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Ambria

[parent_page_wsnations](#) - WsAmbrianlaws - WsAmbriannames Once the greatest coastal province of the Rauko Empire, and now the greatest nation in the Western Shores, the Kingdom of Ambria stretches from the Lofty Mountains in the north to Thimblebark Forest and the Scrubbrush Downs in the south. It extends inland from Stormshaven Bay to the Grand Range, making it by far the largest nation in the Western Shores. In the time of Rauko, Ambria was a wealthy principality. Situated on the coast, and controlling both the plains around Daemon's Cleft and Eagle Pass (two of the three known ways to cross the Grand Range), the land was a major trade route for foods. Ships hailing from Brondheim, Zylibul, and further lands filled Ambrian ports. Ambria's good fortune did not end with trade, either. Her fertile croplands helped fill both the rich man's coffers and the poor man's stomach. Ambria was always well-protected by the Raukan armies, and the Crown Prince was the traditional liegelord of the land. This left no question which principality was highest in the Emperor's esteem. Sadly, Ambria's position of distinction worked against her when the hordes of Daemon's Cleft were released. Rauko was lost in the expedition which awakened the evil, leaving the land without a true leader. Ambria's colonial armies seemed to draw the attention of the infernal host, and her land was ravaged. The Ambrians watched in terror as the host neared Arindel, the provincial capital. The day was saved by Lord General Caebial, commander of the City Guard. Caebial evacuated the population of Arindel onto warships, fishing boats, and commandeered merchant vessels. The ships, teeming with Arindel's citizens, sailed out into the harbour. The ghostly demon warriors, seen only as dim shadows from the boats, were stopped by the waters of the Allsea. Though they spent a day looting Arindel, they could not hurt those on the ships. On the third day after their arrival, the evil horde disappeared eastward. After waiting two more days, General Caebial decided it was safe to return to land. Under the General's direction, the Arindellers began to rebuild their shattered city. When it became clear that no word would ever come from the Emperor, the people asked Caebial to be crowned their new king. Caebial accepted the reins of leadership, but declined a royal title, refusing to officially acknowledge the Emperor was dead. Instead, he accepted the title of Lord Regent. To this day, the ruler of Ambria is known by that title. The folk of the countryside, not knowing of Caebial's heroics, were at first unwilling to accept him as ruler. Many towns threatened to become independent. For a time, it seemed that Ambria would dissolve into many feuding provinces, much like Irolo. Strangely enough, it was the maruding hordes of Kartar which proved to be Ambria's salvation. When the eastern horsemen invaded Ambria, the formerly rebellious towns and provinces turned to Arindel and what was left of the colonial armies for help. Under the leadership of Caebial and his heirs (all of whom showed a true aptitude for ruling), Ambria resisted the woe of the raiding. In the year 2620 the Ambrian army, together with the forces of Jarl Throst of Brondheim, defeated the horde of the Empress. Since that day, Kartar has made no other attempt to cross the Ruined March and attack the Western Shores. With the hordes gone, Ambria was poised to begin a true recovery. Slowly, one by one, the former provinces of Ambria swore fealty to the Lord Regent. The successors of Caebial proved to be true leaders indeed, wisely investing tax money to expand the army and repair the damage done by the hordes of demons and Kartarans. In 2848, the Kingdom of Daria attacked Ambria. This marked the beginning of the Twenty Years War. The war seesawed back and forth. Sometimes the fighting was intense, at others, there was hardly a battle a year. In the end, however, the Darian forces were driven back to the shores of Lake Bellora. King Kron of Daria ordered his forces to withdraw to Darian lands and built Kron's Wall as a barrier to further Ambrian Aggression." In 2901, the Elves of Greatwood drove all Ambrians from the forest, giving no explanation for their actions. Some minor clashes between woodsmen and Elves resulted, with the Elves getting the upper hand each time. Lord Regent Edruss sent an emissary to the Elven king to protest these actions, but the

