

## **FORGOTTEN REALMS ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS: ISSUE IV**

### **Editorial**

Welcome to issue IV of the Forgotten Realms Alternate Dimensions Webzine. My intention is for this to become a home for people who wish to publish material about their own versions of the Forgotten Realms. The content presented within these pages should in no way be considered canon material and is meant to represent a glimpse of the possibilities available to people running a campaign world in the Forgotten Realms setting.

I would just like to say a brief thank you to all the scribes at Candlekeep and everyone who has worked on the Forgotten Realms for the past few decades. Thank you for inspiring me and giving me many years of enjoyment with the Forgotten Realms.

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## Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - Mythology

What follows is an alternate representation of the Mulan deities, their travel to Toril and their actions upon their arrival.

Contrary to what is popularly believed, all the gods of the Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian peoples travelled to Toril in gigantic space faring vessels.

Those deities no longer represented in the modern day Untheric and Mulhorandi pantheons were slain during the war with the Imaskari, the Orcgate Wars, or disappeared into obscurity in the millennia that followed.

The Mulan gods pooled all their divine energy into a single avatar to travel to Toril, essentially making themselves Material Plane bound deities. When they arrived the Mulhorandi deities split some of their power among the Mulan peoples, elevating them to a status similar to the Chosen of Mystra, while the Untheric and Akanic deities kept their divine energy locked inside a single powerful avatar.

Those deities that perished in the ensuing war with the Imaskari were permanently dead. Their entire divinity was contained within the avatar form on the Material Plane and when it was destroyed their life was ended.

Ptah was overcome by the loss of so many of his friends and allies during the Imaskari conflict that he volunteered to watch over the bodies of the deceased on the Astral Plane. Transporting their bodies to a vast deific graveyard, Ptah maintains his vigil to this day.

After the destruction wrought upon their numbers by the Imaskari, the Mulan gods worked hard to bring down the Imaskari Planar Barrier that prevented them from returning to the Outer Planes. The Orcgate Wars interrupted that research and slew another wave of gods which severely hampered their future efforts.

It was Gilgeam who finally discovered the secret of the Planar Barrier in the aftermath of the Orcgate Wars. His search for Imaskari artefacts led him across Imaskar's former territory, and in the lands north of the Alamber Sea, he discovered an extra-dimensional space that housed the artefact creating the Planar Barrier.

Gilgeam toyed with this artefact and used it to imprison Enlil in the extra-dimensional space that Gilgeam had turned into a labyrinthine, trapped, prison. In doing so the Planar Barrier surrounding Toril was removed and Enlil disappeared, allowing Gilgeam to claim his place as head of the Untheric pantheon.

After the Barrier was removed, the Mulan gods returned to the Outer Planes en-masse. Many of them, particularly the Mulhorandi gods, continued to bestow Chosen status upon their favoured servants (many of whom were related by blood to the deities themselves). Gilgeam however chose to invest a vast portion of his deific power and essence into a single avatar on the Material Plane in Unther. This allowed him to maintain absolute control of Unther and also meant he could continue to sample life's pleasures.

The loss of this avatar and the cruelty he visited upon Unther and his worshippers meant that Gilgeam was severely weakened immediately following the Time of Troubles and so was easy prey for Tiamat the Dragon Queen.

**Material Plane Bound Deities:** Just a clarification on the difference between those deities based on the Outer Planes and those deities based on the Material Plane.

When a god first becomes a deity, it is typically as a Demi-Power. These beings usually have insufficient power to create their own Outer Planar home to house their divine essence and so must request a place within another god's home plane, typically their sponsor if they have one.

Once they have settled on an Outer Plane to live in, these Demi-Powers function exactly like any other normal deity. They can send servants and manifestations to the Material Plane to communicate with their worshippers,

Until such a time as an Outer Planar abode is chosen, a god is bound to the Material Plane. This period can last for a few days, months, or years, but for some gods it is a permanent choice, they are unwilling to leave behind the material pleasures of life, or perhaps feel they can fight their cause better in a more direct manner. Whatever the reason for being Material Plane bound, a deity may manifest only one avatar during this period. This avatar is the sole source of their divine essence and if destroyed the deity is likewise destroyed.

It is usually only Demi-Powers that choose or experience being Material Plane bound for any length of time (the Godswar is an exception). The reasons for this are unique to the god, but from a pure efficiency point of view, a lesser, intermediate, or greater power can manifest more than one avatar at a time when he is resident on the Outer Planes. Therefore gods of a power level greater than a demi-power lose a significant amount of options by remaining confined to just one avatar on the Material Plane, and that is not including the vulnerability to destruction.

Tchazzar is a recent example of a Demi-Power that is bound to the Material Plane. After his reappearance, Tchazzar has resided in Cimbar while he consolidates his strength and prepares his next move. His reasons for doing so are so that he can personally protect his worshipper base while at the same time remaining out of sight of Tiamat who at one time was his deific sponsor and ally, although their relationship has since become strained.

The Mulan deities are ancient examples of gods of all power levels that were confined to the Material Plane. The Imaskari Planar barrier prevented these deities from moving to the Outer Planes and so they remained in avatar form on the Material Plane. In this form they were vulnerable to death and destruction and indeed many of them perished in the Imaskari and Orcgate Wars.

## The Adventures of Aytros Falconwing: On The Run (Part 1)

A story by Ryan Rahuba

The six wagons of the Gur caravan pulled through the gates within Greenest's palisade wall and moved along until they came to an open space big enough for them along the wall itself. Greenest was a booming palisade town in the Greenfields in the Western Heartlands of Faerûn slowly being grown by the Halfling Dharva Scatterheart. Though it was barely large enough to make it onto most maps, it was gaining ground mainly due to the trade from caravans passing through the area on the way to or from Berdusk.

The Gurs were a nomadic people of the Heartlands that traveled in family or clan groups. Their caravans were an assortment of enclosed wagons that moved from town to town trading furs, pelts and any other goods they had. They stayed as long as they wished and came and went as they pleased. As a people they were stout, sturdy and strong with black hair, dark eyes and dusky skin.

As the last wagon came to a halt, two people stepped out that were obviously not Gurs. The man was almost 6 feet tall with messy reddish hair down to his shoulders, a full beard, greyish-blue eyes and a pale complexion. He wore a plain faded blue shirt tucked into the waist of his black pants that in turn disappeared into the tops of a pair of well-worn boots. From his belt hung what appeared to be a leather apron that he wore around his back instead of his front and hung halfway down his thighs. On the sides of it, atop his legs, were several small pockets whose contents could only be guessed at. Over the top of everything else he wore a long brown overcoat that hung down below his knees.

The woman was closer to five feet than six. Wavy auburn hair fell below her shoulders with the occasional stray lock coming across her face. Her deep blue eyes were full of kindness but had a wary, almost hunted, edge to them. Her dusky skin covered toned muscles that spoke of speed and agility over strength. She was covered across her chest and from her waist to her ankles with fine silks of greens and browns. A pair of silver bracers adorned her wrists and another bauble was wrapped around her upper right arm. She wore no shoes and had a tendency to walk on the balls of her feet. However, her most striking features were a pair of triangular ears and a bushy tail that curved upward from under a layer of silk. The ears peeked out of the top of her head, through her hair, and were reddish brown

that darkened to black at the tips. The tail was similarly colored with white fur on the underside.

As they emerged from the wagon's door the man turned back to gaze along the road they had come by while the woman performed a languid, almost animal like stretch pushing her arms over her head and arching her back. The smile from finally being outside of the wagon faded slightly as she looked at her companion and took in the tension that was obvious in the set of his shoulders and posture. Her smile turned to a look of gratitude as she recalled the past several tendays. Kidnapped, beaten, tortured and chained in a gods-forsaken basement in who-knew-where, she had given up and resigned herself to whatever fate was coming. Then he came for her. The one person she desperately wanted to see and who she thought she would never see again. He rescued her and in a fury of fire and ice and lightning they both escaped.

He had given up everything for her and, though she was grateful and happy to be together, she regretted the circumstances. Above all she hated to see him so tense, so stressed. She put her hand gently on his shoulder but his eyes remained fixed on the road behind them, though she felt the tension ease a little at her touch.

"Aytros, do not worry so. It has been over a month and we have seen no sign that anyone is following us." She said after several moments without any change. Her voice was soft, soothing. When his only response was a heavy sigh she stepped in front of him and a gentle hand laid upon his cheek brought his eyes down to meet hers.

He stared into her eyes as he slowly relaxed. "Do you think they have given up that easily, Isha?"

Now it was her turn to sigh as she was reminded of the seriousness of their situation. "No. But it has been many tendays since we left and we are many, many miles from Cormyr. We have been traveling all that time cooped up in a wagon. Let us enjoy a little respite and focus on the positive side of our predicament."

His left eyebrow rose slowly, questioningly, "Pray tell, what is this positive that you are referring to?"

She flashed a bright smile and kissed him lightly on his lips, "The fact that we are together, traveling and seeing the wider Realms just like we always talked about

when we were children."

At that he did manage a smile. He took her words to heart and pushed their troubles to the back of his mind and focused on the here and now. He returned her kiss and took her hand in his. "How long are they staying in this place?" He inclined his head to indicate the group of wagons in the caravan.

Isha shrugged, "A tenday at the least I believe. Greenest is a very good trading spot at the moment. And I think a few of them are going to try to find a little work to raise some coin."

Aytros' eyes briefly took in her appearance, particularly her ears and tail. Also, now that he looked closer, her face was subtly different, just a little too long for a normal human. He cleared his throat as if he were broaching a very delicate subject. "Do you think it wise to be out in public like that? Aren't we trying to blend in as much as possible?"

She looked at him and her eyes were pleading rather than angry. "I find myself not caring at the moment. I am tired of hiding. Besides I have been confined too long. You do not know what it is like to keep it hidden. I need to be free for a while."

He nods, merely accepting it as another aspect of their situation. He smiled in spite of himself. It was nice to see Isha in good spirits considering her recent ordeal. "Very well. What shall we do while we are here? We should probably try and earn some coin ourselves."

Isha shook her head. "That can wait. Let's just take today and look around. Some of the *Gur* said that because of the constant caravan traffic through Greenest, the market has some exceptional items and it is always shifting and changing."

"Lead on and we can judge the market ourselves."

The next few hours past in a swirl of barely controlled chaos as the sights, sounds, and smells of dozens of caravans and hundreds of merchants all fought each other for the attention of their senses. There were furs and pelts from the North, silks and perfumes from the South, dwarven crafts including weapons, armor and gems from the depths of the earth, and all manner of other wonders from places like Silvermoon, Waterdeep, Suzail, and the Dales. They bought a set of traveling clothes for Isha, the dress she currently wore being the only clothes that she owned,



though no boots as she still preferred not to cover her feet. Aytros lingered around stalls and vendors that boasted various supposed magical trinkets while Isha was drawn to those selling weapons, particularly those selling paired blades.

Despite their current troubles both of them were able to, if not forget them, at least push them aside for the day. Hand in hand they traversed the whole of the market and even visited some of the caravans and looked at their wares. By the time they returned to the Gur caravan, the sun was starting to sink below the horizon. The wagons had been arranged in a more or less enclosed ring and a bright fire was starting to bloom in the center. Reaching the door to their own, their purse was a little lighter, but they were in better spirits for it. The clan patriarch invited them over to the fire as he normally did. Although they usually accepted, having grown fond of these people in the days that they traveled together, tonight they declined. They needed a good rest tonight before looking for work in the morning.

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The man's name was Rat. It was not his given name, but it was as good a name as any for his profession. He had acquired that name because he was a small timid sort of person but also because he was quite good at moving around unnoticed, especially at night, and getting into places others could not. It was how he was able to gather the best information.

He had spent all day using these skills to follow the two that came in on the last caravan. The two of them were not exactly taking many precautions and it wasn't long before word was sent to him to follow and watch them. Several times he simply shook his head at the whole situation. All shifters went for a high price in the slave markets and were always in high demand. He could only imagine what one would fetch that had more noticeable features. One would think that they would take a little more care to blend in. It was almost enough for him to take pity on them. Almost. Coin was coin after all and he was not paid for pity.

Rat had followed them all day, the crowded market making it relatively easy. He was given slight pause when he found out that the caravan was Guran. They were known to be overly protective and tended to hold nasty grudges. But that was for others above him to worry about. He stayed within sight of the caravan for several hours after the targets entered a wagon and he only left as his scheduled rendezvous approached.

Back within Greenest, he turned down a back alley, walked up to a section of wall and searched for a particular brick marked with a series of scratches. After pressing it, he walked into the revealed door. Inside was a small room with one crude table and two chairs that flanked a door directly across from where Rat entered. Both chairs were occupied by two large men, whom he always suspected to have ogre blood in the lineage. They immediately stood shoulder to shoulder and blocked any further progress.

Rat gave a frustrated sigh, "I am expected."

The two thugs still did not move until a voice called out from behind the doorway. Stepping aside, they continued to glare at the small man until he had passed through the door. This room was only slightly bigger than the previous one and had a larger table near the back wall that had piles of papers scattered on top. The man who sat behind it was taller than he was and rail thin. However, those that mistook that for weakness were sorely mistaken. He had an air of authority and moved with an ease that spoke of confidence and experience. He was meticulously, if simply dressed, with not a thing out of place.

When Rat entered the man looked up and gave a smile of anticipation that never touched his cold, dark eyes. He had been eagerly awaiting Rat and in fact had already sent word to several contacts regarding his soon to be new acquisition.

"Rat, please sit." He was polite to a fault but instead of putting people at ease, it just seemed to add to the danger of this man. "Now what can you tell me of the shifter?"

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Aytros and Isha were up early the next morning and spent a sparse breakfast discussing how best to earn some coin while the caravan was here. Their options were limited though. Aytros was a fairly good alchemist but he had no materials and could not afford to buy any. Isha was in superb physical condition and very graceful. She had earned coin before as a dancer, but that was not consistent. There was always general labor but the Gur that they came with were snatching up those jobs. After throwing around other ideas, all of them equally as dubious, they came to the conclusion that it would come down to their physical prowess. Aytros had previously been with the War Wizards and also had his magic and Isha, before she was abducted, was trained by her father with several weapons.

Shortly afterward they left their wagon and the change in Isha couldn't be more dramatic. Gone were the flowing silks replaced with the clothes she bought at the market: a pair of tan pants, a hole had been opened to let her tail through, and a green sleeveless shirt that was only slightly too big but was gathered and tucked in at her belt. Her hair was in a tight braid draped over her shoulder. She still wore the silver bracers on her wrists and was still without shoes, the reason for which was now clear. She was letting more of her animal side show this day. A thin layer of reddish-brown fur now covered her body from head to toe fading to black at her fingers and toes which ended in small claws. Her feet were shaped more like an animal's than a human's and her face had elongated to a short muzzle with pointed teeth. Blue eyes were replaced with a luminous gold. Strapped across the front of her waist was a sheathed katana and matching wakizashi.

Aytros was dressed in the same outfit as the previous day with the addition of a chain shirt covering his torso. A short spear was strapped across his back and a buckler was attached to his right arm. Both of them had light packs on their backs and made their way to the largest tavern in town where a board stood advertising work to be had which included small excursions into the surrounding lands which could not afford to hire guides and guards outright. Those putting up advertisements were desperate enough to take their chances with whoever answered the postings but could still pay.

On the board was everything from local merchants and craftsmen requesting ingredients and materials found in these parts to those needing protection for trips to outlying farms that traveled overland for longer than was wise when traveling alone. There were even a couple adventuring bands hiring extra, and temporary, help for excursions to this ruin or that site.

After spending several minutes looking over the board Aytros asks, "What will it be, my dear? There seem to be plenty of easy looking tasks. Mostly escorts and message running."

Having something to do, and getting out of the wagon, not to mention the prospect of adventure, had worked wonders on Isha. It was with a much lifted mood and an impish grin that she looked over the boards herself. "What would be the fun in that? I have had my fill lately of 'safe and boring.' Besides, the real coin comes from the more...interesting jobs."

