

## ***Forgotten Realms Alternate Dimensions: Issue VI***

### **Editorial**

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

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

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## Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires – The Scribes' Guild

The most famous organisation in Mulhorand, outside of the various priesthoods, is The Eternal Divine Guild of Honoured Scribes.

Mulhorandi society is a complex web of alliances, pacts, friendships, and betrayals. Everyone is vying for position and power in the society of this decadent empire, and to the uninitiated it can seem quite mystifying.

The Pharaoh sits at the top and beneath him sit the nobles who are taken from the various priesthoods of the Mulhorandi pantheon, for in Mulhorand, divinity and nobility are one in the same and those with a divine ancestry are at an advantage. Within these priesthoods there are various houses that vie for position to put their favoured candidates into the positions of power.

Running through all this is a single guild that links all these people together, the Scribes' Guild.

### **History of the Scribes' Guild**

The Scribes' Guild began shortly after the creation of Mulhorand in -2135 DR. When Ra chose the site for his capital of Skuld he needed a vast building project to begin. This task was delegated to the priests who in turn chose a number of educated citizens to organise and administrate this task.

This group of people became known as the Scribes' Guild for the vast amount of paper work (or papyrus work as it should be known) they created to record and organise the task.

This Scribes' Guild was soon relied upon to perform all the administrative tasks of the entire government of fledgling Mulhorand. The priests and nobles still maintained control of the upper offices of government, but the Guild of Scribes made up the administrative arm of government at both central and local level.

Only the scribes, priests and wizards knew almost the entire pictographic language of Mulhorand and so only they could read and participate in the insane levels of bureaucracy that were built up in that ancient empire.

Yet for all their usefulness the Scribes' Guild remained in the background of politics in Mulhorand. The priests and wizards of that realm shunned the guild as though it were beneath them, despite their reliance upon it to help them rule the country.

Following the uprising of the northern province of Priador and then the disasters of the Orcgate Wars and Set's rebellion, it was deemed by the newly appointed Horus-Re that the priesthood of Thoth would be responsible for all wizards in the land.

All wizards were and still are required to register at the nearest temple of Thoth and submit to regular inspections. Furthermore, the wizard in question must be able to prove his citizenship to Mulhorand or be barred from obtaining magical works from within Mulhorand (to prevent Mulhorand's secrets from being spread to outsiders such as Thay).

Such a task was beyond the priests of Thoth, and many felt the task was not something the priesthood should be doing, so again the priests turned to the Scribes' Guild. The Scribes' Guild of course agreed to the task and in so doing gained a massive influx of members from the wizards that it was now responsible for.

Consequently many priests suddenly desired to join the guild as well because of its newly prestigious membership roll (wizards being a greatly respected profession in Mulhorand). Suddenly anyone in a position of power was a member of the guild, and that trend has continued to the present day.

Now almost everyone in Mulhorand that wants position and power is part of this guild, and it is through this guild that the power struggles of daily life in Mulhorand are played out.

More recently with the escalation in violence between the priesthoods of Horus-Re and Anhur, the Pharaoh has been forced to dismiss many members of the priesthoods that had obtained high level positions in the central government in order to quell the violence. These priests have been replaced with educated slaves owned directly by people independent of the priesthoods (such as merchants, craftsmen, etc). In many cases these slaves are sympathetic to and even worship the Mulhorandi god Set, albeit in secret.

### **Organisation**

The organisation of the Scribes' Guild has now become a mirror of the hierarchy of Mulhorand. The highest ranking official in Mulhorand is the leader of the guild and determines guild policy to protect its members and ensure that the Scribes' Guild holds the most influential positions in government.

The head of the guild is known as the Keeper of the Divine Quill. This title is usually singular since it has been occupied for the last 7 centuries by the Vizier of Mulhorand. However in 1362 DR Mulhorand nearly erupted into civil war as the priesthoods of Horus-Re and Anhur battled for position in the wake of Rezim's execution. The result was the appointment of two Viziers; Mardikan for Horus-Re and Ramerthab for Anhur.

Beneath the position of Keeper of the Divine Quill are a number of positions for the Precepts of the provinces of Mulhorand. These members are known as Reader of the Immortal Word and there is a usually 16 Readers at any one time, although not all Precepts choose to become members of the Scribes' Guild (to their folly), with the recent acquisition of the Precept of Greenfields the membership are expecting new positions to become available.

Below the Readers are numerous other titles as follows in ascending order of importance; Wielder of the Art (a position held by notable wizards), Grasper of the Incarnate Horse, Holder of the Bucket (the lowest position and reference to cleaning out the toilet).

With the recent influx of independent (i.e. non priesthood owned) slaves into the lowest positions in the government administration, the membership of the Scribes' Guild has swelled. These slaves are all given the lowest position in the guild and are made to carry out the orders of their superiors but things could be set to change soon within the guild and Mulhorand as a whole.

**Members:** 56,949 (This comprises all of the lower levels of central and local government and many of the higher positions, consequently much of the modern guild is made up of educated slaves who are worshippers of Set).

**Leader:** Keeper of the Divine Quill; Mardikan, Keeper of the Divine Quill; Ramerthab. The guild is now polarised around these two leaders.

**Religions:** Any Mulhorandi (mostly Set)

**Alignment:** Mostly NE (previously N)

**Secrecy:** None

**Symbol:** A golden quill held by a human hand

### **Hierarchy**

Hierarchy of the order is strict and changes in guild position can only occur with a change in position in Mulhorand's government. Although many of these changes in government positions are brought about through the plots and manoeuvrings within the guild.

### **Motivation and Goals**

Until recently the Scribes' Guild sought to maintain the stranglehold on Mulhorand's government that it had spent the last few millennia building up.

It did this by offering position and status within the guild equal to a member's position within local and central government. Those who joined the guild had allies and contacts that those outside the guild did not.

The lowly scribes that make up the lower level administrative roles of government are famous for their ability to interpret and enact the vague instructions of their superiors. This ability is only possible because of the Guild of Scribes. Together the scribe's converse with each other and swap information so that the best course of action can be determined to meet the superior's actual desire.

Of course not all instructions are enacted so smoothly. Within the guild, affiliations to priesthoods, Houses, and general friendships mean that there is a constant shifting of factions and alliances with members trying to please their own masters (or arrange their downfall) and other groups working to foil those plans.

The downfall of Rezim was primarily due to the efforts of the Guild of Scribes' and Mardikan's contacts within the guild. Rezim alienated many members with his government policies and megalomania so it did not take long before the paper trail of various failures was pointed at Rezim and left in plain sight for the Pharaoh's attention.

With the Church of Set increasingly infiltrating the guild's lower levels the guild is now taking a new direction; to kill the Pharaoh and bring Mulhorand under Set's control.

### **Daily Tasks**

The daily work of a lowly scribe is well known in Mulhorand. It has become the norm for every conversation in government to be attended by a scribe who furiously scribbles down and documents the entire conversation which is neatly filed in the vast archives in Skuld (or the local government offices if it is local government).

Furthermore, any government document is transcribed by a member of the Scribes' Guild and copied multiple times for distribution (and entry into the archives), as a consequence the lower members of the guild are excellent at forging official documents and signatures.

The upper echelons of the guild are occupied by those in the upper echelons of power within central and local government. These priests and nobles still deem themselves above the menial tasks of most

scribes and use the guild as a network of allies and information primarily.

It is also the duty of scribes to ensure all magic scrolls containing Mulhorandi magic must be written in the pictographic script used on all official documents. This of course makes the scrolls completely unreadable to all but members of the Scribes' Guild and the priesthods of Mulhorand.

### **Equipment**

The Scribes' Guild effectively controls the government of Mulhorand and the local government of every province in Mulhorand. As such they have access to the entire arsenal of Mulhorand at their disposal. One simple requisition form and a battalion of fully armed Chessentan mercenaries can be at the ready within an hour.

The only unique asset at the Guild's disposal is the pictographic language they use on a daily basis.

### **Recruiting**

Recruitment into the Scribes' Guild is simple, one must pass the test to show you have the necessary skills for the tasks required, and then you are admitted to the guild at a level appropriate to your position within the government of Mulhorand. In reality only those joining the guild without government position take the tests. Those with position are almost guaranteed a place in the guild.

Obviously the tests for existing officials within the government are easier, and can even be performed by another scribe on your behalf if you have sufficient influence with existing ranked members of the guild.

**Southern Magic:** This supposedly alternative method of magic is nothing more than a uniquely difficult and complicated language that few in the realms outside of the Scribes' Guild will have any familiarity with.

All magic written down in Mulhorand has to be transcribed by an official member of the Scribes' Guild. There are regularly inspections to ensure this is done by all registered wizards in Mulhorand (those wizards that are not registered are banished, enslaved, executed, etc). The original copy is then destroyed and so only those able to read and write using the pictographic language of Mulhorand can then learn Mulhorandi spells.

To make things easier for themselves, the wizard members of the Scribes' Guild devised a variant of the Read Magic spell that could be used to read magic scrolls written in this language more easily. To give knowledge of this spell to outsiders is a crime punishable by instant death.

The pictographic language adds a +20 modifier to the DC of skill checks (such as a linguistic skill or arcane skill) to scribe or read anything written in this language (these checks include the scribing and reading of magic written in this language).

## The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path – Episode 5

After intercepting the decoy caravan the heroes continue on their way to Helgabal. Whether they turned east towards Goliad, or south towards Ostrav should not matter, for once they catch up to the caravan they will learn it is the wrong caravan and they should then head straight towards Helgabal as soon as possible, urged on by Gareth Dragonsbane.

### **Overview**

After several days travel the heroes should arrive at the settlement of Goliad. This small city is surrounded by thick stone walls and is the primary defensive settlement for Damara now that the Witch-King of Vaasa and his forces regularly breach the Bloodstone Pass to march into Damara.

It is at Goliad that the marauders of the Witch-King try to gain entry to the richer lands of Damara to the south and east, and it is here by the Ford of Goliad, that the thick stone walls of this city beat back the orc and human brigands time and again.

**Goliad (City, 2000):** Although smaller than Bloodstone Village, the city of Goliad is home to only 400 citizens, the rest are mercenaries and soldiers stationed at Goliad to protect Damara when the Witch-King and his men arrive each year.

Before the war, the fields surrounding Goliad were busy farms filled with crops and live-stock, now the majority are left bare for much of the year, and many of the farmsteads lie abandoned.

Goliad is ruled by Duke Ebelard Brandebury, ruler of the Duchy of Brandiar, and loyal supporter of King Viridin Bloodfeathers.

The few citizens of Goliad are hardy folk, as capable with a blade as they are with a shovel or a pen. The majority of the populace run the inns, taverns, and markets in this still busy trade hub at the junction of two rivers (The Goliad and Beaumaris).

Some unscrupulous people from outside Goliad are beginning to purchase the empty farmsteads for rock bottom prices as it costs too much for the farmers to rebuild the damage each year. Many feel they are taking advantage of the situation and intend to profit greatly when the war is over. In truth the Witch-King has purchased the lands in secret through his contacts for reasons yet unknown.

### **Ambush**

As the party pass through the fields on their way to Goliad, they are attacked from one of the abandoned farmsteads by a number of assassins who are acting on orders of the Tightpurse Thieves' Guild. However these assassins are also contracted mercenaries hired to defend and scout for Goliad.

Two archers hide inside the farm house shooting the party members with longbows from a distance. These assailants are level 1 fighters armed with longbows, longswords and leather armour.

The archers continue to pepper the party with arrows until one of them is wounded, at which point they retreat further into the house to hide.

Should the party approach the house (and get within 30 ft) then they are attacked from the left and right as 4 level 1 fighters appear from hiding (DC 15 Perception check to notice them) a mere 20 ft from the party. These fighters are armed with chainmail, longswords, and heavy steel shields.

The archers will continue to fire arrows at the heroes, if they have retreated previously they will return to their windows to fire at the party members.

When the assassins are killed, the players should note that a number of them bear the emblem of the forces of Damara and they each carry written notes detailing descriptions that match the party members. A few moments later a group of 10 riders from Goliad arrive dressed in military garb and demand the party account for themselves. The riders are armed with splint mail, spears, longswords, and heavy steel shields, they are all level 2 fighters.

### **Arrested**

The men the party attacked were “soldiers” of Damara acting on orders to intercept a number of Vaasan raiders heading from Bloodstone Pass and believed to be responsible for recent attacks on the Bloodstone Mines and Bloodstone Village itself.

The raiders’ description matches that of the heroes. The horsemen demand that the party surrender for trial and imprisonment or else face immediate summary execution.

Should the party resist (Gareth Dragonsbane will make no attempt to fight the soldiers of Damara) the soldiers will be forced to attack them, they will however attempt to subdue the party members where possible. Gareth Dragonsbane will plead with the party to submit to justice so they can clear their name.

### **Trial**

Whether the party resisted or not, the players will most likely end up in jail. If somehow they managed to defeat or escape the soldiers then they are fugitives in Goliad and should move on to Morovar and then Helgabal (skip to Episode 6).

After 1 day the party are brought out for trial. They stand in the local courthouse with Duke Ebelard acting as judge.

The players are charged with murder and invited to give their account of the events.

Once the players have finished giving their version of events, then Duke Ebelard presents the evidence against him.

1 – Four witnesses saw the party slay the victims.

2 – The party’s description are on official documents provided by Felix Socalur, the King’s aide, which identify them as bandits that recently attacked the Bloodstone Mines and Bloodstone Village.

3 – If the party are still carrying any items from the decoy caravan then these are presented as further evidence that the party are guilty by associating with thieves and criminal elements within Damara.

The party are then allowed to explain their actions.

They can explain away the witnesses as they only saw the party slay the victims, not who started the fight.

The items can be explained away by the party mentioning their mission to rescue Christine Tranth on behalf of Baron Tranth.

If the party cannot think of anything to say on their behalf then Gareth Dragonsbane will mention their



mission for Baron Tranth.

Duke Ebelard will then dismiss them back to their cell while he sends word to Baron Tranth to verify their claims.

### **Escape**

After a further day in captivity, the party are awoken in the middle of the night by the sound of a scuffle and a muffled cry.

A DC 12 Perception check will allow them to notice the cell door is now unlocked.

A DC 13 Perception check will allow them to spot the now dead jail guard slumped on the floor in a pool of blood and a shadow fleeing through the door exiting the jail.

The party's equipment is locked in the adjacent cell, but the jailor still has the keys in his hand and so it is easy to obtain them.

DC 18 Perception checks allow the party to follow a trail of blood spots through Goliad Keep towards the main hallway.

Along the way the party have a 30% chance per minute of being attacked by 2-4 guards, fighter 1, armed with chainmail, longswords, and heavy steel shields.

**The Keep:** The Keep remains undetailed but should have two floors. The functional rooms including the entrance, kitchen, guard room, dining room, meeting room, jail, etc, are all located on the lower floor. The upper floor should contain a variety of bedrooms and guest rooms as well as a library perhaps and a treasure room.

There are a total of 20 guards in the keep (although  $\frac{3}{4}$  of them will be sleeping during the night hours), all are fighter 1, armed with chainmail, longswords, and heavy steel shields, and are hostile to the players because they are prisoners.

**The Main Hallway:** This room has the large oak double doors at one end leading to the outside. On the left hand side is a set of stairs that runs up the wall to the second floor where the living quarters are. Standing at the doorway half asleep are a pair of guards who will only notice the party if they get a 6 on their Stealth checks.

As the party near the top of the stairs a scream echoes about the keep from the second floor and the guards jolt awake and chase the party. The blood trail leads to a room opposite the Duke's (his son's room).

**The Assassin:** As the party near the living quarters they see Duke Ebelard burst out of his room with a large sword (bastard sword) and kick in the door of the room opposite.

From out of the doorway comes a figure dressed in black who runs into the Duke and pushes him into the wall, leaving a dagger lodged in his ribcage.

The assassin turns and faces the party. He is a level 4 rogue armed with a poisoned masterwork short sword (DC 15 1 Str damage for 5 rounds) and +1 leather armour.

### **Aftermath**

Following the fight, the party are cleared of all charges. The Duke clearly saw the assassin standing over his dead son and going over the player's account confirms that the party were set up by someone since their description and deeds have obviously been distributed falsely among the authorities in Damara.

Duke Ebelard is overcome with grief at the death of his only child and faces the prospect that he will need to father a child soon or face the end of the noble line of Ebelard.

With a letter of pardon from Duke Ebelard signed with his personal seal, the party are sent on their way.

## Welcome to the Jungle: Races of Maztica

Below, you will find descriptions of the different races and ethnic groups in Maztica which are ready to choose as a playable character.

### **HUMANS**

Mankind is known for its ability to adapt and survive. In a world with beholders, dragons, and even the dreaded Tarrasque, the fact that humans can be found nearly everywhere gives testament to their extraordinary ability. Maztica is no different.

There are many origin myths in the different cultures but the most common one involves the wisdom of the great sun god Kukul. The other gods failed in a number of attempts to create beings to honor them. Men of clay, wood and gold were created but each in turn disappointed their creators. Kukul, the Father of the Gods, understood their folly and realized that if they were to create beings that would truly worship them, it would require a sacrifice. So Kukul took his great mācuahuitl and severed his own fingers. When the fingers struck the earth, they began to wriggle and crawl; eventually standing and honoring the gods from which they were created.

While many share this origin story, every man or woman is not the same in Maztica. There are many different ethnicities; each with their own appearance, passions and cultures.

### **Mazticans**

Due to their predominance in the lands of Nexal prior to the Night of Wailing, the Faerûnian newcomers to the True World once believed there to be only two ethnicities of men in Maztica, the Maztican and the Payit. The typical Maztican man or woman has a rich brown skin tone and jet black, fine hair. Originally, these folk came from the northern wilds of the True World, but were led to the valley of Nexal by their dark god Zaltec. Since then, their language (Maztican, once known as Nexalan), culture and outlook has spread all over the continent. Maztican is the common tongue of the True World.

**Maztican Names:** (Male) Acalan, Coatli, Naltecona, Nocheuatl, Tolco (Female) Ahuiliztli, Erendira, Meztli, Teiuc

### **Kultakans**

The Kultakans share much in physical appearance with the Mazticans, but are generally taller and more muscular. They are bred from birth to be warriors and for generations the weakest were left to die in the wilds (not even being fit for sacrifice).

**Kultakan Names:** (Male) Acamapichtli, Takamal, Quautli, (Female) Citlali, Citlalmina, Hutamana, Pochilli, Quixitl

### **Payits**

The Payits have similar skin tone and hair coloration to the Mazticans, but are generally softer in body. There is a high frequency of light skin tones and eyes appearing due to generations of interbreeding with Amnians and Waterdhavians.

