

# AETHERDARK WORLDS THE DING

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## The Ring

## Exploration & Colonization

Aetherdark is set during the age of exploration, new worlds discovered with each passing year.

It is also an age of colonization and of exploitation. The powers of The Ring are great, but they are not good.

## The Ring & Ringspace

The source of these explorers and colonizers is a collection of worlds called The Ring, a group of seven independent worlds.

Ringspace refers to the extent to which The Ring has colonized the astral sea. The included maps cover both The Ring and Ringspace, but the Ringspace colonies are not covered here.

If a colony is needed, Aetherdark's world generation tables in concert with the colonies section of this book should serve as a good starting point.

## **Tensions**

Each of the seven worlds of The Ring is listed along with some details about the tensions they have that might lead to war, both internal and external.

The Ring is described during a period of peace that is on the verge of turning to war whenever your game demands.

## An Adventure Hub

Ringspace can be used for adventures, but it is primarily designed to be the place where adventures start. Where those adventures lead is up to you.

That said, there is a lot of room to have adventures within The Ring, and all of the worlds listed have several adventure hooks to help generate ideas.

# The Treaty

In The Ring, everything is decided by The Treaty. Officially, "The Treaty" is "The Fourth Treaty of the Ring and the Revised Aetherspace Accords", but nobody uses the full name.

The Treaty encompasses countless disparate aspects of interworld law and conduct. The Third Treaty of the Ring, for example, defined standard measurements and a standard weight for Ringspace coinage.

## **Privateering**

Traditionally, between wars, the powers in The Ring supported privateers, raiding each other's commerce and ransoming back the ships and captains that others captured.

In the most recent Treaty revision, entirely at Navidem's demand, this practice was banned, although Navidem's practice of not turning any ship away means it still hosts an active pirates' guild.

## Aethership Ownership

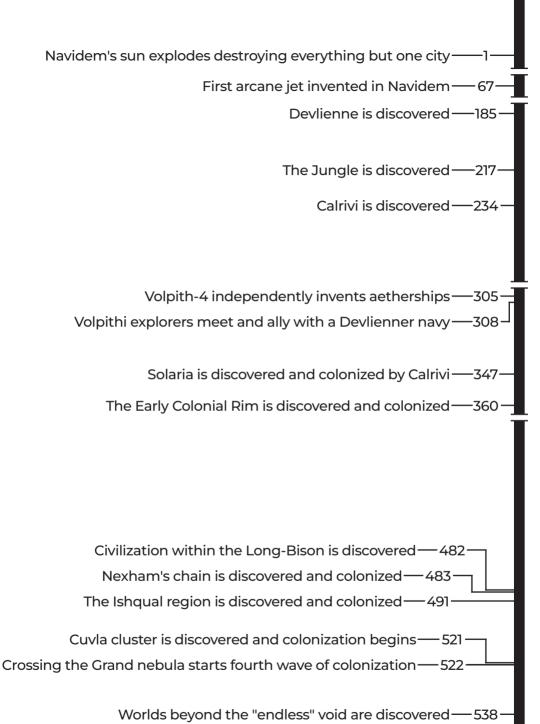
The treaty is fairly clear that, if someone owns a ship, they continue to own it no matter how many times it gets stolen, but that they can be assessed a prize fee for its recovery of 10% of its cost, given the condition it's returned in.

## The Treaty In-Game

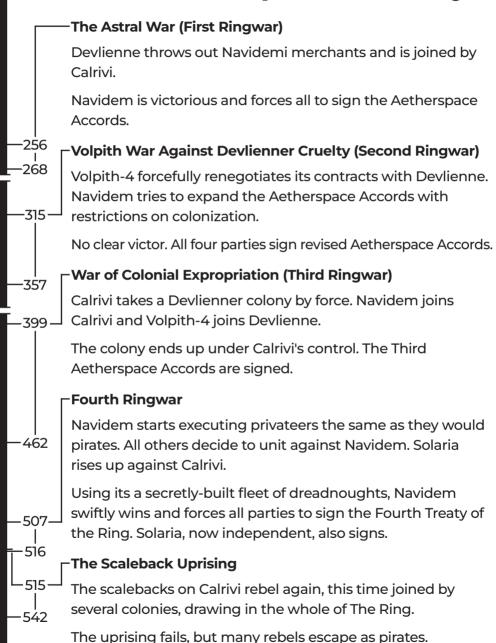
The treaty can mean anything you want, right down to ignoring the details in this section. The primary use of The Treaty is to be the reason something specific is either legal or illegal.

