

AARDSCHADUW

PEOPLES

The Aman are an immortal people who appeared first in Westerwolde, a forest on the western flanks of the Afterglow Mountains. The first Aman had their mortal life on Earth, as free men who had a deep connection with the woods and nature of Western-Europe. When the First Confederation degenerated into the Westerwold Kingdoms they began to leave Westerwolde and eventually split up in three main groups: those who recreated the confederation in Oosterwolde (the Forest-Aman), those who wanted to focus on rebuilding the splendor of the First Confederation further east (the Archan) and those disillusioned who disavowed the equality between the Aman and their mortal offspring (the Oman). While the Forest-Aman and the Archan stayed consistent to their values, the Oman splitted in many groups, becoming a separate society in the far east.

The offspring of the Aman are the mortal Men. They appeared first where the Aman lived, but quickly had their own offspring. Their own societies are mainly feudal, which are mainly in the west and southwest of Aardschaduw. They also live extensively in the city states of the Oman and in the Blue Mountains in the far east. The trade

between the west and the east plays an important role in this world.

The Paja are a pygmy people, offspring of the long gone Polepo gods who lived in Star Mountain. They mainly live in the southern archipelagos in primitive tribal societies, where men and woman have equal occupations. The Oman trade with them to provide their cities with food and rural materials.

WEST

SECOND CONFEDERATION (IIC)

The Second Confederation is created on the radical-confederate values of the First Confederation, with the exception that their mortal offspring should leave the Second Confederation when they reach adulthood. Most of their mortal children join one of the Wisent-tribes, who warmly welcome them in their midst. In the Second Confederation every household has the right to life independently, but can also participate in society to the extent they choose. Many Aman live in lonely cabins scattered in the hills of the great forest canyon that is Oosterwolde. A landscape that looks like their original lands of Westerwolde, but is more a badland like forest. Aman who prefer more participation with society live often in one of the many small towns on the banks of the Canyon River. There are many festivals in which the Aman assemble and trade.

The Second Confederation can roughly be divided in

three regions. The core area is the northern part of Oosterwolde, before the river Archanon joins the Canyon River. Many Aman, old and newborn, came to live here. Most of the festivals are located in this region. The southern part of Oosterwolde lies in the southern part of the canyon, which has more shrubby woods. There are fewer Aman households and towns, because the Aman shy away from the big trade route with their little towns and fortifications along the way. A third region is located to the north of Oosterwolde over the Ice Mountains. It is a coastal larch forest, without towns and only a few festivals. It is sparsely populated with a few remote households of very independent Forest-Aman.

AMAN MONASTERIES

Already since the First Confederation the Aman monasteries came into existence. Almost all of them are located on the eastern flanks of the Afterglow Mountains, where they overlook the Silent Sea and the hills of Oosterwolde behind it. The monasteries are Aman communities based around certain aesthetics. Those communities keep their valleys clear of mortal settlements, the eastern flanks are therefore still in Aman hands.

WESTERWOLD KINGDOMS

The Westerwold Kingdoms cover not only the original Westerwolde valleys, but the whole region west of the Afterglow Mountains. The land is separated between many feudal kingdoms, who live in relative peace with each other. Their main export product is

wool, medicine and amber, which is used in coins to make them valuable. There are almost no great cities, but the many towns on the inner coasts forms the largest trade zone of Aardschaduw. The biggest trading partners are kingdom of Agathea and the city states in the far east. There is a route over land and over sea. Both have their risks.

We can separate the Westerwold kingdoms roughly in six regions. In the northwest lies a hilly country with small forests and grasslands. The culture resounds that of the Scandinavian people. In the northeast lies a dark forest with deep valleys. The region is known as Hogwald. The kingdoms of Hogwald are rather small and sparse. They control the human settlements, but the land is controlled by witch covens that exists out of Aman and mortal witches. Underneath Hogwald lies the similar forested land that was formerly known as Westerwolde, but is now known as the Valleys. The Valleys are more peaceful and the kingdoms strong. Both Hogwald and the Valleys resounds the German culture. West of the Valleys lies the isle which consists of flatlands plough through with tidal channels. The region is separated between two kingdoms. One in the north that resounds the Dutch culture and one in the south that resounds the Belgian culture. In the southeast lies a land that is more gentle with wide and open valleys and forests on the hilltops. The kingdoms in this land resounds more the French culture. On their coast lies the big trade city that is ruled by the guilds. The southwest, a coastal stroke on the brink of a mountain range, is part of the confederation of the Alp Folks.