**Payit Names:** (Male) Atl, Cuauhtemoc, Tetuahemoc, Xiupilli (Female) Centehua, Erixitl, Hucilli, Quinapotl

### **Itzas**

The Itzas are the fun loving, gentle folk who live primarily in the jungles of Far Payit. Short and lean, they are generally self-sufficient and unassuming. It is still rare to find an Itza outside of their small villages in the jungle.

**Itza Names:** (Male) Chimapopoca, Huitzilin, Itzli, Itzcoatl, Tochtli, (Female) Chalchiuitl, Itzla, Teyacapan, Xilonen

### **The Dog People**

The dog people are the savage folk of the northern wilds, badlands and desert. Long haired and lean, their skin can be described as having more of a coppery tone than brown. The dog people were persecuted for centuries by Mazticans, but they have rarely offered any kindness in return.

**Dog People Names:** (Male) Adohi, Moab, Nahuel, Sani (Female) Anevay, Angeni, Nayeli, Zyanya

### **The Green Folk**

The green folk live in the far southern jungles of Maztica, though some of their physical traits can be found in the nation of Kolan. They are a tall jungle folk, often adorned in earthy tones and paints. Their skin tone is brown, but not nearly as dark as their northern neighbors. The Green Folk are easily recognizable on the rare occasions that they enter cities such as Tukan.

**Green Folk Names:** (Male) Chicomecoatl, Matlal, Tlaloc, Tototl, (Female) Centehua, Cozamalotl, Tlacotl,

## **DWARVES**

Since Cordell's invasion of the True World, dwarves have become relatively commonplace. There are both shield and gold dwarf communities (particularly near gold mines), but no type of dwarf is more populous than Maztica's own subrace of desert dwarves.

### **The Desert Dwarf (Maztican)**

Desert dwarves are descended from clans of shield dwarves that were exploring for new veins of gold ore but were ambushed by drow and trapped underneath the True World. When they emerged, they did so in the great deserts of Maztica and despite their hardships, they managed to thrive in their new home.

The desert dwarves are very similar in looks to the shield dwarves of northern Faerûn, but their skin has the appearance of being perpetually sunburned. This condition has no detrimental effects, however

and is simply an adaptation to their sun-baked environment. Desert dwarves have all the standard dwarven traits plus the following.

**Heat Resistance:** Desert dwarves live in a cruel environment and have developed some resistances to heat. The desert dwarf gains advantage on saving throws against fire, and has resistance to fire damage

**Great Stamina:** Living in the desert is difficult and desert dwarves have adapted suitably. A desert dwarf effectively starts off with an exhaustion level of -2 so that the first two levels of exhaustion can be ignored. Finishing long rests and other actions that remove exhaustion return a desert dwarf to this level.

## HALFLINGS

Halflings originated in Maztica completely independent of their origins elsewhere. There are some Faerûnian halflings in Maztica but these are exceedingly rare. Far more populous are the Little Folk; jungle-dwelling halflings who envenom their arrows with a powerful paralytic poison known as kurari.

### **The Little Folk (Maztican Jungle Halfling)**

It is said that the goddess Kiltzi created the Little Folk in imitation of Kukul's crafting of the human race. Though one particular tribe has left the jungles and can work well alongside the "big folk," most jungle halflings are violent and savage.

**Ability Score Increase:** Your Constitution score increases by 1.

**Disease and Poison Resistance:** The little folk are constantly exposed to the many diseases carried by tiny biting flies in the jungle and the poisons of various frogs and snakes. They gain advantage when making a saving throw against poison or disease (natural diseases only).

## TABAXI

*His maca had long since been lost, but with his powerful claws, Tezca felt no fear. In fact, using the weapons of man made him feel less feral, less tabaxi! His quarry passed beneath him, a great taloned lizard of the deep jungles. Its pack had preyed on his clan too long so he and seven other warriors set out to hunt the hunters. All but he had been slain, and the lizard pack had been reduced to this last, the largest of them all. In perfect silence he stalked his prey from the trees. Silence was not enough, however, as the wind turned and the predator suddenly began to sniff vigorously. With a snarl it turned in Tezca's direction.*

In the deepest jungles of Maztica, a race of jaguar folk has kept mostly to themselves and their territory. Devotees to the life of a predator, these tree-dwelling folk have perfected the art of hunting, but do not often extend their predations into human lands. In their wisdom, the shamans of the tabaxi have advised their charges to keep far from the other intelligent races of the True World.

For ages, the tabaxi followed their advice, but when mankind started actually coming to them, this tradition began to change.

## **Proud Jaguar Clans**

Tabaxi thrive in harsh conditions where nearly everything that moves must eat or be eaten. Typically led by either wise elder shamans or at their most debased by cruel jaguar lords, the tabaxi are almost always loyal to their clan. Laws are almost unnecessary, but should a tabaxi sin against his own, the punishment is almost always fatal.

Tabaxi once kept mostly to themselves but mankind has made more frequent contact of late and the younger tabaxi generations have started to develop a bit of a wanderlust, at least as far as tabaxi go. Often ostracized by their elders, these tabaxi quickly take to whatever new clan they accompany, regardless of the race of its members.

## **Alpha Predators**

Tabaxi are the consummate hunters. Their greatest warriors are able to take down prey many times their size, sometimes using only what the gods have given them. These proud creatures are willing to work in groups or alone, but they rarely, if ever shy away from a challenge.

It is a great mark of shame for tabaxi to run from a threat and doing so has a tendency to make them quite ornery. Brave does not mean stupid, however, and tabaxi will sometimes take days to plan a hunt correctly.

Their natural camouflage, senses, cunning and weaponry makes them generally the most successful predators in their territory.

## **TABAXI NAMES**

Tabaxi have their own language that incorporates numerous growls which are difficult for others to pronounce. Clan names always use specialized syllables that require practice to speak and are impossible to record. The younger, adventurous tabaxi typically adapt names similar to their newer companions.

**Male Names:** Igrrtaca, Mirrintic, Otrri, Patrri, Tezcacoatl, Tlacelel, Tupac, Yorrotl, Zarrtic

**Female Names:** Cuarritl, Citlarri, Eztlii, Izerr, Nene, Patrri, Tlarri, Yarretzi, Zuma, Zyanya

## **TABAXI TRAITS**

Your tabaxi character has the following traits which are in common with all tabaxi.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

**Age.** Tabaxi have similar lifespans to humans. They reach adulthood in their teens and live less than a century. Rare elders sometimes extend this lifespan to 120 years.

**Alignment.** Tabaxi tend towards chaos though they can be quite loyal to their clans and its fairly well defined hierarchy. Their concerns are rarely similar to the petty obsessions of man, but clans ruled by a jaguar lord often sink into the depths of evil. The ocēlōtl subrace is generally seen as the kinder of the subraces.

**Size.** The subraces tend to vary in size, but the overall height of a tabaxi is generally between 5 and 6 feet tall.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You may also climb at the same rate.

**Darkvision.** Your eyes are well accustomed to hunting in the dead of night. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness.

**Keen Senses.** You gain advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Jungle Camouflage.** When hiding in natural surroundings, you are proficient on your Dexterity (Stealth) check.

**Claw Attack.** When making an unarmed strike, your sharp claws do 1d4 + your Strength modifier in Slashing damage.

**Languages.** You can speak, read and write in tabaxi but you may only speak the common Maztican tongue. Tabaxi is spoken in guttural growls with long “R” sounds and the written language uses a unique alphabet of claw marks that could easily be scratched onto trees.

**Subrace.** The two main types of tabaxi are the Jaguar Folk and the Ocelot Folk (Ocēlōtl). Choose one of these subraces.

#### JAGUAR FOLK

As one of the jaguar folk, you have more powerful claws and tend to be stronger than other tabaxi.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score increases by 1.

**Powerful Claws.** Your claw damage increases to 2d4+ your Strength modifier.

#### OCELOT FOLK (OCĒLŌTL)

The Ocēlōtl are known for their sharp wit and maneuverability both on land and in the tree tops.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

**Fleet Footed.** Both your ground and climbing speed increase to 35 feet.

#### QUETZALDAUN

*The bakuna were particularly ornery this time of year and Huitzi knew she would need to be vigilant in defense of her nest. Twice before had the dragon-horse come to steal and eat her precious eggs and twice she hurled the creature's broken bodies on the rocks below.*

*Huitzi had found her home a few moons past following the death of her husband. Now the last of his offspring was set to hatch and the growing boys in her nest had yet to find their first flight.*

*Huitzi scanned the horizon and saw the glint of the sun off of many golden scales. Three bakuna approached and she was certain that she couldn't handle the odds. Huitzi turned to prepare her children but then the two eldest emerged from the cave. Oh, how Aaracotl and Xiatem resembled their father! With a look of grim determination in their eyes and a spear embedded with razor sharp obsidian, her children spoke nearly in unison. "Mother, we stand ready to fight beside you. Do not fear for us."*

In the highest mountains and cliffs of the True World dwells a race of bird like humanoids that have been practically unknown for generations. Similar in many ways to aarakocra, yet also different in not so subtle ways, these bird folk are more akin to eagles than to parrots. They are the quetzaldaun. The

eagle folk claim that they indeed were once of the progenitor race of creatures from which the aarakocra were created, but the god Qotal blessed them long ago with their current powerful forms.

The quetzaldaun avoided humanity for untold generations but recent events have left many without a home. Harboring an intense hatred for all dragonkind, these humanoids have found that mankind can be excellent allies in the quest to preserve what is left of their once proud culture.

### **Cliff Dwellers**

The quetzaldaun have managed to remain hidden from mankind for so long because they lair in the most remote reaches of the highest mountains. Deep tunnels are often dug into the sides of the steepest cliffs where only those with the ability to fly can reach. Climbing in such regions is far too treacherous.

Unlike aarakocra who tend to dwell in large communities (or “rookeries”), the quetzaldaun are fairly independent and live in smaller, tight families. Elders claim this is a survival adaptation from ancient days when dragons wiped out entire communities of their predecessors, the aearee.

### **Devout and Grateful**

The quetzaldaun were saved from extinction and changed into their current forms ages ago by the Plumed God Qotal. This part of their history is well known and passed down through the generations. Quetzaldaun pray thanks to the god in daily observances and it is a rare eagle folk that does not worship the Feathered Dragon.

It is ironic to many that the quetzaldaun are so fanatical in their devotion to this draconic god considering that in all other cases, dragon and their kin are the sworn enemies of the quetzaldaun.

### **QUETZALDAUN NAMES**

The quetzaldaun have names similar to other humanoids in the True World, but each has a root or single syllable that means “eagle” in one of the local languages. Family names are generally similar to both male and female first names with the syllables *quet-* or *qot-* appended to the front. For example, *Quetaquilt* is the name of a well-known (and rather large) family.

**Male Names:** *Arascotl, Aquitl, Arvidotl, Cuauhtemoc, Ethonitl, Mokotl, Orelipochtli, Xiatem*

**Female Names:** *Akilina, Arnaudl, Aquilitl, Delinipactli, Huitzi, Ikitipitl, Tristinetepec*

### **QUETZALDAUN TRAITS**

Your quetzaldaun character has the following traits in common with all other quetzaldaun.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2. Your Wisdom also increases by 1.

**Age.** Quetzaldaun are not known to live terribly long lives. They are considered to have reached maturity at a very young age. Anywhere from 6-8 years old a quetzaldaun attempts its “first flight” and is forever after considered an adult. In rare instances a young quetzaldaun fails to be ready and can end up dead or severely injured.

Quetzaldaun can live to 60 years but rarely go beyond that limit.



**Alignment.** Quetzaldaun follow the edicts of their god Qotal strictly and even eagle folk who are raised outside of a quetzaldaun family feel the deity's pull. Therefore, most tend towards an inherent goodness and maintain a generally lawful outlook. There are certainly exceptions to this tendency.

**Size.** Quetzaldaun are tall but light. A typical adult stands anywhere from 6 to 7 feet tall, yet might only weigh 120 lb. The weight is mostly attributed to their hollow bone structure as the eagle folk in no way appear frail.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You may also fly at 40 feet.

**Eagle Eyes.** Quetzaldaun vision is outstanding. They can see three times the distance of humans in near perfect detail. They also gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) rolls based on sight.

**Fear Immunity.** Quetzaldaun are not susceptible to any form of magical fear.

**Dragon Foes.** Quetzaldaun gain advantage on all Wisdom (Survival) checks when attempting to track a dragon or any dragon kin, as well as Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

**Languages.** You can speak, read and write in both Draconic and Maztican.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Dragon Empire of Unther

The history of Unther is widely known and well (if falsely) documented by the servants of Gilgeam. The entire history of the nation could be a lie and none would know the truth for few live today that have witnessed its history first hand.

Following his ascension to the throne of Unther, Gilgeam had the history of that land rewritten so many times that the truth is now surely lost forever. Gone is the entire Empire of Akanu and Gilgeam's origins, unknown is the fate of many of the Akanic and Untheric gods that Gilgeam sought to remove on his path to power.

However what is known for certain is that in 1358 Gilgeam was utterly destroyed and the Empire of Unther came to a swift and bloody end. Unther erupted into chaos as the remaining lords of Unther and the Church of Gilgeam fought amongst each other for control and were in turn besieged by the people who hated them for centuries of persecution.

Outside forces also sought to stamp their mark on a new nation of Unther. The Grey Ghost bandits, long a thorn in Gilgeam's side, marched into Unthalass to take control and began a shifting war of alliances between them and the churches of Ishtar, Tiamat and Gilgeam.

For several years this chaos persisted as everyone sought to claim the rich land of Unther for themselves.

In 1365 DR an ancient being of power emerged to unite that land under his banner. Alasklerbanbastos had spent many years trying to amass wealth and power to eclipse his rival Tchazzar. In the wake of Tchazzar's ascension and supposed death, Alasklerbanbastos seized upon the chaos in Unther to carve out an empire for himself as Tchazzar had once done many years before.

Alasklerbanbastos was blessed with immortality and an extraordinary arsenal of ancient magical items and artefacts. Some of these artefacts allowed him to make certain species of chromatic dragons entirely subservient to his orders. Using these orbs of dragonkind, Alasklerbanbastos gradually built up a coterie of draconic vassals that were totally bent to his will.

It was with these vassals that the Dragon Emperor Alasklerbanbastos seized control of virtually every settlement in Chessenta and Unther, briefly reuniting a grand empire that had been separated for almost 500 years.

**Capital:** Dragonback Mountain

**Population:** 7,000,000 (humans 88%, Halflings 4%, dwarves 4%, half-orcs 2%, lizardfolk 1%, aasimar 1%)

**Government:** Monarchy ruled by Emperor Alasklerbanbastos the Great Bone Wyrn.

**Religions:** In Chessenta; Anhur, Hoar, Azuth, Lathander, Red Knight, Tchazzar, Waukeen, Tiamat, Entropy, Bane.

In Unther; The Untheric Pantheon

**Imports:** Cheese, glass, horses, weapons, magic weapons, mercenaries, perfume, pork, slaves, food

**Exports:** Art, cattle, gold, grapes, olive oil, quality iron, silver, slaves (to Thay), statues, weapons, wine,

minerals, metals, ceramics

**Alignment:** N, CG, LN, LE

### **Population**

The population of the Dragon Empire of Unther nominally encompasses all the people of Chessenta and Unther, as that is the territory claimed by the Emperor Alasklerbanbastos.

In reality only Unthalass in Unther is controlled by the vassals of Alasklerbanbastos. The King of Unther does not bother himself with territory outside of Unther and an earlier bid to conquer Messemprar failed spectacularly in 1365 DR when the red dragon Flamaertis was destroyed by the Northern Wizards who protect that city.

In Chessenta the cities of that realm all swear fealty to Rancrotriglomous except for Luthcheq which has never acknowledged any lords but its own for years, an attempt by the dragon Fulmynargatrion to rule Luthcheq likewise failed in 1365 DR when the Karanoks emerged from hiding and assassinated the dragon using large quantities of ingested witchweed.

### **Life and Society**

The Dragon Empire of Unther had little lasting impact upon the society of Chessenta except that Alasklerbanbastos forbade the city states under his dominion to war among themselves as they had done for the past 3 centuries.

In Unther the situation is more unstable. The Dragon King of Unther, Storum'aelix, controls the land around Unthalass for a full days ride, and he is known to occasionally take to the wing to view his territory(although more often he sends one of his blue dragons to patrol it). His alliance with the Church of the Dark Lady gives him a ready and willing police force throughout southern Unther that delights in inflicting his harsh punishments for non-existent offences (in much the same manner as Gilgeam did during his rule).

The Church of the Dark Lady has drafted in many cultists who are responsible for maintaining the slave workforce that are busy farming the Greenfields to provide food for Storum'aelix (and the rest of Unthalass).

The countryside outside of Unthalass and the Greenfields has become a lawless wilderness, and the people of Unther have begun to abandon those areas en masse, leaving for the better protection of settlements in the north of Unther, or for other nations entirely (many of them do not survive the journey).

Banditry and Brigandage increase in inland areas of Unther, and pirate activity explodes along the coastline, with all many of opportunists seeking to take advantage of the lack of stability in that land, as a consequence trade suffers and the people of Unther grow ever poorer (except in Unthalass). During the reign of the Dragon Empire, the people of Unther are more likely than ever to attack an unknown outsider on sight before he has a chance to declare himself (and they were never particularly welcoming before that). However the major threat to the countryside is the rise of draconic creatures throughout the land. Spawn of Tiamat become increasingly common as the Church of the Dark Lady continues its experiments and often releases the results into the wilds. Half dragons and draconic creatures are also on the rise as is the activity of chromatic dragons who serve the Dragon Empire of Unther.

Unther becomes a dangerous place from 1365 DR until the invasion by Mulhorand.

### **Government**

The government of the Dragon Empire of Unther is a top layer of dragon lords built on top of the existing human bureaucracies of Chessenta and Unther (assuming those bureaucracies existed to start with).

In Chessenta this means that the rulers of the various city states of Chessenta report to and obey the commands of the draconic vassals of Alasklerbanbastos. These draconic vassals in turn report to Alasklerbanbastos himself.

In Unther, the Dragon King of Unther controls Unthalass and remains content to be in command of the largest and richest settlement in Unther. He leaves the rest of the country to look after itself (providing none challenge his rule) and takes the steady stream of taxes Unthalass provides him.

The level of control the dragons exert over their human subjects is complete and yet light. Those subjects that displease the dragons are typically eating without mercy, yet the dragon lords rarely bother with the day to day activity of running their realms except to count the taxes they receive from their subjects. However in some cases the dragons will intervene, usually ordering their inferiors to cooperate with the subjects of other cities within the Dragon Empire of Unther (for instance solving Unthalass' supply problems).