The two of them kept busy taking one job after another, sometimes several smaller ones at the same time, usually working together with only rare instances of taking separate jobs to cover more ground. Mostly they ran messages, or provided escort to and from the outlying homesteads of Greenest, and even a trip to Berdusk itself. The few exceptions were routing a band of highwaymen from the road and hunting some monsters that were causing trouble. As the days passed they felt themselves falling into their old rhythm with each particular skill set complimenting the other's. As a result by the end of the second tenday, when the Gur leader announced that they would be leaving in a couple days, Aytros and Isha had a nice sized bag of coins and were feeling much more at ease and confident about their situation.

After getting assurances from their Guran friends that they would not leave without them, the two of them decided on one last job. They had had their eye on one particular posting on the board. Someone was claiming to have found some previously unknown ruins on the Eastern edge of the Woods of Sharp Teeth and was looking for adventurers to guard against the dangers of the woods. Particularly, the lycanthropes that inhabited it. Isha became more serious at the mention of the shapechangers and seemed more determined to investigate. The flier promised a short trip and a quick look to evaluate the site for its value. For his part Aytros thought it a little too promising and as several people had already answered the advertisement, he originally was not going to give it much thought. However, as each person who answered the posting was turned away, apparently the person requesting help was looking for "the right adventurers," he became more interested. He also became more suspicious. However, as Isha was adamant about checking it out, and he would not leave her to do so alone, he agreed to at least go and hear what the job entailed. Also, the posted pay, 10 gold each and the pick of anything they found, was too tempting.

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Rat's involvement was pretty much done. He had done his job and followed the shifter for over a tenday while plans were made. The leader was a cautious man and never left anything to chance. While the potential price of such a unique shifter to the right buyer apparently outweighed the risks, he was determined not to ignore them. And there were a lot of unknown factors here. In a fight, shifters were known to be quite formidable and this one carried her swords with a confidence that said

she knew what to do with them. The man with her was also unknown and seemed quite capable. He never followed them when they left town, but from what he was hearing from other informants and those who did accompany the pair, Rat's estimation was not misplaced. Finally, no one wanted to upset the Gurs that the two had arrived with. Gurs were good and fair traders and a hearty folk to say the least. On top of that they were very protective of their own. While the shifter and her companion were obviously not Gurs themselves, the fact that they were in the caravan spoke much. As a people Gurs tended to be closed off but those that they allowed to join them tended to be treated as extended family. No one wanted to get involved with at least a dozen strong and capable people.

In the end, it was decided to set a trap and let the shifter come to them. So Rat was ordered to continue to watch and follow. And so he had done and now they were heading towards the warehouse where his fellows were already waiting. As his last part in this, Rat hustled on a roundabout route to the warehouse to tell of their approach.

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As they were escorted inside the warehouse, Aytros became more uneasy. Was it his imagination or when they told the guards at the door that they were answering the flier did they seem unsurprised? For that matter, why did a merchant warehouse have guards in the first place? Surely Greenest was a growing trade community, but they were nowhere near the other cities of the Realms. Was trade competition so fierce, even here, that guards were necessary? The soldier in him said that something was wrong and he wondered if Isha was feeling the same. If this was a trap for whatever reason, he did not want to tip them off that he was aware of it.

On the inside the warehouse seemed normal enough if a little empty at the moment. Aside from a few piles of crates and sacks along the walls, the room was a large open space at least twenty feet high. That alone made the hairs on his neck stand on end. It was too open, exposed. He reached for Isha's hand and gave it a little squeeze to get her attention. When she looked at him he saw the same tension mirrored in her eyes and suddenly he just wanted to get out of there.

Before they could try to silently work out a plan or make any move towards the exits he felt it. Waves of magical compulsion assaulted his mind with one thought.

Sleep. A voice in his head was telling him that everything was fine. It pointed out how very tired he was and that it would be a good idea to lie down and close his eyes. A quick look beside him showed that Isha was being similarly attacked. He tried to fight it. He *needed* to fight it. They needed to get out of there. Aytros fought to the end but as the magical sleep overwhelmed him he slowly sank to the ground. Just before he lost consciousness he heard Isha hit the floor beside him then knew no more.

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The slap in his face was a rather rude way to come back to the waking world. But the fist in his gut was worse. His eyes flew open as he felt all the air leave his body. As he gasped for breath, he looked around him. He was in the center of a small room, little more than a prison cell. His hands were bound together above his head and he was hanging just above the floor. From what he could tell there were no windows and the only light in the room had no source that he could see.

A young man stood in front of him. He had straight dark hair cut short, a clean shaven face, green eyes. A rather unpleasant grin was spread on his face. His fine clothes and, from what Aytros could tell from his vantage, smooth hands suggested some sort of nobility. For a long moment they just stared at each other. Aytros spoke first, asking, "Who are you? What do you want?" He was rewarded with a backhand to his cheek that sent him spinning on whatever he was hanging from. In the blur that followed he made out a metal door opposite the noble with two guards flanking it. Everything was moving too fast for him to make out much detail.

The two guards moved in to straighten him out and make him face the noble again. After another painfully long silence, the young noble spoke, his voice was fairly dripping with disdain. "Do you know who I am yet?" When Aytros just shook his head, and got another punch right to his abdomen, the noble answered. "My name is Aldon Wyvernspur. Red Castle sends its regards."

Aytros's heart sank. Memories flashed through his head from several months ago. Isha chained in a basement. Finding her there and being filled with a rage he had never felt before. Freeing her and escaping. Finally the unfortunate two that tried to stop them. He still saw their faces in his mind from time to time and tried to convince himself that they deserved it. He tried to find the words. "You were holding her. I just wanted to save her. I asked them to stand aside."

Aldon laughed coldly. "They are still dead. House Wyvernsbur was embarrassed as well as a very important associate who we were acquiring the slave for, in payment for her father's debt."

Aytros's temper flared at the mention of "slave" and he spat in the man's face. He barely cared as he received another painful reminder of his position. After he stopped spinning again he looked defiantly at his captor as he continued. "The Red Wizards should not be taken lightly. Especially when those in question are associates of one of the Zulkirs." Wyvernsbur shook his head in mock disappointment. "When our informants brought word of a shifter coming up for sale we were interested as recompense to the property of our associate that was lost in our house. But imagine our surprise when we found out who it was." He paused to let everything sink in. "It took a while to get everything in place, and we simply had to have a representative present."

"So what now?" Aytros' voice was tinged with defeat.

"Now you will both be handed over to the Red Wizards. We sent word to them as soon as we knew for certain and they are sending someone to claim their property. They do not care about you, of course. So I imagine you will be killed. We wanted to kill you ourselves, but since it was they whom you stole from we thought it only fair they get the choice. However, they were not specific as to what state they wanted you in. So we get to have some fun first." Aldon Wyvernsbur drew Aytros' attention to the side where several unpleasant looking instruments, and a few toxic looking vials sat on a table. "Now, if you will excuse me...I have to get some rest. We have several days before the Red Wizards get here and I want to make sure I have the strength to keep up that long."

The noble walked past him to the door and Aytros couldn't even find it in him to try and do anything. As he heard the door close, and the light left the room, he gave one wild scream of rage and frustration and simply slumped lower from his bound wrists.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Mulhorandi-Untheric Pantheon

In 1371 DR the armies of Mulhorand marched on the remains of Unther. With relative ease they conquered the fractious remnants of the once great nation and within 3 years were at the walls of Messemprar, the last bastion of free Unther in the realms.

However success was not guaranteed and with the arrival of Nanna-Sin's legion in 1374 DR, Mulhorand had to negotiate with the remnants of Unther in Messemprar. The new borders of Unther were agreed and everything south of Unthalass (including Unthalass itself) would now be nominally part of Mulhorand and owe taxes and fealty to that land. In actuality however Unthalass remains an autonomous province that obeys the edicts of the government of Unther in Messemprar as much as it does Mulhorand.

This turn of events began when Enlil returned suddenly late in 1374 DR. His story of imprisonment by Gilgeam long ago had a ring of truth to it and his subsequent release by a band of adventurers was well timed with the turmoil and uncertainty surrounding the Untheric pantheon.

Enlil's return meant a re-establishment of the historical borders between Unther and Mulhorand. A legal agreement made so long ago could not be ignored by the head of either pantheon despite recent military conquests; to discount such an agreement was to nullify the ancient alliances that bound the two empires together and preserved peace and prosperity between them for so long.

However instead of demanding the return of Unthalass, Enlil had another idea. He proposed a merger between the two pantheons so that the Mulan gods might better resist the expansionist Faerûnian pantheon that had nearly taken the land of Akanu and was beginning to encroach into Unther. Horus-Re and the Mulhorandi gods were likewise worried about the Faerûnian gods and so were receptive to the proposal.

In exchange for making Unthalass and the Greenfields a vassal province of Mulhorand that paid an annual tithe but otherwise was free to govern itself according to Unther's laws, the Untheric and Mulhorandi pantheons would become one.

Thus the Mulhorantheric Pantheon was born (or Untherandi Pantheon if you are from Unther), and the home planes of Zigguraxis and Heliopolis merged into one. This new pantheon has complete authority in both Unther and Mulhorand and is contesting the



regions of Chessenta and Thay with the Faerûnian pantheon.

In Unther and Mulhorand, any action that empowers a particular portfolio gives power to the Mulhorandi/Untheric god that holds that portfolio. Only those acts performed by worshippers of a Faerûnian deity or performed for a Faerûnian deity (the god in question must be named during the act) will empower deities outside of the Mulhorandi/Untheric pantheon.

In Chessenta, the area has been contested by both pantheons for nearly a millennia. When Ramman left Akanu (as it was known then) for Unther, displaced Hoar who spent many years in Chessenta before joining the Faerûnian pantheon and attempting to spread his faith into that sphere. During that period Anhur made significant inroads as the god of war among the mercenaries of Chessenta as well as Tiamat the Dark Lady and Sebek who also maintained a significant presence in the area as well.

Thay meanwhile has been very anti-Mulhorand since its inception, but it has also been anti-religious (until very recently) and so the worship of gods as a whole has been rather subdued. This means that the zealous worshippers of Set that have remained hidden in Thay through the years, while small in number, actually made up a larger percentage of dedicated worshippers in Thay and so the region remains contested between the Faerûnian and new Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon. Furthermore it is only the Mulan elite who are strongly anti-Mulhorand, among the commoners the Mulan gods still have a following in the hopes they will save them from the Red Wizards. While the leaders of Thay remain strongly opposed to any Mulhorandi influence in Thay, it remains to be seen whether they will allow any of the Untheric gods into Thay. Gilgeam would certainly be popular in Thay for his tyrannical leanings and Tiamat would also be popular among those seeking to bring down the Zulkirate.

### **Rollcall of the Gods**

**Anhur:** War, Battle, Conflict, Thunder, Rain, the Sky, Weather, Storms, Lightning

**Bast:** Hedonism, Sensual Fulfilment, Lust, Excess, Cats, Pleasure Seekers, Festhalls

**Enlil:** Unther, Law, Order

**Geb:** The Earth, Miners, Minerals, Mines

**Gilgeam:** Madness, Physical Prowess, Undeath

**Hathor:** Childbirth, Motherhood, Fertility, Children, Music, Dance, Poetry, Fate

**Hoar:** Revenge, Retribution, Poetic Justice

**Horus-Re:** The Sun, Rulership, Kings, Life, Mulhorand

**Isis:** Magic, Marriage, Rivers, Love, Good Magic

**Marduk (Bahamut):** Good Dragons, Metallic Dragons, Wisdom, Enlightened Justice

**Nanna Sin:** Protection from Evil, Defence, the Moon

**Nephthys:** Grief, Wealth, Trade, Commerce

**Osiris:** Harvest, Nature, Agriculture, Underworld, Death, the Dead, Justice

**Sebek:** Hazards, Crocodiles, Werecoodiles, Wetlands

**Set:** Darkness, Evil, Desert Storms, Drought, Snakes, Murder, Destruction, Rot, Predators, Carrion, Betrayal, Evil Magic, Ambition, Poison

**Thoth:** Knowledge, Learning, Neutral Magic, Scribes, Science, Engineering, Secrets, Invention

**Tiamat:** Evil Dragons, Chromatic Dragons, Greed, Rebellion

From 1375 DR onwards, all the gods of Mulhorand and Unther are able to be worshipped throughout the lands of both nations without conflict. Enlil and Horus-Re agreed not to restrict the worship of gods from the previously separate pantheons and people now have free reign in Unther and Mulhorand to worship whom they please (although the churches of Anhur and Horus-Re still have the most influence in Mulhorand's government and they are making the creation of Untheric temples a long difficult process).

The newly invigorated pantheon is taking extra and concerted effort to expand its sphere of influence into Chessenta and secure the worship of the people of that nation.

Sebek is included in this pantheon but in reality he is little more than an ascended fey creature that was active in this area for many centuries. As such he has chosen the Material Plane as his primary dwelling and spends most of his time skulking in the swamps and wetlands of the Old Empires.

**Heliopolis:** The centre of the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon is now Heliopolis. This planar demesne takes the form of an enormous pyramid platform situated in a desert oasis and topped by smaller pyramids and ziggurats belonging to the other gods of

the pantheon. Both Horus-Re and Enlil rule Heliopolis from the two largest pyramid/ziggurats' at opposing ends of the structure.

The structure itself sits in a vast desert oasis that stretches for hundreds of miles and is inhabited by the planar servants of the rulers of Heliopolis.

Each god of the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon has his own pyramid and maintains at least a token presence on the plane at all times. The gods regularly congregate here and visit one another to discuss problems and settle disagreements.

Sebek rarely makes an appearance on this plane (only when he needs to meet with Set or his other allies - which are few), and spends most of his time stalking the wetlands of Unther, Mulhorand, and Chessenta.

Set spends a lot of his time on this plane in the oasis in a cloaked tower that he has created that can only be seen and accessed by his divine servants and worshippers.

Tiamat and Gilgeam stalk the catacombs and under-city of the pyramid complex, wreaking havoc wherever they go.

**Pantheonic Influence:** A pantheon is geographical boundary as well as a deific-political boundary. The new Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon has borders that encompass the lands of Mulhorand and Unther.

As such any events within these borders that promote the portfolio of an existing deity within that pantheon grant the deity a measure of divine energy. The souls of beings that perish within the border of this pantheon (that do not specifically worship a named Faerûnian deity) will enrich the Mulan deities.

The Mulan gods themselves, like their people, are elitist and believe themselves superior to all other beings on Abeir-Toril. They will not allow non Mulan deities to join their pantheon. They will not allow the organised worship of non Mulan deities within their pantheon (during Gilgeam's rule of Unther any kind of worship of non Untheric deities was forbidden, and in fact all worship of gods other than Gilgeam was discouraged). All attempts to establish worship of Faerûnian gods within the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon will be ruthlessly punished.

However that does not mean Faerûnian gods cannot be worshipped in the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon. Any prayers devoted to a Faerûnian god, or acts performed by a worshipper whose patron is a Faerûnian god will enrich that god and not the Mulan god that holds the relevant portfolio in the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon.

Certain Faerûnian gods have used this to their advantage. Deities such as Mask and Bane have portfolios that are (or were) unrepresented in the Mulan gods and so they can be worshipped without any of the Mulan deities noticing an ebb in the amount of divine energy received.

Should enough people within the borders of the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon come to worship Faerûnian gods, then that region will become contested and that means any actions performed that promote a certain portfolio will not by default go to a Mulan god.

This contested status is currently ongoing in both Thay and Chessenta. In ancient times both regions worshipped the Mulan gods, however over time they turned towards the Faerûnian powers and now no one pantheon has the majority of worshippers in these regions. In Chessenta the worship of Anhur and Hoar kept Chessenta in contested status. In Thay the common Rashemi/Mulan people kept alive the worship of the Mulhorandi powers in the hopes they would help them against their cruel Red Wizard masters.

The newly empowered Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon is intent on aggressively contesting the regions of Thay and Chessenta to try and sway them back to worship of the Mulan gods. Their success in these endeavours remains to be seen.

## When is a House Rule Not a House Rule: Skills

Next in the list of new skills is a small one that is useful to thieves and sages - Appraise

### **APPRAISE (Int)**

This skill allows people to learn the value of an item by studying it, but crucially it allows particularly skilled individuals to learn the history and magical properties of an item as well. Such a skill can explain why sages with no magical ability or training can determine what properties an item possesses without an identify spell to aid them.

