

# OERTH JOURNAL

Volume 2 Issue 16

June 2005



A Chronicle of the Lands and  
People of the Flanaess

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# Oerth Journal

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## Editor in Chief's Thoughts

I'd like to start by thanking everyone for their patience while waiting for this issue to be completed. I hope you think it was worth the wait.

I'd like to thank a few people for getting this issue off the ground. Nathan Irving for stepping in and taking the lead when I couldn't, and Ron Carey for his artwork and his willingness to help Nathan out. Also, a hearty thanks to all my editors and contributors, without whose help this issue never would have been completed.

Greyhawk has morphed into many new directions and forms since my early days of Greyhawking in 1982. Some changes have been good and others, well, not so good. The only true constant is change. These last few years for us fans have been challenging as support from the gaming industry has been waning. The one bright spot in this cold, autumn sky is that the fans have generated more excellent material and kept the world alive. Keep the ideas coming!

Andy Seale  
Aka Fallon the Wanderer

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# Pelor

## The Radiant Force

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By Paul M. Rokuskie ([Jachyras@comcast.net](mailto:Jachyras@comcast.net))

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### **Pelor**

**(The Great Source, The Mighty Healer, The Radiant Force, The Sun Father, The Shining One)**

Greater Power of Elysium, NG

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Sun, Light, Strength, Healing
<b>Aliases:</b>	None
<b>Domain Name:</b>	Elysium/Amoria/Light's Blessing
<b>Superior:</b>	None
<b>Allies:</b>	All good deities (except Pholtus), especially Mayaheine, Zodal, Joramy, Rao, and Kord
<b>Foes:</b>	All evil deities, especially Tharizdun, Nerull, Incabulos, Iuz, Vecna, and Kyuss. Also Pyremius, Wee Jas, Xan Yae, and Pholtus
<b>Symbol:</b>	Golden face of a bearded man with sapphire eyes
<b>Wor. Align:</b>	Any good

Pelor (Pay-lore) is the great Sun God (sun, light, strength, healing) and source of what is good in all things. His symbol is the golden face of a bearded man with sapphire eyes. Those who wish to relieve suffering, or bring warmth and light to the despondent, worship him.

Pelor's worship has changed slightly since the end of the Greyhawk Wars. Previously, most people across the Flanaess regarded Pelor as a gentle and peaceful deity whose clerics helped the sick and needy. However, during the Greyhawk Wars, people turned to the wrathful aspect of his personality, as Pelor's radiance drives out the great darkness that seems to have befallen the land. Pelor is looked upon as a tower of strength beaming with goodness. This is exhibited by the cult of Mayaheine (demi-god of protection,

justice, valor) who is a servitor of Pelor. Pelor's strength and healing ability brings hope to those ravaged by the evil that plagues the land, with many warriors and commonfolk now turning to his faith.

Pelor is a powerful deity whose caring attitude towards all creatures, especially the poor and deprived, has earned him the title of The Great Source. Pelor's goodness shines through the darkness and brings life and warmth to those in need. Pelor's charity is unmatched by any other power in the multiverse as he will aid any creature in need. He is highly regarded by the other healing powers in the multiverse and gets along well with Ishtar (greater deity of love, war) and Mishakal (greater deity of healing, beauty, life, fertility, knowledge) on Elysium.

With deities that have a following on Oerth, Pelor "respects" Kord's (intermediate deity of athletics, sport, brawling, strength, courage) strength and courage in his battles against evil. Pelor is not jealous in sharing this aspect with another Oerth power because he realizes that there is strength in numbers. Pelor also respects Joramy's (lesser deity of fire, volcanoes, wrath, anger, quarrels) power over fire and how she uses it to burn evildoers and bring light into the dark areas of Oerth where the sun can never reach. He also finds a kindred spirit in Zodal (lesser deity of mercy, hope, benevolence), because they both try to help the less fortunate. On occasion these two powers will work together to help the greater good. This is especially easy since Zodal also has his realm on Elysium's first layer as well.

Pelor's largest concern is towards those deities and their servants that employ darkness or try to destroy life. He has a particular hatred for undead of all kinds and attempts to seek them out and destroy them.

The Sun Father's greatest enemy is Nerull (greater deity of death, darkness, murder, underworld),

because he represents the opposite of everything Pelor stands for and finds good in the multiverse. Incubulos (greater deity of plagues, sickness, famine, nightmares, drought, disasters) is also greatly despised because he brings sickness and famine to the people, which Pelor tries to cure. The Lord of Pestilence's alliance with The Reaper is also another reason for Pelor's repugnance towards these two abominations of evil.

Tharizdun (intermediate deity of eternal darkness, decay, entropy, malign knowledge, insanity) is considered an enemy as well, but since his imprisonment, Pelor has not had to worry too much about him. But Pelor does take an active role in making sure that Tharizdun stays where he is right now. The multiverse is a much better place with The Destroyer out of the way. Wee Jas (intermediate deity of magic, death, vanity, law) is the least loathed of all the evil powers of Oerth, but because she controls undead forces, Pelor counts her as an enemy as well. Pyremius (lesser deity of fire, poison, murder) is detested because of his carefree attitude towards life, something Pelor cannot stand. Xan Yae's (lesser deity of twilight, shadows, stealth, mental power) power over twilight and shadows annoys Pelor as well. This is a corruption of his gift of sunlight and He is irritated by such a use of his power. Vecna (demi-god of destruction, evil secrets) and Kyuss (hero deity of creation and mastery of undead) are both reviled for their undead nature. Each has created numerous undead servitors and brought great darkness to Oerth. Iuz (demi-god of deceit, pain, oppression, evil) has recently been added to Pelor's list of enemies since the time of the Greyhawk Wars. The great amount of suffering that was caused by the Old One's armies and the excessive number of undead employed in his tactics has outraged Pelor immensely. All these evil deities are considered perversions and Pelor does everything within his power to see them fall.

Pelor also has an ongoing feud with Pholtus of the Blinding Light (intermediate deity of light, resolution, law, order, inflexibility, sun, moons). Because of Pholtus's unyielding ways, he has made it an issue to challenge Pelor for the title of sun god of Oerth and will not back down. This rivalry has not turned into an all out battle, but time could spark this into a larger conflict.

Pelor's realm is known as Light's Blessing and can be found on Amoria, the first layer of Elysium. A perpetually cloudless sky allows constant sunlight to bathe this huge realm of rolling hills, meadows and woodlands. The bright sun is always in the noon position making it warmer in this realm than the rest of Elysium. It appears from the plant and wildlife that

high summer is always in season. Many people believe that they are on Krigilla, the first layer of the Beastlands, and not Elysium until they see the tamed nature of the land. A section of the River Oceanus branches off from the main body of the river and flows through this realm. The branch eventually loops back to the River Oceanus and cuts the realm into sections. These sections comprise mainly agricultural endeavors by the people that live in the realm. The banks of the river are dotted with small villages of petitioners and planar followers of The Shining One. These planar followers include: assimon of all types, many guardinals and a few quasars, humans, elves, halflings and assimar as well as good aligned flying creatures. The constant light of the realm has rejuvenating properties in it. Any time a creature helps another in need, the light that bathes this realm will heal the charitable individual for 1d8 points.

Pelor spends his time flying on a great ki-rin, accompanied by a flight of eagles, searching out those in need. The petitioners of this realm will aid any traveler that passes through. They will see to the medical attention of any creature that has goodness in their hearts. Everyone is expected to help their neighbors as well as strangers in times of need or crisis.

### **Pelor's Avatar (Priest 35)**

Pelor's avatar appears as a middle-aged human male with exceptional looks. His flowing blond hair, beard and mustache appear to be made of pure light dancing in the wind like sea grass in the ocean current. His avatar has a muscular yet thin body with slender hands. His soft golden colored face, sapphire eyes and soothing voice reveal a compassionate man with a gentle demeanor.

Pelor wears a suit of golden chain mail armor, known as Radiant Glow that reflects the rays of the sun. Pelor also carries Solar Vigor and Luminous Orb, a golden longsword and shield with him at all times. These items (armor, sword and shield) have been rumored to been made by the greatest skilled good deities of the forge from the essence of the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Radiance. In combat he will employ these extraordinary items with deadly force showing mercy only to those that request it. All undead and evil lower planar creatures are extremely susceptible to the overwhelming force of light and goodness that the avatar of Pelor exudes. Any of these creatures that get within 30 feet of the avatar will suffer 2d6 points of damage every round with no save.

AC -8; MV 15; HP 240; THAC0 3; #AT 1

DMG: 1d8 + 15 (long sword)

MR: 95%; SZ M (6')

STR: 24 DEX: 19 CON: 18 INT: 20 WIS: 22 CHA: 20

Spells: P & W

Saves: PPDM 2, RSW 2, PP 2, BW 2, Sp 2

**Special Att/Def:** Pelor is completely immune to all forms of light-based magic like prismatic spray, continual light, etc.; energy reducing magic like an undead's touch, enervation, etc.; evil necromantic magic like vampiric touch, harm, etc.; and from sensory deprivation magic like darkness, blindness, etc.

He is able to cast priest spells from all spheres and wizard spells that deal with light or strength. These include the power word and prismatic spells. Pelor can also cast bolts of pure light every round, which causes 2d10 points of damage to most creatures (no save) and burns undead and lower planar creatures for 4d10 points of damage, no save but magic resistance counts.

In melee combat, Pelor wears Radiant Glow, which acts like chain mail +5 with a special ability to emit a glowing sphere of light equal in intensity to the sun. Any creature within 100 feet and gazing at Pelor when he makes this attack must make a save vs. breath weapon or be permanently blinded by the beams. Even a continual darkness spell will not protect the viewer. His weapon, Solar Vigor, acts like a combination dancing sword and vorpal sword, while Luminous Orb acts like a large shield +5 with the power of an explosive light burst similar to an attack from a double strength wand of illumination. Pelor can only be hit by +3 or better weapons.

## Other Manifestations

Pelor sometimes disguises himself as an average looking middle-aged human male with blond hair, so that he can walk among the common folk and use his healing abilities on the poor and infirm. Occasionally a person will hear a story of a charitable stranger who came to town, gave all he had while taking no payment in return, and then just vanished. These stories are rumored to refer to Pelor.

## The Church

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<b>Clergy:</b>	Clerics (70%), Specialty Priests (30%)
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<b>Alignment:</b>	Any good
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<b>Turn Undead:</b>	C: Yes, at priest level +1; SP: Yes, at priest level +1.
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<b>Command Undead:</b>	C: No, SP: No
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All priests of Pelor receive the healing and religion proficiencies free of charge. They are required to learn herbalism and cooking, but receive no penalties due to class. Clerics and specialty priests can turn undead as if they were 1 level higher. The clergy of Pelor is made up primarily of humans with a few elves, half-elves and halflings rounding out the church.

Pelor's clericy is probably one of the most wide spread throughout all the Flanaess. A temple or shrine to the Great Source can be found in every city, town, village or port of the non-evil nations of the Flanaess. A token shrine or temple can be found in the "religious" districts of the larger cities, but most temples are usually found in the poorer sections. This is where the priests spend most of their time and resources and the temples are usually the center point for impoverished areas. Pelor's priests are best known for their work with the poor and sick. The priests travel around the countryside and city ghettos bringing food, healing and aid to those that require it. The common people consider the priests as saviors of the downtrodden and less fortunate.

Since the end of the Greyhawk Wars, reliance and need for charity has been great. With so many displaced peoples and those that suffered tragic losses in the numerous battle campaigns, the clericy has been spread quite thin in recent years. The upkeep of the temples and shrines in the "religious" districts has been lax, as the clerics spend most of their time helping others and not worrying about the state of their churches. This gives the appearance of neglect, but the people realize that the priests of Pelor are spending their time and money on them and not a building. Instead of fixing the churches, money is being spent on converting the temples into soup kitchens, hospitals and orphanages. Only a small section is left in each temple for the priests to hold services to the Great Source. This determination to help the common people has been noticed and many people have joined the faith. When space is not available in the "temples", the priests get permission from the local authorities to convert abandoned buildings into overflow centers. These are becoming the major centers of worship for Pelor.

The temples that do remain in service are very unimpressive. They are usually a stone or wooden structure painted bright yellow with a wooden roof that can be opened up to allow natural sunlight to enter during the day. If this is not possible, large reflectors are used to bring sunlight into the interior of the temple, where they are bounced into a polished metal ceiling, giving the illusion of bright daylight inside the temple. The interior walls are also painted with the same bright yellow color as the exterior, brightening the atmosphere of the temples. The altar is always made from polished metal that glows in the sunlight. The only lavish aspect of the church is a stained glass window behind the altar that depicts the Mighty Healer in full glory. Special sets of reflectors are placed so that sunlight is always shining through the stained glass window and reflecting off of the altar.

Natural shrines can be found in many places throughout the Flanaess, especially near poor villages. These shrines are always found in open areas where sunlight is plentiful. The shrines are identified by the stone altar that is covered with a yellow cloth and a polished metallic plate or bowl on the top. A cleric or follower of Pelor usually watches over the shrine to ask for contributions to the poor. Those that donate are given a blessing and if a cleric is present, the donator is healed of any ailment that the priest is able to remedy, as long as they are not evil.

Clerics are responsible for the upkeep of the temples and shrines. During these trying times, there are only a token number of clerics to be found in the "religious" district temples because most are in the soup kitchens, orphanages and makeshift hospitals. The few that remain go door to door amongst the richer sections of cities, towns and villages to ask for alms for the poor. The clerics are also known to stand near the busier sections of town and take up collections for the poor. When not asking for alms, the priests remain quiet, kindly people, but will always carry a weapon of some type. In these difficult times, people are known to take advantage of the priests and attempt to rob them of their charity money.

Specialty priests are responsible for traveling outside the "normal" areas and helping the needy, sick and poor in the many diverse areas of the Flanaess. The specialty priests usually concentrate their efforts in hard to reach or far away locations where the need may be great. During the Wars, these priests spent most of their time on the front lines helping those that were wounded in battle or forced to flee their homes. Because of the constant danger, many priests did not survive their valiant efforts to comfort the wounded and sick. These specialty priests are not only selfless,

but have an inner strength that never allows them to give up. When most other people are abandoning a situation, these priests remain in the thick of it to help those in great need.

The clergy is ordered by the following titles, representing the different intensities of light that push back the darkness of evil and ignorance as the priest progresses along the path to greater enlightenment, charitable heart and stronger will. Titles are broken into four categories. Novices (0-Level) of Pelor are called Wicks. Priests of 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level are known as Glows. The proper way of addressing the priest is "Glowing Brother or Sister (name here)". Priests of 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> level are known as Beams ("Beaming Brother or Sister (name here)"). Priests of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> level are known as Luminous Healer {Luminous Healer (name here)}. And a priest of 14<sup>th</sup> level or higher is referred to as Mighty Sun {Mighty Sun (name here)}. The head of the clergy is whoever happens to be the highest level priest in the church. They are known as the "His (or Her) Prismatic Radiance, the Mighty Healing Father (or Mother) of Light and Goodness.

**Dogma:** Shine brightly so that evil may be pushed away from your radiant strength. The light of purpose shall save thee. Give everything you have to the poor, infirm, starving and homeless as an example of selflessness. No good deed goes without reward. Only through the light of day can all be seen as it truly should be. Bring this warming light to those that feel left in the cold.

**Day-to-day activities:** Help the poor, heal the sick, feed the hungry, collect alms from the rich to give to the less fortunate. The priests run the homeless shelters, soup kitchens and hospitals. Their major duties are to comfort the sick and bring the light of truth to those around them. Priest lead by example, and the goodness and inner strength they show is what brings new members to the faith. This is how they preach, by doing good deeds and celebrating the warming light of Pelor.

**Important Ceremonies:** Services to Pelor involve hymn singing, communal prayer, and the dispensing of alms to the needy (and the collection of alms from the well-to-do). The 1<sup>st</sup> of Readying is the Festival of St. Bane. This day has particular significance because of Pelor's hatred for undead, and as a token all attempts to turn undead are made at +1. Priests usually go to areas of known hauntings and attempt to remove the evil blight.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of Richfest (Midsummer Day) is the holiest day of the year. Being the longest sun filled day of the year, clerics of Pelor celebrate by renewing their vows



and indoctrinating new members into the Church of the Great Source.

The 7<sup>th</sup> of Ready'reat is the Festival of Hope. This day is set aside for the priests to hear the petitions of common people and the plights that they suffer. Priests are dispatched to help these poor people in their time of need and specialty priests take on quests to route out evil or undead.

**Major Centers of Worship:** Temples and shrines can be found in the poor sections of every city, town, village and port in non-evil lands of the Flanaess. The larger the city, the greater the presence but there is a fair representation in most areas of Oerth. Being the sun god, Pelor is worshiped most often on days that offer clear skies.

**Affiliated Orders:** The Brothers and Sisters of Mercy (affiliated with priests of Zodal) run the soup kitchens and orphanages in the established towns and villages. This group is made up of rogues, priests and followers interested in helping the less fortunate.

The Order of Healers run the hospitals in these towns as well, but they also venture forth into the countryside to aid the sick. This group is primarily made up of specialty priests and followers proficient in healing. They gained wide renown during the Wars and are the most recognized part of the Church of Pelor. This also makes them the least represented because they took the greatest losses from the evil creatures that would attack them as they combed the battlefields for wounded.

