
Oenklay

A world apart

Geography

Oenklay is group of islands 70-100 miles west of the main land in the world girding ocean. While the true count of islands is unknown, there is one primary island (also known as Oenklay) and 6 midsized islands. A large number of smaller islands to the east of Oenklay proper generally are known as Shatterend. Oenklay also marks the western edge of the world. Beyond the westernmost islands, the ocean ends and gives way to the Other Realms.

Inhabitants of Oenklay often talk about the “Five Provinces” or “Five Peninsulas”. This is because of the shape of the island which seems to consist of five major “arms” with no “body”. Starting at the southernmost and working clockwise, these arms are known as Anealeas, Oirnale, Einea, East Province, and Romhai. Once a single nation (along with the most of the surrounding islands), each province along with each of the major islands is now its own separate entity.

Sociology

Oenklay is primarily an agrarian society. Depending on the province, varying degrees of serfdom predominate. Like most other parts of the known world, the bulk of the population is rural and focused on farming, fishing, and similar pursuits. Dedicated manufacture and supporting resource exploitation is rare. Cities are just large market towns with populations measuring well less than 20,000 souls.

The southern most of these arms is the most populous, with the western and northern most vying for second place. The two eastern arms are dominated by the presence of Shatterend and the difficult seas which are found there. Both provinces’ eastern shores are difficult to reach by ship, giving rise to an extensive network of caravan routes in Romhai.

The Five Provinces and Other Regions

Anealeas

Population: 450,000
Government: Feudal Monarchy (Manorial)
Ruler: Drani, Suzerain of Oenklay
Dominant Races: Human, Halfling

Copyright ©2008 Jim Leonardo, San Jose, CA

Cities and Towns:

Maande:	15,000
Maidins :	9,000
Walferd:	6,000
Axwall:	5,000
Urnwick:	5,000
Pitworth:	4,000

Anealeas is by far the most populous of the Five Provinces. Most mainlanders think of Anealeas when they think of Oenklay. Feudal practices are most highly developed in Anealeas. The majority of persons are serfs who have guaranteed rights and obligations passed down across generations. This includes entitlement to land to be worked, tithes, etc. A free peasant in Anealeas is looked down upon as man or woman with no position in life who must live from one menial job to the next. Wealth is looked upon as the real source of freedom, not some legal code. A great many “freedmen” toil away working for “non-free” serfs who control far more land than they could possibly ever work themselves. This doesn’t mean being a serf is easy, and a great many are barely getting by themselves, but it isn’t slavery in Anealeas. The largest city is Maande with a population hovering around 15,000 or so. A substantial portion of Maande’s population are serfs who have run away from their manors or freedmen who have no place else to go.

Anealeas holds a great deal of sway over Romhai, but the two frequently skirmish over their precise border and who gets to style himself King of Oenklay. Currently, the border runs closer to Caer Aeti than Vengril, but both rulers style themselves King.

Oirnale

Population: 300,000

Government: Feudal Monarchy (Yeomanry)

Ruler: Fepius, Regent of Oenklay

Dominant Races: Eladrin, Human, Dragonborn

Cities and Towns:

Mybourdy:	7,000
Dessea:	5,000
Estco:	4,000
Lerba:	1,000
Enpri:	1,000

Unlike Anealeas, Oirnale is dominated by yeomanry. The majority of land is in the hands of small landholders who work their own holdings with limited help from outside of the family and other yeoman in the village.

The islands to the west are near the end of the world, resulting in the frequent appearance of otherworldly visitors, hence the high population of Eladrin. Nominally claimed by Oirnale, the western islands are lands where powerful other worldly creatures roam. Aardepont, while fertile, is sparsely populated with a few herdsmen living in heavily fortified villages and a few garrisons along the edge of Last Chance Strait to keep that slim lifeline clear for shipping. Pontenfer is essentially a wilderness of heath and moorland with no settlements.

