

FORGOTTEN REALMS ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS: ISSUE V

Editorial

Welcome to issue V 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.

Contents

Editorial	1
Dragons of the South: Alasklerbanbastos "The Great Bone Wyrn"	3
Welcome to the Jungle: The Magic of Maztica	15
When is a House Rule Not a House Rule: Skills	33
Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - A History of Thay.....	41
The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path - Episode 4	50
Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - A Modern Timeline	52
Deities With a Difference: Set	93
Laerakond: The Hundar Isles	103
Rulesword: Trimming 3rd Edition One Step at a Time	107
Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Church of the Dark Lady.....	110
Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Conquest of Unther Campaign.....	121
The Knights Below: Adventure Path - Episode 5.....	147
The Knights Below: Campaign Journal.....	150
Credits	153

Dragons of the South: Alasklerbanbastos "The Great Bone Wyrm"

Alasklerbanbastos, a family member of the blue dragons of the Old Empires, originally came from the Raurin Desert north of Mulhorand. His early years involved a flight from his homeland due to the battle for Suzerainty of the Old Empires after religious strife stirred up factions among the blue dragons. Alasklerbanbastos and his immediate family were on the losing side of the conflict (although it is possible the loss was intentional) and so they were forced to flee their homeland.

Alasklerbanbastos soared far and wide searching for a new home when he heard news about the death of T'khiazzazzar. Alasklerbanbastos was a learned wyrm and he knew of the familial connection between T'khiazzazzar and Tiamat the Dark Lady, a Mulan goddess.

Alasklerbanbastos correctly believed that Tiamat would ascend to godhood once more and the lair of T'khiazzazzar would lie empty (or nearly so). What Alasklerbanbastos did not know was that T'khiazzazzar had recently (for a dragon) had a son who still remained in the lair awaiting the return of his mother.

Alasklerbanbastos and Tchazzar fought each other furiously, and in the end Alasklerbanbastos was victorious and forced the red dragon from his home. So began a lifelong enmity and rivalry which survives to this day, with both dragons trying to out-do one another and see who is truly the strongest and most worthy of Tiamat's favour.

Both Alasklerbanbastos and Tchazzar have sought the favour of Tiamat over the years. However they both sought out the favours of different Tiamat's that would ultimately become one and the same.

Soon after taking T'khiazzazzar's lair for himself, Alasklerbanbastos was approached by Tiamat the Dark Lady, she whispered to him of Tchazzar's desire to regain his lair by using a magic ring he found that would augment his abilities. Alasklerbanbastos was instantly enamoured with the Dark Lady and agreed to her proposal that he use a similar ring which would protect him from Tchazzar, in exchange for an unspecified boon in the future.

When Tchazzar came knocking on Alasklerbanbastos' door the two wyrms discovered that neither could land the killing blow, they were prevented by some kind of compulsion, which would only allow the vessels of Tiamat to kill each other in the

event of Tiamat's death, at which point they would be forced to kill one another.

Tchazzar fled yet again, for although Alasklerbanbastos could not kill him he could still imprison him once incapacitated. The two wyrms went their separate ways, each spying on the other to learn of their respective plans.

Tchazzar discovered the curse of the Rings of Tiamat, yet Alasklerbanbastos was still ignorant of it and focused his efforts on becoming rich and powerful. To do this he desired to rule a nation of humans that could provide for his every need.

Alasklerbanbastos spent years infiltrating the Thresk family of Mourktar, creating and recreating himself over and over again in human guise as an entire bloodline of members of the Thresk family. By the time he created the persona of Askler Thresk in 800 DR, he was next in line to inherit the throne from the aging and childless King Selsgar Thresk.

As Prince Askler, Alasklerbanbastos remained a mysterious and enigmatic figure, always present at major engagements, and yet similarly unable to be found. Everyone had met the dashing young prince but no one could quite remember what he looked like, just that he was young and handsome and charming, with sapphire blue eyes.

Alasklerbanbastos longed for acceptance and the embrace of Tiamat the Dark Lady, and he attempted to court her by doing what he felt was her bidding. His first goal was to claim a nation to make him rich and powerful, the next was to smash Unther into dust.

Alasklerbanbastos recognised the power of the Church of Bane which was recently established in Chessenta. Using a powerful artefact of Bane that he had uncovered many years before, he persuaded the church that he would make an ideal tyrant through which to enforce their will.

In 823 DR, using his newfound allies, Prince Askler declared Mourktar independent of Unther and refused to obey the edicts (and pay the taxes) of that decadent and unpopular land. The retaliation from Unther was pitiful and easily eliminated by the armies of Mourktar backed by the Church of Bane. In gratitude, construction of a grand temple was begun in Mourktar in honour of those that helped liberate them from Unther's rule.

Prince Askler then set his sights on creating a nation. He preyed upon the traditional enmity between Luthcheq and Mordulkin and in 831 DR convinced Luthcheq to help

him conquer the wizardly might of that city. Then at the last moment once the siege was complete, Prince Askler betrayed his allies and accepted Mordulkin as part of the new nation of Threskel.

Shortly after this Alasklerbanbastos' hated enemy appeared to thwart his plans. Tchazzar had spent many years studying the humans of Chessenta, trying to work out how to implement the next stage of his plan to thwart the curse of the Ring of Tiamat. The war for Chessenta was the perfect stage for Tchazzar's bid for divinity; he would oppose Prince Askler and be seen as a crusader against tyranny who could unite the people behind his banner. Even better, the tyrant was none other than Alasklerbanbastos, his ancient rival.

Tchazzar forged an elite mercenary company, and with little more than his name and reputation, he set about fighting against the Prince of Threskel. In battle after battle, Tchazzar annihilated the forces of Threskel for he always fought on the front line with devastating ability. Prince Askler, who preferred to order his men into battle from the safety of his palace, could not compete against the abilities of a great wyrm using only a few thousand humans.

With his forces pushed all the way back to Mourktar and Tchazzar on his doorstep, the two wyrms met in secret (for both knew they could not kill the other). Tchazzar delighted in telling Alasklerbanbastos of the curse he unwittingly bore and how Tchazzar would soon be free while Alasklerbanbastos would become fodder for the Dark Lady.

Alasklerbanbastos retreated to Dragonback Mountain in horror and fear as the forces of Tchazzar and Unther lay siege to Mourktar killing the entire Thresk family. While Tchazzar was forced to retreat back to Chessenta in disgrace, Alasklerbanbastos spent the next hundred years or more trying to find away to break the curse.

The answer, he finally discovered lay in dracolichdom, a process he had heard of in the north created by a cult of lunatics that worshipped dead dragons. He courted them with well placed rumours, through his remaining allies in the Church of Bane, of a very ancient blue wyrm desiring a weapon with which to beat his hated enemy, a wyrm willing to do anything.

The Cult of the Dragon answered his call and arrived in Mourktar. Alasklerbanbastos used his few contacts within the Church of the Dark Lady to allow the organisations

to coexist, claiming that this cell was commanded by him and did not wish to experiment on the sacred dragons the church worshipped. As a result and with the backing of Alasklerbanbastos, the Cult of the Dragon expanded across Unther and Chessenta within a few decades. In return for his services Alasklerbanbastos was transformed into a dracolich and made the leader of the Cult of the Dragon cell (after he devoured the previous leader).

Alasklerbanbastos was delighted when the process worked and he became a dracolich, and the Ring of Tiamat dropped from his finger (it was picked up by a member of the Church of Tiamat and delivered into the hands of the blue dragon Gestanius sometime later. Gestanius was also a member of the same blue dragon family descended from Maladraedior but with a different mother). Unfortunately Tchazzar was waiting, and as Alasklerbanbastos was meeting with his Tiamatian allies to discuss further integration and an alliance of forces, it was revealed the Alasklerbanbastos had become an undead abomination.

The Cult of the Dragon and the Church of Tiamat attempted to destroy each other and both nearly succeeded, leaving only tiny fragments of the organisations across Unther and Chessenta. The Church of the Dark Lady was almost completely eradicated in Chessenta and the Cult of the Dragon was likewise removed from Unther.

Again Alasklerbanbastos retreated to his mountain and did not emerge again until the 14th century Dale Reckoning. During that time he was plotting and scheming and gathering his forces to create a plan, one that even Tchazzar could not take away from him.

However the Time of Troubles struck and Alasklerbanbastos could do nothing but laugh as his great nemesis was struck down by the curse he had supposedly escaped. When Tchazzar perished, Alasklerbanbastos was free to do as he pleased for none could stop his plans now.

In 1365 DR, Alasklerbanbastos appeared from his lair and laid claim to all the lands of Unther and Chessenta. He sent out his draconic servants to claim this land in his name. His dragon forces were highly successful. All of former Unther (except for Messempar) was claimed and held as well as most of Chessenta. For 8 years Alasklerbanbastos extorted wealth and power from his draconic subjects who in turn took it from the pathetic humans they ruled over.

Then in 1373 DR the unthinkable happened. Tchazzar, the demigod that was consumed by Tiamat the Dark Lady during the Time of Troubles, reappeared over the Bay of Chessenta and annihilated a naval spectacle that was on display for the glory of the Great Bone Wyrm. Alasklerbanbastos was confused and furious. He threw the entire might of his dragon empire at Tchazzar, and the great red wyrm destroyed them all.

Alasklerbanbastos' empire dissolved about him as Tchazzar remade Chessenta from its ashes. Now Alasklerbanbastos plots with the Cult of the Dragon and Church of the Dark Lady as allies, and waits for the day the Tchazzar comes looking for revenge.

Alasklerbanbastos' Lair

Alasklerbanbastos lairs in the depths of Dragonback Mountain beneath the Riders to the Sky Mountain range. This lair was once the home of Tchazzar, and before him his mother T'khiazzazar, and before her it was home to Tiamat the Dark Lady herself. Here Tiamat hid from the gods of Akanu and Unther and plotted ways to bring about their downfall, until she ascended to the Outer Planes and left the material world behind.

The lair itself is a honeycomb of weaving lava tubes and constructed tunnels, most of which are big enough for the great wyrm to manoeuvre himself through with ease.

Having been occupied for over 4,000 years, this nexus of tunnels is probably the most well defended place on Faerûn, with many traps and servants created by beings of near god-like power (and in some cases created by actual gods).

Hidden in the deepest darkest chambers are also some of the secret artefacts plundered by Tiamat from the Mulan gods and added to by Alasklerbanbastos over the years.

Overall, Alasklerbanbastos' lair holds a hoard of treasure that could buy him Chessenta several times over, should anyone be willing, or able, to sell it.

Alasklerbanbastos' Domain

Alasklerbanbastos domain has waxed and waned over the millennia. Originally, he viewed only Chessenta as his own domain and he warred with Tchazzar for it constantly.

After Tchazzar and Tiamat's death, Alasklerbanbastos sought to expand his domain

to encompass all of Unther as well. He held onto this domain for nearly 6 years before challenges to his rule began to appear.

Now Alasklerbanbastos (as of 1373 DR) rules only Threskel, and even then it is not clear for how long this will remain true.

Deeds of Alasklerbanbastos

In his guise as Prince Askler Thresk, Alasklerbanbastos began the first serious war of conquest to unite the city states of Chessenta. In doing so he created the nation of Threskel which existed for a brief time and remains as a disputed boundary between Chessenta and Unther, both nations consider parts of Threskel to be their territory while Threskel considers itself independent.

This nation of Threskel was recently expanded between 1365 and 1373 DR to include most of Unther and Chessenta as part of the Dragon Empire of Unther, until it began to fall apart to outside pressures from Mulhorand and the return of Tchazzar.

Alasklerbanbastos has spent most of his life and unlife attempting to destroy and thwart the schemes of his ancient rival Tchazzar, without success.

Not all of Alasklerbanbastos' schemes have resulted in complete failure though. His invitation to the Cult of the Dragon into the Old Empires (although initially disastrous) has resulted in numerous cells being created across Chessenta and Unther, all of which ultimately answer to him. Furthermore his alliance with the Church of the Dark Lady has brought the two organisations towards a close union with dual membership in many instances; this brings with it the potential for Alasklerbanbastos to become a leading figure in Tiamat's church.

This alliance has had the effect of beginning a schism in ideologies between the northern and southern cells of the Cult of the Dragon and may result in a complete separation of the two factions of the Cult. The northern faction, ruled from Sembia is staunchly opposed to organised worship gaining control over a cell's leadership, while Alasklerbanbastos' faction advocates closer integration with the Church of the Dark Lady.

If a true schism does occur, and if Alasklerbanbastos' faction can survive the reprisals from the northern cultists, then he will become the leader of one of the largest cults in the Old Empires, and would have a very real chance of making a play to become High Priest of the Church of the Dark Lady (as that branch of Tiamat's

church is called in the Old Empires region).

Alasklerbanbastos' Magic

Alasklerbanbastos has a gigantic hoard of magical items, artefacts, spells, and servants that have been accumulated by the previous occupants over the past four millennia.

Orbs of Dragonkind: These three orbs (red, blue, and green) were created by Tiamat the Dark Lady shortly after her arrival on Toril. She created them so that she might have more complete control over those dragons that served her (should she need it), and to allow her to gain draconic servants more easily..

Once targeted at a nearby dragon of the appropriate colour, it allowed the user complete control over that dragon. The holder's every will would be obeyed unquestioningly and without delay. Using this orb Tiamat compelled dragons across the Old Empires to wreak havoc on the Mulan gods and the civilisations they ruled as well as worship her as the goddess of dragons.

Later when Alasklerbanbastos found the orbs following his transformation into dracolichdom (he quickly found following this transformation that he was now immune to some of the deadlier traps in the depths of his lair), he lured dragons into his lair and bound them to his will forever using the Orbs of Dragonkind. His rampages in 1322 DR were one such attempt to lure dragons to his lair by engaging in fierce and costly battle with humans that would make him appear weakened and easy pickings for a dragon that did not know he was a dracolich).

Chariot of Ra: This giant golden chariot once carried the Mulhorandi god Ra into battle against the Imaskari and later against Gruumsh. When the orc gods killed Ra and fortified themselves in the Thayan plateau they kept for themselves the Chariot as part of the spoils of war.

Following Tiamat's destruction by Marduk's retaliatory strike, her essence was split among three vessels. These vessels were scattered across the Old Empires and were compelled to seek each other out and destroy one another.

One such vessel sought to escape this compulsion by travelling the Planes, another permanently altered his form to an orc and hid among the invading grey orcs. Nonetheless, Tiamat's daughter and vessel found and devoured them both and from among the orc's treasure haul she found this chariot used as a makeshift throne.

The Chariot of Ra is able to move without horses, using its own magical locomotion. It can fly with perfect manoeuvrability as fast as a hawk. It obeys both the verbal and thought based commands of the person standing in the chariot, and upon command can unleash a *sunburst* spell 3 times per day.

Ankh of Life: The Ankh of Life was the staff of the Mulhorandi god Ptah who gave it to Ra when he left to guard the graveyard of the gods. This staff was lost upon Ra's death at the hands of Gruumsh and was later recovered by Alasklerbanbastos who found it in the hands of a mercenary band come to slay him (likely they had no idea what a treasure they carried).

This 6 ft tall bronze pole with an ankh shape atop it was said to have the power to restore life to any being in existence.

Alasklerbanbastos no longer possesses this staff since he gave it to Gilgeam's former High Priest Zimrilim. Following Alasklerbanbastos' conquest of Unthalass, his vassal wyrm supposedly devoured Zimrilim, but really captured the priest and delivered him to Alasklerbanbastos as a gift.

When Mulhorand arrived to conquer Unther, Alasklerbanbastos needed some way to destabilise the Mulhorandi forces so that he could send in his agents and regain control of Unthalass. In order to deflect the attention from himself, he gave the Ankh of Life to Zimrilim knowing full well that he would attempt to restore life to Gilgeam. Unfortunately for Zimrilim, Gilgeam's corpse was now at the bottom of the Pit of Many Colours (a site formed by the blood of Gilgeam and sacred to Tiamat). When he attempted to raise Gilgeam's body it was twisted by the magic of the Pit and he was restored to unlife as a horrifying undead juggernaut of destruction. This undead abomination ultimately led to the restoration of Gilgeam as a god of undeath.

Cloak of Bane: The Cloak of Bane was an artefact worn by Bane before he became a god when he stalked the realms slaying powerful primordial creatures or binding them to his will in an effort to become divine himself.

This cloak was a sentient artefact that obeyed Bane's every command and would swoop down on his opponents and drain them of all life which would restore damage to Bane when he next donned it.

This cloak and the Spear of Bane were last seen in the far eastern provinces of the land that would be called Chessenta as Bane and the other members of the Dark

Three fled the destruction they had caused in Jhaamdath and the retribution of Tyr. The spear was claimed by the first to find it, but none could control the Cloak of Bane unless it wished it. It was Alasklerbanbastos that was first to claim the artefact as it roamed the land preying on travellers (although at great personal pain as it attempted to drain him of all life), it had long since been thought to be a monster of legend but Alasklerbanbastos recognised it for its true origin and so gambled much to acquire it. He later gave it to the Church of Bane in Mourktar to secure an alliance for himself so that they would back his bid to become the next tyrant of Chessenta.

This alliance has persisted in one form or another and many of his Cult of the Dragon cells in Chessenta and Unther have priests of Bane in prominent positions.

Alasklerbanbastos' Allies

Alasklerbanbastos has had many allies over the years in his quest for power and the attentions of Tiamat the Dark Lady.

Always, Alasklerbanbastos desired to be close to the Dark Lady. He reasoned that by becoming her High Priest he would be rewarded with the chance to meet her personally. However the Church of the Dark Lady had a predominantly human hierarchy and only those dragons sent by Tiamat herself had a place among her church as special members.

His first major allied organisation was the fledgling Church of Bane in Mourktar. Having recently arrived in Mourktar after being cast out of the Vilhon Reach area, the Church of Bane found many receptive worshippers for Bane (thanks to waves of migration since the fall of Jhaamdath). What they lacked was a strong tyrant to promote the power of their god and allow them to create a formal temple and church in the region.

Alasklerbanbastos, in the guise of Prince Askler, put himself forward as that tyrant. With the help of the Church of Bane he convinced them he could forge a nation with himself as tyrant that would grant full support to their church. To sweeten the deal he gifted them a lost relic of their god, the Cloak of Bane. After the alliance was forged and the first steps of conquest were taken, he consented to the construction of a vast temple to Bane in Mourktar known as the Black Lord's Cloak.

Unfortunately following Prince Askler's defeat at the hands of Tchazzar, the alliance

between Alasklerbanbastos and the Church of Bane foundered. Alasklerbanbastos retreated to his lair and began plotting anew.

Alasklerbanbastos' next allies were the Cult of the Dragon who had been attempting to expand into southern Faerûn for many years, quite unsuccessfully thanks to open hostility from the Church of the Dark Lady.

Alasklerbanbastos used his connections within Mourktar (under an assumed guise) and his remaining allies in the Church of Bane to contact the Cult of the Dragon and to enable a cell to establish and grow within the city. He even managed to use his few connections within the Church of the Dark Lady to ensure the two organisations were at least on neutral terms. In return the Cult of the Dragon transformed him into a dracolich and made him the cell leader (after he devoured the original cell leader).

Unfortunately this alliance was also doomed to failure. After spending the next few years aggressively expanding the Cult of the Dragon's influence into Unther, his ancient enemy foiled all his plans by revealing to the Church of the Dark Lady that Alasklerbanbastos was now a dracolich.

The Church of the Dark Lady was unable to countenance the abominable practices the Cult performed upon the sacred dragons and so an underground war was waged between the two organisations across Chessenta, Unther, and the Vilhon Reach.

By the end of the war a year later both organisations were so badly damaged as to be practically extinct in the Old Empires. Only a few cultists and worshippers survived on both sides and it would take several centuries to rebuild the organisations.

Alasklerbanbastos did just that however. He carefully shepherded the Cult of the Dragon through those dark times creating small, secret cells across Chessenta and Unther, all of whom answered directly to him.

The Time of Troubles announced the survival of the Church of the Dark Lady to the rest of the Old Empires (including Alasklerbanbastos), and the subsequent death of the Dark Lady signalled an end to the problems between the Cult of the Dragon and the Church of the Dark Lady. The new Tiamat the Dragon Queen, was just as alluring to Alasklerbanbastos and she was not insanely opposed to the existence of dracoliches.

So Alasklerbanbastos has once again attempted integration between the two organisations. His cultists have gained low ranking positions in the Church of the Dark

Lady and likewise he has invited several of the more open minded clergy of Tiamat to become leading members in the Cult of the Dragon.

The exchange has worked well so far and the two organisations are now closer than ever. Following the Dracorage, and the apparent demise of Sammaster, Alasklerbanbastos has appeared as a real contender for the leadership of the Cult of the Dragon. Only his alliance with the Church of the Dark Lady is preventing him from asserting his control over the northern Cult of the Dragon cells.

It now looks as if the Cult of the Dragon will split, and if he can survive, Alasklerbanbastos could be leader of one of the most powerful organisations in the Old Empires.

Alasklerbanbastos' Fate

Alasklerbanbastos' fate is unknown. He is certainly one of the more powerful dragons in existence; he has amassed an incredible stockpile of magic and has the intellect and cunning to use these resources to great effect.

Had Alasklerbanbastos existed anywhere else in the realms with these assets, it is likely he would now be a dragon overlord of a vast empire.

Unfortunately for Alasklerbanbastos he is consumed by his need to best Tchazzar. His every waking moment is spent trying to beat or get revenge on his ancient rival and so most of his plots and schemes come to ruin, not through lack of planning, or because they were bad plans, but simply because Tchazzar has been luckier than him.

Alasklerbanbastos thinks that his lair is probably the only reason he is still alive (and he is correct in this). The lair of Alasklerbanbastos is protected by more traps than can be counted, many of which are powerful enough to sunder the entire of Dragonback Mountain. For this reason alone, Tchazzar has not sought out his foe and slew him, and it is for this reason that Alasklerbanbastos retreats to his home whenever Tchazzar is around and has the upper hand.

Should someone or something lure Alasklerbanbastos from his lair then he is in very real and immediate danger from his now much more powerful rival and foe Tchazzar.

Alasklerbanbastos is also under threat from the very organisation that he now leads in southern Faerûn. The Cult of the Dragon is undergoing a schism as the Wearers of Purple in Sembia attempt to stamp out all religious influences in the Cult of the Dragon (an event that has occurred before, to the ruin of the Cult).

Alasklerbanbastos is liable to face attacks by mercenary companies, fanatical cultists, and hired adventurers, all seeking to eliminate the dracolich. Should he and his Cult of the Dragon cells survive, then the tables may once again turn in Alasklerbanbastos' favour.

Welcome to the Jungle: The Magic of Maztica

The land known as Maztica is a part of the great continent alternatively known as the True World. It is a land of ancient magics, terrible beasts, and bloodthirsty gods. Life has never been simple in this brutal land, but more changes have come in the previous two centuries than ever before in its eons of existence.

With great threats have arisen great heroes, and the varied peoples of Maztica have learned to adapt to their challenges.

This article is the first of a series designed to demonstrate that a setting need not be Tolkeinesque in order to be fun, and that a campaign set in so called "savage lands" need not be uncultured. Based off of the wonderful novels and sourcebooks of the 2nd editions, Maztica is the Forgotten Realms with a Mesoamerican twist. The Realms have plenty of room for variety, and hopefully starting with these articles, you might just be encouraged - whether as a DM or as a Player- to visit.

This series of articles is also part of a large scale effort encouraging the rebirth of the Maztica setting known as "Maztica Alive!" If you wish to know more, please visit our Yahoo group at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MazticaAlive/info>. Here you will find discussions and completed netbooks expanding the setting. Until then, see you in the jungle!

This article is specifically created to enhance and expand upon spellcasting in Maztica. In the second edition, there were two character "kits" known as the plumaweaver and hishnashaper. These two classes were (oddly) thief kits with limited spellcasting ability in new magic sources known as pluma and hishna magic. Both forms of magic were given to the native Mazticans by brother gods - one of a kindly nature and one unapologetically evil. Pluma, the gentler of the two, was known as the magic of feathers. Hishna, as a gift of the darker god, was derived from claws, fangs and even venom.

Using the new Player's Handbook as inspiration and 5th edition rules, the following article describes two new "Schools" for wizards, and the spells provided can be added to a wizard's spell list.

New Wizard Schools

The Plumacaster

Pluma magic is the magic of feathers created by the goddess Maztica herself and bestowed upon mankind by her son Qotal. You are trained as a wizard in the ways of the foreigners who arrived long ago, but you have managed to stay true to the native magics of your homeland.

The level of magic you command is of a level not seen in previous generations and many of your fellow Mazticans look upon you in awe. As a pioneer in your craft, you also forever seek to develop new spells and find magic in the most hidden corners of the True World.

Pluma Magic Savant

Beginning when you select this type of magic at 2nd level, the gold and time you must spend to copy a spell with the pluma tag is halved.

Plumazotl Familiar*

At 2nd level, you add the find familiar spell to your spellbook if it is not there already. When you cast find familiar, you may choose to summon a lesser plumazotl in lieu of the other choices given in the spell description.

Light as a Feather

At 6th level, you can cast feather fall as a reaction to falling 60 feet or more without using a spell slot. You may also add the spell to your spellbook if you do not already have it. This use of the spell, however, has a range of self only.

Avian Conjunction

At 10th level, you can double the number of bird or bird like creatures you conjure when you cast a conjunction. This cannot be used on spells with an instantaneous duration, such as find familiar.

Bird Wings

At 14th level, you gain the ability to sprout the colorful wings of a parrot from your back. You gain a flying speed equal to your current speed and you can create these wings as a bonus action on your turn. You may keep these wings indefinitely until you dismiss them as a bonus action on your turn.

You may not wear armor while your wings are manifested and clothes worn on the back are typically ruined if worn while the wings sprout.

The Hishnacaster

The magic of talons, claws and venom was a gift given to mankind by the god Zaltec, the Eater of Hearts. Like the practitioners of pluma, you have learned much from the invading Faerûnians, but have incorporated the power of the True World. Your magic is often violent and unforgiving, but such is the necessity when living in a cruel land. You constantly seek to find and create new spells to build your repertoire. The level of power you command was once nonexistent among your people.

Hishna Magic Savant

When you select this type of magic at 2nd level, the gold and time you must spend to copy a spell with the hishna tag is halved.

Mighty Leaper

At 6th level, on your turn as a bonus action, you may cast the spell jump on yourself without using a spell slot. For the duration, your appearance becomes visibly more cat-like and your skin becomes spotted like that of a jaguar. You also add the spell jump to your spellbook for free.

Feline Conjunction

At 10th level, you can double the number of cats or cat like creatures you conjure when you cast a conjunction. This cannot be used on spells with an instantaneous duration, such as find familiar.

Hishna Striker

When you reach 14th level and cast a spell which requires a successful attack roll, you may add your Intelligence modifier to the amount of damage caused. You also gain advantage on the attack roll. You may use this ability once per turn.

New Creature: Plumazotl

The plumazotl is an intelligent being formed wholly of bright plumage that were

created by a great plumaweaver long ago and have since multiplied and spread. Lesser plumazotls are tiny sized and shaped like birds, while the greater variety can shapechange into a man-like form. Plumacasters can summon a plumazotl to act as their familiar once they reach 2nd level.

Note that this version of a plumazotl is specific to a plumazotl which is called as a familiar. Plumazotls in the wild may have additional abilities.

Plumazotl, Lesser (familiar version)

Tiny monstrosity, neutral good

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d4)

Speed 15 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6(-2)	15(+2)	10(+0)	10(+0)	12(+1)	12(+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common and one other Maztican tongue

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Vision. The lesser plumazotl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Flyby. The plumazotl provokes no attack of opportunity when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Magic Resistance. The lesser plumazotl has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Actions

Beak. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage

New Spells

ANIMAL SENSES

1st-level transmutation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 hour

A willing target of this spell is granted the senses of animals. For the duration of the spell, the recipient has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing, sight, or smell.

ARROWFLIGHT

1st-level transmutation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to one hour

You touch a tlahhuītōlli. Until the spell ends, the range of the arrows fired from the tlahhuītōlli (both normal and long) is doubled. Arrows cannot be shared from one person to another, otherwise the magic immediately ends for the shared arrow. Once the arrow has been fired, it also loses this magical property and cannot be recovered.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd or 4th level, the range increases by a factor of 2.5. With a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the range of the arrows is tripled.

BAFFLEMENT

3rd-level enchantment [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V

Duration: 1 round

The casting of this spell requires you to talk to the victim of the spell. Your plumamagic-infused words confuse and disorient a target that fails a Wisdom based saving throw. An affected target drops any weapons it is holding and cannot take an action or reaction for the spell's duration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the duration becomes 1 minute.

BIRD CHARM

1st-level conjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a small coral or jade whistle worth 100 gp which is not consumed in the casting)

Duration: Concentration, up to one hour

You summon and control the actions of 1-3 birds of one hit die or less. Typical birds summoned are parrots, hummingbirds or even eagles. The birds can understand simple commands such as *Attack*, or *Retrieve*, but no mental connection is formed to the caster so the birds need to be able to hear commands in order to follow them. The birds cannot be any type other than *beast*.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you may summon birds with up to 3 hit die and they can now have the type of *monstrosity*. At 6th level or higher, the birds may have up to 5 hit die.

BREATH OF QOTAL

3rd-level evocation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (80-foot line)

Components: V, S, M (gold dust worth at least 50 gp)

Duration: Instantaneous

You open your mouth and a blinding bolt of light shoots from your mouth in a direction of your choosing forming a line 80 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 8d6 radiant damage on a failed save and is blinded for a round. A successful save results in the creature not being blinded and only half as much damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

CAT CHARM

1st-level conjuration [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a turquoise adorned collar worth 100 gp which is not consumed in the casting)

Duration: Concentration, up to one hour

You summon and control the actions of 1-3 cats of one hit die or less. The only available cats for summoning are normal cats. The cats can understand simple commands such as *Attack*, or *Retrieve*, but no mental connection is formed to the caster so the cats need to be able to hear commands in order to follow them. The cats cannot be any type other than *beast*.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you may summon cats with up to 3 hit die and they can now have the type of *monstrosity*. At 6th level or higher, the cats may have up to 5 hit die.

COOL

1st-level abjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (duck down)

Duration: Concentration, up to one day

You touch one willing creature. The target has advantage on all Constitution checks required due to oppressive heat.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you may cast this spell on up to 5 willing participants.

EAGLE FLYBY

2nd-level transmutation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (wing feather from a bird of prey)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose a willing, flying creature that you can see within range. For the duration of the spell, the recipient does not provoke attacks of opportunity when they fly out of an enemy's reach.

ELEVATE

1st-level transmutation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration

You touch a nonliving object weighing up to 200 lb. and make it as weightless as a feather. Left unattended, such objects will remain in place or will move at the speed of even the gentlest wind. Though the spell does not in any way soften an item, weapons under the influence of this spell cause no damage due to the lack of momentum.

EXHAUSTING WAVE

2nd-level evocation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30-foot cone)

Components: V, S, M (handful of sand)

Duration: Instantaneous

When you cast this spell, a shimmering wave of heat emanating from your hands extends to the full range of the spell. Any creatures in this area must make a Constitution save or suffer the effects of exhaustion. Roll 1d6-1 and add this to the current level of the target's exhaustion to maximum of level 5 (this spell alone cannot lead to death by exhaustion, even with multiple castings).

EYES OF THE JAGUAR LORD

3rd-level illusion [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30-foot cone)

Components: V, S, M (a cat's eyeball or cat's eye stone)

Duration: Concentration, up to one minute

Your eyes change to resemble a jaguar's. Each creature in a 30-foot cone must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or immediately fall into a deep slumber for the remainder of the duration. The victims fall unconscious until the spell ends, the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to awaken them. In addition, the

caster has darkvision within the range of the spell.

Undead and other creatures that do not sleep are immune to this spell.

FEATHER DARTS

1st-level evocation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You create three darts of bright energy that resemble feather fletched darts and fly from your fingertips to unerringly strike creatures of your choice. The shards all strike simultaneously and can strike a single or multiple targets based on the desires of the caster. Each dart causes 1d4+1 radiant damage.

At Higher Levels. When casting this spell using a spell slot of level 2 or higher, the spell creates one additional shard for each slot above 1st.