The Knights of Mighty Light consists of specialty priests, fighters and rogues. This is a relatively new organization in the church of Pelor. This group has two missions: destroy evil and undead wherever it hides itself and protect the Order of Healers. Since the wars, the need for healers has increased because of poor sanitation; diseases introduced from foreign countries and diminished food supplies. The Knights have pledged themselves to protect the Healers as they seek out wounded on the battlefields or wherever they may go. Their second mission is to destroy evil everywhere. Since Iuz has created a large force of undead to serve in his army, the Knights have made it their duty to locate these forces and bring the burning light of Pelor upon these unholy creations. Members of the Knights are quite extreme in their views and have no tolerance for those that deal with undead or wish to harm innocent people with darkness and evil.

**Priestly Vestments:** All clerics wear yellow robes, gold-trimmed for specialty priests. Glows have a golden orb emblazoned over their hearts, Beams have a golden orb with 4 rays shooting forth in the direction of the major compass points, Luminous Healers have a

single open hand holding a golden orb and Mighty Sun's have a single clenched fist inside in a golden orb. The head of the church wears a multi-colored set of robes and a shiny golden helm during official ceremonies and yellow robes with multi colored trimming at all other times. A pair of open hands inside a golden orb with 8 multi-colored rays shooting off in the direction of the major compass points is emblazoned over the heart on the robes of the head of the church.

**Adventuring Garb:** Golden chain mail or yellow dyed leather armor are preferred by the more militant followers. Robes, cloaks and regular clothes are preferred by the followers most interested in healing. Carrying a shield is optional, but it will have a great sun emblazoned upon it. The most important aspect of any non-priestly attire is that there must always be yellow in the outfit. It doesn't matter if it is a hat, scarf, or shoes but the priest must wear a yellow article of clothing that is easily seen by casual observation.

## Specialty Priests (Illuminators)

<b>Requirements:</b>	Strength 14, Wisdom 14
<b>Prime Req:</b>	Strength, Wisdom
<b>Alignment:</b>	NG
<b>Weapons:</b>	flail, mace, morningstar, staff, staff-sling
<b>Armor:</b>	Leather or chain
<b>Major Spheres:</b>	All, Charm, Creation, Elemental (Air), Guardian, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, Sun
<b>Minor Spheres:</b>	Divination, Elemental (Fire), Summoning, Wards
<b>Magical Items:</b>	As priests (wand of illumination)
<b>Req. Profs:</b>	Herbalism, Cooking
<b>Bonus Profs:</b>	Healing, Religion

- ❖ At 1<sup>st</sup> level, all healing spells do at least median healing (5 hp for *cure light wounds*, 9 hp for *cure serious wounds*, 16 hp for *cure critical wounds*, heal cures all but 1-2 hp); priests gain a +2 to saves vs. all "evil" necromantic spells (i.e.: *spectral hand*, *vampiric touch*, *contagion*, *enervation*, *finger of death*, etc.); and all priests are considered to be one level higher when attempting to turn undead
- ❖ At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the priest can automatically cast *continual light* a number of times equal to their level without losing or sacrificing a slot for any memorized spells
- ❖ At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the priest automatically saves vs. spells that deprives them of sight (*darkness*, *blindness*, etc.)

- ❖ At 7<sup>th</sup> level, the priest can cast *strength* on themselves (1/day) {W2}
- ❖ At 9<sup>th</sup> level, the priest can cast *fly* on themselves (1/day) {W3}
- ❖ At 10<sup>th</sup> level, the priest is allowed a saving throw to escape level loss from an undead. Priests must make a straight save vs. breath weapon (no magical plusses) to avoid the level drain (melee damage is still incurred regardless of save)
- ❖ At 12<sup>th</sup> level, the priest can cast *fire shield* on themselves (1/day)
- ❖ At 14<sup>th</sup> level, the priest can cast *prismatic spray* (1/week)

## Pelor's Spells

### Vigor

4<sup>th</sup> Level

<b>Range:</b>	0
<b>Components:</b>	V, S, M
<b>Duration:</b>	1 day / level
<b>Casting Time:</b>	1 turn
<b>Area of Effect:</b>	1 creature / level
<b>Saving Throw:</b>	None

This spell enables the priest to help the sick and infirm feel better. This special blessing relieves the suffering of numerous creatures by numbing them to the pain and relieving the symptoms of their illnesses. While under the influence of this spell, creatures can act normally as if they were healthy. This spell also heals the affected creatures for 1d4 points. The material components are the priest's holy symbol and holy water.

### Sun Strike

5<sup>th</sup> Level

<b>Range:</b>	80 yards
<b>Components:</b>	V, S, M
<b>Duration:</b>	Instantaneous
<b>Casting Time:</b>	8
<b>Area of Effect:</b>	10-foot radius by 20-foot high column
<b>Saving Throw:</b>	½

This spell creates a glowing column of blinding light that burns those caught within its area. The column will cause anyone within it to suffer 6d4 points of damage with a save vs. Spell for half. Those that fail the save by more than 6 are also blinded for 1d6 rounds from the light. Undead and Lower Planar creatures are more susceptible to this spell and incur

6d8 points of damage. The material components are the priest's holy symbol and a prism.

### Glow of Life

7<sup>th</sup> Level

<b>Range:</b>	10 yards
<b>Components:</b>	V, S
<b>Duration:</b>	1 round / level
<b>Casting Time:</b>	1 turn
<b>Area of Effect:</b>	30-foot sphere
<b>Saving Throw:</b>	Special

This spell opens a temporary portal to the Positive Energy Plane and creates a sphere of golden light that bathes creatures with a healing glow. The light that shines through heals all those within the area of effect for 2d6 points each round as well as curing diseases and neutralizing poisons after one round in the light. Creatures that stay within the area of effect after reaching full hit points will be able to retain these extra points for 2d10 turns after leaving the spell's influence. But, any creature that gains more than double their normal maximum hit points will explode -- their bodies consumed by the enormous amount of positive energy they absorbed. The resulting explosion will end the spell as well as cause 6d4 + 24 points of damage to all those within a 30-foot radius of the sphere when it explodes, save vs. breath weapon for half damage. Any creatures connected to the Negative Material Plane (such as undead) will be utterly destroyed if they enter the sphere.

# Ahlissa

## A Greyhawk Gazetteer

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By Scott Casper

Based on the work of Gary Gygax, Rob Kuntz, Carl Sargent, Roger E. Moore, Morgan Rodwell, and others.

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### The Principality of Ahlissa

#### Facts at a Glance

<b>Proper Name:</b>	Principality of Ahlissa
<b>Ruler:</b>	Prince (Graf) Reydrich (LE male human W10)
<b>Government:</b>	Feudal monarchy, appointed by an overking
<b>Capital:</b>	Zelradton
<b>Major Towns:</b>	Hexpools (pop. 12,700), Ilahzdruk (pop. 2,700), Lidentsay (pop. 2,700), Prymp (pop. 17, 400), Shargallen (pop. 3,400), Trennenport (pop. 3,100), Zelradton (pop. 12,900)
<b>Provinces:</b>	Six landgraf holdings (fiefs), culled down from nearly 100 in the past.
<b>Resources:</b>	Wheat, oats, barley, grapes, fruits, sheep, goats, cattle, roses, iron products, horses, timber, silver, fine ale and beer, gems, jewelry
<b>Coinage:</b>	nightingale/throne (pp), crown/Ivid (gp), noble (ep), penny/score (sp), common/Vel (cp)
<b>Population:</b>	526,500 -- Human 82% (Ofs), Halfling 4%, Dwarf 3%, Elf 3% (sylvan 80%), Gnome 2%, Orc 1%, Other 5%
<b>Languages:</b>	Common, Old Oerdian
<b>Alignments:</b>	LE, N, LN, NE, NG
<b>Religion:</b>	Hextor, Beory, Zilchus, Pholtus, Nerull, Fharlanghn, Asmodeus, Kelanen, Pelor, Celestian, Ehlonna
<b>Allies:</b>	The Principality is technically allied with every other province of the United Kingdom of Ahlissa; it now has trade relations with Nyron and

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Greyhawk City.

<b>Enemies:</b>	The Scarlet Brotherhood and the North Kingdom scheme against all of Ahlissa; Naerie and Innspa are wary of Ahlissa and suspicious of Reydrich.
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### Geography

#### Earth Parallel

The Principality of Ahlissa is similar to the country of Bulgaria, flattened, turned on its side (north to east), and moved 14 degrees south to the latitude of Egypt.

#### Topography

The lowest elevations in the Principality of Ahlissa are along stretches of the Ahlissan Coast (on Relmor Bay), along the entire length of the Dunhead Coast (on Dunhead Bay), and in the vicinity of the city of Hexpools. In these places the elevation sinks to sea level, or just above sea level (roughly 150 ft. above) in the case of Hexpools.

The next set of higher elevations is inland from both coasts, along the southern half of the Thelly River, and the region southeast of the Hollow Highlands. In these places the elevation averages at 350 ft. and reaches as high as 600 ft. above sea level.

In the range of 600-700 ft. above sea level is the Ahlissan Plateau, also known as the Ahlissan Plains. These rolling, rocky plains dominate the center of the Principality. The upper half of the Thelly River Basin averages at this elevation.

South of the Ahlissan Plains, the elevation varies dramatically. Peaks may reach 1,200 ft. while valleys may dip to 500 ft. above sea level. Within this range is the Thel Plateau, upon which stands the Bonewood

today, towering over the Ahlissan Coast at 800 ft. above the bay.

The Hollow Highlands rise as high as 1,600 ft., but the Iron Hills still dwarf them, rising as high as 4,298 ft. at Alasum Peak. Between them stretches the Ahzdunt Valley, which for a large stretch sinks to a level of 550 ft. above sea level.

## A Tour Of Ahlissa

The Principality of Ahlissa is cradled between the former Iron League nations, and makes up the majority of the Draken Peninsula jutting out into the Sea of Gearnat.

A journey along the coast of the Principality, starting from Nyronnd, follows the coast of Relmor Bay. After leaving the ruins of Chathold, in what was Almor, the boat would follow the rising cliffs southeast until they soared hundreds of feet in the air. Atop these cliffs sit the Bonewood, the remnants of the once-mighty Thelwood. Somewhere in the midst of the Bonewood, a magical spring produces the Thelly River. It flows south and east through the lowest lands of the Principality, and forms the eastern border.

As the coast begins to curve westward, the cliffs gradually subside. By the time the boat reaches Prymp, Ahlissa's most important port, the docks stretch out from sandy beaches. From here west to the cape, the coast alternates between stretches of sandy beaches and rocky cliffs -- though the cliffs never rise higher than 20 feet. The coast is broken only once by a river basin, where the Ruksi River flows inland. The river's shallow basin gradually cuts deeper into the coast, as the land around it rises to the Ahlissan Plateau.

Where Relmor Bay meets Dunhead Bay is the cape once known as the Tusk, now more commonly called White Fang. Previously known for a 600-year old lighthouse of indeterminate origin, in the last 30 years the entire cape has become blanketed with eternal winter. The waters around the cape are reasonably safe for travel, save in bad weather of course.

The western coast (Dun or Dunhead) is mostly beach. Nothing but fishing villages line the coast, and no efforts have ever been made to fortify the region. It is here, in a village like Stevoksal or Yudolzok that the passenger wishing to see more of the Principality must land. The beaches give way to cliffs again to the south, should the ship continue on towards Bronzegate, and the Dwur-controlled Iron Hills. Large ships cannot approach too near most of the Dun Coast without being beached; so the visitors would be loaded into a ship's boat and rowed to shore.

Terrain in the southwest corner of the Principality alternates between miles of arable, flat land and miles of low, rugged hills that are nearly impassable. Trails twist and turn throughout the latter, connecting farming villages in the former. The southwest is fairly dry, with no riverstthough numerous streams flow towards the coast to join Dunhead Bay. Villages have formed inland along these streams and creeks, while others are supported by springs. Only thirty percent of the land is covered in grass. Groves of trees and small woods (none larger than a dozen miles in diameter) still dot much of the landscape, but the forest has long since been cleared away. In the early days of Oerdian occupation, logging camps boomed in the western half of the Principality. Many of the inland villages were built on the remnants of these camps.

Heading east across the southern end of the Principality, the terrain seems near-identical for most of its length. What separates the Iron Hills from the Hollow Highlands is the Ahzdunt Valley -- 60 miles across at its widest points. Streams trickle into the valley from the hills around it, save in the spring when they become more robust. Still, the valley remains hot and arid, and has not attracted many farmers.

On the east side of the Hollow Highlands is the Grayflood River, which flows to the edge of the highlands, and pools there in a lake near the city of Hexpools. South of the Grayflood is a small, often-ignored corner of the Principality. This fertile region of low hills is seemingly scooped out between the Glorioles to the east and the Hollow Highlands to the west. Its southern border is the Rieuwood. Three streams flow off the Grayflood into the region's small but deep valleys. Multiple springs make this one of the wettest areas of the Principality.

The southeast corner of the Principality touches the foothills of the Glorioles, one of the smallest mountain ranges on the Oerth. Roughly 30 miles north of where the Glorioles end, the Thelly River bends sharply east on its way to the Aerdi Sea. At this point the Grayflood branches off on its westward trip. The rise in elevation along the Thelly is so gradual that, if a traveler took a barge upstream as far as the port town of Ilahzdruk, that traveler could look back and marvel at how far below the horizon stretched.

While on the Thelly, this traveler would have passed the Askivador River, as it flowed down to join the Thelly from the Ahlissan Peninsula. At one point, when the Ahlissan Coast considered itself independent, the Askivador was the unofficial border between Ahlissa and South Province. The plains south of the Askivador are the grassiest in the Principality.

The Thelly is clearly the longest river in the Principality (205 miles just within its borders!), and the Grayflood is often the widest (well over 400 feet). The minor rivers are the previously named Askivador River, and the Tamary, Estam, and Ruksi Rivers. The Tamary begins in a small lake fed by natural springs on the Ahlissan Plateau, and runs down to a lake at the western edge of the Hollow Highlands. The Estam is the shortest river, following much the same pattern as the Tamary, only running a shorter course. The mouth of the Ruksi, along the Ahlissan Coast, has already been described. The silt in the water from the bay is quickly deposited in the riverbed until it is drinkable for most of its run across the Principality. This river pools into a small lake northwest of the Iron Hills.

## **Climate**

Cool air off of Relmor Bay, coupled with the Iron Hills holding back some of the hot winds from the south, keep the Principality from being as hot and arid as it should be at its latitude. The northern coast experiences cold winters, hot summers, and an even distribution of precipitation. The rest of the Principality, at lower altitudes, suffers short, wet winters and long, hot, and dry summers. In the peaks and hills to the south, snow seldom lasts more than two months during winter.

## **Natural Resources**

The brown soil of the Ahlissan Plateau is fertile, for natural springs, creeks, and streams therein abound. Grains like oats, barley, and particularly wheat, grow well there. The coasts and the Thelly River Basin provide for much more varied planting. Wheat, grapes, roses, and mulberry trees grow there, and rice also grows in the basin. The Dunhead Coast is all sandy loam and grainy silt, whereas the Ahlissan Coast varies dramatically between fertile soil and rocky terrain. Rice and fig trees grow in the humus of the far south.

Though the Bonewood has only begun to grow back of late with magical (druidical) aid, the Iron Hills remain well-forested, and are now the main source of timber for the Principality. Beech, oak, and pine grow there. The hills are covered in brown and grey soil. Lead, iron, copper, and gold (the last only in the Iron Hills) are mined by men of the Principality. The hills hold more wealth than that, but it is hoarded by the Noniz and Dwur that live in the hills.

The most important sources of natural water in the Principality are the Thelly and Grayflood Rivers. There are smaller, less prominent rivers as well. The Principality has nearly 300 natural mineral springs,

around which many of the towns and villages have sprung up. Because of the varying heights in terrain, there are almost 150 waterfalls in the Principality, which feed many mills.

## **Flora and Fauna**

There are thousands of plant species to be found in the Principality of Ahlissa, even though only seven percent of the region is forested. The deciduous trees in the northern half include beech, elm, and oak. Cypress, date palms, and sycamores are uncommon on the Ahlissan Plateau but flourish in the valleys to the south. In the hills, coniferous trees like fir, pine, and spruce grow. Wild berries, flowers, and fruits are not uncommon. Roses are ubiquitous throughout the Principality, and jasmine, lilies, and lotus grow well here too. Beachgrass is common along the coasts. Fescue, sloughgrass, and yellow foxtail are all fairly common varieties of grass. Barley and wheat grass do not commonly grow unless cultivated. Papyrus grows in the south end of the Tamary River and near the banks of the Grayflood.

Common wild animals include bats, cats, deer, foxes, partridges, pheasants, porcupines, rabbits, squirrels, swallows, weasels, and all varieties of insects and lizards. Uncommon animals include boars, buffalo, crows, donkeys, hamsters, hares, heron, horses, jackals, quails, scorpions, storks, tortoises, and vipers. Rare animals include bears, chamois, cormorants, ducks, eagles, falcons, flamingos, gazelle, gulls, hawks, ibis, pelicans, orioles, otters, owls, vultures, wolves, and woodpeckers. Badgers, camels, and yaks are very rare.

The most common domesticated animals are cats, cows, dogs, donkeys, goats, horses, and sheep.