**Synergy:** If you are trained in Appraise you receive a +2 bonus on Arcana checks.

### **Appraise (Int)**

**Check:** You may study objects to determine their value, history and any properties they possess.

A successful check allows you to correctly appraise the items value accurately.

If you are Trained and fail then roll  $3d4+3$  to determine what percentage of the value you determine the item to be worth (multiply the value by the result as a percentage). If you are attempting to determine history and magical properties as well then you do not learn anything.

If you are Untrained and fail then roll  $1d12+3$  to determine what percentage of the value you determine the item to be worth. If you are attempting to determine history and magical properties as well then you identify the history and its properties incorrectly (for instance you identify non-cursed items as cursed and vice versa).

Item	Example	DC
Common	Trade goods (Spices, food stuffs, raw materials), mundane items, livestock	15
Rare	Fine clothing, precious metals (unworked), gems, artwork	20
Exotic	Unusual gems (strange colourings, unusual to the region, unusually large or pure), spell components, jewellery, obscure religious items, magic items	25

Unique	Masterpiece artwork, royal jewels, crowns, or other adornments, unique magic items	30
Unknown	Items only encountered by a handful of people such as artefacts.	50

Appraise Modifier	DC
Quick Estimate (1 round action)	+20
Learn History	+10
Identify Magical Properties	+20

**Action:** Appraising an item requires 1 minute of uninterrupted study. If you have access to a library, laboratory, or other appropriate resources then you can devote 8 hours of study to determining the items value, history, and properties.

**Try Again:** No until your Appraise skill improves. (Yes if studying the item for 8 hours as above).

**Take 10:** No (Yes if studying the item for 8 hours as above).

## **Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires – A History of Akanu**

Akanu's history begins way back in -2489 DR when the gods of the Mulan people travelled to Toril on gigantic space barges that transported them across the universe.

Once they arrived the gods stirred up rebellion among their subjects, who were enslaved to the Imaskari. A terrible war ensued where the gods directly battled the Imaskari artificers and destroyed their empire.

For hundreds of years the Mulan people moved gradually south, living a nomadic existence as they sought a home for themselves. The Mulan followers of Ra found a home first in -2135 DR in the lush green vales of Mulhorand on the eastern shores of the Alamber Sea.

Unther was created next by the god Enlil after he discovered a perfect pearl on the western banks of the Alamber Sea in -2087 DR.

Akanu was created last in -1771 DR. After many centuries of wandering, the god Anu and his fellow Babylonian deities spotted a legendary greater Quelzarm in the waters of what is now the Bay of Chessenta. Taking this as a sign, Anu created the city of Adanu on the shores of that bay (roughly in the centre of what is now the Adder Swamp).

Some might theorise that the reason for the incredibly long migration of the Mulan people before they found their individual homelands was down to the logistics of feeding the population, or perhaps the need to negotiate movements with the native Turami peoples that were already resident. In truth, it took so long to create the Empires of Akanu, Mulhorand, and Unther because they were taking with them the barges that had carried the gods across the stars to rescue the Mulan people.

These enormous spelljamming vessels were to form the foundation of the cities of Adanu, Skuld and Unthalass. They may lie there still, untouched for four thousand years.

### **The First Empire of Akanu**

Anu's empire was forged in blood and warfare. In order to settle the land of Akanu that he had claimed as his own he ordered the expulsion of the native Turami peoples that lived there. These ancient humans worshipped ancient beings, some of them dark

and evil. Whereas Mulhorand sought to merge with these people and educate them towards proper worship (i.e. of Mulhorandi gods), Akanu and Unther determined the Turami were tainted in some way and ordered them removed from their lands. The Turami fled to the Vilhon Reach region where they remained for a long time.

Anu was primarily concerned with his own glory and greatness and that of his empire. Therefore he left much of the running of Akanu to his most trusted servant, the Grand Viceroy. This title was awarded to the Chess family who had some divine blood of Anu in their veins and were highly accomplished in The Art.

It was the first Grand Viceroy Iphram Chess who enacted Anu's will in eradicating the Turami taint from the land of Akanu. Iphram Chess then decided other fell influences should be removed as well, the Batoi halflings that infested the land were clearly magical in nature and so they too were removed, next came the forests full of fey creatures, until the Mulan were the undisputed rulers of Akanu.

Unknown to everyone however, Iphram Chess himself had succumbed to the taint they perceived in the Turami, he took to venerating Turami gods and practising fell and dark magic, the knowledge of which he passed on to his descendents.

Around -1504 DR, Akanu had cleared the forests all the way to the Akanapeaks. Here they encountered the Turami again that had fled their land early and so Akanu invaded and attempted to push them even further west. Unknown to Anu, the Turami people were now part of an even more ancient empire, known as Jhaamdath, whose people wielded strange powers of the mind.

Akanu and Jhaamdath went to war, the lands west of the Akanamere changed hands many times over the course of 500 years. The forces of Akanu and Jhaamdath proved evenly matched, the disciplined soldiers of Akanu were resistant to the mind powers of Jhaamdath who were likewise protected against the magic of Akanu, and so the war was fought with sword and shield.

It wasn't until -1076 DR that the war was ended by Akanu who was forced to cede all the territory it had claimed back to Jhaamdath. The reason for this was the opening of the Orcgate and the arrival of countless Grey Orcs into the Priador Province of Mulhorand.

Mulhorand called on its ancient allies for help, and all the Mulan people began



preparing for war. A great invasion fleet was created by Akanu and Unther, and the gods and armies of those two empires sailed across the waters to flank the enemy of Mulhorand and rescue its ancient ally.

The fighting was fierce and the orcs called upon their own gods who appeared through the Orcgate and battled the unprepared Mulan deities. Scores of Akanic and Untheric gods were slain before the orcs were defeated and dispersed.

Thus ended the First Empire of Akanu.

### **Second Empire of Akanu**

The gods of Akanu, and indeed the rest of the Mulan peoples knew real fear for the first time. So many of them had died in the battles with the orcs, Ra the head of the Mulhorandi pantheon was killed by Gruumsh and this precipitated a civil war as Set attempted to seize control. Many of the Akanic and Untheric deities were also killed and their pantheons were severely weakened as a result.

The Akanic pantheon in particular was left with only a handful of gods and many fell into despair. Gilgeam however, a minor deity of athletics and combat, was changed by the Orcgate Wars. Originally a mortal who became a god, he was full of ambition and pride, his poisoning by Ilneval's blade began to wither his heart and soul and turn it black as night.

Gilgeam spent many an hour in the catacombs of Adanu searching through the ancient treasures stolen from Imaskar for a way to elevate himself above his fellow gods so that he might claim the position of head of the pantheon. In this task he was aided by his trusting and unsuspecting lifelong friend Enkido; son of Enki god of the sea who perished in the Orcgate Wars.

Gilgeam discovered hints of magics that could imprison or even kill gods, he also found treatises into the nature of gods and how one might steal or absorb a god's power. Gilgeam decided to visit the Raurin Desert and attempt to unearth more Imaskari magic.

Gilgeam's wanderings could not have been better timed. For years the Mulhorandi had scoured the Raurin Desert in an attempt to discover the secret of the Imaskari Planar Barrier. They were always foiled in their attempts by one of their own who

wished the barrier to remain in place; Set was always working against the Mulhorandi and largely succeeded except for around -1100 DR when Ra discovered clues that pointed to the location of the artefact that powered the barrier. This was one of the driving forces that led Set to open the Orcgate, for he realised that while the barrier remained in place he could eliminate his deific family far more easily.

Following the Orcgate Wars, Mulhorand's priorities changed as the various powers of the Mulhorandi pantheon vied for the position of head of the pantheon. Set manipulated his brother Osiris into assuming the mantle of leadership while Horus-Re was incapacitated and then Set slew Osiris so he could claim it for himself.

While the Mulhorandi deities warred, Gilgeam wandered into the Raurin Desert unopposed and discovered many interesting secrets, including the location of the Imaskari Planar Barrier.

With his newfound knowledge Gilgeam returned to Akanu and entered the Lost Temple of Ptah and there he discovered the entity known as Entropy. Using Imaskari devices to control this sphere of concentrated entropic power, he destroyed a number of quasi-divine beings of fey origin that laired in the remote corners of Akanu and took their power for himself.

His efforts also made him a hero in the eyes of the people of Akanu who had been looking for a leader while the other Akanic gods wallowed in their despair. Gilgeam's ambitions culminated in the death of Anu himself, who was seemingly bitten by a single fanged serpent while crossing the Adder River. Despite all attempts to cure him, Anu succumbed to the poison and crumbled into ash. Gilgeam was crowned king and head of the pantheon by a unanimous vote from the people and deities of Akanu.

Unbeknown to everyone, Anu was slain by Entropy, controlled by Gilgeam, and driven into Anu's ankle where it destroyed him from the inside.

Thus ended the Second Empire of Akanu.

### **Third Empire of Akanu**

Gilgeam followed the same pattern towards people, places, items, indeed everything that he owned, once they were no longer useful to him, he abandoned them for something more.

Such it was with Akanu, Enkido, and Entropy. Now that Gilgeam was ruler of Akanu he was no longer interested in it. The Grey Orcs that the Empire of Akanu enslaved in the aftermath of the Orcgate Wars were beginning to grow in strength throughout the empire (and spread to surrounding areas). The Empire itself was slowly falling into decline due to the ignorance of its rulers.

Gilgeam however did not care for Akanu anymore. His lifelong and loyal friend; Enkido, could not rekindle the interest of Gilgeam even when he fashioned the magnificent Galley of the Gods; a splendid warship modelled on the spelljamming vessel, in honour of Gilgeam's coronation as Emperor of Akanu.

Gilgeam skulked in the palace and catacombs of Adanu playing with his new toy; Entropy. Assisted by his Grand Viceroy Ulgar Chessk, their experiments resulted in the creation of an abomination so powerful that Gilgeam himself could not destroy it; furthermore this abomination thirsted for blood and power, preferably both at the same time. This abomination was Ulgar himself who had been turned into a vampire like creature with a thirst for divine blood.

In the end only the sacrifice of Enkido could undo the folly of Gilgeam as Ulgar was tricked into boarding the Galley of the Gods with Enkido as bait. Ulgar was cursed with Enkido's dying breath and left on a far off island in the Sea of Fallen Stars where he could do no harm to anyone and could not leave because of Enkido's Curse of the Sea.

Gilgeam wallowed in self pity and depression for a few weeks in honour of his lifelong friend but then turned his increasingly short attention span to gathering more power, more wealth, and more glory. Gilgeam set his sights on the nearby Empire of Unther that was also in decline after losing so much in the Orcgate Wars.

Gilgeam approached Enlil and suggested to him that the two diminished pantheons might merge so that they could better protect themselves from outside threats like the orcs (and secretly both feared Mulhorand). Enlil agreed and met Gilgeam at the suggested neutral ground to sign the alliance; The Raurin Desert, where the origins of their empires began. There in -734 DR Enlil added his seal to the treaty that would merge Akanu and Unther into one grand empire.

Enlil was foolish to trust Gilgeam, although he could not have known of Gilgeam's

blackened heart. In the depths of the Raurin Desert, Gilgeam turned the Imaskari Planar Barrier inwards upon itself and trapped Enlil in an extra-planar prison deep in a desert tomb from which he had no hope of escaping.

Gilgeam and most of his pantheon of Akanic gods then marched into Unther with Gilgeam claiming that Enlil could no longer deal with the pain of past events and had left for places unknown. He named Gilgeam his heir apparent and sole ruler of the Empires of Akanu and Unther. Gilgeam bore the seal of Enlil and a treaty of alliance signed by Enlil himself so no one could argue or had the power to stand up to the greater power Gilgeam, ruler of Akanu and now Unther

Thus ended the Third Empire of Akanu.

#### **Fourth Empire of Akanu**

With Gilgeam and most of the other Akanic gods absent, only Ramman remained as the sole ruler of Akanu. Ramman was the god of Lightning, Thunder and Warfare for the Akanic pantheon and he could not move to Unther because of Assuran, an Untheric god who also held those same portfolios.

Thus Ramman remained as the sole deity of the Akanic pantheon and although he retreated to the Outer Planes he manifested an avatar to rule of Akanu as god-king (Gilgeam was Emperor of Greater Unther and the kingdom of Akanu was a vassal state of that Empire). Ramman did his best to reinvigorate the former empire of Akanu. He created a second capital called Cimbar further to the west in a bid to remove Akanu from the influence of Unther. He made attempts at expanding the borders of Akanu, and attempted to instil a measure of national pride among the people of Akanu.

Gradually however, worship turned from Ramman and the former Akanic gods as the people of Akanu rejected their ancient Mulan ancestry. Gilgeam no longer cared for Akanu, and he imposed increasingly harsh laws and harsher taxes upon its people to fund his ventures and to punish their increasing wayward and rebelliousness.

Foreign gods from other pantheons made their way into Akanu. The names of dark gods began to emerge as people migrated into the area from fallen Jhaamdath. The names Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul began to be whispered in dark places and the people of Akanu began to make war among themselves.

Ramman was of course empowered by the petty warfare and bickering between the regional rulers of Akanu, but he realised that such meaningless warfare would ultimately cause his downfall as the population declined and the people grew tired of it.

So in 108 DR, using his surging power Ramman also left Akanu behind and made a bid to join the Untheric pantheon. His attempt was resisted fiercely by Assuran and the two gods battled in the heavens and in the waters of the Sea of Fallen Stars. The great storms the two deities produced swamped Unthalass as the Alamber River burst its banks in the first Great Flood of Unthalass.

Ultimately Assuran was beaten and retreated to the now vacant position in the region of Akanu (which was now fiercely contested by the forming Faerûnian pantheon). There Assuran had his revenge by flooding the Adder River and destroying the city of Adanu (and swamping much of Ramman's clergy in Akanu).

Thus ended the fourth Empire of Akanu and began a period of change whereby Akanu would become known as Chessenta. The people of Akanu almost completely rejected their ancient origins and culture and turned against their ancient gods.

### **The Changing Years**

Following 108 DR, the land that would soon be known as Chessenta entered a period of change and flux that would see the identity of its people evolve. The influx of Turami migrants from the Vilhon Reach region following the fall of Jhaamdath brought a simpler way of life and the worship of darker gods with them.

Worship of the Faerûnian gods became much more common and when the church of Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul were exiled from the Vilhon Reach region (around 700 DR) it found a ready home among the people of this land.

Amnian merchant houses arrived seeking new trading opportunities in this industrious land. Rashmi people also arrived fleeing the fallout from the Narfelli-Raumathar war and the rise of Eltab in Rashemen.

This immigration fundamentally changed the character of the people of Chessenta (formerly Akanu). They embraced the pottery, woodwork, stonework, and sculpting arts of the Turami people, as well as the fiercely competitive nature and trade-sense

of the Amnians, the Rashemi reinforced their ancient warlike tendencies and brought with it a mercenary attitude and fondness for wrestling that complemented their own.

These new Chessentan peoples were always striving to be the best at whatever they had chosen to do, and fierce rivalries emerged between families and cities. These rivalries were played upon by the churches of the Dark Gods who sought to bring famine, pestilence, pain, war and death to the land to empower their deities.

Thus by 800 DR the entire land of Chessenta had descended into civil war with their swords at each other's throats and was ripe for a strong leader to defeat the various factions and unite them into a strong nation once again.

**Matet and Semktet:** The gods of the Mulhorandi, Untheric, and Akanic pantheons all travelled to Toril in separate space barges constructed in a joint effort between their most skilled gods. The Akanic pantheon travelled in the *Galley of the Gods* as constructed by Enki. The Mulhorandi pantheon travelled in a great war galley named *Matet* and led the way for the three space barges using the artefact known as the *Beacon of Light*.

The *Matet* was named "Light of the Stars" in the Mulan language, and it was a wondrous sight to behold. A huge metal galley filled with armaments and defences enough to take on any threat they encountered in the void above. It was also blessed with an intelligence all of its own and possessed the ability to repair itself of the damage it sustained.

Travelling through the great void was not without its own trials, and the pantheons faced centuries of peril and epic adventures. Along the way their spacecraft suffered much damage so that once they reached the planet Toril their vessels were but a shadow of their former glory.

