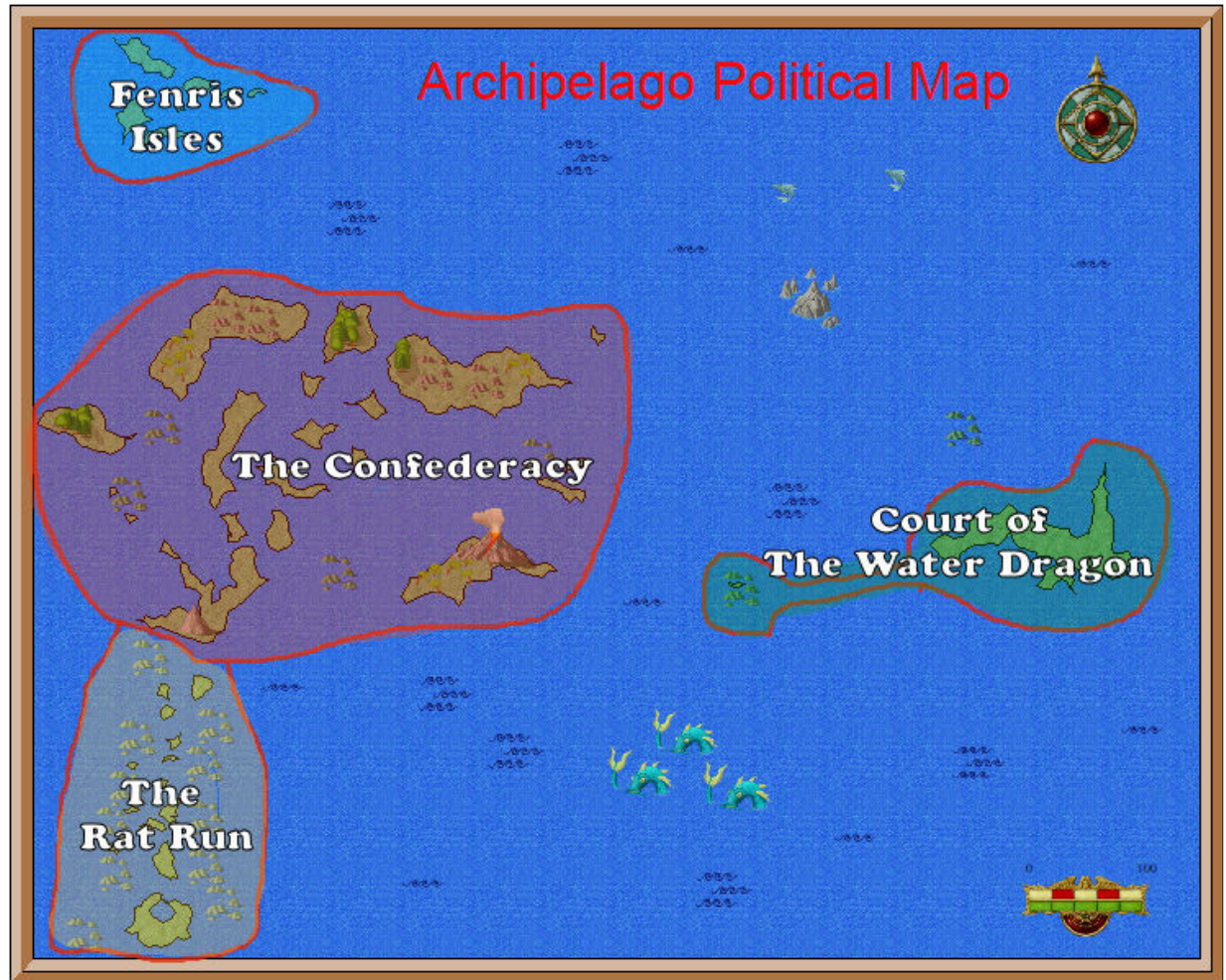


Archipelago



Map valid AU25

(updated 28-8-2022)

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Archipelago is a series of four broad sets of islands, each populated by a major seafaring culture.