### **Law and Order**

The laws of Chessenta remain unchanged, the only extra laws added are that everyone swear fealty to the Dragon Emperor, and that everyone do as the dragons order. The laws of Chessenta are still enforced by the human kings of the city states as they always have done, and they are fairly lax on those caught plotting against the Dragon Emperor (unless one of his agents is also present).

In Unther the government and rule of law collapsed long ago. The Dragon King of Unther restores order somewhat by destroying those factions that won't obey him, but he does little to establish a code of laws beyond whatever his whim is at the time. This however is not an unusual occurrence for the people of Unthalass as Gilgeam had acted in such a manner for centuries. Indeed no one really notices the difference between the laws of Gilgeam and the laws of Storum'aelix, they all continue with their lives, ever fearful of being imprisoned, enslaved, or executed for unknown crimes they never knew existed.

Outside of Unthalass the law no longer exists. Those outside of a settlement are at the mercy of the sword, while those inside a settlement must abide by the laws of the ruler of that settlement (Lord Gudea is a fair and just lord, Lord Ekur is less so). The citizens of Unther learn to arm themselves at all times and are more than prepared to use them to defend themselves.

### **Economy**

The economy of the Dragon Empire is altered somewhat by the rule of Alasklerbanbastos. The kings of Chessenta and city of Unthalass find renewed trading opportunities with the returning stability in Unthalass. Many of their imports and exports complement one another, and so both gain increasing revenues during this time.

Unfortunately the dragon lords of the empire impose extra taxes to pay their tributes to Alasklerbanbastos. The extra revenues barely cover the extra taxes imposed and consequently the economy of Chessenta and Unthalass begins to decline each year and projects are left unfinished due to lack of funds (in the more benevolent cities) or extra taxes are imposed upon the citizens to pay for things.

## **Defence**

The armies of Chessenta and Unther are redundant with the presence of so many powerful dragons defending the Dragon Empire of Unther.

Chessenta's cities still maintain their standing armies and mercenary forces, although they can do nothing to resist the dragons or help them when Tchazzar appears. The declining economy of Chessenta means that many mercenary companies are not recontracted and move to other theatres of conflict.

Unther has no standing army to speak of, or any kind of militia, both having dispersed or been destroyed years before. The Dragon King of Unther does nothing to improve the situation since he can call upon almost the entire blue dragon population of the Old Empires because of his title as Suzerain, and therefore feels he has no need of a human army. He does however allow the Church of the Dark Lady to enforce his will upon the humans and ensure that there is no opposition to his rule.

The Church of the Dark Lady acts as a not so secret police force in Unther, abducting dissenters, criminals, and innocent people and forcing them to work in the Greenfields to provide food for the population of Unthalass. They also steal and extort money from anyone in breach of the "law" in the form of fines, and use that money to finance their endeavours.

## **Important NPCs**

What follows is a list of the more prominent dragon vassals of Alasklerbanbastos.

**Jaxanaedegor, Viceroy of Threskel (Very Old Vampiric Green Dragon):** Jaxanaedegor is an anomaly among Alasklerbanbastos' court in that he is not bound to the Dragon Emperor by the Orb of Dragonkind, nor is he working under duress because Alasklerbanbastos holds his phylactery (which Jaxanaedegor does not have because he is a vampire, not a dracolich).

It is unknown how or why the two dragons cooperate so well. Regardless, Jaxanaedegor served as the Viceroy of Threskel and Lord of Mourktar from 1365 DR, until Tchazzar appeared and the Dragon Empire of Unther came to an end as Alasklerbanbastos' draconic vassals were destroyed. Jaxanaedegor survived because of his vampiric nature, as did many of the dracoliches under Alasklerbanbastos' control.

It is uncertain if Jaxanaedegor will continue to press his claim of sovereignty over Threskel as any reappearance would certainly put him at odds again with Tchazzar, and the people of Threskel may well ally with Tchazzar to remove the dragon overlords if they reappear.

**Fulmynargatrimon, Lord of Luthcheq (Adult Blue Dragon):** This lazy arrogant dragon briefly claimed the city of Luthcheq as his own for a period of two months from Eleint to Uktar in the year 1365 DR.

He enslaved the inhabitants of Luthcheq which was already severely damaged from the recent wars of Chessenta. The people of Luthcheq had to provide every luxury to the dragon that had a clichéd fondness for devouring virgins on a regular basis.

The surviving members of House Karanok that had been living amid the catacombs of Luthcheq saved its people from their enslavement. During a celebratory feast (for an unspecified event the dragon lord could not be bothered to elaborate upon), the Karanoks disguised themselves as servants for the wyrm's amusement (many of them ending up as dinner in the process). They laced his meals (including their own pockets) with vast quantities of witchweed that reacted badly to the dragon's magical nature. The resultant explosion redecorated the festhall of the black palace in a vivid purplish concoction of dragon's blood, stomach acid, mucus, and witchweed that still defies all attempts to clean it.

**Storum'aelix, King of Unther (Great Wyrms Blue Dragon):** This dragon was the reigning Suzerain of the Old Empires and had over 30 blue dragons at his command. He had kept his position for over 2,000 years after wresting it from Maladraedior (the previous Suzerain).

Still Storum'aelix desired ever more power. When Alasklerbanbastos announced the title of King of Unther was available for any that could take it, despite their family rivalries (Alasklerbanbastos being related to Maladraedior), Storum'aelix pledged his fealty to Alasklerbanbastos and in 1368 DR he landed amid the city of Unthalass and proclaimed himself King.

Storum'aelix ruled as King of Unthalass in the same way he had ruled as Suzerain of the Old Empires, with a firm presence. He took to lairing in Unthalass itself, attended by his new servants. He left the institutions (set up by Furifax and the Church of Tiamat during the chaotic years) intact and allowed people to continue their business as long as wealth kept flowing into his coffers.

Storum'aelix was also careful not to exercise his authority over the rest of Unther. Another ally of Alasklerbanbastos (Flamaertis) was beaten back by the wizards of Messemprar after it tried to impose its will on that city. The city of Messemprar was now part of a non-aggression pact with the Dragon Empire of Unther and so did not need subduing further. However, during the Time of Troubles, Maladraedior had been seen flying above areas of northern Unther and Mulhorand and so Storum'aelix was keen not to anger the ancient dragon unnecessarily. He wanted to destroy Maladraedior for good, but he needed to find where he laired first so that he could plan the attack on his terms.

It wasn't until 1372 DR when his old rival Maladraedior emerged from the settlement of Dalath and heard about the Dragon King of Unthalass that Storum'aelix's reign came to an end. The two behemoths were of similar age and physically matched (although Maladraedior had the renewed energy and vigour of a young dragon), but Storum'aelix could not hope to rival the skills in the Art of Maladraedior.

It did not take long for Maladraedior to incapacitate and dismember his foe, before flying off to claim the title, Suzerain of the Old Empires that was rightfully his.

**Pyratyrmanix, Lord of Mordulkin (Adult Red Dragon):** One of Alasklerbanbastos' early vassals and bound to his will by the Red Orb of Dragonkind. Pyratyrmanix was given rule over Mordulkin; Alasklerbanbastos greatly desired control over the entirety of Threskel and so aided Pyratyrmanix in his conquest of Mordulkin by sending a flight of 10 younger dragons and dracoliches to assault the city in 1367 DR.

Pyratyrmanix was successful in his conquest and King Hercubes was presumed slain in the battle. The members of House Jedea fled into exile and Pyratyrmanix claimed the title Lord of Mordulkin, serving under Viceroy Jaxanaedegor of Threskel.

Pyratyrmanix was a largely absent ruler. He implemented a heavy trade tax that stifled the economic growth of the city (and greatly enriched his horde) but in general he left the population to their own devices while he laired in the Riders to the Sky Mountains.

Pyratyrmanix was slain by Tchazzar along with many other draconic vassals of Alasklerbanbastos.

**Rancroriglomous, Viceroy of Chessenta (Old Black Dracolich):** One of Alasklerbanbastos' older dracolich allies, Rancroriglomous was given the title of Viceroy of Chessenta, and tasked with subduing the warring city states.

This black dracolich was rotten and haggard looking with huge gouges in his side (from where Alasklerbanbastos tore into him before ordering him transformed into a dracolich)). He decided the best means with which to unite the cities of Chessenta in the quickest time was through fear.

After the other vassals of Alasklerbanbastos had made their bids for power, the rulers of Chessenta met in secret in Cimbar in Alturiak of 1368 DR to discuss what they should do to combat the dragon invaders.

During the bickering that threatened to descend into a brawl, Rancror changed into his true form and swallowed the Sceptanar of Cimbar whole. The entire collective of Chessentan leaders was so astonished and afraid that they all swore allegiance to Rancror on the spot (while begging and grovelling for their lives), all except the Karanoks of Luthcheq who did not turn up to the meeting.

Rancroriglomous made sure that the cities cooperated with each other and stopped their incessant feuding (so they could pay their taxes to him). He also ruled during a period of bountiful harvest so the coffers of the cities of Chessenta increased greatly under his brief rule (to the later benefit of Tchazzar), although a large portion of it was taxed and given as tribute to Alasklerbanbastos.

When Tchazzar returned in 1373 DR, Rancror was one of the dracoliches destroyed by the great red wyrm. He soon reformed in the lair of Alasklerbanbastos, and there they remain, plotting their next move.

### **Important Organisations**

**Cult of the Dragon:** Following Flamaertis' short lived attempt to subjugate Messemprar, Alasklerbanbastos still needed uninhibited access to Unther in order to spread his Dragon Cultists and the rule of his Empire into that land. In disguise he personally met with Tiglath and struck up a non-aggression agreement where his forces would be allowed through Messemprar unhindered, and in return he would leave Messemprar alone.

Tiglath communicated this offer to Messemprar's council and so Alasklerbanbastos kept his word. From the meeting however Alasklerbanbastos learned of a change in the Church of the Dark Lady and their patron goddess. Alasklerbanbastos gambled on this information, approached the Church of the Dark Lady in Unthalass (Unthalass now being under his control) and struck up an alliance with Shudu-Ab that persists to the present day.

Until that time the Cult of the Dragon cell in Mourktar had been dominated by priests from the Church of Bane because the cult was originally established by Banite priests loyal to Algashon Nathaire in 962 DR and because of Alasklerbanbastos' historical alliance with the Church of Bane during his first attempt to conquer Chessenta in the 9<sup>th</sup> century Dalereckoning.

Since the Time of Troubles much had happened in the Church of Bane that Alasklerbanbastos did not approve of. The Banites were severely reduced in power with the death of their god and many turned to Cyric who was unpalatable to the Great Bone Wyrms and his goals.

Alasklerbanbastos needed new allies with the backing of a living or less insane deity and so the change in ideology of the Church of the Dark Lady proved very timely for him. His alliance with Shudu-Ab allowed him to recruit priests of Tiamat into the Cult of the Dragon and spread his cult further into Chessenta and Unther.

After 1369 DR, the Church of Bane in Mourktar received the backing of a new deity (Iyachtu Xvim, but only in secret) and the ideology of the Banite members of the cult shifted back towards tyranny, although this time it was the priests of Bane who were to be the tyrants rather than backing the tyrants, and so Alasklerbanbastos continued his recruitment of Tiamatan priests.

As soon as Alasklerbanbastos's dragon vassals established their rule over the various cities of Chessenta and Unther he began sending agents to the former rulers of those cities in the guise of dragon slayers loyal to Tchazzar, the sworn enemy of Alasklerbanbastos (the by then long declined Church of Tchazzar had long preached warnings against the Great Bone Wyrms). These agents helped the rulers plot against the dragon lords, while secretly passing information about such plots to the dragons themselves. They also used their presence to establish Cult of the Dragon cells right under the noses of the cities of Chessenta while they were distracted about what to do with the usurping dragons. Alasklerbanbastos even sacrificed his vassal Fulmynargatiron to the dragon slayers (and the Karanoks) to provide his agents with some credibility so that few suspected these "priests of Tchazzar" who were supposedly dedicated to preserving Chessenta and keeping it from Alasklerbanbastos and his forces.

By the end of the Dragon Empire of Unther, the Cult of the Dragon cells; populated with priests of Tiamat because the priests of Bane remained in Mourktar, are firmly established in the slums and criminal underworlds of Cimbar, Soorenar, Luthcheq, Akanax, and Airspur. These cells are not particularly large; most have less than 50 members, they survive however by maintaining a legitimate cover as shrines to Tchazzar attended by "priests". The vast majority of the priestly membership of the Cult of the Dragon is Tiamatan, the Banites only have a presence in the cell in Mourktar and they are not at all happy about it.

The priests of Tiamat are now equal with the Banites in the upper echelons of the Cult of the Dragon cell in Mourktar. To further cement his alliance with the Church of the Dark Lady, Alasklerbanbastos has arranged for many of his Dragon Cultists to enter into the priesthood of Tiamat, just as he arranged for many priests to join the cult's ranks. This will allow him to draw upon the forces of the Church of the Dark Lady should tensions between the Tiamatans and the Banites come to a head, however the Banites can call upon their allies in the Church of Bane which are considerable.



## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Brotherhood of the Griffon

A seemingly harmless mercenary company of griffon riders, this brotherhood is run by an aged warrior with a personal vendetta against many nations of the Unapproachable East and his vengeance may land this group in trouble one day soon.

### **History of the Brotherhood**

The Brotherhood of the Griffon has its origins in 1360 DR when a curiously hued (red) man of unknown origin approached the Aglarondan Royal Council about a solution to their recent pest problems.

Earlier that year a fang dragon named Nartheling had secretly moved into the mountain known as Umbergoth. His presence caused many of the creatures living in and on the mountain to flee into the surrounding countryside. Of particular problem were the numerous groups of griffons and hippogriffs that were now roaming the land of Aglarond and causing much menace to farms and livestock.

The man, who identified himself as Valus Medios, claimed to be an expert griffon rider and tamer. After demonstrating his prowess to the assembled council and convincing them of the usefulness of an aerial combat unit, Valus was given support to round up the griffons (his personal choice of steed) and train the Aglarondan military in riding them.

From these beginnings the Brotherhood of the Griffon was born, and Aglarond's griffon riders were used to great effect in the wars with Thay over the coming years, particularly in 1365 DR when the griffon riders were instrumental in scouting an invading Thayan force.

Valus was appointed commander of the Griffon Riders and allowed the use of a keep in the Aglarondan capital which he named Griffonheight Keep and from there trained the griffons and the men that would ride them. Valus was a harsh taskmaster, and had a vicious temper, but he would always do his best by his warriors and they loved him for it. It was Valus' steadfast refusal to put his men at unnecessary risk that makes the griffon riders so crucial as scouts and messengers today.

It was with much bitterness that Valus was forced out of his position by internal politics within the Royal Council of Aglarond following Thay's defeat in 1365 DR. Members of the Verdant Arrow disliked a human being in charge of the most elite military unit in Aglarond and were successful in having him replaced by a half elf. They fabricated evidence of him stealing funds for the griffon riders for himself (a crime of which he was guilty in real life, but he was too well practised to be caught).

Valus left in disgust taking many of the Griffon Riders with him, he has formed a mercenary corps known as the Brotherhood of the Griffon that operates out of Thesk and has taken part in engagements in Chessenta, Aglarond, Unther, and Thay.

**Deeds of the Brotherhood:** In the month of Tarsakh 1371 DR, an entire wing of the Brotherhood of the Griffon was contracted as an aerial scouting unit to the invading forces of Mulhorand.

They reported the initial troop movements of the Dragon Empire of Unther in the Greenfields and allowed the Mulhorandi troops a significant tactical advantage over the defending cultists.

In the closing days of Tarsakh, Storum'aelix, Suzerain of the Old Empires, called a flight of blue dragons to the field to even the odds. The dragons immediately set upon the Brotherhood of the

Griffon forces and 12 griffons and riders were killed or seriously wounded in the initial battle. A manifestation of Anhur was summoned and forced the blue dragons to flee, but the Brotherhood of the Griffon was unable to complete their engagement and withdrew from the invasion.

The deeds of this wing were not over however. The invasion freed a vast number of slaves set to work in the Greenfields, and many of these slaves (those not recaptured by the Mulhorandi invaders) were forced to flee north and west which took them across the Plains of Black Ash. The Brotherhood of the Griffon took it upon themselves to shepherd these refugees across the plains and into Chessenta, battling ash giants and worse along the way.

After a long trek across the Black Ash Plains, over the Smoking Mountains, and through the Methwood, the company arrived in Chessenta in 1372 DR (which was still part of the Dragon Empire of Unther at that time). After a brief period of rest, recuperation, and reinforcement, the Brotherhood found themselves hired out to the various kings of Chessenta to combat raging dragons in 1373 DR.

When Tchazzar appeared towards the end of 1373 DR and brought the Dragon Empire of Unther to an end, the Brotherhood of the Griffon were retained on contract by him to root out those dragons loyal to Alasklerbanbastos.

The Brotherhood of the Griffon has also seen service in various battles with and against Thay and Aglarond, for instance serving as part of Thay's retaking of the Alaor from Mulhorand in 1370 DR.

### **Organisation**

This mercenary corps is a specialised unit of scouts and messengers that are willing to act as light aerial cavalry should the pay be good enough. They are run by a man named Valus, and take whatever job he orders without question.

Because of past affiliations, the Brotherhood of the Griffon has former and prospective members in the military forces of both Aglarond and Thay.

**Members:** 108 official members, 123 griffons, 45 hippogriffs, 8 wyverns

**Hierarchy:** Militaristic

**Leader:** Valus Medios (NE hm Ftr 14)

**Religions:** Any

**Alignment:** Any lawful

**Secrecy:** None (this group openly advertises its services; however a number of members, former members, and sympathisers exist in secret among the armed forces of Thay and Aglarond.)

**Symbol:** A blood red griffon with wings raised and a rider (black) sat astride it with lance pointing forwards

### **Hierarchy**

The Brotherhood of the Griffon is owned and controlled by High Captain Valus Medios. The Brotherhood is organised into 3 wings of 30 men each, commanded by a Skycaptain. Each wing is

divided into 3 claws of 10 men each, commanded by a Lance.

**High Captain Valus Medios (NE hm Ftr 14):** This man of unknown race has a curious red hue to his skin, hair (black) and eyes (brown). He appears to be a veteran warrior of advancing years though his body is sinewy and well muscled and he does not appear to suffer from any adverse effects of age.

Valus personally travels the lands of the Inner Sea negotiating the services of his Brotherhood of the Griffon in military campaigns. He especially likes to take work that allows him and his men to fight against the nations of Thay and Aglarond.

