

## **A Disturbing Pattern: Fragments of the history of the Vashar**

*“To Loremaster Bold Oraevlor Thennik of Candlekeep,*

*I have sent along to you the summaries of any reference to the proper name 'Vahsar' that my apprentices and I could find in my notes. One of my apprentices has also taken the time to assemble and present a summary of this information, although, of course, you are being given the copies we have made of the original scripts as well.*

*There are some disturbing implications to what has been suggested by threading together the information in these texts, but I'm not entirely sure that my apprentice has been as careful as he ought in light of the potential ramifications of these conjectures. Despite this, I'm sure that the monks of Candlekeep are responsible enough to form their own conclusions based on this information.*

*Sincerely,*

*Orauzlar, Humble Sage and Less Humble Archmage, of Impiltur”*

The term “Vashar” turns up in a surprising number of ancient texts, especially given that there are only a few scant references to this word in modern centuries. The term appears to apply to a race of people that may have actually been, similar to the Mulan, brought to Toril from another world by the Imaskari. While this may be a matter of debate, the earliest references to the Vashar do appear in Imaskari texts.

While in some of these texts Vashar is used as either a term for humans that are of little value due to the trouble they cause, or to humans who seek power from the Lower Planes, the word itself, while eventually evolving into a curse or an epithet among the Imaskari, seems to have originally referred to a specific group of people.

Most of these stories have to do with slaves so recalcitrant that no amount of discipline could force them into doing their master's bidding, but far from being an uplifting story of defiance in the face of domination, these stories tell of the horror inflicted upon the slave masters whenever the slaves managed to go into a revolt. The Vashar had a penchant for eating the raw flesh of overseers and drinking their blood, and if left alone too long, they formed the bones into weapons.

One fanciful Imaskari account mentions that the Vashar were born on another world, and were so loathsome to the gods of that world, that they were stricken dead not long after they were created. According to these tales, the Vashar were brought back to life by the Son of Pale Night (which some speculate as meaning Graz'zt) to amuse the demon lords as mockeries of what the gods had created.

These same tales mention that one of the Vashar, a strong willed woman of singular clarity, left the vicious in fighting of her people, and instead decided to seduce and degrade the younger tribes of humankind, drawing them away from the gods for her amusement. According to this legend, the

woman, who is identified as Lilith, was rewarded by the Archdevil Asmodeus by granting her a rank as a Duchess of Hell, and to this day operates as one of his operatives, undermining humanity in his name.

It is entirely possible that the Imaskari invented these links to the infernal realms as a means of further vilifying a human population that they themselves found loathsome. These beings may have been simply a troublesome tribe of people, and some have even conjectured that the difficult nature of this tribe may have been what forced the hand of the Imaskari to seek out slaves from other worlds.

There is, however, another legend surrounding the Vashar that has been found in Imaskari records that have turned up in the last few years. In these records, it is said that the Vashar were indeed troublesome slaves from another world, and that the Imaskari were on the brink of annihilating them, when the Vashar offered the Imaskari knowledge of a weapon that could defeat even the gods. According to these texts, the Vashar themselves released this weapon on their native world, and it killed all of the gods of their pantheon, leaving them with only the archdevils and demon lords for spiritual guidance.

According to this recently unearthed document (and this has yet to be verified, as the text was purchased only recently by an associate in Mulhorand), the secret of summoning this weapon purchased the freedom of the Vashar, and the Imaskari even aided them in hiding themselves from the rest of the world, despite the fact that the Imaskari found the Vashar loathsome and unworthy of continued existence. What the Imaskari did with this weapon, if it ever existed, is not known.

Beyond the Imaskari texts, some ancient Raumathari texts also use the term Vashar. It is not known if this confirms the existence of descendants of the former Imaskari slaves, or if this is simply the continued use of the term "Vashar" as those who give themselves up to demons and fiends. It is known that in records of the early clashes with Narfell, some of the folk of Narfell are known as having the "taint of the Vashar" on them.

While it would be easy to assume that the name Vashar lingered on as a pejorative into the time of Raumathar, other demonbinders and necromancers are not given this title, when they had committed arguably equivalent acts of a debased nature. If the term Vashar was meant to convey a specific insult, it is difficult to discern what acts specifically warranted the invoking of this term. Since such a thing is difficult to discern, some who have read these texts believe that the Vashar might have still existed as a tribe at this point in time, and that this people had some contact with the people of Narfell.

### **Recent Accounts**

References up to this point have been quite ancient, but a rather strange recent event has captured the imagination of some local sages. A large wing of Kir-Lanan assaulted a pilgrim caravan in Impiltur last year, and the Triadic Knight Rellaen Srantarbrin managed to capture the Kir-Lanan leader, apparently a powerful necromancer, alive.

When Srantarbrin questioned the creature, it wove a tale of its origins that no one had ever heard before. According to the Kir-Lanan, they were created in a ritual that was performed in the Hidden Plateau of Vashar, guided by the Dark Sheppard, which involved powerful magics revealed to the Dark Sheppard by creatures of the Lower Planes. The Dark Sheppard and his followers sacrificed thousands upon thousands of captured priests during this ritual. Somehow, they had come to know when a god was near death during the Time of Troubles, and with each death, they would sacrifice priests who were cut off from their gods, and from their blood, entire broods of Kir-Lanan were born.

Who this Dark Sheppard is was never revealed. The Kir-Lanan seemed to imply that this Vashar stronghold was in a plateau in the Giantspire Mountains, but gave no clear instructions on how to find it. Before it could elaborate further, the Kir-Lanan simply stated that his kin were but the heralds of the God Killer, and then somehow invoked a necromantic effect that engulfed Srantarbrin and all around him before he himself expired.