GEOGRAPHY

The islands of Archipelago are a semi-tropical paradise with, for the most part, storm-free waters. The Southern group of islands is the Rat Run. This area is well known for its difficult waters which make it difficult to navigate, with many sandbanks and reefs, and can be fatal during the rougher winter seas. This obviously makes the islands a haven for all manner of Pirates and vagabonds.

North of the Rat Run is the biggest group of Islands which make up The Confederacy, to the west are the Fenris isles and to the east the The Court of the Water Dragon.

POLITICS

The Confederacy is an area of law and order with each island having its own Governor. Each Governor has theoretical equal status in the Confederacy, although the larger and more important islands and towns tend to carry more weight. Governors don't interfere with each other's islands, although they do come together to deal with common problems. These normally boil down to the Rat Run and managing the pirates hidden there. Although in recent times there has been an uncommon increase in co-operation, largely due to the Demon War. The Governors collect taxes to pay for their Navies which in turn protect their merchant shipping, which is the backbone of Confederacy wealth, from the Pirates which sail out from the Rat Run.

At the far end of The Rat Run is Whitewater, a city run by the Mercantile Guilds. These guilds have great influence in the Confederacy as well several other places in the world. The Guilds ensure everyone does their part and even enforce what little law the Rat Run itself possesses.

The Fenris Islands are a different political structure again. They have little to do with the other three island groups. Each of their islands may have one or more Jarls (Local Lord) which control 1 or more long ships, a small village and heap of Thanes (Warriors). The Jarls all bow to the King of the Fenris Islands.

The last island group is The Court of the Water Dragon, one big island in reality, the Court is where Triad Gangs enjoy freedom from rule of law of the Thunders. They are mainly traders but have many strong links and dealings with the Thunders and Whitewater. The 101 dragons as they are called rule the Court of the Water Dragon on behalf of the long-absent Dragon itself. While there probably not actually 101 dragons, each dragon is the head of Triad Gang.

HISTORY

The main history of Archipelago lies in the history of Whitewater, the island at the end of the Rat Run. This was, for many years, the domain of the pirate group the Sea Beggars and ruled by Admiral Steiner. Steiner was a horror-possessed pirate, who dealt harshly with all those that lived in Archipelago. He was eventually killed for the benefit of all and what was left of the Sea beggars became the Crimson Brotherhood. Along with Triads they ruled for while until the Guilds gradually established control and a sort of order.

Little if anything is known of the time before Admiral Steiner, although it appears he was around for more than a few centuries.

A few decades before AU0 the Jade Empire of the Thunders tried to invade Archipelago setting up first the Island of Jade which is now the Court of the Water of Dragon. The main port is still called the Port of Jade, some names do not die easily. The Jade Empire failed to accurately assess the resolve of the Guilds and the seafaring skills of the Archipelagan people.

Just before the AU 0 the date the worlds came together to form one world, known as The Shards World, the Shard of Union crashed into Archipelago sinking many of the Fenris Isles and killing many with a great tidal wave. Those that could, fled and became a refugee population.

As the world recovered and settled, some of the Fenris islands have emerged from the deep and been repopulated.

REGIONS

RAT RUN

The Rat Run is mainly a collection of small island that are, for the most part, too small to be inhabited or provide farmland, fresh water or anything substantial. For that reason, they are good hideaways for pirates to bury their treasure.

There are, however, a couple of exceptions. These are the island of Whitewater and Bedlam Isle

Whitewater is, by far, the largest island in the Rat Run and is a centre of commerce for Archipelago. It contains one of the seven core portals: a portal large enough to move armies and ships.

The Port of Whitewater sits in the Bay of Pearls. It has grown immensely from a time when you could only get to it by wicker baskets hauled up the cliff slope. Now, steps and jetties - and indeed stilted housing - have extended the port considerably. It is still only approachable through the mouth of the bay. This is protected by a massive iron chain which can be raised to prevent ships getting close in time of need. The northern slopes and reefs prevent access from other directions. The island is full of caves and hidden places, it is and was the perfect place to hide from trouble.

Whitewater has been, for many decades, known as home of the Guilds. It is where all guild headquarters and leaders are based. The Guilds rule and look after Whitewater as a plutocratic council and it is the base from which their, mostly, positive influence on the whole world spreads.