The expertise of him and his men does not come cheap, and he walks away with at least a 10,000 gp deposit before he even commits any men to the battlefield. Once on the battlefield the price is 200 gp per man per day, with the choice of a Claw or a Wing as desired.

Valus also deploys individual members on special missions as requested by contracts, or for his own personal missions. These “special missions” take the form of a variety of requests usually undertaken by adventurers.

Valus is not who he claims to be. In a previous life he was Valerios Theokillos, Tharchion of Pyarados of Thay, and commander of the armed forces of that nation during the invasion of the Tuigan Horde.

Following the disastrous battles, in which the entire Griffon Legion of Thay was annihilated due to the petty squabbling of the Red Wizards and their forces, Valerios was blamed for the failure and the loss of the Griffon Legion (that he commanded) and was removed from his position.

His removal was followed by an execution attempt at his private villa. A number of Red Wizards blasted the villa to pieces with Valerios inside. Valerios however had spent years accumulating magic items, strange creatures, and other items of interest from passing adventurers by taxing them. The resultant mixing of potions, elixirs, herbs, monstrous creature, and magical energy created a potent alchemical concoction that transformed Valerios and a number of orc children (servants) into a prototype version of the Blooded Ones. A naked and bright red Valerios attacked the assembled Red Wizards and escaped

The Red Wizards spent several years trying to replicate the mixture and then many more years trying to get it to work. It wasn't until one of the wizards noted in the records of the incident that a number of orc children were also changed that they found some success. Valerios remains an almost unique result of the Blooded One process.

From his transformation he gained enhanced speed and strength, a curious red tinge all over his body, and the ability to inspire others by his mere presence. He also found the ravages of old age were completely removed from his body. Even more curious was that his blood could be used to distil a magical elixir that has allowed him to form the Brotherhood of the Griffon.

With his new abilities, Valerios met with his old adventuring companions, reopened a number of secret caches of equipment he had stored from his adventuring days, and travelled to Aglarond where he began the Brotherhood of the Griffon.

### **Motivation and Goals**

The goals of the Brotherhood of the Griffon are taught as loyalty and brotherhood to each other.

These warriors have an incredibly close bond with one another that overrides any loyalty to nations or other societies; they will fight and die to the last man to protect one of their own.

Furthermore, each member has a bond with a griffon steed (or in some cases, hippogriff or wyvern) that only he may ride, this bond is so close as to border on telepathy and as a result the griffon and his rider often act as one being.

All members obey the orders of Valus and will travel into certain death should he order it. None of them understand the reason for this loyalty but all are under the influence of some of the many enchantments Valus picked up from his “accident”.

Valus himself has designs on revenge against both Thay and Aglarond. He still has ties to many men he trained within Aglarond, and they remain unswervingly loyal to him despite his absence for many years.

Valus has contracted himself to Thay in recent years to help them rebuild their Griffon Legion, the Thayans have no idea who Valus is or was (his red hue has faded significantly and he is no longer bald as he was just after the accident) and the men he trains are just as loyal to him as the Brotherhood of the Griffon members (something the Thayans are unaware of).

Valus intends to accrue wealth and influence among the regular members of the armies of Aglarond and Thay, and then use his private army to wreak his revenge upon those that have wronged him. Valus never forgets a slight and his hatred towards the wrongdoers is intense.

### **Recruiting**

Recruitment into the Brotherhood of the Griffon is either done by the recommendation of an existing member, or by Valus himself.

Valus will then personally evaluate the candidate’s suitability for entry into the Brotherhood; such evaluations include tests of strength, skill, intelligence, and even an intensive investigation into his personal background (to root out potential spies).

Once the tests are completed the member is tasked with finding his brother (a griffon or other mount) from among the stables, such a task requires riding the griffon unaided and without the griffon eating the candidate.

Once the choice has been made, both the candidate and his brother imbibe a special elixir made using their own blood (and Valus’) which forms a strong bond that ties them together.

### **Resources**

The Brotherhood of the Griffon has access to all the resources squirreled away by Valus during his time as an adventurer, then as Tharchion, and finally as High Captain of Aglarond’s Griffon Riders. During that time he acquired wealth, connections, equipment, and manpower enough to establish the mercenary company known as the Brotherhood of the Griffon.

Thanks to his unique training methods that acquire him lifelong and loyal friends he still has access to many more resources than the Brotherhood of the Griffon itself possesses.

Should a member of the Brotherhood require aid in Aglarond or Thay they are likely to have a range of contacts available that can provide food and shelter as well as other services.

Outside of those areas, as more and more members of the Brotherhood retire, these former members remain loyal to the Brotherhood and to Valus and so would still provide as much aid as they could, even to the point of endangering themselves; such is the depth of their loyalty.

**Elixir of the Familiar:** This elixir is made using the blood of the candidate and his chosen companion creature (usually a griffon in the Brotherhood of the Griffon). Once consumed the two creatures share an incredibly strong bond akin to that shared by a wizard and his familiar (it grants the Empathic Link and Share Spells abilities to the creature as well as increasing its intelligence).

One other (and secret) component of the elixir is the blood of Valus himself. This shares the link between the griffon and its rider with Valus and gives him a measure of control over both of them.

Valus has an empathic link with every creature that consumes the elixir. Only Valus is aware of the link and so only he can sense the emotions and feelings of both the rider and the companion creature. Furthermore, Valus is finding that he can (after years of training) exert a small measure of control over the emotions of such creatures. In time he hopes to be able to develop his abilities to enable him to dominate such creatures as he desires, such an ability would prove very useful when he finally reveals his plans for the Brotherhood and wreaks vengeance upon Aglarond and Thay.

For the time being, Valus is content to use the elixir on all entrants to the Brotherhood and then allow his enhanced leadership abilities to inspire loyalty and trust in his subordinates.

Using this elixir Valus has allies in both Thay and Aglarond that are more loyal to him and his Brotherhood than they are to their own country. They do not realise they are being manipulated by the magic of the elixir and Valus' ability to inspire and read their emotions, and they will follow his orders over their own superior's.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Science of Divinity

The gods are mysterious beings, little known to mere mortals. This is an attempt to dispel some of the myths and confusion surrounding them.

Deities are lumped into 4 categories of power; Demi-Powers, Lesser Powers, Intermediate Powers, and Greater Powers. However what does this power level mean in relation to each other and even regular people?

In broad terms a god can be categorised by the amount of HD it possesses which in turn is determined by the amount of experience it possesses. The HD are split among the levels of various classes, so for instance a Demi-Power could be categorised as any god with 31-45 HD, a Lesser Power with 46-60 HD, an Intermediate Power with 61-75 HD, and a Greater Power with 76+ HD.

In truth the power of a deity varies greatly, sometimes on a daily basis, and depends upon the amount of worship a deity receives, his power before becoming a deity, and his level of activity.

**Ascension:** The methods and means of ascension are poorly understood by mortals and even the deities themselves.

It is possible for a being to be elevated to godhood by the sponsorship of another deity, in this instance the sponsoring deity gives of themselves to elevate the being to Demi-Power status (or whatever power level he wants the being to be at). This method is the one probably used by Tempus and the Red Knight in making her the Demi-Power of tactics and strategy, and is a fairly common method of ascension.

Mortals can also ascend by stealing the power of a god for themselves using powerful magical rituals or artefacts. This has certainly been used in the past most famously by Karsus who briefly became the god of magic by stealing power from Mystryl by casting his Avatar spell. It may also have been used by Velsharoon to steal the power of another god, although he was being unwittingly aided in this task by the god Talos.

It is also possible for a being to ascend simply by the magnitude of worship it receives from other mortal beings. In ages past before the gods were so numerous, the primordials that roamed Toril created many of the lesser races in their own image, Annam is the most well known example of this for he indirectly created the entire giant race through the primordial children he created. At some point Annam became the focus of worship of the giant races (along with his primordial children) and he ascended to become a Greater Power and head of the giant pantheon. It is unknown if this event came before or after his death but death may not be as important an event for deities as it is for mortals.

In fact death appears to be no barrier at all to ascension. Kelemvor for instance was dead for many years before he ascended to godhood (albeit with significant help). A being could be dead for centuries even millennia before his ascension to divinity, as long as people still alive worship him as a deity in sufficient numbers then that being may become a god at any point and he will look and behave as his worshippers remember him. It is unknown whether the god and the original being are the same person following ascension after death, but then again it is also unknown whether any shred of a being's personality survives the ascension to godhood when they are alive. Indeed it may be that the internal and external features of all gods are shaped entirely by the majority beliefs of their worshippers which

makes individuality a moot point among the divine.

The spark of divinity is therefore something that can be transferred to another creature which will make them a deity. Such an outcome depends upon the power of the individual in question (those below a threshold of 30 HD will be almost indiscernible from a mortal of similar level and are therefore known as quasi-deities).

As a creature's power level can vary, so to can the amount of divine essence it contains. Beings sired by gods do not necessarily contain enough of this divine essence to become gods themselves, even when they attain an appropriate level of power (30 +). The Bhaalspawn are an example of this, beings sired by Bhaal that on their own could never become a deity without outside help, however should they concentrate enough of the divine spark within themselves by killing other Bhaalspawn; or other semi divine beings, then godhood is almost a guarantee (although keeping it is another matter). The Chosen of various deities also contain a spark of divinity, but not enough to make them deities in their own right (regardless of their level of power).

It is clear that this spark of divinity originated in some higher power (possibly Ao himself) that was distributed among powerful beings who would become the first gods. From that event the essence has been bestowed upon other beings by the gods themselves, or stolen, or granted anew by Ao or any other number of the various means of ascension which involves the transfer of that divine essence into the being in question which (assuming the transformation to deity is successful) becomes the divine vessel of a new god. Some would also argue that the soul itself has an infinitesimal amount of this divine essence.

Tchazzar for instance may have contained a measure of divine essence by virtue of his ancestry; he may have received it from Tiamat as part of her sponsorship of his ascension. Velsharoon on the other hand may have used a powerful artefact to steal the divine essence of another god. Amaunator may be an example of an idea elevated to godhood which undoubtedly would require the intervention of another deity, perhaps Ao himself, in order to create a being and god that never previously existed in order to fill a gap in the pantheon that the people needed and were crying out for (by prayer). Iyachtu Xvim as the son of Bane contained a portion of this divine essence and appears to have amassed power for himself by serving his father, his ascension however involved the sacrifice of thousands of people and so provides support for the idea that the soul itself containing a measure of divine essence, enough to transform Xvim into a deity and the combined divine energy (experience points) of the sacrifices allowed Xvim to propel himself to Lesser Power status.

Those methods detailed above are just a few of the paths available; there are undoubtedly many more secret and unusual methods to attaining godhood. It is clear that without a sufficient quantity of divine essence, no being may become a deity; no matter how powerful he is when compared to other gods. Of course with enough power, killing a deity and taking his divine essence is within the realm of possibility.

**Planar Bias:** This value is a representative of how the universe as a whole accepts the deity in question and is adjusted dependant upon the location of the deity's divine realm.

Planar Bias on the Prime Material Plane is always 1. A deity is always at his most attuned to the universe when he is located upon the Prime Material Plane.

If a deity chooses to relocate from the Prime Material Plane by creating or dwelling on a Divine Realm

in the Planes then his Planar Bias may increase depending upon the choice he makes.

A deity may create his Divine Realm upon any non transitive plane; this includes the Outer and Inner Planes. If the plane chosen for a Divine Realm has an alignment then the Planar Bias of the deity increases by one point per step the deity's alignment is removed from the plane's alignment (take the plane's alignment on each axis and count up by one as you move along each axis in either direction until you reach the deity's alignment).

So for instance a deity of LG alignment that chooses to create his Divine Realm in Limbo has a Planar Bias of 3 (2 points from Lawful to Chaotic, and 1 point from Good to Neutral).

If the alignment of the deity is in exact opposition to the alignment of the plane (only applies to Lawful Good and Chaotic Evil alignments) then the Planar Bias is doubled.

Planar Bias can be increased by additional points by having an elemental type that does not match that of the required plane, or by not having a required subtype for certain planes. For instance the Abyss desires only demons to dwell on it and so any deity without the Tanar'ri, Obyrith, or Demon subtypes will increase their planar bias by one if they choose the Abyss as the location of their Divine Realm.

**Divine Energy:** In simplest terms the power of a deity can be expressed in the number of experience points a deity possesses. Whatever experience level progression table you use (my own personal table progresses in orders of magnitude so levels 1-10 increase by 1000 each level, levels 11-20 increases by 10000 each level, levels 21-30 increases by 100000 each level, etc), every being in the game has an experience point count.

When a being crosses a certain threshold it may become a deity and gain access to a whole host of new abilities that are available only to gods. However not everyone chooses or is able to do so (a few methods of ascension are detailed here), certainly there are some mortals that are able to best Demi-Powers in combat, and yet these beings are definitely not gods.

Unlike mortals, a god's experience point count is not static or ever increasing. It is expended in the many divine acts they perform to retain the worshippers they have and gain new worshippers and to fend off the predations of divine rivals. Every divine act, no matter how small, requires the use of divine energy in the form of experience point loss.

Some of the most expensive uses of divine energy are creating and maintaining a home plane and creating avatars and avatar forms.

This divine energy is accrued through the worship of mortal beings and the acts of mortal beings within your pantheon that promote your portfolios.

Being a god is a balance between expending enough energy to maintain and expand your number of worshippers, and conserving your divine energy so that you do not become a burned out husk devoid of divine energy.

Should a particularly active deity expend enough divine energy to drop below 20 HD then he is no longer able to perform any divine activities (this includes granting spells to worshippers) in essence the god becomes silent and it is very likely he will lose worshippers to other more active gods). Many gods that reach this stage are confined to single avatar form that roam the Material Plane and gradually burn through the remainder of their divine energy/experience point total until they reach 0 and are destroyed



or they receive a surge in worship that elevates them above 20 HD worth of experience whereupon they return to the status of active deity.

Should a deity ever reach 0 experience points then he is destroyed completely and utterly, there is no chance of him ever returning.

While on their Divine Realm (except for the Prime Material Plane – if that is the deity's divine realm they receive 0), a deity receives 100 experience points per day (divided by the Planar Bias value).

**Worship:** In the beginning stages of play, all characters gain experience through their own activity, by slaying monsters, using their skills, etc. At later levels when the amount of experience required is in the many millions, this method of increasing ones power is hopelessly inefficient, and as a result the most powerful of mortals rarely increases in level once a century.

Deities accumulate experience via a different method, through the collective devotion of their followers. Every devout worshipper of a deity (one that venerates the deity as a patron above all others) grants 1 experience point per day, every prayer raised in that deity's name grants 1 experience point. Every act by an individual (whether he believes in the deity or not, within the pantheon to which the deity belongs) that is covered by the deity's portfolio grants 1 experience point. Upon the death of a worshipper their soul travels to the Home Plane of the deity and can be converted into experience points.

In this way a deity can accumulate experience without any followers at all (providing his portfolio encompasses actions performed by those within the pantheonic area the god belongs to). However it is obviously in a god's best interest to establish an organised church with a number of devout followers who pray many times a day and regularly perform acts that promote the god's portfolio, as well as convert people to worship of the god. In this way a clergy ensures a regular stream of experience to the god which helps determine his stable power level (demi, lesser, intermediate, or greater).

The total amount of divine energy accrued each day from the above sources is divided by the Planar Bias value.

**Divine Activity:** As beings increase in power they acquire new abilities, at higher levels of power many of these abilities require an experience point sacrifice in order to fuel them.

For a god, all of his divine activities require a sacrifice of experience. Every manifestation, every miracle performed, every communication with a mortal, even granting spells to his clergy all require the sacrifice of experience.

A particularly active god requires the regular prayers of thousands of beings in order to maintain his power level. Without this a deity will quickly burn through his experience point count and his number of HD may well decrease if he uses his abilities often enough.

**Avatars:** When a deity is born he begins with one avatar that closely resembles his mortal form (this form may change over time according to what the worshippers believe the god looks like, but such events are rare since the deity usually reinforces what he looks like through manifestations and avatar appearances). This first avatar form is the divine vessel of the deity and holds his deific essence. If it is destroyed on the deity's Divine Realm then the deity perishes. (If the vessel is destroyed away from the Divine Realm then the essence of the deity

reappears in the Divine realm and begins forming a divine vessel once again).

If a deity has no vessel (because it was destroyed away from his Divine Realm) then he reappears on his Divine Realm as a shadowy, incorporeal version of himself that must accrue experience through the levels as normal (starting with half the Divine Energy/experience he had previously which is lost permanently – thankfully accruing experience is vastly magnified on a daily basis because of worship) until it reaches his normal maximum. During this time the deity is particularly vulnerable because if it has less HD than the minimum required and so cannot grant spells or use any divine abilities, and if its Divine Vessel is destroyed again in the weakened state it loses half its experience total again weakening it further).

Creating an avatar of this form costs 50,000 experience points. The number of avatars a deity can create is limited depending upon the power of the deity. Greater Powers can have up to 10 avatars, Intermediate Powers can have up to 5 avatars, Lesser Powers can have up to 2 avatars, and Demi-Powers can have only 1 avatar, these numbers include the divine vessel avatar so a Demi-Power can not create any new avatars unless his existing avatar is destroyed (and it was not on his Divine Realm at the time which would result in the death of the Demi-Power).

Maintaining an avatar costs only 1 experience point per HD of the avatar per day per avatar (divine vessels are counted as avatars). The sole remaining vessels of some long forgotten deities have been known to survive millennia, slumbering in secret tombs before finally expiring as the last of its divine energy is consumed.

Voluntarily ending an avatar allows the deity to recoup 25,000 experience points, half of that expended when creating the avatar, and so deities do not create avatars on a whim unless the need is great.

A deity can create a different form for its avatar. This process costs 100,000 experience points. A different form for an avatar can also be acquired for free when the deity in question subsumes an existing deity (usually absorbing that former deity's Divine Energy); in this case the new avatar form matches that of the other deity. Both these situations have occurred relatively recently with the god known as Tiamat the Dragon Queen. When she subsumed the Mulan deity known as Tiamat the Dark Lady, she gained an avatar form of a Mulan sorceress that is able to take the form of a three headed dragon. In addition, shortly after the Time of Troubles, Tiamat the Dragon Queen submerged the corpse of Tiamat the Dark Lady's avatar into the Pool of Many Colours (in which Gilgeam's avatar corpse was already submerged) and from there created the avatar form known as the Undying Queen, a huge five headed dracolich.