## **Political Divisions**

Traditionally, South Province was ruled by herzogs (equivalent to kings), rulers who were appointed by the Overking at Rauxes. The role of herzog could be inherited in-family or awarded to an individual for his lifetime at the whim of the Overking, but historically the role was dominated by the royal house of Naelex-Selor and the house of Chelor (branched from the previous royal house).

The titles held by royalty, such as herzog, were mostly lifted from the original Flan inhabitants, though Oerdian titles like prince and king have crept in. When South Province became the Principality of Ahlissa, Reydrich Naelex threw off the title of herzog in preference of simply graf. This act both separated him from the herzogs who came before him and, while seemingly a diminutive title, predicted that his powers

under the new kingdom would increase. Graf Reydrich enjoys the almost complete sovereignty of a pfalzgraf (equivalent to prince). Within his borders, his rule is absolute, save for the will of Overking Xavener.

At one time, South Province was divided into a hundred counties, but Reydrich has since removed many entitlements and shifted land holdings in order to restructure the Principality to his liking. Authority beneath Reydrich is now divided between six landgrafs (equivalent to earls or counts).

Farthest west is the County of Nasavta. Landgraf Bortwin of Trennenport rules there, having succeeded Trenrast the Incompetent in 586 CY. His first action was to change the name of the county from Tren to Nasavta. The Dun Coast suffers under his rule, inversely improving the town of Trennenport. He is sure that vast treasures still lie under Icespire, and is eager to have them unearthed for him. He rules in isolation, ignoring the other landgrafs.

Next over is the County of Sakhaeron, which extends from Zelradton to Shargallen. Landgraf Alexander Petrok was finally recognized in 587 CY, after two years of proving he possessed the will of the last count. Alexander is as renowned a fighter as he is a religious zealot in the cause of Zilchus. Despite his impressive territory, Alexander is near-powerless in Zelradton, but is far too busy overseeing the construction of a cathedral of Zilchus in Shargallen to care. The previous counties of Acrolis and Westhills were absorbed into Sakhaeron, so that the troubling grafs Larinnen and Cryus would become Alexander's problem.

The County of Serumaram stretches from Prymp down into the Ahzdunt Valley. The Landgraf Ivan Darmen was awarded the environs of Prymp after the siege of that city in 581 CY. Ivan had a reputation for handling problems, and was assigned the region in order to deal with separatists from Prymp who were sabotaging supply lines to the war front in Idee. Ivan worked closely with the council of Prymp to put down the insurgents, and has been rewarded generously since. He is a ruthlessly aggressive leader, and it is even rumored that assassins work for him. Alexander Petrok is an ambitious neighbor who often noses into Ivan's business, especially regarding Prymp, where Alexander lived for most of his life.

The County of Avoharp stretches from Hexpools to Benkend. Landgraf Stefan Georgiev is an accomplished fighter and was one of Chelor's tribunes (senior officers) before he was awarded the title of graf back in 578 CY by Herzog Chelor. He switched loyalties quickly enough when Reydrich took power to

have been awarded considerable holdings since. Stefan retains an intense loathing for Naerie/Idee, remembering the disgraces they dealt him in the wars. Amongst his land holdings, Benkend has become a source of trouble that Stefan has so far avoided. He instead dominates the Waldgraf of Hexpools, as the city is the main source of wealth in his coffers.

The County of Jalas is the smallest and poorest of the six counties. The Landgraf Mikhail Cranden is based in Ilhazdruk, the largest town in the county. Mikhail has always had closer ties to the city of Rel Deven than to Zelradton, and Reydrich's rein has not changed things. Mikhail has been a member of the landed gentry for 20 years, longer than most of his peers. He is stubbornly determined to not only keep his lands, but also pass them down to his son when he comes of age, so the aging landgraf is careful not to make enemies. He has mistakenly placed too much trust in Stefan Georgiev, however, for that cunning graf has convinced Mikhail that he needs Stefan as an intermediary for dealing with Reydrich.

Seemingly tucked away in the corner of the Principality is the County of Vidvolp. Landgraf Birink Grimuadar is the current ruler, heir to Grisk Grimuadar, a fearsomely powerful necromancer of great renown. Grisk had long ago usurped the holdings of Waldgraf Balemar Cranden, and gained favor with the Chelors until his holdings were extended into a barony. Grisk died 40 years ago in his own dungeons, leaving his wife and only son behind. Birink has grown into a careful schemer, a strong believer that knowledge is power, and he has often used agents to carry out his agendas for him. In fact, Graf Reydrich and he have so much in common that Reydrich immediately promoted him to Landgraf upon taking over. Though Reydrich keeps a close and suspicious eye on Birink, the other grafs tend to overlook him, except for Alexander Petrok. At one time, Birink had been his own liege-lord until the terms of service were broken.

Beneath the level of Landgraf, the Principality is broken into a hodgepodge of land holdings of greatly varying size. Generally, grafs (sheriffs), may hold land up to half the size of a county. Frieheerrs (barons) may hold land up to half the size of a graf's reeve. Waldgrafs (baronets) may hold land up to one half the size of a barony. Rheingrafs or lairds (lords) control the cities, or territory up to eight miles in diameter. Burggrafs (mayors) control the towns, or territory up to four miles in diameter. Ritters (knights) control the villages, or territory up to two miles in diameter.

Detailing the political hierarchy down to the local level is beyond the scope of this gazetteer, though the level of grafs can be detailed as follows:

The County of Nasavta is shared by two grafs who supervise a north and a south shire. Graf Boris Sendova was one of the dreaded pirate lairds of Galdol before Herzog Chelor made the pirates into his navy. Now Sendova has survived and surpassed all his old peers. Graf Atanas Midenov manages a poorer shire to the south, from a manor house in the village of Chirpetev far inland.

The County of Sakhaeron is mostly divided between many freiherrns in the north, while two grafs compete for the southern half of the county. The western shire was once called the County of Westhills, which passed into the hands of Nikolai Torquann after his father's assassination in 588 CY. The eastern shire was once the County of Acrolis, and remains in the hands of a now bitter Larinnen Garasteth. No charges of treason were ever brought against Larinnen for Cyrus Torquann's death, though he has always been suspected of it. Both grafs continue to feud and plot against each other. Nikolai Torquann is based in the town of Astivokharoy Ganor. Larinnen Garasteth is based in the village of Ethirugan.

In Serumaram County, Graf Rolos Terinislov has held the northern mouth of the Ahzdunt Valley for 18 years. Rolos was once a vicarius (lt. general) in the army assigned to take Idee, and was something of a superhero amongst the soldiers. In 572 CY, one of the first times the Iron Hills dwarves had brought their dragon to bear in combat, Rolos had almost single-handedly fended it off so that his contingent could retreat without being wiped out. Now that political alliances have shifted, and the valley is no longer the military encampment it once was Rolos finds that he dearly misses the old days.

Meanwhile, Graf Ivan Petkov has the distinction of having the emptiest holding of any graf in the Principality. Centered in the village of Ayidivor, his fief sits on the south end of the Ahlissan Plateau, and looks down on and includes part of the Tamary River in a valley below to the south. The terrain is rocky, with little grass, and broken spots of fertile ground. Ivan sees his promotion to graf eight years ago as banishment from the court at Zelradton, and bitterly rules the village and hamlets under him. The shire has always been supported by its nearly-played out marble quarry, now doubling as a mere stone quarry.

The lone shire of Avoharp County is ruled by Graf Vardish Xandros. Vardish is of foreign birth to the Principality, the highest ranking such individual. He came to prominence as a war wizard in the arenas of

Jalpa and Zelradton, becoming so popular with royalty that he was awarded the region around the village of Chirton just three years ago. This fief, located halfway between where the Tamary and Estam Rivers pool at the base of the Hollow Highlands, has been traditionally held by evokers and conjurers, placed here to help guard against any tricks the Noniz of the Highlands might try.

Jalas County also has a single graf holed up in its south end. Graf Cherald Alistov came to his title in an unusual way -- his father was a master thief who had won the title from the previous graf in a card game 25 years ago. Cherald is an apple fallen far from the tree, a hardworking, honest man trying hard to compensate for his lack of education, intelligence, and charisma. Luckily, his shire is centered on the village of Arethes, halfway between the Eastern Route from Arogaz Avon and the ferry over the Grayflood leading to Vidvolp County. There is little out that way but sheep and goat herders and horse breeders.

In Vidvolp County, the shire of Nidlup is evenly shared between humans, halflings, and gnomes. Although most of the local rulers are demi-humans, Graf Viktor Arotev is human. No non-human graf had been appointed here in over 75 years, but the people are not dissatisfied enough with Arotev to complain much. Arotev is a quiet underachiever, content with collecting taxes and practicing falconry.

The second shire in Vidvolp County is Getinarala. This area, in the far southeast corner of the Principality, is almost a part of the Rieuwood. Getinarala has become a haven for the Attloi who once roamed the Ahlissan Coast. Elves are not a rare sight either; nor are members of a tribe of tabaxi -- cat-men - - who wander the environs surrounding the Rieuwood. Getinarala is ruled by Graf Teretzel Serotev, easily the most easygoing ruler in the entire Principality.

There are hundreds of thorps, hamlets, and villages all over the Principality of Ahlissa. Some have names, while others don't. Rarely are they fortified. Most of the population will be serfs, with a small garrison of soldiers nearby. Communities with populations of 600 or less will not be detailed below. Conversely, the three communities of 10,000 or more -- Prymp, Hexpools, and Zelradton -- would require too much space here and will require separate treatments at a later date. The following is a list of otherwise significant communities in the Principality of Ahlissa:

## **Significant Communities**

**Ahzenk** (pop. 650). An un-walled village along the Chelor Road, 80 miles south and west of Prymp.

**Akapo** (pop. 730). A walled village with a small keep, guarding the spring that feeds the Estam River. Roughly 40 miles east of Zelradton.

**Anital Salay** (pop. 810). An un-walled village built on gentle hillsides, equidistant between Prymp, the Bonewood, and Hexpools. The treacherous Waldgraf Angelina Torquann -- one of the few of that house left in the Principality -- holds the village.

**Arethes** (pop. 700). Home to Graf Cherald Alistov of Jalas County, Arethes is located halfway along the Eastern Route from Arogaz Avon and the ferry over the Grayflood leading to Vidvolp County. The horse breeders of Arethes raise the fastest steeds in the Principality.

**Arogaz Avon** (pop. 1,040). A walled town at the intersection of the Chelor Road and the Northern Route, halfway between Prymp and Hexpools. The heavily-fortified curtain wall connects to Castle Arogaz, which is home to a petty bureaucrat named Rheingraf Keristo Soveld.

**Astivokharoy Ganor** (pop. 2,100). This fortified town is Zelradton's northwest suburb. The best, and oldest, part of town is built on a hill on top of a hot mineral spring. The homes there are jealously guarded, and the bathhouses are sometimes visited from Zelradton nobles on holiday. More of the town sprawls out below the hill, clustered around aqueducts that carry spring water to Ganor's rather dry outlying lands to the north. There have been problems in the past with the Iron Dwur here, and all dwarves are treated with hostility -- despite the warmer welcome they have received in Zelradton in recent years. Near the town is the Principality's only magic college, specialized in invocation magic.

**Ayidivor** (pop. 640). This un-walled village about 80 miles northeast of Zelradton is one of the most remote in the Principality, for it lies in one of the deeper valleys south of the Ahlissan Plateau and is reached only by a path from the village of Solya along the Tamary River.

**Chevol** (pop. 2,120). This un-walled town is located 31 miles upstream from Hexpools, on the north bank of the Grayflood River. Chevol protects the only bridge to span the Grayflood, but is better known for its Richfest celebration. The festival has forgotten its roots as ritual appeasement of Sotillion for a mild summer and sunk into merchant class-fed debauchery. Some tradesmen come from Hexpools every year for it.

**Chirton** (pop. 1,990). Halfway between where the Tamary and Estam Rivers flow down to the base of the Hollow Highlands lays this un-walled town. The town shares its name with a stream that flows off the Tamary River and supports the town's populace. A

road runs through here that was called the Conqueror's Way under the Chelors, but is more commonly called the Underbelly because it skirts around the southern end of the Principality. The previous Freiherr who ruled Chirton was a cousin of the Herzog Chelor, and though the locals were happy to see the latter go, they were content with the former and quietly grumble still about the Freiherr's execution nearly ten years ago.

**Dargvonesa** (pop. 2,010). This small port town on the Ahlissan Coast has a reputation as being the most chaotic place in the Principality. Fueling this conception is the fact that, for several years, Dargvonesa was ruled by the Mad Prince, Devid Darmen. In reality, Devid was neither a prince nor of the House of Darmen. Rather, he was a delusional illusionist who had taken over the town by virtue of his superior spell power. When Herzog Chelor III clamped down on coastal towns, he had Devid ousted. The illusionist has not been seen since -- officially -- although year after year there have been rumored sightings all over town.

**Dargveto** (pop. 730). This small port village has survived many years of hardship by virtue of being small. At various times, it has been a pirate haven, a refuge for cultists, and even a home for a hobgoblin tribe, but always the local population has proven not only durable, but too small and poor to be worth exploiting for long. There are half-finished fortified structures all over the village. The fishermen take it in stride and adopt them as their homes.

**Ethirugana** (pop. 1,040). This small un-walled town lies 22 miles northeast of Zelradton along the Chelor Road. Every three years, the locals throw the Growfest Tournament, attracting many of Zelradton's best fighters.

**Galdol** (pop. 1,410). Once the main shipbuilding yard for the navy under the Chelors, the town of Galdol remains a viable, albeit risky, port. Its lighthouse is part of the Moonstone Fortress, famed for housing the pirate lairds of Galdol, who for so long vexed the sea lanes of Relmor Bay.

**Ilahzdruk** (pop. 2,700). This is the largest port town on the Thelly River, and one of the few settlements on the east bank that has always been part of the Principality. This un-walled community trades with its poorer neighbors downstream, but subsists mainly on trade with nearby Rel Deven, outside the Principality. Ilahzdruk maintains a whole cottage industry around spell components -- the trading shops specialize in the bizarre, and the local herbalists are prized citizens. There is no bridge here, but an active ferry.



**Ilnamark** (pop. 790). This un-walled village is 33 miles north of Hexpools along the Chelor Road. Ilnamark is known for its vineyards. Ilnamark Red Wine is sold throughout the Principality (but has seldom enjoyed much popularity as an export, with Jalpa Red so predominant).

**Lidentsay** (pop. 2,700). Located 70 miles northwest of Zelradton is this double-walled town. The wider curtain is one-half mile away from the town. Both walls have numerous towers and many defenders, because Lidentsay is home to the Invokers College. This college schools many of the Principality's magic-using defenders. The town is mostly support staff for the college and the garrison that defends it. The town is only 16 miles from the Iron Hills, so it has always been seen as a crucial location to protect.

**Mol** (pop. 1,520). Located along the Underbelly (or the road also known as Conqueror's Way) Mol is one of the communities closest to Idee/Naerie in the Principality. That means that it is walled and fortified, though no longer as well-manned as it once was. It is a poor town, supported by some trade between Zelradton and Hexpools, plus what trickles in from up the Ahzdunt Valley.

**Naprich** (pop. 980). This un-walled village has slowly grown up around the fortress of Ker Bazainn since 584 CY. At first the populace was slave labor brought here to farm and feed the garrison of the fortress, but since the Crook of Rao banished the devils of Ker Bazainn, more and more people have willingly begun to come here seeking the fortress' protection.

**Ovohkayro** (pop. 850). An un-walled village along the Conquest Road, 40 miles west of Lidentsay and 5 miles east of the Ruksi River.

**Ovolrak** (pop. 1,440). The Chelor Road zigzags north from Zelradton up to the Ahlissan Plateau. Sixty-five miles north of Zelradton along that road is the un-walled town of Ovolrak. It boasts the oldest chapel in the Principality. Though the chapel is devoted to Beory, its outdoor shrine has been converted into a theatre by the locals, who no longer particularly revere the goddess.

**Porton** (pop. 1,800). A partly-walled port town along the Ahlissan Coast, 50 miles southwest of Prymp. Porton is ruled by Waldgraf Alette Sorov, whose loyalties are evenly split between the neighboring Freiherr Vlach Stoitchkov and Landgraf Ivan Darmen. The most prominent feature in town is Sorov Fortress, an imposing keep that houses the waldgraf and a contingent of troops half loyal to her and half to the landgraf.

**Shargallen** (pop. 3,400). A walled port town along the Ahlissan Coast, 90 miles southwest from Prymp.

Shargallen is ruled by Waldgraf Teodossyi Calimiro, a blind invoker whom Reydrich himself landed for distinguished service. The Calimiros are a merchant family that controls much of the wealth in Shargallen. The town is known for its high population of Oerdian-Suel humans, and Shargallen is the only place in the Principality with shrines to Suel gods. The cathedral to Zilchus under construction is the only one of its kind along the coast. There is also a shrine to Kelanen here.

Shargallen has never been able to establish a market, due to its reputation for lawlessness, though the resources of the Calimiro family have attracted some specialized industries such as glassblowing, silversmithing, and weaponsmithing. There is one inn, the Traveler's Rest Inn, but the Blue Boar Hostel is fairly respectable as well.

The shoreline here is rocky, and little of the terrain immediately surrounding Shargallen is farmable. South of the town is a stone quarry, the only one in the northern half of the Principality. The quarry runs deep, for it has been half-played out. This enterprise has in the past attracted a small minority of dwarves to Shargallen.

