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# Foreword

Part of the fun of designing roleplaying games is watching people reassemble elements of your game into new experiences.

Parsantium was already underway as an RPG campaign using other d20-rolling systems when Jonathan Tweet and I designed *13th Age*. Rich Green picked up the icons and icon relationships in our storytelling mechanics as the long-missing pieces of his Byzantine Lego castle! The most powerful NPCs of Rich's world of magical intrigue and political magicians were transformed into icons and Parsantium found its voice.

You're holding the blueprint for *13th Age* campaigns set in a world of Byzantine intrigue. The fifteen icons in this book are the pillars, or the potential destroyers, of the greatest city of the world. Follow the Basileus and you'll dedicate yourself to protecting Parsantium at all costs. Risk a flirtation with the Lady of the Summer Kingdom and you could be snared by the whims of Faerie. Ally with the Maharani to fight for the world's smartest heroine whose Peacock Throne pulls its mythic power from Hindu archetypes not seen that often in Western fantasy. Pit yourself against the Boss of All Bosses and you'll be setting yourself up as a fantasy crimefighter in a game where the stakes may rise beyond the streets to cosmic injustice.

A few of the Parsantium icons could stand in for core icons in a variant campaign – the Mummy, for example, could take over the Lich King for a subtle rewrapping of undead horror. The Grand Master of the Blue Lotus taking over for the Archmage would be a much bigger shift, but the campaigns that result would offer a much different take on magic prowess, as well as a race of intelligent magic-using monkeys that aren't humans!

I'm happiest with the figure of the Rajah, the dread archvillain who was supposedly taken out of the world's power struggles ages ago. The lesson here, as always, is that sometimes it's not enough to see the archvillain's body locked in impenetrable magical ice. You need to flame the rakshasa's body and holy-lightning the dread soul, or you'll always have to fear that the future will end up tiger-striped.

Speaking of tigers, *Parsantium* reminds me that core *13th Age* could do a lot more with rakshasas. For a start, any campaign could borrow the Rajah as a newly returned icon of terror, or as the true tiger behind the mask of the Prince of Shadows.

That's our gift cycle complete then. I helped out with icon relationships and by having no objection to my surname being used as a name for one of the world's worst guys. Rich gives me the dream of a resurgent rakshasa.

Here's to a tiger-striped future... or to the characters who forge themselves into heroes making sure that never comes to pass!

– Rob Heinsoo

Seattle, WA  
June 1, 2015



# Who Are Parsantium's Icons?

This supplement for *Parsantium: City at the Crossroads* contains fifteen icons from the Free City of Parsantium and the lands beyond, for use with the 13th Age Roleplaying Game. These movers and shakers should also prove useful for GMs running Parsantium games using the 13th Age icon relationship rules with other incarnations of the world's bestselling fantasy RPG – or indeed anyone using the setting.

The influential NPCs outlined in this section and described in depth throughout the book include the rulers of kingdoms, powerful priests, arcane and martial orders and their leaders, and monstrous beings, both malevolent and benign. Your player characters can ally with or work against the machinations of these icons, thereby driving the story of your campaign in interesting new directions.

You should feel free to tweak the icons to fit your own campaign. For example, if the simmering conflict between Parsantium, Aqhran and the city of Loranto is a focus for your game, then the Basileus, the Caliph and the Water Lords are likely to play central roles, while the Emperor of the Jade Throne and the Mummy fade into the background. Or you might decide that the Grand Master of the Blue Lotus is secretly up to no good, or that the Witch of Flotsam is a useful ally for your PCs.

Each of the icons is laid out in the standard format, with secret GM-only knowledge covered

in a separate section at the end of the book. An additional chapter provides ideas for icon relationship rolls. These suggestions are divided into positive and negative relationships, and whether the dice are 5s or 6s; they can also be used as adventure hooks.



## The Archbishop

His Radiance Arcadius is the Archbishop of Parsantium and the head of the Church of Helion, Lord of the Gods and Bathuran god of the harvest, summer and the sun. The Church's doctrine is to shine the light of civilization onto the world; followers of the Archbishop are expected to guard against evil wherever it might be found, and to show kindness and compassion to others.

## The Basileus

The Basileus, a Bathuran word meaning "sovereign", is the absolute ruler of the Free City of Parsantium and its surrounding territories. The current Basileus is Corandias XVIII the Lion-Blooded; he has been on the throne for ten



years and is a direct descendant of Corandias I the Magnificent. Corandias is fiercely determined to protect Parsantium and its people at all costs: the city must never again be allowed to suffer the indignity of falling to its enemies.

### The Boss of All Bosses

Also known as the Fourth Tribune, the Boss of All Bosses controls the criminal gangs of the Hidden Quarter beneath the city streets of Parsantium. A shadowy Aqhrani man named Avishandu is the current Boss of All Bosses, making strategic decisions, resolving disputes and taking a sizeable cut of the gangs' profits. Cunning, absolutely ruthless and phenomenally patient, Avishandu is playing a long game.