The Guilds are not always what they seem, especially to an outsider. For instance: the Upholstery Guilds may teach how to cover furniture in padding, but its primary purpose is healing, stitching people back together. This stems from times where certain professions were deemed unseemly or illegal and thus a cover guild was formed. Not all guilds work at these cross-purposes, the Bakers - for example - make Bread and little else.

Recently much of the Port was attacked by invading forces. Buildings were burnt to the ground and many killed. The efficiency of Whitewater is such, however, that within days it was up and running again and within a matter of weeks, temporary guild buildings erected and now no visitor could easily find evidence of an attack.

Things have changed though. Little Salem, home to the Salamite refugees, still remains creating friction with the guilds. They have continued to claim independence from the guilds selling at discounted rates and trading with Salemite ships before the Guilds get to buy the goods.

That is not all, actions by various groups have also upped Triad involvement in Whitewater. They are refused guild status but make deals to keep just inside Guild law, but everyone knows only a small proportion of the profits they make are reported. Little Salem and the Triads compete for the same unpopular wharves, the same low rent housing and warehousing and the same shops to sell their wares. Conflict is never far away.

Bedlam Isle is the only other large inhabited island in the Rat Run. It is a fully established outpost for the Upholsters Guild. The isles are used for a centre for rehabilitation of those with poor mental health. Over recent years a vast amount of money from an unknown source has turned the once small facility into a full scale area with some of the best mental care offered to its patients. The facility itself is enclosed by a wall to protect the area should anyone wish to try and attack it, and to prevent its charges wandering off of course...

CONFEDERACY ISLES

The Confederacy Islands are similar in culture to the Spanish Main. The main centre has always been the Port of Saints, although recent times have seen it decimated by Demons and occupied by the White Hand. A battle with the Confederacy Navy and Marine forces which lasted over a year has seen the port retaken although still a ruin. Governor Medinacelli has moved back in a symbolic gesture, declaring that the Port will be rebuilt back to what it was. The Governor's Mansion was one of the few buildings still standing, although little but its walls remain.

The Isle of Port Rabel is next major island with Port Rabel as its main town. This island was controlled by the Crimson Brotherhood until AU25 when it was retaken by Confederacy and its allies.

Port Maracabo is worth a mention, since it contains a stable portal which are prized assets.

The Governors recently joined their Navies into one combined force under control of the Admiral in Chief to make them more efficient at protecting their most vital resource: The vast array of merchant ships that trade through its ports and take its goods of cotton, tobacco, bananas, tea and sugar around the world.

Most of the population follow the Vaudon. A religion who priest mambo or Houngan have a big influence on the population, easily equal to The Guilds. While the Governor's claim rule, their trade deals, their wealth and the land they have has little influence on the day to day thinking and life of the average person in the Confederacy. The Governors set the direction of travel, but the Guilds and the Houngan have more impact on *how* people live their lives.

FENRIS ISLES

Most of the Fenris Isles were lost along with almost their entire populations a year or so before the Union of the Shards. Those few people that remain have relocated to the islands closest to Union or are now seeking what fortune they can on the high seas.

The Fenris Isles are known for their wild Berserkers said to be invulnerable to fire and steel. They prefer hand to hand combat and the only missile weapons they tended to use were thrown spears and axes.

The Fenrisians are said to come from a much more northerly climate, home of the Sea Wolves coastal raiders and their current culture is based around their long ships, fighting and their warrior gods.

Many Fenrisians now travel the world as mercenaries fighting for the highest bidder or for the greatness of the fight. Those that remain fish, tend the land, look after the homes while their warriors are away earning hopefully bigger prizes or glorious death in the heat of battle.

COURT OF THE WATER DRAGON

The Court of the Water Dragon is, at first glance, the Thunders in miniature. However those thoughts will quickly dissipate as with minimal interference from the authorities or the ubiquitous red tape seen in the Thunders or indeed other Guild Towns or the Confederacy Isle, they thrive. Cross pollination of culture sees an eclectic mix of Thunderese and Archipelagan style at work.

Trading in silks, jade and spices as well as more illicit substances illegally brought out of the Thunders, they offer many of the things the peoples of the Thunders like to keep for themselves.