Sometimes this makes a campaign run more smoothly, others it introduces a conflict that can drive the action.

For example, your game might have a ban on the importation of monsters, giving the players a reason to engage in a high-value black-market trade in dangerous, exotic beasts.



## A Brief History of the Ring



## Devlienne

## Overview

Shielded from the Planes: Extraplanar entities cannot cross the barrier from the astral sea into the world at all. Beings such as half-demons are weakened within.

Nature Subdued: Devlienne is small and ancient. The surface has no wilderness remaining. There are many cities, but even more farmland. The mines are exhausted, the soil overworked, the whole world starting to fail.

Open Gardens: Warriors mostly live in unfortified mansion, surrounded by unwalled gardens. Being able to keep a family safe and a garden clear without a wall is a sign of strength.

**Greedy Water:** Trying to leave water, not merely move through it, requires a DC 12 check.

Lesser Planets: Neo-Drummish and Narric are in the same system but are not given much consideration.

## **Demographics**

**Dominant Ancestries:** Most residents are orcs. All warriornobles are orcs.

**Demographics:** 150 million orcs and 20 million of other heritages. 3 million are warrior-nobles. The rest are serfs and indentured servants.

#### Trade

**Trade:** Guilds of artists are renowned for their fine paintings, which they sell throughout Ringspace. Most other fine goods can be bought here, but none have special export value.

**Tariffs:** Finished foreign goods have a tariff, reducing profits by 50%.

Aetherships: Produces incantation-powered aetherships. Can manufacture anything smaller than a dreadnought.



## Culture

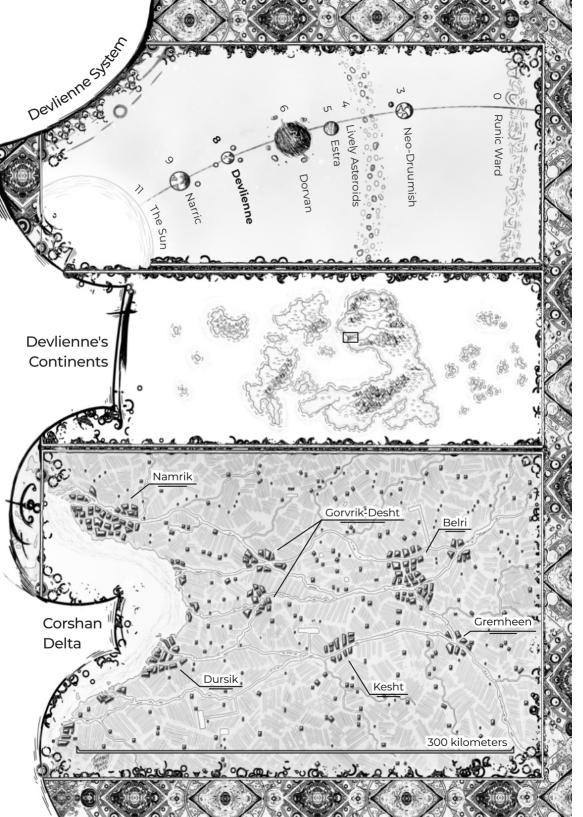
Mannerisms: Posing to show off tattoos and generally flaunt bodies.

Clothing: All wear open robes over pants. Serfs usually wear short, plain robes. Warriors wear robes with fine embroidery. This is part of a way to show off tattoos and to demonstrate that they are still sturdy enough to endure cold and heat without aid.

**Combat:** Outside of war, armor isn't worn. Battleaxes, warpicks, warhammers, and javelins are popular. Having a weapon is an executable offense for a serf or indenture that is not currently working as a soldier.

**Strict Laws:** Very orderly, with extremely harsh punishments, but the rules generally don't apply to the warrior caste.