**Divine Realm:** Creating a Divine Realm varies in cost, depending upon the size and location of the plane upon which it is located. In its simplest form a Divine Realm costs 100,000 experience points per square mile in order to create it. Maintaining that realm is 1,000 experience points per square mile per day.

This value of creation and maintenance of a Divine Realm is increased by a multiple of the deity's Planar Bias value.

Many deities pay for maintenance of their Divine Realm by allowing other deities to dwell therein and donate a portion of their divine energy towards the running costs.

It is possible for a consortium of deity's to work together to create a Divine Realm, in this instance the highest Planar Bias value of all the cooperating deities is used.

**Magic:** Deities are directly attuned to magic, and unlike mortals they can handle magic in its raw form without accessing the Weave.

Using this raw magic deities can create life forms out of nothingness, transport themselves across vast distances, and communicate with anyone, anywhere just by expending a portion of divine energy.

They can of course use spells that mortals use as this is easier and far cheaper than dealing with raw magic. Any spell within purview of a deity's portfolio can be cast anywhere within the pantheon to which the deity belongs at a cost of 1 experience per spell level (plus any additional experience and gold piece costs – which are directly converted into experience at a rate of 1 gold = 1 experience).

These spells can also be cast anywhere within the boundaries of a deity's Divine Realm.

A deity can also transfer spells to their divine casting class worshippers for the same price as casting them (although in this instance the divine caster pays the additional experience and gold piece cost at the point of casting) whenever the divine caster prays for his spells.

Using raw magic is a lot like mortals casting ritual magic (otherwise known as epic magic). The experience point cost is equal to the skill check value required to produce the magical effect.

**Demi-Powers:** A Demi-Power is very much a crossover between mortals and gods. A Demi-Power begins his deific life with the Material Plane as his deific home plane (i.e. where his divine essence is stored); he also begins with only one avatar that is the sole manifestation of his being (his Divine Vessel). In this state a Demi-God is using up a portion of his experience points maintaining this avatar form and so needs to acquire a stable income of divine energy (experience) from worship or portfolio patronage.

A Demi-Power is also vulnerable to destruction in this form. If his avatar is destroyed on his Divine Realm, then like mortal beings, he is likewise destroyed. This can be circumvented by a Demi-Power making his deific home plane in the Outer Planes somewhere but that usually requires an alliance with an Intermediate or Greater Power that is willing to allow them to dwell on his plane. In this instance when the sole avatar of a Demi-Power is destroyed the divine essence returns to his Divine Realm in an incorporeal form and gradually builds his new avatar form around it which can take many years.

Talos is famous for elevating beings to godhood and then burning them out so that they quickly vanish. He forces these godlings to dwell on the Material Plane (by not letting them dwell in his Divine Realm) and he sets forces against them so that they perform destructive acts which promote his portfolio. Once these new gods have expended all their power he destroys them, takes their worshippers (sometimes under an alias) and increases his own power.

Velsharoon, Talos' latest victim, has managed to escape this fate for the time being by aligning himself with Mystra who allowed Velsharoon to dwell on her home plane and has thus far protected him from the predations of Talos. Velsharoon is now conserving his energy and establishing a church to give himself a steady income of experience points.

**Origins:** Working out a god's Power Level is easy if they were an ascended mortal like Azuth. These deities usually become a Demi-Power since they are around 30<sup>th</sup> level when they ascend. Gradually they accumulate more devout worshippers or become more widely known and venerated throughout the Realms and so once their divine energy reaches the critical point they become a lesser power.

Primordials, Archfey, and Cosmic Entities (such as Demon Lords) present a problem when calculating a deity's power level. Many of these beings have HD far in excess of 30 and some of them rival Intermediate or even Greater Powers in terms of abilities.

When these beings ascend they have several choices to make, they can burn through their divine energy (experience points) with flashy displays of power in the hope that this will garner them enough worshippers to recoup the losses later, or they can preserve their divine energy and maintain their power level as it were when they ascended and so are perceived to be of a much greater status than their level or worship would otherwise indicate.

A perfect example of this is the Draconic pantheon. These gods are classified as Greater, Intermediate, or Lesser Powers and yet they are worshipped almost exclusively by dragons that are very few in number. Furthermore the number of dragons that are actually devout worshippers of the gods is very few indeed (rarely exceeding double digits).

From a comparison point of view, Io might be able to best an Intermediate Power in single combat because he is more powerful (being classified as a Greater Power). However such an act would expend much of his divine energy (experience points) and likely result in him dropping to an Intermediate or even Lesser Power status, a change from which he is unlikely to recover to his former status because he has so few worshippers.

This is because Io was a supremely powerful individual before he became a god and has maintained that power level by being thrifty with his divine energy. By manifesting avatars seldom if at all, not sending manifestations or divine servants to his worshippers, and the draconic pantheon collectively pooling their divine energy to create an Outer Planar abode, Io has maintained his divine energy at a level equal to that of a Greater Power and so to all outward appearances he is a Greater Power. His worship and portfolio patronage maintains his level at Demi or Lesser Power status and so if he were to suddenly become more active (for instance manifesting 9 avatars at a time) he would quickly be downgraded to a Demi or Lesser Power. He does however receive a significant divine energy boost when his worshippers die and he gains the sum of their experiences.

This quirk of divinity can be used to a person's advantage before ascension. The Dark Three; Bane, Bhaal, and Myrkul, went on an epic quest binding and slaying the seven lost primordials in Faerûn. This act boosted their power considerably, taking them far beyond the limits of mere mortals. When they finally ascended to godhood (relinquished to them by Jergal), they had a significant reserve of divine energy (experience points) to expend in order to acquire worshippers through displays of power across the Vilhon Reach.

For Cosmic Entities such as Demon Lords, the Elemental Lords, and other beings that are bound to or created by the Inner and Outer Planes to represent that plane, these beings gain a constant stream of power from the plane itself and already have many of the abilities of a deity. Those few that manage to ascend to godhood can use this stream of power from the plane they represent in order to fuel their

divine activities.

The deities Akadi, Kossuth, Grumbar, and Istishia, are an example of cosmic entities that are deities in Abeir-Toril and were once powerful primordials. Birthed in the ancient past of Abeir-Toril, these primordials were “chosen” by the Inner Planes to represent them and became Cosmic Entities (chosen in such a way that a barely sentient plane of existence can make a choice). Worshipped by some on Faerûn as gods, these four have the status of a Greater Power despite having relatively few devout followers. They derive much of their divine energy from the Elemental Planes that they represent, and they serve as rulers over large areas of those planes.

The question is then why become a deity at all. It involves significant risk and effort to maintain deity status, and involves the little known problem that one might lose their identity as the ideology of worshippers is malleable over time. The answer is one of ignorance for the most part, few beings alive in the universe have accurate knowledge of the intricacies of being a god, and even fewer have documented them in part or as a whole. To date there is no known manual of “how to be a god”.

Most beings desire godhood as a path to infinite power or true immortality, not realising that they will attain neither. Gods are not all powerful and they are not forever. Deities are however harder to kill than the Primordial creatures of the Material Plane, and they have more stability than the Cosmic Entities of the Outer and Inner Planes that rely on the barely sentient choices of the planes themselves to keep their power.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Time of Dragons

The ancient history of dragons begins way back in the mists of time when the Batrachi sought a powerful ally to help them in their battles with the primordial beings of Abeir-Toril.

They sought out and compelled a being of incredible power to assist them. This being was known as Asguroth, he was a dragon-like being of immense size that lived in the Crystal Sphere of Abeir-Toril.

Angered by the impudence of the Batrachi, but magically compelled to carry out their wishes, Asguroth used the awesome power of his breath weapon to fire the ice moon Zotha at the planet. Asguroth, in his rage, made a mistake and the ice moon splintered and fractured under the power of the blast. A large chunk of Zotha burst free and spun off into the vastness of space (injuring Asguroth as it went), shards of ice many miles long pierced the great primordial and sent great gouts of his blood spattering across the heavens. Then the ice moon of Zotha powered towards Abeir-Toril at an incredible speed.

It was only through the divine intervention of the being known as Ao that the planet was saved. As Zotha impacted into the Inner Seas, the planet Abeir-Toril was separated into twin planets Abeir and Toril, a dimension apart, one containing the lands of the primordials, the other containing the lands of the lesser races.

Along with Zotha came the blood soaked ice shards that impacted across both planets. Where these shards impacted, eggs formed in the craters and from them hatched many wonderful and varied forms of lizard like creatures, each representing a physical attribute of the being Asguroth.

Over the next few centuries a race of draco-forms from the variety of draco-forms that were spawned came to dominate the planet; an elongated reptilian creature with four limbs and a large head with an enormous maw. This creature was called a landwyrm by the dominant race of Toril at that time (the Aearee).

It was the Aearee who first began experimenting upon these landwyrm; they gave them wings and created a winged lizard like creature that resembled the wyvern of today. This creature quickly out-competed the landwyrm for food and territory and led to its virtual extinction.

This new species, named Eodraco by some scholars, also possessed a degree of intelligence previously unknown among the various draco-forms spawned by Asguroth's blood. It became self-aware and grew to resent its servitude to the Aearee creator race, ideas of rebellion spread through the hives of Eodraco.

The largest and most aggressive of its kind, a being named Nagamat, gathered together the hives of Eodraco and launched a massive, coordinated assault on the Aearee Empire and brought low their great flying hatcheries.

Nagamat wanted to wage war against the other races of Toril, a conflict that some felt would spell the end of their race. One among their number, a being named Xymor, slew Nagamat to preserve the few Eodraco that had survived the war with the Aearee.

Eodraco remained unchanged for a thousand years until a group of them learned the magical lore of the creator races. Using the shaping magics of the Sarrukh and combined with other magics from the Batrachi, Aearee, and Faerie peoples, these Eodraco sought to bring their race closer to Asguroth, their progenitor.

On the shores of the Moonsea these draconic wizards melded together the various remaining dracoforms and infused their creation with magic. The result was a creature that we today would recognise as a dragon; scarlet red, fire breathing, possessing exceptional physical and mental strength and blessed with innate magical abilities. This young dragon was called Garyx and treated as a god from the moment of his conception.

Garyx was an unstable creature, perhaps in part due to his magical creation and the fusing together of many creatures which led to a splintered psyche. That his creators spoiled him rotten from birth did not help him gain self control. His rages were the stuff of legend and his destructive potential increased exponentially as he grew.

Shortly after his creation the giants of Ostoria arrived and evicted the dragons from the Dragon Sea as it was known then. Garyx and his creators were forced to flee far to the south where Eodraco was still strong in numbers.

Garyx was unusual in that he reproduced asexually, every few decades he would lay an egg that gave birth to a dragon that resembled himself, once raised to adulthood that dragon would reproduce in the same manner and even stranger it possessed much of the same memories as the parent. Each dragon knew everything its parents knew and all had the same unstable nature.

When the giant Kingdom of Ostoria began to encroach upon the territory of Garyx and his brood of dragons, it did not take long for a war to break out between the dragons and the giants.

Garyx and his children launched themselves at the giant kingdoms with insane fury, in a conflict that lasted a thousand years. One by one the giant kingdoms fell, until last to stand was Ostoria, ruled by the all powerful Annam.

Annam was an ancient primordial creature along the same lines as Asguroth, he possessed a strength that even the gods would have trouble defeating. Annam fathered many primordial children who in turn fathered the giant races known today. Yet the endless swarms of these powerful dragons proved more than a match for the children of Annam.

One dragon, named Bahamut, possessed a measure of self control that his peers did not. He recognised the flaws in the dragon race and that their current path would lead to certain destruction. Searching for an alternative he learned of the creators of dragons and how they had used magic to attempt to bring themselves closer to Asguroth.

Bahamut searched long and hard and found in far off lands a piece of ice still bearing the blood of Asguroth. Using a reversal of a similar ritual his Eodraco creators had once used, he attempted to purge himself and his collection of eggs of the negative aspects of Asguroth by using the blood of Asguroth. Bahamut was just one being where many had attempted the magic before, he could not control the magical energies and it splintered. From the ritual were created 2 dragons, Bahamut was the dragon race purified, he represented everything good about the dragons and he appeared as a splendid platinum dragon. Another being was created, the very antithesis of Bahamut, she represented everything evil about dragons and she appeared as a five headed behemoth that would come to be known as Tiamat.

The two dragons battled each other ferociously but neither could defeat the other and so they fled. The

hatching dragon eggs they left behind were now a myriad of colours as they too were changed by the magic. These new dragons were accepted into the existing dragon culture but wherever possible stood apart from the conflict between Garyx and Annam, instead following the lead of their perceived sires, Bahamut or Tiamat.

On both sides of the conflict countless dragons and giants perished and their races suffered because of it. Annam was persuaded by his wife to end the conflict quickly by fighting Garyx in personal combat. Using himself as bait he lured Garyx to the battlefield and Annam and his children threw everything they could at the dragons.

Unfortunately for Annam his wife had tricked him. She persuaded him to go ahead with the gamble so that Annam would surely be killed. At the edge of the battle, Othea and her lover stood hand in hand and watched, there they were spotted by Annam.

Annam was furious and charged Ulutiu, leaving the battle, which would surely end in defeat for the giants without him. He slew Ulutiu with a single blow and destroyed the island upon which he lived, after that Annam was never again seen on Toril, although the giants maintain he is the ruler of their pantheon of gods.

Garyx too perished that day between the jaws of an abomination created by the Sarrukh to end the dominance of the dragons so that the reptiles could inherit the world once more.

The battle between the giants and dragons continued for many days until it suddenly ended as the dragons fled the field of battle.

The elves you see had long been working in secret on a magical ritual so strong that it would encompass the entire planet. On the cusp of its creation the dragons sensed the change in the world (as did all beings); something invaded their mind and threatened to drive them insane. They could see the point of origin far in the west with a beam of energy pointing into the heavens, and so off they flew to its source in the Star Mounts of the High Forest.

That day the last of the dragons sired by Garyx perished about the citadel on the Star Mounts, for their unstable natures were tipped over the edge to raging insanity and many of them crushed their own skulls against the rocks of the Star Mounts to escape the madness. Thousands of Avariel and other elves perished against the dragons defending the magic they were creating. By the end of it the Dracorage Mythal was established and the Time of Dragons was over.

Every few hundred years, the King Killer Star would pass by the planet and drive every dragon on Toril insane. He would destroy everything around him and everything he had spent the years of his life creating. Dragon Empires rose and fell over the preceding millennia but none could establish dominance beyond the appearance of the King Killer Star.

**The Draconic Pantheon:** The pantheon of dragons is a confusing mess. The gods Lendys, Tamara, Astilabor, Hlal, Task, Aasterinian, and Xymor are all names of Eodraco that were once rulers of their own draco-kingdoms or famous in draconic history for their deeds. Indeed a few of these creatures are responsible for creating Garyx and in turn the rest of true dragonkind. Over millennia the deeds and history of these beings have been corrupted into what the dragons now venerate as their pantheon of gods.



Whether any of the Eodraco above actually ascended to godhood, or the gods as they exist now are merely a memory of what the dragons believe are their gods is unknown.

Garyx is of course the dragon god of destruction and he is remembered for the thousand year long war that nearly destroyed dragon-kind as it existed then as well as the giants. Garyx and his scarlet dragons are not the same dragons as are known today. The dragons known today as true dragons were created by Bahamut in an effort to save dragonkind from destruction by purging it of certain behavioural weaknesses.

Because of Bahamut's attempt to save the draconic race he has been confused with Xymor who was also known for attempting to save the draconic race (by slaying Nagamut). Much of the history of this time has become confused and corrupted to the point that Bahamut and Xymor are now accepted as the same being by dragons. Belief is a powerful tool in the shaping of deities and since most believe it to be true that is the truth as far as Bahamut is concerned.

The draconic deity of death today is known as Null. Until the Thousand Year War there was no such thing as a draconic deity of death, quite simply the death of a dragon was a very rare almost non event. Upon the battlefield of Garyx and Annam's confrontation, the sheer amount of death and destruction confined to such a relatively small area caused the creation of no less than three undead dragon-like beings of various forms and immense, concentrated power.

These beings, known as Falazure, Chrononepsis, and Null have become the basis for various draconic deities of death. Over time the separate deities have merged through confusion over their similarities, or slain one another and the victor absorbed their power, now only Null remains as the sole draconic god of death.

The ruler of the draconic pantheon is a being known as Io. This god is what the dragons remember of Asguroth, the origin of all dragonkind on Abeir-Toril. Over the millennia they have confused his name with that of Ao who was involved in saving the planet from the wrath of Asguroth.

All the draconic pantheon live in Dragon's Eyrie, except for Bahamut and Tiamat, Both Bahamut and Tiamat may be outcasts among the other dragon gods because they are closer and at the same time more distant to Asguroth than their sires, however it may also be that Tiamat and Bahamut have been significantly influenced by human worship and so desire or are forced to live among the gods of humans.

**Origin Myth:** There are many origin myths in the draconic pantheon, each colour of dragon holds to a different myth that highlights the aspect of their particular race as dominant. The interesting thing about the draconic origin myths is that all of them are in part true.

The very first origin of the draconic race lies in the death of Asguroth. His blood mingled with the ice of Zotha birthed the draco-forms. The Aearee changed these into the Eodraco who were likewise changed by themselves into the scarlet dragons. That the red dragons believe themselves to be the first dragon is partly true. The metallic dragons however believe that Bahamut created the dragons using the blood of Asguroth, and this is also true since his attempt to purify the dragon race of the instabilities of Garyx led to the creation of the various hues of dragonkind that are known today.

## Laerakond: The Sea of Corynactis

For many years the aquatic denizens of the Sea of Fallen Stars have believed that the Sea of Corynactis exists on the far side of the planet as the name to the watery expanse between the continents.

This Sea of Corynactis is the home of the Shalarin that have been brought to the Sea of Fallen Stars in successive waves by the Wild Tide Gate. In truth the Sea of Corynactis is the name of the waters to the north of the continent of Laerakond on the planet Abeir-Toril, later Abeir, and now Abeir-Toril once again.

In the mists of time, before the Batrachi ventured onto land, the Shalarin were a slave race crafted by the Batrachi before they ever ventured onto the lands of Abeir-Toril. Once the Batrachi moved to dominate the continent of Faerûn the Shalarin were abandoned, left behind beneath the ocean waves.

The Tearfall separated Laerakond and Faerûn into twinned planets Abeir and Toril, the two planets occupied the same space and yet existed a dimension apart. The Shalarin were caught up in the separation of worlds and the Sea of Corynactis, where they dwelt, was whisked away to Abeir along with Laerakond.

The oceans of Abeir were vast and largely devoid of intelligent life, in fact the waters of Abeir were largely devoid of any life. Starvation was a regular problem for the Shalarin people and severely limited their expansion.