The Mulhorandi vessel was renamed *Semktet* ("Shadow of the Stars") as it neared its destination it passed through a dark nebula that had once been the home of Shar long ago. Something within this nebula was drawn to the *Beacon of Light* and infested the barge changing the personality of the vessel to something darker, the ship's form changed to a simpler, plainer, shadowy vessel more befitting its new name.

Upon reaching Toril the Mulan gods liberated their people and set them free wandering the land for a new home. Unwilling to leave *Semktet* behind, the

Mulhorandi gods dragged it across the plains for miles before settling on the eastern shores of the Alamber Sea.

There they thrust Semktet deep beneath the earth and set atop it Re's great tower with the Beacon of Light atop it so that Semktet would be forever under guard. Unfortunately great tragedy struck the Mulhorandi over the years, Re was killed in the Orcgate Wars, and the Beacon of Light was stolen from its sentinel position.

Now Skuld, the City of Shadow is in danger of becoming closer to its name than the inhabitants could imagine.

## Deities With A Difference: Gilgeam

The Mad, the Undying, the Tyrant of Unthalass

Lesser Power of Heliopolis (CE)

**Portfolio:** Madness, Physical Prowess, Undeath (formerly Strength, Athletic Prowess, The Sky, Battles, Cities, Unther)

Gilgeam is a tragic god with humble beginnings. On his home world he was a hero of great strength and a passion for wrestling. While usually on the side of good, like many mortals he was flawed, greedy, lustful and ambitious.

As a god his personality flaws were magnified many times over and through the ages became the driving force for his actions. They drove him to become the god-king of Unther, to force all the other gods out of his realm, and to rule the lands of Unther with an iron fist as he slowly descended into madness.

By the time he was slain by Tiamat, his worshippers and power had dwindled and he was a shadow of his once former glory. Thus when he returned to the realms it was not as he once was but as a twisted shadow of his self, altered and perverted into something else, something different, something more.

### **History**

Gilgeam began life on Toril as a semi divine being from another world that stowed away aboard the Galley of the Gods that carried the Mulan deities to the aid of their people that were kidnapped by the Imaskari.

In the battle that followed, Gilgeam distinguished himself many times through acts of bravery, courage, and strength. The Mulan people of ancient Babylon worshipped him as a god like the other deities that helped rescue them and so he was elevated to deific status.

He travelled with the other Babylonian gods beyond Unther to the lands that would later become known as Chessenta, and there the god Anu established the nation of Akanu around the capital of Adanu (land of Anu and place of Anu respectively).

In that land Gilgeam was a minor deity of strength and wrestling, but always he desired more respect, more power, more control.

When the Orcgate opened and the Mulan gods gathered to battle the orc gods that were destroying their lands, Gilgeam was there on the front line. During the conflict



Gilgeam battled the orc god Ilneval in personal combat with his friend and ally Nanna-Sin. Both gods were wounded by the orc's poisoned blades which turned their hearts black as night. In Gilgeam's weakened state the Nemesis of the Gods; Tiamat, attempted to slay Gilgeam and steal his power, and if not for the sacrifice of Marduk she would have succeeded.

As Marduk expired he passed his portfolio onto others. Nanna-Sin gained the portfolio of Protection from Evil which shielded him from the effects of Ilneval's poisoned blade. Gilgeam however was quickly consumed by the poison flowing through him.

Gilgeam was not killed by this poison; instead his heart was twisted and blackened, enhancing his evil nature. In an instant his paranoia, ambition, lust, and controlling nature became dominant in his personality and the old Gilgeam began to die.

Gilgeam knew of his taint but he no longer cared for redemption, he also knew that should his predicament be discovered, the other gods would destroy him or cast him out. So after the battle he used his power to keep the only other god that witnessed the fight (Nanna-Sin) in a comatose state, and when he could not be awakened, suggested the god be buried with the other casualties of the Orcgate Wars.

Upon his return to Akanu, Gilgeam set about increasing his power and standing among the gods of the Akanic pantheon. Using powerful Imaskari magic and artefacts he discovered during his wanderings, Gilgeam slew a number of powerful fey creatures and monsters of legend that lurked in the remote corners of Akanu, these actions caused a migration of the remaining fey and sylvan creatures out of the area. One of these beings, known as Sebek, travelled east where he settled in the River of Swords. Eventually Gilgeam succeeded in slaying Anu, head of the Akanic pantheon, and Gilgeam became the new ruler of Akanu. Yet still Gilgeam desired more.

The gods of Akanu and Unther suffered many casualties in the Orcgate Wars and so Gilgeam entered into negotiations with Enlil and Unther that they might strengthen both their empires against Mulhorand. During one such negotiation Gilgeam attacked Enlil and imprisoned him in an extra planar prison fashioned by the Imaskari for the purpose of containing and neutralising deities.

Gilgeam then declared that Enlil had named him heir and departed Toril forever. Gilgeam was now ruler of Akanu and Unther and head of both pantheons. He abandoned his homeland for the richer Unther (although he still claimed ownership

and taxation of Akanu), and spent millennia enforcing his tyrannical will, destroying or exiling any that disagreed with him.

It is with no surprise therefore that Gilgeam was eventually left without worshippers or allies and was destroyed by Tiamat.

However that was not to be the end of the god-king Gilgeam. Gilgeam's paranoia had driven him to take extraordinary steps to ensure his survival. The near death experience during the Orcgate Wars highlighted the still very real possibility of his death and so as soon as possible Gilgeam created an aspect; a weaker version of himself, and imprisoned it in a remote part of his empire in a prison based upon Imaskari design like the one he had used to entrap Enlil.

He performed this act at least 5 times during his godhood as his divine life was threatened by various circumstances. Gilgeam's ambition and paranoia would never allow him to father children or have any more than one avatar running around Toril, but by detaining the aspects in an inescapable prison; to which only he had the key, Gilgeam could ensure his continued survival by some means should the worst happen.

Following his death these keys were discovered in the ruins of Unthalass, in the Smoking Mountains and in other bastions of Gilgeam's power, although the discoverers did not necessarily realise what the keys were for or what they opened.

The race was on among the remaining worshippers to restore Gilgeam to godhood. Along the way a zealous priest used an ancient artefact to animate the corpse of Gilgeam's avatar into a gigantic, divine fuelled, zombie.

When adventurers finally and inadvertently released one of the aspects it set off a chain of events that resulted in an avatar war, where each aspect strove to destroy the others and unite the remaining pieces of Gilgeam's divine essence inside himself.

The winner became a god once more and was twisted into what the people of Unther now felt Gilgeam represented; a mad, decaying, undead tyrant.

With the restoration and merging of the Untheric and Mulhorandi pantheons, Gilgeam has claimed a place in the new pantheon as an evil and insane god of the undead that is an outcast among the gods along with Set, Sebek, and Tiamat.

### **Relationships**

It is difficult for Gilgeam to form any relationships with gods of the new Untherandi

pantheon, his insanity manifests in an inability to retain any information for extended periods of time and if it is retained it is typically twisted by his mind into what he wants rather than what actually occurred.

He alternates between uncontrollable rages and almost docile, unresponsive behaviour. As such the other gods leave him to his gibberish.

The sight of Tiamat in her multi-headed dragon form enrages him to murderous intent, but her Dark Lady form leaves him confused. So as long as someone figures out how to communicate with Gilgeam he could make a potential ally for anyone, including his one time nemesis.

Thus far only Set has figured out how to influence the mad god. By remaining hidden and whispering to the lunatic Gilgeam, Set has on a number of occasions convinced Gilgeam to undertake a suggested course of action. This method is by no means perfect and leads to frequent arguments among the splintered personalities of the mad god, but occasionally Gilgeam will congratulate himself on a good idea and set about the task for as long as his focus will allow.

### **Avatar**

Gilgeam has one avatar; a naked, barrel-chested, giant of a man with a pale green pallor to his skin and the scars of huge teeth marks all over his body.

This rotting behemoth is a juggernaut in physical combat, capable of titanic feats of strength and rage that few other gods can match.

He also exudes a nauseating stench that can slay most lesser beings he encounters.

His personality and face change between at least four distinct beings that vie for control of any avatar.

First is the master of undead. This being is capable of animating the nearby dead into any unintelligent form of undead that he desires and can control as many such beings as exist. His touch slays instantly and he desires nothing more than to spread undeath to everyone he encounters.

Second is the raging lunatic. This being constantly froths at the mouth and is capable of incredible feats of strength and endurance driven by his madness. He is in a permanent state of frenzy from which he cannot escape and will attack and attempt to kill anything that he feels is threatening him (merely looking in his direction

qualifies as such to his insane mind).

Third is the tyrant. This vestige of his last living personality is capable of command over any mortal being which Gilgeam can see. The command is absolute and he can order suicide if he should wish so. This avatar desires control over everyone and everything and still believes he is the rightful ruler of Unther.

The last vestige is Gilgeam the hero. This vestige is a part of his original personality before he was completely corrupted by Ilneval's blade. He is remorseful for his actions in the millennia since then and constantly apologises for any action (even sitting down). He is deeply depressed and will sit and do nothing most of the time. This effect is sympathetic in nature and drives those nearby into states of deep depression (which have sometimes been so extreme as to stop the sufferer from breathing).

These four personalities usually change on a minute to minute basis, but some have been known to remain dominant for several days, particularly the hero aspect of Gilgeam.

### **Relics**

Any relics Gilgeam may once have owned are long gone by the time of his rebirth. His abandonment of Akanu for Unther meant the relics he once possessed in that land are lost to the mists of time.

The destruction of Unthalass; particularly the Palace District, and the destruction of the Citadel of Black Ash mean that more recent relics are also likely destroyed or lost.

Legends talk of the Belt of Gilgeam that the hero Gilgeam wore before he ascended. This belt supposedly bestowed great strength and near invulnerability, but Gilgeam discarded it after battling the Imaskari (and becoming a god) and it hasn't been seen since.

**The Aspects of Gilgeam:** Before Gilgeam's return the only real relics of power that existed were the imprisoned aspects of Gilgeam himself. These aspects were locked away in extra-dimensional prisons that could only be accessed through keyed portals in the far reaches of Faerûn.

One such portal was thought to exist in one of the Barrow Mounds in the Great Dale which was once Untheric territory. Another was likely to exist in the unexplored

wilderness of the Shaar which Unther borders upon.

The extra-dimensional prisons were full of traps and guardian monsters that were set their by Gilgeam himself. At the centre of this prison was an aspect of Gilgeam that had been imprisoned for millennia and was therefore quite, quite mad.

### **The Church of Gilgeam**

The Church of Gilgeam no longer exists. Prior to his destruction, the Church of Gilgeam was well established and organised. It controlled the government of Unther and ensured the god-king's main avatar was kept in the lap of luxury in the Palace District of Unthalass.

Following Gilgeam's death Unther collapsed, the people rose up against the Church of Gilgeam and with aid from other organisations they slaughtered Gilgeam's priests wherever they found them in vengeance for years of tyranny and cruelty.

The remainder of Gilgeam's faithful retreated to The Citadel of Black Ash, his last secure bastion of power. It was here that they were all slain in a volcanic eruption of unknown cause.

Gilgeam's worship is now in the hands of individuals, there is no church hierarchy or structure, there are no recognised rites or holy days, and there are no scriptures or spells. Each of the faithful of Gilgeam follow him in how they think best, and Gilgeam answers them dependant only on his whim and current state of mind.

The largest concentration of worshippers of Gilgeam is strangely still the Citadel of Black Ash. Now filled with the eternally burning undead remains of his priests, these formerly living followers worship him even now in undeath and protect his secrets from those that would seek to plunder them.

**Allies:** Gilgeam's church officially has no allies because there is no Church of Gilgeam. However, worshippers of Gilgeam will occasionally find aid from an unexpected source.

The Church of Tiamat, as instructed by their deity, is secretly sponsoring Gilgeam's agents by leaving money and supplies where they will be found by the followers of Gilgeam. Through this Tiamat hopes that Gilgeam's faithful will spread yet more chaos and anarchy among the newly re-established Unther and Mulhorand. Without risking her own worshippers she hopes that Gilgeam's might still succeed in causing as much damage as possible so that her Church can, in the ensuing chaos, regain the position of prominence it once briefly held in Unther.

## The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path - Episode 3

After halting the undead eruption in Bloodstone Village, the party discover that Baron Tranth's daughter, Christine Tranth, has been kidnapped.

The ransom note asks for 1,000 gp to be delivered to the Sleeping Bear Inn on the far side of town.

Baron Tranth immediately hands the party 1,000 gp in gems and trade bars and asks that they deliver it to the Sleeping Bear Inn and try to find out what happened to his daughter and return her safely if possible.

### **Overview**

The Sleeping Bear Inn is on the far side of Bloodstone Village outside the town walls towards the Vaasan side of Bloodstone Pass. It has long been abandoned and lies in ruins. Anyone in town will be able to direct the party towards the Inn.

An information gathering related skill check will reveal the following information.

### **DC Result**

- 10 The Inn has been abandoned for nearly ten years now
- 12 The Inn was hit hard in the first invasion by the Witch King's armies since it lay outside the walls of Bloodstone Village. It was rebuilt once but destroyed again the following year and left to ruin.
- 15 The Inn is haunted, strange noises can be heard from it at night and lights come on for no reason in the lower rooms.
- 20 Cloaked figures have been seen leaving the ruins of the Inn of late. They always disappear into the shadows and are difficult to follow. No one has ever found anyone inside the ruin though.
- 30 A beggar on the streets spotted a group of people enter the Inn carrying a large, person-shaped sack. This was several hours ago and he has not seen them leave and he has been watching all day. This information will cost the party 1 gp.

**The Sleeping Bear Inn:** Approaching the Inn, the party can see it is ruined. The outside of the stone building was scorched with fire. The door and window frames are all empty or contain fragments of wood and glass.

The inn contained 8 rooms on the top floor with a common room and kitchen on the

ground floor, as well as quarters for the owner. The upper portion of the building is partially collapsed on the northern side (towards the Vaasan side of Bloodstone Pass).

**Common Room:** The main entrance into the Inn opens onto the common room. At one time this room was warm, cosy, and inviting and was decorated with tapestries and wood furnishings, most of these were consumed in fires and only a single chair remains with a note on it saying "Leave Ransom Here!".

**Innkeeper's Quarters:** This bedroom was the nicest room in the house and contained many fineries purchased from the Moonsea caravans that used to frequent the region. The owner perished in the second invasion of Damara by the Witch King's forces and the ruins were looted.

With a DC 20 perception related check, the party can discover a lock-box hidden behind a false brick. The lock-box requires a DC 18 open lock related check. Inside the lock-box is a gold trade bar worth 50 gp and an ornate ruby ring worth 72 gp.

**Kitchen:** This room looks partially collapsed and is strewn with rubble. A DC 23 perception related check will allow the party to notice footprints leading through the rubble to the far side of the room.

A DC 25 perception related check will allow the party to discover the secret floor panel hidden amongst the rubble.

A DC 15 Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) check will allow the party to realise that the rubble in this room is not from the building or walls (which are intact) and so must have been placed here deliberately.

The secret floor panel is locked, requiring a DC 20 open lock skill to unlock it (Hardness 5, Hit Points 15, Break DC 18), and opens into what used to be the larder but is now the headquarters of an organised thieves' guild.

If the party leave the ransom and depart then after several hours it becomes clear that Christine will not be returning (the Guild Master decided to take advantage of the situation for some profit). Baron Tranth urges the party to go back to the Inn and look for clues. This time a beggar approaches the party and informs them about strange figures entering the Inn with a large person shaped sack.

**Thieves' Guild:** This series of underground chambers are the home of an outpost of the Tightpurse thieves' guild based in the Damaran capital of Helgabal. Furthermore

the thieves' guild has been infiltrated by members of the Cult of Orcus and so this entire cell answers to Zhengyi's orders.

**Entrance Hall:** The hatchway from above opens onto a set of stairs that descend into the larder/guildhouse. Upon descending through the secret hatchway in the floor of the kitchen a DC 20 perception related check will reveal a secret button that is used to deactivate the spear trap that fires when they reach the bottom of the stairs.

**Arrow Trap (CR 1)**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 14; **Tinker** DC 14

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Attack:** +3 ranged

**Damage:** 1d6/x3

The entrance hall is 10 ft wide and travels into the distance (towards Bloodstone Village), it has openings on the left and right walls every 30 ft in the distance.