**Dueling:** Warriors often duel, usually to first blood.



## The System

Runic Ward. The boundary between Devlienne and the Astral Sea is traced with faint runes. Beings of other planes cannot cross the boundary.

**Neo-Druumish.** Colonized by Devlienne, but gained independence during the third Treaty-Conflict. Relatively unpopulated.

Lively Asteroids. Asteroids dart about, regularly swarming together and changing directions. DC 15 MVR or size-d6 siege damage; DC 12 INT grants advantage. Guides charge 100gp for safe passage.

Estra. Uninhabitable rock.

Dorvan. Toxic gas.

**Devlienne.** The primary planet in the system.

**Narric.** Natives attack anyone who arrives in an aethership as an outsider. Little is known about them.

The Sun. Red. Hot.

## Devlienne

Likely once very diverse, this small planet was conquered by a single empire long ago. Farms and cities cover all land. Beasts and monsters only remain in the mountains and out at sea.

## Corshander Delta

The center of the empire that conquered the rest of the world. Millions live in the cities spread throughout the delta.

**Namrik**, ruled by Stuv Snaerson. Largest traditional port, with a long sailing tradition.

**Dursrik**, ruled by Snaer Snaerson. Densest aetherport.

**Gorvrik-Desht**, ruled by Hildr Hrodnisdatter. Protected by elite axewielders

**Kesht**, ruled by Vertidi Ulmson. Wealthy, specialized in linen.

**Belri**, ruled by Stymyr Stymyrson. Largest military fleet.

**Gremheen**, ruled by Todris Oddnison. Once failing, but powerful in the colonies.

## Social Classes

## **Warriors**

For generations, "warrior" has been a hereditary title, never earned but sometimes lost.

Anyone who never fights in battle loses face and may be turned on by other warrior families. The more powerful families stage battles against serfs they claim turned outlaw.

**Thane.** Land-owners, with serfs to labor on their behalf and a retinue they command in battle.

**Aetheling.** A modern term for a thane who maintains a fleets of aetherships.

**Ceorl.** Warriors who are bound to a thane on whose behalf they fight.

**Kin.** The relatives of warriors are given an exemption from being laborers and have a chance to become warriors, but only if they prove themselves in battle.

**Fighter vs Warrior.** In theory anyone who fights is a warrior. In practice, most combatants are levied serfs who gain nothing.

## The Royal Houses

Only six of the thousands of thane families, all from the Corshander delta, are of Ringwide note. They are all from the Corshander delta, which is the heart of the empire that orginally conquered Devlienne.

## Serfs

A serf is legally bound to work the land they were born on. Traditionally, this was farmland, but anymore this also includes family businesses. Which warrior owns that land may change, but the lot of the serf will not.

As most families have more people than they absolutely need to run their farms, serfs are regularly levied for war.

**Indentures** are functionally the same as serfs, although in theory they will be free if they ever manage to pay off all their debts.

**Outlaws** have lost the protection of any thane and are hunted for sport.

## Religion

## The Thrones

The divine powers of Devlienne are referred to as "Thrones."

Legend holds that demons can seize these Thrones and replace the gods, but that the runic boundary about the sky has ended this threat.

The five thrones are: Rage, Agriculture, Wealth, Plague, and Storms.

There are many stories of these being physical thrones. If those stories are true, they are lost.

## **Familial Spirits**

The gods do not respond, but familial spirits do.

When a priest displays power, they are said to be carrying the spirit of an ancestor.

Generally, they know that ancestor by name and are familiar with their tastes.
Penance involves directly appeasing that person, often performing a task on their behalf that requires a body.

## Other Planets

## **Narric**

Little is known of Narric. Even the name is just what Devlienne called it since it was just a moving light in the sky.

The natives of Narric kill anyone they see descending. There have been assays via telescope, implying an early iron-age civilization, but they have of yet prevented anyone from escaping alive.

## **Neo-Druumish**

The first colony of Devlienne was the habitable planet at the outskirt of their own system. As part of the Fourth Ring-Treaty, Neo-Druumish gained its independence.

The planet is minimally populated, as the wilderness is full of dire-beasts instead of typical fauna.