The Shalarin from their inception were forced into veneration of the gods of the Batrachi masters. Over time this pantheon of gods evolved into something known as the Great School and gradually it came to be dominated by dark and fell powers led by a deity known as Ramenos. These evil gods left a sinister legacy on the culture of the Shalarin.

Following the “changing of the stars”, the Shalarin priests noticed their gods no longer answered their prayers. In order to keep their favoured position in society the priesthood seized power, backed by the might of the Protector Caste. The priesthood ruled the Shalarin Empire undisputed until -1509 DR when the Wildtide Gate opened for the first time.

The Sea of Corynactis itself is a brightly coloured undersea plain filled with coloured protrusions of enormous size that sway gently with the tides. The Shalarin have long mastered the art of sculpting and modifying these organic growths of unknown origin, they use them for protection and live within them or use them as building material (pillars) in their construction.

**Es'Corolem:** This once vast empire covered the entire Sea of Corynactis for over 30,000 years. It was built around the swaying brightly coloured “arms” of Corynactis, which were used to construct the buildings and features of Es'Corolem. These “arms” had a protective element as many sea creatures that came into contact with them were instantly paralysed. The Shalarin were not affected by this and lived within and around the arms to keep themselves safe from the many predators of the oceans.

The society of Es'Corolem was a rigid caste structure enforced at first by the Batrachi when the Shalarin were a slave race (so that they could keep track of what their slaves should be doing), then later when the Batrachi left and the Great School came to influence the Shalarin, Ramenos visited untold cruelty upon the Shalarin for any display of free will.

This caste system is so ingrained in Shalarin culture that each Shalarin knows what caste he or she will

belong to before he is even born (the egg itself is coloured according to his caste).

In Es'Corolem there were historically four castes; The Protectors (warriors), The Providers (workers, servants, and rulers), The Scholars, and the Seekers (explorers). Each of these castes were created by the Batrachi to subdivide the Shalarin according to their skills which were bred into them by their creators in order to fill a particular need of the Batrachi.

When Laerakond and the Shalarin were separated from Toril and the Great School, the priests of Es'Corolem feared losing their favoured position among their caste and society as a whole. They used their authority over the Protector caste to eliminate the ruling family of Es'Corolem and placed themselves in charge as a fifth caste, the Faith caste.

The Protectors became the enforcers of the priesthood, the Seekers were sent out to seek whatever food could be found in the vast empty depths of Abeir's oceans, and the Scholar and Providers were forced to be their slaves.

Any deviation or expression of free will was ruthlessly suppressed by the Protector and Faith castes. The punishment for any infraction no matter how minor involved the disappearance of the offending Shalarin from society, they were never seen again and only those sentenced to a similar fate ever discovered what happened to them.

When the Wildtide Gate opened for the first time it was targeted by Dagon against each individual caste. First he directed it against the caste that hindered his infiltration into Shalarin society the most, the Faith caste. The Wildtide Gate produced a bubbling wave that surged from the rift towards Es'Corolem, it targetted the palaces and temples first and so abducted the vast majority of the Faith caste from Es'Corolem (with 20% of the abductees being from other castes).

The effect on Es'Corolem was sudden. The Protector Caste moved in immediately to take the reins of control and ensure the order of Shalarin society was preserved. For 700 years they ruled over Es'Corolem with an iron fist keeping up the practices of the Faith Caste without ever knowing the reasons why.

The second time the Wildtide Gate opened it targeted the Protector Caste, surging forth and abducting the rulers of Es'Corolem yet again. This time round it liberated the Shalarin from their overlords, but the Shalarin did not know what to do with their freedom and so the Provider, Scholar and Seeker castes continued their work as before with only a few seeking a different kind of life elsewhere.

Despite the absence of the Faith and Protector castes, and a lack of enforcement of the law upon dissenters, the disappearances of Shalarin continued, and indeed increased. The population of the Shalarin, instead of remaining stable now began to decline.

When the Wildtide Gate opened for the third time it targeted the Provider Caste. This removed those Shalarin with the skills necessary to cultivate food for Es'Corolem and the remaining Shalarin began to starve. It was at this point that Dagon's agents began to make inroads among the Shalarin of Es'Corolem, providing power and knowledge in return for sacrifice. They always masqueraded as nomadic Shalarin arriving from outside the Empire that sought to help the people of Es'Corolem. With their dwindling population and desperation through starvation, the Shalarin began to welcome these outsiders into their communities.

By the time the Wildtide Gate opened for a fourth time (whereupon it abducted the Scholar Caste) the Cult of Dagon was beginning to become well established particularly among the Seekers who spent increasingly longer amounts of time foraging for food away from the protection of the arms of Corynactis.

And so it came to pass that in 1369 DR a being of incredible power crashed into the Wildtide Gate and triggered it while seeking to escape his enemies. This being known as Iakhovas caused the premature opening of the gate which abducted most of the remaining population of Es'Corolem, most of whom were Seekers and worshippers of Dagon, and dumped them into the Sea of Fallen Stars unannounced causing confusion and upheaval among the nations of Serôs.

All that remains of Es'Corolem now are a few hundred Shalarin left behind by the Wildtide Gate whose numbers dwindle daily thanks to the dark secret the Sea of Corynactis had been hiding for millennia.

**Dagon:** Dagon is a Demon Lord of the Abyss that has long desired to control all the waters of Toril. His long time nemesis has always been the Great School pantheon of the aquatic races of the Trackless Sea. Back when the world of Abeir-Toril was covered with ice, Dagon ruled everything beneath the surface of the waves and he has retained a burning hatred for the Great School that freed the aquatic races from his influence.

The Tearfall had a curious effect for Dagon. When Zotha struck the Inner Seas and merged them into one, the sea bed itself cracked and ruptured opening a fissure into the depths of the planet, at the bottom of this trench was a rift that opened onto the 89<sup>th</sup> layer of the Abyss, Dagon's home. Through it Dagon arrived and attempted to dominate the Sea of Fallen Stars (as it was now known).

The arrival of aquatic elves in the Inner Sea around -27000 DR stopped Dagon's plans in their tracks, for one of their number; a woman named Pyithana, was powerful in The Art and she sealed the rift with Dagon behind it, preventing him from gaining access to the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Dagon was foiled in his plans yet again and now had two eternal vendettas, one against the Great School, and another against the aquatic elves of the Sea of Fallen Stars.

Pyithana's magics however did not work as she had intended. Instead of sealing the planar rift it merely moved its opening a fraction of a dimension away (for how could she have known Toril had a twin planet that occupied the same space and time but a different dimension). The rift now opened into the depths of Abeir's vast and empty oceans.

For a long time Dagon sent his minions exploring the icy, lifeless depths until he discovered Laerakond and the Sea of Corynactis. Once he discovered worshippers of the Great School he was incensed and vowed their corruption, but always his infiltrators were discovered and eliminated by the zealous faith caste.

Dagons plans altered when he was alerted to the movements of a fleet of dwarven sailors appearing in the oceans of Laerakond. Tracing the movements of the fleet back to their point of origin, Dagon's agents discovered a link the twin worlds of Abeir and Toril shared, a rift that allowed travel from the Sea of Corynactis to the Trackless Sea. Prior to the arrival of the dwarves a powerful curse was laid upon the rift preventing anyone from approaching it, but once breached the curse was lifted and travel was allowed freely.

Dagon spent centuries working on this rift and in -1509 DR finished his work. He had channelled the energies into a portal tied to the rift in his own plane. Every 720 years the portal would open and a magical wave would burst forth from the gate, anyone caught by this effect would be transported to its terminus in the Sea of Fallen Stars. The Wildtide Gate continued working even when Abeir and Toril were once again reunited.

The effect this had on the Shalarin and the cultures of Serôs was profound and in some cases devastating. The Shalarin population was depleted in successive waves, whisking off the followers of the Great School pantheon to Serôs to be devoured by Dagon's agents and the other dangers of that place. Meanwhile agents of Dagon were beginning to successfully infiltrate Shalarin society in the Sea of Corynactis because many of the Shalarin that were whisked away were the members of the priesthood of the Great School.

In 1369 DR a powerful primordial being known as Iakhovas accidentally triggered the Wildtide Gate early and was transported with the remaining Shalarin population of the Sea of Corynactis into the Sea of Fallen Stars.

The confusion caused by this event allowed Iakhovas (secretly aided by the Dagon worshippers in the Shalarin) to escape. He was contacted by Dagon (through intermediaries) and an alliance was formed; Dagon would help Iakhovas escape the Sea of Fallen Stars and back to the waters of the Trackless Sea, and in return Iakhovas would help destroy the nations of Serôs.

Thus was born the Twelfth Serôs War, during which the Sharksbane Wall was destroyed, the Sahuagin and Iakhovas invaded Serôs and the evil races banded together to destroy the empires of the sea elves, mermen, and shalarin people.

In the end, only by using ancient magic hidden beneath Myth Nantar (beneath the silt of Nantarum in the first sea elven settlement created on that site, the same site where Pyithana imprisoned Dagon), were the allied races of Serôs able to banish Iakhovas to the outer oceans and end his threat.

Dagon is now free to roam the waters of the Trackless Sea (including the Sea of Corynactis which now lies between Laerakond and Evermeet), and the Sea of Fallen Stars. The magics used to banish Iakhovas were the same used to banish Dagon and prevent his return; their re-use ended the binding effect on Dagon and allowed his re-entry into Abeir-Toril.

**Corynactis:** When the Batrachi abandoned their slaves and ventured on to land, the Shalarin fled to the waters around Laerakond and their discovered what they called the "Arms of Corynactis".

These massive, brightly-coloured, fleshy protrusions thrust up out of the silt of the depths and move slowly with the tides. They cause paralysis to most beings that venture near them, and so provided a means of protection for the Shalarin, who were immune to this effect, from the predators of the deep.

What few Shalarin realised, was the these "Arms of Corynactis" were actually arms attached to a living being, the primordial creature that gave his name to the sea the Shalarin came to dwell in.

Corynactis is a huge sea dwelling creature whose massive body extends under the silt covered sea bed for miles and miles. The entire Empire of Es'Corolem is built atop him, and he has been slowly expanding over the millennia by feeding on the Shalarin that were sacrificed to him. Now that Corynactis has returned to the abundant waters of the Trackless Sea his potential for growth is nearly

limitless.

The arms are used to catch prey and deliver them into the maw of Corynactis, which exists under the palace.

The placement of the palace of Es'Corolem was not random coincidence. Corynactis is capable of intelligent communication with those nearby (if he wishes to that is) and he recognised in the Shalarin a chance to acquire more food and grow even greater in size than he is already.

So Corynactis whispered to the first Shalarin settlers and influenced their rulers to raise the palace over his centre. From there those Shalarin that did not obey the rules were sacrificed to Corynactis (although this practice died out when the Faith and Protector Castes were stolen by the Wildtide Gate – after that time Corynactis helped himself to any Shalarin he could catch).

The Seekers were sent out into the oceans to collect intelligent, and more importantly, edible life forms for Corynactis to consume (else the Shalarin feared quite rightly that he would consume them), and in return Corynactis protected them from the dangers of the sea.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: Chessenta – The Empire of Tchazzar

In the month of Nightal 1373 DR, the Demi-Power Tchazzar returned to Chessenta and destroyed the rule of Alasklerbanbastos and his Dragon Empire of Unther. Shortly afterward he forcibly installed himself in the city of Cimbar and claimed the title of Sceptanar of Cimbar and Great King of Chessenta.

Quickly the kings of all settlements of Chessenta swore fealty to Tchazzar, all except Luthcheq, and even then the made Karanoks did not rebuke Tchazzar, they merely did not respond. Tchazzar now rules all of Chessenta and is busy rebuilding his empire after centuries of absence.

**Capital:** Cimbar

**Population:** 3,386,880 (humans 82%, Halflings 6%, dwarves 5%, half-orcs 4%, lizardfolk 2%)

**Government:** Monarchy ruled by Great King Tchazzar. Individual city government varies by city (military dictatorship, theocracy, monarchy)

**Religions:** Anhur, Hoar, Azuth, Lathander, Red Knight, Tchazzar, Waukeen, Tiamat, Entropy, Bane

**Imports:** Cheese, glass, horses, magic weapons, mercenaries, perfume, pork, slaves

**Exports:** Art, cattle, gold, grapes, olive oil, quality iron, silver, slaves (to Thay), statues, weapons, wine

**Alignment:** N, CG, LN

### **Population**

Despite Chessenta's xenophobic origins, the population of Chessenta is relatively cosmopolitan. People are accepted in Chessenta based on their merits, rather than their origins, even a drow could find peace and prosperity in this land if he chose not to attempt to enslave his fellow man and instead focused his efforts on a craft or skill.

Elves are few in Chessenta for historical reasons. Once upon a time, when the land was known as Akanu, forests filled with fey and elves dominated the landscape. Anu, the ruler of Akanu ordered all non-humans to be removed from this land and soon the forests were logged and the wild elven clans that lived there were gone. Since that time the elves have not returned to Chessenta.

Halflings were also scarce in Chessenta's ancient history; they fled the land long ago to the shores of Aglarond and the Wizard's Reach. When Gilgeam became ruler of Unther, Akanu was left to its own devices and this allowed many of the descendants of the Batoi halflings to return home. Large numbers of these halflings migrated back to Chessenta during the war between Narfell and Raumathar, particular during the Great Conflagration which devastated the lands around those two empires.

These Batoi halflings have a natural affinity for the sea and tend to dwell in the coastal cities of Chessenta where they live as fishermen and ship builders (and occasionally pirates).

The history of orcs and dwarves in the region is closely linked. The western edge of Chessenta, the Akanapeaks was home to a vast dwarven empire for many thousands of years. Unfortunately no one ever knew the name of this empire because it was wiped from history by Grey Orcs before anyone even knew they existed.

The Grey Orcs were brought to Chessenta as slaves by the armies of Akanu following the Orcgate Wars; enough of these slaves escaped or were freed to form a stable population in the wilds of Akanu.

Soon enough these orc tribes were competing with the dwarves for possession of the Akanapeaks, and by -938 DR the dwarven empire beneath the mountains was gone forever.

As time went by the orcs were found to be excellent warriors and gained service in the mercenary forces of Chessenta. This led to a rise in a significant population of half-orcs which have been very successful in combating the orc tribes of the Akanapeaks. As such, clans of dwarves have been able to migrate back into the Akanapeaks mountain range and reclaim some of their lost holds in recent times.

The humans of Chessenta are a mixture of ancient Mulan people that first populated this land mixed with the Turami natives who were driven away but returned following the destruction of Jhaamdath. Waves of Rashemi people migrated to Chessenta following the Great Conflagration and the rise of Eltab in Rashemen. Finally an influx of Amnian merchant houses arrived around the 7<sup>th</sup> century Dale Reckoning seeking new trade opportunities. Together this mix of ethnic groups has given rise to the modern Chessentan.

### **Life and Society**

Life in Chessenta is all about work. The measure of worth of a person is dependant upon their level of skill in their chosen line of work. It is far more important for a person to be well respected and highly skilled than it is to be rich; although those of Amnian ancestry would disagree on this point.

This ethos has gradually evolved over the years from its origins with the Mulan people of Akanu who placed a lot of emphasis on the physical aspects of warfare. The steady decline of Akanu led to Gilgeam and the entire Akanic pantheon abandoning Akanu for neighbouring Unther and caused the people to gradually shun their Mulan heritage.

When the Turami and Rashemi people began to migrate into Chessenta, they brought with them simpler ideals and skills in pottery, wood work and other crafts. The Mulan people of Chessenta embraced these new cultures and it soon came to pass that all skills were valued equally, not just warfare. When the Amnians arrived this brought a competitive edge to society that persists to this day.

Everyone in Chessenta is in competition against others that work in the same field. To be the best at your chosen skill or craft is what matters in life. To be recommended by another for your work is the highest honour one can receive. These things are far more important than acquiring wealth or power. Of course those of Amnian descent still value money above all else, and don't always play by the rules; they have been known to recommend inferior work for money, while criticising superior craftsmanship and skill.

To criticise another's work is a huge insult and will result in a fierce defence by the accused (sometimes resulting in a brawl and deaths are not unheard of). This insult can be mitigated by offering constructive criticism (with a demonstration), to insult another's craft when you do not possess skill in that craft yourself is to invite derision and social ostracism.

**The Quarterly Argyl Games:** A quarterly festival of competition held in every settlement of Chessenta (irrespective of size). This event is a place for people to showcase their skills and craft and compete with local rivals (and strangers) for the title of best in their field.

Its origins supposedly date back to Argyl, the first general of Chessenta, who regularly held military games to inspire the troops of his army.



That origin is however false, during Tchazzar's formation of Chessenta he needed ideals that would cement the warring city states of Chessenta together into a union. He commissioned a respected historian to research Chessenta's ancient past for cultural treasures of antiquity that he could use. The historian however was a drunk and spent the entire budget on a two year orgy of decadence before realising how much peril he was in (after he learned Tchazzar was actually a red dragon) and then using his skills to make up plausible but fictional histories.

One such fabrication was the Quarterly Argyl Games. The real origin lies with Gilgeam, who used to roam Chessenta challenging the best warriors to duels in order to prove his strength. It was given the nickname of Gilgeam's Quarter out of irony because the only mercy he ever showed a competitor was to slowly crush them between his massive fists.

Following Gilgeam's abandonment of Akanu the competition degenerated into annual arena combats in each settlement or monster hunts until it finally disappeared completely.

**Magic:** Magic use has strong roots in Akanu. All the Mulan peoples had a strong influence of magic having served under Imaskari masters for centuries. When they were liberated, the gods of the Mulan plundered many caches of Imaskari magic and took the treasures with them.

As a result the people of Akanu, Mulhorand, and Unther had extensive knowledge of ancient magics. Akanu however was situated on land once occupied by the Aearee creator race, and over the years their magical knowledge has been located in tombs and long hidden stores.

This has led to the mages of Chessenta having a very rich magical heritage that far outstrips their neighbouring Mulan relatives.

The magic of Chessenta is steeped in extra dimensional space, constructs, flight, elemental mastery (particularly the element of air), the people of Chessenta have also been influenced by the magic of those that emigrated into Chessenta over the years. The Turami in particular have some dark tendencies with magic that lean towards the use of shadow and illusion based magic.

## **Defence**

Since Tchazzar's return he has been busy rebuilding his armies. Chessenta was once famous for the warlord Tchazzar and his invincible armies, the reputation of which is largely responsible for Chessenta's significant mercenary trade.