They are ruled by the Triads and you would be hard pressed to find any that don't belong or have some affiliation to a Triad Gang, those that don't probably don't survive long.

SEA OF THE WATER SIDHE

Much of Archipelago is sea and this is inhabited by many intelligent creatures: the Water Sidhe and The Sutekh being the main ones. The seas have massive influence on all the culture of the region, they are trade routes, fishing stocks, with riches such as pearls, whale oil, and unique corals to name a few. The seas are place that add much to wealth of the continent, they are in truth what makes it tick.

RACES/CREATURES

Below is bit of information on the creatures and races of Archipelago, it is by no means complete or accurate.

Playable Races: players who choose to play a characters with Archipelagan origin can pick from these races,; Humans, Rakken, Water Sidhe and Vauden Zombies

Any other race listed are for Archipelagan background information.

HUMANS

Humans make up 95% of population of Archipelago.

THE RAKKEN

Rakken from Archipelago are a playable race, they follow the rules for beastkin but should be played with rat like twist.

The Rakken that players can play do not start with the poisonous claws, bites and other diseases that non playable ones may possess. They are much more human-like, they are a bloodline race, so most player Rakken were once full human.

The Rakken hide away in the gutters around all the islands of Archipelago, they are the scum under most people's feet, they are nervous around people and prefer to form and hunt in packs. Even those that were once wealthy before they changed gradually lose interest in their appearance and fail to notice how filthy they have become.

THE WATER SIDHE

The Sidhe seems to be the indigenous race of Archipelago. Sidhe come in many different forms: some are almost human-like, whilst others stand little more than three inches tall. Some have fragile wings whilst others have skin with hard tough scales and limbs as thick as a man's waist. They are a quiet secretive race that live on floating cities constructed from ancient items taken from deep below the waves. It is said that they know much lore lost to the mists of time. They are at war with their eternal enemy the Sutekh.

In recent times little has been seen of Water Sidhe and those that are seen seem to be lone individuals with little knowledge of what has happened to floating cities. Those that do say anything say they believe the war with Sutekh was lost and their homes destroyed. Others speak of the great veiling, or the secret, some blame the Mari-Ann Foundation for their problems.

The Water Sidhe are a playable race see the character creation rules

VAUDEN ZOMBIES

Vauden Zombies can be a playable in Archipelago.

Vauden Zombies are not like “normal” zombies. Vauden zombies are not slow, in fact they are just as intelligent & skilled as the living. They are also created from willing followers that surrender their normal lives to a Houngan or Mambo as their servant. They, by the use of potions, herbs and magic preserve their bodies at the point of death and prevent their spirits from crossing over into the spirit realm.

Vauden are effectively dead so can only normally be killed by decapitation or total mutilation of their bodies. But they are not immortal and have their own problems: they need the regular maintenance from Mambo/Houngan's potions and magic to stop their bodies rotting.

Players wanted to play a Vauden Zombie should request the special heritage information and work with another player willing to be their Houngan/Mambo master.

THE SUTEKH.

The Sutekh are not a playable race.

This is an ancient race, perhaps older than the Water Sidhe although you won't get to speak to one to find out. They are known by many names: Sea Demons; Death from Below; Deep Ones just to name a few.

It is thought they live in twisted coral cities deep below the waves. They are a great threat to sea traffic and many a boat has been lost to a Sutekh attack.

Like the Sidhe they come in many forms ranging from toad like humans to huge squid headed beasts.

It is fortunate that they can only live on land for short periods of time or they would have easily over run all of the other cultures by now. There are tales told of how the Sutekh breed with captured females and swap the offspring with human children in the dead of night but these are just stories to frighten children... aren't they?.

THE BAKA.

The Baka are not a playable race.

The Baka were once the servants of Loa, until the Loa were lost at the time of the joining in AU0. Since then, they have survived by making deals with humans, mainly the Vauden who worshipped the Loa.

The Baka are magical beings that look entirely human at first glance. They are capable of great things when they wish. They are also tricksters and schemers, although deals with them once made are binding and will not be broken.

The recent return of the Loa has seen many a Baka lose its independence, so making a deal with them where a Loa's wishes may also be involved as well is much more difficult.