The society resembles Devlienne, although the social structure is looser, with some serfs earning positions of power.

## Status & Emblems

As the divide between a warrior and a laborer has vast import in Devlienner society, most warriors and their kin wear emblems of their station prominently.

## **Random Devlienner Status & Rank**

d100	Rank	Status
	Aetheling	Thane with an aethership-fleet
01	Thane	Ruler who maintains a retinue of ceorls
02-05	Ceorl	A warrior who's dependent on a thane
06-50	Serf	Bound to the land, no true rights
51-90	Indenture	Forced labor until debts are paid
91-00	Outlaw	Killed by warriors if discovered

#### **Warrior Emblems**

d12	Object	Emblem	Emblem Form
1	Earring	Wolf	Rearing or Flying
2	Ring	Lion	Standing
3	Necklace	Dragon	Walking
4	Sceptre	Pheonix	Sleeping
5	Robe	Mammoth	Sitting
6	Portrait	Hydra	Slain
7	Marionette	Bull	Bearing an axe
8	Battleaxe	Hart	Bearing a hammer
9	Warpick	Cobra	Bearing a pick
10	Warhammer	Kraken	Repeated three times
11	Knife	Unicorn	Head only
12	Shield	Raven	Fighting with (roll again)

## Names

**Given names** tend to be short and harsh in Devlienne. There are traditionally **no surnames** in Devlienne, but patronyms or matronyms are sometimes used to indicate a warrior's most influential parent. Serfs with the same name may have their profession used as a surname.

## **Typical Orcish Names in Devlienne**

d20	Feminine	Masculine
1	Gudrun	Kinarukh
2	Ahsa	Astrikur
3	Gudbrand	Gyarni
4	Evarakh	Ragnukh
5	Yordis	Dufthakr
6	Grithir	Bragi
7	Sverir	Thirkorn
8	Thirni	Gerd
9	Vakreth	Eistrukh
10	Borgildir	Gair
11	Gautrakh	Svayk
12	Ashildur	Hugni
13	Ragnrakh	Bryorgrik
14	Aylvrik	Grimm
15	Hakon	Eyrik
16	Thrakh	Rikvithukh
17	Argnermir	Kerlugh
18	Aylfir	Sigrith
19	Inga	Hrolf
20	Leith	Garbyurg

## **Potential Conflicts**

## **Hungry for War**

Members of the devlienner warrior caste only inherit their station if they prove themselves in battle. Before aetherships arrived, this meant near-constant battles, usually well-organized.

Anymore, organized combats demand less respect, warriors needing to sail abroad for proper conflict. The lack of a proper war is making it difficult for young warriors to prove themselves.

Not only are they angry, the only thing they want is a better chance to fight people.

## **Built on Oppression**

One in every twenty residents of Devlienne is a noble or their kin. Most of the rest are hereditarily serfs, bound to work land owned by nobles. Those who leave that behind will not be employed outside of an indenture contract.

Navidem's concept of freedom clashes with this, and their victory in the last war added restrictions to the treaty that hindered this practice in the colonies.

## The Edge of Collapse

The rulers of Devlienne have eternally been proud of their conquest of nature. Over the centuries, they have tamed the surface of their world, leaving little wilderness behind.

Now, the cities are too large for their farms to support, and the overworked soil is starting to fail. Able to strip its colonies, Devlienne endures, but the decay continues.

## Adventure Hooks

## **Battle Guides**

I won't be wandering the astral sea just hoping for a chance. You have a reputation of finding danger. I'll pay you to accompany me.

The wealthy daughter of an aetheling is seeking a chance to prove herself. If the party takes her (and several servants) into a dungeon and she does enough to earn an impressive story, she will pay a healthy reward.

## Seeking Prey

There's rumors of a hydra in those mountains. Few have slain such a beast, and I would like to be one such hero.

If the party can find the hydra, return with information of its location, find it again with the thane and their retinue, and help kill it, there is a storied blade and permanent standing on Devlienne on offer as a reward.

## **Smuggling Serfs**

Gitrikorn isn't the man his father was. We need to get out of here, somehow.

The serfs on a recently-inherited property are desperate to escape. They cannot pay well, but will offer what they can to anyone that can get them to somewhere that shelters refugees.

