

can acquire better metal weapons through trading and pillaging. The Caleds and the Pygmies don't use any metal.

Sea Travel: The ships of the Dominions are quite primitive and usually sail close to the coast. The biggest vessels are the Tricarnian galleys but the most maneuverable are the Syranthian merchant ships, which can be seen in all parts of the world. The Amazons too are very skilled sailors, and they use a particular type of sail unknown to other cultures.

Warfare: Nowadays, the strongest warriors are Valk mounted archers with armor of boiled leather, composite bone bows and saddles with stirrups. Second best are the fully-armored Syranthian cataphracts, and in third place is the irregular barbarian infantry. The terrible war elephants of Kyros have almost disappeared today and the Iron Phalanxes are reduced to less than ten legions.

HERO'S JOURNAL: LANGUAGES OF THE DREAD SEA DOMINIONS

The common language spoken almost everywhere is Imperial Syranthian.

Almost all lands have a national language and dozens of dialects, but very few are recorded in writing. The major languages of the Dominions are:

Alchemists' Code. The Alchemists of Gis developed this strange language, in truth more of a secret code than a real mother tongue, to protect the secrecy of their discoveries and potions. The Code is taught only to initiates and requires a certain mathematical ability and decryption skills to understand it. So, only characters with Smarts d8 or more can learn this language. It only exists in a written form.

Barbarian Languages. The people of Northeim, the Caleds and the Cairnlords speak three different languages (Northern, Caled, and Cairn Tongue). Out of these three, only the Cairn Tongue is written, using a runic alphabet. Very few people speak the Caled Tongue; a few more know how to interpret their drum language, which is surprisingly complex and well-articulated.

Ivory Savannah Tribes Languages. The Ivory Savannah Tribes speak an impressive number of different dialects that are all quite similar. In game terms only one language is considered: the Savannah Tongue. In certain parts of the Verdant Belt the most advanced tribes speak a bastardized form of Caldeian called Slavers' Tongue, used mainly for contacts with Caldeian slavers. Neither language has a written form.

Imperial Syranthian. Imperial Syranthian, or simply Imperial, is a simple and rather regular alphabetic language, originally from Syranthia. Every player character can speak it, and, depending on her background, might be also able to read and write it.

Tricarnian and Ancient Keronian. Tricarnians and Caldeians are the descendants of the ancient Keronian Empire. They speak a common version of the language in daily life (Tricarnian) but use a ceremonial, ancient language during religious rites and in sorcery (Ancient Keronian). These are considered two different languages.

Lhoban Secrets. The Jadenien speak a mountain dialect, but the secrets of the monks must be preserved with great care, so a "written" form of communication was devised, called Lhoban Secrets. The Secrets are lengths of ropes, with particular knots. Looking at the size of the knots, their distance from each other, and other parameters, the monks can read and communicate their Secrets.

Pygmy. The Pygmies speak their own tongue. It is very difficult to learn this language, due to the isolation of these diminutive people.

Valk. The Valk speak a very weird, totally unique language. Its peculiarity might be due to the very different origins of the steppe nomads, but there is a theory among the Syranthian sages according to which Valk isn't a human language. A disturbing fact supports this theory: demons speak Valk. No one knows whether a written form of this language exists.