**Guard Posts:** These two rooms are identical and house a complement of guards that monitor people passing by and are supposed to be keeping an ear out for any suspicious noises.

In reality the 2 level 1 rogues in each room pass the time by playing cards and other games. Should anyone pass by and grunt at them or shout hi as they walk by then the guards will not think anything of it. If anyone looks suspicious then they will investigate. The guards have a constant passive DC 15 perception check ongoing so any stealth related checks will need to beat that DC or alert the guards.

All four guards are wearing studded leather armour and are armed with a shortsword and 5 throwing daggers each.

**Training Room:** This room is filled with a variety of dummies, locks, doors, and traps in order to allow the thieves to practice their skills. There are 1d3+2 rogues in this room at any one time. They are wearing leather armour but only have a single throwing dagger on their person (they are practicing their skills wearing the armour but have no need of weapons because they are in the guild



house).

These rogues will not react to anyone entering unless attacked providing the party are appropriately dressed for thieves (i.e. leather based armour or a chain shirt and wearing dark, baggy clothes with hooded cloaks). A party member in gleaming plate armour with a huge sword will definitely draw attention and unless he identifies himself as one of the heavies hired to protect the guild he will be attacked and the alarm raised.

**Quarter Master:** This room contains at least 5 of every conceivable thieves tool and piece of equipment (including weapons) that a rogue would need to carry out his duties. The list of weapons includes shortswords, daggers, throwing daggers, light crossbows, hand crossbows, bucklers, saps, and more.

All this equipment is behind a metal fence that reaches to the ceiling. The door is locked and requires a DC 25 lock picking related check to open. A level 3 rogue wearing masterwork leather armour and armed with a +1 shortsword is also behind the fence and hands out items through a gap in the fence (providing the appropriate approval slip is provided - signed by the guild master).

A locked chest also sits behind the fence containing the petty cash of the guild which totals 349 gp. This chest requires a DC 25 lock picking related check to open, but the quarter master has the key to all locks in this room.

**Prison:** This series of three cells currently contains no prisoners. Christine Tranth was briefly kept here but was removed a few hours ago and is now on her way to Helgabal.

A DC 14 Perception check will see the letters "CT" marked on the wall using a rock.

**Guild Master's Quarters:** This sparsely decorated room contains a desk, chair, and bed. The room is otherwise empty. Inside the desk are a number of invoices for goods purchased from the Glowing Lantern Provisions shop in Helgabal and details of expected arrival times for the goods to be delivered.

A search of the room with a DC 20 perception related check will reveal a secret door next to the desk. The door is not locked but is trapped with a poison dart trap.

**Poison Dart Trap (CR 2)**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Tinker** DC 15

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** none

**Attack:** +4 ranged

**Damage:** 1d4/x3, if hit then roll a DC 14 Fortitude save or fall asleep

**Real Guild Master's Quarters:** The Guild Master really dwells in the secret quarters. The precautions outside ensure that only skilled thieves' will be able to gain an audience with him (not the rank and file members).

The Guild Master is a 5<sup>th</sup> level rogue and wields a +1 hand crossbow, a masterwork rapier, 5 masterwork throwing daggers and he wears a mithril chain shirt.

A chest is hidden under his bed which can be located with a DC 13 perception related check, and opened with a DC 22 open lock related check (Hardness 5, Hit Points 20, Break DC 23).

Inside the chest is a diamond worth 120 gp, a potion of *Cat's Grace*, two potion of *Cure Light Wounds*, a set of masterwork lock picks, and several letters.

The Guild Master will not immediately attack anyone that enters his quarters, since he assumes it is on guild business (who else would be able to gain access to a secret guild and his secret abode other than a member of the guild). His first response is to ask whether the girl has been dispatched successfully. Should the PCs play along then he will ask whether they used the secret tunnel into town to remain out of sight. During the conversation, providing the players answer yes to most questions they can learn that Christine was hidden on an independent caravan owned by the guild called "The Lucky Cart" which was headed for Helgabal and should rendezvous with Morten at the Glowing Lantern.

Once the conversation is over the party can leave if they wish or attack the Guild Master

The text of one of the letters is as follows:

*You are to lend your assistance to the two individuals carrying this letter. One will need equipment and direction to the Bloodstone Mine, the other will need*

*to convince the priest of Ilmater to accept him as an apprentice. Do everything in your power to ensure their efforts are successful. Do not admit anyone else into your operation from the Helgabal branch (except these two of course).*

*When the disturbances begin I want you to kidnap the Baron's daughter. This will convince him of the worthiness of our cause and make him pliant enough not to interfere.*

*Ensure she is brought to the Tightpurse headquarters in Helgabal, I will arrange her transfer from there. Do not mention my involvement, if anyone asks, you acted of your own initiative.*

*Lucky*

### **Aftermath**

Following a thorough search of the guild it should become clear that Christine Tranth is no longer present. The party have several opportunities to learn where she is headed and a few other clues about what will happen to her from there.

Assuming he is still with them, Gareth Dragonsbane recommends the party depart immediately to try and catch up with the caravan before it arrives. They should leave immediately and purchase horses from the local stables (50 gp each) and ride to Helgabal, there isn't even enough time to alert the Baron.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires – An Alternate Timeline

- **-2489 DR:** The Egyptian, Sumerian, and Babylonian pantheons travel to Toril in vast spelljamming vessels. The hero Gilgeam and his semi divine friend Enkido stow away onboard while several monstrous creatures of legend hide away in the bowels of the enormous ships.
- **Arrival of the God-Kings:** The deities of the Imaskari slaves bypass the planar barrier by taking physical form, powerful avatars known as manifestations, and travelling through the endless void of space to Toril, led by the ancient deity Ptah and the Beacon of Light. Upon arriving on Faerûn, the gods invested a number of the Mulan people with divine power (a form similar to a Chosen). These incarnations descended into the fertile plains of Imaskar and went among their long-forsaken peoples. The most talented they made priests, and the truly faithful were transformed into divine minions. The Imaskari slaves then revolted against their masters.
- Imaskari people retreat south to Durpar and Estagund where they mingle with the local tribesfolk.
- **-2135 DR:** The god Ra founds the city of Skuld and gives it the name "City of Shadows," which soon becomes the capital of a new nation called Mulhorand.
- The First Mulhorandi Empire begins.
- **-2087 DR:** The god Enlil finds pearls on the west coast of the Alamber. He builds Unthalass [108], the City of Gems, which becomes the capital of a new nation called Unther.
- The First Untheric Empire begins.
- **-1967 DR: First Mulhorand-Unther War:** Unther and Mulhorand clash at the River of Swords, beginning the First Mulhorand-Unther War. Rashemi, Raumviran, Sossrim, and Nar tribesfolk are employed as mercenaries by both sides.
- **-1961 DR:** The god-kings of Mulhorand and Unther agree on a common border—the River of Swords.
- **-1922 DR:** Mulhorand begins to skirmish with the Durpari barbarians. Many Durpari tribes are wiped out or reduced to a few families over the ensuing

centuries.

- **-1771 DR:** The god Anu spies a greater Quelzarm on the shores of the Bay of Chessenta. He builds a great ziggurat temple there and establishes the city of Adanu (meaning place of Anu), which becomes the capital of a new nation called Akanu (meaning land of Anu).
- The First Akanic/Chessentan Empire begins.
- **-1750 DR:** Akanu orders the expulsion of all non-Mulan from its borders. Batoi halflings dwelling on the shores of the Bay of Chessenta sail towards Aglarond on primitive rafts.
- **-1504 DR to -1069 DR:** The forests of Akanu are cleared all the way to Akanamere Lake. Akanu encounters the Jhaamdath Empire on its western border and invades, conquering the eastern provinces of Jhaamdath. This precipitates a series of conflicts in which neither empire can gain the upper hand. Only the Orcgate Wars brings the conflict to an end with Akanu ceding all previously conquered territory to Jhaamdath.
- Akanic expansion continues across the waters of the Alamber Sea into the Wizard's Reach.
- **c. -1500 DR:** Mulhorandi expansion results in the settlement of the Priador, and the annexation of Murghôm, the Plains of Purple Dust, and the Raurin Desert.
- Set is awarded the title Divine-Precept of Priador Plateau. The title is not a reward and is meant to keep the rebellious deity out of the heartlands of Mulhorand so he cannot stir up trouble there.
- Untheric expansion results in the settlement of much of the Eastern Shaar.
- **-1482 DR:** Mulhorand conquers the eastern realm of Semphâr.
- **-1400 DR:** First crude ships sail the open waters of the Inner Sea, as Akanu expands across the Alamber. These ships are the standard for sea travel for the next two millennia.
- **-1293 DR:** Maladraedior, the Suzerain of blue dragons in the Old Empires loses his title to Storum'aelix, a younger and more energetic rival. Maladraedior retreats beneath the settlement of Dalath. The dispute over

leadership is believed to have arisen due to religious differences.

- **-1250 DR:** Akanu battles Yuireshanyaar for control of the southern Aglarondan coast. The star elves are driven back into the woods.
- Further Untheric expansion near the Great Rift [-6000, 316] brings this nation into conflict with the gold dwarves of the Deep Realms.
- **-1124 DR:** The Mulhorandi outpost of Semkhrun is founded in Semphar.
- **-1100 DR:** Set discovers a gigantic portal ring buried in the High Thay Plateau. This ring was originally used by many of the Okothian Sarrukh to escape Toril and travel the planes. Set spends many years studying the ring.
- **-1087 DR:** The Theurgist Adept Thayd leads a rebellion of mages against Mulhorand and Unther, seizing the northern provinces of both empires as his own territory.
- **-1081 DR:** Thayd and his conspirators are defeated. Before he is executed, Thayd prophesies that Mulhorand and Unther will decline.
- **-1076 DR to -1069 DR: The Orcgate Wars:** The Orcgate opens in the southern portion of the Plateau of Thay. Hundreds of thousands of orcs inundate the northern territories of both Mulhorand and Unther. Set is mysteriously absent during these events. The orcs conquer all territory between Narfell and Mulhorand and lay waste to the settlements in Thay and the Wizard's Reach. Mulhorand hires Nar, Raumathari, Rashemi and Sossrim mercenaries to fight the orc invaders in the north.
- **-1075 DR:** First battle of the Orcgate Wars. Orcs overrun many northern settlements, slaying thousands. The Mulhorandi gods are forced back by the power of the orcish primordials. Mulhorand fortifies their position in Thazalhar and keep the orcs contained in Thay. The Akanic settlements in the Wizard's Reach are destroyed by the orcs.
- **-1071 DR: Battle of the Gods:** The gods of Unther and Akanu marshal their forces and march to the aid of their Mulhorandi allies by landing on the Wizard's Reach and flanking the orc forces. The Untheric and Akanic gods seriously underestimate the Gruumsh and the other orc primordials and lose many of their number in the opening battles. Inanna, Girru, Ki, Nergal, and Utu are slain. Nanna-Sin and Gilgeam are wounded in battle

against Ilneval then Tiamat attacks them from behind. Marduk steps in front of her draconic breath and is consumed by it but lands a blow that shatters Tiamat's form and disperses her essence among her three vessels.

- Gilgeam succumbs to the poison on Ilneval's blade which begins to alter his personality towards evil. He surreptitiously uses his power to keep Nanna-Sin comatose.
- **-1069 DR:** The Orcgate is destroyed by the united Untheric, Akanic, and Mulhorandi forces and their remaining deities. The invading orcs and their gods are defeated in the Priador and dispersed. Tribes of Nars, Rashemi, Raumvirans, and Sossrim return home.
- The deceased gods of Unther and Akanu are interred in various places throughout the two Empires. Nanna-Sin cannot be awakened despite all attempts to heal him and so is also interred in a tomb beneath the Riders to the Sky Mountains.
- The First Akanic/Chessentan Empire ends.
- **-1068 DR:** Gilgeam begins wandering the lands of Akanu and beyond looking for Imaskari magic to increase his own power.
- **-1050 DR:** A power struggle between Osiris and Set to succeed Re results in the murder of Osiris.
- **-1049 DR:** During the troubles in Mulhorand, Gilgeam enters the Raurin desert and discovers a cache full of Imaskari artefacts and knowledge.
- **-1048 DR:** Isis resurrects Osiris. Horus-Re battles Set and becomes chief of the Mulhorandi pantheon, Set worship is abolished. The tower of Set in Skuld is destroyed.
- The First Mulhorandi Empire ends.
- Noting the troubles in Mulhorand, Narfell begins occupation and re-settlement of the land of Thay before the southern empire can regain its former territory.
- **-1030 DR:** Upon his return to Akanu, using the knowledge he acquired from Imaskar's ruins, Gilgeam discovers a portal to the Astral Plane that exits near the graveyard of the gods administered by Ptah. During one of his

many visits to consult Ptah for advice, Gilgeam locates the minute sphere of annihilation that would later be known as Entropy.

- **-1000 DR:** By this time the orcs taken as slaves during the Orcgate Wars have escaped into the wilds of Akanu in sufficient number to form self sustaining clans.
- **-999 DR:** Gilgeam stalks and slays a number of powerful, fey, primordial creatures. He also destroys the Mulan monster of legend known as Druaga, these acts increase his popularity among the gods and people of Akanu.
- **-987 DR:** The god Anu is seemingly bitten by a single fanged snake while crossing the Adder River. Despite all attempts to cure him he quickly wastes away and perishes.
- Gilgeam is crowned King of Akanu by his peers and the people of Akanu.
- **-938 DR:** The orcs of Akanu destroy a hidden dwarf realm beneath the Akanapeaks before the Mulan are even aware of it. From this hidden base they plague Akanu with regular raids.
- **-916 DR:** The demigod Enkido creates the Galley of the Gods for Gilgeam in honour of his assuming control of the Akanic pantheon.
- **-756 DR:** Gilgeam and his Viceroy Ulgar Chessk experiment with Entropy. The experiment goes awry and Ulgar is turned into a powerful vampire-like hybrid.
- **-755 DR:** Ulgar's wife is transformed into a lich-like being after laying with her husband (and being drained by him). Gilgeam's attempts to destroy the abomination are unsuccessful and she flees Akanu. Gilgeam likewise attempts to destroy Ulgar to prevent him from creating any more invincible progeny but this too is impossible.
- Enkido, the life-long friend of Gilgeam decides on a plan to rid Akanu of the indestructible Ulgar. Using himself as bait, Enkido lures Ulgar onto the Galley of the Gods and keeps him trapped there until they reach an island far off in the Sea of Fallen Stars. With his dying breath Enkido lays the Curse of the Sea upon Ulgar preventing him from ever crossing water by any means. The Galley of the Gods then returns to Akanu unmanned. Gilgeam is overcome with grief for the death of his friend and his last vestiges of



goodness are expunged.

- **-734 DR:** Gilgeam enters into negotiations with Unther to merge the Untheric and Akanic pantheons after the disaster of the Orcgate Wars and the subsequent death of Anu. Gilgeam lures Enlil to neutral ground in the Raurin Desert and imprisons the god in an extra-dimensional prison of Imaskari design. Gilgeam then announces Enlil's departure from Toril and proclaims himself Enlil's heir and ruler of the Untheric pantheon.
- Following Enlil's imprisonment, Gilgeam deactivates the Imaskari Planar Barrier.
- Gilgeam abandons Akanu for Unther. Ishtar and a number of the Akanic gods follow him, Ramman remains behind in Akanu. Akanu becomes a vassal state of the Greater Untheric Empire.
- The Second Akanic/Chessentan Empire Ends
- The First Untheric Empire Ends
- **-623 DR Year of Clipped Wings:** Narfell constructs a massive armada and begins a land and sea invasion of Mulhorand. Unther smashes the Narfelli armada using its own navy (with the Galley of the Gods as the commanding vessel). Mulhorand easily destroys the Narfelli invaders who now lack supplies and support.

Taking advantage of the situation, the Raumathari Empire launches a surprise attack against Narfell and conquers most of its territory in Thay, Aglarond and the Wizard's Reach.

From this date onwards the leaders of Narfell turn to demons for aid and legions of the fiends openly march as part of Narfell's armies.

