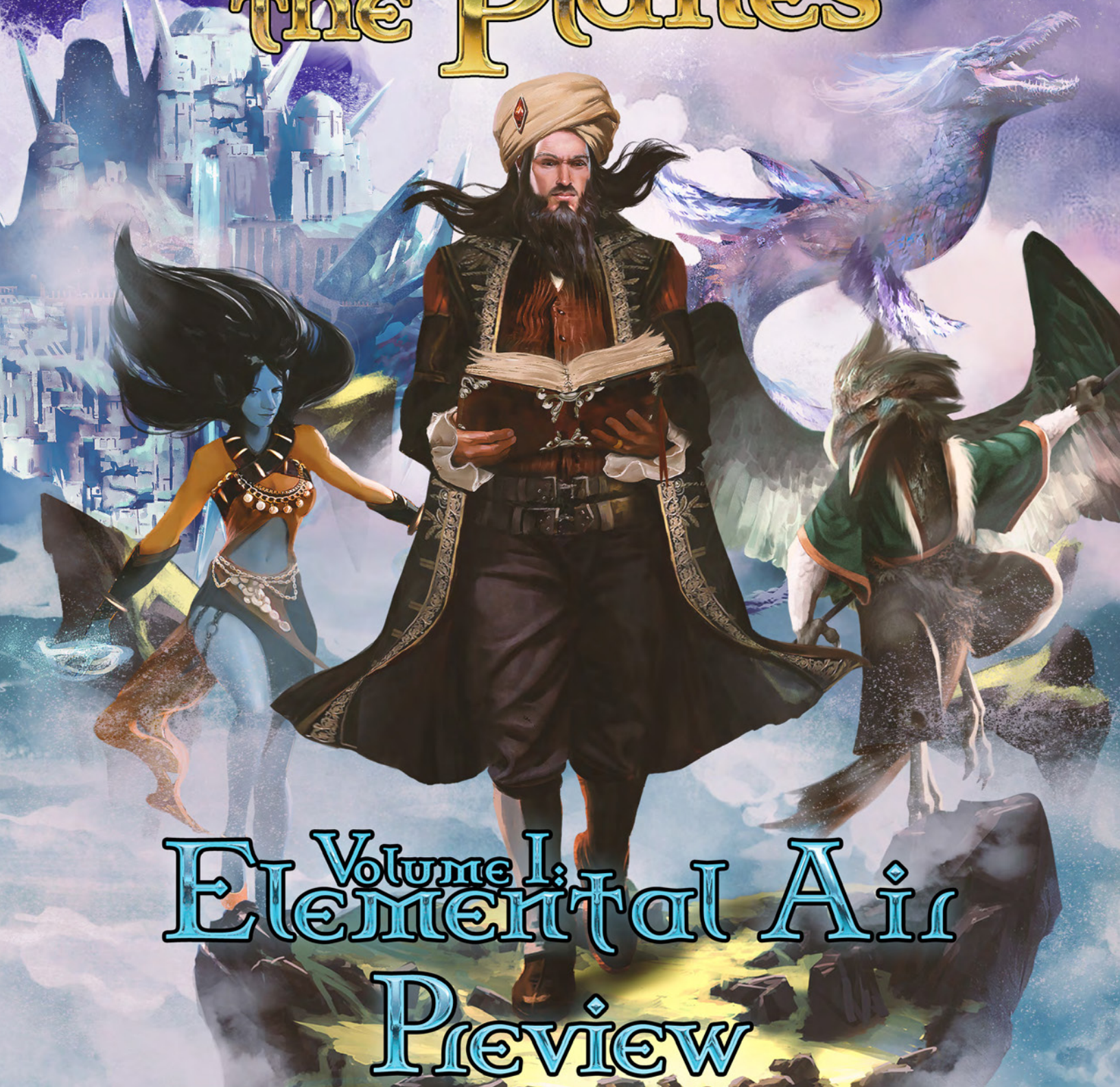


Remarkable Creatures of the Planes



Volume I:
Elemental Air
Preview

Remarkable Creatures of the Planes





Research *RHL*

Writing *Rakzo*

Editing *Anif-Esoj*

Production *Leinad*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RHL was born in 378 AAL. in Urbes Tritios to August and Penelope L.

Growing up, he showed a talent for all things magical, which his parents encouraged him to cultivate. By the time he was ten years old and recruited to study at the MITRA (Ministry of Transliminality), he was already a decent wizard.

In 395 AAL, he met his lost friends (Anif-Esoj Plath and Rakzo Gibran.)

As a student, he developed an interest in living things and the “effects of time” on them. He would later recall the exact moment this interest, in his words, “sparked and burned something inside” of him. In a letter he wrote to his associate and friend Rakzo, he stated the following:

“I was fifteen, standing by the fountain at MITRA’s front garden, and suddenly saw a cocoon start to crack until it burst and, out of it, came a beautiful butterfly. And I wondered, ‘if just mere months can do this to a caterpillar, what could millennia do...?’”

Throughout his life, he would independently study magical creatures and evolution.

Despite deeply enjoying the study of Biomancy, he specialized in Conjuration magic. In 397 AAL, he graduated as an outstanding Akidorat and presented a promising theory to stabilize the Anthropan Library’s Anchors as his Dimikronos (thesis).

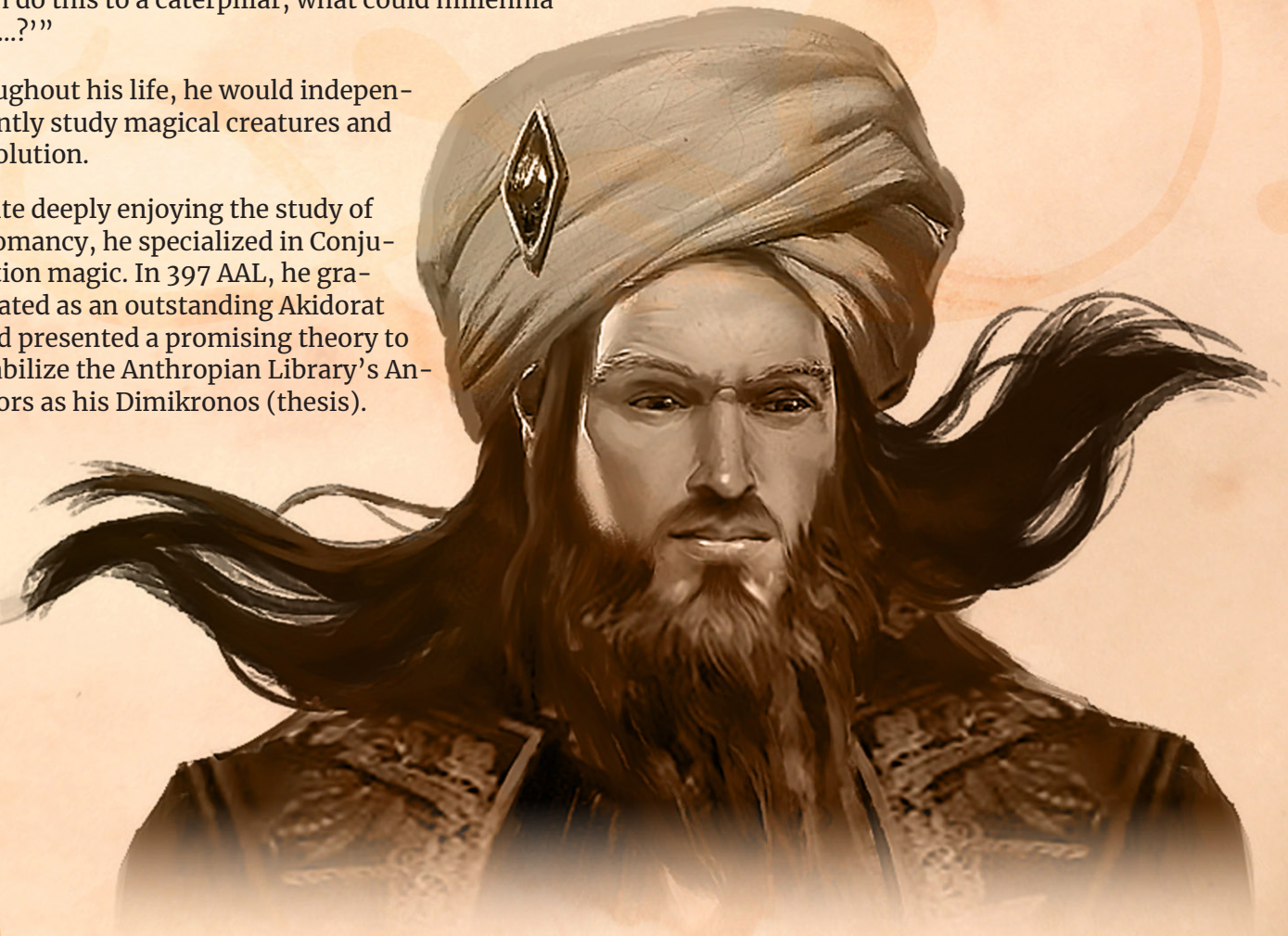
The following five years, he worked for MITRA as a Conjuror, traveling across countless dimensions and perfecting his Anchor Stabilizing Theory.

