

ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 1



Astaroc Cranelson, an Odivshe grandmaster, maintains this large and stately townhouse in the Haldana section of the city of Tashal in Kaldor. The house was built in 632, late in the reign of the first Elendsa monarch, Haldan I. It was intended as the dowry property of Princess Kaisirin Elendsa (613–640), the King's eldest daughter.

ASTAROC CRANELSON

Early Life

At the time the townhouse was built, Princess Kaisirin was betrothed to Sir Taran Pierstel, heir to the Barony of Tonot. Despite the difference in their ages, the two were very much in love, uncommon in aristocratic matches. An overflow of the Kald River in 633 contaminated much of Tashal's water supply, leading to sickness and many deaths, including those of Sir Taran and Princess Mesela, the youngest daughter of King Haldan.

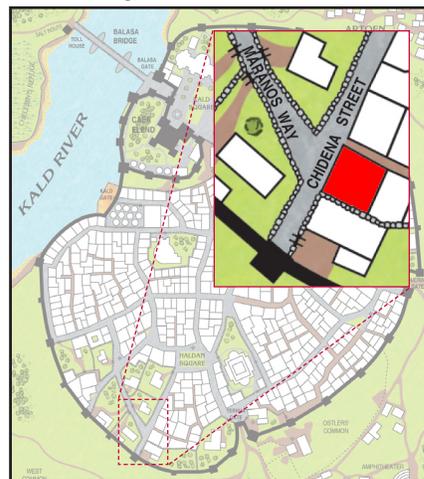
Tongues had been wagging that Princess Mesela had recently had a son out of wedlock, a scandal that devastated the aging king. He refused to let the birth be recorded. Almost inconsolable after the deaths of her intended and her sister, Princess Kaisirin dressed in mourning cloth and took in the child, who had been named Astaroc. Kaisirin succumbed to the bloody flux when Astaroc was seven, leaving him the house and a not inconsiderable sum of money. The king at the time, Haldan II, Astaroc's uncle, confirmed the inheritance but would not recognize the boy or permit him at court. He was sent to live with the priests at the temple of Save-K'nor, who educated him and leased out the property on his behalf. Over time, much of the money found its way into the temple coffers as "donations."

As Astaroc grew, it became clear that he was not suited to Save-K'norian religious life. The priests, however, realized he was not only a genius but that he was brilliant in ways that even they had trouble grasping. They considered Astaroc to have been blessed by Save-K'nor and lamented his lack of vocation, as surely he would have gone far in the Shea-al-Aecor. The temple leaders decided to take him to Melderyn and consult the finest minds in that kingdom as to what ought to be done with this illegitimate royal prodigy.

After being examined by renowned scholars and arcanists, Astaroc found himself the subject of a bidding war that ultimately came down to the Odivshe and the Savoryans, in which the latter prevailed. That the child himself preferred the Odivshe seemed to have little influence on the outcome. Astaroc remained in Cherafir for several years and settled into the routine of a mavari, proving an apt if somewhat dilatory pupil. Frequent episodes of petit mal seizures were at first interpreted as inattentiveness and laziness. However, Astaroc suffered a full-blown epileptic seizure when he attempted to attune to the Savoryan principle. The episode caused a review of his status as a mavari. When any attempt to cast a Savoryan spell resulted in a seizure, the masters of the chantry reluctantly concluded that Astaroc was unsuitable to continue as a Shek-Pvar.

After being expelled from the chantry, Astaroc thought to return to Kaldor, but the Odivshe had not forgotten him. Although wary of risking more seizures, the Odivshe convinced him to try, reasoning their aspect of Pvarism might not affect him in the same way. It turned out to be so, and Astaroc traveled to Chyrefal and joined the chantry there as an advanced

Location of the townhouse in Tashal



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mavari. His experience with the Savoryans in Cherafir had laid the foundation of his Pvaric knowledge and he progressed rapidly and experienced no further seizures of any kind. At first, the Savoryans protested, citing the danger to Astaroc, but when it became clear that his seizures had not repeated in Chyrefal, they withdrew their objections. Nevertheless, his relations with them remained frosty. Around this time, Astaroc adopted the surname "Cranelson," which he explained only as being the legacy of his time in Cherafir.