- **-623 DR to -150 DR:** The empires of Narfell and Raumathar warred throughout this period. Centuries of warfare culminated in a great decade-long conflagration (beginning in -160 DR) that consumed both empires and left all manner of summoned beings unchained upon the face of Faerûn.
- **-585 DR:** Tiamat the Dark Lady reforms from the body of her daughter, T'khiazzazar, after she finally slays and devours the other two vessels holding a portion of Tiamat's divine essence.

- **-474 DR:** The city of Cimbar is founded by Ramman as a grand repository of knowledge and second capital of Akanu, away from the influence of Gilgeam and Unther. In doing so Ramman hoped to inspire the people to regain their former glory and increase their devotion to the ancient Akanic gods (rather than the interloping Faerûnian deities).
- **-425 DR:** Paladins of Osiris destroy the Mulhorandi city of Sekras.
- **-247 DR to -238 DR: The Procession of Justice:** Worshipers of Bane, Bhaal, Myrkul, and other dark gods make their way into Akanu from fallen Jhaamdath.
- **-240 DR:** The struggle between Narfell and Raumathar, as well as the arrival of the Suren in the Endless Wastes causes a migration of beast cultists into the northern borders of Mulhorand. These beast cultists refuse to swear fealty to the Mulhorandi deities. The Church of Anhur takes the lead in combating them but the tribes merely disperse into the wilderness areas of Mulhorand.
- **-160 DR Year of the Stone Giant: The Great Conflagration:** Narfell and Raumathar begin their final war—a decade-long cataclysm that involves the summoning of demon lords and an avatar of Kossuth. At its conclusion, both Empires lie in ruins.
- **-148 DR:** The avatars of the Mulhorandi deities are summoned to Faerûn by their churches for what is known as the "God-Kings Final Battle". The avatars battle a horde of demons that remained following the Narfelli-Raumathari war. They cleanse the land of Thay of the demonic taint, allowing Mulhorand to reclaim its northern territory once more.
- **-135 DR:** The settlement of Kensten (present day Bezantur) is refounded by Mulhorand on the coast of the Wizard's Reach.
- **-100 DR to 250 DR: Humans Settle the Wizard's Reach:** After the setbacks of the Orcgate Wars and the Narfelli invasion of the Wizard's Reach, settlers from Akanu, Mulhorand and some stragglers from fallen Jhaamdath again begin to resettle Aglarond, Altumbel, and the Wizard's Reach.
- **-45 DR:** Mulhorand attempts to conquer Rashemen by sending an army

through the Gorge of Gauros. The berserkers and witches of Rashemen turn the army back and the defeat is placed on the shoulders of the Church of Anhur.

- **108 DR:** Ramman moves from Akanu to Unther due to the rising power of invading foreign deities, and the depletion of his own worshippers thanks to recent plagues and wars. Ramman immediately comes into conflict with Assuran who has a similar set of portfolios in Unther.

The conflict between the two gods of war and weather causes great storms over the Alamber sea as the two deities send avatars to battle one another. The river Alamber floods during the conflict and devastates Unthalass in what is known as the First Great Flood. Ultimately Ramman wins the battle and Assuran is exiled from Unther. In retaliation Assuran causes a great wave to strike Adanu and buries the city in a Quagmire and destroys much of Ramman's remaining power in Akanu.

- By this time the land of Akanu is referred to by its people as Chessenta, after its first Grand Viceroy Iphram Chess. During one of Gilgeam's many later rewrites of history he changes all reference of Akanu to Chessenta to distance himself from his origins and the failure of that empire.
- The Third Akanic/Chessentan Empire Ends
- **127 DR:** Durpar, Var and Veldorn establish formal trade relations with Mulhorand.
- **163 DR:** Altumbel is populated by renegades from Chessenta that tire of the excessive taxes and strict laws imposed by Gilgeam. Most of the settlers are pirates, criminals and hermits.
- **202 DR to 204 DR: The War of Claws:** The nation of Eltabranar, under the influence of the demon lord Eltab, marches on Mulhorand and Unther and decimates their armies. It continues to raid and pillage the two nations until Mulhorand and Unther unite and drive the Arkauin barbarians back and exterminate them.
- During this war the Mulhorandi encounter the dwarves of the Great Rift and learn from them the secret of steel which revolutionises the Mulhorandi army.

- **249 DR:** The Black Flame, a cabal of wizards in Unther are destroyed by rivals or lost to the planes. Their spells later come to form much of the arsenal of the Red Wizards of Thay.
- **317 DR:** A trade dispute sparks the first Mulhorandi-Durpari Coin War.
- **482 DR:** The Wizard's Reach declares independence from Chessenta and the Greater Untheric Empire (although they remain closely allied with Mordulkin and the rest of Threskel). Gilgeam prepares an invasion to retake his wayward colonies.
- **504 DR:** Unther begins a campaign to attack the League of Samathar and retake the Wizard's Reach. The cities of Teth and Nethra join the League of Samathar.
- **625 DR:** The city of Escalant joins the League of Samathar.
- **629 DR:** Cadet branches of the great merchant houses of Amn begin arriving in the Old Empires looking for new trade opportunities. Within 50 years the merchant classes are the true powers behind the cities of Chessenta.
- **677 DR:** Gilgeam sends a naval armada to crush the League of Samathar and the Wizard's Reach. The Untheric fleet suffers terrible losses in a great storm and turns back without landing. Gilgeam uses this event as an excuse to punish the Church of Ramman, although Assuran was the cause of the storm.
- **679 DR:** Unther recognises the independence of the League of Samathar and never again recovers from the long and costly campaign to retake the Wizard's Reach.

The mercenaries used in this campaign come largely from Chessenta and the Vilhon Reach. The Chondathan mercenaries brought with them worship of the dark gods and many of their faithful remain in Chessenta after the war because of growing troubles back home with the churches of Silvanus, Eldath, and Mielikki

- The Second Untheric Empire ends.
- **699 DR:** The Sarrukh of Okoth return to Faerûn and Lake Azulduth.

- **703 DR:** The Church of Bane moves into Chessenta from the Vilhon Reach. It finds itself particularly welcome in Threskel where it receives financial and political aid from certain members of the Threskel family.
- **747 DR:** The reigning Viceroy (King) Bankhil Chesq of Chessenta is slain by assassins in his capital of Luthcheq. Evidence points to a cabal of mages being the assassins.
- **748 DR:** The newly crowned Viceroy of Chessenta attacks Mordulkin. Mordulkin weathers the assault although both sides suffer heavy losses. The entire House of Chesq is killed shortly after when the Black Palace of Luthcheq is gutted by fire.
- Chessenta breaks up into feuding city states, although everyone continues paying taxes to Unther to prevent reprisals.
- **823 DR:** Prince Askler of Mourktar formally secedes from Unther after beating back the armies of Unther with the help of priests from the Church of Bane. Construction of a temple to Bane, the Black Lord's Cloak, begins in Mourktar.
- **831 DR:** Mourktar and Luthcheq march on Mordulkin and successfully conquer the city. Despite Luthcheq's objections, Prince Askler allows the city to continue to exist as his vassal. The city states of Chessenta prepare for war as Prince Askler begins to marshal his forces.
- **835 DR:** The great war leader Tchazzar first arises in the city of Cimbar as the leader of an elite mercenary band. He hires himself out to the various armies of Chessenta to fight in the wars against Prince Askler.
- **850 DR:** Tchazzar, in charge of the mercenary forces of the United Cities of Chessenta, pushes the forces of Prince Askler back to the gates of Mourktar and lays siege to the city. As the moment of victory is upon him, armies of the League of Samathar, led by House Jedea, land at Mordulkin and liberate the city from occupying forces. At the same time forces from Unther arrive to "liberate" Mourktar from the invaders.
- The Church of Bane renounces its alliance with Prince Askler who then disappears.
- Tchazzar is forced to dissolve his army and march back to Cimbar in

disgrace.

- The cities of Chessenta return to their petty feuding.
- **902 DR:** Tchazzar seizes the throne of Cimbar from the ruling council of merchants in a populist revolt after the city suffers its 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive military defeat against the other cities of Chessenta.
- **922 DR:** Several cabals of wizardry in the northern provinces of Mulhorand band together to rebel against the bureaucracy of Mulhorand and its arbitrary control of arcane magic.
- An ancient group of demon binders originating in ancient Narfell call forth the demon lord Eltab to drive the rapidly approaching armies of Mulhorand from the field at the Battle of Thazalhar.
- **929 DR:** Tchazzar finally unites the cities of Chessenta under his rule. His armies march on Unther occupied Mourktar and drive them out of Chessenta. Tchazzar demands annual tribute from Unther until his disappearance.
- The Fourth Chessentan Empire begins.
- **934 DR:** Thayans arrive in Escalant demanding tribute.
- Thay attempts to invade Rashemen through the Gorge of Gauros but is defeated by the berserkers and witches of Rashemen.
- **953 DR:** Tchazzar takes his revenge on the League of Samathar by conquering the Wizard's Reach.
- **955 DR: The Orcgates Affair:** Unable to stop the Grey Orcs in their lands, Thayan wizards transport a great horde of mountain orcs from the Savage Frontier and accidentally distribute them across southern and eastern Faerûn. Within 100 years much of the pure Grey Orc bloodline is weakened and their religious fervour, and advanced culture is diminished.
- **971 DR:** The Cult of the Dragon's expansion in the south is halted by the Church of Tiamat when they attempt to infiltrate the city of Surkh.
- **976 DR:** Mulhorand attempts to invade Thay but is repelled at the River Thazarim.
- The Covenant discovers the Thayans are responsible for the Orcgates

Affair. Aganazzar attempts to infiltrate Thay posing as a lost member of The Black Flame returned from the Outer Planes.

- **1005 DR:** A Cult of the Dragon cell is established in Mourktar.
- **1018 DR:** Tchazzar disappears while fighting the sahuagin of Aleaxtis as he ascends to godhood.
- Alasklerbanbastos becomes a dracolich and assumes control of the Cult of the Dragon cell in Mourktar.
- **1020 DR:** Thay learns much of its unique fire magic.
- **1024 DR:** The Church of the Dark Lady learns of Alasklerbanbastos' transformation into a dracolich. The Cult of the Dragon and the Church of the Dark Lady enter into an underground war that is waged across the lands of Chessenta and Unther. Within a year both organisations are nearly destroyed by the conflict. Alasklerbanbastos retreats to his lair beneath Dragonback Mountain with the few surviving cultists.
- **1030 DR:** The Zulkirs are established as the rulers of Thay.
- **1043 DR:** The second Mulhorandi-Durpari Coin War erupts over tax rates. Wererats of Vaelan attack several military caravans from both sides during the fighting.
- **1046 DR:** Mulhorand attacks Vaelan to destroy the wererat presence. The city is reduced to rubble but the lycanthropes remain hidden underground.
- **1074 DR:** The Zulkirs of Thay destroy the last opposition to the rule in Thay.
- **1081 DR:** Aganazzar is killed by Red Wizards of Thay during an assault on the School of Wizardy in Neverwinter.
- **1086 DR:** The cities of Nethjet and Nethentir are captured and absorbed into the Tharch of Lapendrar.
- **1098 DR:** Thay attempts to invade Mulhorand but is driven back by the armies of Mulhorand backed by the priesthood of Anhur at Sultim.
- **1104 DR:** Szass Tam is born.
- **1110 DR:** Thay marches on Phsant but is driven back by the allied forces of

Impiltur and Thesk.

- **1117 DR:** Chessenta breaks up into squabbling city states after Mordulkin declares independence and successfully resists all reprisals.
- The Wizard's Reach regains its independence from Chessenta.
- The Fourth Chessentan Empire ends.
- **1154 DR:** Cimbar is besieged by Akanax and Soorenar. The Sceptanar of Chessenta is forced to sign a pact by Soorenar which imposes harsh limits on his power. Akanax refuses to recognise the Sceptanar as the King of Chessenta and so does not sign the pact.
- **1157 DR:** Nyressa Flass, the Vampire Zulkir of Necromancy is destroyed by Szass Tam and a cabal of Red Wizards. Szass Tam becomes Zulkir of Necromancy.
- **1159 DR:** Szass Tam becomes a lich following a disastrous invasion of Rashemen in which he is seriously wounded. This event fosters a lasting hatred of Rashemen within Tam who spends several centuries trying to take his revenge.
- **1161 DR:** The merchant house of Karanok takes over lordship of Luthcheq under suspicious circumstances.
- **1183 DR:** Paladins of Osiris level the city of Sekras for a second time.
- **1194 DR Year of the Bloody Wave: Battle of the Singing Sands:** Aglarond repels the first invasion of the Red Wizards of Thay, but Elthond perishes in the fighting. His younger brother Philaspur becomes king of Aglarond.
- **1197 DR Year of the Sundered Shield: Battle of Brokenheads:** King Philaspur of Aglarond dies repelling another Thayan attack. His daughters Thara and Ulae share the throne and become known as the Grey Sisters.
- **1201 DR Year of Embers:** An invasion of Aglarond by a Thayan alliance of wizards is narrowly defeated. The failure of this invasion sees Szass Tam slay the Zulkir of Illusion, Nymor Thrul.
- **1222 DR Year of the Horn: The Harpstar Wars:** The Harpstar Wars [1182] end, and the surviving Harper veterans who return to Faerûn find the



organization under the sway of the self-styled Harper King, the lich Thavverdasz, and also in conflict with the Cult of the Dragon [1018, 1225]. The final battles see the death of the Harper King at the hands of Szass Tam [1201, 1359], Zulkir of Thay, who is in turn defeated by Elminster of Shadowdale, bringing the Harpers into conflict with Thay.

- **1248 DR Year of the Cockatrice:** Rehorusteb III becomes Pharaoh of Mulhorand.
- **1280 DR Year of the Manticore:** The Zulkirs of Thay launch an invasion of Mulhorand that ravages Murghôm and the northern districts of that land. The city of Sultim is nearly overrun. Priests of Anhur are made scapegoats.
- **1301 DR Year of the Trumpet:** A cult of Tiamat becomes active in Unther. This is the first recorded resurgence of the Church of the Dark Lady in Unther for many years.
- **1311 DR Year of the Fist:** Rezim becomes vizier of Mulhorand. He begins to persecute the church of Anhur. Chessentan mercenaries replace Anhur's priesthood as guards of the city of Skuld.
- **1317 DR to 1323 DR: The Plague of Dragons:** A plague sweeps through the Vilhon Reach. It becomes known as the Plague of Dragons in the area due to its visible effect of causing the skin to flake and the madness brought unto its victims. The plague also takes a huge toll in Chessenta and Unther (not ending there until 1324 DR). Mulhorand is largely unaffected. The Thayans withdraw from the Wizards' Reach to escape the disease.
- **1320 DR Year of the Watching Cold:** Akonhorus II becomes Pharaoh of Mulhorand.
- Resurgence of the Cult of Set, as Seti, an incarnation of the deity, appears in Mulhorand.
- **1322 DR Year of Lurking Death:** Alasklerbanbastos, the Great Bone Wyrm, emerges from the Riders of the Sky and begins a summer-long reign of terror in Chessenta.
- **1323 DR Year of Dreamwebs:** In Thay, the Zulkir of Enchantment leads an attempt to control the minds of influential people through their dreams. The efforts of the Red Wizards are eventually thwarted.

- **1324 DR Year of the Grimoire:** Luthcheq invades Mordulkin, and then loses the war. The loss is blamed on wizard-spies in the service of Mordulkin. Luthcheq begins persecution of wizards.
- **1341 DR Year of the Gate:** The first Khaasta raiding party travels through a *portal* in the depths of Azulduth, they are quickly destroyed by the Sarrukh and the *portal* is closed. The loss of this scouting party results in others being dispatched to discover what happened.
- **1344 DR Year of Moonfall:** Samas Kul arranges the concession of a small Thayan Quarter in the city of Procampur, creating the first of the Thayan enclaves.
- **1346 DR Year of the Bloodbird:** After centuries of silence from Tiamat the Dark Lady, the few remaining followers of the Nemesis of the Gods successfully summon an avatar of the Dark Lady to Unther, an event that had been heralded centuries before by Ochir Naal.
- **1350 DR Year of the Morningstar:** The Cult of Set gains control of Sampranasz in Mulhorand, though this fact remains hidden. Seti forms the Fangs of Set.
- **1351 DR Year of the Crown:** The Red Wizards obtain a concession in Telflamm. This site grows into the largest of the Thayan enclaves, since it is a distribution centre for Thayan goods throughout much of northern Faerûn.
- **1356 DR Year of the Worm:** Selfaril of Mulmaster and the Tharchioness of Thay, also known as the First Princess of Thay, exchange gifts.