GIANT EAGLE

4th-level transmutation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

One to three normal eagles are transformed by you into giant eagles. The giant eagles obey all verbal commands and act on your turn each round.

The creature remains in this form until it is dropped to 0 hit points (or slain outright), you dismiss the spell, or the duration runs out.

The DM may allow other birds of prey to be transformed to their giant versions using this spell.

GREAT SCREECH

6th-level evocation [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (60-foot cone)

Components: V

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You open your mouth and let forth the great screech of a colossal bird of prey in the shape of a cone. The ghostly image of a great eagle is superimposed over your head while the spell is in effect.

Each creature in the affected area must make a Dexterity save. On a failed save, a creature takes 6d8 thunder damage and is deafened until your next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and is not deafened.

You can redirect the cone of sound as your action on any turn until the spell ends.

HEART RIPPER

7th-level necromancy [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Make a melee spell attack against a creature you can reach. A hit on a creature that has a heart and 100 hp or less causes the creature's heart to instantly burst from its chest and into the hands of the caster. The spell has no effect on creatures without a living heart such as undead, no heart such as most constructs, or creatures with more than 100 hp. Affected creatures die instantly.

This spell can be cast as a ritual only upon a victim who is incapacitated for the entire duration of the ritual. Typically, this use of the spell occurs during sacrifices to Zaltec deep in the bowels of Nexal.

HISHNAHIDE

1st-level transmutation (ritual) [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (*See Below*)

Duration: Instantaneous

Animal hides can be permanently transformed into the highly durable material known as hisnahide. This spell increases the strength and protective abilities of hide armor, but also stiffens the hide and greatly increases its weight. Enough hide for one set of armor can be created using this spell. The hide in all ways retains its original appearance, but in all ways is now considered *heavy armor*.

Casting this spell can change the effective AC and weight of the hisnahide to match

either ring mail, chain mail, splint or even plate. The wearer of the hishnahide is subject to stealth disadvantage while wearing hishnahide and it has the same strength requirements for the equivalent armor.

The material components for this spell are costly. In addition to the cost of the hide armor, the spell requires special oils derived from the venom of rare animals worth 50 gp (for ring mail), 100 gp (for chain mail), 500 gp (for splint) and 2,000 gp (for plate).

INCUBATION

6th level necromancy [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a gold foil and feather embroidered chamber worth 2,000 gp for the gold and 1,000 gp in rare plumage. The gold becomes lead upon a successful resurrection and must be replaced)

Duration: Instantaneous

If a creature (who must be large sized or smaller) who has had this spell cast upon it dies, they collapse into a pile of feathers. If the feathers are disturbed a melon-sized egg can be found.

If this egg is then brought to a specially prepared "incubation" chamber (as described under components), the egg will hatch after a full 24 hours and the dead creature will grow from infant to full age within an additional hour.

The creature returns with full hit points, and is cured of any non-magical diseases and poisons. It also returns any missing body parts and closes all wounds. Curses or magical diseases remain.

JAGUAR CLAW

Transmutation cantrip [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Using the power of hishna, your hand briefly becomes the claws of a jaguar. Make a melee attack against the target and on a hit, the target takes 1d8 slashing damage.

The spell's damage increases to 2d8 at 5th level, 3d8 at 11th level and 4d8 at 17th level.

JAGUAR POUNCE

2nd-level transmutation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (sinew from a great cat)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose a willing creature that you can see within range. For the duration of the spell, if the recipient moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature before an attack, the attacker's target must make an opposing Strength check or be knocked prone. The DC of this attack is equal to 10 + the attacker's Strength modifier and it is a Strength based saving throw. If the target is prone, the attacker may take a bonus action to make an additional attack against it.

KILTZI'S LOVE

2nd-level enchantment [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a small piece of chocolate)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Kiltzi's love can be cast upon up to 5 creatures within range who are already friendly to the caster.

Good feelings toward the caster intensify to the point where the targets would do almost anything to keep him or her safe. Anyone under the influence of this spell is immune to fear effects if the caster is in danger and will protect the caster even if doing so puts them in mortal danger.

If the caster then attacks any of the targets the spell is dispelled for all affected creatures.

MAGNIFICENT HEADDRESS

3rd-level illusion [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30-foot cone)

Components: V, S, M (feather of any beast, fey or monstrosity that has a magical power)

Duration: Concentration, up to one minute

The phantasmal image of a vibrantly plumed headdress adorns your head and glows with a multicolored light that can convince others of your greatness and majesty. Each creature in a 30-foot cone must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or fall to their knees and remain prone for the remainder of the duration. The prone creature also may not choose to attack you, though it may attack other targets (while still suffering the normal disadvantages of being prone). The magnificent headdress also provides bright light within the range of its effect.

Hats, helmets or other head gear do not prevent the use of this spell as the phantasmal headdress weaves artfully into any worn gear.

MAYZ OF THE PLUMED FATHER

6th-level conjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (10-15 topaz gemstones worth 100 gp each or more)

Duration: Instantaneous

You plant topaz gems as if they were the seeds of the crop known as mayz. For a full day you nurture the crop during which time you can take all actions. You cannot, however, move more than 100 feet away from your crop or they will not germinate and grow.

The crop will mature in a full day and produce one full ear of golden mayz per gem planted. If the mayz is not eaten within an hour, it will wither and become useless. Anyone who eats one entire ear (prepared in any manner) will recover full hit points, be cured of all diseases and curses, and receive the benefits of a bless spell for a full 24 hours after eating the mayz.

OBSIDIAN SHARDS

1st-level evocation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You create three shards of dark energy that resemble obsidian and fly from your fingertips to unerringly strike creatures of your choice. The shards all strike

simultaneously and can strike a single or multiple targets based on the desires of the caster. Each dart causes 1d4+1 necrotic damage.

At Higher Levels. When casting this spell using a spell slot of level 2 or higher, the spell creates one additional shard for each slot above 1st.

Obsidian Tomb

7th-level evocation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S, M (a miniature carved obsidian cage worth 1000 gp)

Duration: 10 minutes

A cocoon-like shell encases the target of this spell who you choose within it's range. An encased creature cannot move or speak and immediately begins to suffocate. They can however make a Strength check each round. One successful check damages the shell enough so that the victim can begin to breath, and a second successful check allows the creature to escape, effectively ending the spell.

The target must be medium sized or the obsidian tomb will not fully entrap the creature.

At Higher Levels. If an 8th level spell slot is used to cast this spell, large creatures can be affected. Using a 9th level slot can affect creatures of any size.

Omen

5th-level divination [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (the caster must cover his skin in gold powder worth at least 50 gp)

Duration: Instantaneous

You cast this spell which causes some non-harmful or game affecting event in the local environment. This event might be as simple as a bright shooting star or as fantastic as the change in color of a snow capped mountain to that of blood. The effect is never permanent, but can last for hours at the discretion of the DM.

This environmental change can then be read by the caster to determine a cryptic understanding of major events in the following year. For example, "dark death on wings of fire" might be read indicating a dragon attack.

This spell may only be cast once until such time as the actual event to which it refers occurs. Using the above example, immediately after the dragon attacks, the spell may be cast again.

PATH OF THE POCHTECA

5th-level conjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Unlimited

Components: V, S, M (gold dust worth 10 gp per mile)

Duration: 1 year

In order to cast this spell the caster must embark on a journey by foot. The distance of the journey is up to the caster and is only limited by the amount of gold dust used in the casting. This gold dust is sprinkled all along the path traveled.

For a full year following the trip the caster may then use the teleport spell to end up anywhere along the path resulting in no chance of mishap and always ending up on target.

PLUMASTONE

1st-level transmutation (ritual) [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (100 gp in alchemical ingredients)

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell can transmute up to 1 cubic foot of obsidian, flint or chert into a material known as plumastone. Plumastone maintains the appearance of the original stone type, but is as hard and durable as normal steel.

PROTECTION FROM HISHNA

3rd-level abjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

For the duration, the willing creature you touch has advantage on all saving throws against magical effects with a hishna source of power (including magic from items such as a hishna talisman).

PROTECTION FROM PLUMA

3rd-level abjuration [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

For the duration, the willing creature you touch has advantage on all saving throws against magical effects with a pluma source of power (including magic from items such as a pluma talisman).

SLASHING PLUMAGE

2nd-level conjuration [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30-foot radius)

Components: V, S, M (an eagle feather)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

The air surrounding you is filled with spinning feathers with hardened, sharp edges. A creature takes 2d8 slashing damage when it enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or if it starts its turn there.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

SNAKE CHARM

1st-level conjuration [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a miniature golden snake statue worth 100 gp which is not consumed in the casting)

Duration: Concentration, up to one hour

You summon and control the actions of 1-3 poisonous snakes. The snakes can understand simple commands such as *Attack*, or *Retrieve*, but no mental connection is

formed to the caster so the snakes need to be able to hear commands in order to follow them. There are no other types of snakes available for summoning besides poisonous snakes.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you may summon different varieties of snakes with up to 3 hit die and they can now have the type of *monstrosity*. At 6th level or higher, the snakes may have up to 5 hit die.

SPEARFLIGHT

1st-level transmutation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to one hour

You touch an atlatl. Until the spell ends, the range of any ammunition from the atlatl (both normal and long) is doubled. Ammunition cannot be shared from one person to another, otherwise the magic immediately ends for the shared ammunition. Once the ammunition has been fired, it also loses this magical property and cannot be recovered.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd or 4th level, the range increases by a factor of 2.5. With a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the range of the atlatl is tripled.

TICKLE

Conjuration cantrip [pluma]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

A small animated feather appears near a target of your choice and can be used to attempt to break concentration by tickling the target.

The target must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 10 in order to maintain concentration while casting a spell. Targets with natural armor cannot be affected by this spell.

ZALTEC'S FURY

3rd-level evocation [hishna]

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 150 feet

Components: V, S, M (the fang of a poisonous serpent or lizard)

Duration: Instantaneous

A small fang of a serpent flies from your hand continuously growing until it reaches a point within the range of your spell. Once it reaches its destination it explodes into needle-like shards in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point. Each creature located within the sphere must make a Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 8d6 poison damage on a failed saving throw, or half damage on a successful one.

The shards do not necessarily fly in straight lines and ricochet off of non-living material so damage from the spell can spread around corners easily.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 3rd.

When is a House Rule Not a House Rule: Skills

Next in the list of new skills is one crucial to all wizards and arcane spellcasters. It is an amalgamation of the Knowledge (Arcane), Use Magic Device, Spellcraft, and Decipher Script skills.

ARCANA (Int, Trained Only)

Arcana is a skill that requires special training and so can only be used if you possess the Skill Training (Arcana) feat.

Synergy: If you are trained in Arcana you gain a +2 synergy bonus on Nature, Psionics, and Religion checks.

Identify (Int)

Check: You may study objects to determine the properties of items created using magic.

Each item to be identified has a base DC + the highest level spell used to create the item or effect. If an item or effect has no spell level associated with it but is magical (such as a +2 sword) then the increase to DC is dependent upon the + modifier.

If you succeed then you correctly identify the item or effect.

If you fail then you do not identify the item or effect.

If you fail by 5 or more then you incorrectly identify the item or effect (predicting that powerful items are insignificant, beneficial items are cursed, cursed items are beneficial, or that the effects are opposite etc, the prediction must be detrimental to the use of the item). In the case of glyphs or symbols if you fail by 5 or more then you set the glyph/symbol off

Identify	DC
Identify a magic Glyph	13 + spell level
Identify a Spell being cast	15 + spell level
Identify the School of Magic of a persisting magical area effect	15 + spell level
Identify a greater magic Glyph	16 + spell level

Identify a magic symbol	19 + spell level
Identify a Spell already in effect	20 + spell level
Identify a Magic Item	20 + spell level
Identify a Potion	25 + spell level
Identify a unique magical effect	30 + spell level
Identify an Artefact	50 + spell level

Action: Identifying a magical effect or substance is not an action because you either know the answer or do not. However if you have access to a library, or alchemist laboratory (if appropriate) and can devote 8 hours study then you may be able to identify an item that you did not previously know about.

Try Again: No until you Arcana 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).

Special: Specialist wizards receive a +2 bonus on checks related to their specialist school.

Specialist wizards suffer a -5 penalty on checks related to their prohibited schools.

The Identify spell grants a +10 bonus to Arcana checks made to identify the magical properties of an item.

Decipher (Int)

Check: You can attempt to decipher written magical writings of various kinds without using the read magic spell to do so.

Each page of writing to be deciphered requires 1 minute of intense focus and has a base DC modified by the highest spell level used to create the writing.

Success means you decipher the script and can translate the writing, memorise the spell, or copy it to your spell book.

Failure means you fail to decipher the script.

Identify	DC
Decipher Arcane Writing (such as a scroll or foreign spell book, or writing created by a spell using magic runes)	15 + spell level
Prepare a spell from another spell book (Only if spell is on class spell list of the appropriate level for you to cast - must be performed each time you wish to memorise the spell)	12 + spell level
Learn Spell (Only if spell is on class spell list of the appropriate level for you to learn. Only performed once and can then be added to your spell book permanently.)	15 + spell level
Quick Estimate (1 round decipher)	+20

Action: Deciphering arcane script requires 1 minute of uninterrupted focus per page to be deciphered.

If you have access to a library or other appropriate resources then you can devote 8 hours study to decipher a page you were not previously able to decipher.

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

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

Special: Specialist wizards receive a +2 bonus on checks related to their specialist school.

Specialist wizards suffer a -5 penalty on checks related to their prohibited schools.

The Read Magic spell grants a +10 bonus to Arcana checks made to decipher arcane writing.

Draw Arcane Runes (Int)

Check: You can draw runes and diagrams and arcane writings that can be used in spells as components and for example you can draw the dimensional anchor to be used with the spell of the same name.

You may also create a magical rune that holds a single spell of any level that can be released upon contact, reading, or breaking of the rune. Those triggering the rune suffer the effects of the spell contained within it upon themselves as determined by the spell's write-up.

Those triggering the rune who are aware of it and its function, and have the spell on their class list may alter the spell's parameters; such as target, distance, area, and any other changeable value normally allowed by the spell.

Once the rune has been triggered it disappears.

Creating the rune takes 1 day per spell level of the rune to be created and costs 100 gp per spell level of the rune to be created (as well as the normal spell material components).

The base DC for this check is $20 + 5$ per spell level of the rune to be created.

A successful check means the rune is successfully created and contains the desired spell ready for activation.

A failed check by 4 or less means the rune is not created and any costs and components are wasted.

A failed check by 5 or more means the rune is triggered accidentally during creation using up all the costs and components and the creator suffers the full effects of the rune.

Action: Drawing an arcane diagram or run requires 1 day per spell level.

Try Again: Yes if drawing a summoning diagram. No if creating a spell rune.

Take 10: Yes.

Activate Magic Device Blindly (Int)

Check: You can activate a trigger device (a magical item that requires a special word, thought or action to activate) without knowing what those conditions are beforehand.

This check requires a DC 20 Arcana check + 1 per spell level of the highest level spell used in the creation of the magical item being used.

A successful check means that you activate the device with the desired results, although you still don't know what conditions activate the device. If you have

previously successfully activated this device before then you receive a +2 bonus on the Arcana check to do so again.

A failed check by 4 or less means you fail to activate the device.

A failed check by 5 or more means you suffer a mishap, expending one use of the device if applicable and its usage has unintentional results (like random wild magic effect).

Action: Activating a device blindly is a standard action.

Try Again: Yes.

Take 10: Yes

Emulation (Int)

Check: You can emulate a requirement of magical items or class abilities in order to use those abilities and items even when you would not normally be allowed to do so.

You must consciously choose what to emulate, an incorrect choice can have negative consequences in the case of certain magical items.

If you are emulate something continuously (such as to gain the passive benefits of worn magical items) then you must perform this check once per hour.

A successful check means you correctly emulate the chosen feature.

A failed check by 4 or less means you cannot emulate the feature and suffer the effects for attempting to use the magic item in question without the required features.

A failed check by 5 or more means you suffer a mishap, expending one use of the magic item (if applicable) and its usage has unintentional results (like a random wild magic effect).

A roll of a natural 1 means you cannot attempt to emulate a feature for 24 hours.

Emulation	DC
Ability Score	Ability score value you desire
Class Feature	15 + level the class feature is

	available from
Spell (for spell trigger magic items that require you have a spell on your class spell list)	15 + level of the spell being emulated.
Race	20
Alignment	25
Specific Feature (like a 3 rd hand or a tail)	40
Specific Person (for instance magic items that can only be used by Manshoon)	50

Action: Emulating a feature is part of the action required to use the magic item or class feature, or feat desired.

Try Again: Yes, but a roll of a natural 1 means no retry for 24 hours.

Take 10: Yes

Knowledge (Arcana) (Int)

Check: You may answer a question within the study of magic. The base DC depends on the difficulty of the question.

Knowledge	DC
Common knowledge (known by everyone with some knowledge of this skill)	10
Basic knowledge (knowledge gained by a basic study of the skill)	15
Specialist knowledge (knowledge usually only known by specialists within a given field of study)	20
Rare knowledge (knowledge usually only known by a master of the field and probably only known by a handful of people)	30
Unique knowledge (secret knowledge that only one being might know - and he might be dead)	40

A successful check means you know the desired information.

A failed check by 4 or less means you do not know the desired information.

A failed check by 5 or more means you erroneously recall the information leading to incorrect conclusions.

Action: Recalling information is not an action because you either know the answer or do not. However if you have access to a library, or alchemist laboratory (if appropriate) and can devote 8 hours study then you may be able to recall information that you did not previously know about.

Try Again: No (Yes if for studying 8 hours as above).

Take 10: Yes

Monster Knowledge

Check: You may recall information about a particular monster with the Magical Beast, Dragon, and Construct types.

The check result determines the information recalled.

DC	Information
10	Type, Size
12	Movement types and speed, Attacks
15	Vision modes, Special Abilities (Ex), Highest Saving Throw
20	Special Attacks, Special Abilities (Su, Sp), DR, ER, SR, TR, Lowest Saving Throw
25	Immunities, Alignment, Organisation, Equipment, Vulnerabilities
30	Unique information to creature

A successful check means you know the desired information.

A failed check by 4 or less means you do not know the desired information.

A failed check by 5 or more means you erroneously recall the information leading to incorrect conclusions.

Action: Recalling knowledge about monsters is not an action because you either know the answer or do not. However if you have access to a library, or alchemist laboratory (if appropriate) and can devote 8 hours study then you may be able to learn

something that you did not previously know about.

Try Again: No (Yes if for studying 8 hours as above).

Take 10: Yes

Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - A History of Thay

The land of Thay originally belonged to the Sarrukh Empire of Okoth, they established an outpost on this plateau to keep an eye on their enemies and continue their experiments. It was as far north as the reptiles dared to venture aboveground because of the cold temperatures that naturally prevail beyond Thay.

The Sarrukh were diminished by centuries of warfare with the lizard like demons known as Khaasta, and were finally finished off by the Tearfall which caused temperatures across Faerûn to plummet for many years by the debris thrown into the atmosphere, in spite of the weather controlling magics of the Sarrukh. Following the collapse of the Sarrukh Empire of Okoth, Thay became an outpost for the Ba'etith.

The centaur of Aglarond and Thay are just one legacy of the Sarrukh, as is the formidable structure upon Thaymount, known as The Citadel. Its tunnels extend throughout the plateau of Thay and have hardly been explored since the death of the creator races.

When the Mulan people were liberated from their Imaskari oppressors, the Empire of Mulhorand expanded north, conquering Semphar and Murghôm, and settling the land of Thay.

This northern province was "awarded" to Set; a minor deity of evil magicians who despised the other gods of Mulhorand and longed to rule over them all.

Set discovered the ancient Sarrukh ruins on Thaymount and plundering their depths, he discovered many ancient magics and artefacts, including the dismantled pieces of a great ring that once assembled would allow travel to other places and other planes. Set also discovered in the depths of the Citadel, a dwindling remnant of one of the gods of the Sarrukh. By absorbing the power of this ancient, abandoned god, Set gained the portfolio of Snakes, and his personality changed forever, making him colder, more calculating and more ruthless when it came to his deific family. Instead of seeking to rule over his fellow gods he wanted to persecute them, torture them, destroy them.

Set's planned to use the gate to weaken the Mulhorandi God-Kings and their armies. He fostered an uprising of mages which, although quashed, concentrated a large portion of the armies of Mulhorand in Thay. Then Set assembled the great portal and opened a doorway to another world so that it might cause maximum damage on the

assembled armies of Mulhorand.

Countless orcs poured through the gateway and swamped the Mulhorandi armed forces present. Set himself fled the province immediately and abandoned Mulhorand to its fate so he could watch events unfold and plan his next move.

The Mulhorandi fortified their position in Thazalhar and abandoned the northern provinces to the orcs. Four years later, after recouping their losses, the armies of Mulhorand marched forth to face the orcs. They were bolstered by their allies from Unther and Akanu who landed to the west, and mercenaries from the northern tribes of Narfell, Raumathar and Sossal, the orcs were surrounded.

During the Battle of the Gods, Ra was slain by Gruumsh, and a score of Untheric and Akanic deities were killed by the other orc gods. Set was delighted; his plan could not have gone better. The armies of Mulhorand were severely depleted and Ra himself was destroyed, leaving a huge power vacuum in the Mulhorandi pantheon.

Set's next move was an attempt to claim the Empire of Mulhorand for himself, this coup kept the Mulhorandi occupied for many years, and as a result, the northern land known as Thay was swiftly re-settled by the people of Narfell who had learned much from their time fighting the orcs and sought to build an empire of their own.

Unfortunately Narfell's neighbour, Raumathar, also wanted to forge an empire and the two nations quickly came into conflict. This conflict lasted for 500 years, saw much territory change hands between the two and ultimately destroyed both peoples in a great conflagration that completely decimated their lands, including Thay.

Once again Thay was in ruins. The Mulhorandi reclaimed their territory and made sure to enforce strict rules upon all magic users, requiring registration with the temple of Thoth and regular inspections and taxes to keep them in line.

For a thousand years Thay remained under the tight control of Mulhorand who did not wish to lose what remained of their empire. However their harsh strictures would ultimately cause Thay to break away in rebellion.

The people of Thay were a mix of predominantly Mulan people with a scattering of Raumathari and Narfelli survivors as well as a sizable proportion of Rashemi tribesmen. Consequently because of the mix of ancient and powerful magic using traditions, the land of Thay contained a larger than normal proportion of people skilled in various aspects of the Art.

Ultimately it took an influx of refugees from another land strong in magic to start the rebellion. Exiles from Halruaa that were looking for a land of their own to perform experiments that even the Netherese would have been hesitant to do. These exiles spotted the strategic potential of the Thayan plateau and so set the wheels of rebellion in motion.

In 922 DR. Ythazz Buvaar led his uprising against the Empire of Mulhorand. The various mage cabals spread throughout Thay united and pooled their resources together to create a large army of magicians. Together they fought the armies of Mulhorand and drove them from Thay.

Mulhorand responded by hiring the greatest force of mercenaries seen since the Orcgate Wars. With their massive force they stormed the Thazalhar and looked set to take back their wayward settlement. It was then the cabals of Thay unleashed their secret weapon.

A conjuror named Jorgmacdon of the Binders Society, and of ancient Narfelli descent, summoned the Demon Lord Eltab to the field of battle. Eltab and his demons scoured the Thazalhar of all human life, leaving it a scarred wasteland. Mulhorand was forced to retreat in shame and it finally resigned itself to the loss of Thay.

The newly emancipated Thayans however found they could not dismiss Eltab, they did not know he was still bound to Toril from ages past. So Jorgmacdon and the other cabals redirected the river Eltar and created a massive rune of binding to imprison Eltab beneath what would be the new city of Eltabbar.

Thay was free, and immediately the various cabals, sects, and wizardly orders descended to infighting. The only thing that could unite them or force them to agree on anything was the threat of invasion from an outside power, especially Mulhorand.

The Binders Society was by far the most popular and most powerful of the factions. The display of power by Jorgmacdon in summoning Eltab and then binding him caused flocks of new students to the sect whose numbers grew rapidly. With their swelling membership the Binders began the first ill fated invasion of Rashemen in 934 DR and were repelled by their ancient enemy reborn (Raumathar) in the Witches of Rashemen.

This caused a loss of face for the cabal but not enough to seriously damage their standing amongst the other wizard cabals of Thay. Their next major venture however

would eventually result in their downfall.

In 955 DR, the Binders Society, specialists in conjuration and summoning magic, used their talents to teleport vast numbers of Mountain Orcs from the Savage Frontier and distribute them across the Old Empires region. To do this they used recently recovered pieces of the original Orcgate that was destroyed long ago by the Mulhorandi God-Kings. They assembled these pieces of the portal gateway into numerous smaller portals which then opened a number of smaller gates between two points on Toril.

Using these portals, they hoped to transport a large number of Mountain Orcs into Thay so that they might mix with and dilute the bloodline of the ever growing threat of the Grey Orcs that were prevalent throughout the Old Empires. These Grey Orcs were technologically, socially, and magically advanced, able to form large complex settlements and wage devastating war against the Thayans. Their numbers had been growing steadily since the Orcgate Wars and they were now becoming a significant threat in the lands of Thay. The Binders hoped that by mixing them with their primitive Mountain Orc cousins from the north-west of Faerûn, they might be able to diminish the more advanced nature of the Grey Orcs over the longer term.

The project was successful after a fashion. The horde they had chosen to transport was larger than anticipated and placed incredible strain upon the portals. The concentration of so many gateways in one place combined with the overload of orc numbers being transport caused the Orcgates to shatter and distributed the Mountain Orcs across Abeir-Toril. Most of the orcs were distributed across southern Faerûn and immediately made war on any Grey Orcs or humans nearby.

The plan was deemed a success, within a hundred years most of the Grey Orc tribes of Thay (and the rest of the Old Empires) were little better than overly zealous Mountain Orcs. However, at the same time the Thayans made an enemy of the Covenant, an organisation who were gathering allies to battle the Mountain Orc horde in the Savage Frontier when the horde disappeared, teleported by the Binders.

The Covenant; who were small in number, chose to work subtly against the Thayans after identifying it was the Binders Society that was responsible for the missing orcs. One of their number, an arch mage named Aganazzar, was a specialist in fire magics. He travelled to Thay, posing as a member of an ancient Untheric order of mages known as the Order of the Black Flame. This order was supposedly extinct long ago,

its members either destroyed or fled to other Planes. Aganazzar portrayed himself as one of these planar travellers returned.

He recreated the Order of the Black Flame and slowly began attracting members to his banner whom he taught the unique fire magics of the ancient order of Unther.

At about the same time another order of mages was established in Thay, The Cabal of the Old Man. Members of this group would sit and meditate around an old skull that could supposedly converse with them in dreams. This order was largely seen as a joke but slowly gained ground as it was revealed the skull may have belonged to Thayd himself, the grandfather of Thay who sought to rebel from Mulhorand so long ago.

The Cabal of the Old Man and the Order of the Black Flame sided with the Brotherhood of Battlemages (an order began by a few mages of Raumathari descent), and the Order of the Blue Star (the exiles from Halruaa that included Ythazz Buvaar, and other archmages). Together this alliance were strong enough to challenge the Binders Society who were weakened by ongoing battles with the Harpers.

By 1030 DR, the opposing faction had forced the Binders to accept a new status quo. The Zulkirate was born, proposed by Ythazz Buvaar, who revered Mystra and magic above all else. A total of eight rulers would be chosen by the leaders of the various cabals. Each ruler would represent a school of magic and would hold the position for as long as he existed.

The leaders of the various sects of course chose themselves for candidacy and they then battled it out to elect other members of their order into the remaining positions.

Once the Zulkirate was born the first contention to its rule began almost immediately. The various churches of Thay were unhappy that they were not represented in the ruling council. They had grown strong in Thay since the yoke of Mulhorand was thrown off and they felt they should have a say in how the country was run.

The churches of the Faerûnian pantheon, led by the Church of Mystra, went to war with the Zulkirs, backed by independent mages and the Rashemmi people who were being treated as second class citizens by the Mulan majority.

The response from the Zulkirate was forceful and resulted in the gradual destruction of many churches in Thay. Once the threat was removed the Zulkirs then realised a number of their own were fervent worshippers of Mystra and other gods. They

turned on each other and the various cabals went to war, most of them turning against Ythazz Buvaar and the Order of the Blue Star.

By 1074 DR the war was over and the new members of the Zulkirate were chosen, these new Zulkirs were distinctly less religious than their predecessors, magic came first above all.

Since then the infighting has never stopped. Various cabals died out or changed over time, and new ones took their place. The Zulkirs fight amongst themselves according to their sponsors and what factions exist among themselves at the time.

This is of course how it was designed when the Cabal of the Old Man first formed and allied itself behind the Order of the Blue Star. Whoever the old skull was, he clearly knew that a council of paranoid, powerful, egotistical mages would never be able to cooperate on anything and so would never threaten the rest of Faerûn.

Until recently Thay was split between those cabals that wanted to expand Thay into an empire, and those cabals that wanted to remain at home and further their magical research.

More recently the cabals are polarised around one being, Szass Tam. There are those who view Szass Tam as the saviour of Thay, a tyrant who can take Thay into a new age of power under his strong leadership. Others view him as an ancient fool who will bring ruin to Thay with his scheming. The rest are undecided and are waiting to see which way the tide will turn.

Should Thay be united behind a strong leader then there is no limit to what this nation of evil grasping mages can achieve given the collective, near unlimited magical resources they possess.

Cabal of the Old Man: This cult existed for little more than 50 years during the time between 976 DR and 1034 DR when the Zulkirate was established. This society of mages was centred on a curious artefact discovered in a vault in the city of Delhumide.

The artefact was an ancient and magical skull that was said to be over 2,000 years old. Those that meditated in the presence of the skull were said to be able to communicate with it. During one of these communications it was supposedly discovered that the skull belonged to Thayd himself and the members of the cult believed a portion of his soul or a memory of Thayd persisted inside the skull.

While few in number, and one of the smallest mage cabals in Thay, the Cabal of the Old Man did something that no other cabal was prepared to do. The Skull of Thayd urged its members to cooperate with other mage cabals in order to ensure the future of Thay.

At first the cult allied itself to the fledgling but fast growing Order of the Black Flame. Within a few years they were strong enough to openly resist the Binders Society and so they then approached the Order of the Blue Star. Once the alliance was joined the Brotherhood of Battlemages quickly sided with this new, powerful, political entity in order to combat their ancient enemy.

Together this alliance of mages, held together by the efforts of the Skull of Thayd, fought the Binders Society to a standstill. Instead of destroying them however the Skull urged its members, who influenced Ythazz and the others, to offer peace and propose a council government where all could rule in partnership.

Ythazz proposed the Zulkirate, based on the eight schools of magic, and the country was named Thay in honour of its grandfather and because of the Skull of Thayd who had made it all possible.

Once the Zulkirate was formed, the Cabal of the Old Man took a step back from the politics of Thay, and when civil war threatened the rule of the Zulkirs, the Skull of Thayd exploded killing a number of former allies, including the leading representative of the cult itself.

Who the Skull of Thayd truly belonged to remains unknown, but it appears that its sole purpose was to steer the fledgling nation of Thay towards a government of disunity, wherein no one faction or person could hope to gain complete control. Because of this Thay has never been able to fulfil its potential and desire for world conquest, and for this reason most of Faerûn owes a debt of gratitude to this mysterious skull.

Brotherhood of the Divine: At least two organisations in Thay's history have used this name. The first to hold this name appeared around 1030 DR after the formation of the Zulkirate. This organisation appeared to be a loose alliance of the various churches of Faerûnian gods who campaigned against the Zulkirate and advocated more power be given to the churches to keep the wizards of Thay in check.

This initially powerful organisation was comprised of the forces of the churches of

Helm, Myrkul, Bane, Mask, Loviatar, Kossuth, Malar, Umberlee, Beshaba, Leira, Azuth, Mystra, Gond, Ilmater. A secret alliance with the Binders Society, as well as support from independent mages (i.e. those who would not join the newly created Red Wizards organisation) and the local Rashemmi population meant this group was a serious threat to the Zulkirate of Thay.