Satia-Mavari

Upon graduating from the chantry, Astaroc signed aboard a merchant vessel as an able seaman and worked his passage throughout Lythia. He refused all promotions that came his way, including an offer to be made pilot, and spent his time pursuing his art. On these voyages, he began his lifelong habit of keeping a journal, recording his travels in both words and drawings. At first he recorded little more than the various ports visited, but over time began to include details and information about the people, places, and cultures. Eventually, the details about people would take a turn to the scandalous and salacious. Astaroc's sense of humor took a cynical and sardonic turn.

Astaroc made no friends among his fellow crewmen, who considered him not only aloof but odd. At first, they ridiculed him, but he seemed impervious to their taunts. Soon, little aquatic accidents began to happen to the most persistent tormenters, and in each case Astaroc pointedly remarked on his lack of sympathy. Eventually, the crewmen began to shun him instead, which suited Astaroc just fine. If the crew suffered, the ship did not, and its passage was smooth and its journeys swift. The superstitious captain considered the crew to be lucky and took great pains to keep it together, much to the chagrin of those who had hoped to abandon Astaroc on some faraway shore.

Shenava

After a few years, Astaroc had more than met the requirements to be made Shenava and returned to Chyrefal. Having experienced the seafaring life, he decided to return to Kaldor and pursue the further refinement of his art along other avenues. In the nearly two decades that had passed, he had become almost a

stranger to Kaldor. Upon his arrival in Tashal, he learned his house was on long-term lease to none other than Prince Torastra. Although Torastra had accepted his mother as queen, he found that Caer Elendsa was not big enough for the two of them. When Astaroc met with the mercantyle clan that had handled his affairs in his absence, he discovered he remained quite wealthy and that the rent produced by the house allowed him the freedom to do as he pleased. He began a peregrination around Kaldor, exploring and learning about the kingdom of his birth. He also took on his first mavari, Terrell of Chart.

While traveling Kaldor and beyond, Astaroc learned of a chantry at Inbernel that had been built to take advantage of a pond with unusual properties. A daughter house of Chyrefal, the chantry was small and largely unknown. He joined the chantry and spent the next several decades there. During a trip to Melderyn, he discovered a promising young mavari named Cedric of Kalbin at a small chantry in Thay that had come under a cloud. He took him back to Kaldor as his second apprentice.

Viran

Astaroc did not seek the honor of becoming a viran, it sought him. He had not even been aware that a petition was circulating on his behalf until the delegation from Chyrefal arrived to inform him of his elevation. Characteristically, Astaroc simply thanked them and returned to his laboratory and his apprentice, Garth of Kerrina.

Some years later, when Terrell of Chart returned to Inbernel, Astaroc realized to his horror that his former mavari had as a shenava become not much more than a bureaucrat. Terrell was an organization man with an approach to the art that was formulaic and sterile. Finding him a stranger and having no interest in fighting for the leadership of the chantry, Astaroc decided he could no longer abide there. He had already accepted his fourth apprentice, Jilsene of Sarnro, and when he departed, he took her with him to Tashal. There Astaroc found his house rented by a mercenary company, the Blue Boars, and used connections he had almost forgotten he had to break the lease. The mercenary captain at first defied the strange old man but several inexplicable incidents changed his mind.

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Astaroc Cranelson



Current Situation

Having lived in Tashal for several years and reached an age where further travels were impractical, Astaroc has settled into the combined rhythms of his art and the city of his birth. King Miginath, like his predecessors, does not recognize Astaroc as a member of the royal family; as such, he is not entitled to bear arms. Lady Cheselyne Hosath, on the other hand, does recognize him and always invites him to her parties, which he often attends. His curmudgeonly presence plays well against her persistent elegance. Astaroc finds the custom of selecting an annual color absurd and has threatened (only within the hearing of other Shek-Pvar) to turn the Kald to the color of the year. Lady Hesena, wife of Prince Conwan Elendsa, finds Astaroc intriguing and would like to know him better. His role in the event of the death of the king is unknown.

