

The Magumul Empire

Geographical Locale on the Isle of Artemisia

Along the northeastern coast of Artemisia stretching from the border of the Matriarchy of Verinress' Arl in the west to where the great Afutunke Forest reaches the sea in the east, lies the crescent of coastal plains that form the lands of the Magumul Empire of the Minotaurs. In addition to the coast, there are small groups of islands that lay mostly with sight of the mainland. For the most part, the Minotaurs do not like to sail further out from where they can see land.

To the southwest lies the wild lands of the Phindardol Forest. Directly south of the central lands of the Empire is the Forest of Borovica, , home to the mysterious Fae Court of Oberon and Titania, and to the west, the Empire butts up against the Afutunke Forest wrapped in the great forest rise the Ukomulo Mountain range with Mt Ogmetuki being the highest peak in the range. To the north of the Empire lies the great and treacherous Frigid Ocean.

Four rivers flow through the Empire. From the west to the east they are Efratis River, the River Potok, the Keziak River, and the Tigrii River.

Neighbors States to the Magumul Empire

To the southwest lies the Matriarchy of Verinress' Arl, home to the Dark Aeifa. They claim the western reaches of the Phindardol Forest and lands south. Their actual border with the Empire is a narrow stretch of the coastal plain sandwiched between the Phindardol Forest and the Frigid Ocean. Relations between the Empire and the Matriarchy are fraught at best; over the centuries incursions into each other's lands have occurred, the greatest of which occurred 425 years ago when due to increasing raids by the Dark Aeifa, the Empire sent a great army south, capturing the border city "Dro'Naus" of the Matriarchy now renamed "Cheshegna" that lay at the mouth of the Efratis River and claimed a further stretch of land to the south of the river. Since that day, there has existed an uneasy peace between the Empire and the Matriarchy, save for occasional raids across the border by forces of both.

In the east, cuddled between the Forest of Brovica, the Ukomulo Mountains, and the Afutunke lies the little Principality of Nashmurmul. Inhabited by the Grim, a population of Orcs and Goblins, who keep a wary eye on their great neighbor to the north. In the past, raiders from the Principality struck into the Empire until, after a series of egregious raids, the Empire struck back. Today the Principality is a protectorate of the Empire that has been granted nearly complete autonomy to live their lives as they wish. Over the years, admiring the greater strength of the Empire, the Grim of Nashmurmul have adopted many of the ways of the Empire including the Gods of the Empire, the Principalities secondary language is that of the Empire, both spoken and written. As a result, the Grim have attained a high level of civilization. A Protector lives in the capitol city of the Grim, "Golgorg" who advises the Prince, and facilitates trade of gems, ores, and slaves from the Grim to the Empire and a large amount of manufactured goods from the Empire into Nashmurmul.

Creation Story of the Minotaurs of the Magumul Empire

In a land far, far away in an arid and treeless land, two great rivers arose in the north and flowed south until they merged in their descent into the sea. On the banks of the river a great civilization arose dedicated to the worship of the Gods of the Mountains who had led the people from their original home in the hostile mountains of the north and east to the fertile river banks.

To honor their gods, great Ziggurats of fired-brick were built in their new cities upon the summits of which, sacrifices were made to their Gods.

Anu, Great God of the Sky, looked upon his people with favor and they flourished. To the far west, he noted that Zeus, chief god of the Hellenes, had often taken mortal women as brief consorts, usually after having assumed the form of some great and perfect beast. In a moment of competition, Anu decided that he too would create a line of offspring upon the fairest maidens of his people. From each of the noble and priestly families he had brought to him one of their nubile daughters, 47 in number. In the shape of the greatest beast he knew, the Bull Aurochs, he spent some of his godhood upon the virgins. After a long gestation of 10 months, from the wombs of the women burst forth a new breed.

Of the 47, there were 3 new forms. First to come forth was a male child in the form a mighty aurochs with the head of a wise, bearded man. Four were born in the shape of tall, muscular men with the horned head of a bull. The remaining 42 were in the shape of cows with bovine featured female heads. To Anu's disgust, the nobles and priests brought these children to the tops of the Ziggurat Mountains to offer up as sacrifice thinking it would please their Lord and also to remove these deformed and twisted creatures from their midst. Anu took them up and caused them to be sent to a new home on the world of Nibirum onto the Isle of Artemisia.

Culture of the Minotaurs

A culture has developed that relies on 4 castes to maintain the peace and power of the Minotaurs: Majerna, Bulls, Steers, and Cows.

Of every 200 births, 120 are female cows. Of limited intelligence, they spend their time in the harems of the males in the cities of the Empire or in nine great herds that roam the plains. Their time is spent grazing, caring for the very young calves, and producing milk that forms the basis of many food products.

Of the remaining 80, one is a Mejerna, the human headed bull. This caste comprises the rulers and priests of the Empire. There are very few Mages within the Empire and those that do exist are primarily interested in forces of destruction and conquest. The Mejerna are the only ones allowed to cast Magical spells and as priests only they have access to higher level Clerical Magic.