As a personal project, during his travels, he began studying and classifying the magical creatures he came across with and documented his observations in a series of diaries. It is from these diaries that this book is based.

In 407 AAL, six years after the Anchor used for the 7th Expedition into the Anthropan Library was found, MITRA wizards were finally able to stabilize it using his theory; this earned him a place in the expedition as an Akidorat.

It is worth noting that the 7th Expedition (408 AAL) has been the longest one to date due to RHL’s method of anchor stabilization proving to be extraordinarily effective.

In 411 AAL, three years after the 7th Expedition was over, RHL disappeared. It is believed he set out on a quest to solve something he discovered in the Anthropan Library, but after thirty years, it is highly unlikely he’ll ever return.



PROLOGUE

My dearest RHL, the other day, I found myself walking through the foggy streets of our beloved metropolis like a blind pilgrim, aimlessly wandering in search of something.

Past the Ministry of Transliminality, past my cradle of ever-changing crystalline water, past the last building on the last street, I saw your house. It was so out of place, yet, it felt like it was exactly where it needed to be. The sun seemed to shine only upon it.

You came out and received me with a grin, and I suddenly remembered I was there to tell you the good news of the last volume of your "Remarkable Creatures- a guide for the planar traveler" finally being published.

You let me in, and we talked for hours. Tell me, friend; do you remember how we used to talk endlessly about your beloved creatures and the "wonders of evolution"? I most certainly do.

Abruptly, I woke up, and reality made itself known to me again. There is no house past the last street, and you most certainly died a long time ago. But maybe, in some years, when our chronologies mix in the vague plural memory of our city, it will be fair to say I did see you and gave you some good news.

PREFACE

Dear reader, even though RHL isn't here to write this preface, I thought he could still reach you and explain his Biomanancy diaries through a letter he wrote to me- explaining that much- so many years ago. Today, I ask you to surrogate yourself in my place and receive this letter with the pleasure that spews out of your chest when hearing from an old friend.

*Fort Dalqamar (The moonlight fort)
Hades, first layer
February 3rd, 403 AAL*

Esteemed Anif-Esoj, I hope this letter finds you well.

I thankfully write to you this time as a friend and not for work-related business. Well, when I say work-related, I mean MITRA-related because you know that my life is but what I'm working on at the time.

But enough blabbering; now to the point:

As you know, I've been traveling across so many dimensions due to my Conjururation research that I can't even recall exactly how many places I've visited.

While my research has certainly kept me occupied, my passion for Biomanancy has- as all true passions in life do- found a way to manifest itself. I've started studying the most interesting- in my opinion- creatures I've come across with and annotating my observations in a series of diaries. I now have filled over a dozen with this type of "articles."

My beloved friend, I really believe this project has the potential of becoming something worth publishing. It would serve as a guide to planar travelers on how to treat these remarkable creatures.

If you want, I'll send you one of the journals. I would appreciate it if you could take the time to read it and give me some feedback.

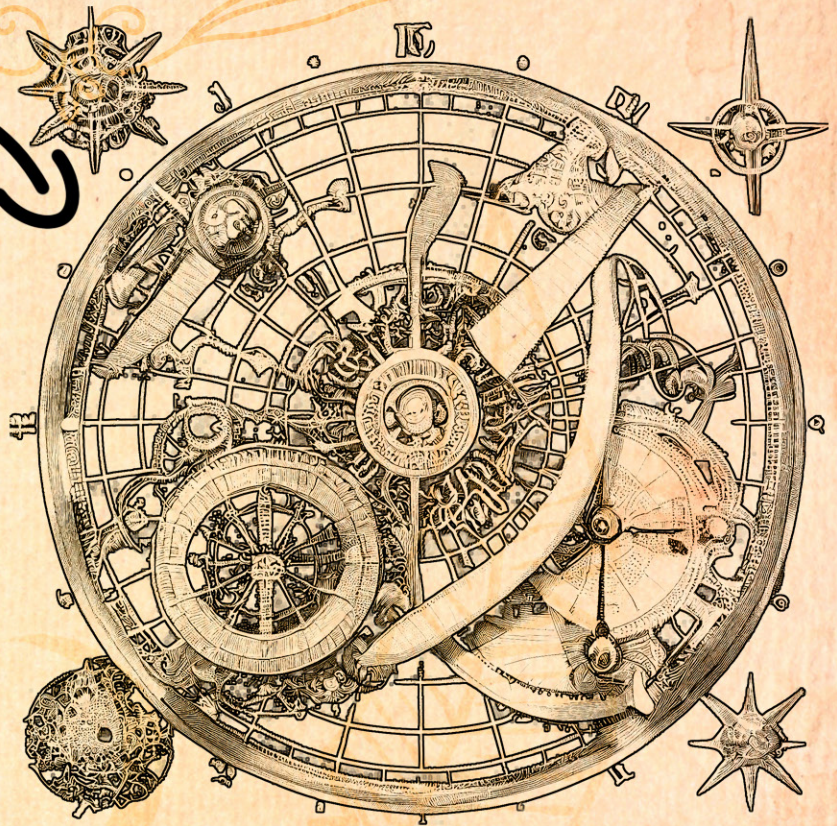
But enough about me; how have you been? How are those arcane protective glasses coming along?

Yours truly,

RHL

*Anif-Esoj Plath
Ministry of Transliminality
8911, Arcanum Ward.
Urbes Tritios*

Astralabe. Astral navigators, like RHL, use this tool to find their way through the infinite vastness of the Astral Sea.



Note for those unacquainted with reading texts from the city of Urbes Tritios.

As you read this book, you will notice that several of the most important institutions in the city of Urbes Tritios (MITRA, the CS, and the government itself) have commented on our text.

This practice is completely normal. In our city, the government ensures that anyone with enough expertise or interest in a particular subject is informed when someone else is writing a book or research paper about it.

When the original manuscript has been completed, all experts or interested parties are sent a copy so they can append their thoughts to it. These comments are then gathered and published alongside the original manuscript.