The Zulkirs responded with ruthless aggression, but in the end the Zulkirs had to resort to intrigue in order to defeat their enemy. They bribed the churches of the darker gods with wealth and power in order to defect to the side of the Zulkirs. Bane, Myrkul and Kossuth's churches soon abandoned the cause and the Brotherhood of the Divine was suddenly fighting a losing battle.

Once defeated the backlash against the churches was swift and strong. The number of temples, clergy, and the amount of tithes they could collect were strictly controlled and so the churches and worship of the gods was kept small. Mystra's church was punished particularly bad for being the figurehead of the Brotherhood, and any Zulkirs and Red Wizards that worshipped Mystra openly (i.e. those members of the Order of the Blue Star) were killed or exiled from Thay.

The churches of Bane, Kossuth and Myrkul prospered somewhat due to laxer restrictions and on occasion their more prominent priests were given positions of power in the Tharches of Thay.

The second organisation to hold the name Brotherhood of the Divine arose after the appointment of Spiros Dehkahks to the position of Tharchion of Thaymount. Backed by the Zulkir of Divination and her supporting cabal, these two explored hidden depths of The Citadel and discovered a network of tunnels dedicated to the worship of ancient reptilian deities.

Various members of the original secret society to which both belonged were used to research this network of chambers and soon afterwards the entire society was converted by the sinister power of presumably one of the gods detailed in that chamber.

What few realise is that both Brotherhoods of the Divine were/are actually a front for the agents and schemes of Set. The first organisation was an attempt by Set to regain control of Thay from the wizards just as it separated from Mulhorand. Set had his agents in Thay for many centuries waiting for the right time to rebel from Mulhorand, the arrival of the Order of the Blue Star kicked off the rebellion but

events soon got out of his control and his agents ended up marginalised in the power structure of Thay.

After the failure of his agents and the various churches of Thay (supported by supposedly independent mages who were secret Set worshippers) to topple the Zulkirate, the Brotherhood of the Divine was all but destroyed and Set worship in Thay diminished considerably.

When Spiros and Yaphyll, the Zulkir of Divination, explored The Citadel and discovered a new chamber network that was constructed by the Sarrukh of Okoth, they encountered an avatar of M'daess (who was now Set) and they were quickly bent to the will of Set.

These two set about recreating the Brotherhood of the Divine from inside the secret society to which they already belonged that backed Yaphyll's appointment to the post of Zulkir of Divination.

Now the Brotherhood of the Divine supports Szass Tam's rise to power in the hopes that one arch-mage will be easier to remove and then Thay can be delivered into Set's hands once again.

The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path - Episode 4

After investigating the Sleeping Bear Inn, the party discover Christine Tranth is on her way to Helgabal via caravan.

Gareth Dragonsbane suggests they give chase immediately. Horses can be obtained at the local stables and they should be able to catch up with the caravan very quickly.

Overview

The Bloodstone Village Stables is located on the Damaran side of Bloodstone Village, just by the southern gate.

Bloodstone Village Stables: This run down stables has subsisted through the hard times by taking in injured or old mounts from those passing by Bloodstone Village and then selling them on to those that need them.

Each horse is little more than a nag (use stats for a light horse with -2 to Str, Dex, and Con) and costs a hefty 60 gold pieces each, but they get half that back if they return the horses in a similar condition.

The owner, Geriah Cratosk (N hm Exp 1), is not a deliberately cruel or exploitative man, but he does have a family to feed and a business to run, so his prices are quite high for the quality of the stock because of the economic problems in Bloodstone Village.

Those characters willing to barter can with a Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate check (opposed by Geriah's Diplomacy or Insight skill). For every 2 points difference between the two checks, adjust the price by 1 gp (obviously if the PCs score higher the price is reduced, if the PCs score lower the price is increased).

Those PCs that successfully perform an Appraise check on the horses to determine their actual value receive a +2 bonus on the Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate check. A successful Nature, Perception, or Heal related skill check that might reveal the physical problems with the horses will likewise incur a +2 bonus on the Diplomacy, Bluff or Intimidate check (these bonuses are cumulative).

The Chase

The caravan has a days head start on the party and it is a long road to Helgabal. Just outside of Bloodstone Pass the party come to a fork in the road. One branch of the road turns east towards Goliad, while the other turns south towards Ostrav.

A DC 15 Perception check will reveal recent wagon track marks travelling along both roads. Gareth Dragonsbane will reason that the kidnappers will want to throw people off their trail and so would take the indirect road south towards Ostrav.

Whichever road they take should be the incorrect road. Depending upon how hard they ride in pursuit depends on when they catch up to the caravan, but when they do they find it is not unprotected.

The caravan is a large and flat with one person manning the horses and another "riding crossbow". Alongside the caravan are four mounted guards wearing chain armour and carrying spears. All are level 1 fighters trained in the weapons they are using.

As soon as the party begin to close upon the caravan the four riders stop and wait for the party to get within speaking range before warding them off. They refuse to answer any questions, even when Gareth Dragonsbane declares he has the authority of Baron Tranth.

Once the guards are defeated the party can search the caravan. On general inspection it contains a number of provisions and food items and requests for equipment from the shops in Bloodstone Village. Most of the items look like they are bound for the *Glowing Lantern Provisions* shop in Helgabal (at least according to the invoices and requests attached).

A DC 15 Perception related check will reveal a piece of paper detailing a short story about a wandering shepherd. It is actually a coded cipher and requires a DC 18 Intuition or Linguistics related check will reveal that it is a coded cipher requesting a number of "specialist items" be delivered including thieves' tools and weapons as well as for several bloodstone jewels to be passed on for "cutting and cleaning".

A DC 22 Perception related check reveals a hidden panel inside the caravan containing 2,000 gp worth of uncut Bloodstones.

Now all that remains is for the party to head to Helgabal and attempt to rescue Christine Tranth.

Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires – A Modern Timeline

- **1357 DR Year of the Prince:**
- *Hammer:* Theris, king of Mourktar, is dying without issue. On the instructions of his god, Assuran, he is holding a tournament of athletic skills at the base of Mount Thulbane four months hence to find a worthy successor. This tournament is open to any who choose to participate. The winner of the tournament will be the new king.
- *Ches:* The Statues That Walk finally come to a halt, one year to the day after they began to move, for reasons unknown. The Statues wreaked destruction throughout Mulhorand, but rebuilding efforts are already well underway. Tholaunt, Divine Precept of Thoth, has determined that Derlaunt, Precept of Gheldaneth, was foolishly responsible for reanimating the Statues. Derlaunt intended to animate and control only a single Statue, which would have been a definite coup in the ongoing power games of the various priesthoods, but he quickly determined that he had awakened all of the Statues, and could not control any of them. Tholaunt has not revealed Derlaunt's foolishness to anyone else, but he has required several significant acts of atonement on the part of the Precept of Gheldaneth. Even Tholaunt is unsure as to why the Statues have stopped moving.
- *Ches:* A wave of assassinations in Mulhorand climaxes in the murder of Pharaoh Akonhorus of Mulhorand at the hand of one of his most trusted advisors. Horustep III (age 11) takes the throne of Mulhorand, ushering in an age of unusual ferment in Mulhorand. The Fangs of Set are responsible for the spate of assassinations, including the previous pharaoh's murder, and they have plans in the works to kill the boy-king as well. The Fangs employ magic to charm the designated victim's friends or bodyguards into becoming their murderers. Many priests in the clergy of Horus-Re are not happy about their new ruler's energy, fearing (rightly so) that it will eventually lead to a reduction in their authority.
- *Ches: The Salamander War Begins:* The Red Wizards of Thay send legions of elementals against the Coastal Cities. Four of the cities are reported destroyed (Lasdur, Taskaunt, Murbant, and Thasselen) and taken under Thay's

banner. Tilbrand surrendered without a fight, and Escalant is still holding out. It is thought that such vast numbers of elementals could not be summoned by spells, but rather a gate or portal was opened directly to the elemental plane of fire on the Priador. Many refugees are said to be fleeing across the Wizard's Reach to Chessenta and the Vilhon Reach.

- *Ches:* Cimbar's armies drive back the encamped allied forces of Airspur and Soorenar to the south and the west in a series of engagements across the Plains of the Red Wyrn. (The Plains of the Red Wyrn are the unnamed lands west of Cimbar and south of Airspur.)
- *Tarsakh:* The Wraith of the Inner Sea, a fleet of Chessenta privateers, have attacked and sunk three ships from Delthuntle sent to break the siege of Escalant and deliver much needed supplies to that city. The Sceptanar has condemned the attack, despite Cimbar's historic rivalry with the Cities of the North Coast, declared the half-orc "Sea Queen" Kreodo outlaw, and barred the Sea Queen, the Sea Horse, the Sea Jewel, and the Sea Quest from Cimbar's harbour. In contrast, the military council of Airspur, including its leader, the half-orc Khrulis, has expressed its support for the Sea Queen and noted Escalant's indirect support for the prior government of Airspur.

Airspur's declaration of support for the naval action has far more to do with its ongoing war with Cimbar and the common heritage its ruler shares with Kreodo than the trade agreement signed between Escalant and Airspur years ago when the cult of Bhaelros happened to be in power.

- *Tarsakh:* Laothkund surrenders to the elemental forces of Thay
- *Tarsakh:* In pursuit of their goal of destroying all magic and inflicting painful deaths on all its practitioners, the lords of Luthcheq kidnap powerful mages throughout eastern Faerûn. One such abduction results in the capture of King Hercubes' eldest daughter, an aspiring sorceress, and, in response, Mordulkin mobilizes for war.

Therescales, an agent of Jaerios Karanok, exposed the opposition Magus Society's plan to contact a powerful foreign wizard to his Karanok spymasters. When the Society moved to contact the ruler of Mordulkin through his daughter and to plea for that city's assistance, the Karanoks had the princess abducted by agents already in place in Mordulkin and proceeded to round up every mage or mage sympathizer in Luthcheq they could find, they leave the

Magus Society intact and their spy in place; hoping to enjoy again the thrill of capturing and torturing powerful foreign magelords. Mordulkin's inevitable declaration of war was of no consequence to the mad Karanoks.

- *Greengrass:* Gilgeam demonstrates his athletic prowess during the Festival of Assumption, the most holy day of the Untheric calendar which marks the Supreme Ruler's coronation over two millennia ago. While cheering crowds (secretly rooting for Gilgeam's opponent) watch from shore, the Father of Victory dispatches a dragon turtle in the harbour of the City of Gems. Only the strenuous efforts of the priesthoods of Ishtar and Ramman prevent the complete destruction of Unthalass's port district during the battle.
- *Greengrass:* A fleet of three score naval vessels sails from Sultim's harbour following the Sharpening of the Sword festival. Constructed in secret by the clergy of Anhur in sea caves south of the city, the ships and their heavily armed crews leave despite diviners' predictions of fierce storms. Several suspected agents of the Red Wizards in the city disappear in the hours before the fleet departs.
The Anhurites intend to assault and, if possible seize, the Thayan base on the Alaor. Warnings of a brewing tempest in the region are discounted due to suspicions that Thayan spies have already alerted the Red Wizards to the impending attack and an unwillingness on the part of Anhur's priesthood to disobey the direct command of the Divine Precept of Anhur.
- *Mirtul:* The fleet of vessels dispatched from Sultim by the priests of the Blood Fortress is decimated by fierce storms which wrack the Alamber Sea and never reaches the Alaor. Nevertheless, the crews of the surviving ships are perfectly positioned to attack a sahuagin army that coincidentally emerges from the depths to raid the coastline from Skuld to Sultim. The Battle of Summer Storms rages up and down the coast of Mulhorand for a fortnight before the armies of Aleaxtis are driven off. Less than a dozen vessels from the original fleet return to Sultim's harbour. Despite the great loss of life, Anhur's priesthood garners considerable respect from the populace for defending Mulhorand from foreign invaders, its ancient responsibility. The priesthood of Horus-Re, which was caught totally off guard by the attack, suffers a comparable loss of status.

- *Mirtul:* Mourktar has a new monarch of Mulhorandi ancestry, King Theriheb I, a paladin of Osiris. There were many disruptions during the tournament due, in large part, to the rampant cheating and the settling of numerous long-standing feuds among the participants. Notably, Helyos of Akanax, one of the favoured contestants and leader of the lawless band of mercenaries based in Akanax known as the Renegades, was implicated in the death of Thareus, a lieutenant in a rival mercenary group known as the Society of the Sword (currently based in Cimbar), during the charioteering competition and forced by King Theris to withdraw from the tournament. Gilgeam's chosen champion, Nebuseddar, an early favourite in the competition, died from magically poisoned wine he drank on the third day of the tournament and could not be revived. In the planned duel to the death between the two final candidates, Sorn, a trader from Bezantur, vanished a split second before Theriheb could inflict a death blow. Evidence discovered later implicated Sorn in Nebuseddar's murder. Within days of King Theriheb's ascension to the throne, the former monarch dies peacefully in his sleep.

Sorn was really a servant of Lauzoril, Zulkir of Enchantment and Charm, who was ordered to win the crown or assassinate the winner. Despite Sorn's failure to accomplish his mission, the Red Wizard rescued his agent seconds before his death, for the false-merchant was successful in framing Helyos for Thareus's death and for the murder of Nebuseddar, thus eliminating two of the most likely victors.

- *Mirtul:* Mordulkin's armies meet the armies of Luthcheq in a series of inconclusive engagements near the Ford of Nanna-Sin that gradually bog down into a stalemate along the Jade River.
(The Jade River runs northwest from the Riders to the Sky mountain range to the Bay of Chessenta, exiting between Luthcheq and Mordulkin. The Ford of Nanna-Sin is named for a long-dead member of the Untheric pantheon and is located where the road from Luthcheq to Mordulkin crosses the Jade River.)
- *Mirtul:* Cimbar's armies push Airspur's forces nearly halfway down the coast to the west before Airspur's armies manage to regroup. Cimbar's fight against Soorenar's armies grinds to a halt less than ten miles from Cimbar's outlying farms. In response, Soorenar's lords hire powerful wizards to bombard Cimbar, devastating unwarded New Cimbar and severely weakening the city's economy.

Soorenar's bombardment of Cimbar alienates wavering Akanax, which had been considering attacking Cimbar, as Soorenar employed similar tactics against Akanax in the most recent war between the two cities.

- *Kythorn:* A secret expedition to Raven's Bluff has returned to Luthcheq in triumph. Led by one of the younger Karanoks, the band succeeded in capturing and bringing back alive a mated pair of disenchanters. An extensive breeding program is expected to ensue.
- *Kythorn:* Escalant falls to the elemental armies of Thay.
- *Kythorn:* The youngest son of King Hippartes is attacked and badly injured, and agents of Soorenar are blamed. In revenge, the monarch of Akanax forms the Triangle Alliance with Cimbar and Mordulkin, and the three cities declare war on the Northern Alliance of Luthcheq, Soorenar, and Airspur.
Mordulkin is behind the attack on the young prince. Agents of Hercubes deliberately implicated Soorenar's rulers so as to draw Akanax into the war, increase the forces arrayed against the Northern Alliance, and weaken Luthcheq's security to the west, thus improving Mordulkin's overall position
- *Flamerule:* War has broken out between Thay and the armies it used to conquer much of the Wizard's Reach. Legions of humans, gnolls, goblins, and zombies are battling salamanders for control of the Priador. Occupying forces have been withdrawn from Tilbrand, Lasdur, and Taskaunt.
- *Flamerule:* A tax revolt in Messemparr is gathering steam, and food shortages are growing. Gilgeam, the Supreme Ruler of Unther, takes no immediate action.
- *Flamerule:* Riots break out in Airspur between the majority human populace and the half-orc minority, composed largely of recent immigrants. The half-orc Khrulis and the rest of the military council are forced to sue for peace with Cimbar in order to crush the incipient revolution.
- *Elesias:* The Sceptanar of Cimbar, self-proclaimed ruler of Chessenta, has sent an envoy to Sembia, Cormyr, and the Dalelands seeking word of those who unleashed the magic-eater in Scornubel two winters ago. The Sceptanar has a similar creature imprisoned in an ancient globe in the Crypt Royal, and offers gold, magical training, griffins, or noble maidens of his realm to anyone who can safely unleash the magic-eater without harming the people and treasures of

Chessenta. He wants it returned to its home plane or controlled to do his bidding in a certain task.

- *Elesias*: The armies of Cimbar and Akanax besiege Soorenar, but the siege unexpectedly settles into a stalemate as the putative allies jockey for position over the expected fate of their mutual foe.
- *Elesias*: Luthcheq's armies slowly fall back in the face of Mordulkin's superior forces. The cost to both cities is high however, and Mordulkin's wizard corps is devastated by the witchweed fields the Karanoks have secretly sown west of the Jade River.
- *Higharvestide*: Riots erupt in Messemprar due to severe food shortages.
- *Marpenoth*: The riots in Messemprar quickly lead to open revolution, and many city guardsmen and citizens are killed in the strife. Control of the city is divided among several factions: Lord Annunaki and his guard control the palace district, the Northern Wizards control the southern section and the city gates, and the "non-slaves" (ex-slaves who have declared their freedom) control the dock district.
- *Marpenoth*: Akanax mobilizes for an assault on Soorenar, and in response the Lords of that city sue for peace with Cimbar, hoping to spare their city and save their own lives. The Sceptanar of Cimbar accepts Soorenar's surrender, and defers further conflict by promising Akanax free passage for its trade goods and forcing vanquished Soorenar to pay heavy reparations to rebuild Akanax.
- *Marpenoth*: Luthcheq and Mordulkin reach an uneasy armistice brokered by the Sceptanar as neither Cimbar nor Akanax can spare troops to enter the war (as both are too busy guarding against treachery by the other), and Mordulkin's unexpectedly heavy losses prevent Luthcheq from being overwhelmed but are not severe enough that Luthcheq has any hope of prevailing.
- *Uktar*: Larsa and Tammuz, high-ranking members of the Northern Wizards are murdered, and the assassin is said to be Shuruppak, the Reaper. Within two days, the palace district is overrun and Lord Annunaki is killed by an angry mob. Dama, leader of the slave revolt, and Shurlash, leader of the Northern Wizards, jointly declare the independence of the Free City of Messemprar.

Gilgeam sends six ships of Unther's navy to blockade the port and his poorly trained army to besiege the city walls.

- *Nightal:* The Siege of Messemprar persists, but without any sign of resolution. Ships from Bezantur and Mourktar easily evade the naval blockade and supply the city's hungry populace with sufficient food to resist Gilgeam's ire. While King Theriheb of Mourktar is assisting the rebels primarily for moral reasons, the shipments from Thay are simply another ploy by Lauzoril, Zulkir of Enchantment/Charm, to destabilize Unther and possibly to acquire a permanent base on the southern coast. Ruduk, Lauzoril's agent, has ensnared Dama in a web of enchantments that leave the charismatic demagogue susceptible to his every word.
- *Nightal:* Sahuagin from Alextis repeatedly raid the coastline of Unther in revenge for the attack on their forces in the Battle of Summer Storms, the town of Red Haven is particularly hard hit.
- *Nightal:* The Skriaxit, the dreaded dust storm, a harbinger of doom and remnant of the war between the God-Kings and the Imaskari, is sighted in the Plains of Purple Dust.
- **1358 DR Year of Shadows: The Time of Troubles:** Cast out from their otherworldly domains by the overpower Lord Ao, the gods of Toril wander the Realms as mortals. During this dark period, known as the Time of Troubles, magic becomes unpredictable and the prayers of the faithful go unanswered.
- *Kythorn:* The biennial competition to determine Chessenta's finest athletes begins on the first day of Kythorn on the fields of Pryollus under the shadow of Mount Thulbane. The most notable participant is King Hippartes, who has not competed in the games since assuming the throne of Akanax. King Hippartes has received a vision from the god Assuran commanding him to participate in the games, and the monarch, a faithful follower of the Lord of Three Thunders, attends without question.
- *Kythorn:* The Fellowship of the Firebrand has arrived in Cimbar from lands to the north and west and accepted the Sceptanar's challenge. When the group attempts to unleash the imprisoned hakeashar on the 15th day of Kythorn, however, both the adventuring company and the eater-of-magic simply disappear without a trace. Suspecting treachery leading back to the Karanoks,

the Sceptanar quickly offers a sizable bounty on the head of every member of the company. For the time being, Cimbar's Great King chooses not to open the treasure vault of the Crypt Royal as he fears further trickery.

In truth, the Fellowship of the Firebrand and the Sceptanar fell victim to the magical chaos caused by the Fall of the Gods. A simple divination spell employed by Maelos Karanok to spy on the proceedings misfired, creating a magical vortex between the temple of Entropy in Luthcheq and the Crypt Royal. Both the hakeashar and the adventuring company were swept through the temporary gate to Maelos's private chapel. The high priest of Entropy and all but one member of the Fellowship were slain in the ensuing implosion of the hakeashar when it came into contact with the burning witchweed in the room, and a large, permanent dead magic zone centred on the temple and encompassing most of Luthcheq was created in the aftermath of the event.

- *Kythorn:* The town of Klondor is consumed by the Skriaxit destroying every building and killing every inhabitant before travelling further into the Great Vale. This causes widespread panic among the people of Mulhorand. Hethhab, the incarnation of Anhur and his loyal followers ride into the Skriaxit causing it to disperse. Rezim tries to keep this development a secret by having all witnesses to the event killed before word can spread of the brave Hethhab's sacrifice (and Rezim's involvement in his posting to such a dangerous position).
- Rezim himself claims the calming of the Skriaxit as a triumph for the church of Horus-Re; this greatly increases the prestige and opinion of the Church of Horus-Re in the eyes of the people.
- The loss of so many Chessentan mercenaries in Klondor causes opinion amongst them to turn away from the Church of Horus-Re whom they blame for posting so many in one place and failing to do anything to prevent it in time to save Klondor and the mercenaries.
- *Kythorn:* On the 15th day of Kythorn, gods arrive in the Realms in weakened avatar form throughout Faerûn. Most of the gods of Mulhorand choose to possess the bodies of their chosen.

The most notable manifestation occurs when the Lord of Three Thunders appears on the slopes of Mount Thulbane in the body of King Hippartes and descends to greet the awe-struck assembled participants and spectators.

Assuran/Hippartes commands all those present to return to their cities and gird for the war of revenge which will soon sweep all of Chessenta. The Lord of Three Thunders then vanishes in a massive plume of smoke as three booming thunderclaps roll across the plains of Threskel.

Appearances of omnipotent power notwithstanding, Assuran/Hippartes departs for the Thaymount where he has hidden a cache of weapons for use in the coming conflicts. Although successful, the Lord of Three Thunders narrowly evades the plots of a Red Wizard known as the Masked One on the 19th of Kythorn. He then returns to Akanax and prepares for war.

- The avatar of Sseth appears briefly above the water of the Lapal Sea before battling the dinosaur avatar of Ubtao on the eastern edge of the Jungles of Chult. The sarrukh of Okoth approach Seti (the chosen of Set) and agree to bind their god Sseth into eternal slumber if they are granted spells and aid in their ancient battle against the khaasta.
- *Kythorn:* The six-month old siege of Messemparr is finally ended. In the chaos that follows the Fall of the Gods, Gilgeam finds it prudent to withdraw his army (those who did not desert) from Unther's northern border and declare victory. In Messemparr, Dama dies a martyr's death when he falls to the Reaper's blade, as a parting gift from Gilgeam. Shurlash and the Northern Wizards reconstitute the government as an oligarchical magocracy. In gratitude for the assistance of Mourktar and Bezantur, the council of Messemparr drafts laws granting merchants from both cities special trading privileges.

While the Red Wizards lose much of their sway over Messemparr with the death of Dama, Ruduk had managed to infiltrate the Northern Wizards during the course of the siege, and he joins the ruling council upon Dama's death. Gilgeam never acknowledges the secession of Messemparr, but neither does the god-king attempt to exercise his sovereignty in the region again.

- *Flamerule:* Citing Akanax's unsated appetite for revenge against Soorenar, Assuran/Hippartes and the armies of Akanax march north along the River Akax. Soorenar quickly falls to the attackers, despite the assistance of the occupying Cimbaran garrison, and is occupied in the resultant carnage by Akanax.

- *Flamerule:* Maladraedior, the great blue wyrm, has been seen once again over the skies of Dalath in hale health. Some 2,650 years ago, Maladraedior, then the reigning Suzerain of the blue dragons of the Old Empires, abdicated or disappeared, and the great wyrm has not been seen since. Several merchants visiting Dalath at the time have recounted his aerial battle with a lesser wyrm of uncertain heritage who quickly fled from the 4,000 year-old behemoth. The last sighting of Maladraedior occurred in the Great Vale of Mulhorand and he was recently spotted heading south and east towards the great dust desert of Raurin.

As the last remaining worshipper of Kalzareinad, a demi-power of draconic magic, Maladraedior was the only candidate to serve as that draconic deity's avatar host during the Time of Troubles. The great blue wyrm has long laired beneath the streets of Dalath in a hidden temple where he is served by members of the Ramahresh and Kalmarak families. As Kalzareinad/Maladraedior, the great blue wyrm emerged from his centuries of seclusion and set out to recruit new worshippers among the younger blue, brown, and yellow dragons of the Raurin region, achieving only limited success. At some point, Kalzareinad/Maladraedior encountered the avatar of Kereska and Kalzareinad voluntarily merged his aspect with that of the Wonderbringer. The revitalized Kereska accepted Maladraedior as one of the highest ranking priests of her faith, and bid him to redouble his evangelistic efforts. Following the conclusion of the Time of Troubles, Maladraedior returned to his subterranean lair in secret, along with a clutch of twelve chromatic dragon eggs of varying hues (a peace offering from Tiamat the Dragon Queen) that he plans on raising as disciples of Kereska/Kalzareinad. As a gift from his reinvigorated deity, Maladraedior has maintained the youthful state of health Kalzareinad's avatar exhibited. As a result of his renewed vigour, Maladraedior may become significantly more active in the coming decades.

- *Flamerule:* Several hundred followers of Geb are observed by passing merchant traffic entering sea caves west of Skuld. None of the missing Gebites are ever heard from again, and the caves they entered mysteriously collapse within hours of their disappearance.

Geb leads his followers' west through tunnels beneath the Alamber Sea to the subterranean heart of the island known as the Ship of Gods. There his

followers begin construction of a temple they call the Golden Forge in the depths of the simmering volcano that dominates the isle. The Gebites complete their temple over the course of the next decade, all the while working to contain the long-threatened eruption.

- *Elesias*: Savage wererocodiles of the Adder Swamp win an important victory in their long-running war with a community of wererats resident in the region. Sebek's faithful are said to have been lead by Sebek himself.
- *Elesias*: The armies of Akanax, augmented by conscripts from fallen Soorenar, unexpectedly appear outside the walls of Luthcheq. Within days, Luthcheq is conquered, and Assuran/Hippartes declares that Cimbar's historic arrogance towards the other cities of Chessenta will soon be avenged. The Sceptanar of Cimbar wisely surrenders to the vengeful god-king without even a token of protest. As for the mad Karanoks, some are slain, but a most survive amidst the catacombs of the city.
- Saestra Karanok the vampire is driven from the city of Luthcheq and wanders the realms for many years before settling in Erlkazar.
- *Elesias*: Reports of a great battle in the harbour of Sultim spread throughout Mulhorand. The avatar of Anhur, God of War, has defeated a great white shark larger in size than the greatest leviathan. The shark, believed to be the avatar of Sekholah, god of the sahuagin, is said to have been gravely injured and fled the Alamber Sea.
- *Elesias*: Gilgeam, god-king of Unther, destroys Tiamat the Dark Lady. A several mile wide swath along the southern bank of the River Alambar is incinerated in the conflagration touched off by the battle. The Supreme Ruler of Unther declares the Nemesis of the Gods forever vanquished. Tiglath, high priestess of the Church of the Dark Lady, disappears during the battle. The Battle of Burnt Fields does indeed destroy Tiamat's avatar, but the Dark Lady is well prepared for that outcome. Her essence splinters and disperses into the three pre-prepared draconic vessels: Tchazzar (red), Gestanius (blue), and Skuthosiin (green) thanks to the Rings of Tiamat each possesses. Shudu-Ab assumes control of the Church of the Dark Lady in Unthalass. Tiglath is thought dead but secretly retreats to Cult holdings in Firetrees on the edge of The Green Fields where the church is strong.

- *Eleint*: The Salamander War has finally come to an end and the Red Wizards are victorious thanks to the aid of the elemental legions of Kossuth, Tyrant Among Fire. The western Coastal Cities have maintained their independence, while the eastern cities of Escalant, Murbant, and Thasselen have fallen under Thayan domination. Claims that Kossuth himself appeared on behalf of the Thayans are widely dismissed as rumour, despite the presence of many other deities in the Realms.
- *Eleint*: King Theriheb I vanishes after just over a year on the throne of Mourktar. Shuruppak, Gilgeam's chief assassin more commonly known as the Reaper, is widely blamed for Theriheb's assassination, but no trace of the paladin of Osiris is ever found. A regency council chaired by Surran Thunderbolt, high priest of Assuran, and including prominent merchants, military leaders, and Dread Imperceptor Kabarrath Telthaug, high priest of the Black Lord's Cloak, assumes control of the city. Mourktar's late monarch was in fact deposed by Banite agents of Telthaug as part of the Dread Imperceptor's plot to seize power in the city. Telthaug continues secretive efforts already underway to co-opt the members of the new ruling council.
- *Eleint*: The armies of Assuran/Hippartes march around the northern extent of the Riders to the Sky Mountains, seeking vengeance for Unther's purported involvement in the disappearance of Mourktar's recently anointed king. Reinforced by armies from Mourktar, the Chessentan armies shatter Unther's poorly equipped and poorly trained forces in the Battle of Bloody Metal. During the conflict, Assuran slays Ramman, the Untheric god of war.
- *Eleint*: A gigantic red wyrm is observed in flight above the Great Vale heading towards the Sword Mountains. Tchazzar, imbued with Tiamat's divine energy, feels compelled to seek out Gestaniius, another receptacle of the Dark Lady's essence. The great red wyrm eventually triumphs over his crippled opponent after twelve days of battle, and he immediately devours her corpse before sinking into a month-long slumber.
- *Marpenoth*: Hearing of Assuran/Hippartes victory over the armies of Unther (they have not yet heard of his subsequent defeat at Anhur's hands) the council of Mourktar elect Telthaug the Regent of Mourktar.

- *Marpenoth*: Gilgeam sensing the death of Ramman, orders his clergy in the city of Unthalass executed immediately. Very few of Ramman's priesthood in Unthalass survive and those that do quickly leave the city and head to the Green Fields where their base of worship is strongest.
- *Marpenoth*: The shattered armies of Unther are reforged under the leadership of the avatar of Ramatep (Anhur), god of war. In the Battle of Thunder, on the 10th of Marpenoth, the armies of Unther and Chessenta clash on the plains of Threskel, while the avatars of Assuran and Ramatep battle for supremacy. The tightly executed strategy of Unther's general divides the army of Chessenta, despite its numerical superiority, and the allied forces of the city-states quickly dissolve into squabbling legions. Ramatep drives the Lord of Three Thunders from Unther, Ramatep is the Untheric name for Anhur, Mulhorandi god of war, and, in the aftermath of the battle, Anhur claims fallen Ramman's disputed portfolio.
- *Marpenoth*: The Alliance of Chessenta quickly dissolves once again into fractious city-states with the defeat and disappearance of Assuran/Hippartes. Former inhabitants of Soorenar and Luthcheq begin the rebuilding of the western cities. In addition to the populace who begin rebuilding Luthcheq, Luthcheq's catacombs are adopted by many of the wererats fleeing the Adder Swamp. The Magus Society relocates to holdings just outside the city of Luthcheq away from the dead magic zone.
- *Marpenoth*: The 15th of Marpenoth is the Time of Departure and the end of the Time of Troubles. From this day forward, the long-static pantheons of Unther and Mulhorand as well as the Faerûnian pantheon are forever changed.
- *Marpenoth*: Numerous wild and dead magic regions appeared in Chessenta, Unther, and Mulhorand during the Time of Troubles, and some of them appear to be persisting. In addition to the large dead magic zone that appeared throughout Luthcheq during the Time of Arrival, smaller such regions have been found scattered throughout the eastern reaches of the Akanapeaks (with several such regions located near strongholds occupied by the Flaming Spike orc tribe) and in the northern reaches of Azulduth, "The Lake of Salt." Many wild magic regions have appeared as well in these three ancient lands. The largest seems to be located in the Hills of Maerth, centred on the holdings of

the archmage Azurax Silverhawk, who purchased large tracts of land in area several years ago. Whether this development will impede or facilitate his quest for a philosopher's stone is unknown. Smaller wild magic "bubbles" have been found throughout the Methwood and along the banks of the River of Spears as well.