Einea

Population: 250,000
Government: Feudal Oligarchy (Manorial)
Ruler: Diet of Oenklay
Dominant Races: Dwarf, Human
Cities and Towns:

Wempley: 6,000
Bluwell: 4,000

Einea is rugged both in geography and the temperament of the people. No one person has been able to pull all the factions together, instead a council of the six most powerful nobles known as the Diet of Oenklay rule the land. Legend has it that this Diet once represented all of Oenklay, not just the north. Each of these nobles has a number of lords who swear fealty, but these lords change allegiance regularly, resulting in a patchwork of territory controlled by each member of the Diet. The living conditions of the peasantry vary tremendously from fief to fief, but generally fall somewhere between those of Anealeas and Romhai.

Wempley is the closest thing Einea has to a capital as well as being its major port. Divided into three districts under control of different lords, it remains unaligned as a whole to any faction and so remains relatively neutral and therefore provides good meeting ground for the Diet. Bluwell is located in between two major passes in the mountains of Oenklay and so it is the jumping off point for both overland travelers to the south as well as caravans to the mines of Einea.

Being second closest to the end of the world, Einea sees its fair share of problems crossing over from the Other Realms. The islands to the north provide something of a land bridge for creatures that cross over, while strange phenomena aren't so strange in Einea. Like Oirnale, the islands to the north grow progressively wilder with nearness to the end of the world. Tilinga is ruled over by various lords, of both "civilized" and "uncivilized" races, that have allegiance to no one. Fospegun is a barren wilderness not unlike Pontenfer. Unlike Pontenfer, ruins of towns and even cities are rumored to dot the landscape, but few venture here due to the wildness of the land.

East Province

Population: 75,000
Government: Village
Ruler: None
Dominant Races: Gnome, Human, Dwarf
Cities and Towns:

Joring: 2,000
Middlesea: 1,000

East Province is quite primitive compared to the other areas of Oenklay. In ancient times, its central mountains were home to a number of iron and copper mines that have played out while the subsistence level of farming practiced in the region prevents new prospectors from arising. Most of the settlements consist of at most a few dozen families and the trademark East Province broch, a stone tower used both for storage and defensive shelter. With little in the way of professional warriors, the slim pickings of East Province are still attractive to the Shatterend raiders, especially those who are slavers. Each village is ruled by some form of elder/patriarchal government, but this is rarely a formal government. Most folks are just trying to survive. Hope is a rare commodity in East Province.

Two larger villages still manage to somehow survive in East Province. Joring is a waypoint for travelers taking an overland route from Einea to Romhai or (more commonly) Anealeas. Travelers come

across the mountains through one of the passes near Bluwell and take a ferry across the Inner Sea before resuming overland travel to Vengril, Tendo, or Maande.

Middlesea is a major fishing village, the only net exporter of goods in all of East Province. A large number of salt licks nearby provide ample means to preserve the prodigious quantities of fish that are caught. Drier weather than Southsea (due to the mountains) also helps with the curing process, ensuring that most of the fish shipped around Oenklay is Middlesea fish.

Romhai

Population: 150,000
Government: Feudal Monarchy (Plantational)
Ruler: Choshre, High King of Oenklay
Dominant Races: Tiefling, Human
Cities and Towns:

Tendo:	6,000
Parey:	2,000
Southsea:	1,000
Vengril:	1,000

Romhai is the ancient seat of power of the ancient kingdom, but has fallen on hard times. Its few towns are surrounded by the tumbled down remains of their former greatness and many of the nobles have titles that sound far more grandiose than the fiefs they preside over would justify. Feudal practices in Romhai are far less developed than in Anealeas or Oindale and the manors are more like plantations with the serfs being slaves in all but name. Nevertheless, the nobility is a strong warrior class and has of late been getting the better of Anealeas in their frequent spats.

Being even more fertile than Anealeas, Romhai should be far more populous, but two factors work to keep the Romhains from gaining any permanent advantage. The first is the lack of any sort of real port. In ancient times, Tendo and Vengril are in legend and myth great ports, but today both have broad, quite shallow bays with many a ruin visible at low tide. Both the ruins and the shallow depth of these bays make them unsuitable for any ocean going vessel except well crewed long ships. The second factor is the lawless expanse of Shatterend. A great many outlaws hide in the Shatterend with a few pirate "kings" who band together anytime Romhai tries to root them out. They frequently raid coastal villages of Romhai to take slaves, or liberate them as the taste of the pirate band goes. The conditions of life for many in Romhai lead many to flee for the Shatterend, causing a self reinforcing cycle.