Anyone with expertise on a specific topic can complement or challenge the ideas presented in the original work. In this manner, you (the reader) can inform yourself with different viewpoints and make your judgment.

To further help those unacquainted with these institutions, we've compiled a summary of every organization that commented on this publication.

You will find it immediately after this section.



I may not be an expert on the topics discussed here, but my name is on this book as the producer, so I will leave my comments nonetheless!

URBES TRITIOS,
THE CIMMERIAN CITY LEFT ADRIFT





Urbes Tritios is the only surviving human settlement in the Astral Sea; with the city's origins as mysterious as its native plane- remaining unknown even to its inhabitants- the Cimmerian City stands proudly insular.

Urbes Tritios has been shaped by the thriving arcane arts cultivated by its citizens, from xylographs to polarized metals and the arts of the Tonal Arboretum return to the beauty of its Arcanochiral Crystals. However, the thing that has defined the city's history the most, the greatest achievement of the Tritians, and the reason their city has survived the Astral Sea's turbulent nature for centuries, is the discovery of the Anthropian Library. This discovery is perhaps the most important in the history of the Astral Plane.

The Anthropian Library

In this mystic library, a colossal, dilapidated labyrinth of corridors and rooms roved by unknown assailants, coded in great tomes indecipherable to the layperson's eye, lies all knowledge.



Though not much is known about the library (with its physical location, creator, and purpose still unknown), it is speculated that a great cataclysm of unknown origin precipitated the library into its current state of disrepair.

One can only access the Anthropian Library through "Transliminal Anchors," relics of great magical power intrinsically linked to the library that, when adequately stabilized, act as temporary portals (once an anchor's magical reserves are spent, it will collapse) into the location.

Urbes Tritios is the only known settlement with access to the library.

The Mind of God

Tritians believe that one can access, in one way or another, an "index" of the knowledge inside the library. They have come to denominate this "concept" that gives order and harmony to all knowledge as the "Mind of God."



THE MINISTRY OF TRANSLIMINALITY



The Ministry of Transliminality (MITRA) is an organization dedicated to the study and conservation of the Anthropian Library, whose ultimate goal is to find the Artifex (the Mind of God), which they believe lies inside it.

MITRA also doubles as a school to prepare its future generations of agents, and every year will select a few promising youths and children and invite them to study with their specialists. Receiving this invitation is considered a high honor in Tritian society.

Origins

The High Archon Ad-faa-yr founded MITRA after publishing the General Theory of Transliminality, a new theory of arcane magic that opened the way for arcanists to manipulate the fabric of magic with a fluidity never seen before. The Transliminal Equations that derive from this theory are closely guarded secrets that only trusted citizens of Urbes Tritios can wield.

Excursions into the Anthropian Library

The conservation of the wealth of knowledge inside the library is a colossal task.

Since the Anthropian Library is quickly dilapidating, the Ministry has decided to extract all the knowledge inside before it is forever lost.

The only way to extract information from the library is via the expeditions launched when a Transliminal Anchor is stabilized and used as a link to the library; so finding and stabilizing Transliminal Anchors are two of MITRA's prime directives.

Every time the opportunity presents itself, and MITRA successfully stabilizes a Transliminal Anchor, they organize an expedition into the Anthropian Library, where all institutions in Urbes Tritios can participate in one way or another.

Special MITRA agents

Anakrits

Anakrits operate outside the city and specialize in locating and transporting Transliminal Anchors to MITRA's headquarters.

Akidorats

Akidorats function as scouts of the expeditions into the Anthropian Library. Their job is to trailblaze a path towards where they speculate (through divination magic) that the most illustrious tomes are.

Afrokremas

Afrokremas are in charge of judging if a book is worthy of retrieving and protecting the selected tomes and the Akidorats from the mysterious monsters inside the library.

Hemeneuts

Hemeneuts or interpreters, as they are commonly known, are MITRA agents who decipher and transcribe the Anthropian Library's books. Each book has a unique cipher.



THE CRYPTOGNOSTIC SOCIETY





The Cryptognostic Society is an organization dedicated to recollecting all knowledge that exists. Inspired by the creation of the ancient Anthropian Library, the Society believes that it, too, is capable of replicating such a feat. They believe the former builders of the library used it to attain godhood and ascend to a superior state of existence and that by recreating the Anthropian Library, they will be able to forge their version of the Mind of God, which they call the “Yliaster” or “Prima Materia.”

Members of this organization scour the planes of existence to find, catalog and decipher any piece of information not yet in their possession.

Every new piece of knowledge that the CS gets is cataloged and then placed in one of their many huge library complexes within the city of Urbes Tritios, popularly called “The Serpent Vaults.” Each vault is dedicated to a particular category of items; grimoires, weapons, armor, tools, etc.

Special CS members

Heresiarchs

Heresiarchs are agents dedicated to containing and retrieving worthy artifacts or fragments of knowledge found by the CS from every corner of the multiverse.

Syphogants

Syphogants are responsible for verifying knowledge, creating protocols to contain dangerous objects, and cataloging both. They also conduct extensive research and experimentation within the vaults to better contain or neutralize the dangerous objects in the CS’s possession.

Directives of the Cryptognostic Society

The Society strives to construct knowledge one topic at a time, delving as deep as necessary to unearth the secrets of the multiverse. Some topics are so esoteric or complicated that an enormous effort must be made by many members to succeed in arriving at the truth. When the Society reaches such a topic, the Exarchs (top ranking members) call for a Directive.

The Directives of the CS are programs designed to be completed by a multitude of agents working in tandem. At its conclusion, all participants are rewarded with a unique “Cryptona”.

Below, we mention the relevant Directives for this text, as well as their respective Cryptonas.



Frozen Feather



Elder Avian Biomancer



Wings of the Past



Cobalt Eyes



Wanderings of Air

MEMORIOUS INK



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Memorious Ink is an independent editorial and publishing company that collaborates with the Ministry, the Society, and Urbes Tritios' government to create and disseminate knowledge to all Tritians.

The company was founded by Anif-Esoj and Rakzo Gibran, two MITRA-trained wizards who have worked for the Ministry and participated in one of the seven expeditions to the Anthropian Library.

The subjects of the books published by this company are vast and varied, from journals of other remarkable citizens of the city and anthologies of cartographic societies to historical records of events in this and many different planes and the conflicts between the gods and demons who roam the outer planes.

Memorious Ink's books make niche knowledge accessible to the layperson and, for that reason, have enjoyed tremendous popularity with the general public. It is speculated that by the year 462 AAL, the company will grow to the level of major publishing houses like Interdimensional Geographic and Warlocks of the Coast.

The company's headquarters are located in the library district, and the lower part of the building serves as a library that houses all titles published by the company.

AARAKOCRA



M.A.C.E. THREAT CLASSIFICATION

SUBJECT NAME

AARAKOCRA

CLASS

01 ISFET



PHYSICAL DAMAGE TYPES

MELEE



RANGE



MOBILITY



LAIR

NONE

ARCANE DAMAGE TYPES



REMARKABLE TRAITS

NONE

Taxonomy

- ϕ Fuscus Aarakocra
- ϕ Tenebris Aarakocra
- ϕ Dutebatur Aarakocra

RHL's Classification

- ϕ Solo travelers- intermedium
- ϕ Adventurers' party- beginners
- ϕ Level 1 threat
- ϕ Level 0 hostility towards outsiders

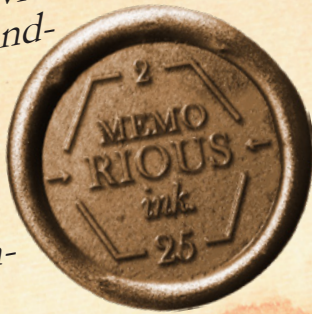
Endangered species status

There are growing concerns amongst biomancers researching the Aarakocra that they might soon start going extinct, for it seems their species has stopped growing under mysterious circumstances.