The wild magic zone in the Hills of Maerth is due in part to the magical researches of Azurax Silverhawk. The archmage had been secretly searching for the catacombs that lie beneath the ruins of the long-lost tower of Ultham, son of Urrekanam. The latter wizard is the near-legendary creator of the Magical Chessmen of Ultham-Urre and is believed to have once dwelt in the hills near the village of Oslin. Azurax found some magically hewn caverns that appeared to have been created by Ultham, but before Silverhawk could fully investigate them, a fluctuation in the Weave cataclysmically interacted with his divination spell. The subsequent explosion created a massive wild magic zone in the region and collapsed the newly discovered complex. Azurax barely escaped with his life.

- *Marpenoth*: A three-headed dragon sporting red, blue, and green heads is seen overhead in Maerth. This follows three days after the only survivor of a hunting party stumbles out of the Methwood claiming to have witnessed a terrible battle between a two-headed dragon who breathed fire and lightning and the venerable green dragon of the Methwood, Skuthosiin. After slaying Gestaniius and devouring her corpse, Tchazzar absorbed the divine energy she too had received from Tiamat. The Father of Chessenta then sprouted a second head, blue in hue, and began to hunt Skuthosiin. When Tchazzar foolishly destroyed Skuthosiin and devoured his corpse in turn, Tiamat the Dark Lady manifested once again in the Realms and the three headed dragon began to plot the death of Gilgeam, once and for all.
- *The Feast of the Moon*: The three headed avatar of Tiamat the Dark Lady lands atop the Ziggurat of Eternal Victory in the Palace District of Unthalass and bellows out a challenge to Gilgeam. Unable to ignore this challenge, Gilgeam emerges from his throne room for the first time since the Time of Departure. At first, the Supreme Ruler of Unther and the Dark Lady seem evenly matched, but the diminished stature of Gilgeam is soon apparent to even his followers. Tiamat the Dark Lady destroys the avatar of Gilgeam after twelve

hours of continuous battle that destroyed much of Unthalass as it unfolded. The avatar of Tiamat consumes her ancient enemy's corpse and perishes immediately thereafter, despite the lack of an obviously mortal wound. Unbeknownst to most inhabitants of Unthalass, the battle which destroyed their city continues to rage across the Outer Planes as Gilgeam and the Dark Lady fight in Zigguraxis. Tiamat the Dragon Queen invades Zigguraxis immediately following the battle and consumes the victor. The Feast of the Moon is forever known in the Old Empires as the Feast of Tiamat.

- *Nightal:* Fires and beasts loosed by the destruction of Unthalass's zoo and gladiator arena rage throughout the City of Gems unchecked for ten days after the death of Gilgeam. Rampaging mobs who gather as night falls destroy idols of Gilgeam throughout the city and kill every Gilgeamite they can find. The rioting does not stop until the Ziggurat of Eternal Victory is sacked on the tenth day after Gilgeam's destruction. For the rest of the month, Unthalass slowly disintegrates as no one rules the city. Thousands of refugees flee the chaos of the "Night Fires" with the aid of the clergy of Ishtar (Isis).
- *Nightal:* Sahuagin from Alextis launch raids along the coasts of Unther in revenge for the Battle of Summer Storms and the defeat of Sekolah by Anhur who was last seen in Unther during the Time of Troubles.
- *Nightal:* Lord Karigulzu, attempting to flee Red Haven by ship is carried away by sahuagin beneath the waves of the Inner Sea, the first victim of their raids on Unther.
- *Nightal:* The Cult of Tiamat in Firetrees executes Lord Tulkuti upon hearing of Gilgeam's death
- *Nightal:* Lord Ekur allies with the church of Ishtar in Shussel using high priest Ibalpiel to calm the local citizenry and ensure the local merchants turn to Lord Ekur and his Chessentan mercenaries for protection from the anarchy that is sweeping the country and the sahuagin raids that plague the coastline.
- *Nightal:* Lord Teumman Bloodletter mysteriously disappears from Dalath within an hour of Gilgeam's death. In truth he was devoured in his bed by Maladraedior.
- *Nightal:* Lord Gudea being the only honest lord in Unther is secreted out of Unthalass by his loyal servants with the aid of the priesthood of Ishtar and

the remaining priests of Ramman (now Anhur). He makes his way to Ssintar and sends out word that those loyal to Unther can find safety in Ssintar.

- **1359 DR Year of the Serpent:**

- *Hammer:* As the great diaspora from shattered Unthalass continues, anarchy spreads to the rest of Unther. Within a fortnight, Gilgeam's clergy is almost completely annihilated thanks to the mobs that fan out across the country, looting and killing as they go.

In Unthalass, a still calm gradually settles over the city. The City of Gems population is greatly reduced in size.

- A few of Gilgeam's priests and a host of slaves escape the tumult and make their way to a secret stronghold long hidden in the eastern branch of the Smoking Mountains. The new residents of the Citadel of Black Ash are all that remain of Gilgeam's once all-powerful clergy.
- Shudu-Ab's Serpent Guards begin a reign of terror throughout Unthalass and the surrounding region after the Dark Scaly One claims rulership of shattered Unther in their god's name. Many opponents of the Dark Scaly One are hunted and killed in the months to come as Shudu-Ab gradually establishes her control over the City of Gems and her influence throughout much of central Unther. However, the Wyrms Princess's authority is undermined by the widespread belief that the Dark Lady died alongside Gilgeam, and, despite the prayers of Shudu-Ab, Tiamat does not manifest in Unther over the course of the next decade or give any sign that might convince the populace otherwise.
- *Hammer:* Hearing of Gilgeam's death, Furifax and his bandits march to Unthalass across the Green Fields. The 1,000 strong militia of the Greenfields immediately disperses upon seeing Furifax and his bandit cavalry advancing upon their position. The militia moves towards Ssintar and Lord Gudea. In the hopes of finding a safe haven from the bandits and the Church of the Dark Lady.
- *Hammer:* Zimrilim, high priest of Gilgeam; who survived his god's death and the chaos that followed, has begun receiving prayers from a source that claims to be Gilgeam (secretly Cyric). Zimrilim, under orders from his god converts the remaining Gigleamites and Banites in Unthalass to worship of "Gilgeam" (the others who would not convert he killed). With the Chessentan mercenaries he

had been funding for years that were stationed around the outskirts of the city he seizes control of the entire Port District of Unthalass in a bloody battle with Cultists from the Church of the Dark Lady and begins turning the district into a fortress.

- *Hammer:* Rezim the vizier of Mulhorand introduces a new law allowing the sale (rather than leasing) of slaves directly to nobles without interference of the church. Large numbers of slaves are purchased from the priesthods generating vast profits (most of which enriches the church of Horus-Re). Many of the buyers are from the priesthood of Anhur, another significant group of buyers are the rich in Sampranasz (worshippers of Set) who then educate the slaves further (and magically influence them) before leasing them out to other nobles and local and central government officials. After several years a network of Set sympathetic administrative slaves are in place within every city and level of government.
- *Alturiak:* Furifax arrives at Unthalass to find the city in complete chaos and anarchy. Wishing to destroy whatever is left of Gilgeam's priesthood he blocks all entry and exit to the city by land and orders his men to take the Port district.
- *Alturiak:* With Zimrilim in control of the Port District, food supplies to Unthalass' population begin to shrink. Zimrilim buys all the food that comes in via ship and charges extortionate fees to distribute the food; those allying with him get preferential rates. The Church of the Dark Lady in Unthalass, already seriously damaged by Zimrilim's arrival is unable to contest his rule and retreats to the catacombs beneath the city. Ultuhegel the leading priestess of Ishtar in the city negotiates with Furifax over securing food for the city and in return the priesthood of Ishtar will assist him in securing Unthalass.
- *Ches:* Zhenghyi, the Witch-King of Vaasa, is destroyed by the Heroes of Bloodstone, and Damara is reunited by Gareth Dragonsbane and his stalwart companions.

To break the stalemate at the Ford of Goliad between the armies of Damara and the Witch-King's forces, the Heroes of Bloodstone journey to the Abyss and steal the Wand of Orcus. During the course of their adventures, Gareth and his companions battle and slay an avatar of Tiamat the Dragon Queen. This

setback disrupts Tiamat's plan to reappear in Unther and claim all of Gilgeam's former territory as her sovereign domain before the avaricious Faerûnian and Mulhorandi pantheons began divvying up the unclaimed territory.

- *Ches:* Furifax turns to his secret allies in the Church of the Dark Lady to help him supply food to Unthalass. Shudu-Ab has cultists begin kidnapping and enslaving citizens across Unther to work in the Green Fields. The entire town of Firetrees is enslaved and forced to work in the fields. Tiglath; unable to prevent the kidnappings or reconcile these latest acts with her conscience takes those cultists loyal to her and leaves for Messemparrar to establish a new sect of the church away from Shudu-Ab.
- *Tarsakh:* With regular food shipments arriving, Furifax and the priests of Ishtar begin making plans to assault the Port District of Unthalass
- *Tarsakh:* Ultuhegel hears of kidnappings in Unthalass by the Church of the Dark Lady and makes attempts to prevent it.
- *Kythorn:* The forces of Furifax (secretly aided by Shudu-Ab and her cultists) and Ultuhegel are ready to assault Zimrilim and drive him out of Unthalass. Jehokim sells information crucial to Ultuhegel's and Furifax's whereabouts in the city to Zimrilim. Zimrilim attacks the opposition leaders before the assault begins in their separate safe houses within Unthalass and succeeds in capturing Ultuhegel, the priestess of Ishtar. Zimrilim's men disrupt a meeting between Furifax and Tiamatian cultists. When the kidnapping attempt is discovered the priests of Ishtar also discover Furifax's involvement with the Church of the Dark Lady and the kidnappings in Unther. The priests of Ishtar now turn to a militant crusader named Ningal, dissolve their alliance with Furifax and leave the city.
- *Flamerule:* A greater quelzarm has been seen off the coast of Unthalass at least three times in the past ten-day. Several ships are already missing, including the *Bey of Chessenta*, the *Maid of Gems*, and the *Watcher's Cape*, and their disappearances have been blamed on the legendary sea serpent. Hunted nearly to extinction centuries ago by Untheric nobles, it has been seventeen years since the last known sighting of a quelzarm, let alone a greater quelzarm. The situation in Unther is too chaotic for a hunt to be organized, and the beast

disappears within a month of its first noted appearance after wreaking havoc with shipping in the Alamber Sea.

- *Flamerule*: Furifax and Zimrilim come to a tentative truce with one another dividing the city of Unthalass between them so that they both might benefit from the situation.
- *Uktar*: After attacking distant Shou Lung, the Tuigan horde turns westward and invades Faerûn. The Tuigan horde battles the armies of Thay in the Battle of the Griffon Legion.
- **1360 DR Year of the Turret**: A volcanic eruption created by magic buries the Semphâri city of Solon [-6422], in the Raurin Desert, under magma.
- *Hammer*: Lord Ekur arranges Ibalpiel's disappearance and makes it appear that she was kidnapped by the Church of the Dark Lady (really her body lies weighted down at the bottom of the sea).
- *Hammer*: Cimbar provides food and manpower to aid Soorenar and Luthcheq and absolves any trading embargoes and fees the two cities may have had to pay Cimbar in order to alleviate their suffering caused by the recent troubles.
- *Hammer*: Rezim introduces a heavy road tax to repair and maintain the eastern roads of Mulhorand; this causes much resentment among the merchant class, and enriches the coffers of the Church of Horus-Re even further. Improvements to the Eastern Way do begin almost immediately, increasing the opinion of the Church of Horus-Re in the eyes of the people.
- *Flamerule*: On the back of popular opinion of the Church of Horus Re, Rezim introduces a new law preventing the Justices (priest-judges) from applying the rule of law to priests of Horus Re. This antagonises the churches of other Mulhorandi gods.
- *Uktar*: Word reaches Mourktar of the Banedeath unleashed in far-off Zhentil Keep by the followers of Cyric. Dread Imperceptor Telthaug unleashes his own inquisition in the name of Bane Reborn, and many citizens of Mourktar disappear forever after being taken to the dungeons of the Black Lord's Altar. In the course of the inquisition, Telthaug's followers abduct and murder the few true Cyricists in Mourktar as well as many mid-ranking followers of Assuran. By the end of the year, when the inquisition finally draws to a close,

three-quarters of the regency council reports directly to Telthaug, and the followers of Assuran are greatly reduced in number and influence.

- **1361 DR Year of Maidens:** *Mirtul:* The corpse of a large vodyanoi washes ashore on the beaches of Oslin. The aquatic umber hulk has apparently been dead for quite some time, and it appears to have been bitten nearly in half. The Lords of the Inner Reach, a mercenary company employed by the small trading village, begin accompanying local fishermen and merchants sailing on the Akanamere.

A young dragon turtle has been driven from its lair in the depths of the Wizard's Reach and sought out the relatively peaceful waters of the Akanamere. It reached the lake by swimming up the River Akax, and the monstrous beast finds the bountiful waters and lack of competition to its liking. The dragon turtle quickly drives off the family of vodyanoi (aquatic umber hulks) who have long dwelt in the region and then begins to settle into its new demesne.

- *Kythorn:* A large dragon turtle surfaces in the harbour of Rodanar and destroys two trading vessels from partially rebuilt Soorenar. The monster brushes off the feeble attacks of the town's few defenders and departs after ingesting both crews. Panic quickly spreads along the coast of Chessenta's largest lake. Over the next few weeks, no fewer than seven ships of varying sizes disappear in the Akanamere.
- *Kythorn:* The army of Cimbar marches toward Soorenar (still damaged by the invasion of Akanax). Instead of besieging the city the army offers the hand of friendship and asks for their aid in taking Akanax and uniting Chessenta once again so that they may take Unther and bring true enlightenment to its people. Without any other choice Soorenar allies with Cimbar and contributes to its armies.
- *Kythorn:* More trade caravans begin appearing along the Eastern Way travelling into Mulhorand, as a result bandit activity and monster predations in the area increase.
- *Elesias:* The armies of Cimbar and Soorenar march on Akanax. King Hippartes cannot resist the combined might of both armies and joins forces with Cimbar.

The army makes camp at Akanax to prepare for winter. Diplomats are sent to Luthcheq requesting it join the Chessentan alliance.

- *Elesias*: Khrullis begins reinforcing his army in preparation to attack Cimbar once their army reaches Luthcheq and is therefore too far away to respond in time. Unbeknownst to Khrullis, Cimbar has bought the allegiance of Horgkin; leader of the mercenary company the Wardogs based in Airspur.
- *Flamerule*: The Lords of the Inner Reach fight a five-hour battle with the Akanamere's newly resident dragon turtle from Oslin's beaches. Well over half the company and most of the anchored ships are destroyed by the monster's breath weapon, but the beast is believed to be severely injured and retreats. Rumoured sightings of the dragon turtle decline precipitously over the next several weeks, and the beast is assumed to have fled or died. In the years to come, the occasional lost ship is blamed on the Akanaturtle, as the dragon turtle is commonly referred to, but no one really believes the monster remains with the lake.

In truth, the Akanaturtle remains within the Akanamere, but it is much more careful in choosing its targets and eliminating all potential witnesses. The dragon turtle restricts itself to destroying only a handful of vessels each year and only during inclement weather when they could have conceivably foundered on their own.

1362 DR Year of the Helm: Maligor, Zulkir of Alteration of the Red Wizards of Thay, attempts to wrest control of the nation from the Council of Zulkirs. His plan might have worked were it not for the intervention of agents of the Harpers and the lich Szass Tam, Zulkir of Necromancy.

- Thay attempts to invade Rashemen by moving forces through Thesk along the Golden Way, but those forces are overwhelmed by water elementals summoned by the witches. The Thayans retreat after using magic to scorch the western shore down to bare rock. The witches spend a month repairing the damage.
- *Ches*: Emissaries from the Church of Set approach the Okothian sarrukh beneath the lake of salt while posing as archaeologists. The meetings are largely unproductive from a Setite point of view, but the sarrukh manage to gain complete obedience from a few of the wereserpent worshippers of Set in

the group. The sarrukh agree to allow pilgrimages from the Church of Set, but they do so only to enslave more were-serpents to their will.

- *Ches:* The army of Chessenta approaches Luthcheq, the citizens fly a white flag from the tallest non ruined building signifying their capitulation to the armies of Chessenta.
- *Tarsakh:* Riots erupt again in Airspur between the human populace and the half-orc after the self-proclaimed Apostle of Bhaelros begins preaching that the Raging One will annihilate the city to punish its inhabitants for allowing the Spawn of Gruumsh to taint their pure human blood. Many humans flee the city for the purported safety of refugee camps ten miles to the south. The Apostle of Bhaelros is an opportunistic human mercenary named Horgkin with no affiliation to the followers of the Destroyer. Horgkin commands the Wardogs, a powerful mercenary company, and he has pretensions of founding his own kingdom. The mercenary lord's loudly proclaimed hatred for half-orcs is simply a means to appeal to the disaffected fraction of Airspur's human population and is, in fact, secretly supported by Khrullis, the half-orc leader of Airspur. Khrullis seeks to drive out those humans who seem incapable of accepting his rulership or the presence of him and his kin without destroying Airspur in the process. However unknown to Khrullis in a double blind the human Horgkin is secretly being pay-rolled by Cimbar also to stir up trouble in the city.
- *Tarsakh:* The Pharaoh Horustep III decides his first act of adulthood will be to personally lead a campaign along the Eastern Way to cleanse the area of bandit and monstrous populations. Although Rezim tries to discourage this, the young Pharaoh will not be swayed. Rezim hires many mercenaries to shadow the young Pharaoh and keep him safe. One of these mercenary groups, the Gold Swords, counts a young woman named Kendera Steeldice among its number.
- *Tarsakh:* Mardikan, the rival of Rezim leaks the plans of the Pharaoh to unsavoury individuals within Skuld in an attempt to disgrace Rezim for not protecting the Pharaoh. The information eventually reaches the ears of the Church of Set (through its network of slave spies) who dispatch agents to ambush the young Pharaoh

- *Flamerule*: The Apostle of Bhaelros prophesies the imminent destruction of Airspur, and most of the human refugees from the city who have heeded his warnings join him, most of Airspur's hastily recruited army leave Airspur and head to Cimbar thus destroying Khrullis' ambition to conquer Cimbar
- *Eleint*: With the rest of Chessenta allied behind Cimbar, Airspur capitulates and joins with Cimbar also. The Chessentan alliance begins a program of rebuilding the ruined cities and reinforcing its position and armies with plans to march on Mourktar and Mordulkin as soon as they are able.
- *Marpenoth*: As the campaign to clear the Eastern Way draws to a close, the young Pharaoh and his elite guard are ambushed by Set cultists on the outskirts of the Plains of Purple Dust. The Gold Swords rush to aid the Pharaoh but suffers heavy losses in the attack. Kendera Steeldice assumes command and rallies her troops to rescue the young Pharaoh. The Pharaoh's friend Brathes is killed protecting the Pharaoh.

After the ambush, 7 much decomposed bodies not from either group (cultists or Mulhorandi) are found partially buried near the edge of the Plains of Purple Dust. They are the bodies of Hethhab and his 6 loyal followers. In the shallow grave containing the bodies are the memoirs of Hethhab and all information about his posting to the eastern borders by Rezim.

Rezim hired foreigners to recover the bodies of Hethhab and his followers after the Skriaxit was calmed and bury them in the desert; the foreigners would not be aware of the importance of Hethhab and his information about Rezim and therefore were unlikely to leak such information, however they were also reluctant to enter the desert and so buried the bodies hastily on the edge.

- *Nightal*: Following his return from the campaign the Pharaoh Horustep III immediately orders an inquiry into the events surrounding Hethhab's death and the Skriaxit. The truth is uncovered after powerful magics are used to interrogate Rezim the Vizier who is then executed for treason and endangering the Pharaoh (acting on information planted by Mardikan).

The truth revealed, the priesthood of Anhur are hailed as heroes and celebrations are held throughout Mulhorand in honour of the brave sacrifice of Hethhab the last incarnation of Anhur.

- The priesthoods of Anhur and Horus-Re begin fighting openly on the streets of Mulhorand in every settlement. The priesthood of Horus-Re without its allies among the other priesthoods or social classes looks to be losing the fight. Both priesthoods appeal to the Pharaoh to resolve the conflict quickly. The priesthoods both want prominent positions in power, the Anhurites are prepared to bring open war to Horus-Re's church to gain the position of Vizier, and the Church of Horus-Re threatens to throw the government into chaos if they lose the position.
- The Pharaoh appoints two viziers in place of Rezim; Mardikan the priest of Horus-Re and Horamsin of Anhur, to help him rule Mulhorand. Both viziers begin attempting to outperform the other in an attempt to oust their opponent and become sole vizier.
The chaos resulting from this conflict and the previous reliance on government on the priesthood of Horus-Re means the new Pharaoh appoints educated slaves to deal with the administrative work in local and central government (slaves that are sympathetic to Set thanks to that church's earlier efforts in buying and educating slaves).
- **1363 DR Year of the Wyvern:** *Mirtul:* The armies of Mourktar march west across the plains of Threskel and besiege Mordulkin. Still weakened by its recent battles with Luthcheq and Unther, Mordulkin is forced to pay heavy tribute to the coffers of the Black Lord's Cloak to dissuade them from besieging the city.
- **1365 DR Year of the Sword:** The Thayan army marches on Emmech. Aglarondan griffon riders spot a second Thayan force moving toward the Shyvar Pass. Forces from Glarondar meet the southern Thayan army and force it back, then come around through the Tannath Gap and take the Thayans at Emmech from behind.
- Thay invades Rashemen from the east, while the Red Wizards melt glaciers in the Icerim Mountains, causing severe flooding in Immilmar and Mulsantir and the Endless Wastes. While the hathrans are distracted, the Thayan forces cross the foothills of the High Country but are driven back by angry elementals.

- *Tarsakh*: The Great Bone Wyrms of Dragonback Mountain, northernmost peak of the Riders to the Sky mountain range, is reportedly stirring. Several shepherds have reported rumblings from deep within the mountain's heart similar to those their parents heard before the fearsome dracolich emerged in the Year of the Lurking Death (1322 DR) to terrorize the region for one long summer.
- *Mirtul*: A hunting party of nobles from Mordulkin reports sighting dragons of all shapes and hues flying around Dragonback Mountain.
- *Kythorn*: Tchazzarites in Cimbar have hired the Red Morning; an adventuring company based in that city with an extremely formidable reputation, to destroy the Great Bone Wyrms, a historical rival of the Father of Chessenta. The band expects to return in two months time.
- *Elesias*: Expecting the Great Bone Wyrms Alasklerbanbastos dead, the armies of Chessenta march on Threskel from Luthcheq whilst navies leave from Cimbar and Soorenar.
- *Eleint*: Jaxanaedegor flies over the cities of Mourktar and Mordulkin proclaiming himself the Viceroy of Threskel. He then demands that the human Kings of both cities pay regular tribute to his liege, the Great Bone Wyrms, or be replaced with leaders more to the liking of the self-proclaimed Dragon King of Unther.
- *Eleint*: The leaders of Mourktar and Mordulkin ignore the commands at first, until Jaxanaedegor and several young red dragons attack the Drakelight, a nearly 800-foot-high lighthouse which stands at the north-eastern end of the Bay of Chessenta at the tip of the Watcher's Cape. The sole survivor, a soldier from Soorenar, reports that the dragons tore open the structure and devoured everyone inside. The red dragons remain at the lighthouse to operate the structure. Jaxanaedegor then proceeds to burn every ship in the bay of Chessenta including the navies sent from Cimbar and Soorenar.
- *Eleint*: Several red dragons heading towards Chessenta encounter the allied forces of Chessenta. The two forces engage and the dragons are destroyed but two thirds of the army is killed or injured and all the siege equipment is burned, the rest retreat home unable to complete the invasion.

- *Eleint*: An adult blue dragon called Fulmynargatrion descends on Luthcheq and proclaims the land now property of the Great Bone Wyrm. He makes his dwelling in the Karanok palace as Lord of Luthcheq.
- *Marpenoth*: Faromi, a priestess of Lathander, is the only surviving member of the Red Morning to return to Cimbar. She reports that the party was slaughtered by the dracolich they had hunted.
Sages in Mordulkin and Cimbar uncover records suggesting that the Great Bone Wyrm was once a great blue wyrm named Alasklerbanbastos (a-LASK-ler-ban-BAST-os) who contested with Tchazzar for control of what would become Chessenta.
Faromi reports to the Sceptanar of Cimbar and his court as well as the priests of Tchazzar that the skeletal dracolich was attended by several younger chromatic dragons of varying hues that seemed to be serving the Great Bone Wyrm. In addition, she mentions that numerous human followers in the garb of the Cult of the Dragon guarded the lair and attended to the dracolich's draconic courtiers.
- *Uktar*: The remaining Karanoks dwelling under the city of Luthcheq destroy the blue dragon Lord of Luthcheq. They secretly have the servants feed him large quantities of witchweed which burns in his stomach and kills him slowly and painfully. The Karanoks then emerge as saviours of the city and begin open rule once more.
- *Nightal*: An old red dragon named Flamaertis attacks the walls of Messemparr demanding that they submit to the rule of the Great Bone Wyrm, king of Unther, Threskel, and Chessenta. The Northern Wizards blast the dragon with their combined magical might, forcing her to retreat
- **1366 DR Year of the Staff**: *Hammer*: Alasklerbanbastos begins negotiations with Messemparr; the Northern Wizards and also with Tiglath and her sect of the Church of the Dark Lady. In exchange for military access to Unther he agrees to leave Messemparr alone. He comes to an agreement of sorts with the Church of the Dark Lady and his dragons will rule Unther with the backing of the cult.
- *Eleint*: The Monograph of Nezas, a discourse on ancient elven and Netherese magics penned by the grand-nephew of Neznam "Worldwalker," is recovered

amidst the ruins of Myth Drannor by the Scions of Nezram, an Mulhorandi adventuring company. The Scions are last seen in Klondor, headed east.

The Scions of Nezram are a company composed primarily of wizards descended from Nezram and based in Nezas, on the eastern side of the Sword Mountains. Nezas resided in Myth Drannor for several decades prior to the fall of that fair city, and during his studies at the Six Tyryl Towers he learned something of the nature of the Quess` Ar` Teranthvar. The Monograph of Nezas is a treatise that discusses the results of Nezas's research into ancient elven and Netherese incantations, including an extensive discussion of the history and fate of the Nether Scrolls.

- **1367 DR Year of the Shield:** A major earthquake destroys much of Eltabbar in Thay as the Zulkir Szass Tam releases the demon lord Eltab from his centuries long imprisonment. Szass Tam realised Eltab would soon be free and deliberately released the demon lord which caused the earthquake. Eltab flees to a demoncyst beneath Thaymount and begins recovering his strength and subverting the servants of Szass Tam.
- The Simbul disappears from Aglarond for three months during the spring. Councillors begin to jockey for position, many hoping to be named the new ruler by acclamation. When the Simbul finally returns, she makes clear arrangements to notify the council in the event of her death.
- *Hammer:* This year sees daily celebrations in the city of Skuld marking its 3,500th anniversary as the oldest inhabited settlement on Faerûn.
- *Ches:* An emissary is received in the court of King Hercubes in Mordulkin. He proclaims the ascension of the Great Bone Wyrms to the title of Overking of Chessenta and demands a vow of fealty from the city-state and a tithe of 100,000 pieces of gold. The emissary's demands are rejected, and King Hercubes orders him imprisoned. Before the king's guards can capture the emissary, however, he transforms into a fairly young green dragon and flies off to the east.
- *Flamerule:* A flight of chromatic dragons attacks and destroys much of Mordulkin and its army. As much as a quarter of the citizenry is reported killed in the fighting. King Hercubes is slain in the battle, and the surviving members of the Jedea family flee into exile in Cimbar. An adult red dragon by the name

of Pyratyrmanix (PEER-a-tear-MAN-icks) proclaims himself Lord of Mordulkin and vassal of the Overking of Chessenta. Thus begins "The Flamerule" in that city.

Over the next several months, the surviving citizens of Mordulkin rebuild their city and most of the occupying dragons leave. Trade resumes, but a heavy tax imposed by the city's new dragon lord greatly hinders Mordulkin's economic recovery. Agents of the Cult of the Dragon assume most of the positions of authority within the city's bureaucracy.

- *Eleint*: Guyanothaz, a venerable red dragon long crippled by blindness, has apparently regained his sight and emerged from his centuries-long, self-imposed withdrawal from the outside world. Guyanothaz has been seen bathing and drinking in the Methmere, hunting in the Methwoods, and attacking caravans west of Thamon. After two weeks of stretching his wings, the dragon was last seen headed northwards along the coast of Unther in the direction of Thay.

The Church of the Dark Lady is responsible for Guyanothaz's cure and subsequent emergence. They have convinced the venerable wyrm to ally himself with their efforts to rule strife-torn Unther and to move its lair to the eminently more defensible island in the Alamber Sea known as the Ship of Gods. Guyanothaz now lairs with his quickly expanding hoard atop the ever-rumbling volcano that dominates the isle. In addition to the sizable treasury of wealth donated by the Church of the Dark Lady, the red dragon has quickly acquired additional riches by preying on shipping throughout the Alamber Sea and the Wizard's Reach. As of yet, no one suspects the Guyanothaz's role in the recent increase in disappearances of ships in the region, nor is anyone aware of the location of the dragon's new lair. The cult provides information on shipping routes and cargoes, focusing on vessels operated by their rivals for control of Unther.

Unbeknownst to Guyanothaz or the Church of the Dark Lady, during the Time of Troubles the avatar of Geb led a small army of his followers to the depths of the island volcano where they built a secret temple. Only through the unceasing efforts of the Gebites has the long-anticipated explosion of the volcano been averted. For now, the inhabitants of the Golden Forge continue their daily battle with the forces of the earth, but if Guyanothaz ever learns

of Gebites presence so close to his new lair, the resulting strife may hinder their efforts sufficiently that the Ship of Gods erupts in a shower of lava, reigning ash on the coast of Unther or Mulhorand.

- **1368 DR Year of the Banner:** High Blade Selfaril of Mulmaster is slain by his twin brother Rassendyll, who assumes his identity. The disguised Selfaril then marries the Tharchioness Dmitra Flass of Eltabbar, a Red Wizard. They have maintained a noticeable presence in the city ever since. (Dmitra is unaware that her husband has been replaced by Rassendyll, and this state of affairs is unlikely to change since she spends the majority of her time in Eltabbar.)
- The Red Wizards open an enclave in Phsant. The place is an instant hit with merchants up and down the Golden Way.
- They cause chaos in Rashemen by igniting the western portion of the Ashenwood, driving its fell creatures eastward into civilized areas. During the confusion, gangs of cutthroats teleport to Mulsantir and Immilmar to slay important Rashemi but are cut down by berserkers.
- They place enclaves in Cimbar, Phsant, Proskur, and Turlagol. The Zulkirs increase the production of magic items for export.
- The lich Velsharoon ascends to godhood with the sponsorship of the deity Talos.
- *Hammer:* Heralds simultaneously appear in the courts of Airspur, Akanax, Cimbar, Mordulkin, Mourktar, and Soorenar proclaiming the rule of Overking Gildenbone the Eternal, otherwise known as the Great Bone Wyrm. Immediately after each proclamation, the herald vanishes in a puff of golden smoke and a gleaming skeletal dragon is briefly seen in the skies overhead, gilt in the tribute of Mordulkin and Mourktar. Minions of the Great Bone Wyrm melted down the thousands of gold pieces seized from the cities of Threskel into a molten bath. The draconic Overking then immersed himself for a ten-day before he emerged plated in golden armour. In addition to appealing to the dracolich's vanity, the coat of gold improves his ability to withstand certain types of attacks and acts as a material component for several unique spells the Great Bone Wyrm has researched. Unseen by the inhabitants of Chessenta's cities, the dracolich has also embedded countless gems in his bony frame. Each jewel contains an

embedded incantation that can be triggered at will by the Great Bone Wyrn or is automatically released if shattered by an attacker.