**Solya** (pop. 920). This un-walled village lies 48 miles northeast of Zelradton, where the Chelor Road first ascends the Ahlissan Plateau. Solya is known as a haven for artists. Roughly 150 carpenters, potters, and smiths call the village home.

**Tabonrak** (pop. 990). A large, un-walled village has gradually coalesced here, along the Chelor Road 60 miles north and a little west of Hexpools, around the manor house of Freiherr Hristo Soveld -- despite the wicked thaumaturgists's ungenerous rule and occasional experiments on villagers.

**Trennenport** (pop. 3,100). Though the Lantern Road once ran farther, it now ends at the town of Trennenport. The oldest lighthouse in the Principality (not counting Icespire) endures here. Like in Galdol, the lighthouse here is part of a fortified keep (though smaller in this case than Moonstone Fortress). The town has always been a haven for pirates and other undesirables, including an orcish minority of about 200. Graf Bortwin keeps the rabble under control by occasionally giving mercenaries and adventurers leave to cull out some of the excess scum and villainy.

There is only one reputable inn, the White Oak Inn, though there are also several seedy hostels where one is as likely to get fleas as a stab in the back. The only market is devoted to the local fishmongers. There is a chapel to Hextor, a shrine dedicated to the Draken Pantheon, and a shrine to Boccob. The last is for a small cult-like sect of old hedge magicians scattered

through the town. They sell hexes and charms to superstitious buccaneers, and generally look on Bortwin with respect and admiration.

**Vecheld Gesto** (pop. 800). An un-walled village at the end of a half-paved road leading 25 miles south of Prymp. Its castle was once the seat of power for Graf Lopezos Cranden, who was supportive of the Ahlissan Coast's independence, but Lopezos was deposed by Chelor III in 580 CY and replaced with Pfalzgraf Ivan Darmen. Ivan was in turn beheaded at the command of Graf Reydrich five years later when Ivan became defiant. His lands were forfeited then to Freiherr Xerxes Naelex, who had actually been running the fiefdom for the past five years anyway while Ivan was engrossed in court politics in Zelradton. Despite all this political turmoil, the annual Richfest tournament has never been canceled. Delayed until Brewfest on occasion, but never canceled.

## History of Ahlissa Legendary Kingdoms

The following knowledge has been all but lost to mankind. It may be divined, and is known by several quasi-deities such as Kelanen and Daern.

The earliest human settlements in the region of the Draken Peninsula which would become Ahlissa occurred over 5,000 years ago. These humans were early Flan, a mixture of hunter-gatherers and flax growers. They revered a small pantheon of Flannish deities, with the Oerth Mother, Beory, at the head of them. Their tribes settled first around the Thelly River and then north of the Iron Hills. They had been drawn to this region from the north by the presence of Dwur and Noniz in the Iron Hills. Word had reached the Flan in the north that the Dwur and Noniz - both of who had dwelt there considerably longer -were rich with silver, gold, and gems. Luckily, both the Dwur and Noniz were eager to acquire linen from the Flan, and so a rich trade was established.

Life in the region changed very little for 2,000 years. The Flan grew slowly in numbers, but still much of the region remained uncultivated. Jebli and Euroz were becoming a problem for the Flan, as the Dwur and Noniz were working to exterminate these monsters from the hills, and refugee monsters were fleeing into the plains to the north. This forced the Flan to better organize. Herzogs united tribes in common defense against the intrusive humanoids. The tribes north of the Iron Hills were slowly driven northwards, though, towards the coasts. The tribes along the Thelly River prospered. The Thellian Tribes became excellent metalworkers themselves, drawing

the curious Noniz out of the Hollow Highlands to dwell with them. The Thellian Tribes were good horseman, having found the plains of the region to be excellent for raising their steeds. Around this time, they even began minting bronze coins, which still turn up in the occasional ancient trove.

Towards the end of this time, Olves began to travel up the Thelly River, bound for the woods at the end of it. The Olves had several reasons to wish to settle this region. The lich Acererak was leaving a stench of evil throughout the Vast Swamp and the region which would become Sunndi, and many Olves wished distance from this. Others had migrated to the Rieuwood from the Adri in the north, but had found the wild southern forest not to their liking. The Olves had little contact with the Flan along the way except to notice each other. They passed the (now lost) three largest Flan towns in the whole region - Astarv, Ethsiruganap, and Nurthiclev.

Three hundred years later, the Thellians had grown considerably in number and spread out from the river basin westward. The Dwur, slow to take to new neighbors, finally accepted these Flan as trading partners as the Noniz already had. The Thellians became so prosperous that they absorbed the other Flan tribes in the region and became a kingdom. Having a matriarchal society, however, the first Flan leader was a queen - Queen Ehlissa.

## Ancient History

The following information is rare, but not entirely inaccessible. Some scholars in Rel Deven have this information, as does Prince Reydrich in Zelradton, and of course the Circle of Eight.

Queen Ehlissa was a good ruler, strengthening militias without appreciably raising taxes. She was so admired by the Noniz that those in the Hollow Highlands also accepted her as their queen. In honor of their queen, the Noniz constructed a stone castle for her (the first anyone in Ahlissa would enjoy). The castle was located in the Highlands, southwest of modern Hexpools. The crumbling remains of the castle yet stands, though hidden by illusions long ago cast by the Noniz. Ehlissa was also one of the most powerful Flannae mages, and was often referred to as Ehlissa the Enchanter. Her greatest claim to fame, however, is her Marvelous Nightingale. This artifact, combining powerful magics and unknown technology, was made for her by two time-travelers who had come from the future and were deeply impressed with the queen. At the time, these travelers were the mage Zagyg and the demi-goddess Joramy, though both have since ascended to greater heights (seemingly on a

whim Zagyg had taken the alias of Xagy. Amongst the many powers of the Nightingale was longevity for its owner, allowing Ehlissa to rule for 500 years. Only the first 75 years of her reign were idyllic, however, for that was when she attracted the attention of the dread arch-mage, Acererak.

Acererak ruled a horrible kingdom in the Vast Swamp, peopled by animal-men of his own creation. Acererak let no corpse go buried or burnt in his kingdom, for each was instead raised as some evil form of undead. These atrocities had long disgusted the sparse Flan tribes of Sunndi and the Olves of the Rieuwood, and word of Acererak eventually reached the ear of Queen Ehlissa. With an army of Flan and Noniz, she crossed the Grayflood and gained passage through the Rieuwood. But the lich had divined her intentions, and met her in battle with a force of wights and many lesser horrors in Sunndi. Acererak boldly confronted the Queen herself, and while their battle was a stalemate, Ehlissa's army was beaten and forced to retreat. Acererak followed her, harrying the queen all the way back through the Rieuwood, but Ehlissa made a stand against him just south of the Grayflood River and this time won. Humiliated, Acererak fled back to the Vast Swamp to lick his wounds.

Ehlissa's mistake had been in leaving her Nightingale behind to protect her realm. The enchantments of the artifact were keyed to the Queen's presence, and the longer she was gone the more malevolent the Nightingale became. Upon Ehlissa's return to her palace, the artifact reached out to her mind and affected her. From then on, she was a reclusive, paranoid leader. Her castle, once open to all, was restricted from all but a slowly diminishing number of courtiers. Her administrators governed as best they could while their queen redoubled the number of wards protecting her.

By the time Ehlissa had reigned for three hundred years, Acererak was more interested in attaining lichdom than expanding his kingdom. Ehlissa was seen by so few of her citizens that most people assumed she had died, and her courtiers were perpetrating some hoax. The power of the courtiers was very real, however, and when one died while traveling on an errand, a whole clan was held responsible. The clan fled northward to the coast of Relmor Bay to escape persecution. They settled there, and built small ports. They lived undisturbed for a time, until one day barges sailed towards their docks. The visitors were the Rhennee, an old race of nomadic sailors. The Flan told them of how they had been driven from their homes, and the Rhennee were sympathetic. They gave the clan the name Attloi,

which meant "cousin" to them. It would be many years before the word Attloi would be poisoned in the minds of the Rhennee, and come to mean "traitor."

Ehlissa sought out powerful allies to help defend against Acererak, and in this she made her last bad decision. By magical invitation, she brought a knight riding a young red dragon to Ahlissa. They held meetings in private chambers, and while no record was made as to what was discussed between them, what followed afterward was a falling out between them. Somehow, the Queen who had bested Acererak was caught off-guard, and was slain. This contingency made the Nightingale extremely dangerous, and the knight was in turn slain by its released powers. But the Nightingale was still not done. It created a great zone of antipathy around the Queen's castle, driving out her guards and courtiers until the castle stood empty. Then the artifact hid itself deep under the castle and protected itself with its magics. It has not been found since.

## **Aerdy Hegemony**

The following information is uncommon, but can be found in libraries in Rel Deven, Hexpools, and Zelradton.

Four hundred years passed after the death of Ehlissa. The Flan tribes took to fighting over control of her kingdom. Several kings came and went in rapid succession, not one being able to hold onto as much land as the one before him. The Noniz became so disheartened that they broke off contact with the Flan for a century. It was during this time that Hobniz first appeared on the peninsula. Three clans came on ships from Nyronnd, fleeing some fiscal difficulties to start over on the far side of the bay. More Hobniz followed, as they found the Draken Flan to be friendly and inviting. Of course, the Flan were eager for demi-human trade partners since the departure of the Noniz.

At some point, the rulers began to hearken back to older traditions and abandoned the title of king for herzog again. The names of these herzogs have been lost and forgotten, save the last Flannish herzog. Herzog Okram was the first capable leader the land had seen in ages. Tribes were reunited under his banner, and the Noniz were even impressed when Okram led reinforcements to aid the Noniz against a resurgence of Jebli. Given time, Okram might have rebuilt Ehlissa's kingdom of old. But the Oeradians did not give him the chance.

To the northeast, the fledgling Kingdom of Aerdy turned its gaze to the Draken Peninsula, and saw it as ripe for both cultivation and conquest. Prince Terven,

whose considerable fief was south of Rauxes, was commissioned to take the peninsula from the Flan either by treaty or by force, with seven legions placed under his command. Terven expected little resistance, and for the most part was right.

After crossing the Thel River, the Oerdians first encountered the Olves of the Thel Wood. The Olves were slightly concerned at having new human neighbors, but had neither the numbers nor inclination to oppose them. It would not take long to regret that mistake. The Oerdians packed into the plains in droves. They surrounded the Thel Wood and tore away at its edges, leaving the Olves hiding deep inside. The Dwur and Noniz endured because the Oerdians did not wish to chase them into the hills. The Hobniz survived by virtue of their small numbers and rapid assimilation. The Flan were not so lucky. Many tribes were cut off from Okram's banner and tried their best to protect themselves, only to be overwhelmed. Okram's tribes performed a fighting withdrawal across the Ahlissan Plains, fighting mercilessly to stave off the 30,000 Oerdian invaders. It took two generations to back the Flan up against the Iron Hills. Okram had disappeared mysteriously, though the Oerdians proudly proclaimed him dead. His loyal grafs fought on for years, often more like guerrilla fighters than soldiers. But in the end, over half of the native Flan had died, and the rest either fled northeast or south, or stayed to be assimilated.

## Recent History

The following information is common.

The Principality of Ahlissa was until recently known as the South Province of the Great Kingdom, and much of its modern history has been defined by its relationship to the Great Kingdom. The last few overkings have granted this region to a procession of herzogs, and the people of the region were meant to be their serfs. Without fail, each herzog showed his appreciation by oppressing those under his rule, but all too often their reach exceeded their grasp. The counties of Idee, Onnwal, and Sunndi, as well as several ports on the Ahlissan Coast, have each enjoyed stints of independence of varying lengths. Autonomy is the rarest prize in this region.

In the distant past, dissatisfaction with their leaders stemmed from incompetence, but from 450 CY to the present the citizenry has had an even greater concern -- their leaders are evil. Ever since the House of Naelex ascended to the Malachite Throne, the herzogs they appointed to the South Province have been devil worshippers, many in the service of Asmodeus. The herzogs did what they could to

encourage the worship of devils and evil deities, while outlawing the worship of some of the more problematically good deities such as Pelor, Heironeous, and Pholtus.

By 576 CY, an age of heroes had begun in the land. Daring men and women who took the mantle of adventurers upon themselves rose up to do heroic deeds. Such activities tended to run counter to the herzog's wishes, and were responded to with public censure or punishment whenever circumstances permitted.

The reigning Herzog of this time was Chelor III. The Chelors were of lesser nobility, having long ago branched off from the royal house of Selor, and only came to hold the Province because Overking Ivid was mad at every other noble house. Chelor III had tried hard to break the Iron League by taking back Idee to the south. Year after year, his campaigns ended in failure. He had several factors working against him. One was that Nyron and Almor were bearing down hard on him from the north, in retaliation against the pirates that the South Province harbored and encouraged. The second problem was a streak of rebellion that had run through some of the port towns along the northern, Ahlissan Coast. Prymp, Shargallen, and the smaller towns of Porton, Dargvonesa, and Dargveto had entered into a little league of their own, and dared to claim their independence. More adventuring parties began to spring up in this region, including the famous Band of the Grinning Gargoyle. Chelor was able to squash most of this resistance in 581 CY, culminating in the Siege of Prymp. His third and greatest problem had always been the Dwur of the Iron Hills. The Dwur, guilt-stricken for not having done more to aid the Flan, vowed to protect Idee. With their ally, the Dragon of the Hills, the Dwur seemed to have no trouble in repelling the Oerdians each time they tried to move through the Ahzdunt Valley into Idee.

In 582 CY, Chelor's will was still bent southward, having broken through several lines of Idee's defenses in his most successful campaign yet. It was then that Nyron and Almor struck, marching an army south for a final reckoning with South Province to redress the piracy that had long been practiced against them. Recognizing the Thelwood as a vital resource of the province, the army mercilessly burned it down (it has been called the Bonewood since). Chelor turned north to face them too late, and would have met his utter defeat then had Ivid not dispatched forces to push the Nyronese and Almorians back home. But Ivid the Undying was not a forgiving Overking. He summoned the herzog to Rauxes to explain his

failures. Chelor did not even survive the torture he endured on the trip. Fed up with handing South Province off to yet another royal house to administer badly, Ivid sought a more radical solution. He found it in the former vizier to the herzog, the Wizard Reydrich. Reydrich was as cunning as he was ambitious. He assumed the lesser title of graf, to avoid being associated with the line of herzogs before him.

For the most part, everyday life did not change much after Graf Reydrich came to power. Though less supportive of the Church of Hextor and the Asmodeus cult in Zelradton, Reydrich is still as evil a man as any of the herzogs were -- and twice as fearful since his return from the dead (the Scarlet Brotherhood had successfully assassinated him in 585 CY). Yet the concerns of the populace have been alleviated by the absorption of Ahlissa into the United Kingdom of Ahlissa in 587 CY. Its overking, Xavener, is believed to be a good man, and the cooperation he has brought about between the royal houses has inspired optimism in the future of the kingdom.

But cooperation in the new kingdom runs only skin deep, and the politicking is subtly savage. Many are willing to shed blood in the pursuit of power, and it is even rumored (though never spoken in public) that Reydrich had a hand in an assassination attempt on Xavener in 590 CY.

When Ahlissa broke away from the sundered Great Kingdom to become its own country, its people rejoiced - but also held their breath. Citizens fearing economic change hoarded their copper pieces. But the change from a province to a principality went smoothly. It helped that rulership of Ahlissa had not actually changed hands, what with the return of Reydrich. So, while other regions of the new United Kingdom of Ahlissa are struggling with social and economic change, Ahlissa is virtually unscathed.

Urban Ahlissa, represented by its only cities - Zelradton, Prymp, and Hexpools - has undergone only superficial change. Since Overking Xavener could drop by for a visit at any time, beautification projects have been underway, such as fixing dilapidated residencies along major streets, planting trees, and the like. In the villages, though, one can still find older folk who haven't even heard that Herzog Chelor has died.

## **The Draken Pantheon, and Worship in the Principality**

The Draken Pantheon has been developed by the human denizens of the Draken Peninsula. Dwarves, gnomes, and elves had all dwelt in separate areas of the peninsula before tribes of human Flan migrated here sometime before 4970 SD (-546 CY). Three

hundred years later, the Oerdians migrated to this area and eradicated the native Flan. As was Oerdian custom, the gods of the conquered natives were adopted so as to appease them. The Oerdians continued many of the traditions of the local Flan religion, and the original Oerdian settlers would later convert migrating Oerdians. By 100 CY, the Draken Pantheon was officially adopted when the reigning Herzog of South Province converted.

The gods of the pantheon are largely agricultural, warlike, and patriarchal. Male gods lead the pantheon. Urbanization has come to the pantheon through those Oerdian gods who have been adopted into the Pantheon. The Flan gods and the Oerdian gods do not get along, but they do not war against each other, despite the atrocities committed by the Oerdians in the past. Rather, they seem content to affiliate as pleases their worshipers. Only one change has been made to the pantheon by the gods rather than the worshipers, and that was when the Flan gods asked the Baklunish goddess, Geshtai, to come join them.