To find a Baka, find a Houngan or Mambo, they normally have a favoured Baka contact.

COSTUME

THE RAT RUN AND THE CONFEDERACY MERCHANT SAILORS

The 'Pirate' look is universal and of course, those who are dressed in a typically piratical fashion are not necessarily 'pirates' in the true sense of the word.

Those who might dress in a style reminiscent of pirates are often legitimate merchant sailors, privateers and self made men as well as genuine Pirates.

At its most basic, a pair of loose trousers or breeches, a large oversize shirt and a sock hat or bandanna will give you the proper nautical look. From there you can add a tri-corn hat, eye patch, frock coat, bucket boots, long waistcoat, lots of black powder pistols, cutlass, frilly shirt, hook, peg leg and even a parrot - provided you have a suitable physrep of course



THE REST OF THE CONFEDERACY ISLES

Costume is typified by late 18th Century European fashions, but ex-patriots of other Continents can also be found here, drawn by the opportunities presented by the Confederacy's bustling shipping network.

Fashions currently favoured vary widely, but appearance is governed by chosen profession and background.

Typically, those who can afford it would opt for frilly, ostentatious shirts, coats dripping buttons, piping and trim and full length, fitted dresses for ladies of fashion. Wigs are always an option for formal occasions, whilst breeches and stockings are still popular amongst some islands gentlemen.

The common man or soldier might favour trousers or perhaps a Napoleonic style jacket if they can afford it. The lowest classes and working folk will of course wear whatever they can lay their hands on.



THE VAUDEN

The Vauden are the mortal followers of the Loa, they tend to whiten their face & blacken around their eyes, they like dreadlocks in their hair. They wear mainly black but always a with big splash of colour. They like to wear lots of jewelry mainly of bones and other body parts as wells old top hats.



FENRIS ISLES

The people of the Fenris Isles and their remaining displaced population are not dissimilar to Vikings or ancient Norse of Earth history.

Their menfolk typically favour big beards, furs, pelts, belts, pouches, drinking horns, coloured shirts, cross-strapped leggings or trews with leather vambraces and armour when combat is expected.

Their weapons of choice are axes, spears and large round or oval shields.

Women favour loose fitting dresses or long tunics worn over trews and belted at the waist.



THE WATER SIDHE

As well as Faerie Water Sidhe can be found in numbers in the Archipelago region where they live on large floating islands. Water Sidhe have pale skin with possibly a hint of blue, a colour they favour in their choice of garments, mixing various shades together with hues of blue in layered but lightweight clothes which will not hinder their movements if they take to the water. (no photo's available)

THE COURT OF THE WATER DRAGON

The Oriental peoples who have set up home here dress in the style of historical Chinese nobles, warriors or peasants, in loose fitting Mandarin style jackets, kimonos, karate gi, pyjama style trousers and Chinese style straw hats. There are some cross pollination of other Archipelagan garb but the Thunders style is prevalent.



RAKKEN

Rakken should look filthy and rat like



THINGS TO NOTE.

NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE

Archipelago is busy hub of activity, so probably as the largest list of noteworthy people of any region.