- *Hammer:* An ancient blue dragon, Storum'aelix, the Suzerain of the Old Empires, with scales as black as night, flies over Unthalass landing in the ruins of Gilgeam's palace. He proclaims himself Lord of the city and all must submit to the rule of the Overking of Unther, the Great Bone Wyrn. The dragon proceeds to devour the followers of Zimrilim in the Port District (secretly Zimrilim is kept alive in the maw of the beast and later delivered to Alasklerbanbastos). Shudu-Ab allies her church to the dragon and Alasklerbanbastos. Furifax reluctantly also allies his men with the dragon but is concerned by the recent turn of events. The dragon rules Unthalass uncontested until the arrival of Mulhorand's army.

The city returns to a semblance of normality with a government of sorts established (with the Church of the Dark Lady holding all the positions), and Furifax and Shudu-Ab advising the dragon on various matters. People begin to return to the city even though it is run by a Dragon King; it is still safer than the anarchy of the countryside.

- *Hammer:* The priesthood of Anhur dispatch a ship to recover the Beacon of Light from the Pirate Isles. Co vizier Mardikan uses his agents to alert the privateers, The Wraith of the Inner Sea, to intercept the ship, recover its cargo and kill all onboard.
- *Alturiak:* The Sceptanar invites the leaders of Chessenta's autonomous city-states to Cimbar to discuss the looming threat of the Great Bone Wyrn and his minions. The conference quickly breaks down into bickering along traditional fault lines between the cities over who should lead the nascent alliance, despite the Sceptanar's offer to withdraw himself from consideration. In the end one of the attendees to the leaders informs them all that Alasklerbanbastos is the rightful ruler of Chessenta and brandishing the original Sceptre of Cimbar (fashioned by Tchazzar and possessed for the past two hundred years by Alasklerbanbastos), he proceeds to polymorph into the form of an old black dracolich and devours the Sceptanar whole. Rancroriglomous then proclaims himself Viceroy of Chessenta.
- *Kythorn:* The Golden Osprey is wrecked on the rocky coastal shore of Mount

Thulbane while fleeing the Wraith of the Inner Sea. Several members of the Osprey's crew survived the sinking and made their way to Mourktar. Reportedly the ship's officers were Mulhorandi priests of Anhur who had successfully recovered a long-lost artefact known as the Beacon of Light from the Pirate Isles. The fate of the artefact and the rest of the ship's cargo is unknown, but other ships report seeing unusual sahuagin activity in the area shortly thereafter.

The Beacon of Light now rests in the treasury of Kromes, Tyrant of Vahaxtyl. Vahaxtyl is the largest city of the sahuagin in the Kingdom of Aleaxtis, located on the floor of the Alamber Sea. The priesthood of Anhur will spare no effort to find and recover the artefact for which they have long searched. However, Kromes has no intention of allowing the Anhurites to recover the Beacon as the sahuagin tyrant is still smarting from the defeat of his forces in the Battle of Summer Storms.

- *Uktar*: The harvest in Chessenta, particularly in the Akanul, has been so great this year that heavily laden ships are plying the Sea of Fallen Stars to sell root vegetables at bargain prices. A rare cross-Shaar caravan led by the Sailors of the Crimson Sea (a land-based mercenary company) is attempting to bring the plenty to markets in the Lake of Steam ports. Brigands have attacked this caravan several times, but it is so large that its outriders mass into a small army, and their swords and spells have driven the attackers back with heavy losses. Farmers across Faerûn are warned that carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, potatoes, and the like will bring only a copper a basket or less in any land easily reached by ship or wagon.
- **1369 DR Year of the Gauntlet: The Twelfth Serôs War:** Iakhovas, He Who Swims with Sekolah, instigator of the Twelfth Serôs war, shatters a large section of the Sharksbane Wall. The explosion destroys the sea elf city of Akhanmyr, seat of those who defended the Wall against the sahuagin, and breaches the Wall, freeing the sea devils so long penned east of it to swim west, marauding in the rest of the Inner Sea.
- *Mirtul*: Guyanothaz during remodelling of his new lair discovers a tunnel leading deeper into the volcano; home to some rather tasty humans.

- *Flamerule:* The Island known as the Ship of the Gods explodes. Tidal waves swamp Alaor and Bezantur, causing much destruction. The volcano south of Aleaxtis rumbles and erupts; aquatic earthquakes open fissures along the floor of the Alamber and allow the volcano to expend much of its force and lava along the sea floor. The magma flow both destroys the capital of Vahaxtyl and more than half of the upper hierarchy of the sahuagin kingdom of Aleaxtis, including the king.

The fissures collapse much of the city into the newly opened trenches before the explosion of steam and magma escaping from these fissures destroy the buildings, and then expel the contents out into the inner sea. The more durable items such as the Beacon of Light, kept in Vahaxtyl, survive and are carried away on the tide not buried in magma as most assume.

Guyanothaz is partially blinded by the poisonous searing volcanic gas that shoots through his lair and he quickly flies away to the only place he feels safe (his old lair), the damage to his eyes is irreparable and over time his eyesight fails once again.

- *Flamerule:* Within three days, sahuagin attack Bezantur and wreak havoc on the storm- and wave-damaged city, stealing many magical items. On the twenty-fifth day of the month, a great sub-sea explosion shakes rooftops in Airspur and Delthuntle and the resulting waves cause damage to the docks of their small ports. In addition, several large chunks of coral-encrusted stone fall onto notable buildings in Delthuntle, killing 30 people
- *Flamerule:* The tsunami that spreads from the volcanic explosion damages Thay, Mulhorand and Unther. Shussel is spared from the destructive force of the waves because of its proximity to the island, instead the superheated steam and poisonous gases released from the volcano kill a third of the population but leave the city intact. Unthalass is likewise spared from the worst effects of the wave thanks to the geography of the coastline; the Port district in Unthalass is still heavily damaged however.
- *Flamerule:* The fishing village of Red Haven is wiped from the face of Faerûn with no survivors and few buildings left.
- *Flamerule:* Skuld is spared damage from tidal waves due to the actions of the Gebbite priests who diverted the power of the eruption into the sea bed and

channelled its power away from Skuld. What little tidal waves reach Skuld are easily deflected by the low sea wall around the city harbour.

- *Flamerule:* Caught completely unprepared the sprawl of Gheldaneth is damaged greatly by the tidal wave as it washes through the slums of the city. The University of Thoth is badly damaged and many of the priesthood washed away. The remaining clergy of Thoth are the minority sect who wish to rebuild Mulhorand's technical expertise and they come to dominate the priesthood from now on leading to a revival in repairing of old technology and innovation in new technologies.
- *Flamerule:* Neldorild is also damaged by the tidal waves that hit the coast but with much more large and solid architecture to absorb the force less people are killed and much more of the city remains intact.
- *Flamerule:* The settlement of Sampranasz is again destroyed by a natural disaster (the tsunami) dispersing the survivors of the Church of Set.
- *Flamerule:* Earthquakes rock the more inland areas as the fissures and explosions from the Ship of the Gods disrupt the land around the Alamber Sea. These quakes awaken the avatar of Nanna-Sin from his tomb in the Riders to the Sky Mountains.

The avatar of Nanna-Sin barely a Demi Power now with no worshippers, stretches out his mind looking for someone deserving and in need to reach out to, he finds the Lord Gudea praying for help to unite and save Unther and its people. Nanna-Sin speaks to him in visions asking him to come find him.

- *Flamerule:* Lord Gudea sets off on a pilgrimage to the Riders of the Sky Mountains, leaving his army to guard Ssintar for his return.
- *Elesias:* During rebuilding work in Sampranasz in the aftermath of the tsunami, shrines and items are found indicating Set worshippers were present in the town. The Brotherhood of Skuld, led by Halcaunt are authorised to root out Set's evil in Mulhorand.
- *Eleint:* Mulhorand's Church of Horus-Re (organised by Vizier Mardikan) using Chessentan mercenaries invades and occupies the wrecked shipyards and ports of the Alaor. Aside from the Mulhorandi tents and makeshift encampments, the only buildings still extant on the Alaor are the House of Holy Tides, a

temple to Ishtishia and the village around it, which the priests protected from harm.

Unbeknownst to Mardikan and the Church of Horus-Re, the Chessentan mercenaries have loyalty to the Church of Anhur and are under orders to abandon their posts and return to Skuld when given the command.

- *Eleint*: The Brotherhood of Skuld tracks down a group of surviving Set worshippers who have taken up residence in Sekras. A series of battles begins between the Brotherhood, the Cult of Sebek in Sekras and the surviving worshippers of Set. During the purging of Sekras, Halcaunt is infected by a werecrocodile, but discovers the involvement of the precept of Sampranasz; Sanuet, in the Church of Set.
- *Marpenoth*: Lord Gudea returns from the mountains with a man at his side. The man is dressed in ancient tattered robes and never speaks. Lord Gudea declares to his men that they must unite Unther and safeguard its people from evils within and without. The army of Lord Gudea prepares to march on Shussel.
- *Marpenoth*: The Brotherhood of Skuld is killed almost to a man in the ruins of Sekras. Halcaunt survives and returns to Skuld to implicate Sanuet in his involvement with the Church of Set. The government administrators had destroyed all evidence of Sanuet's involvement in the Church of Set, and without any evidence the claims are deemed false. In response both Halcaunt and Sanuet duel for their respective honours. During the duel Halcaunt transforms into a werecrocodile and is destroyed by the witnessing priesthood as a worshipper of Sebek.

Sanuet is completely exonerated of all charges and allowed to resume his precept.

- **1370 DR Year of the Tankard**: Trade between the sea folk of the Sea of Fallen Stars and ports along the Inner Sea increases sharply in the aftermath of a great undersea war.
- Although the Red Wizards withdraw from the UMBER Marshes, the battle is not over. As autumn falls, undead creatures trapped in the swamp claw their way out of the thickening muck. Without the leadership of the Thayans, they wander about aimlessly to this day, hurling themselves upon the Watchwall.

- They attempt to invade Rashemen by crossing Lake Mulsantir on magically crafted boats, but a storm created by the hathrans dashes the Thayan vessels against the southern shore.
- First undersea conflicts with surface-world people occur as Thayan wizards hunt the deep for the forces responsible for the damage to their city of Bezantur. They seek Iakhovas and believe anything undersea that does not help them must be harbouring the enemy.
- They set up enclaves in Westgate and Selgaunt.
- The deity Velsharoon shifts his allegiance from Talos to Azuth and is shielded from the Destroyer's wrath by the deities Azuth and Mystra.
- *Alturiak*: A bright flash in the central peaks of the Sword Mountains is observed by thousands in the Great Vale on the seventh day of this month, but the origin is obscured by unusually dense and persistent cloud cover. A hastily organized expedition is dispatched by the clergy of Anhur to investigate. When the expedition arrives at the site, they discover that the top of Mount Nezram has been sheared off cleanly and the peak now hovers, upside down, a thousand feet above its original location. Extensive and ongoing construction atop the floating island is visible through the obscuring clouds. On a hunch, the commander of the expedition dispatches a smaller team to investigate the status of the nearby community of Nezas. The team reports that the settlement of Nezasmites (descendants of Nezas 'Worldwalker') has been completely abandoned, apparently within the past few weeks. Two days later, the unnatural cloud cover abruptly dissipates to reveal a city of gleaming spires atop the inverted pinnacle. Shortly thereafter, the floating citadel flies off towards the moon and is never seen again. Nezas's descendants, many of whom are skilled practitioners in the Art, have succeeded in recreating some of the long-lost spells of the Netherese. The crowning achievement of that work is the creation of a floating city reminiscent of ancient Netheril. As the floating cities of Netheril are said to have done millennia ago, the newly raised city of High Nezas and its inhabitants have set off to the upper reaches of Toril's atmosphere from which their spelljammers can explore Realmspace and the crystal spheres.

- *Ches:* Lord Gudea's army marches on Shussel and Lord Ekur mobilises his army to meet it, the two armies meet in the Battle of Lost Lords. Lord Ekur's men; mostly Chessentan mercenaries, outnumber Lord Gudea's and are better trained and equipped. With the silent man at his side, Lord Gudea's armies seem untouchable in battle, arrows bounce off shields and armour, blades blunt and snap upon contact. The Chessentan mercenaries quickly rout upon seeing this magic and Lord Ekur flees back to Shussel.
- *Tarsakh:* Lord Gudea and his army march into Shussel unopposed, hailed as liberators by the population; Lord Ekur is seen hanging from the walls as the army approaches.
- *Tarsakh:* A second expedition to the Sword Mountains is mounted by the clerics of Thoth and Isis to explore the abandoned village of Nezras. The company reaches the Lonely Lake Oasis without incident, but is then attacked and nearly wiped out by a great brown wyrm which erupts from the Plains of Purple Dust. The two survivors of the ill-fated expedition report that the great dragon has apparently claimed the site as its lair and the Sword Mountains and western Plains of Purple Dust as its domain. Scholars in Gheldaneth speculate that the great wyrm is female by the name of Wastumberkari (wa-STUM-ber-KAR-ee) and that she may have also laid claim to the hoard of her ancient foe Gestanius, the great blue wyrm slain by Tchazzar during the Time of Troubles.
- *Kythorn:* The Beacon of Light washes up on the shores of Shussel and is picked up by Lord Gudea walking with the silent man. Lord Gudea and the silent man quickly return to Shussel to begin a ritual involving the ancient artefact.
- *Uktar:* A mist descends upon the town of Shussel and transports the army of Unther and Lord Gudea along with 90 percent of remaining population of Shussel to Zigguraxis where they are transformed into Aasimar and trained in the arts of war by the god Nanna-Sin himself.
- *Uktar:* Thay amasses what forces it can and strikes out to secure the Alaor, undead walk underwater, while hastily mustered trade ships carrying gnolls, and orcs are sailed to the island.

- *Uktar*: Hearing of the disappearance of the last remnants of Unther's army, the Church of Anhur orders the return home of all its loyal forces on the Alaor.

Without an army to defend the Alaor, the Church of Horus-Re retreats in disgrace and loses any last traces of respect the people of Mulhorand had for it. The dominance of the Church of Horus-Re on the life of Mulhorand is over as its people embrace the other churches, especially Anhur, and hope for a bright future.

- **1371 DR Year of the Unstrung Harp**: The Zulkirs of Thay, tired of incessant battles with Aglarond, offer peace. The Simbul accepts with reservations.
- The Third Mulhorandi Empire begins.
- Thydrim Yvarrg, Iron Lord of Rashemen, is slain by a Thayan assassin. Rather than raising him from the dead, the witches opt to replace him with Volas Dyervolk, whom they feel will chafe less under their guidance.
- The Red Wizards begin to funnel gold and magic into Unther to oppose the Mulhorandi conquest.
- The Red Wizards of Thay erect a small enclave in the city of Hill's Edge in the Western Heartlands. The enclave thrives and so does Hill's Edge
- *Tarsakh*: The armies of Mulhorand invade Unther; marching through the Greenfields they turn the bread basket of Unther to mud.
- *Tarsakh*: The armies of Mulhorand are met by the forces of Storum'aelix, the Dragon King of Unthalass and Suzerain of the Old Empires, his armies filled with cultists from the Church of the Dark Lady (the bandit lord Furifax takes this opportunity to retreat with his men into the interior of Unther).

After several skirmishes the forces of Unther are routed. The Dragon King then sends a flight of dragons to attack the invaders. Mulhorand suffers many casualties before Anhur sends an avatar to the field and slays several of the dragons, causing the others to flee.

The army of Mulhorand continues its march across the Greenfields churning the now burnt crops to mud. They quickly occupy Firetrees and force the Cult of Tiamat troops to retreat further to Unthalass.

Mulhorand troops besiege Unthalass for the rest of the year but are unable to gain entry to the city thanks to the dragon defending it and the forces of the Church of the Dark Lady.

- **1372 DR Year of Wild Magic:** Yellow Snake Pass in the Western Heartlands is cleared of snakes and Zhentarim patrols by the Red Wizards of Thay and mercenaries from Hills Edge. Yellow Snake Pass becomes free to use.
- *Ches 24:* Khalia, a Thayan emissary, approaches Mulsantir under the flag of peace and asks permission to create an enclave. She is refused but allowed to leave safely. The return of Bane puts the hathrans on alert for any news of Banite activity in the area.
- *Feast of the Moon:* Volcanic eruptions in the Smoking Mountains bury the Citadel of Black Ash under lava and kill almost everyone inside.
- *Ches:* Maladraedior leaves the town of Dalath for some demonstrations to his young dragon pupils. Upon hearing of the latest news from the townsfolk of Dalath (upon whom he was performing the demonstrations on the finer points of magical theory), he flies to Unthalass immediately to confront the ancient foe he fought over 2,600 years ago above Dalath. With a flourish of magical power he pins the great blue wyrm in place and tears its head from its neck in one bite as he flies past.
- *Ches:* The army of Mulhorand overwhelms the remaining defenders of Unthalass and Shudu-Ab is missing presumed dead. The surviving cultists of Tiamat retreat once again to the catacombs below Unthalass.
- The armies of Mulhorand leave behind a detachment to fortify and rebuild Unthalass, commanded by Lord Khemenhet, servant of Horus-Re, as interim Precept of Unthalass (the position is an insult since he will not be able to participate in the conquest of Unther). Lord Khemenhet uses his slave auxiliaries to set up a government and administration of sorts. These slaves are of course full of Set sympathisers.
- *Elesias:* The army of Mulhorand marches on Shussel and easily enters the undefended and almost totally deserted settlement.
- **1373 DR Year of Rogue Dragons:**
- *Ches 3:* Freed by Alasklerbanbastos and given the Ankh of Life, Zimrilim uses

the artefact to animate the corpse of Gilgeam that lay at the bottom of the Pit of Many Colours in Unthalass.

- During investigations into the Palace District, the Mulhorandi forces discover a tomb robber attempting to leave the Ziggurat of Eternal Victory. On his body (after they executed him on the spot) they discover a book containing bronze plates which details the life of Gilgeam (from his perspective). This entry of his memoirs indicates that aspects of Gilgeam may survive, imprisoned by the God-King himself. The information is leaked by the Setities to undesirables in Unther who hope to destabilise the occupation.
- Loyal Gilgeamites, adventurers, and the Church of the Dark Lady begin searching all of Unther's historic territory for the remaining aspects of Gilgeam.
- *Tarsakh*: The army of Mulhorand occupies Ssintar.
- *Kythorn 3*: Adventurers aided by Zulkir Szass Tam, unwittingly release Eltab from his imprisonment beneath the Thaymount. In defeat, Eltab is magically transported to the Citadel of Conjurers in Impiltur by ancient bindings cast upon him by wizards of Narfell over one thousand years ago.
- *Flamerule*: The army of Mulhorand occupies Dalath. Maladraedior and his brood of students are absent from the city having vacated their lair for that of the Suzerain of the Old Empires whom he eliminated in Unthalass in the previous year. Maladraedior reclaims his title of Suzerain of the Old Empires and uses this opportunity to spread the teachings of Kereska to his subjects.
- *Nightal 1*: In honour of his majesty the Great Bone Wyrm, the cities of Chessenta hold a mock naval battle at dusk in the Bay of Chessenta (most of the ships are from Cimbar and Soorenar, the others lacking a credible navy of any kind). Suddenly in the sky over the Bay of Chessenta appears a great red wyrm of immense size (Tchazzar). He quickly destroys all ships in the bay. Upon sensing the return of his old foe Tchazzar, Alasklerbanbastos sends his vassal dragon lords to attack him immediately in a show of force. Pyratyrmanix and Jaxanaedegor lead their flights of dragons and attack Tchazzar in a massive aerial battle above the Bay of Chessenta.

Tchazzar easily destroys the dragons and dracoliches arrayed against him (the dracoliches and Jaxanaedegor survive because of their phylacteries or gaseous form abilities), he then flies to Cimbar and installs himself as Sceptanar of Cimbar and King of Chessenta.

- *Nightal 28*: Tchazzar appears in the skies above Cimbar in Chessenta and swiftly overpowers its defenders, installing himself in the Palace of the Sceptenar and establishing his absolute rule over the city. Gestanius and Skuthosiin also reappear elsewhere for reasons unknown, perhaps returned by Tchazzar, perhaps by Tiamat.

1374 DR Year of Lightning Storms: Shussel-folk who disappeared from their city in the mysterious event known as the Vanishing have reappeared in Shussel as the Legion of Nanna-Sin. According to reports, the Shussel-folk were taken to the "lost" plane of Zigguraxus by Nanna-Sin, transformed into aasimar, and trained as elite warriors. Now the Legion has returned, opening a new front against the rear flank of Mulhorand's forward armies.

- Faerûn is beset by great lightning strikes the length and breadth of the continent. At least some of those lightning strikes mark the impact points of an unusual year-long rain of meteors. In a series of visions, Bahamut and Tiamat instruct their respective followers to seek out such sites, for each contains some form of draconic egg within.
- *Mirtul 9*: The Red Wizards [1371] open a merchant enclave in Kourmira [1369], a Tuigan city in the Endless Wastes.
- *Hammer*: Banite templars of the Black Lord's Altar in Mourktar march forth to the defence of Messemparr, reinforcing the besieged defenders of that city. Early successes by the Banites are attributed to a massive influx of magical weaponry from Thay, sold to the Church of Bane at cut-rate prices.
- *Tarsakh*: The army of Mulhorand reaches the borders of Free Unther near the city of Messemparr.
- *Tarsakh*: The Legion of Nanna-Sin appears behind the army of Mulhorand, cutting them off from their supply lines. They are quickly joined by Ningal and the Rebels of the Moon who recognises in the Legion a force for good dedicated to preserving Unther.

- *Tarsakh*: The Northern Wizards seeking further allies make contact with The Magus Society in Luthcheq. Therescapes of the Magus Society informs the Karanoks of the meeting between the two wizards.

The Magus Society and Shurlash; leader of the Northern Wizards are executed. Therescapes is also executed along with the Magus Society.

- *Flamerule*: Isimud teleports to Messemprar and appears to the remnants of the Northern Wizards as a friend and ally. Isimud is quickly voted in as leader of the Northern Wizards by its members.
- *Eleint*: Enlil returns to the Untheric Pantheon amid a huge lightning storm. The warring armies of Mulhorand and the remains of Unther cease fighting as the returning gods of Unther and Mulhorand speak to their people.
- The ancient truce between Unther and Mulhorand is restored and the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons merge into one.

Deities With a Difference: Set

Lord of Evil, Defiler of the Dead, Lord of Carrion, Father of Jackals, Brother of Serpents, Outcast of the Gods, King of Malice

Intermediate Power of Heliopolis (LE)

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

Set is the primary god of evil in the Mulhorandi (and later Mulhorandi-Untheric) pantheon and has always been the black sheep of that family of gods. Set is the brother of Osiris and entered Toril as a demi-power of Ambition, Darkness, Evil and Evil Magic.

For a long time Set plotted how he might supplant the other gods of Mulhorand and become ruler of the Mulhorandi pantheon. All the other gods did their best to keep him out of the way so that he couldn't do much damage to Mulhorand or its people.

History

After centuries spent on the outskirts, ignored and outcast by the deities and society of Mulhorand, Set's big break came around -1500 DR when he was appointed Divine Precept of the Priador Plateau.

Such an appointment was actually a disguised punishment. Set was supposed to be kept so busy running the newly settled province and taking advantage of its wealth that he would be unable to pursue his plots against the rest of Mulhorand.

Instead Set discovered an ancient ruin atop the Thaymount that was built by the Okothian Sarrukh. In the depths of that ruin he found an avatar of an ancient sarrukh god named M'daess who had been left there as a guardian of the secrets of the Okothian sarrukh and was now all that remained of that deity. After a long battle he defeated M'daess' avatar who then became a part of Set. From this he gained power over Snakes and Poison and was fundamentally changed into something more inhuman, almost reptilian in nature.

Set also gained a renewed thirst for power and a desire to destroy the Mulhorandi Empire. He now spent even more time plotting the downfall of the Mulhorandi gods, as well as searching for other divine beings to absorb so that he might increase his power.

In the chambers of The Citadel, Set discovered the pieces of a gigantic portal ring that could be used to open a gateway to another world. With this artefact he hoped to destroy Mulhorand so that he could rebuild it anew.

Set allowed mage cabals to form in his province that were not friendly to Mulhorand, he provided them with funds and magic from The Citadel. He then manipulated them into open rebellion. Set knew the uprising would be a failure but his plan was not to have the wizards succeed, his plan was to draw the armies of Mulhorand to the Priador Plateau.

After the uprising was quelled, much of the army remained, just as Set had hoped. Set then opened the gate to a world filled with orcs and their gods. Countless orcs poured through the gate and annihilated the armies of Mulhorand as Set fled in secret.

It was several years before Mulhorand could organise itself and its allies to march back into the Priador and battle the orcs that had fortified themselves therein. Set's plan worked even better than he could have hoped and on that day Ra was killed by the orc god Gruumsh, along with a score of Akanic and Untheric deities.

Set watched in safety from an ancient tower in the Raurin desert. His next move was to marshal his forces in preparation to take Ra's place. In the meantime he even found and absorbed an ancient and powerful creature, unleashed by the Imaskari long ago, known as the Skriaxit, giving him power over Desert Storms, Darkness, and Drought.

In the aftermath of the Orcgate Wars, Horus was infused with the essence of Ra, who nominated Horus as his heir. For a time Horus-Re could not handle the massive influx of power and was behaving erratically because of Ra's personality overwhelming his own.

Set used this confusion to whisper to his brother that someone needed to take control of Mulhorand until Horus-Re could control himself. Osiris succumbed to the manipulation and fought the confused Horus-Re into submission with Set watching in the background and the other deities looking on in horror.

Then Set struck with his two pronged, fanged dagger coated with a poison more deadly than any known before. The blade plunged into Osiris and slew the deity in an instant.

From that act Set also gained power over Murder, Betrayal, and Destruction. Installing himself as the God-King of Mulhorand and for a few days he reigned supreme. Unknown to Set however Horus-Re was slowly regaining control of himself, and Nephthys travelled to the graveyard of the gods in the Astral Plane and gave of herself to restore Osiris to life.

Horus-Re, Osiris, and the rest of the Mulhorandi pantheon retaliated against Set and forced him to flee. From that day forward Set was forever an exile of Mulhorand existing only in the shadows, his places of worship were torn down and his worshippers put to the sword.

Still that minor setback has not stopped Set from plotting. An influx of beast cults into Mulhorand from the Endless Wastes to the north in -240 DR allowed Set to add a few more portfolios to his name. From these semi-divine beings he gained power over Predators, Carrion-Eaters, Rot and Destruction as he sent his own avatar to find and consume these demi-powers.

His latest schemes have centred around regaining control of his ancient province of the Priador Plateau, now known as Thay. Set hopes to use this land as a platform to launch attacks against decadent Mulhorand.

His first attempt at regaining Thay began shortly after Mulhorand re-settled Thay (following the Great Conflagration between Narfell and Raumathar) sometime after 148 DR when the last of the fiends from that conflict were scoured from the plateau by the combined might of the summoned avatars of the Mulhorandi gods.

Set's agents (who were all powerful and evil magic users) fostered a culture of hatred towards the Mulhorandi and their strict controls over users of The Art. This anti-establishment feeling eventually resulted in open rebellion in 922 DR just as Set had hoped. Unfortunately for Set there were other players involved in Thay and their power groups eventually secured control over what form of government Thay should have.

Set's agents were kept out of the Zulkirate that now ruled Thay. Set was angered and used his agents to foster another rebellion, this time against the rulers of Thay, they forged a coalition of the leading churches in Thay that were also marginalised and attempted to bring down the Zulkirate or force them to allow the churches to have more of a role in government.

The attempt ultimately failed and Set's agents were greatly reduced in number. Furthermore, anti-religious feeling in Thay was rife among the rulers of Thay and this led to strict controls over the churches. Open worship of Mystra was banned altogether for her church was seen as the instigator of the rebellion.

For centuries Set plotted a way to get his agents back into Thay in force. Recent delvings into The Citadel on Thaymount presented an opportunity when the Zulkir of Divination and a previous Tharchion of Thaymount stumbled upon the avatar of Mdaess that was now an alias of Set himself. Set used this avatar to dominate the minds of these two and their attendants and convert them to worship of Set.

All Zulkirs are merely puppets for the secret cabals that elevate them into power and help them attain the position of Zulkir. So through Yaphyll; the Zulkir of Divination, Set gained access to a secret cabal of mages and to considerable resources. He has slowly converted most of the cabal members to veneration of himself and has reformed the Brotherhood of the Divine in Thay.

Set now intends to throw the full weight of his cabal behind the strongest Zulkir of Thay (Szass Tam) in order that Thay might become ruled by a single wizard who can then be converted to worship of Set at a later date or if he will not, he can be killed and replaced by someone who does worship Set.

Relationships

Set has a working relationship with Sebek. Following Set's transformation into a reptilian being and his then failed attempt to gain the throne of Mulhorand, Set was outcast from the Mulhorandi pantheon and his worship was forced underground. Sebek had suffered similar treatment ever since he ascended to godhood and joined the Untheric pantheon. The deities therefore came to an agreement where their respective churches would cooperate and pool resources wherever they deemed appropriate.

Thanks to this agreement, Set's worship has survived in hiding in many of Sebek's places of worship where his priesthood sheltered until the latest bout of Setite purges died down.

More recently with the events in Unther and the merging of the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons, Set has found new potential allies in his battle to destroy the Mulhorandi gods. Tiamat has been receptive to a similar alliance and pooling of

resources as she likewise seeks to topple the establishment (although she has no intention of letting Set take charge in the aftermath). Gilgeam is also proving a useful tool despite his insanity.

Set has learned that by whispering suggestions in the mad god's ear, he can masquerade as Gilgeam's subconscious and influence his current train of thought. Success is not guaranteed, but the lunatic, juggernaut of destruction is usually only useful for one thing and most of his thoughts end up with something being attacked.

Set's relationship with the rest of the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheon is one of open hostility and abject hatred. He feels they have persecuted and ignored him for too long and that all the power in Mulhorand rightly belongs to him. He will never stop attempting to destroy Mulhorand and the other deities and he will do anything to achieve his aims.

Avatar

Set originally appeared upon Toril in his avatar form as a 10 ft tall muscular man of Mulan descent that was capable of wielding devastatingly powerful, evil magics and frequently carried a two pronged dagger.

Now his avatar form is somewhat different from its origins. From his first deific conquest, Mdaess, Set gained a very finely scaled skin, forked tongue, and snake-like eyes; he also gained immunity to all poisons of any kind.

Following his battle with the Skriaxit, Set's skin darkened to an almost black hue which disguises his scales very well (although they were so fine as to be almost invisible anyway). Set also gained control over Darkness and so can cause shadows and darkness to spread into areas of light where it should not be present (thus blocking the light to see him), although he cannot create shadow and darkness out of nothing.

Finally Set wears a helm shaped in the form of a jackal that disguises his unusual facial features (tongue and eyes). This change occurred following the influx of beast cults into Mulhorand around -240 DR.

The beast cults worshipped powerful creatures that resembled animals or monsters; they were forced into the northern provinces of Mulhorand by the Suren that had invaded their homelands. They refused to worship the Mulhorandi deities and so the Empire of Mulhorand declared war upon them. Anhur's church led the charge in fighting the cultists but their members just dispersed into the wilderness and proved

difficult to locate, or they summoned the beings they worshipped to their side to battle the Mulhorandi.

Bast was the first to encounter the avatar of one of these quasi-powers and she merged with the one called Felidae the cat. Felidae's worshippers initially refused to believe what had occurred and so Bast took to appearing with the head of a feline to appease these new potential worshippers who in time worshipped Bast as Felidae.

The idea quickly caught on and a number of other Mulhorandi gods sought out and merged with or conquered these quasi divine beings that the beast cults idolised so that they might gain more divine power. Horus-Re for instance battled an enormous hawk over Murghôm while Set sought out and devoured the jackal Typhon.

The animal head regalia appealed to the Mulan people of Mulhorandi and it entered popular culture and religious worship ensuring that certain gods of Mulhorand would forever be depicted with animal heads.