diplomat was turned back at the forest's edge. Fearing renewed hostilities with Daria, Edruss avoided open conflict with the fair folk, and the greatwood became an Elven stronghold. Despite Edruss' fears, another conflict with Daria never came, and Ambria has enjoyed relative peace to this day. What few know, however, is that this peace has sapped the great nation's strength. Ambria's armed forces, while still impressive, have been reduced in size and have lost their fighting edge. Centuries of fighting raids along the eastern frontier has killed off most of Ambria's great warrior families, and the blood of Cenning-t-íd runs thin in the current ruling class. Lord Regent Arvidius, the present ruler, is a wise but aged man, extremely studious and no fan of war. His heir, Evren, is an eager young man, and good with a sword, but is widely considered to be not very bright. While their hearts are in the right place, neither Arvidius nor Evren may truly be up to the task of defending Ambria from the threats of renewed Darian attacks, increasing raids from trolls in the Grand Range, or the ancient evil which seems to be stirring once again in Daemon's cleft. Perhaps all Ambria needs is a few good men in the right places, heroes like General Caebial, who can stand alone against the darkness and protect the Western Shore's greatest nation.

Roleplaying Synopsis

Ambria is designed to be the Good Guy of the Western Shores. The culture is similar to that of medieval Britain, with a heavy Arthurian flavor. Knights are common, and the Church is powerful (but not as powerful as the Regent!). Ambria is the recommended home nation for most European PCs, and it makes a good location for campaigns to begin. Even though it has seen better days, Ambria is still the Western Shores' center of civilization. Ambria is currently friendly toward the Duchy Irolo and the Free City of Weyrcliff, neutral toward Brondheim, Zylistan, and the Elves of Greatwood, and hostile (but not yet at war with) Dornica and Daria.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Ambria varies greatly in terrain and climate, as its northern extreme borders the icy wastes of Talarak, and its southern edge borders balmy Irolo. Ambria is primarily covered by rolling hills, though the regions surrounding Stormshaven Bay and the Ruined March are fairly flat. These hills gradually become larger as one moves inland, finally culminating in the Grand Range. The climate is temperate, with the areas closest to the sea receiving the most rainfall. Ambria's driest region is the desolate plains around the city of Trell. Most all of Ambria's land is quite fertile. The flatlands around the bay are especially well suited for farming, and the relatively warm climate makes for a long growing season. Most of Ambria's people live in these farmlands, scattered about in small villages and hamlets. Many small, winding rivers drain this area, but the only river of any size completely within Ambrian borders is the Druidwash. Ambria's inland hills are home to shepherds and cattle-raisers. Fewer people live here, and raids by bandits and monsters from the mountains are not unknown. Consequently, the local lords are given more freedom by the Lord Regent to deal with these problems directly. Castles and fortified manor houses are more common in this region. Three great forests lie in the shadow of the mountains: the Witchwood, Thimblebark Forest, and the largest of all, Greatwood Forest. Few humans live in these regions; the Thimblebark because it is the home of the Halflings, the Greatwood because of the Elves' border watch (lifted only in recent years) and the Witchwood because it is rumored to be haunted. Consequently, most of Ambria's lumber comes from smaller forests nearer the sea. Ambria is home to many creatures, both domestic and wild. Nearly every type

of beast common to temperate climates can be found somewhere within its borders. Large wild beasts become more common the further east one goes, but true monsters are not seen in any number outside of the forests or the Grand Range. Occasionally, a single Dragon, Gryphon, or a small group of orcs and ogres will stake out a territory within Ambria, however, and the local militias have not always been successful in killing them or driving them away immediately.