Four of the remaining 79 are the Bulls. They lead the various herds and act as the Generals of the Armies, Guild-masters for the various trades, and the lower ranks of the Empire's priests. During their prime, they resemble a tall, muscular human with the head of a great bull. Those that age beyond their normal age limit continue to

serve the empire as councilors and story tellers of the young.

The remaining 75 are steers, neutered males. The nature of the bulls is very competitive and early on in their history it became necessary to limit the number of breeding males to prevent continual civil war. The steers act as the warriors, servants, traders, and craftsmen. As a side effect of their castration, they tend to grow to an immense size; most are over 7 feet in height and close to 400 in weight. Their horn width can reach up to three feet. For distances up to 5 miles, a steer can run as fast as a horse and wielding their great axes, they can overrun most opponent forces.

At first the minotaurs self-divided into Mejerna led herds which were often in conflict, one with another. Over the span of a 1000 years, the herd of Khelaphet began to dominate all others and a great leader of the herd, a Majerna called The Majernus, founded the first true city of the minotaurs called “Khelephet” which formed the seed of the Empire. To this day, the leader of the Empire is a Majerna of direct descent of the first Majernus, the current one being the the 23rd of that name.

The Minotaurs rely on slaves to perform many of the tasks involving manual labor. These slaves come from captives taken from raiders into the Empire, the occasional raid by the Empire into other lands, “tribute” from the Grim of Nashmurmul, and those that pass through the slave markets located in the “Mountain of Nanna” on the isle of Kon Severtri. Slaves within the Empire are for the most part, well cared for, as the Bulls see them as a measure of their wealth and are loath to be wasteful with them.

Locations within the Empire

On the Mainland, the Minotaurs have created 6 cities from west to east: Cheshegna, Othosha, Kuremet, the Capitol Khelaphet, Moonophet, and Nugnish. These are the main focus for the civilization of the Minotaurs. In their racial memory, the Minotaurs remember the architecture of their original home of Babylon. As a result, their cities and other major structures are built of fired-brick which are often glazed with jewel-toned colors that form beautiful images on their walls, palaces, and Ziggurats, most often of images of their eight Gods and their one Great Goddess, Ishtar. Early on they discovered that the fine clays found along the banks and bottoms of the rivers Potok and Keziak, when mixed with straw and the urine of the Cows and fired, made bricks of extreme strength and durability.

The Empire is divided into two geographical regions, the Western Plains and the Eastern Plains, with the city of Khelaphet being the midpoint between the two. On the plains roam 9 herds of Cows that are the main breeding stock of the Minotaurs. Named after vaguely remembered ancient cities of Babylon they are the herds of Ur, Lagash, Eridu, and Isin in the West and the herds of Kish, EshnunnaBad-tibira, Adab, and Sippar in the East.

To guard their borders and to honor their Gods, the Minotaurs have erected 9 great citadels, called Mountains after their deities who are known in the collective as the Gods of the Mountains. Each is under the control of a Majerna who acts as a High Priest of the God honored by the citadel, aided by a selection of Bulls, Steers, Cows, and slaves who defend their section of the border. The Mountain of Nanna on the isle of Kon Severtri, in addition, has the purpose of guarding and managing the slave port

located on the island.

Scattered around the Empire are 18 towers that guard local areas that need special care. They are just small outposts with between 30 and 40 inhabitants.

In the Frigid Ocean to the north of the Empire lie 9 island or island groups that are nominally within the purview of the Empire, but except for the isle of Kon Servertri, they are mostly left alone, as the Minotaurs are not great sailors and rarely travel the waters beyond the sight of the mainland. Few Minotaurs are able to swim, and due to the heavy density of their muscle mass, they sink. These island groups are from west to east, Kon Severozapad, Kon Morsh Panna, Kon Mroz, Kon Meziac, Kon Severjeden, Kon Severdra, Kon Severtri, Kon Severstyzi, and Kon Severpat. Of these, only Kov Severdra, Kon Severtri, and Kon Morsh Panna are much interest.

Kon Severdva is the remnants of a volcano that erupted catastrophically long ages ago, leaving behind a ring of islets with a deep central caldera. Recently a mountain has begun to erupt from the ocean bed and is continually growing pushing forth great quantities of magma and ash. Some brave Minotaur Steers are tasked with gathering rare minerals and ores from the surrounding islets.

Kon Severtri is the home of the Mountain of Nanna and a slave market where ships from around Artemisia bring slaves to be traded for luxury goods from the Empire.

Kon Morsh Panna is little visited by the Minotaurs which for them is probably a good thing. Off its shore reside a colony of Mermaids who have swum to this distant shore in furtherance of their crusade to destroy all human descendants of Baron Dogetage of Dunor, in Ezrute. To the mermaids, all humans, or anyone who might look like a human, which includes the Minotaurs, the Aeifa, the Davarin, and the Grim are to be slain. Their Queen is a well studied Elementalist who has caused a great Water Elemental to swirl into being a great whirlpool, hoping to draw in ships to their doom and the savage killing of their crews.