Idol worship is common, with every shrine having at least one figure meant to represent the appropriate deity. Villages may have wooden idols in their shrines, while towns are more likely to have iron idols, and silver idols can be found in Prymp, Hexpools, Zelradton, and the more important temples in the countryside. The idol may have multiple faces, especially if the shrine has multiple entrances. A shrine or chapel may or may not display holy symbols upon its walls and doors, but must always have its holy symbol on a fence or wall around the holy ground.

This marks the boundary between the religious and the secular worlds, and allows the holy ground within to retain special properties, such as repelling undead, and allowing the consecration of holy water upon it. Clerics must train on this holy ground, and may only work their magics outside these grounds while on quests sanctioned by their church.

Most rural shrines are crafted from carved wood, or even made within a grove of trees. The cities and larger towns have cathedral-like churches. A temple is often devoted to a single deity, whereas a chapel or shrine (especially a shrine) may be dedicated to multiple gods. On Godsdays and other special occasions (like when a cleric is training), animal sacrifice is common. Human sacrifice is performed in the name of the evil deities.

The deities of the pantheon include, in descending order of importance, Zilchus, Pelor, Beory, Nerull, Hextor, Atroa, Pholtus, Velnius, Celestian, Ehlonna, Fharlanghn, Obad-Hai, Telchur, Heironeous, Erythnul, and Geshtai.

Further information on the pantheon itself will require more attention at a later date. What follows are some of the most important religious institutions/locations in the Principality.

The Cathedral of Kasudremes in Zelradton is led by High Priest-General Haelx of Zelradton. This Hextorite has bullied the Zilchites out of the cathedral, but embraced the Nerull sect, the Asmodeus cult, and even the occasional wandering Incabulite as hangers-on. It is truly an evil and loathsome place.

The Monastery of Alir is 54 miles west of Zelradton in a valley. It dates back to Flan days when it was dedicated to Allitur. Allitur's name has since been corrupted into a servant figure for Zilchus and Atroa, who are currently revered at the monastery. Abbot Alben Kenarov has never in his tenure been corrected by the gods, and uses that as proof in his semiannual theology debates with High Priestess Schleretha of Zilchus.

The Ovokhab Abbey is located 15 miles south of Wasdelb, the largest town in Nidlup Shire. It was founded in 582 CY by Freiherr Andel Mooriv, himself an adventuring cleric of Pholtus, who instated its first and current abbot, Simis of Wasdelb. The abbey is named for a greater servant of Pholtus who appeared as divine intervention in the Siege of Prymp. The abbey is known for its single-minded dedication to Pholtus, and the clergy here resemble the Theocracy of the Pale somewhat in their intolerance towards the worship of other gods.

The Cathedral of Farlockend in Hexpools is dedicated to the entire pantheon, but is mainly in the hands of the Zilchites and the Hextorites. High Priest Voldran Mardov is the highest-ranking cleric at the 200-year old cathedral. The cult of Farlockend -- those who believe the long-dead arch-mage was divine -- have never been allowed in the cathedral, but always have representatives nearby. There is also a separate temple of Zilchus and a chapel of Hextor, used mainly as lodgings for the respective clergymen these days.

The Cathedral of Zilchus in Prymp is the only one of its kind in the region dedicated to a single deity. Patriarch Leris Borgev is the head of the church, spiritual advisor to the military council of Prymp, and general overseer of the various chapels and shrines about Prymp dedicated to the Draken Pantheon as a whole.

The Abbey of Vargas, near Shargallen, was originally dedicated solely to Pholtus. It was through the persuasiveness of Waldgraf Vladimir Kostitov that the abbey was rededicated to both Pholtus and Pelor. Vlad's sister, the Canoness Cassandra Milnov of Pelor, has held ceremonies there since. There was a time

when the Pholtites at Vargas would have opposed such a move with bloodshed, but mutual oppression by the herzogs slowly brought the faiths closer together.

The ruins of Ethsiruganap can be found due northwest of Kalstrand across the Thelly River. Located several miles from the nearest village, the old ruins here hold the remains of one of the three lost Flan towns, and no less than 20 chapels that have long since been looted and destroyed.

There is druidism in the Principality, but it is subtle. Many farmers in the most rural areas believe they are adhering to the tenants of the Draken faith when they are in fact practicing druidism under the guidance of cunning druids. There is a relatively strong, and intentional, following in the area of Ovesho Larene, the village southeast of Trennenport. Druidism was near-rampant once around the Thelwood, but is just starting to spring up again since the forest's decimation.

## **Fighting Men in the Principality**

Although none of the Chelors were very successful on the battlefield, it cannot be argued that it was due to lack of manpower. The South Province fielded huge, well-armed forces -- sometimes leaving entire villages lying fallow behind them. This is scarcely true in the Principality today. Graf Reydrich maintains a standing army one-fifth the size of the one Chelor III mustered to battle the Iron League. Reydrich naturally has a reason to have cut his forces. The only enemy remaining is the Scarlet Brotherhood, and they are too wily to fight on the battlefield. And many other battles are fought economically today -- not against rebellious counties and enemy kingdoms, but merely trade rivals. Actually, Reydrich would have kept a larger standing army if he could, but Overking Xavener has demanded more soldiers from Ahlissa than Ivid ever did.

None of this is meant to suggest that there is no place for fighters in the Principality anymore. True, one can no longer expect to perform moderately well against the Dwur and be rewarded with a fief anymore, but there are still other opportunities.

Every city, town, or large village is required to have its own standing militia, in addition to any army troops stationed there. Reydrich has dropped the required size to five-percent of the population, rotating in new, able-bodied men every two years. In this way, all army recruits come in proficient in one or two weapons already. Smaller communities rely on training from army personnel (who must do it on their own time) or itinerant veterans. It is not unknown for

adventuring fighters to take this opportunity to earn a temporary salary as well.

In Prymp and Hexpools, the local militia is comprised of the city watchmen. The city watch patrols all of Prymp, and all of Hexpools save the Palace District. Both organizations are captained by high-level fighters, so training for adventuring fighters can be gained through them in exchange for membership (and standard fees, of course). A two-year stint in the city watch may crimp the lifestyle of the average adventurer, and yet one could also rise rapidly in the organization.

Mercenary companies are uncommon but fairly successful in the Principality. The herzogs made use of them in their desperation to break the Iron League, and they have been hired by guilds, trade companies, and even the church of Zilchus on occasion since. The largest mercenary companies are no more than a few hundred strong now, though there was a time when the largest company could fill a whole town. Also, the mercenary companies are so much more likely to use humanoid monsters, such as gnolls and ogres, that even Reydrich does not trust to employ them anymore.

The largest company remains the Thunder Dragons. They remained active on the battlefield for much of the '80s, and are only now adapting to a growing need for naval protection. The Company of the Thunder Dragons owns numerous galleys based out of Dargvonesa, Shargallen, Porton, and Prymp, and a chapter house can be found in each of those towns for company members. They are just shy of 900 members, including five ogres and two dozen gnolls. Their leader is a battle-scarred, peg-legged fighter named Ferened, recognized as a superhero by those loyal to him.

The second largest company is called the Flaming Arrow. The Flaming Arrow Company had a dramatic change in personnel in 586 when its leader was slain in a duel with Lemunda the Lovely, a champion as renowned for her sword arm as for her beauty. Under Lemunda's guidance, the company has set itself up as the protectors of the Dunhead Coast in case the Scarlet Brotherhood ever launches an invasion. Reydrich has not been as forthcoming in funding the company as Lemunda expected, and she has had to turn her back to the now-common practice of shaking down villages near the coast for protection money, as it were. There are roughly 400 members, including two score hobgoblins.

Members of these mercenary companies may go their own way so long as they tithe monthly to the

company. In return, members have access to armorers, weaponsmiths, and trainers.

The ablest of fighters are highly sought after by the various lairds and grafs of the Principality -- not just for war -- but for tournament. With an annual tournament in Vecheld Gesto and a triennial tournament held in Ethirugana, there is opportunity to win much fame at the expense of little blood.

Sometimes, a fighter down on his luck will take his chances in the arena at Zelradton. Though nowhere near as impressive as Jalpa's famous arena, the one in Zelradton can still seat an audience of 2,000 people, and has a reputation for posting good odds against free fighters who just want a shot at fame in the ring. Bears, boars, bulls, and the occasionally rare monster can be hurled into the arena on short notice.

Rangers have been nearly unheard of in the Principality for the last five years. It is not hard to learn that Burggraf Noldar Half-Elven of Namithki had once been a ranger, though he renounced his rangerhood to settle in a tiny, impoverished village near the Bonewood and set up a chapel to Ehlonna there. It is rumored that other adventuring bands of old -- the Ahlissan Fist and the Hexpools Defenders -- possessed rangers amongst them, but their members seem to have long since moved on.

For all the South Province's reputation for having been an evil place (which is still mostly true), there have always been a fair number of paladins here. Every cathedral, abbey, and large chapel has at least one paladin sworn to defend it. Most are loyal to Heironeous, a relatively minor god in the Draken Pantheon, and it has always been a constant struggle for the clergy to keep the paladins in check and not out crusading against the evils in the land. Hexpools has the greatest number of paladins -- indeed, a small order of them -- this side of Rel Deven and Kalstrand.

### **Magic in the Principality**

The Principality of Ahlissa remains a fairly magic-poor region of the Flanaess. Some towns have no more than a hedge wizard or two living there, and the smallest towns may even lack that. That said, the number of magic-users in a given location is always subject to change. The Provincial Army has long kept its squads of invocers mobile, and wandering magicians will seek out new apprentices as they travel through the Principality.

Astivokharoy Ganor has the highest population density of magic-users in the Principality due to the presence of the Invocation College outside the town. The walled compound of the college is almost the size of a village in its own right, and is well-defended by

elite troops. There may be up to 75 apprentice students at a time, half of whom came voluntarily and the other half were forced to attend to represent their village (there is a generous, one-year tax break for villages which do so). One in five may return for a second training. One in ten may return for a third. Out of the staff of 25 that runs the college, half of them are mid- to high-level faculty. The college is currently run by only its fifth chief administrator in its 240-year history. Corvoruvius Talax is one of the most powerful invocers in the Principality but, at the age of 89, hasn't seen a battlefield in many years. The arcane secrets locked away in his still-lucid mind are considered a national treasure.

Hexpools enjoys the greatest diversity of magic-users in the Principality. Magicians' Lane, near Fountain Square, is famous for its row of magic shops. In these shops, diviners, enchanters, and transmuters cast spells for a large fee. The most successful amongst them has long been Taldar the Diviner. Transmuters in particular were en vogue amongst the elite of Hexpools from fifteen to five years ago. At the time, all the idle rich were employing transmuters in the belief that transmuters could turn ordinary objects into gold. Disillusionment soon led to unemployment, and there remain quite a few irate transmuters drinking cheap beer in Hexpools' taverns and complaining to any who will listen. With leadership and a goal to work towards, the transmuters would make a powerful guild.

Zelradton is home, of course, to Reydrich himself. The Supreme Graf of the Principality balances civic duty with mentoring his apprentices. He keeps a large class, but sees to it that none of them become too powerful. He has learned from the mistakes of the past, and his treacherous apprentice, Tarrak. At least one invoker squad is always present in the city. Their commander is Allanon Damios, a war wizard who flirted in his youth with an adventuring career. Though he has a soft spot in his heart for other magic-users who take up adventuring, his reputation is mainly that of a harsh taskmaster. Naturally, Reydrich expects no less of him. Reydrich also has a council of diviners to advise him, though for the past few years they have mostly sat idle and wondered why Reydrich does not confer with them more often.

Along the Ahlissan Coast, near Porton, sits Skull Keep -- or what remains of it. These impressive ruins are the entrance to a dungeon complex that has become the permanent home of Waldgraf Vladamir Kostitov, the highest-ranking nobleman with the smallest plot of land. Indeed, Vladamir turned down finer holdings to the south and east in exchange for

Skull Keep and its inland environs for a three-mile radius. It is from here that Vladamir runs a powerful cabal of illusionists. His spies are said to be everywhere, some lurking invisibly. He had an intense hatred of the last Herzog Chelor, and keeps a keen eye on the nobility to make sure no noble house becomes so powerful in the Principality again.

Last, but not least, no discussion of magic-users in the Principality of Ahlissa can be complete without mention of the most renowned, the most well-traveled, and the most dangerous mage of them all -- Eneever Zig. Eneever returned several years ago from Castle Greyhawk more powerful than ever, or so he brags to all he meets. Much to Reydrich's chagrin, Eneever has set himself up in a tower outside Zelradton that once belonged to Astigarus -- Reydrich's deceased mentor. An attempt to evict Zig was answered with a chain lightning spell that decimated two units of elite guardsmen. Reydrich has made no move against him since, and it seems that even the Supreme Graf now fears Zig's power.

## **Thievery, and the Laws of the Principality**

The lot of a thief under the herzogs was not altogether bad. True, death awaited the lone rogues and the unsuccessful bandits, but the Chelors rewarded successful thievery by absorbing them into the military. Brigands were often made into soldiers, and the navy that plied Relmor Bay was almost exclusively pirates. Things became increasingly difficult with the rise of so many adventuring parties circa 580 CY as, with many of these bands, brigands or pirates were their first targets. The infamous pirate/privateer Beregun Renspa met his demise at the hands of the Band of the Grinning Gargoyle around that time. That same group went on to ruin the thieves' guild in Prymp, and had a hand in the eventual downfall of the thieves' guild in Hexpools.

Into this power vacuum came a young but fast-climbing thief named Mikhail Levinksya. He was at one time a member of the Band of the Grinning Gargoyle, and used his position there to learn much about the thieves' guilds that were squashed. Those that escaped the wrath of adventuring parties were surreptitiously contacted by Mikhail and offered membership in a new, even more shadowy organization. This new thieves' guild stretches from Prymp to Hexpools, and is even more secretive and clandestine than its predecessors. Membership is tightly controlled, and "awarded" by a ritualistic indoctrination. Indeed, the cult-like aspects of the



“Shadow Guild,” as it is called in whispers, were intentional to produce high morale.

Zelradton has always had a thieves’ guild of a different sort -- a spy network that has worked for Reydrich longer than he has been graf. The Guild of Midnight Darkness is down to a lean, efficient, 11-member team -- but they are all high-level thieves, and probably the highest in the Principality.

And then there are the freedom fighters. Adventuring parties with noble intentions are often quickly squashed. Yet, there is a secret society known as the Flying Turtle Guild that has harried those in power for eleven years now. The guild members are almost predominately from the Ahlissan Coast, but they have spread far and wide to escape the easy capture of many members. Some of the highest ranking members have even had to flee to Nyron and coordinate efforts from there. There are several plans afoot to depose various noblemen in the Principality, but these plans are developing slowly to avoid detection.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to the Principality to present the laws in detail. The laws themselves are written laws, scribed by hand in blood on sheets of parchment, bound in thick books, and kept under lock and key in a tower in Zelradton. Any nobleman is entitled to have copies of the laws made and delivered to him, at his own expense. Reydrich is empowered to change laws or add new ones as needed, which can only be checked by the overking or four or more landgrafs working in unison. Likewise, any laws of the United Kingdom of Ahlissa take precedence in the Principality of Ahlissa unless a law at the Principality level is written to supercede it (an action seldom taken against the powerful overking).

The laws are full of little things that could trip up careless or ignorant visitors to the Principality (and everyone but the nobles and the Church of the Draken Pantheon are ignorant). Destroying a flag of the Principality is punishable by public flogging. Arms and armor are not to be worn or carried in the villages except by the militias or soldiery (the lower class is sent to the stocks for it, and the middle class is fined). Traveling cross-country is punishable by a hefty fine if the toll roads are not taken. Slavery is legal, and people may be bought and sold to settle debts. In general, it is legal for anyone to kill anyone of a lower class than themselves. There may only be a heavy fine for killing someone of the same social class. Killing someone of a higher class is, of course, treason and punishable by gruesome death.

## **Adventure in the Principality**

True, the Principality of Ahlissa is not the safest place to travel in the Flanaess, but danger is the meat on which adventurers feast. There are everyday adventures, location-specific adventures, and epic adventures to be had here.

Everyday adventures can be easily had, just because evil is fairly commonplace in the Principality. That clerk may seem friendly and honest, but there’s always the chance that he has a virgin tied up in the backroom and plans to sacrifice her to Asmodeus. Poverty is a constant burden on the lowly peasants, who sometimes choose banditry as an alternative lifestyle. The rulers are most often vile men who would rather rob a band of adventurers blind and force them into slavery than hire them to perform good deeds.

And yet there are locations that call out their need for adventurers. The four dungeon levels beneath Skull Keep, near the town of Porton, have long since been cleared out by adventurers. And yet, Waldgraf Vladimir Kostitov continues to have problems every so often with monsters that come through the portal on the lowest, partially-submerged level.

Near the town of Arogaz Avon are the ruins of an Eiger steading, destroyed some years back by adventurers. Since then, the dungeon level beneath the steading has become the home of ghouls and ghosts. The town itself is well-defended with high, heavy walls, but travel to and from the city is always endangered.

In the Hollow Highlands, near Hexpools, the insane bard Dage maintains a dungeon for his menagerie of monsters. Every year or so, he abducts random people -- thinking they are his friends from years back who “betrayed” him -- and casts them into his dungeon for revenge.

Farther from Hexpools are the Calling Mines. These mines were never shut down despite the fears of it being haunted because so much silver remained inside. In 589 CY, a reason for the “callings” might have finally been found -- a creature identified as a dark creeper was finally captured in one of the lower mining areas.