LIFE IN AMBRIA

Ambria is a classical (if somewhat idealized) feudal society. The lower class is composed primarily of tenant farmers who work on farmlands owned by their lord. Free farmers (i.e. those who own their land), most merchants, artisans, and the military make up the middle class. The upper class is composed of wealthy landowners (most of whom are of noble birth) and the most successful merchants. The peasants pay fealty to a local noble (a Lord, Earl, or Count), who in turn pays fealty to high noble (a Baron or Duke). While Ambria's ruler merely holds the title of Lord Regent, he actually enjoys all the powers of a King, and all of the high nobles owe their loyalty to him (since the days of General Caebial, the tradition of avoiding noble titles has lapsed somewhat, and many refer to the Lord Regent as the King, and government property is known as royal property. Peasants in the lowlands make their living primarily through farming, except for fishermen along the coast of Stormshaven Bay. Farmers are rarer in the eastern hills. Most folk there are occupied primarily with raising animals. Autumn sees a great deal of travel along the royal highways, as the herders head west to sell their fattened animals to farmers, and farmers head east to sell their harvests to the highlanders. Taxes are collected regularly, and this causes some grumbling, but most of the peasantry is happy with its lot. The only exception to this rule is the land around Trell, where the peasants regularly challenge the authority of the area's high noble, Duke Whympul. Whympul is a weak ruler, and is not well-liked even among the aristocracy. Twice a year, at tax-collection time, the Lord Regent needs to send several companies of soldiers to that province to put down tax revolts. It is possible that in the future, the area may try to break off from Ambria entirely. Life in Ambria's cities is more fast-paced than in the countryside. Goods are plentiful in city markets (even in Trell), and folk from the Ambrian countryside crowd the cities, looking to spend what little money they have for good clothes, fine tools, and other such items that are less available in the rural areas. Crime is also more common in the cities; Strongwall in particular is known for its pickpockets. Law in Ambria is not very formal. Most disputes are settled by common law, with justice being dispensed by the local lord or his appointed judge. Punishments for a crime vary from region to region depending on local custom and the disposition of the lord or judge, although there are three killing offenses: murder, treason, and horse thievery. Lesser punishments can range from a night in the pillory to lifetime imprisonment. As a final note, in Ambria, unlike any other nation in the Western Shores, slavery is illegal. Any slaves brought onto Ambrian soil are immediately set free by the local authorities. Some rural villages are composed almost entirely of former slaves from Daria, Irolo, and Zylistan. Ambrian religion is semi-nordic. It resembles the medieval Catholic Church in feel and structure, but heroes are elevated to the status of saints, or even lesser gods. The Chief Ambrian God is known as Odin the Allfather. He is in turn served by several dozen lesser gods, all known as the Aesir. The Ambrian Church is very much like the medieval Christian church, and preaches the virtues of prayer, charity, humility, and forgiveness (sadly, it also resembles the medieval Christian Church in that not all of its priests practice what they preach!). Priests are revered in Ambria more than in any other land (with the exception of Zylistan). All but the most lowly priests practice magic to some extent. Magic is generally not accepted in Ambria, and the common folk are often suspicious of magicians. In the cities, the practice of magic is more accepted, and also more common. Ambria still produces fewer talented magicians than Irolo, Weyrcliff, and Zylistan, however. Many attribute this to the country's proximity to Sorcerer's Spire, although no link has been proven.

ARINDEL

✘ **Arindel:** (pop. 600,000) Arindel is detailed here as a good city in which to begin a campaign and to give the GM ideas on how to detail his own cities. Built at the mouth of the Druidwash, Arindel is the Western Shores' largest city. Founded as a small village even before the arrival of the Celinadians, it has weathered adversity time and again, and has somehow always survived. Today, it is a major trading center for both sea routes and the Great North-South Road. It is also the political capital of Ambria. The city proper is surrounded by a stone wall 30 feet high. There are only four gates in the wall 1 inland and three facing the wharffront. The city itself is divided by interior walls into five districts: the wharf district, the merchant district, the commoner district, the military district, and the wealthy district (These divisions are not formal merchants, soldiers and commoners can be found in almost every district). In order to cut the crime rate, travel between districts is restricted at night. Only those with passes from the district watch commander may pass the gates. The citadel of the Lord Regent is situated on the edge of the wealthy district. It is a huge construction, with many catacombs underneath. The outer sections resemble a fortress, but at the center is the sturdy palace of the Lord Regent. If Arindel were ever attacked in time of war, all of the city's 10,000 soldiers and guardsmen could withdraw within the walls of the citadel, along with a fair percentage of the general populace. The city is ruled by a mayor, who is appointed by the Lord Regent. The current mayor is Brinn Andhame, an ex-military officer who often tries to run Arindel more like a military post than a civilian city. Brinn's hard-bitten approach to leadership is tempered somewhat by Archbishop Nafan, the head of the Arindeller Church. Nafan spends much time away from his cathedral in the wealthy district, moving with his procession of retainers throughout the other districts, dispensing blessings, hearing grievances, and meting out low justice. While this is not strictly protocol, Nafan is allowed his eccentricities because he is well-loved by the people and has served the Church for almost 50 years. Many consider him a saint. The following are locations of interest in the city:

1. the Citadel: This large structure sits upon a low hill and is easily defensible. It is not only the home of the Lord Regent, but also the location of the Royal Treasury Vault.
2. Arindel Cathedral: the second-largest cathedral in Ambria (the largest is in Strongwall), this building is the tallest in the city. It is the home of the Archbishop of Arindel, and the center of the Ambrian Church. On religious holidays, the streets around the cathedral are packed with pilgrims from all over Ambria.
3. Mayor's House: Mayor Brinn's dwelling, this lavish townhouse is the traditional home of the city leader. Brinn, however, has no use for the luxury the house provides, and lives in spartan quarters in one wing. The rest of the house is only opened for social occasions (which Mayor Brinn also dislikes).
4. Wharf-Front: This area is busy 24 hours a day. In daylight, ships hailing from all ports load and unload cargo, and any man with a strong back and a will to work can earn himself a silver a day here. At night, any man who is good with a knife can make considerably more...
5. Central Market: This trading bazaar is one of the largest in the northern lands. Farmers from the countryside come here to sell their goods, and the square is a veritable carnival of wagons, tents, and temporary stands. Pickpockets work the area by day, but at night the stands and tents are taken down, and the wagons are rolled away. The empty square is then

patrolled by the City Watch.

6. Bridges: Three bridges span the Druidwash. The largest of these, nearest the mouth of the river, can actually be raised in the middle to allow small ships and boats to pass to the smaller docks upriver. Each bridge has a toll booth.

7. Washtown: This collection of houses is an small suburb of the city proper. It is filled mostly with lower-class fisher-folk who can't afford to pay city taxes on their boats. It is not patrolled by the city guard, but crime is not especially bad (there's not much to steal!). While the folk are poor, the houses are normally kept in good repair and are very tidy-looking.

8. Gatetown: Another hamlet just outside the walls of the city, Gatetown is a shanty-town composed of the poorest of the poor. It is also where disreputable merchants try to sell their wares outside of city tariff jurisdiction. Gatetown is rife with crime, and the city guard doesn't bother patrolling here, either. Mercenaries hired by the Free Mercantile Union sometimes cause trouble here and try to drive the peddlers away.

9. Home of Sir Roland Galden: A typical dwelling of a wealthy man, Sir Roland's house is a walled, three-story affair with a modest garden and a few small outbuildings. Sir Roland also employs a gardener who is good with a sword. Sir Roland was a knight but is now a wealthy spice trader and the leader of the Arindel branch of the Free Mercantile Union.

10. the Tower of Falltann: Falltann is a sage, and a member of the Academy of Ancient Knowledge. His tower is actually a twostory building, the doors and windows of which he has bricked up. Falltann lives in the attic, which is accessible only by a narrow wooden stair. Falltann is an expert on the cultures of Celinad and knows something of Kartar as well. The walled-up first and second floors of his tower are actually a fine library containing much knowledge of Celinadion times. Anyone who entertains him with a good story of a far-off land may be allowed to enter his library through the attic.

11. Xavier Xanx, Magician at large: Xavier Xanx, one of the city's most colorful figures, both lives and works here. Xavier was once an adventuring wizard who has settled down to practice in town. Hailing from Dornica, he is more than half swashbuckler, and fancies himself a fine swordsman as well as a great magician. Xavier performs minor enchantments for a fee, but has begun to tire of staid city life. With a little prompting, he could be convinced to saddle up his horse, strap on his sword, and go riding off to some new adventure.

12. Needle's Tatoos: This seedy establishment is actually a front for the local thieves' guild, and is also affiliated with the Golden Hand. The owner, Needles, is a huge, bald mountain of a man, more than a little willing to give quick, painful tattoo jobs to snoopers he catches hanging around his place. The Guild meets in the immense cellar.

13. City Watch: This large, sturdy-looking building is the headquarters of the city watch. It is also the city armory. Its massive vaults can equip 10,000 men in time of war. The building is, of course, always very well guarded.

14. Interior Gate: Scattered throughout the city, these gates are the only public means of passing the walls from district to district. They are normally only guarded by a pair of watchmen. There is no toll for passing from district to district, but in nighttime hours, the gates are closed by

portculli and travel is restricted only to those who have permission from the district watch commander.