## Throne Tales

I saw it myself. A great chamber, as if built for impossible giants, and at its head a throne fifty feet at the seat.

A half-mad adventurer has stumbled back into society telling tales of one of The Thrones. Everyone is certain he's dreamt it up, but not so certain that there aren't dozens of thanes preparing expeditions into the wilderness.

## **Ancestries**

## **Devlienne Warrior**

Wealthy orcs, training to maintain a warrior tradition. Known for being tall, slim, and dangerous, Devlienne orcs are feared throughout the ring.

You know the Common and Orcish languages.

**Finesse.** +1 to attack rolls with one-handed and thrown weapons.

**Competitive Athletics.** Gain advantage on checks involving running, jumping, and swimming.

## Devlienne Serf, Indenture, or Outlaw

Working every day on land they do not own, Devlienne serfs perish or grow strong.

Most are orcs, but of late more from other worlds have arrived and been pushed into indentures and serfdom. With the constant labor, they all end up much the same.

You know the Common and Orcish languages.

**Mighty.** You have the same traits as standard Shadowdark halforcs (SD 16).

## Backgrounds

Devljenne Warrior Background

People from Devlienne are evenly divided between those from its dense cities and its endless farms. Nobody from Devlienne has much experience in the wilderness, as little wilderness remains.

40	Devicence varior background
1	Arcanist, seeking secrets in rare tomes.
2	Bladesmith, carefully forging and honing fine weapons
3	Dancer, performing rituals to extol the ancestors
4	Ceorl, serving in a thane's personal guard
5	<b>Hunter</b> , seeking prey in the mountains
6	Overseer, managing a parcel of farmland
7	Sailor, working on an aethership
8	Singer, composing epics about your thane's deeds
d12	Devlienne Serf/Indenture/Outlaw Background
1	Blacksmith, making tools for the local village
2	Farmer, toiling in the fields all day
3	Servant, cleaning and cooking for warriors
4	Incanter, belowdecks on an aethership, chanting
5	Laborer, doing exhausting work for master crafters
6	Soldier, fighting under the leadership of a ceorl
7	Carpenter, crafting furniture and homes for the locals
8	Stonecutter, down in a quarry all day
9	Drover, managing a warrior's carriage
10	Vendor, hawking your warrior's wares at market
11	<b>Urchin</b> , begging and stealing on the streets
12	Outlaw hiding from warriors and stealing to survive

## **Devlienner Crews**

## Ceorls & Serfs

The leadership of Devlienne, its warrior class of Ceorls, Thanes, and Aethelings, are incredibly dangerous fighters.

These warriors are few, the bulk of its military consisting of serfs. While they still are raised in a tradition of warfare, they lack the consistent training of many modern militaries.

## **Conscripts**

Although there are many serfs, the supply is not as limitless as Aetheling ambition.

To resolve this, pressgangs conscript people, forcing people to join the incanting gangs.

#### d3 Devlienner Crew Events

Rage. Deal +1d4 injuries if

- 1 hitting this round and next round.
- Disorganization & infighting. Do nothing.
- 3 Two sailors joins key-fight.

## Devlienne Ceorl

Painted platemail bears the emblem of their thane, hiding this orc's face and form.

AC 17 (plate + shield), HP 11, ATK 1 greataxe +2 (1d8), MV near, S +2, D +0, C +1, I -1, W -1, Ch -2, AL C, LV 2

Rage. 1/day, immune to morale checks, +1d4 damage (3 rounds).

## Devlienne Ceorl Elite

Sleek and powerful, clad in fitted, brightly-painted plate.

**AC** 17 (plate + shield), **HP** 20, **ATK** 2 greataxe +4 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** +0, **C** +1, **I** +0, **W** +0, **Ch** -1, **AL** C, **LV** 4

Rage. 1/day, immune to morale checks, +1d6 damage (3 rounds).

## Devlienne Conscript

Exhausted and beaten down.

**AC** 10, **HP** 3, **ATK** 1 club +0 (1d4), **MV** near, **S** +0, **D** +0, **C** -1, **I** -1, **W** -1, **Ch** -1, **AL** N, **LV** 0

Unwilling. Fails all morale checks.