Occasionally, Satia-Mavari seek out Astaroc for advice, and sometimes more. He receives them with ill grace, although this can be tempered if the fledgling brings seed cakes, a particular favorite of the Viran. He is free with advice, often of a critical nature and rarely to the liking of the seeker. However, he has never provided a spell or artifact, believing to do so violates the spirit of the student's Satia-Mavari journeys. Visitors of more exalted status are infrequent but always welcomed. Astaroc does not meet often with the other Shek-Pvar in the city and has never even set foot within the chantry of the Guild of Arcane Lore.

HårnMaster Character Profile

Name: Astaroc Cranelson **Race/Sex:** Human/Male
Occupation: Shek-Pvar Viran **Born:** 2 Nuzyael 633 (*Lado/Ulandus*)

Appearance: Age 87, 5' 11", 150 lb, light frame (size 6), handsome appearance, fair complexion, gray hair, blue eyes

STR 08 **AGL** 11 **SML** 07 **WIL** 17 **CML** 14
STA 15 **EYE** 12 **VOI** 10 **AUR** 18 **END** 13
DEX 15 **HRG** 10 **INT** 19 **MOR** 12 **MOV** 11

Medical/Psyche: Epilepsy, Mild (resist on WIL×5, or WIL×1 when triggered by Savoryan activity)

Physical Skills: CLIMBING 13/52, Dancing 12/60, JUMPING 10/40, STEALTH 13/65, THROWING 12/48, Riding 15/75, Swimming 17/85

Communication Skills: AWARENESS 10/60, INTRIGUE 18/72, ORATORY 14/42, RHETORIC 12/48, SINGING 10/30, Mental Conflict 17/102

Languages: Hårnic 15/100, Ivinian 15/60, Emelan 15/75
Scripts: Lakise 15/100, Runic 15/85

Religion: Ritual: Save-K'nor 16/32; Piety: 29

Combat Skills: INITIATIVE 15/75, UNARMED 13/52, Dagger 14/56, Staff 11/33

Craft Skills: Astrology 19/76, Brewing 10/40, Drawing 13/78, Fishing 13/78, Folklore 17/102, Heraldry 15/45, Mathematics 18/72, Piloting 18/54, Seamanship 14/82, Weatherlore 14/56

Armour/Weapons: Cloth robe; Leather belt and shoes. Dagger. Cloak if inclement.

Money/Valuables: 3d6×10 pence, Odivshe focus (staff) and artifacts at GM discretion.

Other Equipment: Belt purse

Load: 9 lb **Encumbrance/FR:** 1/1

Weapons	Wt	WQ	AML	DML	HM	B	E	P
Dagger	1	15	61	61	•	2	3	6

Location	Armour Layers	AQ	B	E	P	F
Skull		•	•	•	•	•
Face		•	•	•	•	•
Neck		•	•	•	•	•
Shoulder	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Upper Arm	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Elbow	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Forearm	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Hand	•	•	•	•	•	•
Thorax	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Abdomen	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Hip	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Groin	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Thigh	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Knee	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Calf	Cloth	S	2	2	2	2
Foot	Leather	S	4	6	5	5

Ritual Invocations and Psionics: None

Convocations: Neutral 18/112, Odivshe 19/119 (☆☆☆☆), Savorya 18/54

Spells: All Neutral to level VI; all Odivshe to Level VII; others at GM discretion but no Savoryan. Has all spells of his own creation (see following pages).

ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 4

GROUND FLOOR

The townhouse is of an imposing size, much larger than Astaroc has ever needed. Although selling it would bring a considerable sum, Astaroc has never forgotten his aunt, Princess Kaisirin, and the generosity of her bequest. Additionally, the independent income it provides him with has freed him to devote himself almost exclusively to his art. The building plus lot is worth approximately £190 but is assessed for tax purposes at far less, enjoying privileged status with the exchequer due to its original royal grant.

Marhet of Lak, a litigant from Tashal's Eastside neighborhood, manages the property on Astaroc's behalf. He hired Redlin of Kelaty as chamberlain and has insisted that any lessee retain the full staff that Redlin manages. In this way, Marhet has protected the long-term value of the property. Astaroc is inclined to treat the staff as he treats the furniture, but Redlin understands their job is to make sure the Viran's daily needs do not interfere with his scholarly pursuits.

