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Dornica

[parent_page_wsother](#) The Dornican Archipelago was first settled about C.Y. 300 by mannish tribes fleeing the wrath of the Lizardmen on Choon. These natives lived in relative tranquility (broken only by a few minor tribal wars between the islands) until the arrival of Celinadion explorers in 2067. The islands were soon colonized, and the natives were forced to swear fealty to the emperor (this didn't mean much to the natives, and they went along with it just to keep the newcomers happy). When the empire fell, the mainlanders abandoned the islands for a time, but soon a different kind began showing up. Smugglers, escaped criminals, pirates, and cutthroats began using the islands as a hideout/base of operations. Over the years the natives gradually became absorbed into the growing pirate population. Nearly a dozen small towns sprang up on the islands, each a den of thieves. With a bona fide base-camp to operate from, pirates began to grow more bold. Even repeated attempts by the Ambrian and Irolon navies to exterminate the pirates were not successful. In 3169, Captain Crispus Hookhand, the most infamous pirate ever to sail the seas, consolidated his power and united the islands beneath him, founding the independent nation of Dornica. Since that date, Dornica has continued on its merry way, regularly assaulting merchant ships and occasionally attacking coastal towns. A strange relationship exists between the Dornican pirates and the Brondheim raiders. The Vikings respect the Dornican's sailing skill, but consider them cowardly weaklings in combat. The pirates consider the northmen to be witless barbarians, but nevertheless rarely attack the Viking longships.

Roleplaying Synopsis

Dornica is similar to the West Indies of the pirate era . It is a wild, lawless land filled with wild, lawless men. Its a good place for thieves to come from, and wild, swashbuckling adventures can be set here.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Dornica is composed of a half dozen large islands (large meaning more than a square mile in size) and hundreds of smaller ones. Each island has many coves, giving a pirate vessel literally thousands of places to hide. The islands themselves are covered with low hills. Stands of twisted pine grow on the north and west sides of the islands, but on the sheltered east and south sides, tropical forests thrive. No monsters inhabit the islands, but many tropical and semi-tropical creatures live there. The seas around Dornica are another matter, however. Large sea-monsters are often sighted, and small ships need to be wary of such hazards. Mermen have also supposedly been spotted, although many contend that such beings are merely creatures of legend.

LIFE IN DORNICA

History has no record of anyone ever living a quiet, peaceful life in Dornica. Buccaneer rowdiness often spills over from the towns into the countryside. There are really no laws in Dornica, and a man

must depend on his wit and skill to survive. Occasionally, small wars break out between rival pirate factions. These rage ferociously for a short time, and then die out when one crew or another has been killed or driven away. The natives live primarily in the countryside. The descendants of jungle tribesmen from Choon, they are a rugged, dark-skinned folk. Their culture is a strange combination of old tribal customs and mainland influences. The natives worship naturalistic forces, and many practice the magical art of voodoo. They often hold colorful festivals, filled with music, dancing, and much rum-drinking. The pirates quite naturally enjoy participating in these. The pirate towns themselves are little more established than the native villages. Composed of shanties and huts, they regularly suffer from fires, riots, and general lack of maintenance. The only permanent buildings are in Port Regency, which is also the only town of any size. Most types of (stolen) goods can be bought in the towns, although inconsistent supplies cause the prices to vary wildly over time. Nevertheless, the cities are awash with stolen gold. Gold is cheap, but life is cheaper. Aside from the animistic voodoo practices of the natives, Dornica has no formal religion. Most of the citizens actively avoid any attempts at organized worship, and Ambrian missionaries who have visited in the past have gone away sorely disappointed. Magic is accepted in Dornica, but practitioners are quite rare. Since its founding by Captain Hookhand, Dornica has theoretically been governed by a strange, fraternal, democratic system. Every man, woman, or child can buy a vote (or votes!) with gold. True power, however, has always rested in the hands of the most competent and powerful sea-captain, who collects the gold from voting and acts on the people's desires as he sees fit. The current top sea-dog is an unsavory character named Mad-Dog Blacke. He has no illusions about Dornica's place in the world, and knows that it is a nation only in the crudest sense of the word. He readily encourages piracy, granting amnesty for a percentage of the plunder. He has survived several assassination attempts, and seems to be more firmly seated in power than ever. His bodyguard, a hulking native, is said to have the strength of 10 men. Dornica has no formal relations with any other nations. Their ships are hunted by the Darian, Ambrian and Irolon navies. Even the sultan of Zylistan has a price on the head of Captain Blacke, dating back to a time when the infamous pirate stole nearly half his harem.

Places of Interest

Port Regency: (Pop. 20,000) the most wretched hive of scum and villainy in all the Western Shores, Port Regency is built in and about the ruins of the original Celinadion settlement. The town is defended by a medium-sized keep, and is gaudily decorated by Captain Blacke to (unsuccessfully) appear like a sumptuous palace. **Picket's Point:** While technically on Irolon soil, this sandy cape is a favorite mainland hideout for Dornican smugglers. The treasure of Crispus Hookhand, reported to be worth more than all of Dornica, is supposedly buried here. To this date, however, it has not been found, by magical means or otherwise.

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