- **Eva Medinacelli** Governor of the Port of Saints, Governor in Exile of Port Rabel, Grand Admiral of Fleet which the Confederacy's combined Navy and its many Marines.
- **Lord Gutter** - Head of the Ratters Guild - Control Sewers, spokesman for all the guilds
- **Mari Ann** - Leader of Mari Ann Foundation
- **Governor Osbourn** - Current leader of the Silver Sabres
- **Simon Huntingdon** - Member of the Silver Sabres
- **Solomon Grost** - Former head of the Horologist Guild and grandsons of the much younger Philomena Grost
- **Captain Daniels** Dead leader of the Crimson Brotherhood
- **Captain L Redjaq** - Leader of Cerulean Rangers the army of the confederacy
- **The Black Rose** - Diplomat for the Court of the Water Dragon
- **Schmidt** - Leader of Little Salem
- **Daniel Carver** Head of the Carvers Guild - Assassins
- **Master Ambrose Acacia** - Head of the Potters Guild - Magic
- **Lady Philomena Grost** - Horologists - part of Grost family
- **Hugo** - A member of the Beggars - Info Gatherers
- **Shillelagh Hyde** Leader of the Butchers Guild - Law enforcement
- **Master Honey** - Head of the Confectioners Guild - Sweets
- **Mr Pastry** - Head of the Bakers Guild - Bread
- **Misato 'Willow' Ogawa** Head of the Upholsterers guild - Healers
- **Dr Alexia Wickham** a botanist and doctor who works with the poor and is currently deputy head of the Upholsterers Guild.
- **The Quiet Man** - Leader of the Cutters Guild - Thieves/pickpockets
- **Verdigris Vile** - Head of the Tutors - Poisons
- **Lady Tourmaline** Head of the Seamstresses - Female prostitutes
- **Topper Thackery** Head of the Hatters Guild - Alchemists
- **John Leatherman** - Collector of bloodline materials, member of Hatters Guild
- **Ulysees Chase** Head of the Navigators Guild - Portals
- **Professor Felix Asher** Head of Research for the Navigators Guild - Portals
- **Professor Jonathan Kingdom** - Skilled Navigator and close friend of Felix Asher. His guild status is uncertain due to a long running feud with Ulysees Chase.
- **Vito Fibonachi** Head of the Cartographers Guild - Maps/Cyphers
- **Lady Luck** Head of the Book Binders Guild - Gambling
- **Rosie Glow** Head of the Lanterners Guilds - Guides

- **Emery Stock** Head of the Toy Makers Guild - Machine Makers
- **Fernando The Beautiful** - Head of Tailors Guild - Male prostitutes
- **Captain Abraham** - Important Captain in Mari Ann foundation
- **Don Alfonso Caldera** - Wealthy Philanthropist controls the portal to Vincent's Village, and a sand mine
- **Theodore Noble** - A wanted man and con artist
- **Captain Dove** - Scoundrel and self proclaimed Guardian of Time
- **Timothy Renshaw** primary researcher of Society of forgotten times.
- **Howard Smedley** - Wealthiest man in Union hates poor people owns a bakery and potato farm. Also a member of the Society of forgotten times.
- **Berkley Utherstone-Meyer III** - Foppish Hatter and society of forgotten times member.
- **Berkley Utherstone-Meyer II** - Current Head of Softies, (or at least thinks he is).
- **The Quartermaster** also know as **Jake** leader of The House
- **The Trader** also known as **Marik** member of The House
- **The Butler** also known as **William Dampier** - member of The House
- **The Cook** also know as **Grace O'Malley** member of The House
- **The Captain** also known as **Harry Morgan** member of The House
- **The Doctor** also known as **Remus Tailor** member of The House
- **Dr Vladimir Beria** Member of the Serpentine University - Specialist in arcane grafting and cryptozoology
- **Sun Yat Sen** - Leader of the Mighty Axe Gang one of Triads gangs
- **Olaf the White** - Guardian of Fenrisian Clans while the true heir refuses to take up leadership.
- **Brigid Hannelore** - Leader of Hildamels Mercenaries from the Fenris Isle
- **Fafnir** - Leader of the White Shield of the Fenris Isle
- **Theodore** - A Baka that claims to be able get any item for a price
- **Thomas** - A Baka that knows the quick way anywhere and will get you there for a price
- **Carmela** - A Baka that will help you fulfil your desires for a price
- **Buckleman the Baka**- A Baka good a finding hidden places for a price
- **Mambo Mullenka** - Vauden Mambo, used to be a travelling adventurer before settling in Whitewater.

GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

(not previously mentioned in regional backgrounds)

- **Crimson Brotherhood** - Pirate group that is also part of the Cabal, known for being ruthless, they have recently taken over island of Rabel and fiercely guard it waters.
- **Silver Sabres** - Famous throughout the world, they are all renowned hunters of one form or another membership is prestigious achievement, they are traditionally based in the Port of Saints
- **The Mari-Ann Foundation** - Are a large group of sailors with no obvious affiliation that control and use the latest state of art ships, they patrol the sea lanes and offer protection to those that pay. Despised by the pirates and legal merchant equally, the one thing that can said of them is they are the best at what they do. The Marine Annexation group patrol the seas of the whole world.
- **The House** - A group of skilled individuals that help in troubled times
- **The Society of Forgotten Times** - An Archaeological society, known as the Softies for short. Members did include Lady Jane Pottle (Secretary) Rodney Effingham, Dr Godfrey Abode and Tunnels.
- **Serpentine University** - A establishment based in Whitewater that educate and research anything odd
- **University of New Sciences** - Based the Confederacy this establishment trains people to build machines

GODS

THE LOA

Most of the population of the Confederacy and the Rat Run follow the Loa, their devoted followers call themselves the Vauden and practise Voodoo.