Astaroc has allowed Marhet to rent out a room or two and even space in the dormitory to carefully screened tenants, thus providing some supplemental income. The only current tenant is Sir Telberan Brailour, a cousin of Lady Peresta Bastune [*Tashal*, H3]



Sir Telberan Brailour

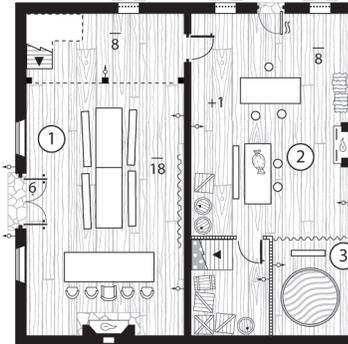
Shield: Per Saltire Vert and Sable, an Eagle Rising Wings Elevated and Adorsed, Proper

Motto: *To the Bold, the Glory*

Registry: Holy Oak, 714

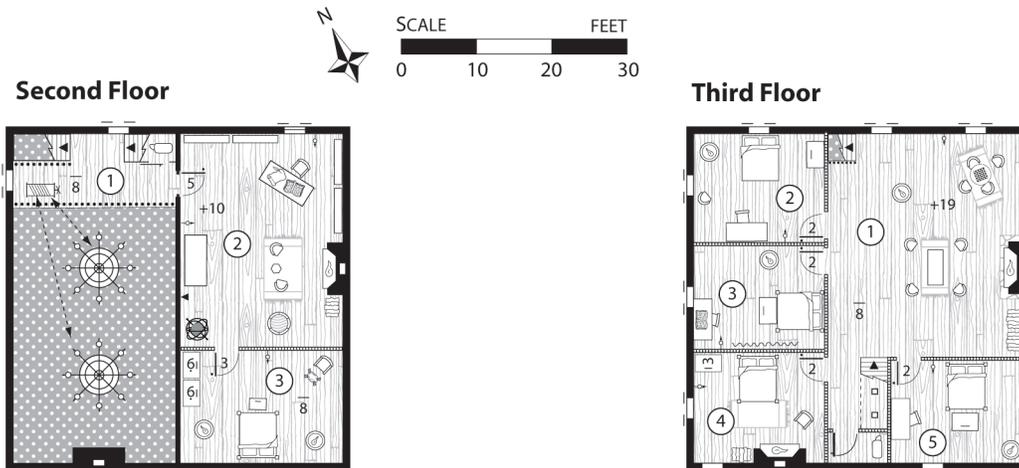


Ground Floor



- [1] **Hall:** The main entrance to the house opens into a large and impressive hall. Astaroc rarely eats here, although his visitors are permitted to wait here until he is ready to see them. Lady Cheselyne, who disdains this edifice only slightly less than Caldeth House, has suggested to Astaroc more than once that his hall was built for entertaining. His answer is always a gruff “don’t have the time.” Other members of the household, including the servants, dine here daily. A huge tapestry depicting two sorrowful lovers adorns the east wall. Only Astaroc recalls that it was commissioned by Princess Kaisirin and is of herself and Sir Taran.
- [2] **Kitchen:** The culinary needs of the household are not great, as Astaroc is indifferent to his meals and consumes just enough nourishment to sustain his rail-thin body. As is common, the cook, Jullila of Kelaty, is married to the chamberlain. She oversees a small kitchen staff and the acquisition of foodstuffs. Much of the daily fare is given to the urban poor; the staff have noticed the Viran ignores food that isn’t freshly prepared and have begun to follow suit for themselves.
- [3] **Bath:** When Astaroc moved into the townhouse, he ordered a massive tub to be installed in the area where the servants ate. He bathes daily and initially shocked the servants with his unconscious display of nudity. He frequently spends long periods of time in this room in arcane pursuits, and woe betide the servant who draws the curtain aside while he is doing so.

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SECOND FLOOR

The rooms on this floor have always been the exclusive preserve of the master or mistress of the house.