### The Caliph

The Great Caliph, Faisal al-Aqil, Most Blessed Disciple of the One True God, Supreme Potentate of the Desert Realms, Grand Sultan of the Sparkling Sea, Conqueror of Khemit and Protector of Parsantium, rules the Caliphate of Aqhran, the vast desert kingdom to the southwest of Parsantium. The Caliph is a scholar and an astronomer who sees himself as the spiritual heir to Hulieman, Parsantium's great sultan and an enlightened ruler with a passionate interest in the stars.

### The Dragon

The Dragon is Naelere, a very old female bronze, who has lived in Parsantium for the last 700 years under various guises and acts as the city's unofficial protector. Little more than a legendary figure to most Parsantines, the Dragon is a mysterious guardian who has appeared a handful of times in the city's past to defend Parsantium from danger.

### The Emperor of the Jade Throne

The youthful human Emperor of the Jade Throne, Cheng Xiao, also known as the Ruler of All Under Heaven, presides over the mighty kingdom of Tiangao, situated far to the east of Parsantium at the end of the Silk Road. The Emperor battles criminal tongs inside his borders, as well as the bloody raids of the Gnoll Khan on Tiangaon trade caravans.

### The Gnoll Khan

The Grand Khan of the Gnolls, Urgedai the Kinslayer, menaces the Silk Road that runs from Parsantium across the Great Grass Sea to the exotic land of Tiangao far to the east. The Gnoll Khan has united many of the feral tribes of the steppes under his bloody standard, building them into a rapidly growing army.

### The Grand Master of the Blue Lotus

The Grand Master of the Esoteric Order of the Blue Lotus is the head of the world's foremost arcanists' guild – an order dedicated to the advancement of magical knowledge. The vanara Tapasranjan, a superlative practitioner of magic of the mind, is the current Grand Master. Extremely intelligent, honest, and very direct, he champions the rights of the downtrodden citizens of Parsantium's Old Quarter.

### The Lady of the Summer Kingdom

As arrogant as she is alluring, Queen Nazrylana is the Summer Queen of Faerie, ruling a kingdom that exists in two worlds simultaneously and encompasses the Feyshore Forest to the east of Parsantium. The Lady of the Summer Kingdom watches over the lands of Faerie and the forests and wild places of the material world, defending them from brutal humanoids and from the relentless expansion of human civilization.



### The Maharani

The wise and beautiful Maharani Rashmi rules the Kingdoms of Sampur, which lie to the southeast of Parsantium beyond the Pillars of Heaven Mountains, at the end of the Path to Heaven. The daughter of the human Rana (queen) of the kingdom of Jhanzadar and the sun god Surya, the Maharani united the six kingdoms of Sampur by marrying the Rajputs (princes) of the other five.

### The Mummy

The Mummy is the undead Queen Merytnofru, last pharaoh of the fallen desert kingdom of Khemit, which lies to the south of Parsantium. Newly awakened by a group of blundering tomb raiders, the Mummy is gathering the forces she needs to restore her once great kingdom to its former splendour.

### The Platinum Knights

The Platinum Knights of Themicia is a fighting order of knights and paladins acting as the sword and shield of the Church of Themicia, sworn to protect the god’s clerics and worshippers from harm, and to mete out justice to evildoers. Followers of a strict chivalric code, the Platinum Knights defend the inhabitants of the former Bathuran Empire from orcs, hobgoblins and other hostile humanoids.

### The Rajah

The Rajah is Vrishabha, the rakshasa lord who ruled Parsantium nearly 2,000 years ago when the city was known as Dhak Janjua. Vrishabha has been frozen in the ice at the top of the Pillars of Heaven Mountains for 1,900 years, waiting to be freed so he might return to rule his city with an iron fist once again.

### The Water Lords

The twelve Water Lords are the elected rulers of the Most Serene City of Loranto, a powerful mercantile canal city situated across the Corsairs’ Sea to the west of Parsantium. Although the Water Lords squabble, scheme and plot against each other, all of them share the common aim of making Loranto the dominant maritime trade power in the Corsairs’ Sea.

### The Witch of Flotsam

Jagadamba, the Witch of Flotsam, is a fortune teller, skilled apothecary, priestess of the Black Mother, and Parsantium’s most powerful witch. Jagadamba is renowned throughout the Old Quarter, and it’s recently become fashionable for Bathuran noblewomen of the Imperial Quarter to consult with her.

<b>HEROIC ICONS</b>
Usually the Archbishop, the Dragon, the Grand Master of the Blue Lotus, the Maharani and the Platinum Knights. Possibly the Caliph and the Basileus.
<b>AMBIGUOUS ICONS</b>
Usually the Caliph, the Lady of the Summer Kingdom, the Basileus, the Emperor of the Jade Throne and the Water Lords. Possibly the Archbishop.
<b>VILLAINOUS ICONS</b>
Usually the Boss of All Bosses, the Gnoll Khan, the Mummy, the Rajah and the Witch of Flotsam. Possibly the Water Lords.