15. the Half-Hewn Hickory, Inne and Taverne: Arindel's premier inn, this establishment is well-known for its fine food and drink, and occasional rowdy bar fights. It is expensive for an inn; private rooms cost a silver per night. Meal prices are fair, and food is served in heaping portions. Maak One-Eye Maavins, the owner and sometimes bartender, is an ex-adventurer. It is said that he occasionally hires rogues of the better sort to come to his tavern and cause trouble, just to keep things lively.

16. Weaponsmith: Known only by this utilitarian name, this is one of many weapons shops in Arindel. Most common weapons can be found here, as can some more unusual ones. Grig, the owner, is an immense, taciturn man with huge biceps. Some say he is a half-giant. Like all other weapons' dealers in the city, Grig operates only under strict license from the mayor.

17. Mad Hettie the Prophet: Mad Hettie is known by no other name. For as long as anyone can remember, she has operated a small shop in the poorer section of town, making prophecies and general pronouncements about the future of the world. What makes Mad Hettie remarkable is that her predictions sometimes come true! (Not always, but just enough to keep people coming to her for more prophecies). Mad Hettie charges no money. Only those who bring food for her and her two dozen cats will be granted a sitting. Depending on her mood, Mad Hettie can act either like a kindly old woman or a lunatic crone.

18. Livery: One of only a few stables in the city proper, horses can be bought or boarded here temporarily. Once a day, in fair weather, the stable boys lead the tethered horses to the fields outside the city for feeding. The Livery is guarded at night only by a few hired ruffians. Horse stealing is a hanging offense in Ambria, so this deters most would-be horse thieves.

19. Moneychanger's: Set in the heart of the wharf district, this small building is visited frequently by sailors and travellers from other lands. For a 10% fee (or more if the customer looks gullible), the moneychangers will exchange coins of another realm for those of Ambria, and vice-versa. There is a secure vault in this building, and it is guarded day and night by hired members of the Fraternity of the Sword and Shield.

20. Royal Gaol: This squat building is well-designed for holding prisoners. The above-ground levels are used for most offenders. Extremely violent or dangerous criminals are kept in a below-ground dungeon. Set in the heart of the military district, this building is always well-guarded.

21. The Knights of St. Grignr: Although this order originally had its headquarters in the wealthy district, 20 years ago they moved to a new building in the common district to be closer to the people. The building acts almost like a mission, providing shelter and food for the unfortunate. It is manned primarily by old knights and young squires, as most of the battle-ready knights travel the countryside in search of honor and adventure.

22. Curiosity Shoppe: Run by an old Halfling named Pipkin, this shop deals in magical trinkets of all kinds. More powerful items are kept here, but they are stowed away in a back room, only shown to special customers. Thieves which attempt to break in here invariably find that all doors and

windows whose locks are picked magically open into the City Gaol. No one knows where the Halfling comes by his items, but he is known to receive strange visitors late at night, who are always gone by morning.

23. Royal Theater: Built only recently on the south bank of the Druidwash, this theater closely resembles those of Elizabethan England. In warm, fair weather, two performances are given every day, ranging from juggling acts to ribald comedy to serious drama. With expensive boxes, and a cheap standing-only section, the theatre is a favorite locale of both nobles and commoners alike.

24. Royal Hospice: This house of healing is divided into two sections. The first is for non-paying customers. Here, city folk, upon proof of citizenship, may receive basic medical care and some minor healing magics performed by public chiurgeons. The other section is for paying customers. Here, as long as someone has money, nearly any healing magic can be found (prices are very high for major magics, however. For example: A cure for a broken arm may cost 25 silver pieces, but the regeneration of a severed limb may cost as much as 100 gold!).

25. Harbormaster: This building is the center of all dock activity. Jen Thorfssen, an ex-Brondheim captain, is the current harbormaster. Assisted by nearly two dozen customs officials, Jen levies trade tariffs and docking fees with a fair but firm hand. His word is law when it comes to the harbor, and any captain who crosses him may find his ship impounded.

26. City Gates: These huge wooden gates are set into solid gatehouses which are manned and guarded at all times. The gates are closed from sunset to sunrise, and small camps of folk waiting to enter the city often form outside at night. Pedestrians are allowed to pass through the gates free of charge, but horses and wagons are each charged a toll upon entering the city.