From that moment on Set was represented as wearing the jackal head of Typhon the Jackal who he is famous for battling in the Raurin desert and from whom he gained power over Predators, Carrion, and Rot. Certainly some of the Mulhorandi powers were changed far more profoundly than others that just took to wearing animal heads.

Set also has the ability to transform into a colossal sized snake with poison and constricting abilities but he uses this ability seldom.

Relics

Over the years Set has acquired many relics and artefacts, the most famous being his dagger.

The Fangs of Set: This magical two pronged dagger is sized for Set's avatar form and so is usable as a shortsword by any normal human. The dagger is the inspiration for the name of the organisation also known as The Fangs of Set.

This dagger is currently in the care of Seti; the Chosen (Incarnation) of Set, and leader and creator of the organisation that bears its name.

The dagger is coated with an adaptable poison that immediately targets the victim's lowest ability score thereby ensuring the quickest death. The poison is especially potent and fast acting and most victims succumb within a matter of seconds.

This was the dagger used to kill Pharaoh Akonhorus II, and it is capable of

teleporting to the hand of the Chosen of Set upon his command as long as it is on the same plane of existence.

The Orcgate: This gigantic gold ring was over 100 ft in diameter when constructed. It was made by the Okothian sarrukh with the express purpose of transporting their entire people and civilisation across the planes.

It was left behind on Toril with an avatar of the god M'daess who dismantled it and stored its pieces in the most remote and defensible structure of Okoth that was left, the fortress now known as The Citadel on Thaymount. There M'daess set her avatar to guard the Orcgate and the other secrets of the sarrukh, and slowly she withered away as her name was forgotten.

The Orcgate was discovered before -1076 DR by Set himself, who plundered The Citadel which then resided in his province of the Priador. Set learned how to assemble and use the gate and opened it to a world on another plane filled with highly advanced orcs that worshipped huge primordial orcish creatures (what Set didn't know was that he was opening the gate onto Toril's twin, the planet Abeir).

Orcs flooded Thay and slaughtered the Mulhorandi, it took several years before the God-Kings of the Mulan could marshal their forces and organise their allies to invade. The primordial orcs killed a number of the Mulan deities including Ra, and allowed Set to make his bid for power to rule Mulhorand.

The Orcgate was shattered by the combined might of the God-Kings, and the threat was neutralised, or so everyone thought. However the shattered pieces of the gigantic Orcgate were still powerful artefacts in their own right and when the Red Wizards of Thay found them scattered throughout their land they studied their potential.

Using the pieces of the old Orcgate, the Red Wizards managed to assemble hundreds of smaller portals by incorporating these pieces into existing portal mirrors that they had crafted. These portal mirrors were then all attuned to a single place many thousands of miles away in the Savage Frontier where a horde of Mountain Orcs was assembling.

The plan was to transport the Mountain Orcs from the Savage Frontier to Thay where they would interbreed with the resident Grey Orcs and reduced some of the more advanced tendencies of the Grey Orcs.

Unfortunately the weakened and unstable Orcgate pieces, combined with the vast numbers of orcs being transported and the great distance involved caused the portal mirrors (a man sized mirror that can display a reflection of anywhere in Faerûn, upon command a portal can be opened in the area displayed in the reflection) to shatter and the orcs being transported were shunted across Toril, mostly centred on Thay and the Old Empires, but thousands of orcs appeared across Faerûn and even on other continents (such as Laerakond).

What happened to the pieces of the Orcgate is unknown. The portal mirrors shattered and disintegrated, but no trace of the Orcgate pieces incorporated into them were found. It is possible that the Orcgate was attempting to reassemble itself during the transportation magic being used, and moments later a whole and fully functional Orcgate appeared at random in some remote part of Abeir-Toril just waiting to be discovered.

If this is true then it is possible that the remaining Okothian sarrukh would be very interested in obtaining this artefact so that it could return what remains of their people from the planes they have been travelling for so long (and also to send them to another place away from the Khaasta).

The Church of Set

The Church of Set is a loose, cell based organisation, which is necessary to keep the clergy secret and safe from the agents of the other God-Kings of Mulhorand.

Each cell is typically led by an intermediate level priest of Set who determines recruiting, funding, and even the religious practices of those beneath him. Because of this, each cell worships Set in their own particular way, many focusing on a specific aspect of his portfolio as the primary point of veneration.

The only truly uniting feature of each of these cells is the recognition that the Chosen of Set (the current chosen is Seti) is the high priest of the entire church and all are answerable to him.

Cell membership tends to be human, and involves a variety of skill sets, not just priests and other divine servants; rogues, warriors, and especially magic users all have a place in the Church of Set. Most prominent are those blessed with lycanthropy, the were-serpents, these beings hold the most powerful positions in a cell and it is not unknown for non priest were-serpents to become a cell leader.

The individual cells of the Church of Set used to be largely isolated and spread throughout Mulhorand with each barely aware of the existence of any other cells except those personally encountered.

The largest cell in recent history (the one run by Seti) was based in Sampranasz and quickly came to control the entire town by enticing the ruling Precept into its fold, following this event the local merchants were inducted into Set's worship and any opposition was lethally silenced.

Following Grand Vizier Rezim's decision to sell slaves directly to buyers rather than lease them, Seti instructed his cell members to purchase as many slaves as possible. The merchants banded together and purchased over a thousand slaves in the first batch. These slaves were educated to the highest standard and slowly indoctrinated into the worship of Set who was styled as a liberator and protector of slaves.

These slaves proved excellent administrative servants and were leased to local administrations across Mulhorand, more slaves were bought and educated with the profits. Following a period of civil strife when the churches of Horus-Re and Anhur threatened to tear the country apart vying for the position of Vizier, the Pharaoh sought to replace his reliance on the churches to administer the central government. He turned to independent slave owners to lease their slaves to him to be trained as administrators, the slaves of Sampranasz were found to be well suited to this role and more than half of the government positions were stocked with slaves from Sampranasz.

Now the Church of Set is becoming much more organised and interconnected. They use the government administrators to provide a communication network between the cells and also to provide intelligence and funding as well. The Church of Set has for the first time in its history begun to think about planning national campaigns of sabotage and rebellion rather than just local attacks.

Following the Mulhorandi invasion of Unther, the Church of Set has managed to infiltrate Unthalass and the rest of Unther using the Mulhorandi administration installed in Unthalass which again contained a large number of Set sympathisers.

Allies: The Hidden Scale is a secret organisation within the secret Church of Set. In 1362 DR a number of Set's clergy sought out (on the instructions of Seti) the sarrukh that had returned to Faerûn and were dwelling in the ruins of Okoth near Azulduth. They hoped to gain more allies and resources with which to combat the Mulhorandi

Empire.

Instead the were-serpents among the expedition were compelled to obey every command given by the sarrukh. This ability had long been possessed by the sarrukh and they used it to force obedience from their reptilian creations, only the sophisticated yuan-ti had ever acquired the ability to resist this and so the were-serpents were totally enslaved to the sarrukh's will.

These were-serpents were ordered to return to their cells and organise more pilgrimages to Azulduth, the expeditions were to include more of their lycanthropic brethren. Furthermore, the were-serpents were to infect certain key targets with lycanthropy so that they too could be commanded by the sarrukh.

Within 10 years The Hidden Scale was born. Within every cell of the Church of Set there exists at least one were-serpent beholden to the will of the sarrukh. In some of the larger cells, particularly the cell in Skuld, there is a sarrukh hidden within, beneath, or nearby the local government buildings and orders the were-serpents to carry out his bidding.

So far The Hidden Scale has eluded detection by the Mulhorandi and the Church of Set as it gathers intelligence and further infests the government of Mulhorand. They were nearly discovered in 1369 DR by Halcaunt and the Brotherhood of Skuld, but when Halcaunt challenged Sanuet to a duel in Sampranasz, a nearby sarrukh used his abilities to force a change of form in Halcaunt that revealed him as an infected were-crocodile. The Set sympathetic administrators then did the rest covering up Sanuet's misdeeds and making the incident look like a personal vendetta.

The Hidden Scale intends to infest the key positions of Mulhorand's government, using were-serpents, to get enough of its species into the government buildings and perform a secret coup. They can then use the Mulhorandi Empire to battle the Khaastas that pursue them.

Set is perfectly happy to let this turn of events occur, even at the expense of his own clergy. As the god of betrayal this is in accordance with his philosophy and indeed many of the Okothian sarrukh now worship him as well so he can still conquer the Mulhorandi Empire and pantheon even if it is through the sarrukh.

Laerakond: The Hundar Isles

The Hundar isles are an assorted group of islands that stretch out from the eastern edge of Laerakond (The Barrier Mountains) out into the Trackless Sea for thousands of miles.

These islands were a by-product of the shifting of Laerakond due to the Sundering ritual performed by the elves. While the vast majority of Laerakond in Abeir was moved across the ocean in an instant without anyone noticing, the far eastern edge of Laerakond cracked and fragmented leaving island peaks dotted throughout the waters of Abeir.

Over the millennia these mountainous islands were colonised by plants and animals and most crucially groups of humans seeking to escape the orcs (who are terrified of the ocean). The humans of Laerakond were called Darukurzym, meaning weak in orcish, although the fall of the orcs may have changed their outlook of the humans of Laerakond.

These humans set up small villages on the islands and blossomed without the dangers of being hunted by orcs like vermin. Living on the cold mountainous isles with few resources changed them into a blonde haired, war-like race that raided the mainland of Laerakond for wood, food, weapons, and treasure.

They persisted in this manner for thousands of years because the orcs were too afraid to come and get them and the dragon overlords were not bothered by a few humans stealing rothé and trees and killing the odd orc here and there.

This all changed around -3400 DR. Upon the twinned world of Toril a group of sea faring dwarves were planning their latest expedition of discovery into the Trackless Sea. The high priest of Marthammor Duin was using magic to search for signs of land in the far off ocean, when by happenstance he scried the place where Laerakond would reappear in three thousand years time.

This place was the centre of a rift in the fabric of space, time, and dimension that was created when the planet Abeir-Toril was halved and twinned to separate Laerakond and Faerûn. This rift had an immensely powerful antipathy curse on it that would force anyone nearing the rift to move away in the opposite direction, the curse could only be broken by someone passing through the rift which was impossible unless they had powers in excess of an over-god.

Unfortunately for the high priest his magic scried through the rift to Abeir and so was repelled by the antipathy effect towards Laerakond, he was driven mad by the constant feeling that he should be on the other side of the rift. This antipathy effect cursed the dwarf and made him a focus for it thus spreading the antipathy to those around him. Slowly over many years the dwarves of that kingdom all began to experience a great desire to leave Faerûn and sail across the sea to shores unknown, the desire was so great it drove them mad.

For many years they sailed across the oceans from island to island, sometimes staying for a time before they were drawn ever onwards by their madness. When they finally reached the rift and passed through it they broke the antipathy curse.

The dwarves emerged on Abeir in the depths of the ocean and continued their journey towards the promised land of their dreams. They first encountered the Hundar Isles and in their insane rage they slaughtered every inhabitant on them (including animals and trees). By this time the dwarves were mad beyond comparison, the only word they ever uttered was "Hundar", they refused to leave their stone ships that they moored on the beaches of the Hundar Isles, and they would only eat and drink items that came from the sea (they still retained the knowledge they had once possessed and so the sea water was filtered, distilled, or fermented before being drunk and the food was cooked before being eaten, but that doesn't make them any less mad).

This invasion of insane, uncompromising, genocidal dwarves forced the humans on the isles to leave in their dragon-ships and sail far out into the ocean (where they too encountered the rift and passed into Toril).

The Hundar Isles are now home to the degenerate offspring of these dwarves. They have continued sailing from island to island along the chain of Hundar Isles until they reached the mainland around -2800 DR. Their stone-ships sailed around the Barrier Mountains to the south and they landed on the southern plains that are now known as the Dusk Desert.

There they were firmly beaten back by the assembled orcs who were warned of the approaching invaders by some of the Darukurzym who fled back to Laerakond and were captured and tortured to death by the orcs. The surviving Hundarim fled back to the islands which were named the Hundar Isles because of the only word the dwarves have ever been known to speak.

The Hundarim: These dwarves are far removed from the rest of the dwarf race of Faerûn. These short wiry humanoids are covered in long hair that disguises their origins so that they almost resemble shortened versions of yeti from human mythology. They spend their time living underground in the mountains of the Hundar Isles and only come out at night.

Beneath the hair, their wiry, withered form resembles a large derro more than it does a dwarf. They take to the water on their stone ships, armed with stone weapons and stone armour.

The Hundarim have a curious mythology based around the moon. During their long trek across the oceans the only feature they could ever rely upon was the moon. The cursed sun scorched their skins and made them suffer, but the moon was the only peaceful feature on the empty ocean voyage.

When they found the Hundar Isles the moon was full, yet when they reached Laerakond the moon happened to be mid cycle. Their deranged minds have reasoned that the moon will bless them with victory when it is full and so they emerge from their homes when the moon is due to be full and set about raiding each other or more usually attacking the dwarves of Banderl's Hope. Should clouds or other things obscure the moon during these attacks then it is likely the whole force of Hundarim would flee in terror.

The two groups of dwarves in Laerakond are unaware of their relation and battle one another as dwarves and duergar do on Faerûn, with utter hatred and loathing for the differences between each them.

The numerically superior Hundarim are slowly wearing down the technologically and tactically advanced dwarves of Banderl's Hope, and have forced the dwarves to take shelter in the mines during the night while the Hundarim pillage their homes. During the day they return to their settlement and clear out what few insane degenerates remain.

Banderl's Hope (Town, 2,000): This recent settlement is built upon the centre of the far eastern shore of the Barrier Mountains and stretching east from this point are the Hundarim Isles.

Banderl's Hope is built into a natural bay formed by the collapse of parts of the Barrier Mountains during the elven Sundering ritual which resulted in the creation of

the Hundar Isles so long ago.

The town itself is made of stone quarried from the Barrier Mountains and is home to some 2,000 dwarves of varying ages and abilities. The leader of the community is the High Priest of Dumathoin and he is always descended from one of the apprentices of Bandaerl who saved them back in Faerûn by sealing their tunnels as they fled attacks from drow and other creatures.

During the days leading up to the full moon the settlement of Bandaerl's Hope becomes a ghost town, with the entire population crammed into the mines in the Barrier Mountains. This is to protect them from the attacks by the Hundarim who arrived during the full moon, pillage the town and then leave.

Rulesword: Trimming 3rd Edition One Step at a Time

Step five of simplifying 3rd edition focuses again on the various defences of creatures which should now be reduced so that a creature can be hit by melee but there are still other myriad defences that are applied haphazardly to creatures again depending upon the whim of the designer.

So the fifth suggestion is:

5. **Spell Resistance, Spell Resistance, wherefore art thou Spell Resistance:**
Bringing logic to the various defensive abilities.

Following on from previous suggestions, attack modifiers should now be much lower, and all methods of attack (including spells and magical abilities) use an attack roll instead of relying on static DCs. Furthermore the defensive modifiers are also much lower to bring them in line with attack modifiers, and no modifiers now escalate with level.

Therefore one may now question what the point of Spell Resistance is. Why should attacking a creature with a magical ability have to bypass two defensive checks when attacking them with a sword only requires one? Both attacks are subject to a form of damage reduction and so to make all attack methods comparable and balanced we should do away with Spell Resistance in its entirety and rely solely on the saving throw modifiers.

In this way players can make informed choices about what spells to use to focus on exploiting a creature's weakest save and thereby maximising effectiveness. Such ingenuity should be rewarded with increased success rather than punished by having them foiled by another defence that applies only to magical attack forms. (If you are worried about the increased damage potential of spells I will deal with that in a later suggestion).

Following on from the removal of Spell Resistance we have the Damage Reduction and Energy Resistance defensive abilities.

Both of these are similar in idea and yet are executed in opposite methods. Damage Reduction is bypassed by the specified damage form and Energy Resistance applies to the specified damage form.

To simplify things I propose a single Damage Resistance and single Energy Resistance value (why have different names as well). These Resistance values apply to all forms

of physical damage (in the case of Damage Resistance) and all forms of energy damage (in the case of Energy Resistance).

The means to bypassing these resistances lies with Vulnerabilities (which at the moment are usually only applied to Fire and Cold damage but there is no reason not to expand it to everything). Every creature (player, monster, npc) should have at least one vulnerability to physical damage and one vulnerability to energy damage.

Any attack dealing a damage type to which a creature is vulnerable immediately bypasses the Damage Resistance (or Energy Resistance) and deals 150% of normal damage. If it is not of a vulnerable damage type then Damage Resistance (or Energy Resistance) is applied as normal, unless the creature is immune in which case no damage is applied.

Now using this suggestion not every monster will need redesigning to ensure it has a resistance to sonic damage and wizards will be able to expand their spell lists to include energy types other than sonic.

When deciding what vulnerabilities to have use common sense. If a creature was resistant to an energy or damage type in the original rules then it probably shouldn't be vulnerable now. Crystal creatures are vulnerable to sonic, fleshy creatures are vulnerable to most things, scaled creatures are vulnerable to piercing, etc, etc. You can always change a creature's vulnerabilities to make things interesting (especially if it has a template added which justifies a new set of vulnerabilities).

Because Damage Resistance and Energy Resistance are now a single value of no type they should always stack with other Damage Resistance or Energy Resistance values.

House Rule 1: Consider tying the number of vulnerabilities a creature possesses to the tier of its Type (explained in following issues).

Tier 1 Types: Dragon, Giant, Aberration, Fey, Construct

Tier 2 Types: Monstrous Humanoid, Magical Beast, Outsider, Ooze, Undead

Tier 3 Types: Humanoid, Animal, Plant, Vermin

As a general rule, tier 3 Types should be vulnerable to all damage and energy types, tier 2 Types should be vulnerable to at least 3 damage and energy types, and tier 1 Types should be vulnerable to only 1 damage and energy type.

Every creature has to have at least one physical damage and energy damage

vulnerability. This will encourage players to research and roleplay and allow them to experiment and exploit weaknesses in enemies.

House Rule 2: Consider having the various armours remove certain physical damage vulnerabilities. For instance leather based armours are vulnerable to Slashing damage but the resistance applies to Bludgeoning and Piercing damage. Chain based armours are vulnerable to Piercing damage but resistant to Slashing and Bludgeoning, and Plate based armours are vulnerable to Bludgeoning damage.

In this house rule the armour actually removes some vulnerabilities from a creature. This encourages humanoid creatures to wear armour because it makes them less vulnerable to being stabbed or cut or crushed (depending on the armour worn).

A similar method can be applied to natural armours. Hide or hair based natural armours (rhino skin for example) are vulnerable to Slashing damage but not Piercing or Bludgeoning. Scale based natural armours are vulnerable to Piercing damage but not Slashing or Bludgeoning damage. Solid state natural armours (like an earth elemental's skin) are vulnerable to Bludgeoning damage but not Slashing or Piercing damage.

You can of course think of your own rationalisations for what armour should be vulnerable to what damage type.

If a creature is vulnerable to Silver, Cold Iron, or Adamantine then it is never vulnerable to Bludgeoning, Piercing, or Slashing damage types.

Similar to this, when a creature gains Energy Resistance or Damage Reduction from a class ability or magic item, then using this new method it actually removes the vulnerability for that damage/energy type from the creature.

House Rule 3: Consider adding a bonus to all saving throws if the creature originally had a Spell Resistance value (or you deem it naturally magically resistant). The bonus should be between +1 and +3 depending on the level of magic resistance it had before.

This can also be done for Power Resistance and can relate to only saving throws against spells or psionic powers depending on whether you deem magic and psionics to be different, related, or the same.

Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Church of the Dark Lady

The Church of the Dark Lady is one of the organised churches of the deity known as Tiamat. Originally a church belonging to the Mulan goddess known as Tiamat, it was silently subsumed into the worship of Tiamat the Dragon Queen following the death of Tiamat of Unther.

History of the Church of the Dark Lady

Worship of Tiamat the Dark Lady began long ago following the liberation of the Mulan people from the Imaskari. Tiamat was one of many beings from another planet that travelled in a powerful avatar form to Toril and attempted to free their people from servitude.

At the time, Tiamat, known as the Dark Lady, was a mysterious and powerful sorceress; she hated the other gods of the Mulan people, and spent most of her time secretly stirring chaos and anarchy within their empires.

It wasn't until the Orcgate Wars that Tiamat made a very public attempt to destroy the gods by attacking Gilgeam when he was wounded. For her betrayal, Tiamat's form was shattered by Marduk, but she was not slain. Tiamat had worked for many years on a means to prolong her life should her mortal vessel be destroyed.

It took centuries for her restoration to occur, and gradually her worship dwindled as her worshipper's prayers went unanswered. Once the Empires of Akanu and Unther came to be ruled by her enemy Gilgeam, who had become a cruel and despotic tyrant, Tiamat's title of Nemesis of the Gods and the memory of her attempt on Gilgeam's life caused a resurgence in her worship in the hopes that she might return to destroy Gilgeam.

Thus Tiamat the Dark Lady became the embodiment of the people's anger against Gilgeam. The disaffected people of Unther and Akanu would whisper her name in secret, praying for her return.

Tiamat finally returned to life in the year -585 DR, but she was so weakened by the millennia of absence that it was an age before she could take any meaningful actions on Toril. The whispers of her name in the darkness kept her alive, but only just. She spent the next thousand years rebuilding her church and her divine strength.

Then at the height of Tiamat's strength, just as she was building up her forces to destroy Gilgeam, disaster struck. The Church of the Dark Lady was all but destroyed

war with another organisation in the Old Empires known as the Cult of the Dragon. The two evil cabals battled each other in a war of annihilation leaving but a few loyalists from each spread across the entirety of Unther and Akanu. Tiamat's power was weakened once again and she was forced to begin the slow process of rebuilding anew.

In 1301 DR, the steps to Tiamat's return began when she was strong enough to answer prayers and grant spells to her followers once more. By 1346 DR a manifestation of Tiamat was successfully summoned by the cultists of Tiamat, and the Church of the Dark Lady was reborn. One of the cultists in attendance at the summoning of Tiamat was a teenage girl and escaped slave by the name of Tiglath. She was so awestruck by the event that she dedicated her life to Tiamat's worship and would quickly rise through the ranks of the Church of the Dark Lady.

By the time of the Godswar, the Church of the Dark Lady had established a huge cavern temple complex beneath the settlement of Firetrees where the faithful of Tiamat would operate from to spread anarchy and chaos among the people of Unther. Other bases of operation were established beneath the Lord's Palace in Messempar and in the catacombs of Unthalass. The Church of the Dark Lady was ready to strike and open rebellion began.

Just at that time the gods themselves were cast down to Toril in avatar form, and Tiamat and Tiglath attempted to slay Gilgeam in personal combat. Tiamat had underestimated Gilgeam's strength and the error in judgement cost Tiamat her life, although her contingency plan once again allowed her to survive the destruction of her body.

The destruction of Tiamat's avatar however sent shockwaves through the Church of the Dark Lady. Tiglath was injured and fled from Unthalass to Firetrees where the bulk of her supporters remained. Shudu-Ab, the Scaly One of Unthalass announced Tiglath's death and proclaimed herself Dark Scaly One (High Priestess) of the Church. Few challenged Shudu-Ab's claim in Tiglath's absence, and Tiglath herself was too weakened to challenge it personally.

Tiamat did indeed return to life from the body of Tchazzar, one of her divine vessels, and on the Feast of the Moon 1358 DR she attacked and devoured Gilgeam's avatar before she too perished. The Church of the Dark Lady was too occupied with infighting to aid their god and was further shattered by the apparent second death

of Tiamat.

Unbeknownst to everyone on Toril (except Tiglath), Tiamat the Dark Lady ceased to exist on that day; she perished on the Outer Planes and was forever slain. However, another goddess called Tiamat the Dragon Queen took up her portfolio of rebellion and began answering the prayers of her faithful as though she were the Dark Lady. This new Tiamat was an ancient draconic deity of evil dragons, but her similar multi-headed dragon form and similar name meant that few of the faithful in the Church of the Dark Lady noticed any difference.

Gradually over time, the focus of the church shifted from chaos and rebellion to worshipping evil dragons and promoting their tyrannical rule over everyone. It was a subtle shift from rebellion for rebellions sake to rebellion for the sake of dragon overlords, and none seemed to notice or mind the change. However the mindset of the faithful of the church began to change towards evil; acts of kidnapping, murder, blackmail, thuggery, and other crimes became common and the people of Unther began to see the church not as a group of rebels against tyrannical rule but as a group of criminals exploiting the weak.

In the chaos that followed Gilgeam's death, Unther was plunged into anarchy and the Church of the Dark Lady attempted to take control, first of Unthalass and then the rest of Unther. They forged alliances with other organisations in an attempt to stabilise the empire so that they might rule. When Alasklerbanbastos expanded his dragon empire to encompass Unther, the Church of the Dark Lady was only too glad to help in accordance with their new doctrine and the wishes of their god.

The ranks of the church swelled with the evil, grasping, petty minded individuals that loved inflicting pain and misery on those weaker than themselves, ironically the very same type of people that the Church of the Dark Lady once sought to remove from power in Unther under Gilgeam's rule.

When Mulhorand invaded Unther, they took Unthalass first, and smashed the power of the Church of the Dark Lady once more. Shudu-Ab was forced to flee in failure and a new Dark Scaly One named Malise now runs the Church of the Dark Lady in her place.

The war with Mulhorand is over and Unther is restored after a fashion, but the Church of the Dark Lady still remains, spread across Unther, ready to stir unrest and rebellion once again. Thankfully the church has its own troubles as factions within it

battle for supremacy over who has the right to rule.

Organisation

The Church of the Dark Lady originally began as a very chaotic and loose organisation. The highest ranking priest in an area would call himself a Scaly One and would gather a cell of cultists around him to foment chaos and unrest in the region. They all answered to a single high priest known as the Dark Scaly One who in the modern incarnation of the church was Tiglath (LN hf Fighter 3/Cleric 16).

Following the Time of Troubles, the Church of the Dark Lady fractured into two organisations. One located beneath Unthalass that ruthlessly controlled that city led by Shudu-Ab (LE hf Cleric 18), and the other located around Firetrees (later moved to Messempar) controlled by Tiglath.

Following the conquest of Unther, the church fractured once again as Shudu-Ab was forced to flee Unthalass and Malise took over her position.

Church of the Dark Lady

Members: 172 priests, 1000 cultists as of 1375 DR

Hierarchy: Strictly organized church centred on Firetrees and the surrounding Greenfields

Leader: Shudu-Ab

Religion: Tiamat the Dragon Queen

Alignment: Any evil

Secrecy: Medium (a well known presence within the area but none can pinpoint the location of their base beneath Firetrees).

Symbol: Five headed dragon

True Church of the Dark Lady

Members: 38 priests, 200 cultists as of 1375 DR

Hierarchy: Chaotic

Leader: Tiglath

Religions: Tiamat the Dark Lady

Alignment: Any Chaotic or Neutral

Secrecy: High

Symbol: Three headed dragon

New Church of the Dark Lady

Members: 289 "priests", 3000 cultists as of 1375 DR

Hierarchy: Loosely organised

Leader: Malise (NE hm Cleric 14)

Religions: Tiamat the Dragon Queen

Alignment: Any evil

Secrecy: Low (everyone in Unthalass knows of the organization and all know it operates out of the catacombs of Unthalass).

Symbol: Five headed dragon

Hierarchy

The hierarchy of the Church of the Dark Lady is in flux at the moment. All three leaders of their respective churches claim themselves to be Dark Scaly One of the Church of the Dark Lady, however they only have power over the faithful of their sect of the church and wield no power within the other sects.

The "True Church of the Dark Lady" run by Tiglath holds to the old order wherein there is one Dark Scaly One who commands the Scaly Ones of the various temples (currently there is only one in Messempar), and they in turn command the priests and affiliated members of the church.

The "Church of the Dark Lady" has very much embraced the new doctrine of Tiamat the Dragon Queen and so Shudu-Ab's church is dedicated to promoting the rule of dragons over all. This group allies itself heavily with dragons and draconic creatures and they are experimenting with the Spawn of Tiamat. The church is run by Shudu-Ab herself out of one of the many tunnel complexes beneath Firetrees and the Greenfields, she is served by a number of lesser priests called Red Spawn, who in turn command the Blue Spawn, each level of hierarchy has its own colour associated

with it from Red to White and they take orders from the next highest rank/cour.

The New Church of the Dark Lady is little more than a rabble of criminals that exist to take money from the local populace which in turn is used to enrich Malise and his experiments with the Spawn of Tiamat. The church is organised into cells spread across the districts of Unther (commanded by "priests" from a variety of professions, Deiros Forktongue runs the cell in the Palace District for example), who report directly to Malise. They are otherwise free to operate as they wish as long as they don't disobey the Dark Scaly One.

Tiglath (LN hf Fighter 3/Cleric 16): Tiglath began her life born into slavery in Unther. Her mother was innocent of any real crime and was sentenced to slavery merely for looking unclean in the presence of a Lord of Unther. Pregnant at the time she survived until Tiglath's 11th birthday whereupon she was beheaded for being too ill to work.

Tiglath escaped slavery shortly afterward and joined up with a group of cultists worshipping a many headed dragon god that would help them overthrow Gilgeam's rule. This lithe, strong, and pretty young woman was handy with a blade and stood guard during the various meetings.

One fateful ceremony in 1346 DR summoned a manifestation of Tiamat the Dark Lady into Unther and from that moment on Tiglath dedicated her life to the goddess. Tiglath fervently believed she was chosen by Tiamat and destined for greatness (she often said the goddess winked at her and smiled during that summoning in 1346 DR), and she quickly rose through the ranks of the newly formed church.

When the Time of Troubles happened, Tiglath was happy to be riding into battle on a huge green dragon to slay Gilgeam the God-King. Her faith however was shattered that day when Tiamat was slain, and her injuries kept her an invalid for weeks in hiding in Firetrees.

When Tiamat returned to battle Gilgeam again, Tiglath was overjoyed, but watching her goddess die a second time shortly after victory, Tiglath knew Tiamat the Dark Lady was truly gone.

And so Tiglath was puzzled when her prayers and the prayers of the other priests were still being answered by a many headed dragon goddess called Tiamat. Very few noticed the difference, but Tiglath could sense something was not quite right. This

new Tiamat was alien to her, in communication with her goddess Tiamat spoke of dragons ruling the world and the deeds they might do together, evil deeds that horrified Tiglath who wanted only to save Unther from the tyrants.

Tiglath spurned this new Tiamat and fled further north to Messemparrar with the few old guard loyalists to Tiamat the Dark Lady that remained, the newer members of the church under Shudu-Ab were little better than thugs and murderers.

In Messemparrar Tiglath has been busy establishing the True Church of the Dark Lady as it once was. She controls only the faithful within Messemparrar and orders them as she thinks Tiamat would have wanted. She has taught the faithful how to steal the divine energy they need for their spells using elaborate rituals (although they are not aware of the reason for the rituals - that Tiamat the Dark Lady is dead), and she has sent out her agents across the Old Empires to search the land for the Rings of Tiamat that Tiglath knows to hold a spark of the divine essence of her god.

With that spark of divinity, Tiglath hopes somehow to be able to bring her goddess back to life. For the time being she is battling hard to resist the other churches of the Dark Lady but she knows it is only a matter of time before the battle is lost without some kind of divine patron. In order to improve her position Tiglath has come to an agreement with Alasklerbanbastos and his Cult of the Dragon followers, the two organisations have agreed to end their historical differences so that Tiglath can focus her efforts elsewhere.

Kedrak Gilbane (CE hm Fighter 2/Cleric 3/ Talon of Tiamat 10): This grizzled looking bear of a man is nearing his eighties. He is descended from a long line of Serpent Guards (the parent often passing on his equipment to the child, despite the absence of any formal organisation) and he proudly wears his red plate armour that is said to be made from the hide of Tiamat's daughter.

Kedrak was one of the early members of the Cult of Tiamat (following its resurgence in 1301 DR) and one of the founding members of the Church of the Dark Lady (following 1346 DR). Kedrak was responsible for recruiting Tiglath into the cult (she was originally one of his enforcers) and she looks upon him as a father figure. He in turn regards her as a treasured daughter and never leaves her side; he will fight to the death to keep her safe, and gladly murder any that threaten her.