Some divination sages have reportedly heard "whispers" of an ancient enemy of the Aarakocra awakening. However, none can say what it is or what it plans.

Below, we present the current theories of the four main institutions in Urbes Tritios. To access them, merely put your finger over the seal and press it.

All the information provided about Aarakocra is **not** intended to be used for their poaching. We at Memorios Ink do **not** endorse the hunting of any sentient creature.



Syphogrant Undavar, a recognized biomancer of the Society, developed a theory that involves the Yuan-Ti and the divine retribution of one of their main gods "Merrshaulk" against the Aarakocra for a transgression their ancestors committed against an ancient reptilian race.



While the possibility of this "ancient enemy" being The Shadow That Kills Treacherously is very slight, the Aegis Ward has requested further investigation. If information linking this dark entity with the Aarakocra is found, all institutions within the city of Urbes Tritios are ready to step up and exterminate this cancerous entity wherever it may appear.



During the second expedition into the Anthropan Library, the Ministry found a tome called "Oculus ad Abyssum." It predicts the downfall and destruction of the Aarakocra by an ancient conclave of Obyrith demon lords. If the holy scriptures have so foretold it, then it will come to pass exactly as it was written.

→ Brief description →

Aarakocra are humanoid birds whose bodies are covered by a thick plumage varying in color depending on gender and species.

All Aarakocra have a prominent beak that can be used as a weapon, sharp claws that easily tear through flesh, and nimble enough fingers to be capable of tool production. They average 1.6 m (5 ft) in height, and their wingspan is around 3.5 m (11 ft).

There are three major subspecies of Aarakocra. Two of them have their arms fused with their wings (the Fuscus and the Tenebris), and the other (the Dutebatur) has six limbs.

→ Aarakocra subspecies →

The three subspecies are listed below from most to least common.

Six-limbed Aarakocra (the wings are separate from the arms).

Dutebatur Aarakocra (or the dual-arm Aarakocra)

The easiest way to differentiate between Dutebatur males and females is by looking at the plumage and build of the Aarakocra. Males are slightly larger, more robust, and sport bright color patterns of red, yellow, green, and sometimes even blue. On the other hand, females are usually brown, gray, and white, slimmer and therefore more agile and generally faster when flying.

Dutebatur shamans are difficult to identify as males or females because both sport a mostly uniform bright red plumage- the consequence of ingesting large quantities of Charrak seeds during spiritual ceremonies.



It is speculated that these feathers can be used to coat armors to silence them. The problem with this practice would be collecting enough feathers to do so, for they must be harvested from the wings of the Aarakocra.

This red color is characteristic of Aarakocra Shamans. Their consumption of Charrak seeds is responsible for the change in coloration.

Four-limbed Aarakocra

These subspecies' arms are fused with their wings, making these extremities stronger and more resilient.

Thus, these Aarakocra can sustain longer flights and carry light armor into battle.

Despite the fusion of arms and wings, four-limbed Aarakocra retain small but functional hands near the end of their wings. Compared to the Dutebatur, their hands are weaker in strength and dexterousness, making tool manufacturing harder.

Fuscus Aarakocra

Like the Dutebatur Aarakocra, the easiest way to differentiate males from females is by the coloration of their plumage.

Fuscus' wingspan is longer than the other subspecies, and the feathers covering their wings have a unique morphology that minimizes rustling noises as they fly, making them the stealthier species while flying.

Tenebris Aarakocra

The Tenebris, which was just recently discovered, is the rarest subspecies of the Aarakocra.

Instead of the abundant plumage and aquiline head typical to the species, the Aarakocra Tenebris have all-black oily plumage and a head similar to that of a vulture. Their beak is very long and strong enough to break bones. Furthermore, their body is not covered in feathers; they only grow on the wings and around the neck. The exposed skin is hardened, granting them tough natural armor. Differentiation between males and females is nigh impossible.

This species is the most aggressive and resilient of all Aarakocra.



RHL hypothesized that Tenebris' characteristic aggression and competitiveness were a direct product of their environment's challenging conditions.



On rare occasions, during droughts, Tenebris have been known to eat humans and even the weaker members of their tribes.

❖ Anatomy of the Aarakocra ❖

All species of Aarakocra share the same hollow bone structure as birds. This remarkable evolutive trait allows them to be incredibly agile while flying and very stealthy on the ground. However, it also means their bones are fragile. A well-placed hit on one of the wing bones might be enough to cripple or even kill (if flying high or fast enough) an Aarakocra.

Prominent anatomical features

Chest structure

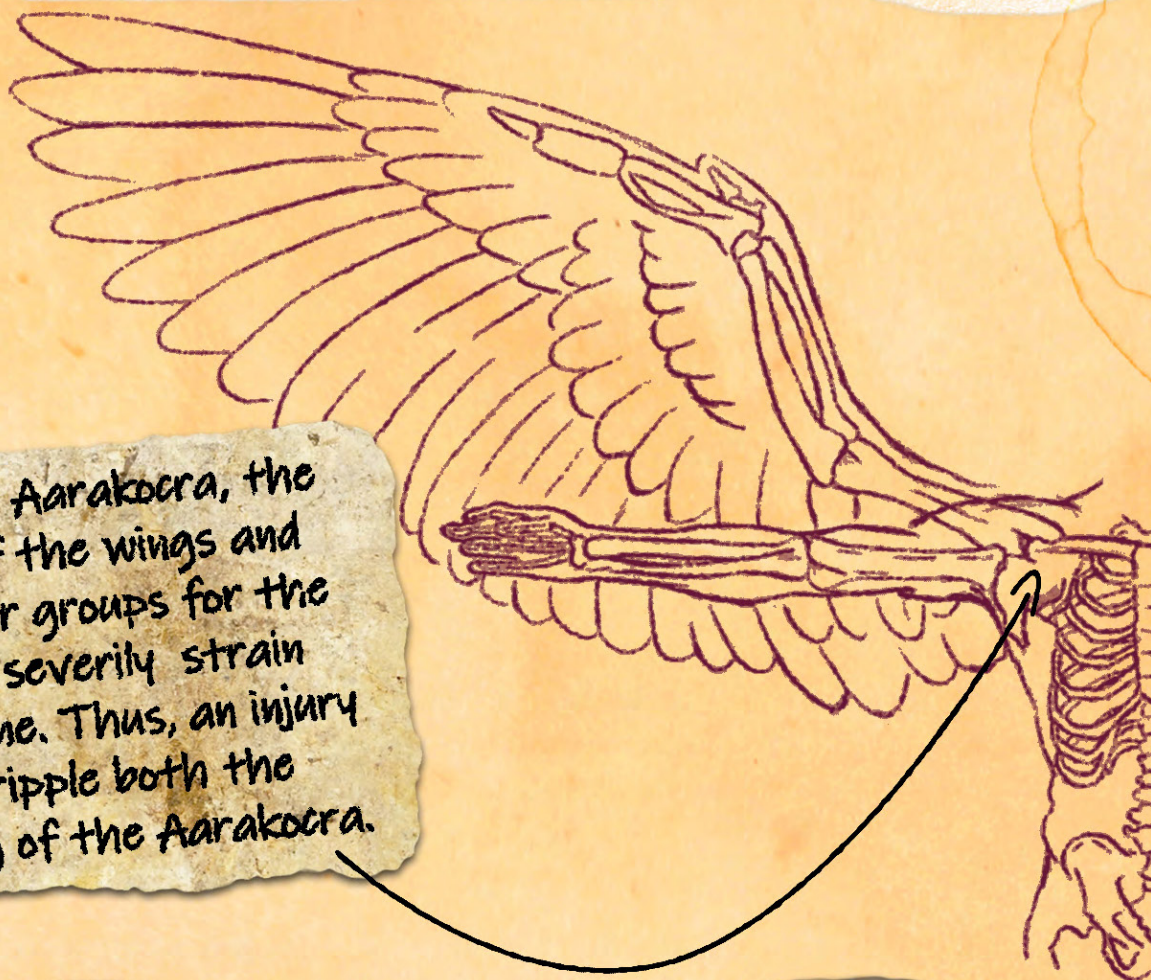
Like traditional birds, Aarakocra chests are pointy and very prominent because they are used as an anchor for their wing and arm muscles.