27. Festival Field: Twice a year, this large, open field is the scene of a carnival. The Spring and Harvest Festivals draw all manner of folk from the city and the surrounding countryside. There are tournaments, dances, and bardic competitions, and the Lord Regent himself presides over the activity.

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

Strongwall: (pop. 250,000) This city is a large trading port, set between two bayside hills. The castle of the Duke of Strongwall is on one, and the Western Shores' largest cathedral is on the other. The city gains its name from the large (45' high) stone wall which protects most of the city. **Anarn:** (pop. 50,000) A medium-sized fortress city, Anarn has traditionally maintained watch over Ambria's approaches from Daria. Although trade with Daria is forbidden, Anarn is home to a thriving black market, which deals in goods which are smuggled across Lake Bellora in small boats. **Trell:** (pop. 35,000) This small city is not a pretty sight, and has been on the decline since the fall of the Celinadion Empire. Trell is filled with criminals, barbarians, Half-orcs, and other unsavory types. Only nominally a part of Ambria, Trell is almost completely controlled by criminal gangs. The official ruler, Duke Whympul, is a spineless man and an embarrassment to the Lord Regent. **Lake Bellora:** The Battle-Lake, this body of water was the scene of the final battle of the Twenty Years War. Today its cool, dark waters are often crossed by smugglers from Anarn and Vlaskarov. The lake is very deep, and it is said that a strange, reclusive monster lives in the depths. **Stormshaven Bay:** This large body of water is a fisherman's paradise. Sheltered from the storms on the Allsea, and filled with all

sorts of edible sea-creatures, it is occasionally patrolled by Ambrian naval vessels. Because the only means of entering and exiting the bay is a narrow straight between Sand Island and Picket's Point, it is normally free of Dornican pirates, who fear they could be trapped within. **Sorcerer's Spire:** Once the tower of the great Celinadion wizard, Malekith, this strange island is now deserted. Shaped like a black, jutting finger of rock pointing skyward, the spire is almost 3000' tall, but only half as wide at the base. The ruins of Malekith's tower still sit atop the spire, but the sides are fairly smooth and unscalable. Magical means of climbing the tower are useless, as well, because no magic works within ten leagues of the tower, ever since the great magical explosion of 2150. Even magical flying steeds such as dragons and pegasi lose their abilities if they stray too near. Because of this strange ban on magic, no man has ever been able to reach the top of the tower in the eleven centuries since the explosion. It is rumored the the secrets of Celinadion magic can be found in the ruins, but this may never be learned for certain, unless mankind develops a non-magical means of reaching the top of the tower. **Sand Island:** This island at the mouth of Stormshaven Bay is 50 miles long, but never rises more than 10 feet above sea level. It is really nothing more than a glorified sand bar. The island is home to all manner of sea-going birds, and even a few sea lions, but no humans. **Druidwash:** This river is Ambria's only major waterway. Beginning at the Elven city of Moondeep, its clear, pure waters flow past Arindel and into Stormshaven Bay. In autumn, the river is covered with yellow leaves which fall in Greatwood Forest and are washed downriver. **Witchwood:** This forest of twisted oaks borders the wild lands, and has a reputation for being haunted. At night, passing travellers hear a moaning beneath its branches which may or may not be the wind. Bold woodsmen have occasionally entered the forest for timber, only to flee when a feeling of insurmountable fear gripped their hearts. To this day, the Witchwood remains a mystery. **Grand Range:** With peaks over 15,000 feet high, the Grand Range is second only to the Lofty Mountains in height. It forms the border which separates Ambria from the uncivilized lands of the east. The mountains themselves are also wild, and are filled with trolls, ogres, and goblins. Small communities of Gargoyles haunt the peaks, but rarely attack Ambrian villages. Eagle Pass, the only known route through the mountains, has been closed for almost 200 years by mountain giants and ogres. **Thimblebark Forest:** This woodland is the home of the Western Shores' Halfling population. The Halflings consider themselves to be citizens of Ambria, but also appreciate being left alone to manage their own affairs. Despite being in the shadow of the mountains, this area is very pastoral and peaceful, and the countryside around the forest itself is dotted with many small Halfling towns.

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