In Vidvolp County is Castle Grimuadar -- current seat of the county’s landgraf, but had also belonged to his villainous father. Lycanthropes and worse things have been locked away over the decades in the dungeons under that castle -- a mounting problem that will need to be dealt with decisively someday.

In the Iron Hills there stands a hall built by a tribe of minotaurs. The minotaurs once served Chelor III briefly, but retired back into the hills over differences

with Reydrich. While not a threat to the Principality at large, they do make travel into the Iron Hills -- and logging enterprises in particular -- extremely dangerous. There was once a subterranean pass, made by the Dwur, under the Iron Hills that connected Ahlissa to Idee. That pass has long since been abandoned, and may hold worse than minotaurs inside it now.

At the tip of White Fang Cape is Icespire -- an ancient lighthouse buried in the ice and snow that lies spread over the entire cape. Beneath Icespire are glacial caverns once populated by the Children of Telchur (yeti). Most of them have perished at the hands of adventuring parties over the years, but the devils that lurk in the lower caverns have always caused such would-be heroes to flee or perish.

And those are just the locales that people know about. There is also the near-mythical Bronze Fortress that changes location on the whims of its unknown master(s). And there is the Fountain of Health that is believed to be somewhere in the Principality, but has never been located. Most mythical of all, it is sung in old songs that Queen Ehlissa's silver palace still exists as it did of old, and all its denizens slumber and wait to be awakened.

For those looking for long-term adventures in the Principality, there are several paths to follow. Adventurers can easily get caught up in the politics of the region. Even a seemingly simple quest like finding and slaying evil priests is complicated by how well-connected the evil priests of the Principality are. The adventurers may be looking to thwart the Hextorite tending his foul deity's public shrine, the local waldgraf who is taking in slaves transported from Almor, or even looking to remove Reydrich himself from office. All these things require careful plotting and scheming, and not just the use of swords and spells. At the other extreme, adventurers could spend their lifetimes making contacts and gaining favors from those in power here. Much has already been said about where those of various classes could find favor or success in the Principality. Though there are no organizations for bards, monks, or the other rarer classes, that very rarity might make them the prized agents of some local laird.

For more epic quests, there is the pursuit of the Fountain of Health. The ancient laird of Hexpools has long offered a huge reward for its discovery. The druids in this region believe the waters of the fountain could be used to restore the Bonewood. The reforestation of the Principality is itself a worthy goal that would benefit all. The transportation of lumber across the Principality is costly and time-consuming. Adventurers would have to travel far and wide to find a solution; perhaps even through time to a past when the Thelwood was vast, and Olven and Flannae druids knew secrets that could restore the Thelwood to life.

An even more unusual tact for an epic adventure would be to restore the Principality to the Flan. It may be slightly less impossible than it would seem, for the last Flannae herzog of Ahlissa slumbers in a crypt under Icespire, long since protected by a divine pact between Beory and Telchur. That herzog, if awakened by powerful magic, knows the secret location of Queen Ehlissa's Marvelous Nightingale. And if the Nightingale were to sing again in the lands of Ahlissa, then Ehlissa's silver palace would reappear and the queen of old and her castle full of loyal retainers would stir again. Any attempt to return Queen Ehlissa would attract the attention of her old nemesis, Acererak, and that insidious horror has never entirely turned his gaze away from her lands.

## Epilogue

Since Gary Gygax first wrote the entry for South Province in the 1980 Greyhawk Folio, relatively little attention has been paid to it by its copyright holders. Carl Sargent's Ivid the Undying certainly gave much more detail than there had been, but even those pages were insufficient for running a full-fledged campaign. Later, the official Greyhawk timeline was moved up to 591 CY, and much of what was written about South Province was suddenly obsolete.

While I make no pretension that this work is any more a complete campaign guide to the Principality of Ahlissa than earlier efforts, this article may ignite new interest in the region, and hopefully inspire a new campaign or two.

# The Study

## Knights of the Golden Dawn

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By Chris Anderson

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The Mage, for such he appears to be, sits in an overstuffed chair raised up on a dais. Around him are the papers and paraphernalia of one deep in the study of the Art. Wands, leaning against a corner. Skulls, of varying types and races, scattered on benches and tables. Stacks of tomes and folios of paper are piled haphazardly, leaning this way and that, ready to fall. In front of him, though, a long and wide table is in perfect order. On it is a miniature model of the Flanaess, in perfect detail. It appears real: the mountains poking above the surface, the rivers slowly flowing down to the Nyr Dyv, clouds floating across the surface, ships slowly moving across the waters.

The Mage stares at the map, his eyes rapt with attention. Those eyes... genius lurks there, tinged with madness. They are eyes that would chill the soul of one who saw them. They are the eyes of one who would stop at nothing to achieve his purposes.

Suddenly, the Mage stiffens and leans forward. On the map, near the Kron Hills, a tiny shadow helix has formed...slowly it turns and twists before fading away.

Consternation ripples across the Mage's face. He had not expected this... what could it mean? Ah yes, wasn't that where the Temple lay? Perhaps old evils were stirring there. Or new ones? Hard to say... still, his plans were laid. Best to seek it out and determine if this was a threat. He began to turn to a crystal ball, but then stopped, pondering for a moment.

Did it matter? Truly, events were in motion. Did this matter?

A wave of his hand and a spoken Word -- glowing points of light filled the map. The golden points represented those who followed Weal; the dark, those who worshipped Woe; the blue, those who served the Balance.

Dark points surrounded where the helix had formed. Too many to count. Some larger, some smaller. Another muttered Word. Most of the glowing points faded out, leaving just a few of each type. Only a few near the helix...those he knew. But

this was new...a new darkness forming? Too powerful and too sudden to be native. It had to come from elsewhere.

The Mage continued to stare, his gaze widening to take in nearby lands. A golden force was in the Gnarley Wood, surrounded by powerful dark areas. One point of darkness was greater than all the rest, and the golden points of light appeared to be retreating from it. There was another point of light... blinding in its power...south of this conflict and not yet part of it.

To the north, more golden dots coming south to the aid of their beleaguered fellows. He touched one, more powerful than the others, and an image filled his mind of a sad cleric of Heironeous. An abbot, leading forces south. He removed his finger, and the image faded.

All this was good. Not, perhaps, precisely the way he had envisioned it. But part of the overall whole.

The Mage returned his attention to the area near the Temple. That black point...it threatened things. Tipped the Balance too far. It was the glue that could join the dark points near the Temple to the darkness in the Gnarley Wood. It seemed a hair too much. Balance was important, not darkness or light. Balance. This point upset the Balance.

Resolved, he put his finger on a dimly glowing point of light, far away to the south. An image appeared...a warrior, armored in golden chain mail of a very antique style, wielding swords in either hand. He was dancing a sword dance, lost in a complex series of attacks and defenses against a slowly dropping ribbon of silk, waving in the wind. The warrior spoke, "Bide a moment". The Mage waited.

Half an hour later, the dance was finished, and the ribbon lay separated into its own threads on the floor. The warrior turned and asked, "Yes?"

"I need you. Evil stirs to the north."

"What evil?"

"A drow. He threatens Celene."

"What is Celene, again? You know I don't keep up with current affairs."

The Mage sighed. "Celene is the last bastion of your people after they were destroyed by Vecna"

"Vecna. Yes. I should have taken part in that war, in retrospect. It seemed so...unimportant...at the time."

"Perhaps so. Yet, the cities of the Olve were completely destroyed. Your fellow Knights were slain as well. The Knights of the Golden Dawn could have prevented that, methinks, had they all mustered rather than just Sir Eliador and Sir Barien."

Drawing himself up, the warrior spoke frostily, "And who are you to judge me? I fought in the Great Wars against Gods and Darkness. My vigil is eternal, whereas you are merely the newest in a long series of those who think they are powerful. This audience is ended."

And with that, the image faded. The Mage bowed his head and sighed in frustration. Fools, who did not realize that they had left the stage of events. So caught up in their dreams and memories that they could not act if a sword was falling on their head.

Raising his head again, the Mage stared at the map. Perhaps someone else... yes, perhaps so. There was one. And no matter the outcome, Balance would be served. He reached forth a finger to a dimly lit glowing point of light and an image formed: this time, it was a bent and gnarled human, crouched over a large tome. He looked up, aged face flickering in the lamplight.

Speaking in a thin, reedy, voice, "Yes? Who calls?"

"Mordenkainen. I have need of you, old one."

"Me? For what?"

"An Evil has arisen that needs to be laid to rest. Drow, most malign."

"Is there none other who can serve? I am ... ill..."

"Only you possess the power to confront this one. He is beyond my feeble skills"

"Surely you jest. I had heard that you had grown mighty amongst mages"

"Nevertheless"

"Why do you tell me this? You only serve your own purposes, not that of Weal."

The Mage smiled coldly, "This time, our purposes align. Still, if you are too aged to take up the challenge, I could always ask your daughter. I am sure that she would be eager for the opportunity."

"No! You would not do that! My daughter is no match for the drow."

"Nevertheless. Such would be my next act. You have other children as well. I need your answer, old one."

The aged face fell, grief-stricken and full of fear, yet bowing to the inevitable. In a whisper, "Yes, I will serve, curse you."

Smiling, "Good. I shall send you particulars. Welcome back to the lists, old one."

The aged face stared, doggedly, at his tome and refused to answer.

And with that, the Mage removed his finger from the map, well pleased.

## Character Guide

As an aid, here are the descriptions and stats of the characters in this vignette.

**The Mage:** Mordenkainen, obviously. The timeframe for this scene takes place in 581, just prior to the Greyhawk Wars. At this time, Mordenkainen is actively monitoring the Balance of the Flanaess, and intervening regularly to shape events to his liking.

**The Drow:** At this point, little is known of this personage. His purposes and his name are clouded. Rarely do the drow come to the surface world to meddle in the affairs of the Flanaess, and this alone explains Mordenkainen's concern. From a game standpoint, the drow is an accomplished 14<sup>th</sup> level necromancer.

**The Knight:** The Knight is Sir Delius, one of the younger members of an olven order of knights known as "The Knights of the Golden Dawn".

**The Old Mage:** Aristocles, once one of the great practitioners of the Art who served the Court of Keoland. Illness and age have eroded his skills. He has three children: the eldest, a daughter who serves as a paladin of Heironeous; a middle son who makes his living as a furrier and trapper in the Jotens, and a younger son, who is an apprentice to the High Court Wizard of Keoland. At this time in his life, Aristocles has the spellcasting ability of a 13<sup>th</sup> level wizard.

## The Knights of the Golden Dawn

Many are the legends of this fabled Order of Elven Champions. It is said that the Knights stood at the side of Corellon Larethian when he battled Gruumsh in Elder Days. It is certain that they mustered in both the Battle of Law against Chaos on the field of Pesh and in the Wars Against the Drow. Mighty in both magic and war, their deeds are the stuff of songs and legends amongst the olve. They are the guardians of all that is Faerie.

Corellon Larethian blesses the Knights with life and vigor undying, so long as they wish to remain in the world. When the time comes for them to lay down their shield and sword, they simply vanish on the wind. Bards sing of a palace in the forest of Arvandor that holds the Knights and their entourage for all eternity.

During their time in the world, the Knights are commanded to perfect their art and craft to levels undreamed of by mortals. It is told that a single Knight may battle against a thousand opponents and hold the field. In all aspects of martial valor, they are paragons.

There are few Knights in the world, however. Many have chosen to lay down their shield and sword over the ages, and their numbers are not replenished easily. Few olve have the gifts to be considered as a potential Knight, and fewer still can reach the levels of skill necessary to be inducted into the Order. As the Knights dwindle, so do the Squires and Pages from whom their replacements are drawn.

Those Knights left in the world continue their ceaseless pursuit of perfection in the martial arts. This is an all-consuming passion that leaves little time for the affairs of the outside world, and so most Knights are unaware of the history and condition of even their own people. Against the battles of yore, the trials and concerns of present day seem to be petty things, not worthy of a Knights' attention.

It is said, that the last time that the Knights were called to muster was against the human arch-mage Vecna. Only two considered the war to be important enough to sally forth, and they were slain by the overpowering magic of the invader. That the olve were defeated, their cities destroyed and their people driven into hiding was not noticed by the remaining Knights.

Yet, still the Knights train in their isolated castles. One day again, the trumpets of the olve will call them forth, and when they ride, the world will shake beneath the hooves of their steeds.

From a game play standpoint, the Knights are a *deus ex machina* that should rarely be invoked by the DM. Consider them to have access to any power or magic item that exists, saving only artifacts that have been already placed. Although, the world has passed them by, the monarchs and nobility of the olve both respect and are in awe of the Knights. They will receive any aid for which they ask or demand, no matter what the cost.

There are perhaps a dozen or so Knights still in the world. Each has anywhere from 1-3 Squires – powerful warriors and magi that seek to become a Knight. A Squire is a champion with the audacity to seek the greatest honor an olven warrior can achieve – entry into the Order of Knights. They are lords and heroes in their own rights, with full access to their lands and forces. Squires range in level from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, with attendant magic items and weaponry.

Each Squire commands the services of 1-4 Pages. A Page is an olven warrior or mage that seeks to be inducted as a Squire, but does not have the reputation or renown to gain the notice of a Knight. It is also possible that a Knight simply does not wish to have any more Squires, and so a champion must serve as a Page until room is available for him. Pages usually

range in level from 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, with access to all lands and wealth.

In the last millennium, since the Wars of Vecna, three Squires have been inducted into the Order of the Knights, and some 8-10 Pages have been added to their forces. It is not expected that any more Knights will be inducted until one or more existing Knights lays down their sword and shield.

Knights of the Order are very difficult to kill, since the blessing of Corellon Larethian infuses their bodies. Knights, Squires, and Pages do not age so long as they are part of the Order. If they ever leave the Order, they will begin to age normally. No sickness can touch them, and they heal wounds very quickly with rest – consider them to have a natural regeneration ability of 1hp/turn that will heal even wounds made by fire or acid.

Even cutting a Knights body apart and scattering the remains will not truly slay them, since they will regenerate back from the largest portion left. It is said that fell magic is required to truly slay a Knight, but what that magic may be is unknown. The last Knights to fall in battle were Sir Eliador and Sir Barien, who fought and fell in the war against Vecna. They were truly slain, and it is said that their spirits did not come to rest in Arvandor. How Vecna accomplished this remains a mystery to present day.

## **An Average Knight**

Sir Delius can be considered to be an average Knight of the Order. Although young, he served as a Squire for nearly two millennia before being inducted into the Order as a replacement for a Knight who laid down his sword and shield a few hundred years before the fall of the Suel Imperium. Sir Delius has worked hard to gain the recognition he seeks from the elder Knights of the Order.

Sir Delius considers himself to be a master in the use of slashing weapons. Although he has proficiency in all weapons known in the Flanaess, he gains an automatic +3/+3 to hit and damage with any slashing weapon, as well as improving his AC by +3 for each slashing weapon that he wields. When using a slashing weapon, Sir Delius gains two additional attacks per round, and has no penalties for dual wielding. Normal penalties apply if Sir Delius uses a non-slashing weapon.

Sir Delius maintains a small keep in the southern eaves of the Suss Forest. His needs are few, and the dark twisted majesty of the forest appeals to him. So long as he can perform his torturous practice sessions each day in peace, he is content.

His Squires and Pages, however, are less content. They see the changes over the last few centuries that have taken place in the Forest, and suspect that fell forces now work in the southern Suss Forest. Even though Sir Delius requires constant training sessions from them, a few have taken to patrolling the area near the castle during their rest periods. What they see troubles them.

From the perspective of Sir Delius, a few orcs more or less in the world is unimportant, and the concerns of his Squires and Pages detract from their real duties – preparing for the next great conflict that requires the services of the Knights. He has been contemplating a sharp increase in their training sessions, to take their minds off of the outside world, for the last dozen years or so. He hesitates only because it would reduce the amount of time that he spends in his own training. The matter requires more thought.

In the meantime, Sir Delius has been pondering the replacement of his aging steed, a huge war griffon. Even with longevity potions, the beast is not sufficient for the needs of a Knight, and he has sent to several other Knights to see if any of them have young replacement steeds. Sometime over the last two centuries, his breeding stock has dwindled to nothing. If no answer comes in the next decade, then Sir Delius will arrange for a hunting expedition to either the Yatil or Griff mountains to capture new breeding stock and replenish his stables. The exercise will do his Squires and Pages good.

In general, Sir Delius is a considerate and attentive Knight. He is resolute in his determination to field a superbly trained and equipped force in the next conflict in which he takes part. He takes his responsibility of being a guardian of the olven race seriously, and every century or two, will tour the courts of the olve to learn of their lives and troubles. He tries hard to maintain good relations with other Knights, and regularly solicits their advice and counsel.

His peers consider him to be a touch hyperactive and overeager, but they expect him to settle down in a millennia or two.

# Keoland

## The Geopolitical History of Keoland

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By Kirt Wackford

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### Part I: Petty States and Proto-Nations

#### Author's Forward

I wrote the first edition of "A Geopolitical History of Keoland" in 1996. At the time, canon information included many hints about the history of the Sheldomar Valley, but few definitive names or dates. I was relatively free to develop vast aspects of the history and have them conform to my own views. For extra-canon resources, I relied heavily on the personal works of Joe Katzman and other authors on "The Citadel." I was also influenced by the Sheldomar history developed by Scott Rennie.