## Deities With a Difference: Tchazzar

*The Father of Chessenta, the Warlord of Chessenta.*

Demi Power of Toril (CE)

**Portfolio:** Chessenta, Red Dragons, Weredragons

Tchazzar is known as the father of modern Chessenta. A great warlord of Cimbar, he united the warring city-states of Chessenta behind his banner and kept them in check for a century before he ascended to godhood. Few knew he was an ancient red dragon, but many suspected he was not what he seemed.

His deific life has been unremarkable except for the manner of his death and then his return to life which are inextricably linked to another draconic god; Tiamat.

### **History**

Tchazzar is the grandson of the Mulan goddess Tiamat the Dark Lady. Unlike his grand-mother, who was a human with the ability to change into dragon form, Tchazzar is a full blooded red dragon with the ability to shape change into human form at will.

After the death of his mother, Tchazzar was quickly forced from her lair by the arrival of a young blue dragon, called Alasklerbanbastos, against whom Tchazzar would spend the rest of his life struggling for supremacy.

Taking what few possessions he could carry, Tchazzar fled his home. Over the years he searched desperately for something to help him take his revenge on the blue dragon that stole his heritage.

He was soon approached by a human woman dressed in black who possessed immense power. She promised Tchazzar a ring that would help protect and strengthen him, and allow him to take revenge on his rivals. In return she wanted an unspecified boon that she would collect at some point in the future. Tchazzar agreed and from that moment on his fate was sealed.

The woman in question was Tiamat the Dark Lady, and she had given him one of the Rings of Tiamat that would make him a vessel for her divine essence. Later when he learned of the curse of the ring he sought for a means to counter it and preserve himself from this fate.

However the first thing on his mind was revenge and so he sought out the blue dragon that had stolen his birthright. Still in the lair beneath Dragonback Mountain in the

Riders to the Sky mountain range, Tchazzar found Alasklerbanbastos and fought him to a standstill, for it was only then he discovered he had been betrayed by Tiamat, the Alasklerbanbastos also wore a Ring of Tiamat so they were evenly matched and some powerful magic of the ring prevented them from dealing a killing blow to the other.

Tchazzar fled once again and devoted his time to ridding himself of the curse. His salvation, or so he thought, lay in divinity. If Tchazzar could become a god himself, then he would be free of Tiamat's curse and his life would be saved.

Tchazzar spent many years among the humans, studying them to try and determine the inner workings of their mind. He deduced that humans revere the brave and courageous so he would need to become a hero in their eyes. Even more-so, humans worship the strange and unexplainable, so at some point he would have to make the humans think he had become a god in order for them to believe he had.

The fractured nation of Chessenta provided the ideal playground for Tchazzar's scheme and so he set about uniting that land. His first attempt was undone by the mysterious ruler of Mourktar who had also decided to unite Chessenta under his banner. As Tchazzar's mercenary armies met Prince Askler's on the field of battle in Threskel, the armies of the League of Samathar landed behind Tchazzar and conquered Mordulkin. With his supply lines severed and facing the possibility of a war on two fronts, Tchazzar was forced to return to Cimbar in shame.

Thankfully for the would-be-god, Prince Askler disappeared shortly after, and in the petty wars between the city states of Chessenta that followed, Cimbar's military performance was woeful without him leading their armies. The citizens of Cimbar longed to be strong again and their memory of Tchazzar's near victory was at the front of their minds.

In a populist revolt the people of Cimbar threw off the yoke of the Council of Merchants, and made Tchazzar the Sceptanar of Cimbar. Within 30 years, Tchazzar had conquered all of Chessenta and unified it into a strong nation, even beating back the armies of Unther and exacting an annual tribute from the ancient empire.

And so for a century, Tchazzar held Chessenta together under his rule, waiting for a suitable enemy to appear so that he may perform his final act.

It wasn't until the Rage of Dragons struck in 1018 DR that Tchazzar found an enemy

and a war worth fighting. In order to prevent himself from destroying the nation he had spent so long building in a moment of Dracorage fuelled madness (and thereby ruining his plans). Tchazzar fled Chessenta into the depths of the Alamber Sea, there he spent weeks ravaging the undersea peoples.

Upon his return to Chessenta, Tchazzar found the Empire of Aleaxtis marching towards him intent on revenge. Tchazzar marshalled his armies and met them on the Long Beach. He personally led his men into battle and slew hundreds of the sea devils single-handedly.

Just as he landed the killing blow against the enormous sahuagin Prince, Tchazzar disappeared. Tales spread throughout Chessenta that Tchazzar had in those final moments become a god. People flocked to the temples and organised worship began, soon after Tchazzar did indeed ascend to godhood.

The only question that remained was who had sponsored his ascension to godhood. The answer lay in Tiamat, but not the Mulan goddess known as the Dark Lady. Instead Tiamat the Dragon Queen had backed Tchazzar's rise to godhood, hoping that through him she could wrest control of the Old Empires region from the Dark Lady. Regardless of her intentions, Tchazzar was glad to escape the curse he knew would consume him thanks to the Ring of Tiamat.

Using his agents, Tchazzar struck against, the now *Great Wyrm*, *Alasklerbanbastos* that had been his ancient enemy, and sparked an internal struggle between two factions of allies of the blue dragon. For the most part though, Tchazzar was happy to simply exist on the Outer Planes and while away the centuries as he waited for Tiamat to perish and his curse to be broken forever.

This event was a long time coming, and unfortunately for Tchazzar it happened during the *Godswar*, when the gods themselves were forced onto the planet Toril in avatar form to fend for themselves. Despite his best efforts Tchazzar fell victim to the curse and was compelled to seek out and destroy the other vessels of Tiamat (he was surprised when his ancient enemy *Alasklerbanbastos* was not among their number). Upon completion of this task, Tchazzar was consumed by the essence of Tiamat and should have perished in the process.

Instead the Time of Troubles twisted the magic that created the curse. Instead of Tchazzar's essence being replaced by Tiamat's, his soul was forced into the ring just as Tiamat's soul flowed out of it to consume his body. The Ring of Tiamat became the

Ring of Tchazzar, and his curse became his salvation.

The Ring of Tchazzar lay discarded on the battlefield where he slew the last vessel of the Dark Lady, until it was picked up by a draconic servant of Tiamat the Dragon Queen who had been instructed to collect it. The foolish creature put it on and within several years had been completely transformed into the Great Wyrms Tchazzar.

Once the transformation was complete, the demigod Tchazzar set about learning of events that had passed in his absence. He learned his ancient rival had also survived the curse of the Ring of Tiamat, and was now a dracolich of tremendous power. Even worse, Alasklerbanbastos was using vassal dragons to impose his rule over Chessenta, a nation that Tchazzar had forged.

When the time was right, Tchazzar reappeared over the Bay of Chessenta and destroyed Alasklerbanbastos' armies and many of his vassal dragons. He then flew to Cimbar and reclaimed the throne that was rightfully his.

### **Relationships**

Being a recently ascended demigod that perished and then returned to life, most of Tchazzar's relationships were mortal beings that dwelled on the planet Abeir-Toril.

During his deific life, Tchazzar spent his time serving Tiamat the Dragon Queen. Tiamat desired to use him in her plot to take worshippers from Tiamat the Dark Lady, and expand into the Old Empires pantheons.

Now that the Mulan goddess Tiamat is gone, Tiamat the Dragon Queen has little use for Tchazzar. Tchazzar is trying to stay out of her way, hoping that she has forgotten about her former servant. She may not even be aware of his resurrection, which is why he remains tied to the Material Plane and has not reclaimed his Outer Planar abode.

Tchazzar hopes to gain enough strength to replace Tiamat so that he can become the god of all chromatic dragons.

Tchazzar, given his red dragon origin, is enemies with Bahamut the Platinum Dragon. However, he has on a number of occasions secretly aided the forces of Bahamut in their unending war with Tiamat, by providing information and occasionally sabotaging Tiamat's plans.

The rest of the gods are unaware of Tchazzar's return and most are ignorant of his

existence as a god unless they have a vested interest in Chessenta.

Tchazzar has not yet decided what pantheon to align himself with. Dwelling in the contested region of Chessenta gives him a measure of security, in that no one pantheon of gods controls the area entirely and so few members of either pantheon are even aware of Tchazzar's existence as a god. Tchazzar is certainly able to join either pantheon because his Mulan heritage (he is the grandson of Tiamat the Dark Lady) will allow him to join the Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheon, his geographical location also means he is welcome in the Faerûnian pantheon, and his portfolio's conflict with no existing god in either pantheon.

The only thing preventing him from declaring his allegiance to one or both pantheons is the presence of Tiamat herself. He is unsure how much she knows of his return, and he is equally unsure of her plans for him. He suspects she would likely devour him given the opportunity and take his followers and portfolios for herself, therefore he is hiding in the contested region in the hope that he can remain secret for long enough to increase his power to a level to resist her advances.

### **Avatars**

Tchazzar has one avatar but that avatar can take two forms.

The War Leader can take the form of either a Great Red Wyrm or a grizzled, scarred, human veteran of many years.

In either form he retains his full draconic abilities (although he rarely uses them in human form), as well as the knowledge and abilities of a legendary warrior and general.

He can command the Mulan of Chessenta to perform his bidding with such force that few are able to resist.

His strength and speed are the stuff of epic ballads and it is claimed that he has never been beaten in physical combat (although Alasklerbanbastos may dispute this claim).

In human form he wields a blood red bastard sword called Red Razor, this sword inflicts terrible wounds that can cause an enemy to bleed out within minutes.

### **Relics**

**The Ring of Tchazzar:** What was once a Ring of Tiamat, this artefact was altered by the disruption of the Time of Troubles. It now holds a piece of Tchazzar's divinity,

and should he perish it could be used to bring him back to life once more.

In fact this has already happened. Shortly after the Time of Troubles, a draconic servant of Tiamat the Dragon Queen found the ring and foolishly put it on. The creature was transformed over several years into Tchazzar himself who still wears the ring to this day.

The Ring of Tchazzar enhances the wearer's abilities just like a Ring of Tiamat would. But should another dragon put it on then it will be transformed into Tchazzar by the power of the ring.

Tchazzar does not know if this will occur while he is still alive, and so makes sure to wear the ring at all times (the last thing he wants is to have to battle another version of himself). Upon his death though, Tchazzar has given instructions to his clergy to gift it to the first dragon they find in order to hasten his return.

In this way the ring acts like a deific phylactery for Tchazzar and is another reason why he has not chosen to return to the Outer Planes, because he does not think he can be killed even if he remains bound to Toril.

### **The Church of Tchazzar**

The Church of Tchazzar has gone through several upheavals in its short life. During the foundation of Chessenta, Tchazzar himself created the infrastructure for his own worship. Temples were erected in cities across the nation, although most went unused until his ascension.

Upon his disappearance, the people thronged to his Church, and worship of Tchazzar soared. However after Chessenta collapsed to infighting, many people felt Tchazzar had abandoned them and so his worship declined.

With his confirmed death during the Time of Troubles, the Church of Tchazzar collapsed and only the most devoted of fanatics and high priests remained to worship the former god of Chessenta.

Now that Tchazzar has returned, he has once again set about rebuilding his Church. He recognises that in order to survive he needs plenty of worshippers. So he is reclaiming his temples from the worship of whatever god they have been converted to.

He is also making sure his temples are safe-havens and protectors of the poor



(providing they devote their lives to Tchazzar). As part of this Tchazzar is using his Church to form the backbone of the new model army of Chessenta, those poor that seek refuge in his temples are indoctrinated into the Church and given new lives as fanatical soldiers. Tchazzar intends to have his army filled with zealous worshippers, brain-washed into following his every word. This new model army is still in its infancy but already Tchazzar has given it the name Chessenta's Legions

The head of the Church of Tchazzar is the titled the Sceptanar. Currently that position is held by Tchazzar himself, however in the event of Tchazzar's absence he hopes that making the ruler of the clergy and ruler of the secular state the same it will give the Church of Tchazzar and the nation of Chessenta a bit more stability.

At the moment the head priest of each temple is given the title Prefect, they are to be the military commanders of Chessenta's Legion. Each temple is responsible for the Legion recruited from the settlement in which they are based and at maximum strength each legion should be 1,000 strong, should a settlement contain more than one temple then the most senior priest of all the temples is called the Prefect and the others are called the Prefectus.

Beneath the Prefects are the Draconarians, these are the senior priests of each temple and serve as the front line military commanders, the lieutenants that are in charge of a battalion of 100 legionnaires each.

Finally each battalion contains 10 legionnaires including a Tchessenturion ( usually shortened to Senturion). The legionnaires are the fighting men recruited from the surrounding settlements, while the Senturion himself is a junior priest at the nearby temple.

The clergy are expected to serve as both priest and battle commanders in Tchazzar's new model army, again in an effort to preserve his nation and worship long after his ascension (or death). Those recruited into the Legions are trained hard for at least 2 days out of every ten-day, the training includes induction into the worship of Tchazzar. The top 10 percent of legionnaires recruited are given exclusive roles as members of the Legions and paid well to make the military their sole career, these legionnaires train daily and are among the most deadly in Faerûn.

**Allies:** At this moment in time the new Church of Tchazzar is only in its infancy and has no allies. However, should Tchazzar's plan proceed as intended then the Church of Tchazzar will be able to draw upon the entire army of Chessenta should it need to.

Tchazzar hopes that should he ever become absent from Chessenta again, the Church will be able to hold the nation together backed by the armed forces.

## Rulesword: Trimming 3rd Edition One Step at a Time

Step four of simplifying 3rd edition focuses on defences. Because of the number creep that comes with high level play, the defences of most high level monsters are unbreachable unless you are of equal level and have focused on the correct method of attack. Poor choices mean that some characters are left unable to achieve anything in combat against certain creatures.

So the fourth suggestion is:

- 4. Beating Defences (How to hit a dragon wearing magic armour and a template or two):** Reduce Armour Class to bring it in line with attack rolls.

If you have been following previous suggestions then most attack bonuses will struggle to exceed +10 and only a god should have an attack bonus greater than +20. Therefore the defences of all creatures need to be likewise reduced.

This can be achieved in a number of separate ways, but all need to be done to ensure fairness across the system.

By halving all Armour Class values for armour (round up) we significantly reduce the number creep for defences. Plate Mail will have the highest armour value at +4. Of course such a move increases the redundancy of various armours (for instance armours with an AC of +5 and +6 will now have the same value of +3). So by using a rule from *Unearthed Arcana* we can keep the various armours distinct by assigning each armour a Damage Reduction value (equal to half the original armour value rounded down).

This Damage Reduction value can be typed (Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing) or untyped depending upon preference (however I will be addressing Damage Reduction types along with vulnerabilities and immunities in a later Rulesword article).

Next is Natural Armour Class. This bonus seems to exponentially increase based on whatever whim the designer could think of. This often left particularly powerful creatures, such as ancient dragons, with an Armour Class in the high 50's which were unable to be hit by almost anyone not wielding an artefact level weapon.

So my personal preference is to link Natural Armour to the size of the creature. The protection an animal receives from its hide/skin typically increases according to size in the real world (an elephant is unlikely to be killed by a single sword wound - unlike a human). So Small and smaller creatures have a maximum Natural Armour bonus of +1,

Medium creatures have a maximum Natural Armour bonus of +2, Large creatures have a maximum Natural Armour bonus of +4, and the maximum increases by +2 for every increase in size category after Large. Obviously this is a maximum value and the Natural Armour bonus value does not have to equal the maximum, for example a horse probably shouldn't have a Natural Armour bonus of +4 despite its large size because its skin offers little more protection than a human.

Next we need to address the double defence associated with magic. All spells affecting unwilling targets need to bypass a creature's saving throw. However, most spells also need to beat a second defence called Spell Resistance before finally having any damage done affected by Energy Resistance.

Spell Resistance should be completely removed to make spell and melee combat the same.