Shatterend

Population: 10,000?
Government: Pirate Gangs
Ruler: None or many.
Dominant Races: none
Cities and Towns:

No significant settlements known.

Shatterend is a large group of rugged islands located off the north east coast of Oenklay. No one rules over this area, but various pirate groups and worse claim the larger islands as their homes. If it were not for the treacherous waters and the pirates, most sea trade would pass along the eastern side

of Oenklay, but instead it is forced to choose the relatively safer western passage through Last Chance Strait.

Imsea Wood

Population: 10,000?

Government: None

Ruler: None or many.

Dominant Races: Elf, Human, Halfling

Cities and Towns:

No significant settlements known.

Imsea Wood is a nearly trackless forest that straddles the center of Oenklay. What settlements there are line the Imsea River or Lake Imsea, while majority of the forest is wild lands populated by forest creatures, bandits, and worse. The Imsea River drains into a vast marshland on the Romhai/Anealeas border. Many channels of the river meander and rejoin the main channel, creating a labyrinth for the small boats that travel between the wood and the towns of Southsea and Walferd.

Life in Oenklay

Oenklay is not a peaceful, idyllic utopia. Warfare and disease are endemic, and while the land is fertile, famines do occur in Oenklay. Although Anealeas and Romhai's frequent border wars get attention across all of Oenklay when they brew up, the unique shape of Oenklay means the Shatterend pirates can strike nearly anywhere. The feudal system present throughout also means local lords occasionally get into minor skirmishes which are tolerated as long as they don't get too out of hand. Bandits and worse dwell in Imsea, while Oirnale and Einea, and to a lesser extent Anealeas, must also endure "visitors" and various "special phenomena" crossing over the edge from the Other Realms.

In addition to the "civilized" races, plenty of "uncivilized" races dwell in the forests, mountains, caves and islands of Oenklay. These include kobolds and goblinoids mostly, Orcs are generally rare, but at least a few of the Shatterend pirate bands are Orc clans. Monstrous beasts are well known to exist in Imsea as well as other areas with Bulettes being a particular scourge in East Province. A few dragons are known to lair in Oenklay, but they are rarely known to interact with other creatures that aren't about to become food. They are occasionally seen on the wing. When circling, this is a sign to hide, but just as often, they seem to be flying with purpose to some destination. A few massive individuals are known to exist, but these are seen very rarely.

The edge between this world and the Other Realms is a thing of mystery. Only in legend has anyone returned from attempting to cross to the Other Realm, and these legends also speak of incredible and varied torments visited on these heroes. "Going on a journey to the Other Realm" is a euphemism for undertaking a hopeless task.

Magic and Religion in Oenklay

While hardly a part of everyday life for most of Oenklay's peasants, magic is far from rare in Oenklay. Most of the magic that is performed is in the form of utilitarian rituals: a baron may seek out ritualistic cure for a disease; a blessing on the farmland of a wealthy serf may be performed before planting in the spring and so on. The other form of magic seen is in the form of the minor tricks

performed by those in traveling entertainers. Most of the “magic” seen here is in the form of sleight of hand, but someone capable of true magic in some low form travels with nearly every such group.

There are no grandiose magic schools or such in Oenklay. Nearly every wizard, warlock, and travelling show trickster is trained as an apprentice by someone else. The result is that most arcane practitioners are relatively low skilled. Non-religious magic is viewed by most nobles as a “commoner’s trade” and so even though every noble that can afford one has a magician of some sort on staff, it is rare to find a noble who practices it, at least overtly.

A wide variety of gods are worshipped in Oenklay. Even malicious gods are worshipped openly in many cases... this is generally in the form of offerings intended to placate them rather than veneration. A number of monasteries exist in Oenklay and this is where most of the priests, clerics, and paladins get their training. A number of these are monastery-cathedrals located in towns, while others are their own countryside demesne. Every town has at least one temple, every village a chapel, and many roadside shrines exist throughout the land.