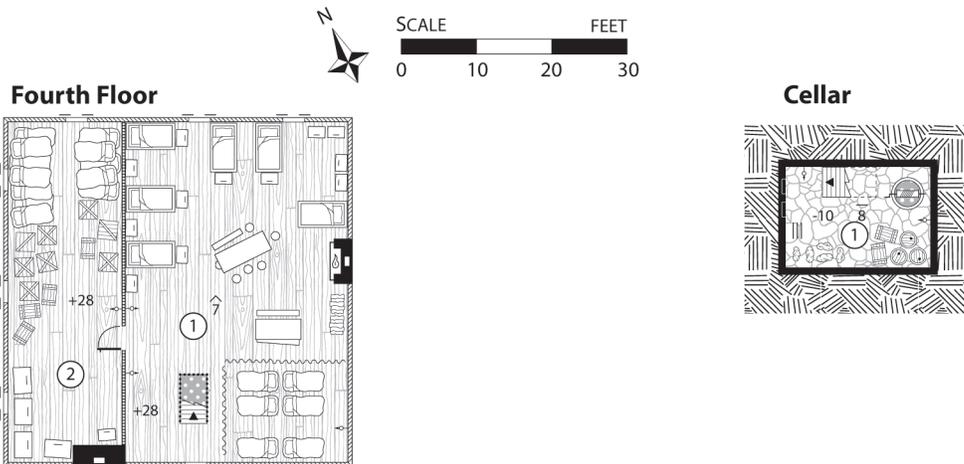
- [1] **Gallery:** The winch raises or lowers the two chandeliers simultaneously. The garderobe is reserved for Astaroc's use; other members of the household are not expected to tarry in this place or make noise as they pass by.
- [2] **Study:** This room has been used by most previous residents as a private solar, but Astaroc has converted it into a study. The entire room is an Odvishe sanctum. Books and scrolls line the shelves, the desk is covered with whatever Astaroc is currently working on, and a side table contains curiosities and memorabilia from his travels. In the southwest corner stands an astroglobe representing the Kethiran solar system. A peephole nearby allows for discreet spying on the hall. In the southern portion of the room is Astaroc's font, a basin capable of holding more than 160 gallons of liquid. Copies of Astaroc's journals and grimoire are hidden in the floorboards under the astroglobe.
- [3] **Bedchamber:** On the nights that Astaroc does not fall asleep in his study, he often falls asleep while reading in the chair here; it is rare for him to make it to the bed. The chamberlain will sometimes steal in to cover him with a blanket but the maids are never allowed here or in the study without the chamberlain present.

THIRD FLOOR

This floor was originally the top level of the house. When Prince Torastra leased the building, he decided it was too small and had a fourth floor added for servants' quarters. The third floor was renovated to house his retainers and companions. The steep staircase from the second floor was not changed and remains a bane to those of above-average height.

- [1] **Solar:** This warm and inviting room is a comfortable retreat for the household.
- [2] **Guest:** Astaroc has few guests, but those he does are lodged here.
- [3] **Apprentice:** Jilsene of Sarnro occupies this well-appointed chamber. A native of Qualdris, Jilsene has only recently attuned to the Odvishe convocation and is still unsure of herself. She spends most of her time in study; Astaroc sometimes forgets about her.
- [4] **Sir Telberan Brailour:** Officially, Sir Telberan represents his clan's interests in Tashal, but they are so slight that he rarely acts in that capacity. Sir Telberan is a martial figure and he participates in every tournament possible. The chamberlain has reduced his rent with the understanding that he act as something of a guard, but actions of this sort have never been necessary.
- [5] **Chamberlain:** Redlin of Kelaty manages the household with the practiced ease that comes from long experience; he and his wife have lived in the townhouse for more than a decade. Lately, Redlin has become concerned at Astaroc's advancing age; with no heir, the house reverts to the Crown. He and his staff could be turned out with nowhere to go. He is bracing himself to raise the issue with Marhet of Lak.

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FOURTH FLOOR

As this level was of later construction, the walls are of wattle and daub instead of the solid stone of the rest of the building. The slate roof above is pitched at an unusually shallow angle and in the winter, snow can be heard sliding off the roof in sheets. The timber support beams for the roof are very thick and the internal structure is open. The denizens of the top floor have a constant battle against the bats who find the beams a natural habitat; even with the windows closed, the bats seem to find a way in and out. On the plus side, there are virtually no insects on this floor, but the servants find that of little comfort.