Tchazzar has come to realise his previous centuries long reliance on godhood for immortality was flawed. He is just as vulnerable to death now as he was when he was a young red dragon hiding in his mother's lair.

Tchazzar recognises the power in humans and intends to harness that power to his own ends. In his own mind Chessenta belongs to him, and he will gladly use it to defeat his enemies. Tchazzar is going to forge the greatest armies ever seen in Faerûn and use them to keep him safe from his enemies (including Tiamat the Dragon Queen if needs be).

Tchazzar has already implemented a program of recruitment in Chessenta, he is taking the beggars, the wounded, the criminals, and the average people who will never succeed in Chessenta's competitive society. He intends to turn them into a model army, completely loyal to him. To do this he has his priesthood giving them a place to live, food, clothes, training, and a means to support themselves, in

return they need only dedicate their lives to following the orders Tchazzar gives.

Chessenta's Legions is still in its infancy, with barely 300 fighting men enrolled, and even then their skill at arms is questionable for they have never seen any combat outside of a temple brawl. The other kings of Chessenta however are wary of a military force independent of the city states and loyal only to the temple of Tchazzar, they are not yet certain that such a force will not be used against them in the future.

### **Religion**

The official religion of Chessenta is now the Church of Tchazzar. The city's of Tchazzar have been ordered to erect a grand temple in every settlement so that Tchazzar's glory may be honoured appropriately. This has angered the kings of Chessenta's city to no end, but Tchazzar is no fool and understands that the people ultimately determine who rules Chessenta.

As such Tchazzar has ordered a number of holy days to be created, including the date of his death and rebirth. During such times his fledgling priesthood gives away food, and gemstones to all that attend the temples and the costs are paid for out of Tchazzar's own considerable hoard (which increases daily thanks to the tribute from the cities). As such the people of Chessenta love Tchazzar and the kings are paralysed to do anything about it.

Other religions are permitted in Chessenta and a variety of temples from the Faerûnian and Mulhorandi-Untheric pantheons exist in the cities. For the time being at least Tchazzar looks to be taking no direct action against the other churches in his country.

Tchazzar is the head of the Church of Tchazzar and his incredible intellect and personal presence gives his church a considerable advantage over the churches of other gods. He is using his own hoard to fund the church and it is expanded at an incredible pace, with 13 churches erected in only 2 years.

Unfortunately it appears that Tchazzar has inherited a cancer from the Dragon Empire of Unther, and many of his loyal clergy are in actual fact worshippers of Tiamat and members of the Cult of the Dragon who serve none other than Alasklerbanbastos.

### **Law and Order**

Chessenta laws are based strongly around the Code of Enlil which enforces the idea that those who commit crimes shall suffer the same as the victim of those crimes.

The enforcement of these laws are less severe than in Unther, and although by killing another, the criminal's life is forfeit, that does not necessarily mean death, just that his life now belongs to the victim's family (in the form of permanent servitude).

Lesser crimes dealing with loss of property or injury require the criminal pay fines that compensate the victim for his loss.

Enforcement of these crimes is performed by local magistrates, although Tchazzar is hoping to turn over ministration of justice to his church (once it is established). The prosecution of crimes is held in public forums with both sides presenting their arguments. If the defence is particularly eloquent and persuasive then they can escape punishment entirely because to enforce justice could cause a riot. Particularly rich people usually escape justice by hiring the greatest orators and lawyers in the land for their defence.

The society of Chessenta revolves strongly around excellences and competition, and the laws reflect those cultural leanings.

To falsely represent a person, his skill, or goods, is a crime punishable by servitude to the victim for a period between 1 and 20 years. To be convicted one must be witnessed by at least 5 other people of good character, falsely proclaiming good quality of service or goods from a place or person that is later found to be inferior.

Every citizen has the right to “trial by combat” for goods or services that are unsatisfactory. This combat is not necessarily a real physical battle, but a competition between the accused and the accuser over the quality of goods received. In the public forum the accused must reproduce the contested work, measured against the accusers chosen champion. Whoever produces work of a higher quality is deemed the winner and the loser must make reparations to the victim (including reimbursement of costs for the trial by combat).

Regular duels do happen over services provided, and these are a legal aspect of “trial by combat” but such duels are only allowed if both parties agree and it is only until one side surrenders (deaths are not unknown however).

### **Government**

Currently Tchazzar is the Sceptanar and Overking of Chessenta, all the kings of individual settlements in Chessenta report directly to Tchazzar and must enact his wishes.

Only Luthcheq has not sworn an oath of fealty to Tchazzar, and as yet he has not contested them over this issue, but once his armies are ready it is almost a certainty that Luthcheq will bow down before Tchazzar or be destroyed.

**Nobility:** The nobility of Chessenta are the land and title holders of Chessenta. The kings and major land owners of Chessenta are hereditary titles granted them by virtue of their birth. One can become a noble however by performing great acts of skill or heroism. By being the best in Chessenta, or performing great acts of courage in battle, middle class, commoners, and even slaves can be given a title and land grant that elevates them to the ranks of minor nobility. Such grants are not hereditary.

**Middle Class:** The true power behind Chessenta has always been the middle class, ever since the end of the Empire of Akanu. Trade has been the major money maker in Chessentan society (although many times the item being traded was warfare), when the Amnian people began to arrive in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Dale Reckoning, they came as lesser scions of Merchant Houses to seek their fortune in new lands.

These shrewd people were instantly successful at making vast amounts of money which quickly led to them becoming powerful people in Chessentan society. These Houses over time merged, died out, or mixed with non-Amnians and eventually bought their way into nobility becoming the rulers of many of Chessenta’s modern city states.

House Karanok and House Jedea are two such examples of Amnian Merchant Houses that now rule in Chessenta.

The middle classes are still very important in Chessentan society, the craftsmen and professionals provide the high quality goods that merchants sell across lands around the Sea of Fallen Stars, including the mercenaries that Chessenta is so famous for.

**Politics:** Currently, for the first time in centuries, the political warfare that has consumed Chessenta has ceased. Tchazzar will not allow the city states to fight among themselves, and the kings of Chessenta are too scared of him to disobey.

Chessenta is relatively at peace, and this could bring in a new age of cooperation among previously bitter enemies, such that should Tchazzar disappear from Chessenta, the age old enmities may no longer apply and new and unusual alliances could be formed.

Most of the kings (except the Karanoks) are content to obey Tchazzar for now as he has proved himself a highly successful ruler in the past. However all of the kings are making their own plans and preparations to remove Tchazzar should he fail in his endeavours and the prospects for Chessenta begin to turn. This has led to a number of talks with dragon hunters and even the Cult of the Dragon, as the kings of Chessenta explore their options for the future.

### **Important Organisations**

**The Cult of the Dragon:** The Cult of the Dragon's presence in Chessenta survived the reappearance of Tchazzar almost completely intact. The Cult had been hiding from the authorities of Chessenta by posing as priests of Tchazzar and attending his shrines.

When Tchazzar returned the cultists mostly disappeared into the background of the settlements of Chessenta, hiding in the slums and the underworld that they had spent the last decade infiltrating.

However in Cimbar, Tchazzar ordered the shrine be returned to the glorious temple it once was. The "clergy" already in attendance were given the task and as a reward received prominent positions in the Church of Tchazzar. As the god of a draconic deity with similar portfolios it was not difficult for the priests of Tiamat and the cultists to pretend to worship Tchazzar, and the ruse has continued to this day.

The Cult of the Dragon now has a number of contacts among the fast growing Church of Tchazzar which many believe will soon become synonymous with the government of a true nation of Chessenta. Should such an event happen then the Cult of the Dragon will wield considerable power within this new nation.

## Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Free Republic of Unther

Following the end of hostilities between Mulhorand and Unther in 1374 DR, a new country is born out of the ashes of the old Empire of Unther.

This new nation, called the Free Republic of Unther, rules all the previous lands of Unther directly, except for Unthalass and the Greenfields which are now a province of Mulhorand.

**Capital:** Messemprar (formerly Unthalass)

**Population:** 3,000,000 (humans 93%, dwarves 3%, halflings 2%, 1% aasimar)

**Government:** Magocracy/Theocracy

**Religions:** The Mulhorandi-Untheric Pantheon

**Imports:** Food, mercenaries, slaves, weapons

**Exports:** Ceramics, cloth, gold, iron, minerals, sculpture, seed oil

**Alignment:** LN, LE, N

### **Population**

Whereas Old Unther was fiercely xenophobic, New Unther is slowly changing those attitudes. The years of tyranny, and devastating wars of Unther left that land severely depopulated as those that were not killed fled the country in droves. The new government is trying to entice those people back by offering land and employment to all those wishing to settle in Unther, and that includes non-humans.

Currently the population is still more than 90 percent human, but a number of dwarves, halflings, and even half orcs from Chessenta are beginning to make their way into Unther seeking their fortune.

The war with Mulhorand did lead to the creation of a large number of aasimar who are still viewed as Mulan by the people of Unther and so their numbers are beginning to grow.

### **Life and Society**

Unther's social structure completely collapsed following the tyranny of Gilgeam, the chaos after his death, and the invasion by Mulhorand. Almost every single lord and noble of Unther was slain, or fled the country, only Lord Gudea remains as Lord General of the armies of Unther.

As the government in Messemprar slowly rebuilds Unther from the ashes it has had to hold elections for the posts of public office of local government in every settlement in Unther. This has led to a number of unusual appointments and the nobility of Unther is no longer dominated by Mulan (although central government still is).

Slavery was briefly abolished and a full amnesty given to all slaves, most of whom had been freed anyway by the death or absence of their masters. Since Enlil's return, slavery has been reintroduced but only as a form of punishment for legitimate crimes, gone are the days when a commoner could be enslaved for walking on the wrong side of the street.

**Magic:** Magic has a new place of importance in the society of Unther alongside that of religion. Many see the mages of the Northern Wizards as the saviours of Unther, and they are revered as heroes throughout the land. Everyone is trying to enrol their sons and daughters in the new magical academies

and many are saving hard for the fees they believe will soon be charged to enter such a prestigious institution.

The Northern Wizards and the Enclave united towards the end of the conflict with Mulhorand and now exist as the Enclave of Northern Wizards. The Northern Wizards' headquarters is to become a new college of magic, while the Enclave headquarters remains a secret redoubt in times of crisis (still undiscovered somewhere in the Greenfields).

The wizard rulers of New Unther intend to open colleges of magic in every major settlement of Unther, starting with the first in Messemprar. What was once the secret headquarters of the Northern Wizards is due to become the first Untheric School of Magic and will be opening soon. Applicants are already flocking to Messemprar hoping to gain entry into the school, entry is free for now but only the best are chosen.

## **Religion**

Alongside the Northern Wizards, the Old Gods of Unther are heralded as saving Unther from destruction. The merging of the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons has meant an agreement that any god of the pantheon can be worshipped anywhere in Mulhorand or Unther without restriction.

Creation of new temples in Unther is beginning apace. The governmental buildings in Messemprar already hold a temple to Enlil and Nanna-Sin, and secret shrines to the Old Gods are fast being converted to temples to the Untheric gods. Temples to the Mulhorandi deities are also becoming popular, and worship of Anhur and Osiris are becoming firm favourites (behind Isis who was already widely worshipped in Unther as Isis).

The progress of Unther's gods into Mulhorand is not quite so fast as the bureaucracy of the government there is slowing down applications for new temples (some believe this is a deliberate act on the Mulhorand's part).

The Church of the Dark Lady is at the moment the strongest church present in Unther at this time and has a recognised temple in every settlement. They are a recognised religion and can practise as they wish providing they do not breach the Code of Enlil (or more specifically providing they do not get caught breaching the Code of Enlil).

**Enlil:** The Church of Enlil is relatively new and has only one temple in the whole of Unther; the Temple of the Code. Here is enshrined what remains of the original Code of Enlil, a tattered beaten manuscript found in the catacombs beneath the Palace District in Unthalass.

There are currently fewer than 40 priests of Enlil, all of whom are below level 5. However despite their lower individual power, they wield significant political clout as the law makers of the realm of New Unther.

At least one priest of Enlil is present in every settlement in Unther at all times, and is required to stand in judgement over every criminal case in Unther. In practice this is not possible and sometime summary justice is implemented by local sheriffs (granted temporary powers of judgement by the Church of Enlil), but plans are in progress to recruit more priests and assign them to sheriffs as needed.

**Nanna-Sin:** The Church of Nanna-Sin is also a new church. It has significant support from the military forces of Unther (which number less than 1000 in 1375 DR), many of whom were direct

witnesses to the power of Nanna-Sin when the Legion arrived to save Unther at the end of the war.

The regular military are almost all devout worshippers of Nanna-Sin, and some of the more accomplished have retired to become priests of this 30 strong priesthood. The Church of Nanna-Sin is beginning in the settlement of Shussel where Nanna-Sin ascended to the heavens once again with his legion in 1371 DR. The Temple of the Moon Ascending is currently an old warehouse on the docks near to where the Beacon of Light was found and the priests are busy helping with rebuilding the town. Merenhet is the high priest of the new church and is busy in Messemprar governing New Unther.

**Anhur:** The Church of Anhur in Unther is actually represented by the remains of the priesthood of Ramman who watched their god perish during the Time of Troubles at the hands of Assuran and were then almost destroyed to a man themselves by the Church of Gilgeam.

The few priests that survived found their priestly powers were supplied by Anhur when the Mulhorandi invaded Unther, and almost all converted to Anhur completely when Enlil returned and the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons merged (a few deluded, die-hard worshippers are still convinced Ramman survives and is answering their prayers).

This 104 strong priesthood has rebuilt and rededicated the temple of Ramman in Unthalass and has a large following in that city as the mercenaries and soldiers of Mulhorand are usually devout followers of the war god. His presence outside Unthalass is smaller but still significant, and efforts are underway to rebuild ancient temples to Ramman across Unther and rededicate them to Anhur.

The Church of Anhur is also trying to make inroads into the military forces of Unther itself with the aim of wresting away control of the armed forces from the Church of Nanna-Sin and Lord Gudea. Currently these plans are opposed by many of the wizards (who are natives of Unther) and the churches of Nanna-Sin and Enlil.

**Isis:** This is an ancient church of Unther, that was once the Church of Ishtar, but following the merging of the Mulhorandi and Untheric pantheons it was revealed, by Isis herself, to her worshippers that Ishtar had left Unther long ago and given her powers to Isis (although the truth of the matter will likely never be known, Ishtar could have been murdered by Gilgeam, or fled to the Shaar and Isis usurped her role silently).

Few of Ishtar's worshippers minded the deception and continued in their role as priests of Isis the goddess of love, rivers, marriage and good magic.

Isis has well established temples and followers throughout Unther and her 800+ strong priesthood perform marriage ceremonies and act as midwives across the country. With the rebuilding of Unther, the Church of Isis has a new role, restoring the long neglected rivers of Unther and using them to irrigate the land and make it fertile once more. Plans are underway to irrigate the outskirts of the Black Ash Plains in the west of Unther using the River Alamber.

It is through the Church of Isis that the other more benevolent Mulhorandi gods are making inroads among New Unther's citizens. The priests of Hathor are regularly consulted by priests of Isis and often present during matters of childbirth. The Church of Osiris and Thoth are heavily involved in the irrigation and agricultural improvements being made in Unther, and the citizens of Unther are seeing a real benefit to having a dedicated deity of the dead now that priest of Gilgeam often try to pervert

death to undeath to further that dark god's goals.

**Tiamat:** Tiamat is represented by the Church of the Dark Lady in New Unther. Currently the Church of the Dark Lady is undergoing a schism caused by events since the death of Tiamat the Dark Lady during the Time of Troubles.

The Church of the Dark Lady and the New Church of the Dark Lady are the largest branches that operate out of Firetrees and Unthalass respectively and are primarily active in the Precept of Greenfields. These churches have a (very) thin veneer of respectability, with proper temples and organised worship. In reality however they are little better than criminal organisations and are largely responsible for much of the criminal activity in the settlements they occupy.

The True Church of the Dark Lady is headed by Tiglath and it is this branch that represents the church as a whole on the Council of Unther. The Council are aware (through Tiglath) of the other branches of the church, and deliberately appointed Tiglath as a representative in order that she might help them root out the more criminal and corruptive elements in Unther.

Tiglath is using her political clout to help her numerically inferior church combat the much larger branches to the south. The True Church of the Dark Lady is careful to have very few ties to criminal activity (which is why Tiglath does not allow Cult of the Dragon cultists to gain position within her branch), and she publicly crusades against the rogue elements within the church in the south.

Her church is still quite popular among the people of Unther for Tiamat's role in destroying Gilgeam and people throng to the churches of Tiamat on the Feast of the Moon which is known as the Feast of Tiamat throughout the Old Empires.

**Hoar:** Hoar is attempting to make a comeback in Unther following his millennia long exile when Ramman drove him out of Unther in 108 DR. The Church of Hoar is already established in Chessenta and has a presence in the rest of Faerûn, his priests are merely seeking to extend this church into Unther.

This effort is aided by the fact that Hoar has a significant presence in Mourktar, and over the years, the close distance between Hoar's greatest temple and Unther itself has allowed Hoar to gain many worshippers among the downtrodden citizens of Unther.

In fact, the rise of Dread Imperceptor Kabarrath in Mourktar has seen Hoar's church become victimised by the authorities there and it is possible the Doombringer's church will move its headquarters to Messemparrar in the very near future. Should this happen then the Council will undergo some upheaval as Hoar's church in Unther will be larger than Anhur's and the Church of Nanna-Sin may well lose their place on the Council unless they can expand significantly.

Merenhet is already in secret talks with the other Council members about garnering support to expand the Council by one seat in this event and is throwing his support behind the ideas of other Councillors so that they may return the favour soon.

**Gilgeam:** Gilgeam's church in Unther is dead and gone. The last remnants of it were wiped away by the eruption of the Citadel of Black Ash. It is no longer an official religion of Unther, and worship of this god is discouraged (worshippers of Gilgeam tend to be evil and perform criminal acts so are often punished harshly by the law).



## **Law and Order**

The laws of New Unther employ the original Code of Enlil. Every crime inflicted upon a victim must be visited back upon the offender with equal measure. This is strictly enforced and so depriving a person of possessions results in the offender's possessions being confiscated and delivered to the victim.

Assault results in the offender being similarly beaten and or maimed, usually by the victim or someone he nominates.

Murder is punishable by death/deprivation of life.

Any offender unable to meet the terms of their punishment becomes a slave of the state (and usually assigned to serve the victim). Criminals can always opt for slavery instead of the usual punishment, but their term will not be lenient and does not have to be granted by the courts.