Mambo = High priestess of the Vauden

Houngan = High priest of The Vauden

The Vauden have been known to make dolls that lets them target their magic without seeing them, their high priest are often guarded by zombies.

THESE ARE MAIN LOA

Baron Samedi - guardian of the graveyard, big chief among the Loa.

Ezili Loa of love life and healing.

Papa Legba - guide to the lost, the old man at the crossroads, leads dead to heaven or hell,

Damballah Wedo - Loa serpent/s/lightning, rebirth and renewal,

Ogu - Loa of War, the warrior, dealer of justice, protector of the people,

Mama Zakka - The farmer, friend to the common man.

Ayizan - The trader, aid in matters of money and business, the market place.

Agwe Woyo - lord of the sea, friend to sailors/mariners, bringer of rain,

Petro Jacques - Loa of negative emotions, vengeance, freedom,

Kalfu - Loa chaos and mischief, lord of the Baka, the man off of the beaten path.

Le Chance - chance and change, the fickle winds of fate, the gambler.

Gran Bwa - the great tree, keeper of the forests, the elemental force of nature, herbalist and knowledgeable of healing potions and potent poisons.

Zarabanda - Loa of Destruction the destroyer, entropy, the burning man.

Kaptin Zombi - Loa the unquiet dead, rot and decay, eater of the dead.

Baron Kriminel - Loa of Murderers, possessor of bodies, he makes them do unspeakable things, his sign is the hanging tree were criminals are left to die, he is a assassin for the Loa. Nobody is quite sure if he is an actual Loa or just a very powerful Baka

Grandma Brigit or Maman Brigitte is also not a Loa but was given powers by Baron Samedi - She is the ex wife of Baron Samedi swearer/Obscene Loa of the addicted - the Tuboc plant crop, a highly addictive substance that slowly kills over years believed lost but wild plants still exist

Gedde - Half human/Half Loa son of Samedi and Brigit, Not seen since the gods left no one knows if alive or dead

THE FENRISIAN GODS

The Fenrisian Gods are similar to the Asgardian/Norse Gods we all know from Earth they follow a warrior code and their follower want to die a warrior's death when the time comes, not die of old age and disease.

The Fenrisian Gods are followed by the People of the Fenris Islands

THE PANTHEON THE FENRISIAN GODS CONSIST OF.

Bragi - God of poetry, music and the harp

Eir - Goddess of healing

Freyja -Goddess of love, fertility and battle, ruler of Freyja's fields, one of the three afterlives

Frigga- Goddess of marriage, motherhood and prophecy

Forseti - God of Harmony, the arbitrator

Hel - Queen of the Underworld, one of the three afterlives.

Heimdall - Guardian of Asgard, herald of Ragnarok

Jörð - Goddess of the World

Loki -Trickster and God of Mischief

Njörðr - God of sea, wind, fish, and wealth

Odin- The "All Father" God of war, associated with wisdom, poetry, and magic; ruler of Valhalla, one of the three afterlives

Sif - Goddess of harvest

Thor - God of thunder and battle

Its should be said that while there are apparently peaceful gods amongst the Fenrisian pantheon, all the Fenrisian gods are fierce sorts and should be considered warrior gods but with broad range of interests.

THE CELESTIAL DRAGON

The Celestial order is followed by the Court of the Water Dragon, for more information see the Thunders background Document

THE ONE TRUE GOD

The One True God is Followed by the people of Little Salem and few others around Archipelago

To find out about the one true god visit the information on Salem

NOTES

The colour of Archipelago is Blue and also represents Vigour, Water and Warding.