- [1] **Dormitory:** Shortly after this floor was added in the time of Prince Torastra, a large number of bunk beds were installed for his retinue of men-at-arms. The beds remain but are quite old and little maintained; some of the upper bunks are unstable. Although the household servants have pallets in the southeast corner, most prefer to sleep in the more comfortable lower bunks. The staff enjoys the relative privacy afforded on this floor. One of them, Grelina, a Karejian, has run away from her abusive husband in Mason Way and is terrified he or her relations will find her. The top bunk of the eastmost bed is unusable and a haven for bats. Astaroc has never been up here.
- [2] **Storage:** When the bunks were added, the men-at-arms' pallets were haphazardly stored in this room. The room now contains numerous crates and chests of all sorts and sizes. No one really knows what is in here, but it is all from long-forgotten tenants; none of this belongs to Astaroc.

CELLAR

- [1] **Storage:** The cellar is used for the storage of foodstuffs, especially those benefiting from the cool environment. Ale is acquired from Galopea's Feast across the alley and the excess is stored here. The well provides all the water needed by the household. The servants have noticed that the cellar is remarkably free of vermin, especially near the well. The more perceptive of them are wondering if it has something to do with the Viran and his activities.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Murder Most Foul: There are rumors of lovers being murdered in the city of Tashal. Grelina suspects her husband, Torres, is responsible. Bodies have been found in the Peonian Crypt [*Tashal*, G9a], on the grounds of the temple of Halea [G10], and some outside the city walls. The killing style is of the old country. She is afraid to go to Redlin and the Viran is out of the question. Her brothers-in-law, Janni or Casca, might know something but the masons protect each other. Is there anyone who can help?

Inns Are So Expensive: The PCs hear that a room or two may be available for rent in an imposing edifice in Haldana. It's a better bargain than living in inns all the time, but that old man is both strange and surly...

It's in the Attic, Trust Me: Halime of Falesh [H16] wants to recover an item a former associate stole from him. He has just learned that the thief sojourned in Astaroc's townhouse. The item has to be there somewhere, perhaps the attic. Halime is looking for someone to retrieve it, and he doesn't care how.

ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 7



ZEPHYR OF ASTAROC (II)

This spell fosters movement of air by cooling an area CSI×CSI yards, causing the warmer air to rise away and the cooler to flow into the vacated space. As the cool air drops, it warms, repeating the cycle and causing the continually cooling air to flow sideways. The process begins once the spell is cast, but the effect may take some time to manifest as wind depending on the amount of air being cooled. Also, the effect may continue past the normal spell duration if the system is large enough to become self-sustaining, i.e., it becomes a normal weather pattern.

Bonus Effects

- ML51+** Caster can control the speed of the airflow
- ML71+** Range and Area become CSI×10 yards if the caster chooses
- ML 91+** Caster may control the effect sufficiently to direct the airflow
- ML101+** Caster may reverse the effect to reduce airflow

Time: 15–CSI minutes

Range: CSI yards

Duration: Variable



ASTAROC'S FUMBLE (II)

This enchantment increases the amount of sweat an individual's hands create. The basic spell requires an added 2d6 (MS) or 4d6 (CS) to any roll associated with DEX. It will cause an immediate fumble roll if the target is holding anything. At the conclusion of the spell, the target will be ravenously thirsty.

Bonus Effects

- ML71+** Range becomes CSI feet
- ML81+** The fumble is also applied to AGL, causing a stumble roll

Time: 10–CSI minutes

Range: Touch

Duration: CSI minutes



ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 8



CLOUDS OF CRANELSON (III)

This enchantment designates a human-sized being or object as a “particle” for the purposes of cloud formation. Water vapor will immediately begin coalescing around the particle and, within seconds, a small rain cloud will have formed. The cloud obstructs visibility into or out of it. If the caster chooses, the cloud will stay with a moving being. With CS, two such particles may be designated.