## Devlienne Coxswain

Tasked with keeping the crew on-rhythm as they chant, the coxswain is often more important to the ship than its captain.

**AC** 17 (plate + shield), **HP** 15, **ATK** 2 greataxe +3 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** +0, **C** +1, **I** -1, **W** +0, **Ch** -1, **AL** C, **LV** 3

Rage. 1/day, immune to morale checks, +1d4 damage (3 rounds).

Voice of Command. 1/day.
Automatically succeed at rallying the crew without an action.

## Devlienne Thane

Powerful, steel-clad orc knight.

AC 17 (platemail + shield), HP 26, ATK 2 greataxe +4 (1d8) MV near, S +3, D +0, C +2, I +0, W +0, Ch -1, AL C, LV 5

Rage. 1/day, immune to morale checks, +1d6 damage (3 rounds).

**Inspire Rage.** 1/day, up to 3 allies gain +1d4 damage and immunity to morale checks for 3 rounds.

## Devlienne Serf

A brutish orc, eager to raise their station through violence.

AC 13 (chainmail), HP 4, ATK 1 warhammer +2 (1d10), MV near, S +2, D +0, C +0, I -1, W +0, Ch -1, AL C, LV 1

Rage. 1/day, immune to morale checks, +1d4 damage (3 rounds).

#### Devlienne Shaman

Painted with emblems of the thrones, eyes white with power.

**AC** 10, **HP** 26, **ATK** 2 greataxe +3 (2d8) or 1 spell, **MV** near, **S** +3, **D** +0, **C** +2, **I** -2, **W** +3, **Ch** +2, **AL** N, **LV** 5

Enraged. Immune to morale.

## Throne of Plague (WIS spell).

DC 13. Target in near has DISADV on their next check. If they fail that check, their nearest ally gains this effect.

Throne of Rage (WIS spell). DC 13. Target in near must take the attack action every round until they make a DC 15 CHA check.

## Throne of Storms (WIS spell).

DC 11. One target in near, second close to them, suffer 1d4 damage.

## Ships

## Tradition of Melee

The Devlienne theory of war has changed little, even after centuries exploring the aether: True glory is found in hand-to-hand combat aboard ships, not by blasting distant targets apart.

Devlienne ships are incantationbased, designed to get as many people to the target as they possibly can.

#### Devlienne Crasher

Rows of chanting orcs grip tight as they rush the skiff into battle.

AC 12 (lacquer), Hull 8, Spd +6, Mvr +4 (ceorl), Size 1, Ram hammer (1d12 siege, 1d3 injuries)

Serfs led by a plate-clad ceorl charge forth with battlecries.

CRW 10 devlienne serfs, AC 11, ATK +1 (1d6), Key Crew 4 devlienne serfs, 1 devlienne ceorl, LVs 6



#### **Devlienne Bicantor**

A sleek ship, lined with chanting sailors, driving it to ram.

AC 13 (lacquer), Hull 15, Spd +9 (coxwain), Mvr +3 (ceorl), Size 3, Ram hammer (3d12 siege, 3d3 injuries)

Devlienner orcs roaring warcries.

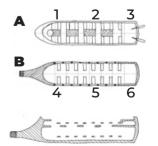
CRW 20 devlienne conscripts, 20 devlienne serfs, AC 13, ATK +2 (1, 1d6), Key Crew 3 devlienne serfs, 2 devlienne ceorls, 1 devlienne coxwain, LV 10

# d6 Bicantor Decks 1 Drum & incanting seats 2 Aft incanting seats 3 Tillers 4 Fore cargo storage

Lower incanting seats

6 Aft cargo storage

5



#### **Devlienne Lesser Tricantor**

A small, triple-decked ship, lined with cantors on every level.

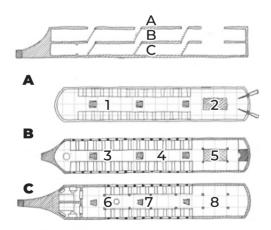
AC 12 (lacquer), Hull 35, Spd +9 (bosun), Mvr +2 (ceorl), Size 5, Ram hammer (5d12 siege, 5d3 injuries)

Pressganged sailors and serfs led by heavily armored ceorls.