Kedrak knows the truth; that Tiamat the Dark Lady is dead, and he is firmly behind Tiglath's plan to try and restore the goddess, although he believes (correctly) that

Tiglath has no idea how to accomplish this and so is prepared for the plan to fail.

In the meantime he is busy training a new generation of Serpent Guards who are fast becoming elite soldiers that are easily the match of any in New Unther.

Shudu-Ab (CE hf Cleric 18): For a long time Shudu-Ab was Tiglath's lieutenant and the Scaly One of Unthalass. A cruel and ambitious woman, Shudu-Ab pounced when Tiglath was at her weakest following the apparent death of Tiamat the Dark Lady.

Shudu-Ab quickly declared herself Dark Scaly One of the church and gathered followers to her banner, those that didn't obey were eliminated, and soon every priest in Unthalass was under her rule.

Tiglath was secretly in hiding in the temple complex beneath the settlement of Firetrees and was being sheltered by her closest allies. Shudu-Ab however began asserting her control over the settlement of Firetrees and Tiglath could only resist in secret or risk exposure and elimination.

By the time Storum'aelix seized Unthalass, Tiglath had decided to flee to somewhere safer and took her followers and resources north to Messemparrar.

Shudu-Ab was aware that Tiamat was subtly different following her apparent demise during the Time of Troubles, but she does not care for the reason. She was in close communication with Tiamat until the invasion of Unther and fully embraced the new ideals Tiamat spoke of to her.

When Mulhorand invaded Unther, Shudu-Ab failed Tiamat and the Dragon Queen does not like failure. However Shudu-Ab believes that if she can conquer her replacement (Malise) then she will regain the favour of Tiamat and her rightful position as head of the church. The fact that Tiamat has not acted in anyway to prevent Shudu-Ab's goal could be seen as her supporting this plan, but perhaps Tiamat does not care either way.

Motivation and Goals

The Church of the Dark Lady aims to spread itself across the Old Empires and indeed the whole of Toril.

Within the various sects of the church each has a goal to eliminate the other sects and become the only Church of the Dark Lady.

Shudu-Ab and Malise are vehement opponents and seek to eliminate the other first.

Neither of them regards Tiglath's church as a real threat and so they only combat it directly when it encroaches upon their territory.

Although Malise is a devoted follower of Tiamat and wishes to spread her worship, he is also a greedy, evil, power hungry man and desires gold and power above all else. Spreading the word of Tiamat comes secondary to this.

Tiglath on the other hand wishes to restore Tiamat the Dark Lady to life. She recognises that her branch of the church is small compared to the others and is at a disadvantage because it traditionally preaches chaos, anarchy, and rebellion to its followers.

As a result Tiglath is shifting the focus of the church towards resisting the Mulhorandi invaders (during the invasion of Unther), and later rebelling against tyrannical and evil rulers. Once the church is strong enough and has eliminated its rivals then she will begin rebelling against the restored Unther state, but for now she needs more allies and less enemies.

Recruitment

The True Church of the Dark Lady recruits new faithful in the traditional way of preaching to those it feel may be sympathetic to their cause, and any showing an interest are welcomed into the fold.

The Church of the Dark Lady and New Church of the Dark Lady typically recruit new blood by absorbing criminal gangs into their church, or worse by kidnapping people that will not be missed and then brain washing them into the doctrine of the church.

Equipment

The Church of the Dark Lady spent several years building up stockpiles of resources throughout Unther in preparation for its rebellion. When the city of Messemprar rebelled it was the Church of the Dark Lady that provided many of the resources used by the slaves to defend themselves against the forces of Unther.

Following Gilgeam's death, Tiglath withdrew her resources to Firetrees and from there took the bulk of the churches resources to Messemprar when she relocated her own sect of the church.

The other sects of the church have what few resources were located in the temples at Firetrees and Unthalass, but apart from that they have had to build up their

equipment from scratch.

That process is not as slow as might be imagined however. Shudu-Ab has the allegiance of a number of dragons in Unther and using these allies she has already stockpiled a number of magical items as well as a growing number of half dragons and spawn of Tiamat.

Malise and her criminal gangs are obtaining great hoards of riches from the local populace of Unthalass which although devastated by 17 years of chaos is still the richest trade hub in Unther.

Allies

The Cult of the Dragon is the main ally of the Church of the Dark Lady. Despite previous iterations of the church attempting to destroy the cult for its blasphemous treatment of dragon, the current churches no longer regard the Cult of the Dragon as their enemy.

Tiamat the Dark Lady always regarded dragons as sacred beings, and indeed many of the dragons in the Old Empires share a blood link with the goddess from her experiments. When the Dark Lady perished and the Dragon Queen took her place she emphasised that all dragons were sacred, even undead ones.

The Church of the Dark Lady and the New Church have embraced this new doctrine fully and have welcomed Cult of the Dragon members into their fold. Some priests of these churches have even formed their own cells of the Cult of the Dragon (with permission from Alasklerbanbastos) and have entered into a full alliance with the Great Bone Wyrms.

Tiglath and the True Church of the Dark Lady stick strongly to the old tenets of the Dark Lady's faith, but in order to survive Tiglath recognises that they cannot afford to fight a war on so many fronts. As such Tiglath first came to an agreement with Alasklerbanbastos that they would not attack each other, and out of respect for the Dark Lady, Alasklerbanbastos has kept to that agreement. However Tiglath has not knowingly allowed any dragon cultists into her church as yet.

The Serpent Guard: This organisation is an affiliated organisation of fighters that serve the Church of the Dark Lady. Like the church itself the serpent guard fractured when its parent organisation did so.

Previously the Serpent Guard were used as defenders of the church and they would

also defend the lairs of dragons affiliated with the church.

The True Church of the Dark Lady run by Tiglath preserves that role and the commander of the Serpent Guards for that sect (Kedrak Gilbane), a devout and aged follower of Tiamat the Dark Lady who resists any overtures from the other sects to sway him to their cause, is busy building up a network of dragon allies by sending his guards to protect their lairs.

The Serpent Guards under Kedrak took much of the arms and equipment from their stores in 1358 DR to follow Tiglath and they remain the best armed and armoured of the guard. They wear armour made from dragon scale and dragon hides that has been donated by dying dragons during the church's existence. Their weapons are forged of exotic metals and enhanced with powerful enchantments to enable them to combat people and dragons alike.

Contrasting this are the Serpent Guards of the Church of the Dark Lady and the New Church. The guards of these churches are little better than thugs and criminals and are typically used as part of the criminal activities of the church. The few original members of the guards for these churches were slain during the invasion of Unther and their replacements were hastily drafted in from the criminal gangs and bandits roaming Unthalass and the rest of Unther.

Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Conquest of Unther Campaign

This campaign revolves around the conquest of the fallen Untheric Empire by the Empire of Mulhorand.

Overview

The campaign begins 17th Tarsakh 1371 DR when the armies of Mulhorand march upon Unther by crossing the River of Swords. This campaign can be played from both sides with the players either working to save Unther or help the Mulhorandi conquer it.

Introduction

Depending on the character motivation and their origins there are a number of entry points for the campaign.

Red Wizards: If any of the party have any evil tendencies or contacts among the Red Wizards then they will be contacted (secretly most likely) and ordered to Messemparr where they can meet with Ruduk, a member of the council of Messemparr, who is also the local representative and agent of the Zulkir of Enchantment, Lauzoril, this affiliation however is secret and not widely known.

Benefits: Ruduk can provide upon request loans of any +1 magic item or other items up to a value of 1,000 gp at a discount of 20%, providing the Players agree to an unspecified favour he may call upon in the future.

Cult of the Dragon: The Cult of the Dragon is dually represented in both sides of the conflict. The southern branch of the Cult of the Dragon, headed by Alasklerbanbastos seeks to preserve the Dragon Empire that covers most of Unther and is ruled over by Alasklerbanbastos and his vassals. The northern branch of the Cult of the Dragon (nominally ruled by the Cult cell in Sembia) seeks to destroy Alasklerbanbastos and his southern Cult and so may send agents to aid Mulhorand.

Benefits: The Cult of the Dragon has safe houses in every settlement in Unther, as well as considerable resources to draw upon in each. Criminal gangs can be provided to support the Player's plans in the area. Allies or members of the cult of the dragon will incur the ire of opposition cult forces.

Church of Bane: Priests of Bane could be sent visions from Bane or instructions from their church to travel towards Unthalass and aid the cause

of Unther. The Banites in Unthalass seek to keep Unther separate from Mulhorand so that the Faerûnian pantheon can move into Unther and Bane can hopefully create a tyrant state centred on Unthalass.

Benefit: Banites will have access to safe houses in Messemparrar and Unthalass as well as the support of the templars in Messemparrar at the end of the war. Banite contacts in Unthalass will be able to provide information to the Players and perform supporting acts as required against the Mulhorandi.

Church of Gilgeam: While the church no longer exists in any real form, a few scattered worshippers of Gilgeam may still lurk in the dark corners of Unther. These cultists seek to spread chaos among the invading Mulhorandi forces and will do anything to ensure the return of their god.

Benefit: Loyal Gilgeamites have the ability to call upon Shuruppak the Reaper to help them kill one target. Shuruppak will want substantial reimbursement for his services or else the Players will become the next targets.

Church of the Dark Lady: Worshippers of Tiamat are firmly on the side of Unther for their own nefarious reasons. The True Church of the Dark Lady is headed by Shudu-Ab and is located in Unthalass, they are helping Storum'aelix oppress the people of Unther for their own ends and fight the Mulhorandi invasion to keep this position of power.

The Church of the Dark Lady in Messemparrar is headed by Tiglath which is opposed to the Mulhorandi invasion and will lend its resources to that conflict. That their deity is a goddess of chaos, anarchy, and rebellion is overlooked for now in favour of resisting the invasion.

Benefits: It is most likely the PCs are part of the less evil Church of the Dark Lady in Messemparrar; as a result they can count on manpower and resource assistance while in the lands around that city. They will be attacked on sight by members of Shudu-Abs branch of the church in Unthalass and Firetrees.

Mercenaries: Parties looking for mercenary work are likely to be hired by Kendera Steeldice who is looking for more recruits to aid in her conquest of Unther. Her mercenaries are working alongside the Church of Anhur (by order of the Pharaoh) and she wants to make a good impression. She is willing to pay a premium for experienced adventurers.

Benefits: Any member of the mercenaries taking part in Mulhorand's invasion can look forward to free equipment maintenance and replacement (non magical only) at any Mulhorandi occupied settlement in Unther. In addition they can request special equipment (magical) up to a value of 5,000 gp from Kendera. This request is on loan only and must be returned after the invasion.

Natives: Those characters native to Unther or Mulhorand will have a vested interest in taking part in the conquest of Unther on the appropriate side.

Benefits: Natives of Mulhorand or Unther have little more to look forward to than the support of the common people of their nationality in whatever settlements or areas they visit.

The Talons of Justice: The Talons of Justice are an organisation dedicated to justice and thwarting Tiamat wherever she and her cultists have a presence. They care nothing about who wins the invasion, but they do seek to keep the common man safe from the evils of war.

At the moment this organisation's presence in Unther is only one individual strong. However Skara is a silver dragon and a paladin so he is very powerful. He is currently pretending to be a Mulan mercenary in the employ of Kendera Steeldice who he is growing to love with every day.

Benefits: Players that are allied to or have membership in the Talons of Justice can call upon Skara to aid them. Such aid should only be called upon if in dire need, but he will not refuse the Players providing their requests are not evil.

Whispers of Hoar: A secret movement of saboteurs and activists that are all worshippers of Hoar. This organisation works from the shadows listening to the plots and plans of others before lending their expertise and resources to specific goals.

Benefits: Worshippers and allies of Hoar gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all skill checks during the campaign providing there are commoners nearby. The bonus is from an Aid Another action performed by one of the Whispers.

Scenario One: Battle of the Greenfields

Mulhorand's first move is to march its armies across the River of Swords, through the Greenfields and surround Unthalass. The Greenfields are defended by cultists of

Tiamat (little more than thugs and criminals. Travelling through the area are the Grey Ghosts who seek to escape Unther and the slaughter they believe is about to follow.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (5000 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and a Spear.
- **Mulhorand, Regulars (3000 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield.
- **Mulhorand, Cavalry (500 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Spear, Shortbow, Light Wooden Shield. Mounted on 250 two-man chariots.
- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (2000 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty.
- **Unther, Grey Ghosts (NE hm Warrior 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Spear, Light Wooden Shield, Short Sword
- **Unther, Grey Ghosts Cavalry (NE hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Spear, Light Wooden Shield, Short Sword, Shortbow. Mounted on Light Warhorse.
- **Unther, Cultists (2000 NE hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Quarterstaff. These Cultists are fanatics and receive a +2 bonus to Str and Con, +1 bonus to Will, and -1 penalty to AC.
- **Unther, Regulars (500 N hm Warrior 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Short Sword, Buckler (all metal is bronze)

All Unther forces rout after 10% casualties (except for Cultists who rout after 20%). Mulhorand forces rout after 15% casualties.

1371 Tarsakh 18: The armies of Mulhorand march through the Greenfields. Groups of 50+ cultists engage various units of Mulhorand Slave Troops, Regulars, Cavalry, and Mercenaries.

1371 Tarsakh 21: Storum'aelix, the Dragon King of Unther, deploys the Grey Ghosts to harry the Mulhorandi forces. The Grey Ghosts attempt to flee south through the Greenfields. Mulhorand forces allow the Grey Ghosts to leave.

1371 Tarsakh 24: The forces of Unther meet the forces of Mulhorand on the Greenfields. On Mulhorand's side are the 5000 slave troops, 3000 regulars, and 2000 mercenaries (minus any losses). On Unther's side are the 2000 cultists, 500 regulars (plus the grey ghosts if they were attacked or unable to leave). Unther loses 400

cultists and 200 regulars and is routed from the field. Mulhorand lost 300 slave troops and a few regulars.

1371 Tarsakh 26: A flight of blue dragons (10 of various ages) are sent by their Suzerain, Storum'aelix to attack Mulhorand.

Initially Mulhorand loses 600 slave troops, 200 regulars and 50 mercenaries as well as a significant loss of siege engines which are damaged by the dragon attacks. Mulhorand rallies when mercenary dragon hunters kill 1 adult dragon. Priests of Anhur call upon their god who sends an avatar to the field. Lightning bolts and thunderclaps fill the sky and destroy 4 more blue dragons and cause the others to flee. Anhur's avatar then leaves the battle.

Side Quests:

- **The Grey Ghosts Escape:** This force of bandits that currently serves the Dragon King of Unthlass is using the invasion of Unther as a cover to make its escape. Mulhorand normally would let these bandits leave if they take no offensive action, but savvy PCs may be able to force the Mulhorandi forces to block their escape or engage the bandits which will bring them into the conflict on Unther's side.
- **The Enclave:** This organisation has long been hidden somewhere in the Greenfields region. Whether it was an invisible building in the middle of the countryside, an extra planar refuge, an underground refuge, or a miniature castle submerged beneath the River Alamber or Angol, should the Players find the Enclave they will have access to the significant magical resources of this group.
The Enclave will not engage in the fighting at the moment, preferring to save their resources until the 11th hour when they are most needed, but they will provide magic items and spells to the Players at 50% discounted rates providing they are used in defence of Unther (and the Enclave will know if they are lying).
- **Slave Rescue:** Mulhorand and Unther both routinely use slavery as a form of punishment and to bolster their armies. The forces of Mulhorand are not kind to the slaves of Unther working the Greenfields (many of whom were kidnapped into slavery by the Cult of Tiamat) and they are drafted, brutalised and even murdered by the invaders. Kendera Steeldice and her Gold Sword

mercenary company from Tethyr will actively fight Mulhorandi regulars that treat the slaves in such a manner. This is an opportunity for PCs from both sides (Mulhorand and Unther) to earn Kendera's respect for helping the slaves.

Scenario Two: Siege of Firetrees

With the Unther army defeated a quarter of the surviving Cultists retreat towards Firetrees (the rest retreat to Unthalass). General Khemenet favours taking the easy target of Firetrees for himself and thereby securing a route across the River Alamber. He takes a force many times that needed to conquer the settlement and orders his rival, General Bokasin to take Unthalass.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Regulars (1000 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield. Commanded by General Khemenet (LG hm Pal 8/Glorious Servitor 7 of Horus-Re).
- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (1000 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty. Commanded by Kendera Steeldice (LG hf Pal 11 of Red Knight).
- **Unther, Cultists (400 NE hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Spears. These Cultists are fanatics and receive a +2 bonus to Str and Con, +1 bonus to Will, and -1 penalty to AC.
- **Unther, Slaves (500 N hm Commoner 1):** Unarmed. Will only fight if forced to. Slaves suffer -1 penalty to all checks.
- **Unther, Bluespawn Ambusher (9):** These Spawn of Tiamat lie in wait underground in groups of three around the settlement and leap forth to ambush those that venture too close.

1371 Mirtul 1: The forces of Mulhorand surround Firetrees. General Khemenet orders all forces to attack (Kendera Steeldice keeps her Gold Swords back) and encounters the Bluespawn Ambushers. Almost 100 regulars are killed in the initial attack and the forces of Mulhorand regroup.

1371 Mirtul 2: The Cult of Tiamat send an envoy to General Khemenet demanding the army of Mulhorand end the siege or a total of 500 citizens of Unther will be sacrificed to Tiamat. General Khemenet gives the Cult 3 days to surrender.

1371 Mirtul 3: Kendera Steeldice and the Gold Swords attempt to infiltrate

Firetrees and rescue the slaves.

1371 Mirtul 4: General Khemenet orders the attack early and at night to catch the Cultists off guard, this foils Kendera's plan to rescue the slaves. All cultists and slaves are killed with a further 100 Mulhorandi regulars and 50 mercenaries lost in the fighting. Kendera Steeldice withdraws to Unthalass and refuses to work with Khemenet any longer.

Side Quests:

- **Hostage Situation:** If the PCs are working for Mulhorand and particularly if they helped her with rescuing slaves on the Greenfields, then Kendera Steeldice will approach them and ask for help in rescuing the hostages from Firetrees. If the PCs are working for Unther then Kendera and the Gold Swords will infiltrate Firetrees, if the PCs happen to be there then the two groups will encounter one another and Kendera will ask the PCs to help release the hostages, and she will ensure they are allowed to leave Firetrees unmolested.

The hostages are kept in groups of 50 and are guarded by 10-20 cultists at a time. Any sign of hostility and the cultists will begin massacring the nearest hostages. The Gold Swords will rescue 200 out of 350 hostages. The PCs, with Kendera's help can rescue the remainder.

- **The Ritual:** In the depths of Firetrees, lie a series of catacombs dug by the Cult of Tiamat to serve as their base when Unther was ruled by Gilgeam. Now these tunnels serve as a marshalling point for the Cult of Tiamat forces in the Greenfields and it is from here the slaves are sent to work the fields. Upon seeing the avatar of Anhur take to the field, a number of senior cultists in Firetrees decided to call upon their goddess for aid. In a ritual requiring the sacrifice of over a hundred slaves (not included in the numbers above), these priests and wizards seek to call upon Tiamat to send them aid. In the deepest section of the catacombs, a total of 5 priests and wizards (levels 3-5) are sacrificing the bound slaves one by one (they can do one each per round). They are protected by 5 Serpent Guards (NE half blue dragon Fighter 3). The number of slaves sacrificed determines the type of aid Tiamat sends. If 10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 slaves are killed then an abishai is sent (colour ranges from white to red depending on the number of slaves killed). If 75 slaves are killed then a bluespawn godslayer is sent by Tiamat.

The party need to kill the Serpent Guards and the priests and rescue as many slaves as possible. If they are already working with Kendera Steeldice then she will be available to help.

Scenario 3: Siege of Unthalass

In a risky gamble General Bokasin (N hm Ftr 12/Clr 10 of Anhur) decides to hurl the bulk of the army directly at Unthalass. If he captures the city then he will have control over the major crossing point of the River Alamber as well as control over the largest and most valuable city in Unther and he will have eliminated the Dragon Empire that is laying claim to much of Unther at this time. If he fails then the Mulhorandi invasion of Unther will be over.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (4000 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and a Spear.
- **Mulhorand, Regulars (1800 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield.
- **Mulhorand, Cavalry (500 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Spear, Shortbow, Light Wooden Shield. Mounted on 250 two-man chariots.
- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (900 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty.
- **Unther, Cultists (1700 NE hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Quarterstaff. These Cultists are fanatics are receive +2 bonus to Str and Con, +1 bonus to Will, and -1 penalty to AC.
- **Unther, Regulars (500 N hm Warrior 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Short Sword, Buckler (all metal is bronze)
- **Unther, Serpent Guard (100 NE half blue dragon Fighter 2):** Armed with Chain Mail, Long Sword, Heavy Steel Shield.
- **Unther, Church of the Dark Lady (100 NE hm Cleric 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Club, Light Wooden Shield.
- **Unther, Storum'aelix (Great Wyrm Blue Dragon):**

1371 Mirtul 3: The forces of Mulhorand reach the bridge of Alamber, guarded by a force of 200 regulars and 300 cultists who are attempting to destroy the ancient stone bridge. Mulhorand sends it's cavalry in to charge. Casualties are high for Unther, 200 cultists and 50 regulars are killed, Mulhorand loses only 20 cavalry

(mostly broken chariots). The remaining Unther forces are captured and unable to return to Unthalass.

1371 Mirtul 4: Mulhorand surrounds Unthalass and lays siege to it. The siege is hampered by the earlier loss of its siege engines during the attack by Storum'aelix's flight of blue dragons.

1371 Mirtul 8: Siege preparations are complete. Unthalass is completely surrounded, no one is able to enter or escape the city without being allowed by Mulhorand's army.

1371 Mirtul 9: Kendera Steeldice and the Gold Sword mercenary company (100 strong) arrive ahead of General Khemenet. Kendera volunteers her men to infiltrate the city (through the sewers) and sabotage Unthalass from the inside. General Bokasin agrees since the city is too well defended (by the great wyrm blue dragon) to take in a direct assault.

1371 Mirtul 11: General Khemenet arrives with 800 regulars and 800 mercenaries and assumes command of the siege. He orders an immediate attack by all forces. The attack is a disaster, the Dragon King and his Serpent Guard forces decimate those attempting to enter the city via siege towers and ladders. Holes made in the white granite walls of Unthalass are quickly filled by cultists backed by the priests from the Church of the Dark Lady and prove difficult to breach. Mulhorand loses 600 regulars, 1,100 slaves, and 300 mercenaries over the course of the days fighting. Unther loses only 400 cultists.

Mulhorand settles in for the long siege, although Unthalass is still receiving goods via ship (From the Red Wizards of Thay mostly who want to prevent the conquest of Unther).

1371 Kythorn 2: The Mulhorandi fleet arrives to blockade Unthalass.

1371 Kythorn 10: The already understocked grain stores of Unthalass run out and starvation begins to set in among the populace.

1371 Kythorn 13: Sahuagin (allied with Thay), attack the Mulhorandi fleet from below and ends the blockade of Unthalass.

1371 Kythorn 20: General Bokasin comes up with the idea of rotating small sized assaults on Unthalass at the same time to confuse and divide the enemy. Casualties are light with only 100 slave troops lost by Mulhorand, however the walls still remain unbreached.

1371 Kythorn 28: Kendera Steeldice and the Gold Sword mercenary company succeed in opening the south gate and letting the army of Mulhorand into the Poor District of Unthalass. Because each of the four districts of Unthalass are separated by internal walls as formidable as the external walls, fighting continues to gain access to the Trade, Port, and Palace Districts.

1371 Elesias 4: The forces of Mulhorand conquer and secure the Trade District.

1371 Eleint 16: The forces of Mulhorand conquer and secure the ruins of the Palace District.

1371 Eleint 20: The wererat forces of Ereshkigal swarm up out of the undercity of Unthalass and push the Mulhorandi forces out of the Palace District. Storum'aelix and the Dragon Empire control the Port District, the Mulhorandi control the Poor and Trade Districts, and the Palace District remains a contested region.

As the weather starts to cool the fighting lessens and the armies of Mulhorand start fortifying their positions within Unthalass to setup more permanent garrison buildings.

1372 DR: Ches 3: Maladraedior travels to Unthalass to wreak revenge upon his ancient rival Storum'aelix. The great wyrm bests his foe through his superior magic and decapitates his foe within moments. The forces of Mulhorand seize the opportunity and storm the walls of the Port District. The forces of the Dragon Empire of Unther are overwhelmed. Shudu-Ab disappears, the rest of the Cult of Tiamat descend into the catacombs.

General Bokasin is slain in the assault. General Khemenet is awarded the title Lord of Unthalass for his "distinguished" command during the siege of Unthalass. Kendera Steeldice and Abasi-Retep (CN hm Fighter 6/Pious Templar 4 of Anhur) are given control of the Mulhorandi armies, reporting in name only to Lord Khemenet.

1372 Flamerule 1: After 3 months spent fortifying Unthalass, Abasi-Retep and the Mulhorandi troops set off north towards Shussel. Kendera Steeldice and the mercenary companies head west. Lord Khemenet maintains a garrison of 500 regulars and 1000 slave troops to occupy Unthalass.

Side Quests:

- **Infiltration:** At the beginning of the Siege of Unthalass, the armies of Mulhorand are unable to breach the wall. Kendera Steeldice volunteers her

troops to infiltrate the city and open the gates. If the party are on the Mulhorandi side or are independent and wish to gain access to the city, and Kendera has worked with them before then she asks the PCs to accompany her and her men.

The group emerges inside the Poor District in the southern quarter (the area most heavily damaged and closest to the flooding River Alamber). First they must battle their way through the sewers, filled with hidden temples to Tiamat and the forces of Ereshkigal; the Queen of Torture who runs the under-city. Once inside the Poor District the party will need to battle their way to the Gatehouses which are guarded by the Serpent Guards and Spawn of Tiamat. They may encounter priests of Ishtar led by Utuhegel who is secretly being aided by the Whispers of Hoar (an organisation dedicated to a free Unther ruled by Hoar), these priests can provide supplies and other assistance in taking the Gatehouse.

- **Gilgeam's Aspect:** Once the city of Unthalass is taken the Mulhorandi begin sponsored expeditions into the catacombs of the Ziggurat of Eternal Victory. Here the party will encounter more of the Cult of Tiamat and the forces of Ereshkigal, the Queen of Torture, as well as other fiendish and undead servants of Gilgeam.

Hidden in the depths of the catacombs is an archive filled with slate books that contain the memoirs of Gilgeam. Those perusing the memoirs will learn of the Aspects of Gilgeam, five divine aspects imprisoned by Gilgeam in case he should perish. One such aspect is buried deep in the bowels of Unthalass's catacombs in the spelljamming vessel the Untheric pantheon used to travel to Toril.

- **The Many Possible Deaths of Lord Khemenet:** Following the taking of Unthalass, the Three Thunders, assassins dedicated to Hoar, decide to eliminate the threat of invasion by killing the Lord of occupied Unther. Their plan revolves around stirring up unrest among the locals of Unthalass before setting fire to the Lord's Palace in the Port District. The Players get wind of this plot when they over hear one of the Three Thunders telling stories of the atrocities committed by Lord Khemenet and the Mulhorandi while in charge (most of which are false, although the occupying soldiers have committed minor acts of destruction and theft).

The Players can either assist or hinder the uprising and assassination attempt. The Three Thunders will attempt to infiltrate the palace during the uprising and will start fires inside it and set traps. They will then chase Lord Khemenet through the palace so that he dies in one of the traps or the fire. If the Three Thunders are successful the Mulhorandi crack down upon Unthalass will be severe with many executions among the local populace, an event the Three Thunders will not have foreseen or want to occur.

"Skara" the silver dragon in disguise will attempt to hamper the assassination attempt when the Three Thunders infiltrate the palace.

Should the Players hinder the Three Thunders or dissuade them from the attempt then Setites within the Mulhorandi administration in the palace will foment unrest among the population, make the assassination attempt themselves and blame it on "Skara", the Players, or the Three Thunders.

No matter the result of the assassination attempt (success or not) the Mulhorandi backlash against the people in Unthalass will be severe, curfews will be imposed, arrests will be made, and executions will take place to dissuade further unrest.

Scenario 4: Battle of Red Haven

Commander Abasi-Retep takes the main force of the Mulhorandi army north, towards Messempar and the last bastion of organised resistance in Unther. Commander Steeldice takes her mercenary forces west to occupy the remaining settlements of Unther.

Abasi-Retep's forces first encounter the ruins of Red Haven on their journey northwards. Red Haven was destroyed by a tsunami generated by the eruption of the Ship of the Gods volcano in the Alamber Sea. The ruins are now a haven for pirates and other villainous scum that prey on the surrounding area.

Abasi-Retep recognises the possibility of Thayan encroachment using these lawless elements and so decides to attack the pirates while they are at anchor.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (2000 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and a Spear.
- **Mulhorand, Regulars (1000 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield.

- **Mulhorand, Cavalry (480 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Spear, Shortbow, Light Wooden Shield. Mounted on 250 two-man chariots.
- **Independent, Pirates (500 CN hm Swashbuckler 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Long Swords, Daggers, Short Bows

1372 Flamerule 26: The Mulhorandi forces arrive on the outskirts of Red Haven. Abasi-Retep orders the pirates to surrender or else be exterminated. The pirates stand their ground; Mulhorandi cavalry moves towards the beach to cut off their retreat to the ships, hidden trenches in the ground destroy many chariots.

The fighting in the ruins is fierce and brutal as the pirates attempt to move their goods onto the ships and then retreat. Casualties are even at 50 pirates, and 50 regulars. The pirates flee the field by ship and return after the Mulhorandi have left.

Side Quests:

- **The Snake Pirates:** About 10 wereserpents are among the pirates in Red Haven. These lycanthropes are all worshippers of Set and made inroads amongst the pirates when the settlement of Sampranasz was destroyed by the tsunami caused by the Ship of the Gods eruption.

Shortly following the tsunami, the pirates of the Alamber Sea settled in Sampranasz and a number were infected with lycanthropy by the survivors they captured, now these infected wereserpents obey the orders of sarrukh dotted around Mulhorand (and making inroads into Unther) whenever they enter a settlement to restock.

During a fight with a pirate, there is a 1% chance that the Player's opponent is a wereserpent and should they inflict enough damage the pirate will change into his animal form (and attempt to escape).

Any attempts to report the wereserpents are met with derision and disbelief by the administrative aides of the generals. Official reports regarding the matter are lost or destroyed to cover up the Player's findings.

Scenario 5: The Occupation of Shussel

In the month of Uktar in 1370 DR, a strange mist descended upon the settlement of Shussel which was occupied by the forces of Lord Gudea from Ssintar. The entire population of the settlement, including the occupying army disappeared and have not been heard from since. Shussel has since lain abandoned and the area around it has degenerated into a barren desert.

Commander Abasi-Retep seeks to hold the forces of Free Unther here at Shussel should they ever choose to mobilise from their capital in Messemparr. He awaits the arrival of Commander Steeldice and then together the combined forces will march on Messemparr.

- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (2000 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and a Spear.
- **Mulhorand, Regulars (950 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield.
- **Mulhorand, Cavalry (330 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Spear, Shortbow, Light Wooden Shield. Mounted on 250 two-man chariots.

1372 Elesias 17: The Mulhorandi forces arrive at the walls of Shussel. The gates are open and the city is largely abandoned. Bandits, smugglers, and sahuagin war among the streets for what little of value remains in the city. The forces of Mulhorand quickly scour the city clean with the loss of only 100 slaves, they immediately begin rebuilding the port and fortifying the city.

Scenario 6: Battle of the Western Journey

Beginning in Flamerule the forces of Commander Abasi-Retep and Commander Steeldice set off towards their respective targets. Kendera Steeldice heads west towards Ssintar and Dalath.

Following the trail that borders Smoking Mountains, Kendera Steeldice and her mercenaries come under organised attack by packs of draconic creatures and units of goblinoids.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (1,500 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty.
- **Independent, Blue Spawn Ambushers (20):**
- **Independent, Goblins (200 CE goblin Warrior 1):** Armed with Spears
- **Independent, Hobgoblins (100 CE hobgoblin Fighter 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Long Swords, Light Wooden Shields, Spears
- **Independent, Bugbears (50 CE bugbears):** Armed with Studded Leather, Great Club

1372 Flamerule 5: The Mercenary forces marching along the trail are ambushed

from the east by hidden Blue Spawn Ambushers that surface and blast the mercenaries with lightning. At the same time hobgoblin forces from the west charge into the mercenary flanks.