Such a vast work, covering a quarter of a continent and over a thousand years of history required a unifying theme to tie it all together. I chose the Suel identity. My thesis was that the Suel belief in their cultural superiority explained most of the history of the Sheldomar. Furthermore, I proposed that this belief had changed over the centuries. What began as a lofty ideal of *noblesse oblige* was slowly corrupted into a justification for imperialism and conquest. This corruption, along with the gradual loss of purity in the motives of the good Neheli and Rhola, provided the drama of my work. Since I wrote the first edition of the "History", there have been major additions to the Greyhawk canon. *The Adventure Begins!* changed little, but the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* added many dates to existing history and invented new history. The *Living Greyhawk Journal* articles have added further details, such as names and dates for every King of Keoland. The *Living Greyhawk* Campaign Triads have introduced new material as well. One purpose of this work is to bring my history up to date, to revise it so that it conforms to the new canon and Campaign information. As a secondary goal, I occasionally critique the new canon,

showing where I think it is in contradiction to what was published before. I do include some references to the fanon that I am familiar with, but I have not tried to be thorough or comprehensive in my inclusion of fanon. Mostly this is because of the research effort involved. My last check on Canonfire!, for example, turned up over 100 article hits when I searched on Keoland! This is just one site in the vast expanse of the Web.

The new official canon has added something more important than mere facts, however. The whole approach to history has changed. Acting on the view that the history as given in the *World of Greyhawk* was written "in-character", the new canon questions the goodness of the early houses of Neheli and Rhola. The new canon is based on the idea that human nature does not change drastically, and purports that the early Neheli and Rhola were not much better than the other Suel houses. The primary difference is that these houses "won" the Sheldomar, and, as they say, "history is written by the victors."

If my personal view may be called "Romanticism", the new *Living Greyhawk* view is "Realpolitik". In the opinion of LGG and LGJ author Gary Holian and former Keoland Triad member Sam Weiss, the Neheli and Rhola arrived in the Sheldomar, conquered and slaughtered the native Flan, and made a pact with the Empire of Vecna. These authors attribute the fabled goodness of the early Neheli and Rhola to royal propaganda, not truth. The drama of this view is provided by the actions of the PC's in a campaign setting. They slowly discover the dirty, secret history behind the benevolent, official façade, with an air of morbid revelation.

Both views, romantic and realpolitik, have resonance, and either could serve a DM well. This second edition of my

history provides a basis for either view. In the main text I persist in presenting the romantic version of fallen nobility. Those DM's who wish to use this perspective may take the main text at face value. In the footnotes I point out the harsh "truth" behind the pleasant fables. Those DM's who favor realpolitik can use the footnotes to guide them, while treating the main text as the "common myth" with which PC's begin their careers. In this case, the main text is not exactly the official story of the Sheldomar, but is what would be "known" by naïve historians and sages. The real version of events, as contained in the footnotes, would be known to only a few, such as the Silent Ones.

From the romantic view, the main text accurately describes the steady decay in the originally lofty Suel values. From the realpolitik view, the main text grows more accurate as it progresses. While starting with an impossibly fabulistic version of the arrival of the Twelve Suel Houses, it eventually arrives at a relatively unbiased account of the Hateful Wars. This increasing veracity is a reflection of the loss of control of the Keoish monarchs over the content of history. The Lion Throne greatly distorted distant history in its national interest. As centuries wore on, however, the increasing population, complexity, factionalism, and international contacts of Keoland have all diluted monarchical control of historical accounts. Thus the history itself has become more accurate and more critical of the monarchy as time has gone on.

Whatever your perspective, I sincerely hope that you enjoy my contribution to the "Geopolitical History of the Sheldomar".

Kirt WackfordTibás, Costa Rica January 2005

## Prologue – The Suel Identity

What was behind the unparalleled success of the Keoish monarchs? What driving force transformed a few hundred horsemen guarding rice fields into a single nation dominating a quarter of the Flanaess? The Keoish expansion was, remarkably, accomplished through the willing incorporation of disparate peoples into the Kingdom, not by their conquest. In fact, all Keoish attempts at conquest have ultimately ended in failure. The growth of the Kingdom has come from people seeking to join, not from their being forced to submit. What lies behind this remarkable history?

To answer these questions, one must understand and appreciate the Suel identity. The Suel had a strong and unyielding belief in the superiority of their culture over those of all other humans. The Suel firmly believed themselves to be the most civilized, most advanced race of men. In art, technology, magic, dress, manners, government, and a thousand other things, they considered the Oerid, Baklun, and Flan to be inferior to the glory that was the Suel (1). This belief was universal, held by all Suel, but it has shaped the behavior and fates of the different Suel groups of refugees in different ways.

The majority of the Suel migrants, both before and after the Rain of Colorless Fire, were neutral wanderers, opportunistic nomads. Their superiority, they believed, gave them moral license to treat non-Suel in any manner they wished. These Suel lied, cheated, stole, and enslaved others for the simple reason that non-Suel, as inferior beings, deserved no better treatment (2). Although they did not treat their own people thus, the ill treatment of non-Suel was believed to be of no more moral consequence than the exploitation of animals.

Evil Suel took this notion even further. As a superior race, they believed that they were destined to be the masters of the world. All inferior races owed them obedience. Deliberately cruel deeds were not only acceptable; they were believed to be a necessary precursor to the subordination of others (3). The group calling itself the Scarlet Brotherhood exemplifies the evil Suel. The Brotherhood has worked ceaselessly for the global domination they believe is their due. To this end, any means are acceptable - and are used - against all who oppose them, even other Suel (4).

Good Suel, such as the houses of Rhola and Neheli (5, but see 6), also believed in the absolute superiority of the Suel culture. But for them, this superiority came with responsibilities. As a superior race, they held themselves to a higher moral standard than they used for others.

Although condescending, they were always fair and honest in their dealings, even self-sacrificing. How could they display their superiority, if not through their unimpeachable honor? The good Suel considered it their



duty to help the other races of humanity live in a civilized manner, by giving them the fruits of "Suel Culture". Active conquest was not deemed necessary to spread enlightenment to the barbaric east - the Suel needed only to defend themselves, and the other races would eventually recognize Suel superiority. Doing so, the inferior races would then pledge loyalty and ask for assistance, at which point the Suel were obligated to instruct, protect, and defend them, all for the glory of the Suel culture (7).

Of course, no group of people is entirely of one alignment or outlook, including no group of Suel (with the possible exception of the fanatical Scarlet Brotherhood). While the houses of Neheli and Rhola, and the later monarchs and nobles of Keoland, were by and large good, many individuals within them were more neutral or even evil. Evil lies within the potential of all men, waiting for the right conditions to express itself. Many individuals embraced evil during Keoland's imperialist times. But the evil goals they strove for (conquest and domination), and the reasons they gave to justify their actions (national and cultural superiority), did not arise from nowhere. They were simply the dark side of the traditional Suel values that had ennobled many others of their brethren. This is why it is essential to understand the Suel viewpoint, for it has informed all of their descendants, whether good, neutral, or evil.

When the Neheli and Rhola first came to the Sheldomar Valley and made a place for themselves, the indigenous Flan were impressed with their honesty, generosity, and technology (8). When desperate Flan refugees sought their protection, the Suel took them on as subject people to be aided and trained, not exploited. The Suel rule was fair and capable, and in those troubled times many Flan came to their banners. Eventually, other Suel and Oerid migrants were incorporated into the young states, and the Suel rulers treated them justly, without permitting them to abuse one another. Thus the good Suel states grew through a policy of benevolent treatment of all their subjects, while this policy was based on a philosophy of the obligations of a superior race and culture.

Many tribes joined these early Suel states solely for the benefits they offered, but quickly learned to work harmoniously with other tribes and cultures. When a good Suel state was attacked, its neighbors joined it in mutual defense. In so doing, the good Suel soundly defeated their independent attackers, who either withdrew, or surrendered and joined the growing states.

Unlike neutral or evil Suel, the good Suel houses could acknowledge the worth of demi-human cultures without threatening their own identity. The non-human nature of demi-humans meant that the good Suel could treat them as equals, at least the dwarves and elves (less so gnomes and halflings, as they were believed to be less cultured). Thus,

demi-humans living within the new Suel nations were invited to make alliances as equals, for trade and mutual protection (9). When Keoland emerged as a significant power, it assumed that the duty of protection fell mostly to it, and regularly sent troops to defend the demi-human states on its periphery. In return it asked only for fair trade and honest friendship.

The good Suel were also appalled by the employment of humanoids as mercenaries by the other Suel (10). To the good Suel, humanoids were the lowest forms of life, and could only sully and corrupt all who dealt with them. In particular, the good Suel believed that the use of humanoid mercenaries had been the harbinger of the end of the Suel Imperium. The good houses waged unceasing war upon humanoids, which helped them gain the acceptance of demi-humans and the Flan.

Through the centuries, the Suel intermarried with Flan and Oerid, improving the bloodlines of the inferior races (from the perspective of the Suel, at least). In time the idea of the cultural superiority of the Suel passed, for no distinctly Suel culture remained. The legacy of Suel ideas became an equally strong belief in the superiority of the nascent nation of Keoland. As the oldest modern nation, the Keoish held themselves to be the most civilized and socially advanced state in all the Flanaess (11).

Under the enlightened rule of the new Keoish monarchs, the country grew and prospered. The Sterish, the Ulek States, and many of the tribes of Gran March and Bissel willingly joined the Kingdom. This gradual expansion was halted in the 4th century CY when Keoland had grown to border Ket and Veluna. For the first time in its long history, Keoland faced not scattered, independent tribes but united, powerful nations. These nations, one Baklunish, one Oeridian, did not acknowledge, and in fact emphatically rejected, the claims of Keoish cultural superiority. Rather than reassess their identity or question their central truths, the Keoish spent a century at war to prove their superiority, as much to themselves as to the other nations. The resulting external failures and internal disillusionment tore the nation apart, though it was many years before a monarch emerged with the wisdom to see the new reality. He led the Keoish bravely into peace, and they have continued to reassess themselves ever since.

For a time the nation, shed of its dependencies, held fast - secure in its renewed goodness and content to let others work out their destinies on their own. The Kings and the people had given up the idea of a continually expanding Keoland, always generously extending the benefits of its rule to others. Now aid was given more pragmatically. It was, to be sure, good faith assistance. But now it was given only when advantageous to Keoland. Thus when Belvor IV of Furyondy called for Keoish assistance at the beginning of the Greyhawk Wars, it was only after much careful thought that

Kimbertos Skotti, King of Keoland, entered into allegiance. And when invaders beset Geoff and the former Keoish provinces of Bissel, Sterich, the Yeomanry, and the Principality of Ulek, the King hesitated and sought gainful terms and conditions in return for aid to these countries. While the King looked for advantage in the misfortunes of others, the wars continued. His penny-wise, pound-foolish shrewdness eventually caused many of these fair lands to be lost (12).

Imperial Keoland is past - none wish to return to conquest in the name of culture and empire. Yet reluctance to aid friendly neighbors has cost the country dearly, and all recognize that an isolationist, self-serving Keoland cannot survive these dark times. The current King ponders annexation of former dependencies, not for empire, but for the "greater good" of the region (13). The Keoish leadership is now more than ever a class in search of a unifying idea, a worldview that specifies the proper role of Keoland in the affairs of other nations.

But that is a matter for now, and for the future. Let us turn back to the past, to the very beginning of things...

## The Land

At the end of the 51st Century by Suel Date, the fertile Sheldomar Valley was a populated, if chaotic, place. Flan tribesmen lived throughout the land, in the dry eastern hills, along the rivers and on the marsh edges, on the northern prairie, and inside the fringes of the vast southern and western forests (14). These tribes were politically independent of one another, though related through family and clan. Alliances between them were shifting, temporary events - usually begun upon the arrival of a tribe to some locale, and ending with their departure.

The Flan of the forest practiced a competent agriculture, unaided by plow beasts but supplemented by the prizes of hunting. Those in the dry, forestless hills herded sheep or goats under the direction of druidic leaders. The nomadic Flan of the plains hunted the wild herds and followed their migrations (15). These Flan were considerably less technologically advanced (and less vile) than their brethren to the north, who lived under the shadow of the Ykrathian Empire (8, 16).

## The Sheldomar at the time of the Migrations



Roaming throughout the northern plains and eastern hills were bands of Suloise hunter-warrior horsemen, the “firstcomers”, or remnants of earlier migrations through the region (17a, c). In the dryer portions of the land these people could make a fair living hunting the wild ungulates. Most of them, however, survived in part by continual raids against the Flan tribes. The Flan, though fierce, lived in scattered bands and lacked both horses and extensive iron technology (15). Thus, they were on the defensive, and over the past two decades (17a) they had mainly gotten the worse end of these conflicts. Only fighting among and between the firstcomer Suel and the local humanoids had prevented the complete destruction or enslavement of the Flan peoples in the plains and hills (18). Many Flan would have gone deeper into the southern and western forests to escape the horses of the Suel, but the great numbers of humanoids in such places prevented them (19).

Humanoid bands were dispersed throughout the lands and outnumbered the scattered humans, particularly in the west and south. Gnolls roamed the hills and prairies and were as much a plague to the Flan herders as Suloise horsemen were. Orcs, goblins, and kobolds hunted the vast forests (19) and the northern plains, and raided human settlements and one another.

The lands also sheltered many independent demi-human communities. Gnomes and halflings had fortified settlements in the hills and valleys, while dwarves lived in strongholds in the more rugged hills and mountains. Elves dwelt in small communities throughout the forests and glades of the eastern river valleys, and more rarely in the thicker southern and western forests.

Flan contact with demi-humans was rare (20), for these primitive folk tended to regard demi-humans with superstitious awe or fear (21). The Suloise horsemen attacked humanoids and demi-humans on occasion, but less often than they raided the Flan. Most demi-humans lived in communities that were too well defended to attack (or too well hidden, in the case of elves). Humanoids, on the other hand, generally had too few possessions to be worth the trouble of battle and looting. Sometimes the Suel nomads would ally with humanoids for mutual attacks on other humanoids, strong Flan tribes, or even one another (10). Sometimes the Suel would trade goods with humanoids or demi-humans. In both war and trade the Suel were untrustworthy - lying, cheating, and betraying allies on many occasions (2).

In the two decades preceding the Twin Cataclysms, groups of Suel migrants and refugees had steadily arrived in the Sheldomar (17a). Many had soon moved on, emigrating to elsewhere in the Flanaess. Others had fallen victim to the depredations of those already there. And some few had remained in the Sheldomar, devolving into the nomadic raiding bands previously mentioned (but see 17c). The Rain

of Colorless Fire (S.D. 5094 / CY -422) (22) brought a new wave of refugees to the region. Among the dispossessed of the time were the Suel houses of Neheli and Rhola (17b). These houses, the flowers of Suel nobility, were determined not to fall into the barbarism their predecessors had. Their resolve to tame the Sheldomar brought the first advanced civilization to the region (16). It is with the arrival of the Neheli and Rhola, then, that the history of the Sheldomar truly begins (17c).

## History Part I – Petty states and proto-nations

c. SD 5096 (CY -420) Arrival of the Suel Houses of Rhola and Neheli in the Sheldomar Valley; Settlement; The Development of Petty States, Economy

### Arrival of the Suel Houses of Rhola and Neheli in the Sheldomar Valley

At the end of the 51st century of the Suel Dominion came migrations of Suel peoples different from their predecessors. These noble families had reluctantly quit their land after its destruction by the Rain of Colorless Fire (17b, 22). Led by the last Mage of Power, Slerotin, the famous Twelve Suel Tribes made their way across and beneath the Crystalists and down into the basin beyond (23). Though few in number, they steadfastly aided one another under the direction of the mage and so survived the depredations of humanoids and the earlier Suel migrants (17a). The most important families were the Neheli and Rhola, but other Suel families came as well; the Zelrad, Malhel, Lizhal, Linth, and Secunforth (23). Upon the death of Slerotin, the tribes began feuding and soon scattered (17b).

After some time on the northern plains, the House of Rhola turned south. Some Rholan families settled along the Kewl and Sheldomar Rivers where they border the Silverwood (5), while others continued south until they reached the coast of the Azure Sea (24). Lesser families, such as the Zelrad and Malhel, continued a nomadic existence in the vast plains west of the Sheldomar River. The most powerful house, Neheli, traveled north across the prairie until it found the lands of civilized Flan and the former Suel migrants who had settled among them (24). The minor House of Linth settled in the Sheldomar Valley between the Rholan lands (25).

### Settlement

In the land around the Rushmoors the Neheli came upon the southern margins of the Ykrathian Empire (26). This dreaded despotry dominated many Flan and Suel groups, but at that time some were in a state of open rebellion. The

powerful Neheli quickly united the rebellious Suel, and with themselves as leaders then fought for independence from the "Cruel Lord," who ruled the Empire as seneschal. This Lord's master, The Whispered One, could not be bothered to personally attend to such mundane matters as rulership. After several years of struggle, the Neheli were forced to abandon their erstwhile subjects and withdraw to the south. They rejoined their Rholan kinsmen in the now-settled river valleys, or sheltered themselves along the border of the southern forest where the Sheldomar cut through the plains (24). Ironically, the Ykrathian Empire would eventually fall by the hand of the Cruel Lord himself, when he would turn against his master (26).