Bonus Effects

- ML61+** Caster can alter the movement of the cloud to a new vector and the cloud will continue along this new path unless altered again
- ML91+** Caster can now designate $CSI \div 2$ particles (MS) or CSI particles (CS)

Time: 15–CSI minutes
Range: CSI yards
Duration: CSI rounds



ASTAROC'S RIVER (III)

This spell establishes control over any flowing waterway, such as a river's current, within CSI (MS) or $CSI \times 10$ (CS) yards. The caster can increase or decrease the river's flow by 1 league per hour within the area of effect. The edges of the effect react normally to the spell's alteration of the current (i.e., an increase in speed results in waves).

Bonus Effects

- ML71+** The effect moves with the caster
- ML91+** The control extends to other aspects of the river, allowing the caster to manipulate the waves into shapes
- ML101+** The caster may alter the river's appearance to reflect other properties such as ice, vapor, color, or movement

Time: 15–CSI minutes
Range: CSI yards
Duration: CSI minutes



ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 9



SEAL OF CRANELSON (IV)

Using a small vial of water (one ounce) as a seed, this spell can be used to seal any two contiguous surfaces such as a doorway, box and lid, or the like. The basic spell is of variable duration, but becomes permanent with CS. The two surfaces become bonded together and are impenetrable unless dispelled by a more powerful enchantment or the physical destruction of the two surfaces.

Bonus Effects

- ML71+** Surfaces do not need to be fully contiguous but only touch at two points
- ML91+** Duration is always permanent

Time: 15–CSI minutes

Range: Touch

Duration: Variable



ASTAROC'S ELMITHRIC TRANSFORMATION (VI)

This spell transforms the caster's physical body into an Elmithri, a water sprite. Attributes do not change but AGL doubles for the purposes of swimming. The caster gains all other abilities of an Elmithri and becomes aware of all such creatures with CSI yards, if any. The spell requires that the caster have previously encountered an Elmithri. The caster's clothing and belongings do not transform. The caster may cast no other spells during the effect.

Bonus Effects

- ML81+** The spell may be cast on a willing subject
- ML91+** Clothing and belongings transform as well
- ML101+** Caster may cast other spells while transformed

Time: 15–CSI minutes

Range: Touch

Duration: CSI hours



ASTAROC'S TOWNHOUSE 10



ASTAROC'S DEWY DOOM (VI)

This incantation raises the moisture content of the air in an area to its absolute humidity. The area of effect (AoE) is equal to $CSI \times CSI$ feet. Depending on the ambient temperature, this spell may physically manifest as fog (colder) or haze (hotter). In direct sunlight, the increased water vapor may also result in uncanny visual clarity within the AoE (treat as +2 EYE).

All those within the AoE will find it increasingly difficult to breathe and move due to the super-saturation of water vapor, becoming bedewed as their bodies fail to either perspire or metabolize excess water. They will temporarily lose 3 points off of STA and AGL (6 points with CS) per round. At zero, the character will fall unconscious (STA) or be immobilized (AGL). If both reach zero, then the character must roll 3d6 (5d6 with CS) every minute versus END. Failure results in death as the lungs can no longer extract sufficient oxygen from the saturated air. If a person is removed from the AoE or the spell ends, STA and AGL return to their normal number at a rate of 3 points per minute.

At the conclusion of the spell, excess water in the air releases as a brief but intense rain storm within the AoE. The spell requires a water source as a seed.

Bonus Effects

ML91+ Caster can set AoE up to $CSI \times CSI$ yards.
Caster is now immune to the effect

Time: 15–CSI minutes

Range: CSI yards

Duration: CSI minutes



ASTAROC'S DESICCATION (VIII)

This spell removes all moisture from a living target. At the spellcaster's option, the moisture may be collected into a receptacle or evaporated into the surrounding air. The target may attempt to Dodge or employ an arcane defense (greater than or equal success needed). Determine hit location normally. If the caster manages to touch the target's flesh, the spell will drain 3d6 (MS) or 6d6 (CS) percent of the target's bodily moisture and a special penalty equal to the percentage of moisture drained. If the percentage exceeds $STA \times .5\%$, the target will fall unconscious; beyond $STA \times 1.5\%$, the target will die. Chemical residue and clothing or possessions will remain if the target succumbs.

Time: 15–CSI minutes

Range: Touch

Duration: Immediate