CRW 120 devlienne conscripts, 60 devlienne serfs, AC 13, ATK +1 (3, 1d6), Key Crew 8 devlienne ceorls, 1 devlienne thane, LV 21

## d8 Song of Fury Decks

- 1 Upper incanting seats
- 2 Cargo lift & tillers
- 3 Fore incanting seats
- 4 Aft incanting seats
- 5 Provisions & galley
- 6 Cabins
- 7 Lower incanting seats
- 8 Main cargo hold



#### **Devlienne Great-Tricantor**

Massive trebuchets line the deck, tight-packed incantors below.

AC 15 (steel), Hull 100, Spd +6 (drummer), Mvr 1 (captain), Size 8, Ram hammer (8d12 siege, 8d3 injuries), ATK 4 large rock (far) +6 (1d8 siege) or 4 frost nets (near) +6 (slow)

A dense press of roaring orcs.

CRW 200 devlienne conscripts, 100 devlienne serfs, AC 12, ATK +1 (3, 1d8), Key Crew 8 devlienne ceorls, 1 devlienne thane, LVs 3

**Exhaustion.** After 3 consecutive SPD checks, SPD checks are at disadvantage for the day.

**Slow.** Target suffers -3 Spd and -3 Mvr for 1d3 rounds.

#### d12 Random Deck

	Fore trebuchet battery
2	Ships' boats & cargo lift
3	Aft trebuchet battery
4	Tiller
5	Fore incanting & bunks
6	Mid incanting & drums
7	Mid incanting & bunks

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8 Aft incanting & bunks

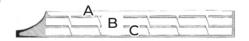
9 Fore incanting & drum

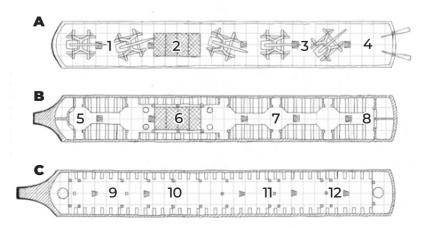
10 Mid cargo hold

11 Aft cargo hold

12 Aft incanting & drum

2 Crashers. AC 12, Hull 8, Spd +6, Mvr +4 (ceorl), Size 1, Ram hammer (1d12 siege, 1d3 injuries), Key Crew 4 devlienne serfs, 1 devlienne ceorl, LVs 6





## **Devlienne Quadricantor**

Shockingly fast for its size, headed by a massive steel ram.

AC 15 (steel), Hull 100, Spd +8 (drummer), Mvr +1 (captain), Size 8, Ram hammer (8d12 siege, 8d3 injuries)

Too many orcs to count, all eager for battle.

CRW 500 devlienne serfs, AC 11, ATK +1 (1d6), Key Crew 8 devlienne ceorls, 2 devlienne elite ceorls, 1 devlienne thane, 1 devlienne shaman, LV 2

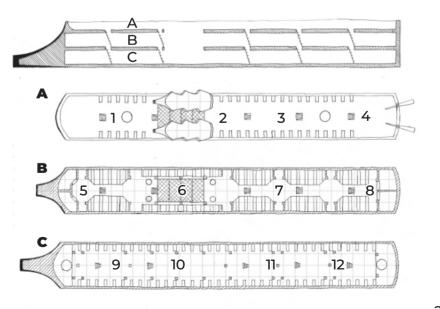
1	Upper fore incanting
2	Ships' boats & cargo lift
3	Upper aft incanting
4	Tiller
5	Fore incanting & bunks
6	Mid incanting & drums

- 7 Mid incanting & bunks
- 8 Aft incanting & bunks
- 9 Fore incanting & drum
- 10 Mid cargo hold

d12 Random Deck

- 11 Aft cargo hold
- 12 Aft incanting & drum

2 Crashers. AC 12, Hull 8, Spd +6, Mvr +4 (ceorl), Size 1, Ram hammer (1d12 siege, 1d3 injuries), Key Crew 4 devlienne serfs, 1 devlienne ceorl, LVs 6





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