Arm-wing fusion

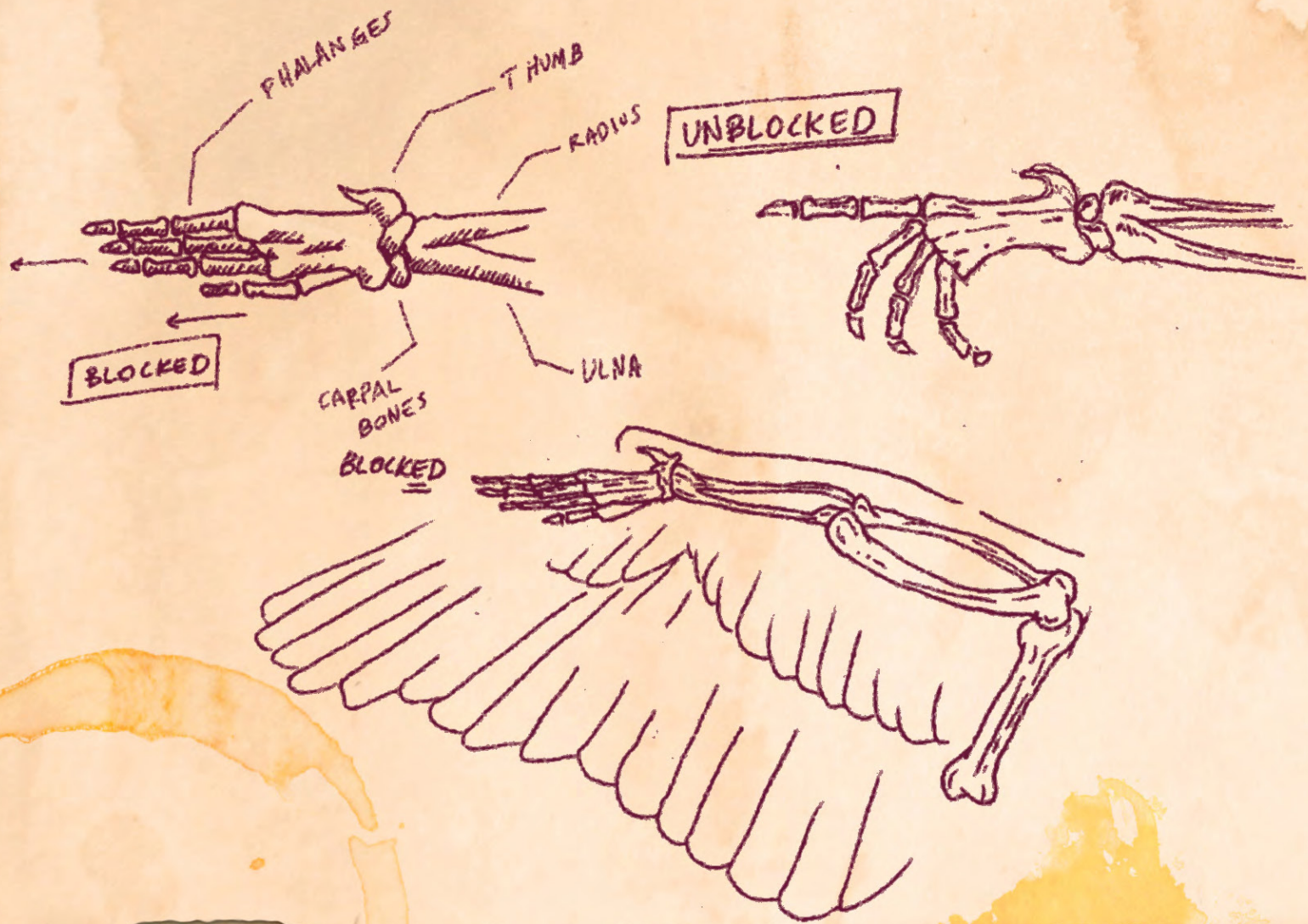
Two of the three Aarakocra (Fuscus and Tenebris) have fused arms and wings while the Dutebatur do not. Scholars to this day debate whether the four-limbed Aarakocra evolved first or the other way around.

Fused limbs provide higher strength, speed, and maneuverability in flight. However, it means the Aarakocra cannot use its hands while flying because the hand bones lock up. Furthermore, the pinky finger is fused into the wing and cannot be used; this makes Fuscus and Tenebris Aarakocra less capable of tool production and adequate usage.

On the other hand, because Dutebatur Aarakocra's wings and arms muscles are separate and yet have to share the same space, this species is weaker in raw strength and flight capabilities.



In dutebatur Aarakocra, the competing of the wings and arms muscular groups for the same space severely strain the anchor bone. Thus, an injury here can cripple both the hand and wing of the Aarakocra.



Where to find them

Aeries

Aarakocra communities, or aeries as they call them, are notoriously difficult to find due to the Aarakocra's isolationist nature and the height at which they are constructed.

A typical aerie usually has 20 to 50 individuals, a central nest structure, religious temples, and several adjacent crude buildings used to house the residents and belongings of the tribe.

Prime Material Plane

The high mountains constitute the perfect nesting location for all known Aarakocra species on the Prime Material Plane. Although they prefer warm and tropical climates, several expeditions sponsored by the Cryptognostic Society have yielded evidence of Aarakocra dwelling in arctic regions. Ruins of their communities, bones, feathers, and tools, suggest these arctic subspecies are very different; however, no sightings or direct evidence have confirmed this.

The current belief of the Society is that these "arctic Aarakocra" inhabited the Prime Material Plane until recently.

During its 430 AAL expedition to the Spine of the World Mountains, the CS uncovered evidence of a massive, hastened migration and an ancient undecipherable map believed to be of an unknown region of the Plane of Elemental Air. After these discoveries, the Society issued



the Frozen Feather Directive to investigate the "arctic Aarakocra" disappearance and restore the damaged map.

It is believed "arctic Aarakocra" might have fled the Prime Material Plane to avoid the mysterious enemy driving the species towards extinction. However, every major divination ritual attempted to discern what this enemy might be has been met with nothing but silence.



Since the Ministry of Transliminality has reason to believe the damaged map may contain information on the missing Transliminal anchor in the Elemental Plane of Air, the CS amicably handed the map over to the Ministry.

Recovery of information regarding this map has moved to a priority class 03 for all agents, and the Ministry has offered a sizable reward to anyone capable of deciphering it.



Although the government may want you to believe that the CS gave the map to MITRA out of kindness, know that it wasn't like that at all. They pressured the CS through political moves into handing it over... Looks like a catfight is about to ensue. Fight, fight, fight!