ALP FOLKS

To the south of the Westerwold kingdoms live the Alp Folks. They try to live up the values of the First Confederation. Each village is a democratic confederate union. The Alp Folks resounds the culture of Austria, Swiss and Italic peoples respectively from north to south. They make mainly cheese and milk.

AGATHEA

Agatheia is the biggest of the three southern kingdoms. The lands of those kingdoms consists of the southern mountain coasts and the many isles that the region is rich. Agatheia lies in the middle. It resounds the Greek culture. The two mountenous isles west of Agatheia form the kingdom of Aragenia. They resound the Spanish culture. On the eastern side of the mountain range lies Tymos, which resound Cypriot culture. Economically Agatheia strives on spices and other luxury products. But it is foremost important as connection point in the sea trade route to supply the ships for the long journey to the east.

MIDDLE

ARCHANON

In order to further built the splendor of some creations of the First Confederation, they had to create their own communities outside the Second Confederation, as to collectively built the splendor without the help of mortals their

communities would be too large to support individualistic confederacy. The Archan found their heaven around the underground lakes that formed the springs of the river Archanon. There they built their first city; Archon. Later on as the community grew many small communities grew around the city. They were connected by graceful tunnels dug in the rocks. Most of those small communities were dug into the eastern cliffs of the steppe plains, although there were others deep beneath were no light dwell. Some caves and caverns were lighted by soft glowing mushrooms of all colors. Those Archan who lived underground for ages could see clearly in that light. The Archan trade with the Second Confederation via the river and two times a year with the Wisent tribes, who pass over there city when they change from their summer location to their winter location or vice versa.

WISENT TRIBES

The Wisent tribes have their origin in the mortal children of the Second Confederation. Instead of making one society for Aman and Men alike, the Aman decided to make two societies after the degenerated First Confederation. This seemed to work and whenever Aman made children they where gladly included in the tribes, as the first children are often stronger and more beautiful than the children of mortals. This transfer might happen two times a year in the great festivals on the steppe above the city of Archon.

The Wisent tribes follow the Wisent through the

seasons. In the winter they are grazing on the southern steppes, in the summer on the northern steppes. Both steppes are split by a deep ravine, the ravine of the river Archanon. In the migration season all the herds of Wisent come together through the gap above the Archanon where the river goes underground. It's at that time that the tribes who are all attached to one herd converge and have their traditional festival. During this festival they also trade with the Archan. The Wisent tribes are a fierce people.

SULFUR ROAD

South of the Silent Sea, between the Afterglow Mountains and the Canyon River, lies Sulfur Road. For the largest part it goes over the beaches of the Silent Sea, avoiding as much as possible the volcanic lands in the south. But as the Silent Sea is a salty dead sea, also there it is not the most pleasant of trips imaginable. There is not much water available and if you can find one it is often poisonous. Close to the pass over the Afterglow Mountains there is a little village of cart repairers. Than it is a long lonely trip to Bridgetown on the Canyon River.

Bridgetown is not only a large bridge over the river, it is also an ancient city and melting pot of mortals, Paja, Aman, Oman and Archan alike. The only one in this regard. It is not clear who runs the city, as around each bridge pier lies a town that is claimed by another obscure faction.

OMAN ROAD

The second part of the great route to the far east (and back) is the Oman Road, named after the oldest Oman city that was named Oman. This city lies in the middle of the Oman Road. From Bridgetown the Oman Road goes to the east on the northern bank of the West Branch until it reached the moors where lies the city Oman. From Oman the road follows the East Branch until it reaches the White River. There a ferry service brings you to the beginning of the pass over the Cristal Range. North of the Oman Road lie the Badlands. It is notorious for Oman bandit gangs. They are the reason that it is wisely to join a caravan to take the Oman Road as a trader. To the south lies a large lowland swamp. Along the road there are some Paja villages, but they exist rather to support the food supply of Oman than to trade on the road or make it safer for that sake.