Casualties are high on the mercenary side with 100 mercenaries lost and only 50 goblins and 20 hobgoblins killed. Kendera Steeldice is forced to retreat back to Unthalass, wait out the winter and continue next year with reinforcements.

Side Quests:

- **Gilgeam's Return:** In the month of Ches in 1373 DR Lord Zimrilim, former High Priest of Gilgeam returns to Unthalass with a white staff topped with an ankh. Zimrilim uses his contacts among the agents of Bane hidden in the city to fight off the Cult of Tiamat and gain access to the Pit of Many Colours. Using the Ankh of Life, Zimrilim resurrects Gilgeam's corpse which lies at the bottom of the pit.

Unfortunately for Zimrilim, the Pit of Many Colours and the lingering effects of the Time of Troubles corrupts the magic and Gilgeam returns as an undead juggernaut of destruction.

This dead god returned wreaks havoc throughout Unthalass, particularly the Palace District, as it attempts to find the Aspect of Gilgeam it believes is hidden in the catacombs.

Eventually Gilgeam is driven from Unthalass/leaves of his own accord and heads north west towards Chessenta (there is another aspect imprisoned in the depths of the Adder Swamp).

This event combined with the earlier Gilgeam's Aspect side-quest set off a chain of events with various organisations (The Church of Gilgeam, The Church of Hoar, The Church of the Dark Lady) searching Faerûn for the remaining imprisoned aspects so that they can destroy them and prevent Gilgeam's return, or absorb them and hasten his return.

Killing an aspect of Gilgeam is not enough as this will cause that portion of his soul to join with the nearest free aspect. His soul must be drained and destroyed using an artefact such as the Spear of Bane.

Gilgeam's remaining aspects are in the Raurin Desert (in the same prison as Enlil), in the Great Dale in one of the Barrows, and another is imprisoned in the eastern Shaar.

Scenario 7: The Siege of Ssintar and Surrender of Dalath

In the month of Ches in 1370 DR, Lord Gudea and his army marched from Ssintar towards Shussel to combat his rival Lord Ekur. This left the town of Ssintar largely unprotected and so when the Smoking Mountains became active once again in 1372 DR, the town had no defence against a tribe of Kir-Lanan that swooped in and slaughtered the remaining inhabitants and set up a base with which to raid the surrounding region.

After spending the winter of 1372 DR in Unthalass, resupplying and reinforcing, Kendera Steeldice begins her campaign once again to occupy Ssintar and Dalath. She decides to take the long route via Red Haven and leave the hobgoblin tribes alone.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (1,400 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty.
- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (500 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and Spears
- **Independent, Kir-Lanan (100 CE Kir-Lanan Fighter 1):** Armed with Spears

1373 Tarsakh 13: The Mercenary forces near the town of Ssintar when gargoyle-like creatures as black as night swoop over the marching columns and rain down spears and boulders upon the soldiers. 50 slaves are killed during the march.

1373 Tarsakh 16: Mercenary troops reach the walls of Ssintar and find the town deserted. The Kir-Lanan are easily hidden among the black ash covered buildings of Ssintar and ambush the troops as they secure the settlement. 30 Kir-Lanan are killed and the rest driven off, the mercenaries lose 200 slaves and 100 mercenary troops.

1373 Flamerule 1: The Mercenary forces arrive at the walls of Dalath which immediately surrenders without resistance.

Side Quests:

- **The Spear of Bane:** Hidden beneath the town of Dalath lies the now vacant lair of Maladraedior. The great blue wyrm, chosen of Kereska, has now left Dalath to claim the title of Suzerain of the Old Empires. His old lair is now devoid of most of its treasure except for one single artefact that Maladraedior could not easily transport.
The spear itself is a personal artefact of the being known as Bane before he ascended to godhood. It has the power to drain the life (and soul) of any

creature it strikes and is one of the few weapons powerful enough to kill an avatar.

It also drains the life of any who hold it for any length of time and so Maladraedior opted to leave it behind. The empty lair it now occupies is filled with magic traps and construct guardians that you would expect of a Chosen of the draconic god of magic.

Curiously the Spear of Bane has been affecting the town of Dalath in Maladraedior's absence and its magic is absorbing the souls of all that perish while in the town. These empty husks then animate as undead of various types and have been running amok among the town.

The inhabitants of Dalath (the merchant families Ramahireh and Kalmarak are prominent in this town) implore Kendera (who asks the party if they are present) to investigate what is causing the undead plague,

Unfortunately everyone in the town is under a geas not to reveal the location of Maladraedior's lair, and in fact that same geas also causes them to hamper the party's efforts at investigation in subtle, non-violent ways (giving them incorrect directions etc).

Scenario 8: The Battle of Messempar

The forces of Commander Steeldice and Commander Abasi-Retep unite in Shussel in the month of Tarsakh in 1374 DR, they then march on the last bastion of organised resistance in Unther in order to complete their conquest. The forces of Mulhorand have been re-supplied and reinforced by ship.

Forces Involved:

- **Mulhorand, Slave Troops (3000 N hm Commoner 1):** Armed with Leather Armour and a Spear.
- **Mulhorand, Regulars (1500 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Light Wooden Shield.
- **Mulhorand, Cavalry (350 N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Shirt, Scimitar, Spear, Shortbow, Light Wooden Shield. Mounted on 250 two-man chariots.
- **Mulhorand, Mercenaries (1,000 N hm Fighter 1-3):** Chessentan mercenaries. Armament varies according to specialty.
- **Free Unther, Rebel Troops (1000, N hm Fighter 1):** Armed with Chain Mail, Long Sword, Light Steel Shield.

- **Free Unther, Banite Templars (500, LE hm Fighter 1/Cleric 1):** Armed with Chain Mail, Long Sword, Light Steel Shield
- **Free Unther Rebels of the Moon (500, LG hm Warrior 1):** Armed with Studded Leather, Long Sword, Short Bow.
- **Free Unther Legion of Nanna Sin (1000, LG Aasimar Paladin 1):** Armed with Chain Mail, Long Sword, Light Steel Shield.
- **Free Unther Serpent Guards (50, LE hm Fighter 2):** Armed with Two Handed Swords and Dragonhide Breastplates.

Tarsakh 8: The forces of Mulhorand engage the troops of Free Unther on the field of battle outside Messemparrar. 1000 rebel troops and 500 Banite Templars from Mourktar face off against the entire Mulhorandi army.

The battle is long and bloody. The magical armaments supplied by the Red Wizards allow the forces of Free Unther to deal heavy damage to the Mulhorandi cavalry using single charge wands of fireballs. Over 100 members of the cavalry are lost and the rest are forced to flee.

The slave troops and regulars of the Mulhorandi army slam into the lines of Free Unther where the superior equipment of the troops of Free Untheric pays off. Over 200 rebel troops are killed, but nearly 800 slaves and 100 regulars of the Mulhorandi are lost to death or severe injury.

The mercenary troops carry the day by using missile fire to soften up the battle lines of Free Unther during the fighting, this leads to the deaths of a further 50 rebel troops and 50 Banite Templars. The forces of Free Unther retreat behind the magically reinforced walls of Messemparrar.

Tarsakh 18: The siege preparations are complete and Mulhorand unleashes the force of its siege engines. The rock throwers are unable to breach the walls but do deal some casualties to the forces of Unther with a further 50 rebel troops perishing.

Siege towers attempt to take the walls but are repelled by magic supplied by the Red Wizards of Thay once again (wands of viscid globs stick the siege engines in place).

Tarsakh 19: The Legion of Nanna-Sin reappears in the middle of Shussel and quickly subdues the Mulhorandi garrison left there. A sizable portion of the legion is left behind to defend Shussel from Mulhorandi attempts to retake it. The rest of the legion marches north towards Messemparrar where they are joined by the Rebels of

the Moon (led by Ningal).

With the supply lines of Mulhorand now severed the Mulhorandi army has trouble supplying itself from the barren fields of the Northern Plains.

Tarsakh 23: Using mercenary infiltrators combined with a siege attack, the forces of Mulhorand succeed in taking a section of the walls of Messempar but suffer heavy losses thanks to the defending actions of the Serpent Guard (loyal to Tiglath). The walls however are quickly retaken by Free Unther using a horde of creatures summoned by the Northern Wizards.

Tarsakh 24: Therescales and a number of the Northern Wizards are executed by Luthcheq during a meeting with the Magus Society. Luthcheq had infiltrated the Magus Society long ago and was using it to entrap powerful magic users.

Tarsakh 26: The Legion of Nanna-Sin arrives to the rear of the Mulhorandi army and skirmishing begins. With their cavalry forces severely depleted, the Mulhorandi are unable to force the Legion of Nanna-Sin to commit to battle.

Tarsakh 29: The forces of Free Unther sally forth against the besieging Mulhorandi. The Legion of Nanna-Sin attacks from the rear. The result of this battle is a stalemate. The legion of Nanna-Sin loses 400 paladins and the Rebels of the Moon lose 200 warriors compared to the loss of 300 mercenaries and the rest of the cavalry by Mulhorand. The slaves of Mulhorand lose a further 300 men and rout the field fleeing into the wilds. Free Unther loses a further 100 rebel troops.

The reason for the devastating losses among the mercenaries and legion of Nanna-Sin is that during the battle, the green dragon Skuthosiin swooped down out of the Methwood and landed amid the fighting mercenaries and paladins. That day she took her revenge against hundreds of the former inhabitants of Ssintar that made up the Legion of Nanna-Sin. Once satisfied that she had slain the impudent human that had wounded her with an arrow many years previously, she left the fighting with barely a scratch.

Side Quests:

- **The End of Kendera Steeldice:** Again the Three Thunders are present on the battlefield among the Untheric and Mulhorandi forces. The Players should recognise these assassins if they have met them before, if not they may be witness to the attempt on Kendera's life which could take place at any point

during the siege, particularly if Kendera is participating in front line combat (which is certainly possible).

The Three Thunders seek to kill Kendera Steeldice for her crimes against the people of Unther. Should the players vouch for Kendera and explain that her actions have mitigated the consequences that could have befallen Unther (Lord Khemenet being a particularly self righteous man would have been far less lenient with the enemy) then the Three Thunders will alter their plans.

If persuaded not to kill Kendera Steeldice then they will instead attack the Banite Templars present on the side of Unther (the Banites of Mourktar have persecuted the faithful of Hoar for over a decade) and weaken the defence of Messemparr.

If Kendera Steeldice should be slain then Skara will be on hand to take her place (using his Alternate Form ability) to preserve morale among the Mulhorandi.

Aftermath: Following the fighting the three armies retreat to their various corners of the field. Neither side now has enough men to gain victory, the forces of Free Unther and Mulhorand are evenly matched and Mulhorand does not have the manpower to finish the siege, likewise Free Unther does not have enough men to break the siege.

The siege continues for several months without either side making any further assaults or sallying attempts. Messemparr is regularly supplied by food from its allies and so the siege becomes meaningless as the populace are unaffected.

In the month of Eleint 1374 DR the Untheric god Enlil returns to Toril. He briefly manifests above Messemparr and urges the two sides to cease their fighting. Then Enlil visits the home of Horus-Re where the two gods come to an accord and the Untheric and Mulhorandi pantheons merge.

The Pharaoh is advised that the ancient truce between Mulhorand and Unther is restored and the invading forces are to return home immediately.

Organisations

Ereshkigal's Lamia: Hidden beneath the streets of Unthalass is an ancient and powerful being known as Ereshkigal; the Queen of Torture. Long ago Ereshkigal was a member of the Untheric Pantheon, but she was cursed for a crime to never set foot in the light of Unther again.

Changed into the terrible form of a lamia noble, Ereshkigal perverted the curse and continued to live in Unther in the shadows and the catacombs of Unthalass.

Long she plagued the city, unwittingly aided by Gilgeam who never bothered repairing the damage to Unthalass, merely building atop the ruins. Ereshkigal would send her lamia children to steal entire households from the city for merely whispering her name, for the cursed creature was terrified that should anyone utter her name she would be discovered by the gods and punished yet again.

Ereshkigal does not allow anyone in her domain and sends her forces (lamia, wererats, undead, and other intelligent denizens of the dark and the deeps) against those who dare trespass. For many years she has been engaged in an underground war with the Church of the Dark Lady, but their cooperation and experimentation with dragons has meant the battles often result in a stalemate.

Should the Players set foot in the catacombs of Unthalass for any reason then Ereshkigal's wererat servants will sniff them out and report back to Ereshkigal, within a week the party will be the target of repeated attacks by her forces until they are dead or have left the city. These attacks always occur at night and they come up from below through the sewers and secret doors that litter the streets of Unthalass.

The Cult of Set: The Church of Set has no presence within Unther as yet, but a number of administrators sent to Unthalass with the invasion forces are devout and loyal Set worshippers.

These evil cultists are under orders to undermine the Mulhorandi occupation of Unther and place blame on other parties. The Setite administrators will foment unrest in the towns under Mulhorandi control and plant false evidence pointing towards the Players or NPCs allied with the players.

Should the Players realise agents within the Mulhorandi administration are working against them and attempt to complain to Lord Khemenet then they will discover that most of the administration is working against them and their meetings will be delayed, blocked, or prevented by any means possible.

Short of the Players assaulting the palace by force they will be unable to gain an audience with Lord Khemenet and will have no other recourse against the hostile administration.

The Setites are careful and have no symbols or other effects linking them to the worship of Set. A number of the administrative staff are wereserpents who receive their orders telepathically from Sarrukh in the catacombs beneath the surface of Unthalass' streets.

The Church of the Dark Lady: The Cult of Tiamat in Unthalass and Firetrees is firmly under the control of Shudu-Ab. She is loyal to the Dragon King of Unthalass, Storum'aelix, and will use all means at her disposal to defend Unther.

This branch of the church is known as the True Church of the Dark Lady and its ranks are filled mostly with commoners armed with whatever possessions they have. These are typically mean, evil petty minded people of common status that enjoy bullying other people. They are fanatically devoted to the worship of Tiamat and will fight (not very effectively) to the death in most cases.

The True Church is responsible for much of the kidnappings and slavery in Unthalass, and they act as a police force enforcing the will of Storum'aelix.

In Messemparr is a completely different sect known as the Church of the Dark Lady, run by the original high priestess, Tiglath. This branch of the church focuses on rebellion and anarchy. During Gilgeam's rule they were the primary force of opposition for the common people of Unther.

Now that Gilgeam is dead, Tiglath is shifting the focus of the church towards rebelling against evil and tyranny, in particular resisting the invading forces of the Mulhorandi. As such she has allied her small church with the council of Messemparr in the hopes that she can gain a measure of power in return after the invasion is over.

The Whispers of Hoar: This organisation is a secret organisation, and relatively new in the land of Unther. Despite their recent spread they have a numerous and resourceful membership comprising the commoners and artisans of Unther.

The Whispers of Hoar to the outside have seemingly conflicting goals. Their members could be found in Unthalass aiding the Mulhorandi in infiltrating the city, next they could be helping start the fires at the governors palace in the Port District, in Messemparr they are likely to be found sabotaging the siege engines of the Mulhorandi and the bombards of the Red Wizards.

However actually identifying a Whisperer of Hoar is exceedingly difficult. They work by helping others achieve the desired goal, either by providing equipment or money (a

much needed item left in the appropriate place), or advice (a whispered comment from a passer-by), or extra help (a group of commoners that just happened to be directed down the wrong street).

In the end the Whispers of Hoar work towards Unther for the people of Unther, and hopefully ruled by Hoar. They do not like the Mulhorandi invaders, nor do they like the Church of the Dark Lady and so work against them wherever possible, especially if they can set the two against one another.

If the party are working on the side of Unther then on any crucial check (ability, attack, skill, save, etc) the Player's receive a +2 circumstance bonus from an unknown source. If the party get themselves into danger then help will be given to get them to safety, but it is always from what appears to be the common people of Unther.

Should the party be working on the side of Mulhorand then on crucial checks the Player's suffer a -2 circumstance penalty as random passers-by hinder their attempts.

NPCS

Abasi-Retep (CN hm Fighter 6/Pious Templar of Anhur 4): Following General Bokasin's death, Abasi-Retep was appointed Anhur's representative during the invasion.

He is not as measured, controlled, or experienced as Bokasin was, but he more than makes up for this in his fierce anti-Horus rhetoric and pure luck on the field of battle.

Abasi-Retep recognises Kendera's genius in battle tactics and so naturally defers to her advice when she is on the field. He cares not a whit for the priests of Horus-Re and their politics, he only cares that Mulhorand wins and that Anhur is properly honoured for its role.

While not always leading from the front, he ensures that he is present at the strategic points during a battle and that his personal guard are used to great effect defending important strategic points.

In battle he wields a massive khopesh that has severed many a head from its body. He refuses to ride a horse and so gains much respect from the common soldier for marching with them, his tireless marching enables armies to cover a greater distance than normal as none wish to fail their commander.

General Bokasin (N hm Fighter 12/Cleric 10 of Anhur): At the time of the start of the conquest of Unther, General Bokasin is the leading general of Anhur's armed forces. With so much riding on the conquest of Unther for the Church of Anhur, it is not surprising that they send their best man to lead the expedition.

Unfortunately the Church of Horus-Re did not want to let the Anhurites take all the glory and so Vizier Mardikan beseeched the Pharaoh to ensure the Church of Horus-Re had an equal presence among the conquest. They of course sent their best man as well, but Lord Khemenet proved less than competent as a general. With the Church of Horus providing the bulk of the slave troops and finance for the conquest, General Bokasin is often forced to defer to the decisions of Lord Khemenet.

A humble man of meagre means, he wears ancient and battered armaments that are relics of his family. In combat he is a truly terrifying opponent, but it is his quiet consideration of the facts of battle that make him a dangerous general (for the enemy).

He works with what he has and when forced to he will perform quite risky manoeuvres but always with himself leading from the front.

During the siege of Unthalass, General Bokasin is quick to take advantage of the death of Storum'aelix, by leading a charge on the heavily defended walls. He personally takes the first section himself and battles his way to the gatehouse but is slain by poison used by the cultists of Tiamat.

Kendera Steeldice (LG hf Paladin 11 of Red Knight): A mercenary from Tethyr, this courageous woman is a tactical genius on the battlefield. Originally the second in command of the Gold Swords mercenary company, she was elevated to commander of the company in the month of Marpenoth in the Year of the Helm (1362 DR) when her company was ambushed by cultists of Set and other mercenaries in their employ.

The attack was swift and precise and many of the Gold Swords perished that day, including the commander. Kendera rallied the remains of her men and charged into the ranks of the enemy. Sheer luck and determination helped her win the battle that day and for saving the life of the Pharaoh she (and her unit) were given a special place of honour among the armies of Mulhorand (much to the annoyance of Rezim).

Since that day there have been whispers that the Pharaoh is enamoured with Kendera, and her special position among the normally very traditional hierarchy of Mulhorand

may support this rumour.

Kendera cares deeply about the well being of the men that are under her command, but she understands that sometimes sacrifices are necessary. She leads by example and would never ask a soldier to undertake a mission she would not be willing to perform herself.

If the PCs prove themselves capable and honourable (whether they are on the side of Mulhorand or not) then she will treat them with honour in return.

Kendera wears a red suit of field plate that has been enspelled to reduce the effects of the hot environment of the Old Empires, She sits astride an enormous horse that she calls Torus, and her sword (called "Avakxun") appears to be forged of a glowing light that passes through armour and flesh as if it were paper. The sword was a gift from the Pharaoh forged by the Church of Horus-Re as a reward for saving the Pharaoh's life.

Lord Khemenet (LG hm Paladin 8/Glorious Servitor 7 of Horus-Re): While Lord Khemenet is a good and true man, who is very capable at combating evil in single combat; he is a completely incompetent battle commander and cannot see beyond the length of his sword.

As typical for a Mulan, he is an elitist, and as typical for a follower of Horus-Re he believes in the eternity of tradition. Thus he routinely dismisses the opinions of anyone that is not male, is not of Mulan descent, and who is not a worshipper of Horus-Re. Anyone that does not meet these requirements is not worthy of his attention and so he ignores them as unimportant.

Lord Khemenet believes himself to be supremely important in the battle plans of Mulhorand, and has therefore taking it upon himself to ensure he and his personal guard have the best armaments available. As Lord Khemenet does not wish to risk himself being killed in combat (and therefore severely hampering the conquest of Unther), these magical artefacts may as well not have been deployed.

Lord Khemenet always rides in the Chariot of Horus (a horseless, flying chariot that sports two golden golem like protectors) and carries the Spear of Hamenotep (a magical spear that emits sunlight upon command and strikes fear into opponents that see it). His armour is known as the Sarcophagus of Ra as it was fashioned from the remains of the armour worn by Ra and sundered during his battle with Gruumsh

during the Orcgate Wars; it has never been pierced by any weapon since that date and regenerates the wounds of its wearer.

Following the conquest of Unthalass, General Khemenet becomes Lord Khemenet of the Province of Greenfields until such a time as a Precept can be decided upon to represent Mulhorands rule of that region.

Sterllerskarand (LG juvenile silver dragon male Paladin 1): This juvenile silver dragon is a recently joined member of the Talons of Justice, and the only representative of that organisation in the Old Empires.

"Skara" as he is known in his human form as a Mulan soldier of unknown origin, travels Unther attempting to right wrongs and root out the evils of Tiamat.

Still rash and hot-headed, he seeks to temper the evils of war in this region and root out the evil of Tiamat wherever he can find it. Using his Alternate Form ability he will be present in all battles involving the cultists of Tiamat (on the opposing side), wherever possible he will appear as a mercenary working for Kendera Steeldice (whom he respects and is growing to love).

During the latter months of 1372 DR he remains in Unthalass with Kendera and her mercenaries where he will become involved in the assassination of Lord Khemenet.

The Three Thunders (LE hm Rogue 7/ Assassin 4): These three followers of Hoar have been dispatched by the Hand of Hoar in Mourktar. They were sent to mete out justice to the invading Mulhorandi by ensuring their deaths at the hands of those they would conquer.

These three never refer to themselves by name only as Hoar's First, Hoar's Second, and Hoar's Third in the order that they joined the faithful of Hoar. They arrange natural accidents (landslides, lightning strikes) and stir up unrest among the people of Unther so that they might slay the Mulhorandi soldiers.

If the players are affiliated with the clergy of Hoar then they may have a means to contact The Three Thunders (as provided by their superiors) if so they would be willing to directly assassinate individuals on behalf of the players, providing they can give justification for such a killing (they must have wronged someone).

If the players are in Unthalass from 1372 DR onwards they may encounter The Three Thunders in their attempt to assassinate Lord Khemenet.

The only thing The Three Thunders like to kill more than the Mulhorandi invaders are Banites, and during the final battle at Messempar it is likely this trio of assassins will be attempting to snuff out the life of battle commanders and Banite templars while hiding in the ranks of either side.

The Knights Below: Adventure Path - Episode 5

Overview: The party travel by themselves or are escorted by Araevil and or Hawkeye (depending on the negotiations with the elder of Small Trees) to the clearing on the southern shore of the River Rauvin in the Upper Rauvin Vale.

It is nearing dusk by the time the party reach the tree-line of the High Forest's boundaries and all can see the orange glow of fire in the distance.

The orcs are attacking Maxar's Farm and they have surrounded the building and have set it alight.

The Environment: The farm house is 150 ft from the tree line. It is a two story, wooden house that is surrounded by a circle of orcs carrying torches, many of which

have been thrown onto the house to set it alight.

A DC 15 Perception related check will reveal that two orcs are dragging two humanoid shapes away from the farm towards the tree-line (towards the party), the humanoid shapes are struggling wildly but the orcs are too strong.

A DC 18 Perception related check reveals the sound of a human voice coming from inside the farm building itself.

The NPCs: After 5 rounds of battle Maxar will arrive.

- *Maxar (NG hm Exp2):* Maxar has been a farmer his entire life after inheriting the farmstead from his father. Maxar and his son Maxim are cursed with lycanthropy although both were born with the affliction which first manifests during puberty or times of great stress.

Maxim has incredible physical strength in his werebear and hybrid form, and the resistance to damage he possesses has enabled him and his ancestors to hold their farm this close to the dangers of the High Forest.

Maxar wears no armour and carries no weapons.

The Enemy: A total of 20 orcs are attacking the farm house. The orcs are from the Axebiter Clan of the High Forest and all are Fighter 1 armed with Studded Leather armour and wielding a Battleaxe, with 2 Throwing Axes at their belts. All weapons and armour carried by the orcs have the fragile condition.

The orcs are led by a Barbarian 2, wearing a Chain Shirt and carrying a Greataxe.

The Captives: Two of the orcs are approaching the party and are 100 ft away from the main group. If the party can eliminate them with ranged weapons on the same initiative count (ready an action to all fire at the same time) then the orcs do not get a chance to scream for help.

If the two orcs do survive the first attack then they will begin screaming and the DM should roll a DC 15 Perception related check to see if the orcs hear their comrade's screams.

The two humanoids held by the two orcs are Maxar's wife and daughter, they explain that Maxim (Maxar's son) is still at the farm and they ask the party to rescue him. The orcs attacked the farm with a smaller force an hour ago and Maxar chased after them, but this larger group of orcs came shortly after and is now burning the farm.

The party can sneak up on the remaining orcs with a Stealth related check (the orcs are at a negative penalty to notice them but this penalty decreases the closer the party get to the orcs.

Once combat is engaged the party have 10 rounds to defeat the orcs and save the boy, Maxim (who is Maxar's son) who is in the burning building. After 10 rounds Maxim will become unconscious from smoke inhalation. After a further 10 rounds he will perish.

After 5 rounds, Maxar will return to find his farm on fire, he will immediately begin attacking the orcs. Maxar is in his hybrid bear form when he returns.

The Farm: Once inside the building A PC notices the building is filled with smoke but there are no fires on the first floor yet. In front of them is a stair case leading to the second floor, once on the second floor PC's must make a DC 15 (+1 per consecutive check) Fortitude save every 10 rounds or spend a round choking and then require a further check next round (2 consecutive rounds choking causes 1d6 nonlethal damage). The boy will be using the PC's Reflex save as the PC will have to help him, he has 15 hit points

On the 2nd floor there are 5 doors leading off the hallway (the lad is trapped behind the 3rd door; a DC 16 Perception related check is required to hear the lad choking). The 5th door is a backdraft danger (DC 20 Perception check to see the smoke wisps or feel the heat behind the door) which if opened causes 3d6 fire damage in a 30 foot radius spread (Reflex DC 15, half). The 3rd door upon opening reveals the lad laying on the floor choking, the room is filled with heavy smoke.

If the PC tries to take the lad back down the stairs then the floor collapses on the landing (DC 15 Reflex save to jump clear otherwise 1d6 fall damage +1d6 fire damage, and they land in the kitchen on the first floor). Once they reach the bottom of the stairs they are near the exit when the ceiling collapses on them (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid, fail means 1d6 damage from debris +1d6 fire damage and they are trapped taking 1d3 fire damage per round until freed with a DC 20 Str check.

The Aftermath: Following the battle at Maxar's Farm, the party will either have rescued all of Maxar's family, or only some of it. If everyone is rescued then Maxar is elated, he cannot thank the party enough and promises a life-long debt to the party.

If only some of Maxar's family is rescued then Maxar is overcome with grief.

Either way Maxar (and his family) will make the long trip to safety now that their house is smoking ruins. If everyone has survived then Maxar will be incredibly happy and chatty, if not then he will be sullen and depressed.

At this point Hawkeye and Araevil will depart the group and leave to return home.

The Knights Below: Campaign Journal

Our journey to Maxar's Farm was not quite as easy as we would have liked. On the second day Crag's moaning about the lack of food prompted a short rest while Hawkeye and Araevil foraged for supplies.

During their absence the continued grumbling of Crag's stomach must have alerted a nearby wandering orc party to our presence, because we could hear a number of them charging through the forest in the opposite direction.

Hawkeye and Araevil returned and we quickly marched as fast as we could towards the safety of Maxar's Farm.

When we arrived we could not have been more wrong about reaching safety. A war party of orcs that must have been twenty or more strong was burning down Maxar's Farm, and even worse two orcs were approaching our hiding place inside the tree line and they carried the struggling forms of two women.

Carefully, Hawkeye, Araevil, Markus, Mikhail, Wystan, and Tallyn all readied their bows. Chadwick and Crag prepared a javelin and dagger to throw as well. With a nod of the head the weapons flew towards their marks. Only one arrow went astray and accidentally struck the woman on her leg. Her scream appeared to please the orcs surrounding the farm who threw more burning torches onto the farmhouse.

Slowly we crept forwards inch by inch getting ready to unleash the attack. We could have only been within 60 feet when Crag stood upright swearing he could hear a voice coming from the burning building. Crag hearing voices was nothing new, and it usually meant trouble.

We unleashed arrows and spells at the orcs who immediately charged us now that Crag had given away our position. Tallyn summoned his ape like ally who he had took to calling "Beast", quickly followed by a very large cat like creature who we affectionately named "Tiddles" because of his penchant for ripping off the faces and tearing out the throats of any orcs nearby.

The melee was joined and surprisingly we had the upper hand. Araevil and Hawkeye were as adept with the sword as they were with the bow. Crag however had other ideas and ran towards the house as fast as he could travel. With a sprint and a leap he crashed through a ground floor window and into the burning building. He was followed shortly after by a very large, dangerous looking orc with a huge axe.

Inside the building Crag made straight for the stairs, smoke filled the house and made it difficult to breathe or even see. He did not notice the orc coming up behind him, unimpeded by the smoke filled room.

Bounding up the steps Crag kicked open the first door only to be met with a wall of flame. Crag's quick reflexes allowed him to sidestep safely behind the wall, but the orc pursuing him wasn't so lucky and was consumed by fire, his thrashing caused him to collapse through the weakened floor at the top of the steps which blocked off Crag's escape.

Crag then carefully checked the remaining doors for heat and listened for the sound

of crying. Crag found the lad collapsed behind a door to one of the bedrooms, and after a quick rummage through a chest under the bed, he carried the boy to a window and prepared to jump.

Meanwhile outside we were shocked to hear the sounds of a huge bear that came crashing through the forest pursuing two bloodied and fearful orcs fleeing for their lives. They both died beneath the crushing jaws of the immense bipedal bear like creature, as did at least five other orcs before the rest ran off into the trees.

We looked to the building just in time to see Crag standing at the window of the upper floor. Moments later the floor gave way and Crag and a scrawny teenage lad he was carrying fell through to the ground floor as the floor they were standing on gave way.

We all rushed over to find an unconscious Crag covered in pieces of burning wood with a confused black bear in the far corner of the room. Upon seeing the much larger bear, the two creatures embraced in a curiously human display of affection before both transformed before our very eyes into a man and his son.

We quickly gathered up Crag's weighted bulk and dragged it out of the house as it burned and collapsed to the ground.

No one noticed the newly acquired animal bite marks that covered Crag's shoulder, but they would become an important reminder of Crag's affliction in the months to come.

Following a short rest and the expert healing ministrations of Wystan, we packed up and headed to safety.

Credits

Dragons of the South: Alasklerbanbastos "The Great Bone Wyrn" G.Dallison

Welcome to the Jungle: The Magic of Maztica T.J.Hild

When is a House Rule Not a House Rule: Skills G.Dallison

Alternate Dimension Presents: Old Empires - A History of Thay G.Dallison

The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path - Episode 4 G.Dallison

Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires - A Modern Timeline G.Dallison

(Original timeline by Eric Boyd)

Deities With a Difference: Set G.Dallison

Laerakond: The Hundar Isles G.Dallison

Rulesword: Trimming 3rd Edition One Step at a Time G.Dallison

Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Church of the Dark Lady G.Dallison

Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Conquest of Unther Campaign G.Dallison

The Knights Below: Adventure Path - Episode 5 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.

And congratulations to George Krashos for identifying the secret hidden across issues 1, 2, and 3, that Higenzi was in fact Zhengyi the Witch King in disguise (but only if you want her to be).

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.