Elemental Plane of Air

The Aarakocra take advantage of the monumental air currents pervading this realm to extend their influence far and wide. Here they have developed a curious alliance with the Wind Dukes of Aaqa, and Sages speculate that they act as servitors of these powerful beings.

Aarakocra tribes living in this plane grow more numerous (up to 300 individuals) than others.

These Aarakocra communities are very welcoming to outsiders, provided they act civilly.



Plane of the Obscured Sun

Only the Aarakocra Tenebris inhabit the harsh, desolated desert environments of the Plane of the Obscured Sun, finding rock outcrops, cliffs, ravines, and canyons particularly suitable.

Aarakocra can be invaluable guides to the Elemental Plane of Air, and many are willing to be hired to accompany or guide expeditions.

RHSL



On tracking the Aarakocra

Watching the mountains

Hunting is the primary food source for an Aarakocra community, regardless of species. Thus, hunting parties leave the aeries frequently, and although they are notoriously tricky to track- for they seldom leave any hints of their or their prey's presence- one could pinpoint the position of an aerie by keeping watch over mountains of an isolated region for a flock of hunters to leave it.

This tactic is considered a slow and dull process recommended only for beginners trackers.

Looking for possible hunting grounds

Expert trackers will search for ponds, rivers, and places near the edge of the forest where large groups of small animals gather and look thoroughly for broken branches facing a particular

direction on the trees in the forest line, which Aarakocra commonly damage on their rapid descents when hunting. After finding these branches, trackers will mark that place as an "Aarakocra hunting ground."

Since the hunting areas of Aarakocra communities are always circling their aerie, once trackers have identified a couple of them, they'll be able to pinpoint the general location of the aerie.

What makes this creature unique or dangerous?

Toolmaking and usage

The most remarkable feature of the Aarakocra is their capability of making and using a wide variety of tools. Their prehensile hands allow them to craft weapons- specializing in spears and javelins, their favorite kind- and sometimes even armor.

Fuscus and Tenebris Aarakocra

Lacking useful hands while flying, the Fuscus and Tenebris Aarakocra have developed their talons as substitute hands. Both species use them to grasp one (or two in rare cases) javelins, which they use while diving towards their prey to cause catastrophic piercing damage. Records of medium armor pierced by such tactics are abundant.

Dutebatur Aarakocra

On the other hand, Dutebatur Aarakocra make extensive use of their two free arms while on the fly. They have developed an advanced form of fletching, and their keen eyes allow them to be exceptional archers.

Intelligence

Aarakocra are social creatures who support each other; this has caused them to develop a tribal system rich with culture and traditions.

It is important to note that most Aarakocra are capable of speech and are not hostile, primitive, or stupid, as many would have you believe. Most Aarakocra are friendly when addressed and can be a cooperative ally if care is taken to understand their worldview.

Mobility and stealth

Being slender and lightweight makes Aarakocra almost impossible to hear while flying; their remarkable sight allows them to see their prey way before being sighted. These skills make them excellent scouts and ambushers. Once you hear their battle cry, it is already too late.

→ Combat tactics of the Aarakocra ←

The following advice is shared to prevent the death of innocent people or travelers who stumble into an unreasonably hostile tribe's territory. It must be noted that most Aarakocra are peaceful and isolationists; and are not the monsters many portray them to be. They will not usually attack unless attacked.

Aarakocra's war cry

The war cry of an Aarakocra is one of its greatest weapons. It is used to induce fear and confusion amongst its targets and prevent them from communicating effectively.

When the whole hunting party emits the war cry, the sound is so high pitched and strong that it might instantly stun even the hardest adventurer.

Typical combat tactics

Fuscus Aarakocra

Fuscus Aarakocra will typically ambush their prey.

They will unleash their war cry as they begin their rapid descents with the javelins and spears firmly held in their talons, guaranteeing a devastating first blow.

Tenebris Aarakocra

Since they live in the desert, where no trees may cover their approach, Tenebris Aarakocra have become adept at producing paralyzing poisons.



They manufacture special javelins, darts, and nets with poisoned barbs to catch and debilitate prey or enemies before closing in to finish them off. The nets are used to transport the paralyzed prey in a timely fashion. Lingering in the open for even a minute in the harsh desert might attract unwanted attention.

Dutebatur Aarakocra

Dutebatur Aarakocra make full use of their free hands to pepper their enemies (or prey) with arrows at a great distance. Thanks to their supreme agility, these flying archers are almost impossible to hit.

Some particularly clever tribes of this species divide their hunting parties in two. One group uses ranged weapons to debilitate and “herd” their prey into a particular direction while the second group lays in the high tree canopies, preparing a devastating ambush for the already weakened and tired enemies.

How to defend oneself against an Aarakocra's attack

Successfully defending oneself against the attacks of Aarakocra relies on preventing an ambush in the first place.

Always keep an eye on the sky, even if you are under the cover of thick canopies. Aarakocra are used to not being searched for and usually are completely unable to hide against the blue background of the sky. If you see one, make an extra effort to respect nature around you, for Aarakocra are very protective of nature, even more so inside their territory; do not make campfires, and do not destroy vegetation that is impeding your way, etc. This is usually enough to avoid attacks in the first place.

If you suspect the Aarakocra you've encountered might be hostile, then apply the following tactics:

1. Keep to uneven terrain. It makes diving attacks much more dangerous and challenging for the Aarakocra and reduces exposure to attacks.
2. When camping, make thick smoke around the camp; the more it can catch on the canopies of small trees or rock outcroppings, the better. This will prevent Aarakocra from pinpointing individuals within.
3. Armor is the best way to thwart the first strike of an ambushing party, regardless of whether they use javelins, darts, or arrows. Heavy armor is best because a diving Aarakocra can pierce even some types of medium armor.
4. If a battle seems inevitable, always use bludgeoning weapons. As detailed in the “Anatomy” section, a well-placed hammer strike can completely cripple an Aarakocra.

Body parts for which the Aarakocra are hunted for

Unfortunately for the Aarakocra, certain parts of their body have extraordinary properties that compel some hunters, rangers, and mercenaries to search and kill them. Some cities have forbidden the selling of body parts of sentient species, but this only makes the black market business more profitable.

We at Memorious Ink encourage people to boycott any product containing Aarakocra's body parts.



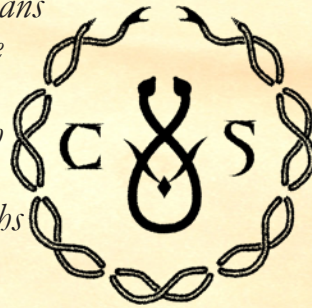
Feathers

Feathers are the most commonly sold Aarakocra body part on the black market, and although most of them do not have magical properties, their sheer beauty is often enough to command a high price on the black market. Usually, the more brightly colored the feather, the more it is worth.

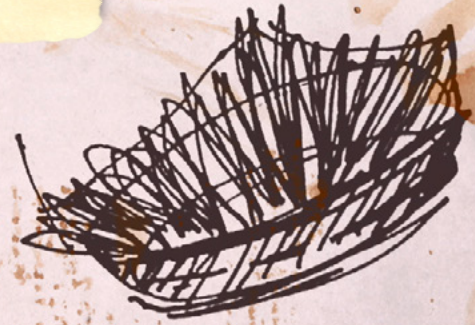
There is, however, a type of feather that does have magical properties. As mentioned in the “Description” section, shamans eat Charrak seeds to enter spiritual trances. While the seeds themselves are not magical, the resulting psychoactive processes stain the feathers with a deep and vibrant red color and infuse them with minor magical properties. These magical red feathers can be used as arcane quills for spell scribing or grounded to produce tinctures that empower divination spells.