The city Oman came to existence in the period of the First Confederation. Early on there were Aman who didn't see mortals as equal beings, as they had yet to proof that they are worthy to survive death. Those Aman left early the confederation and erected the city Oman. Later on all Aman with elitist thoughts where called Oman. The city was built by the Paja who where the first servants. Later on the mortal Men became a class between the Oman and Paja, who had a higher status and more privileges. The mortals became citizens of Oman, living in the lower parts, while the Paja had to live in shanty towns around the city and alongside the rivers, hunting and fishing for the city.

CLIFF ROAD

Cliff road begins by the Cristal Range and ends at the Counterglow Mountains. In between the road emerges from the Cristal Range on the Glass Plains, the dead stony plateau that separates the eastern part of the continent from the western part. A dug out path leads the traders down the cliff to the wild lands of Pajapolepo. There between the palm groves and the cliff the road continuous towards the Counterglow Mountains. Although this is Paja land, they don't like too much contact with the traders. Thus also this part is for the most a lonely section of the road.

EAST

COUNTERGLOW MOUNTAINS

The city states lie in Counterglow Mountains. Most of them oversee the Aurora Sea on the east side of the mountain range. These cities came into being during the formation of the Second Confederation. Opposing the egalitarian approach of the Glass Plains these Aman choose to become the highest caste in their newly society, becoming as such the Oman. At the beginning there weren't off course not so much Men, but gradually they filled in the cities made for them around the Oman forts, who were at the beginning very similar to the Aman Monasteries. Each city has its own architecture, character and community laws; but most of the cities have a caste system. The most southern cities have Paja inhabitants, who form the lowest caste. The cities trade mostly between themselves

and with the Blue Empire.

BLUE EMPIRE

The Blue Mountain range lies behind the Aurora Sea, it is a long stretched isle furthest to the east. Also this isle is ruled by the Oman, but in contrast to the city states, the Oman divided themselves in an aristocratic hierarchy with an emperor as head of office. The class system is here replaced by family lines among the mortals who can trace them back to their immortal ancestors. There is a constant strive for power among the bloodlines. They rule the many towns along the east and west coast of the Isle. Although the towns on the west side are geographically better located for trade, it are the towns on the east side which are more culturally sacred to these people. As the Oman who migrated to the Blue Mountains are proud that they migrated furthest east and are thus the most true Oman. The Oman of the Blue Empire see the Oman of the city states philosophically lesser progressive in their elitist endeavor.

PAJAPOLEPO

South of the Glass Plains lie the palm hills of Pajapolepo. This land is inhabited by many Paja tribes who live there since the dawn of time. They live secluded from the rest of the world, although many Paja seek adventure, moving to the Oman cities and hunt more abroad. In contrast to what mortals and Oman think, the Paja are not a lower caste in their own minds. They just have their own society,

providing mortal Men from the cities with fish, wood and hunting meat for whatever they can use in their own society. Men think the Paja work for cheap, but the Paja are a free people, not bound like Men on societal systems.

PIRATE ISLES

Since the trade route over sea was possible between the Westerwold Kingdoms and the Counterglow cities pirates begun to emerge. They occupied the southern Pajapolepo isles, building a few pirate settlements. The Paja and the pirates hate each other. If a pirate wanders to much inland he endangers his life. Although stronger and better equipped than the Paja, the pirates need to be watchful all the time for Paja hunters. The pirates are groups of mostly mortal Men from all over the world

GLASS PLAINS

The Glass Plains are a high stone plateau with for the most part an inhabitable cold smooth surface. But there are many cracks, gorges and regions with natural stone sculptures where plants seem to appear and sources are located. Sometimes there are low lakes and ice cheats on the surface. No one lives here, but it is for some Aman and Oman a favorite travel destination when they want to be truly alone for a time.