With these few changes we have an all encompassing defence system based around AC for physical attacks, and saving throws for magical attacks. These systems should now be balanced with the lower attack bonuses (assuming you follow previous suggestions), and so you need never worry about your PCs not being able to hit a creature of appropriate level. Even a commoner could hit a giant with a lucky hit; PCs should particularly be aware that they will no longer be able to wade into an army of orcs and expect to survive (even if they are level 20).

Dragons being the iconic example are massive creatures. They should be relatively easy to hit with any weapon. Damaging them is however another matter that we will come to in the next issue.

**House Rule 1:** Consider granting a Damage Reduction value equal to half the new (and much lower) Natural Armour bonus of a creature to make monsters comparable to humanoids that wear armour.

**House Rule 2:** If a creature already has Spell Resistance then consider adding a bonus to all saving throws against magic equal to +1 per 10 points of Spell Resistance. This can affect psionics in whatever way you choose depending on if psionics are equal, different, or similar in your campaign. Similarly those creatures with Psionic Resistance gain a bonus to all saving throws against psionics which may or may not affect magic in the same way depending on your campaign's interaction between magic and psionics.

## Laerakond: The Sea of Fire

The Sea of Fire was once a water-logged quagmire, a disease infested, stinking, marshland that was home to the desperate and the disgusting.

This area of Laerakond had once been lush plains and forests that extended the great forest of central Laerakond far to the south. It was a land full of the wonders of draconic evolution where reptilian creatures great and small vied for evolution.

It was here where most of the meteorites from the Tearfall impacted on Laerakond, and it was here that the first dragon; Xcorv'inara'dalace, was born. However the impact of so much space debris had weakened the continental plate upon which this portion of Laerakond sat. The sea level of Abeir was also slightly higher than Toril and so over the next few centuries, sea water began to seep into the rising water table and swamp the land.

Gradually the fetid swamp of the south expanded and forced out the dragons that were still forming there. Xcorv'inara'dalace flew north to claim the first dragon empire on Laerakond, and others soon followed suit. A great draconic exodus of dragons left the swamp lands. The creatures that remained were mostly swarms of insects and other verminous creatures that could survive in the hostile, saline marshes.

And so the southern swamp lands remained unclaimed by all save for the few dragons that remained. These adapted dragons lacked the well developed wings of their cousins, and their breath weapons took the form of gases that saturated the water-logged environment and poisoned those nearby.

Only the most desperate orcs, outcast from the dragon empires, dared to venture into the swamps and they usually lived very short lives as hermits. The dragons of the southern swamps were content living there knowing that none of their kindred would bother to invade or attempt to vassalise them, and so they remained independent and multiplied.

That is until 400 DR when H'Calos arrived. The meteor housing H'Calos slammed into the southern swamps and instantly vaporised most of the life-forms living there. The force of the impact collapsed the continental plate and the entire swamp-land sank several hundred feet in a few seconds. Water from the oceans rushed in to fill the

void, and the huge split in the crust caused by the meteor and the collapsing land spewed forth magma in great quantities.

Amid all this chaos, there crawled H'Calos; the star worm. This great monstrosity was larger than any dragon, and bigger than some of the ancient primordial. He was a being twisted by the radiation of space and energies from the Far-Realm. He exists only to feed, and so he wriggled and writhed his way out of the sea and onto the western plains of Laerakond, forever transforming that land.

H'Calos was not the only creature riding on the meteor. Tiny worms, with human sized (and looking) eyeballs at one end, fell from the body of H'Calos as he wriggled beneath the waves.

These things resembled a mix of the star worm himself and the creatures known as beholders. They soon discovered a natural affinity for their new home. The water all around them increased their mobility, and their bodies were adapted to harsh environments and so had no problem in keeping them alive in this underwater home.

The area itself became known as the Sea of Fire. The rift between the continental plates spews forth a constant stream of magma that is quickly cooled by the water and then falls back into the rift where it is melted once again. This causes the central portion of the sea to glow a deep orange, and the rift itself is visible beneath the waves.

The water is also coloured red from the impact of the meteor and the presence of the star worm. The colour is darkest near the impact crater (just south of the magma rift) and gets lighter the further from the crater you go (by the time you reach the ocean the red colour is completely gone). This red from the crater and orange glow from the rift give the impression that the sea is literally on fire (especially when mixed with the ripple effect from waves and the high mineral and silt content of the water) which gives the inland bay its name; the Sea of Fire.

Despite the obviously dangerous environment, the Sea of Fire is not devoid of life. Some of the dragons that laired in the swamp survived the impact and were already well suited to life underwater. They exist now as aquatic dragons that feed on anything they find in the sea.

A number of Shalarin enclaves also exist in the depths of the Sea of Fire, although

only around the edges of the land above (these edges appear to the Shalarin as great cliffs rising upwards, and represent the portion of the continental plate that was not crushed by the impact of the meteor).

The Shalarin fled here once it formed because of the Wild-Tide gate that kept abducting their people. Fearful of what lay beyond the gate, a number of the Shalarin fled away from their homeland and came to Laerakond. They chose the Sea of Fire because it was largely free of predators (apart from the dragons) and was sheltered away from the effects of the Wild-Tide gate.

These Shalarin live inside the rock face of the cliffs, in excavated cave spaces which shelter them from the roaming dragons. Most of the Shalarin settlements are free Shalarin, but at least two of them are devoted to the worship of Dagon and are planning attacks on the free Shalarin.

**The Star Worms:** These monsters are the creatures that fell from H'Calos as he fled the Sea of Fire. They resemble an individual beholder eye-stalk, and indeed their eye has the initial capability to fire a stunning ray.

When they first appeared, the star worms were unable to locate any prey, and so most of them burrowed deep into the sand or the rock and entered a stasis to preserve themselves. Only one worm was successful in finding prey, a sleeping Sea Dragon, which it stunned, it then burrowed into his head, and so the Eyed Tyrant of the Deep was born.

The other Star Worms remain dormant hidden in their secret burrows, waiting to be disturbed by the unsuspecting. Once awakened they seek to stun the first living being they can find, then they burrow into that being's head and kill the unfortunate creature. They remodel the creature's skull so that the worm's eye protrudes from the skull (pointing outwards). The process is fatal for the creature, but its body remains living and under the control of the star-worm.

Once this remodelling is complete, the ray ability of the main eye changes to complement the physical and magical abilities of the being it now inhabits. Furthermore, this new hybrid creature becomes a host to the star worm as it divides and produces more of itself. When the hybrid creature is killed, or when it becomes "full" of these star-worms, they burst forth and seek out new prey.

Fortunately the reproductive process is not very fast (maybe one worm a year is produced), and the star worms initially found few creatures nearby that they could infest. So the star worms have remained dormant in the rocks and the sea bed waiting to be disturbed. As the Shalarin or other creatures begin to investigate the Sea of Fire the star worm population could see an explosion as they are uncovered.

**The Sea Dragons:** These dragons are not like their land dwelling kin. They have small, wings that appear under-developed, but actually serve brilliantly as rudders, allowing the dragons a degree of mobility their surface kin could never achieve.

Their gaseous breath weapons and physical abilities make them perfectly adapted for underwater living; as such they have become the masters of the sea.

Prior to the arrival of H'Calos, the Sea Dragons fought amongst themselves as their surface kindred do. They constantly battled over territory, mates, food, treasure, anything of value was a prize to be competed for.

When the meteor struck it wiped out most of the dragons except for a mated pair and their clutch of eggs (and one other dragon who became host to a star-worm). This family of dragons have learned to co-operate with one another and infighting is rare among their number.

However the lack of varied genetics among their population is starting to take its toll, and the latest generation of Sea Dragons is significantly smaller than their parents. Furthermore, the Sea Dragons are under threat from the Eyed-Tyrant of the Deep.

**Eyed-Tyrant of the Deep:** This dragon abomination was already ancient when the lone star-worm found him slumbering in a sea cave and took up residence in his skull.

The cave itself extended far beneath what is now called the Dusk Desert, and so the dragon was unaffected by the meteor strike (the earthquake that followed only roused him momentarily), and so several days later, when the tiny eye-stalk crawled into his lair, he barely noticed it crawl into his ear and burrow into his brain.

Since that time the star-worms have multiplied inside his carcass for nearly a thousand years. This bloated, rotting, draconic creature barely resembles his Sea Dragon kindred anymore.

His face contains a large eye-ball in the centre of his face, above his maw, that



projects a ray of dazzling light out from it. This light is powerful enough to easily illuminate the murky depths of the Sea of Fire out to 60 ft, and thankfully gives his prey some warning of his approach. Anyone caught in the light is likely to be blinded and so become easy prey for the Eye Tyrant of the Deep.

Recently the multiplying star-worms inside the Eyed Tyrant have started to partially burrow out through the dragon's skull, and a number of lesser eye-stalks project out of the side of his head. These stalks project magical rays with effects such as stun, sleep, paralysation, and other abilities that aid this behemoth in hunting the heavily silted depths of the Sea of Fire.

## The Knights Below: Adventure Path - Episode 4

**Overview:** The party should find themselves, either with Hawkeye's aid, or by accident, at the wood elven settlement of Small Trees in the High Forest.

**The Environment:** The entire settlement resides up among the boughs of the wide trees of the High Forest. The elves usually remain within their forest dwelling, coming down only to forage for food.

There are a total of 20 tree-houses in the boughs above that house 15 family units of at least two members. This small clan is led by a wizened old elf referred to as Elder Maerthar by the others and he makes all the big decisions for the clan. He is assisted by an elf known as Araevil, who is in charge of defending the settlement.

**Arrival:** When the party arrive at the settlement, Hawkeye (if he lives) instructs the party to remain below while he converses with his family. After several minutes he returns and instructs the party to use the lift (now lowered to the ground) and they can rest in the empty guest tree-house.

If Hawkeye has perished during the journey then Araevil descends to the ground to talk with the party. He is initially reluctant to allow them to stay among the elves, but will relent and eventually allow them to rest in the guest tree-house while under guard.

**The Settlement:** The families of Small Trees are the equivalent of level 1 experts. They all tend to their assigned duties and do not wish to speak to strangers.

There is a basic equipment store that can sell bows, arrows, and provisions to the party but at 100% markup from normal prices.

A gather information related check can reveal the following information to the party.

### **DC Result**

- 12 The Axebiter and Bloodskull orc clans have been at war in this area of the High Forest for generations.
- 15 The old abandoned keep lies several days west of here inside the borders of the forest. Various bandit groups have operated out of the hold for over a century since it was abandoned by the Parlfray family and the forest reclaimed

it.

18 The Hewn Head tribe of orcs from the Nether Mountains have been acting strangely of late, they are far more organised than usual and prey on all boat traffic entering or leaving the Upper Rauvin Vale.

At some point the party should seek an audience or will be requested to attend an audience with the elder.

**Audience:** The elder wishes to speak with the party about what is happening in the Upper Rauvin Vale. He is worried about the strange behaviour of the Hewn Head orcs, and can see a possible calamity brewing regarding the overcrowding in Lhuvenhead.

At first the elder enquires about the party's intentions toward the elves and Small Trees. He also asks what they will do in the near future. If the party do not know what they will do next then he suggests they visit Lhuvenhead as there is always work available in the human settlements, especially for adventurers, and he has heard the local lord is in need of a few special men to perform a dangerous task or two.

The elder advises the party head due north-west for 4 days and they will enter the cleared area of the southern bank. There should be a friendly farmer there called Maxar, he will aid the party in reaching Lhuvenhead.

If the party ask for aid then the elder will grant them help depending on his disposition towards the party. Initially the elder begins with a neutral opinion of the party. A diplomacy related check can be used to raise this opinion. If the party return the bow retrieved from the tomb then this raises the opinion of the elder by one step (neutral to friendly, friendly to helpful, helpful to fanatic). If the party roleplayed well with Hawkeye and formed a friendship then he will also speak up on behalf of the group and this will raise the elder's attitude by one step.

If the elder's attitude towards the party is "helpful" or greater then he will send Araevil to accompany them as far as Maxar's farm.

If the party have bonded particularly well with Hawkeye then he will also accompany the group as far as Maxar's farm.

**Aftermath:** Following the audience with the elder, the party are able to rest for a night and can leave in the morning for Maxar's farm. They are asked to return the

magic bow recovered from the elven tomb (at arrow point if needed), assuming they recovered the bow. If they refuse to return the bow then the elder's attitude towards the party is reduced by one step. The elves will not attack the party, merely threaten them with violence. They will however defend themselves if attacked.

Keep track of the elder's opinion of the party as this will be important for future assistance that the elves may provide later.

## The Knights Below: Campaign Journal

*After what seemed like days of travel we arrived at the elven settlement. Of course given our meagre forest-lore we had no idea that above our heads were over a hundred elves belonging to the same clan as Hawkeye.*

*Crag was blustering along the forest floor, kicking up litter and complaining about the lack of a fourth meal this day. Chadwick and Wystan in their chain armour were equally as silent. It was therefore to no ones surprise when two warning arrows were fired into the ground at our feet, they chimed a sound as they coursed through the air to announce the elve's presence.*

*Hawkeye instructed us all to remain very still while he conversed with the elder. It appears the elves do not like unexpected company. Crag also did not like being ordered around, and neither did his Brain. The two of them argued vocally over whether the elves were in league with the squiddies until Hawkeye returned from the tree tops.*

*We were raised into the trees on a wooden platform held up by pulleys. Once in the tree-tops we were shown to our guest quarters, which although little more than an empty room, were more comfortable than staying on the forest floor with the animals, insects, and orcs.*

*After settling in a few of us went wandering and found the local shop. We managed to restock our provisions, even though Crag complained that the strange elven meals were barely enough to satisfy his hunger for a few hours.*

*During our shop we were summoned by the elder. Approaching his shack we saw the ancient elf propped up with a staff on the far side of the room, he looked to be a thousand years old, with his wrinkled, paper thin skin, and eyes that stared straight through you.*

*Chadwick surprised us all by saluting the elder using an ancient elvish gesture, Chadwick did not know what the words meant, but he knew they were a mark of respect and I was sure the elder smiled slightly.*

*Tallyn then immediately offered the bow we had recovered, despite Crag, under his breath, accusing the wizard of being insane.*

*The elder was more than pleased by our gestures and his following interrogation of us was light. We explained our flight through the forest to escape the orcs and that we had no ill intentions towards the elves. The elder was aware of the strange behaviour of the orcs on the north bank of the Delimbiyr and was worried it could spread to the orcs in this region of the forest.*

*He instructed us to travel north-west to a nearby farmstead. It was owned by a human named Maxar whose family was well known and respected by the elves, and he would help the party from there. He urged us to continue to Lhuvenhead where we might find work in the region from the local lord, and hopefully discover what is behind the strange events happening in the Upper Rauvin Vale.*

*As a parting gift the elder instructed one of his aides, a tall, strong elf who seemed good friends with Hawkeye. Hawkeye himself requested permission to continue journeying with us as far as Lhuvenhead, as in his words "They will only find trouble on their own"*

*To our surprise the elder agreed, and he gave the bow we had returned to the unnamed elf. With that we were bid farewell and escorted back to our room.*

*The following day our ever expanding group left the elves and headed north-west, the two elves leading the way.*

## **Credits**

Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - Mythology	G.Dallison
The Adventures of Aytros Falconwing: On The Run (Part 1)	R.Rahuba
Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Mulhorandi-Untheric Pantheon	G.Dallison
When is a House Rule Not a House Rule: Skills	G.Dallison
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Deities with a Difference: Gilgeam	G.Dallison
The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path - Episode 3	G.Dallison
Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - An Alternate Timeline	G.Dallison
Deities with a Difference: Tchazzar	G.Dallison
Rulesword: Trimming 3rd Edition One Step at a Time	G.Dallison
Laerakond: Sea of Fire	G.Dallison
The Knights Below: Adventure Path - Episode 4	G.Dallison
The Knights Below: Campaign Journal	G.Dallison
Special thanks to Sam Evans, Kenneth Fabacher, and Ryan Rahuba for proof reading and idea development.	

## **Final Word**

Just to note that this is in no way to be considered canon material; it is a fan-made representation of different versions of the Forgotten Realms. It uses some canon information as a base but may remove some pieces of the Realms, alter others, and add many homebrew ideas to develop it further.