Because some vendors are genuinely unaware of the source of Aarakocra’s feathers, which to the untrained eye can look like an ordinary bird’s one, many find their way into the open market as part of home decorations.

*Aarakocra shamans
never give these
feathers willingly
since each will
take at least five
months to grow
back.*



*Aarakocra's feathers are not
only used for ornamental
decorations, these are sacred
to their cultures and some of
them grant magical properties.*



Beak

There is a wide market for Aarakocra's beaks. It is said that they are a potent aphrodisiac, especially those from the Tenebris family. Disregard any such claims; they are false.

Bones

The bones of an Aarakocra can be used as an ingredient in Potions of Flight. Most civilized races recommend that before buying such potions, one makes sure they do not contain this ingredient, as it is banned in many urban centers.

→ Culture ←

After RHL's first notes on the Aarakocra were stolen and started to be used for their poaching, he studied them more closely and realized that they were a sentient species with a rich and vast culture. In an attempt to "redeem" himself, he documented the Aarakocra's way of life in hopes of publishing his findings and educating the public on these remarkable creatures.



Religion

Aarakocra are polytheistic creatures who worship three deities; Aerdrie Faenya, an elven goddess of unpredictable weather; the major goddess Akadi, queen of air elementals; and Syranita, the patron goddess of Aarakocra. Some scholars debate to this day if the relationship they sustain with the Wind Dukes of Aaqa is one of gods and their priests or a mutual pact as equals.

Worship of Aerdrie Faenya

Temples and shrines dedicated to this goddess are usually constructed outside the main aerie. They are built on locations inaccessible by means short of flying, like mountain tops and the walls of ravines. These distant locations force worshipers to move daily from their home to the shrine, which is supposed to remind the faithful of the primary tenet of the deity: eternal wandering.

Such is the case with the city of Urbes Tritios: Merchants that introduce, commercialize or purchase potions fabricated with ingredients obtained from sentient creatures will be fined or incarcerated, depending on the quantity and origin of the illegal goods.



Woops! I must say I have- in the past!- used potions with these types of illegal ingredients. Well, I guess the ladies will like me better now that I'm officially considered a "bad boy."

Music plays an integral part in the rituals to worship Faenya. All her temples are decorated with functional wind chimes and woodwind instruments. Because of this and the perpetual air currents that run through them, they and their surroundings are always lively with chaotic wind music.

Chaos turns into order, though, when a pilgrim arrives, or a priest performs any ceremony. During such events, whoever leads the ceremony begins to play a wind instrument. As soon as the first notes are produced, the winds magically rearrange themselves and provoke the chimes and even the unattended wind instruments to follow the melody of the leader. The result is a perfectly ordered ensemble of wind instruments performing seamlessly. This phenomenon is called a "Wind Symphony."

Wind Symphonies are so renowned amongst musicians and bards that some spend years trying to find and convince an Aarakocra priest to perform for them.

Worship to Akadi

The worship of this deity is little understood due to the difficulty of researching it. Because of the peripatetic nature of the religion's tenets, most Aarakocra who practice it become perpetual nomads, which impedes the formation of organized structures like churches or the construction of temples. Furthermore, since Akadi is believed to be an elemental primordial, most of her clerics reside in the Elemental Plane of Air, whose infinity makes an encounter with an Aarakocra priest of Akadi very rare.

Of the scarce information we possess about the cult of Akadi, the most prevalent is that she requires material sacrifices called "Myrrh Hecatombs" to be appeased. These sacrificial ceremonies, believed to protect Aarakocra's aeries from bad weather, are performed not only by Akadi's clerics but by all members of the community (except in the Tenebris' case).

A Myrrh Hecatomb is a group effort. It requires the collection of tens of kilograms of this valuable spice. Once collected, it is burnt on (or near) the aerie the clan wishes to protect from bad weather. Chants and ritual dances accompany the ceremony; the whole ceremony may last from several hours to a couple of days. The average price of the spice used is around 1,000 gold coins; however, larger clans can muster more, and the most valuable offering recorded exceeded 4,000 gold coins only in myrrh.

Worship to Syranita

Syranita is the patron goddess of the Aarakocra. All Aarakocra tribes (except the Tenebris) maintain a small shrine to her at the center of their main nest.

The worship of this deity is notoriously simple. Syranita's priests are dedicated to teaching the young how to sing, enjoy art, and keep balance in nature.

Once a day, at dawn, when the breeze of the morning air is the freshest, Syranita's worshipers gather around her shrine and honor her by performing communal whistling and soft chants that imitate the wind passing around the aerie.

Theologians speculate that Syranita- who, because of the mysterious recent decline in the Aarakocra population and consequent decline in followers she has experienced, is losing power- might fuse with Faenya to keep watch over the Aarakocra.

Society

Lineage

Aarakocra are one of the oldest races of the Prime Material Plane. Their lineage goes back to the times before the elves began to record history. They appear to have evolved around the same time as the Lizardfolk and the Bullywugs.

Their ancestors, however, were very different from the Aarakocra we know today, but although their physical appearance has been lost to the tides of time, their history has not.

Aarakocra's ancestors' empires were expansionist and ruthless. They waged great wars of extermination against the old reptilian and amphibian races. In fact, many biomancer historians believe they created several diseases that only infect reptiles and amphibians, some of which still affect modern races like the Lizardfolk.

Information regarding these ancient times was hard to get. During my travels with in the Elemental Plane of Air I managed to gain access to a library owned by the Wind Dukes of Aaqa- these paragons of law have the history of the Aarakocra carefully documented, even when they were not the Aarakocra we now know. The information contained within was enough to keep an army of scribes busy for months; thus, my research was very limited in time and scope.

RHLL



Neither the Society nor the Ministry of Transliminality has been able to locate the library RHLL talks about. It is speculated the Wind Dukes have hidden it within a specially created demiplane.

It is unknown what exactly caused the downfall of these ancient races. The most popular theory suggests a rapid climate change (probably of arcane origin) that made farming impossible for years, which led to the scattering of the races and the fragmentation of their nations. Eventually, the ancestor races fell into barbarism, from where the Aarakocra we know today evolved.

The era when these ancient races dominated the Prime Material Plane is known by Elven historians as the "Days of Thunder."

RHSA

To better understand these diseases, the Society has issued the "Elder Avian Biomancer" directive. Finding specimens of these diseases and deriving useful, applicable defenses against them is paramount in understanding the nature of epidemics.



The origin and physiology of these ancestral races remain unknown.



Language & Communication

Linguists initially believed that Aarakoran (Aarakocra's language) was derived from Auran because historians thought the Aarakocra were native to the Elemental Plane of Air. This theory was later rebuked when it was noted that Aarakocra have trouble pronouncing the breathy and soft language due to their beak structure. After this discovery, Aarakocran was scrutinized to find its roots- which incidentally helped with finding more about the culture's and race's origins.

Linguists concluded that Aarakocran had developed separately from Auran. Therefore, it is now believed that Aarakocra and their ancestors evolved naturally on the Prime Material Plane, and only after the fall of the ancient empires did some flocks migrate to the Plane of Elemental Air, where they learned the Auran language and mixed it with their own.

Within the Elemental Plane of Air, Aarakocra's "accent" is mockingly called "Aarakocran." This "mocking" is just another example of the relentless specieism they have to endure.