Criminals are judged by the growing priesthood of Enlil who have been tasked with enforcing law and order (and which should ensure them a permanent place on the ruling council).

It should be noted that the laws are as yet undocumented, the original Code of Enlil is actually more of a church dogma and so is very brief, providing a few pointers on how worshippers should live. The state of New Unther is busy documenting specific crime and punishments as they arise, all presided over by the Church of Enlil. Criminals should expect the laws of Unther to change regularly over the next few decades.

## **Government**

The new government of Unther is a joint rule between the priesthods and wizards of Unther. A Council of Ten rulers is elected from among the membership of the Enclave of Northern Wizards which elects 5 members from within its own ranks (by ballot). The various churches present in Unther also have 5 members on the Council from the 5 most powerful churches of Unther (by clergy and laity membership numbers in Unther). This rule ensures that for now only Untheric churches will be present on the ruling council, unfortunately it also means that the Church of the Dark Lady has a seat on the Council in the form of Tiglath.

The current list of council members is as follows:

Isimud (LG human male, Wizard 24)

Asshurat (LN human female Abjurer 11)

Borsipa (CE human female, Wizard 9)

Ruduk (NE human male, Enchanter 10)

Nimrud (CN human male, Wizard 12)

Tiglath (N human female, Priest 14 of Tiamat)

Utuhegel (NG human female, Priest 8 of Isis)

Eresgul (LN human male, Priest 4 of Enlil)

Merenhet the Elder (CG human female Priest 5 of Nanna-Sin)

Relisi Mutep (N human male Priest 8 of Anhur)

Unbeknown to all Ruduk and Borsipa have secret affiliations to other organisations that might hamper the continued existence of Unther. Borsipa was a loyal follower of Gilgeam given the task of assassinating the Northern Wizards. He let the Reaper into Messemprar several times in the past to eliminate members of the Northern Wizards and it is possible he would continue to do so now.

Ruduk is a member of the Red Wizards of Thay and used that affiliation to broker favourable deals with the Red Wizards to supply the Free Unther with arms to resist the Mulhorandi invasion of Unther. Now that the invasion is over it is uncertain what Ruduk will do with his dual allegiance, although should Lauzoril command his agent to betray the council then he will likely do so rather than risk a very painful death.

The Council is by no means united in its efforts. The wizards members of the council are all natives of Unther and are suspicious of any Mulhorandi attempt to usurp rule of their country from within (not realising that Ruduk secretly serves Thay). As a result they generally oppose any suggestions by representatives of the churches of Isis and Anhur as they are viewed as being compromised by the Mulhorandi gods they represent (despite Isis having posed as Ishtar for years without anyone realising). The representatives of Enlil and Nanna-Sin likewise side with the wizards against the Mulhorandi churches. Tiglath generally opposes anyone and anything that does not directly benefit her branch of the Church of the Dark Lady, but has been known to use her vote as leverage for future favours.

The wizards themselves are divided, with the members of the Northern Wizards remaining slightly suspicious of Isimud's motives (him being the only member of the Enclave on the Council) despite his efforts which ultimately saved Free Unther in the closing stages of the war.

A majority vote is required among the Council in order for a motion to be successful, except for the creation of new council posts (which may be required in the future) which requires a unanimous vote of all members.

**Nobility:** The nobility of Unther was decimated by the recent troubles, only Lord Gudea remains, and he is Lord General of the Armies of Unther. This vacuum of nobility has led to open elections being held for the various titled positions in Unther (Lords of the various settlements, tax collectors, sheriffs, magistrates, etc).

In general, prominent and trustworthy merchants are being elected into the positions of power as they hold the funds necessary to begin rebuilding. However a few odd appointments have occurred during the rebuilding of Unther including the appointment of an elf woman (and ranger) named Jeardra as Lord of Shussel.

**The Middle Class:** The middle class of Unther that survived the tyranny of Gilgeam and the chaos that followed became the new nobility of Unther. Jehokim (CN hm Fighter 5) is one such example who now serves as Lord of Red Haven (he still operates out of Unthalass as Red Haven is largely a pirate occupied ruin).

The new middle class has yet to emerge, but the common people of Unther and migrants from other nations are beginning to claim their place in society.

**Commoners:** The common people of Unther were the down trodden victims of Gilgeam's rule. Since

the brief abolition of slavery it also includes a large portion of former slaves who are relishing their freedom. These people are working hard to claim a new life for themselves from the ashes of Old Unther.

## **Defence**

The job of defending Unther now falls to the Lord General Gudea, a formerly ageing Lord of Old Unther who was instrumental in preserving remnants of that nation from Mulhorandi conquest.

During this time he was transformed into an aasimar by Nanna-Sin and trained the Legion of Nanna-Sin with the express purpose of preserving Unther. Lord General Gudea is now middle aged for an aasimar and enjoying his new lease of life. He intends to turn the armies of Unther into a fighting force to be reckoned with.

The armies of Unther themselves are woefully underpowered and under equipped. The regular army numbers less than 500 individuals who are armed with an assortment of leather and chain armour and armed with a variety of weapons from spear to short sword. All metal used in these armaments are still the primitive bronze metal in use during Gilgeam's time, although Lord Gudea has hired a number of dwarven smiths to begin forging steel armaments.

**The Legion of Nanna-Sin:** This 500 strong unit make up the elite troops of Unther's armies. It is made up of the survivors of the Legion of Nanna-Sin, and the Rebels of the Moon, plus a few newly joined members.

It is well armed with steel weapons and armour, and highly trained in both warfare and priestly disciplines. Every member must be a devout worshipper of Nanna-Sin and have a measure of priestly skill as well as combat prowess.

Currently the regular army is employed in policing efforts during the rebuilding of Unther. The Legion of Nanna-Sin is held in reserve for real combat against monsters, bandits, and invaders, and clearing out the ruined settlements of Unther.

## **Important Sites**

**The Precept of Greenfields:** This region once held the capital of Old Unther. Following the invasion by Mulhorand, the Greenfield region and the settlement of Unthalass are now nominally part of the Empire of Mulhorand.

For the present the Precept of Greenfields is held by Lord Khemenet, but following his disastrous command of the invasion it is almost a guarantee that he will be removed in favour of a member of the Church of Anhur.

The Mulhorandi are busy with the rebuilding effort of Unthalass. The walls are in a state of disrepair following the invasion and the entire Palace District is little more than rubble and ruined buildings. Centuries of neglect have left much of Unthalass in ruins, and the Mulhorandi are dedicated to rebuilding this city and the region to become a shining new example of the Mulhorandi Empire.

The priests of Thoth are hard at work installing the latest technological advances to irrigate the fertile Greenfields. The Church of Anhur is responsible for the defence of the city and are rebuilding the walls whilst training a standing militia in the latest military techniques (many of which were rediscovered

during the invasion) in conjunction with the Church of Nanna-Sin.

**Unthalass (Metropolis 50,000):** Unthalass remains primarily populated with natives of Unther and the Mulhorandi have seen fit not to alter the code of laws established in the rest of New Unther, nor have they imposed their own laws on the city. The people of Unthalass are free to govern themselves as they see fit (and indeed they have their own law courts and tax systems in place already) as long as the people of Unthalass pay their taxes and don't resist Mulhorandi rule.

Once the Port District is repaired and restored as a trading hub, Unthalass will once again become the shining jewel of Unther and promises to make Mulhorand fabulously wealthy in return.

Beneath the hard work and toil stirs trouble. In the depths of the ruined under-city of Unthalass is an ancient and powerful lamia noble named Ereshkigal. Known as the Queen of Torture, Ereshkigal has lurked in Unthalass for millennia, some whisper she has always lurked in the shadows of this city. With her tribe of lamia children, she kidnaps and tortures the entire households and families of those who dare whisper her name before marking the building by filling it with plague ridden rats and other vermin. Many empty buildings in Unthalass are left to ruin in case it was Ereshkigal that caused their emptying.

Ereshkigal it is whispered is barred from Unther itself by some ancient curse (which may have resulted in her current form) and so she hides in the catacombs and ruins beneath the city of Unthalass. Gilgeam long and unwittingly aided this creature by leaving Unthalass to ruin and building atop the wreckage of natural disasters. As a result Ereshkigal's domain is even larger than Unthalass itself, extending downwards over many levels.

The Queen of Torture accepts no intrusions into her lands and will send her children and servants to pursue any trespassers. She is engaged in a long running war with the Church of the Dark Lady that lairs in the upper level of the catacombs. Should the forces of Mulhorand attempt to clear the catacombs and restore the ancient city to its former glory then it is likely they will unknowingly enter into a war with a horde of monsters that live right under their noses.

## The Knights Below: Adventure Path – Episode 6

**Overview:** The party and their companions, plus the survivors of Maxar's Farm arrive in the settlement of Hilltop after a days travel. When they crossed the Rauvin River they were halfway between Jalashar and Lhuvenhead so the nearest settlement was Hilltop in the foothills of the Nether Mountains (even Maxar was unwilling to camp out in the dark along the banks of the Upper Rauvin Vale).

**Hilltop:** Hilltop is a small mining community with a semi-permanent population of around 200 people. During the colder months when farming becomes impossible in the frozen ground, a proportion of the men from Lhuvenhead and Jalanvaloss move to Hilltop and work in the mines for extra cash.

The settlement itself is built onto a flattened hill-top and surrounded by a wooden palisade wall. Inside the settlement are a few services, a general shop, a warehouse, and a festhall/inn.

- **The Pit Stop:** This is the name of the Festhall in Hilltop and is situated on the north side of



the settlement near the Quartermaster's House and the Scales as well as the entrance to the mine. It is secretly owned by the three sisters that own the General Store, but it is fronted by the buxom temptress Sophena.

Sophena and the 20 strong gang of barmaids, waitresses, and escorts are all widows from the nearby towns who lost their husbands to orcs, bandits, or worse and have had to find work by other means. They are all pleasant and pleasing individuals but every single one of them could skin a boar with a dagger in under thirty seconds. As a result everyone knows the ladies rule in this house (all N hf Commoner 1).

The building itself is a 200 ft long, longhouse reminiscent of old Northmen architecture. It is cold, but not draughty, and is so packed with straw and twigs that a single spark could burn the whole place to the ground within minutes.

Fare is cheap here at 1cp per tankard and 5cp for soup and bread. The "beds" are typically any patch of floor free for you to sleep on after drinking yourself unconscious and will cost you only a further 1cp for the night.

- **The General Store:** This shop is owned by the 3 sisters Ursula, Lursa, and Drusila. They are rumoured to be witches among the local population, and as a result people tend to keep away from them unless they need something from the shop.

The store itself is well stocked for farming and mining equipment as well as oddities you might need for maintaining such equipment as well as any other household items that are needed.

Weapons and armour are not available (apart from the odd dagger with the Fragile quality), but the sisters are quite happy to order anything from the caravan that arrives each week.

Prices here are 10% above normal because of the isolation of this settlement, but Lhuvenhead can sometimes provide what is needed. Any items not normally found in a small general store are 50% above normal prices.

The sisters themselves are all adepts (CG hf Adept 3), they found a spellbook a few years ago in the hills around Hilltop and have taught themselves magic from it. The spellbook in question was actually part of a secret cache stored by Thaumster and he would love to know where it has gone. The spell book actually contains all wizardly cantrips, as well as *bold portal*, *colour spray*, *summon monster I(eagle)*, *mount*, *enlarge person*, *unseen servant*, *mage armour*, *hypnotism*, *summon monster II (medium earth elemental)*, *summon swarm*, *detect thoughts*.

DC 13 Perception check to notice strange markings etched around the house rather haphazardly, DC 15 Arcana check to recognise they are attempts at magic runes and lettering.

The sisters will gladly trade spells and knowledge with the party (especially if the party members are actual wizards) although they will not reveal this to the PCs, they must be approached about magic first.

- **The Warehouse:** This building is owned by the Quartermaster Draghin who also runs the mine at Hilltop. It is guarded by a father and son team; Voncar (N hm Warrior 2) and Vargus (N hm Warrior 1) who have a pack of 4 trained mastiff dogs to help them patrol. Voncar, the father is the smarter of the pair, although his son is as strong as a bull (Str 17), both are armed in Leather Armour with a Buckler, Voncar carries a Heavy Mace, and Vargus carries a Warhammer.

The Warehouse is one of the few stone structures in Hilltop and is a large sturdy building that is used to hold the ore for transport to Lhuvénhead and spare mining equipment. Draghin rents out warehouse space for 10% of the value of the ore.

The Warehouse is locked at all times, and the key is held by Draghin. The lock requires a DC 20 Thievery related skill check to open.

- **The Quartermaster's House:** This grand stone house was built long ago by dwarves of nearby Undervault as they aided the humans nearby in mining the hills and securing their settlements.

It is now home to Draghin as the last surviving member of the dwarves of Undervault known on the surface.

Draghin (N dm Expert 4) runs the mine and warehouse and makes a tidy profit from doing so. He is also being blackmailed by Squire Marling and declares less in profits than he otherwise makes (half of the difference he pays in tax goes directly to the Squire, the rest Draghin can keep).

From this house Draghin operates his business where he offers equipment for rent or sale to the miners that delve into the mines. He then offers them storage space for 10% of the value of the ore recovered, and transport of that ore to Lhuvénhead 1/week for a further 10% of the value of the ore, or alternatively he will buy the ore directly from them for 25% of the value of the ore.

Hidden in Draghin's bedroom (under the bed under a floorboard – DC 20 Perception check to find) is a locked chest (DC 20 Thievery check to open) filled with his savings that total 100 gp worth of valuables.

- **The Scales:** At the entrance to the pathway leading to the mine are a set of enormous scales used to weigh ore automatically. It is a dwarven invention that requires one person to use a rotary wheel to drive the carts (brought out of the mine on the mine tracks) up onto the scales and weight them against a standard measure.

The device has never broken, but only Draghin truly understands it (and has slightly skewed the measure to his advantage but only to the amount of 1cp per cart), and greatly speeds up the mining process.

- **The Redoubt of Helm:** Further up in the Nether Mountains themselves is a small community dedicated to Helm where the priests live a monastic life dedicating themselves to protecting their charge. What that charge may be no one knows. The priests will not admit anyone into the mountain fortress (which delves inside the mountain itself), but are more than willing to let the party into the surface compound where they can rest and trade for the grain, ale, and goats cheese the priests produce.

**NPCs:** Following the party's arrival in Hilltop, Maxar and his family will leave the group and thank them for all their efforts, if the party rescued all his family he declares that he will aid them however he can in future, they need but ask.

Geouf, Susaire, Markus, Mikhail, and Barden will all leave the party as well, although Markus and Mikhail can be retained in return for a 1gp payment per day for their services.

**Quests in Hilltop:** The work in Hilltop is sparse, unless the PCs enjoy spend days of backbreaking labour mining for ore in the foothills of the Nether Mountains.

- **The Missing Miners:** Draghin is looking for volunteers to help him investigate a pair of miners that went missing in the mine only yesterday. He has been unwilling to open the mine until the source of this investigation is discovered just in case it was orcs. He is willing to reward the party with 5 gp per person if they come up with the bodies or a set of events that satisfies him (this will be detailed in episode 7).
- **The Nature Friend:** Any party that includes a ranger, druid, or other nature related class will be approached by a druid named Leona who is shapeshifted into a small fox. The druid is unhappy with the iron mine that is poisoning the water in the surrounding regions. She would like the party to sabotage the Scales and make it look like a natural malfunction (DC 20 Tinker check) so that no one will suspect it was deliberately broken. As a result the mining operation here will slow down and damage to the environment will be lessened.

**Aftermath:** Following their arrival in Hilltop, the party will say goodbye to their newly acquired friends for now. Award each party member 100 xp for reaching Hilltop and a further 10 xp for each NPC with them from the original group on the barge.



## The Knights Below: Campaign Journal

*We arrived in Hilltop two days after the battle at Maxar's Farm. Crag had belly-ached the whole journey about his hunger and thirst for ale and women, which slowed us down considerably.*

*When we reached the fortified hill settlement the group went their separate ways. Wýstan it turned out was a priest of Helm and made straight for a little monastery in the mountains as soon as he heard of it.*

*Geouf and Suzaire gave us their many thanks and went to visit the Quartermaster to arrange visit to Lbuvenhead.*

*Maxar and his family pledge their undying gratitude and a life debt should ever we need their aid. It would turn out to be a great boon later to have a family of werebears on our side.*

*Barden slunk away in shame, his reputation shattered after the catastrophe on the barge, not that we would ever tell a soul about another's misfortune.*

*Markus and Mikhail said their thanks for getting them this far and told us to come find them in the Pit Stop or in Lbuvenhead if we ever needed an extra pair of swords.*

*Crag as usual went straight to the local Feshhall and spent the rest of the day drinking and wenching.*

*That left Chadwick and Tallyn to investigate the settlement and see what they could find. A visit to the general store resulted in a slight altercation between Tallyn and the three sisters who did not like being interrogated about the nature of the arcane symbols etched onto the shelves and walls. Once Chadwick diplomatically explained that Tallyn was also a student of the magical arts (despite him dressing like an Uthgardt barbarian).*

*However following that the four of them spent many hours discussing magical theory, and Tallyn gave them all a taste of the arcanology lectures he had endured at the Lady's College in Silverymoon in his youth.*

*After Tallyn had copied a number of spells from the curious tome the sisters possessed; it was obviously not penned by them and far in advance of their skill – in fact Tallyn was certain he recognised the wizard's mark on the front, Chadwick and Tallyn headed towards the Quartermaster's House and met with Draghin the dwarf.*

*It turned out the mine had suffered a number disappearances recently and was closed until further notice, as a result all caravan traffic to Lbuvenhead was also suspended since Draghin owned the caravan and wasn't going to make any trips without ore to transport. Without anything better to do with the time Chadwick and Tallyn offered their services in investigating the vanishing miners.*

## Credits

Alternate Dimensions Presents: Old Empires – The Scribes' Guild	G.Dallison
The Bloodstone Lands: Adventure Path – Episode 5	G.Dallison
Welcome to the Jungle: Races of Maztica	T.J.Hild
Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Dragon Empire of Unther	G.Dallison
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Laerakond: The Sea of Corynactis	G.Dallison
Alternate Dimensions Presents: Chessenta – The Empire of Tchazzar	G.Dallison
Alternate Dimensions Presents: The Free Republic of Unther	G.Dallison
The Knights Below: Adventure Path – Episode 6	G.Dallison
The Knights Below: Campaign Journal	G.Dallison
Background and Artwork	S.K.Rush

Special thanks to Sam Evans, Kenneth Fabacher, and Ryan Rahuba for proof reading and idea development, and to S.K.Rush for the new background and artwork.

## **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.