RHSL



After seeing how deeply the studies of language have changed the panorama regarding the Aarakocra, the Society has issued the "Wings of the Past" directive, whose purpose is to unearth and understand the evolutionary path taken by the Aarakocra.

The Society believes this directive will allow it to understand the unusual relationship between the Aarakocra and the Wind Dukes of Aaqa.



Roles in Aarakocra Society

The small nature of Aarakocra's flocks (from 20 to 50 individuals) makes their society easy to organize.

Aarakocra divide themselves into different professions within a hierarchy. On top is the chieftain, advised by a shaman. Below we find the hunter or warrior caste (Aarakocra make no distinction between one or the other) and the crafter caste.

Chiefs

Chiefs are always the strongest males. Their duties are primarily concerned with the organization and command of hunting flocks and the protection of the aerie. They are the final arbiters of any dispute or decision that involves the community.

Chiefs are selected by the shaman amongst the younglings of the tribe during the aerie's vernal festivals. Once selected, they are trained until they become old enough to hold the position. Once a chief becomes old, a new one is selected.

Shamans

Shamans, which are the oldest Aarakocra in the aerie and can be male or female, serve as the sacred advisors of the tribe; they advise everyone no matter their job, from the chief to the common craftsmen.

Shamans tend to be druids with sun or moon domains or clerics of one of their deities and are the only type of Aarakocra capable of spellcasting.

Due to their ties with nature (if they are druids) or their gods (if they are clerics), shamans can sense their deaths in advance; this prompts them to seek a successor amongst the tribe.

The process of selecting and training the next shaman is known as the "Cycle of the Winds." It is almost a year-long ceremony that culminates in the autumn equinox when the new shaman is ordained.

Hunters

Hunters are the providers of the tribe.

Hunting flocks are composed mainly of males; however, many Dutebatur clans have begun incorporating females because their higher dexterity and agility make them excellent marksmen. This range-style hunting allows females to avoid direct confrontation while still delivering deadly blows to their enemies, forcing them to move in a particular direction while the males hide and prepare for a devastating ambush.

Crafters

Both males and females can take this role.

The primary task of this caste is the production of anything necessary to the aerie, from buildings to weapons. Their primary crafting products include javelins, bows and arrows, slings, lightweight construction materials, religious artifacts (like incense burners and symbols), leather armors, pottery, and weaves.

Aarakocra are seldom interested in the wares of other species, so everything an aerie possesses is made by its members.

Some of the most impressive items Aarakocra can make are woven cloaks of their own feathers, which are said to have magical properties. These rare garments have fetched incredible prices at auctions.

The most venerable and skilled Aarakocra crafters are known to construct portals linked to other aeries or the Elemental Plane of Air.

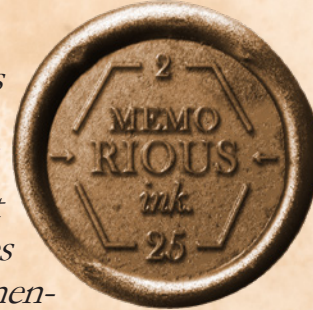


The exact details of the construction of these portals are still unknown. They are kept as the best-guarded secret in Aarakocra society. However, there is a widely accepted theory explaining how the Aarakocra acquired the ability to create such portals, which suggests that the Wind Dukes of Aaqa provided the knowledge and/or magical potency needed, which would explain why the Aarakocra have such strong bonds to this mysterious race.

During one of my expeditions to an Aerie, I confirmed the existence of such portals.

RHL

There are records in the archives of the Wind Dukes of Aaqa of allies of the Aarakocra who have used these portals to significant effect during critical battles against the forces of Elemental Evil or the Gods of Fury.



Natural enemies

Aarakocra have a natural enmity with chaotic or evil creatures; therefore, they are mortal enemies with Gargoyles and servants of Ogmoch, the Prince of Evil Earth, the Mountain that Walks.

In the Elemental Plane of Air

To help in the eternal war against the Elemental Plane of Earth, they act as watchers and sentries, constantly guarding the border between the two planes from Gargoyles' assaults.

Due to their natural agile complexion, they also usually serve as scouts and agents rather than shock troops or frontline soldiers against the resilient might of the earth elementals.

However, in times of need, great battle flocks of gilded warriors have formed under the banner of the great Dukes of Aaqa, always in staunch defense of their homes and peoples.

In the Material Plane

In this plane, the Aarakocra- being natural enemies of chaotic and evil entities- serve as agents for the Seldarine Pantheon (of which Faenya is a leading deity), gathering intel on the Drow's movements, the cults that worship the Elemental Evil, and the servants of the Gods of Fury.

Aarakocra's stealth and mobility have proven invaluable in the relay of information needed to thwart the evil plans of cultists and evil clerics across the material plane.

IMAGES & ILLUSTRATIONS ATTRIBUTIONS

Lerayne



Book cover illustrations



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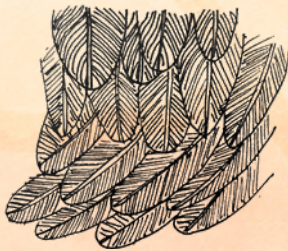
Nancy Rivas



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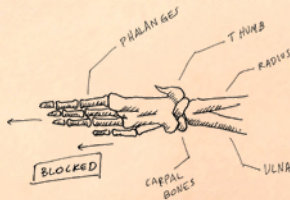
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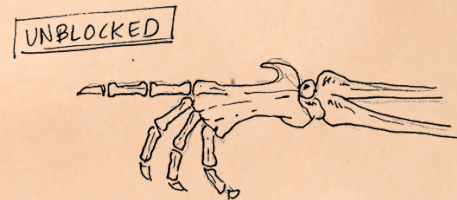
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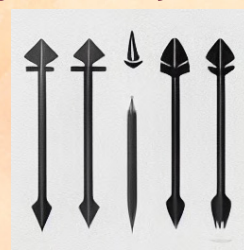
Institution seals; various pages

And all of the paper textures and ornamental designs that were used to create the layout format.

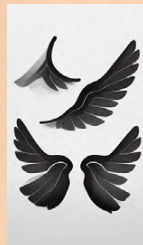
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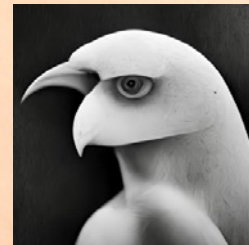
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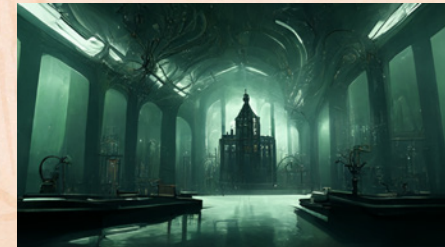
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Aarakocra & Djinn Cryptonas; page 13



Memorious Ink Banner; page 14



Memorious' Library; page 15

CREDITS

Lead Design & Art Direction: Oscar “Rakzo” Anchondo

Writing: Oscar “Rakzo” Anchondo & Josefina Espino

Editing & Proofreader: Josefina Espino

Layout & Graphic Design: Daniel “Odeyseis” Riquelme

Cover Illustrator: Leraynne

Interior Illustrators: Nancy Rivas & Leraynne

Marketing: David Limas

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS

Neuron Games



[Official Webpage](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#)

Email: nga@neuron-games.com

Oscar “Rakzo” Anchondo

[Instagram](#)

Nancy Rivas from Mimica.mx

[Instagram](#)



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | Email: hola@mimica.mx

Leraynne

[Instagram](#) | [MyPortfolio.com](#)

Daniel “Odeyseis” Riquelme

[Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Kickstarter](#)

Email: driquelme@neuron-games.com

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