The Flan of the Sheldomar were of course initially hostile to the new invaders (8), but they soon learned that some of these Suel were not interested in conquest or pillage. It was not long before the exchange of goods and information was common. As trust grew, mutual defense alliances were struck, uniting these new Suel with the indigenous Flan, against the raiding bands of humanoids and other Suel. These alliances became increasingly necessary as the warlike Oerid (27) began to move south into the Sheldomar after the collapse of the Ykrathian Empire (17a).

Although friendly with the Flan, the Neheli and Rhola considered themselves a noble, civilized people, and viewed the dark-skinned natives as primitives. At least in terms of technology and arcane magic, they were for the most part correct (8, 15, 16), and the Flan were much impressed with the strength and knowledge of these newcomers. Furthermore, while separate Flan bands were traditionally independent of one another, they all admired these powerful and friendly Suel. By virtue of their technological superiority, political cohesion (28), and horse-borne mobility, the Neheli and Rhola quickly assumed the dominant role in local alliances with the Flan. Over the years, the Suel nobles evolved into the ruling overlords of many petty states with Flan and Suel subjects (29). The Flan, lacking any leaders of their own with intertribal political authority (28), were content to let the just and capable Suel assume this position of leadership. They were at the very least safer from the raids that had heretofore plagued them, and in many cases were genuinely better off under Suel administration.

In contrast to the Neheli and Rhola, the Zelrad, Malhel, and other Suel groups sought no alliances with the "inferior Flan savages." Instead, they survived by continually raiding the Flan, the Oerid, and each other.

The Nehelian and Rholan nobles soon came into contact with demi-humans who were, like the Flan, initially surprised by the behavior of these Suel. The new rulers treated them not with the superstition of the Flan (21), the treachery of other Suel (2), nor the brutish demands of the Oerid (27), but with honesty, fairness, and respect. In most

cases, trade and alliances of mutual assistance against humanoids came soon after contact (9).

The many petty states created by the various Rhola and Neheli nobles in general did not fight among one another, but proved vigorous in the defense of their subjects against humanoids and the roving Suel and Oerid. Defeated opponents were driven off, and eventually the Zelrad and others were forced to depart the Sheldomar entirely (30). The Malhel, however, proved too powerful to displace. They continued their violent existence (30), but shifted their tactics. They would stage devastating raids on settlements near the Sheldomar River, and then retreat rapidly across the vast plains, out of range of reprisal.

### **The Development of Petty States**

The settled states earned the continuing goodwill of their peoples, and so grew slowly from within. More rapid expansion occurred when nearby Flan communities, seeing how well their subject kinsmen were defended and treated, asked to join these small nations (8). Each Flan tribe that swore allegiance to a Suel Lord expanded the domain of these strong but peaceful states. The rule of the Suel lordlings spread out from three centers of settlement: in the plains of the upper Sheldomar, at the mouth of the lower Sheldomar, and at the confluence of the Sheldomar and Kewl. The cultural impact of the Suel spread more rapidly than their rule, out among the Flan of the forests that bordered the rivers.

When hostile nomad groups were defeated, they were often allowed to pledge loyalty to a Suel ruler and join a state. Since the raiders were seldom more than roving warbands, they were easily incorporated into the standing military. Thus, the numerous petty states assumed similar multiracial compositions - a Suel kinglet ruler and high officials; Oeridian and Suloise horsemen as elite (mounted) troops and minor nobility; Flan and Oeridian tribesmen as common soldiers; Suloise, Oeridian, and Flan commoners as farmers and herders; and neighboring affiliated demi-human communities (31).

### **Economy**

In the first generation after their arrival, the Suel kinglets ruled tribes and people, but not land *per se*. The Flan of the river valleys practiced shifting cultivation - clearing a section of forest with axe and fire to grow crops (corn, beans, gourds, and sunflowers) for a few years until the fields were overcome with weeds, then moving on and letting the region revert to its undisturbed state (15). They also hunted in the lush wetlands along the riverbanks. The Suel had brought with them the technology of draft oxen and iron plows, but these did them little good. The field grains of their homelands (wheat, barley, millet) did not grow well in this hot land of flooding river valleys and lush forests (32),

yielding little seed and all too often succumbing to molds, smuts, and other blights.

Many Suloise commoners took up the shifting cultivation of Flan crops, enhanced by iron axes and sickles purchased from Dwarves. Others resumed their pre-migration trade as herdsmen in the dangerous northern plains or eastern hills. The peoples protected by a ruler moved about, villages shifted and resettled, and towns were non-existent. Often times, more than one tribe would settle in the same location, each with a different ruler. Many Suel lords had traveled for years as nomads, and were more comfortable ruling from the saddle or chariot than squatting in villages. The subsistence economies of their subjects provided little surplus in any event, so lord and warband moved continually among the different settlements of their subjects simply to stay fed. Thus, a ruler considered himself the master of tribes and people, but not of land. Territorial boundaries were unknown. Most trade for finished goods was with demi-human communities, for there were few professional artisans among the new states.

c. SD 5116 to 5166 (CY -400 to CY -350)  
Suel begin settled agriculture; populations grow rapidly;  
Political effects of settled agriculture

## **Settled agriculture begins; populations grow rapidly**

The Suel and their subjects soon learned from halflings the cultivation of field crops appropriate to the climate of the region, such as cotton, indigo, jute, tobacco, and hemp (33). To these crops, the Suel applied their pre-Cataclysmic knowledge of engineering. Once the value of rice as a staple crop had been proved, Suel kinglets embarked on ambitious dam and levee projects and began to fill the river valleys with rice fields. Rice both permitted and required a fundamental transformation of the semi-nomadic human lifestyle. First, rice required settled agriculture with permanent fields and villages. The Suel took naturally to this, though the Flan were more reluctant. Second, well-tended rice fields produced a great surplus of food, allowing more non-farmers to be fed. The immediate effect of this was for the Suel to increase the number of soldiers in their war bands, giving them an important tactical advantage over the landless rovers. One long-term effect was that a population of craftsmen and other specialized laborers could be supported. The humans began to have their own smiths, wrights, engineers, and other tradesmen, and no longer relied so much on the demi-humans. Another long-term effect was that human populations grew rapidly, and the agriculturalists began to achieve greater population densities than the raiders or humanoids.

## **Political Effects of Settled Agriculture**

As the advantages of rice cultivation became obvious, permanent agriculture was adopted throughout the Sheldomar and Kewl river valleys. People settled down and territories developed. Populations grew and settlements spread. People who lived in one place all their lives saw the value of planting citrus orchards, olive groves, and grape vineyards (33). With many craftsmen producing goods, trade towns came into being. In time, trade cities grew from the largest and best-located towns. The first of these was Gradsul, founded in SD 5148 (-368 CY) (34). Gradsul was the first Suel port on the Azure Sea, and products from the sea (fish, shellfish, salt, pearls) were processed there for transport inland. Nirole Dra was settled a decade later (-359 CY) (34). Although the area of Jurnre had been settled shortly after the arrival of the Rholan migrants, long before Gradsul or Nirole Dra, the Suel settlements in the narrow valley along the Kewl River did not grow as fast as those along the broad Sheldomar. Jurnre could not truly be called a city until much later, c. CY -320 (34).

The Suel lords began to construct fortifications to defend their new holdings. At first these were crude affairs – timber-palisaded corrals with a watchtower or two, wherein the lord's war band could camp. A number of these were constructed in the ruler's sphere of influence, and he rotated among them, occupying and deserting them each in turn. As the importance of settled land grew, particularly the economic importance of towns, so did the complexity of the fortifications. After a century of Suel presence, a few rulers had constructed large motte-and-bailey complexes with double wooden walls and stone manor houses. These retained permanent garrisons even when the lord was not present. The best preserved of these is the Citadel at Junre (35). Although stone has long since replaced the original wooden walls, much of the original design is still evident. Gollunfane, in the Duchy of Dorlin, is another fine example, but in this case the original structure has been added to so many times that it is difficult to tell the original from the various additions (36).

With permanent, settled agriculture and growing populations filling the Sheldomar valley around Nirole Dra and Gradsul, and the Kewl valley along the Silverwood, the Suel kinglets found themselves not just the masters of men, but of land as well. Permanent fields and towns could belong to only one lord. As settlements grew, the boundaries of the petty states became clearly marked. Increasingly, rulers had to discuss with one another their plans for settling new communities and for undertaking new hydraulic projects. Increasingly, they had to resolve competing claims among their subjects for water rights and access to new land, pastures, and hunting areas. In most times and places this would have led to wars, and, to be sure, there were some skirmishes and contests of power. But for

the most part the Suel rulers were reluctant to fight one another. They were united by their common history and Suel identity, their bonds of honor, their (still necessary) military alliances against the incursions of humanoids and the unsettled Suel, and by the exhortations of the Silent Ones (28). Thus, in conflicts over land, lesser Suel kinglets tended to defer to the judgments of their greater peers. "Lesser" and "greater" were widely recognized, complex (and sometimes disputed), matters of honor, involving the size of one's estate, the valor of one's action's, and the reputation of one's family (37). The premier nobles among the greater lords tended to be those along the Sheldomar, which has a broader valley and more farmable land than the Kewl. Those nobles at the northern end of the Sheldomar had access to the plains that lay beyond the furthest extent of the coastal forest (14). These nobles protected herding families and had direct access to horses for their armies (38). This added greatly to their power and prestige. Other nobles had to make do with the horses they could either buy from elsewhere or raise themselves in second-rate pastures. Thus, the nobles of the Sheldomar were favored over those of the Kewl, and in particular the Neheli of the northern Sheldomar assumed precedence among all the Suel houses (39).

- (1) comm
- (2) WoG, FtAA, TAB, LGG, OKW
- (3) GA, SB, LGG, LGJ4, GG
- (4) WoG, FoI, FtAA, SB, LGG
- (5) WoG, FoI, TAB, LGJ1, OKW
- (6) LGG, LGJ4
- (7) comm
- (8) FoI, LGG, LGJ4, OKW
- (9) LGJ1
- (10) WoG, FoI, FtAA, TAB
- (11) FoI
- (12) FtAA, LGG
- (13) OKW
- (14) WoGG, FoI, FFF, GoF, FtAA, LGG, LGJ1, OKW, GDU, HoT
- (15) WoG, FoI, GA, FtAA, LGG, OGW, comm
- (16) comm
- (17a) WoG, FtARC, SB, TAB, LGG, *Dragon*, CF!
- (17c) comm
- (18) KOW
- (19) LGJ1
- (20) LGG
- (21) LGJ4
- (22) WoG, FtARC, PGG
- (17b) WoG, FoI, TAB, LGG
- (23) WoGG, LGG, LGJ1, *Dragon*, CF!, OKW
- (24) LGG, LGJ1, LGJ4
- (25) LGJ1, OKW

- (26) DMG1, WoG, FFF, VL!, FtARC, FtAA, OJ1, GG, TAB, LGG, SLA, VR, LGJ4, CF!, OKW, HoT, comm
- (27) WoG, FtARC, FtAA, ItE, LGG, OKW
- (28) LGJ4, CF!, LGJ1
- (29) comm.
- (30) LGG, LGJ4
- (31) FoI, SB, LGG
- (32) FoI, SB
- (33a) FoI, comm.
- (33b) OKW
- (34) FoI, LGG, LGJ1, CF!
- (35) FoI
- (36) LGJ1
- (37) comm
- (38) GDU, OKW
- (39) CF!

## Citations for Part I

Notes on Citation Sources: Sources listed in blue are from websites, which were checked in September 2004 or more recently. Sources listed in black are traditional text sources in my possession. Sources listed in red are text sources that I do not have personal access to. Thus, I have relied upon Zavoda's "Encyclopedia Greyhawkia" and the "GreychronDEX" (v4.2) to identify sources of interest, and then have used a network of helpers, to whom I am very grateful, to provide me with quotes and page numbers. If you enjoyed this work and would like to assist my research for the next installment, I would greatly appreciate suggestions of other sources, donations of sources I don't have, or small monetary donations so that I might purchase sources I do not own. If you are interested, write to me at kmwackford@hotmail.com.

**Special Note on the Official Keoland Website (OKW):** I last visited this website in January of 2005. Some of the relevant material on the website is taken from other Greyhawk sources (though frequently without attribution). I cited the Keoland web page only when the material on it was original; exact copies of other sources are cited from the other source. In particular, much of [Provinces of Keoland](#) is taken from LGJ1, the [Government in Keoland](#) and [History of Keoland](#) are taken from LGG, and some of the [overview of Keoland](#) is a mix of material from both WoG and FtAA.

## Source Notation

CF! – [The Canonfire! Website \(www.canonfire.com\)](#)

comm - this indicates the personal commentary of myself or others

DMG1 - *Dungeon Master's Guide*, First Edition

FFF - *City of Greyhawk* Boxed Set, Folks, Feuds, and Factions Book

FoI - *Fate of Istus* (WG8)

FtAA - *From the Ashes*, Atlas of the Flanaess

FtARC – *From the Ashes*, Reference Cards

GA – *Greyhawk Adventures*

GDU - *A Guide to the Duchy of Ulek*, version 1.1

Note: This document was produced by the Living Greyhawk Duchy of Ulek

Triad, when that region was still active. This Triad does not currently exist.

See Appendix B

GG - "Greyhawk Grimoires", article in *Dragon* #225

GoF - *City of Greyhawk* Boxed Set, Greyhawk: Gem of the Flanaess Book

HoT - "The History of Taurusilmäa" (see Appendix C)

ItE - *Iuz the Evil* (WGR5)

KOW - *Knights\_of\_the\_Watch\_Knights\_of\_Dispatch\_3-1.0.pdf*

Note: This is available at several Living Greyhawk

websites, for example [OBW](#)

[LGG](#) – *The Living Greyhawk Gazetteer*

[LGJ1](#) - *The Living Greyhawk Journal*, Number 1

[LGJ4](#) – *The Living Greyhawk Journal*, Number 4

[OBW](#) - [Official Living Greyhawk Bissel Website \(www.bissel.living-greyhawk.com\)](#)

[OJ1](#) – *Oerth Journal 1*

[OGW](#) – [Official Living Greyhawk Gyruuff Website \(www.living-geoff.com\)](#)

[OKW](#) – [Official Living Greyhawk Kingdom of Keoland Website \(http://keoland.living-greyhawk.com/\)](#)

[PGG](#) - *Player's Guide to Greyhawk*

[SB](#) – *The Scarlet Brotherhood*

[SLA](#)- *Slavers*

[TAB](#)- *The Adventure Begins*

[VL!](#) *Vecna Lives*

[VR](#)- *Vecna Reborn*

[WENK](#) - "What Everyone Needs to Know About Keoland" (See Appendix A)

[WoG](#) - *A Guide to the World of Greyhawk*

[WoGG](#) - *Glossography for the Guide to the World of Greyhawk*

**1)** I use the words Oerid, Baklun, Flan, and Suel, as nouns referring to groups of people. They can be used with or without the article "the". The respective adjectives are Oeridian, Baklunish, Flan, and Suloise. Thus, I might say, "The Oerid migrated south and east", but "The Oeridian migration routes followed major rivers."

**2)** "Perhaps the biggest asset the Oeridians had, however, was the vileness of the Suloise - the majority lied, stole, slew, and enslaved whenever they had inclination and opportunity." WoG, p.8

"The arrogant Oeridians might have been overcome by this mix of forces, but for one thing: the Suel were far more unpleasant than the Oeridians were aggressive. The Suel invaders lied, cheated, stole, enslaved, pillaged, and killed out of hand." FtAA, p.3

"The Suloise who spread across the southern Flanaess were very often wicked and destructive." TAB, p.18

"A few Suloise clans settled around the western shores of Wooly Bay, circa 300 OR...Most were driven to the isolated coast by infuriated olvenfolk of what are now the Gnarley Forest, Welkwood, and Celene. Along this poor strip of land, the Suloise established the Wild Coast's long traditions

of independence, adventuring, and seafaring, as well as treachery, slavery, theft, brigandage, piracy, tracking [sic] with humanoids, and so on. Certain humanoid bands encountered by the Suloise in the Lortmils were encouraged by threats or bribery to join the Suloise as partners in their exploitation of the coast...A ruined city of the Suloise...was a center of wickedness for centuries before it fell." TAB, p.55

"For over two centuries, Suel and Oeridian fought for control of the region from the Crystalmists to the Solnor Coast. Many Suloise were debased and wicked, and they lost most of these battles and were pushed to the periphery of the Flanaess." LGG, p.13

"In those dark days, groups of fleeing Suloise pushed through the Lortmils and entered the elven country, but their sojourn was brief. Such was the wantonness and cruelty of the Suel that most were banished by the elves and driven past the Jewel River." LGG p.39

"The region that would become the Duchy (and later Earldom) of Linth was a

collection of disparate Flan tribes that had been brought under control by the Suel

house known as Linth. Confident in their place as rulers by preordination, and filled

with a sense of superiority for their magic and technology, the Linth and their

favored Suel allies expelled the previous Suel overlords and inherited whatever Flan

were still around. These Flan were told by the Linth to leave their homes, as these

new Suel had no use for them, either as allies, servants or slaves." [The Earldom of Linth - Player's Primer](#), p.4, OKW "History and Information" page.

**3)** "...a particularly wicked band of Suloise who fled with all their treasures eastward along the northern coast of the Azure Sea, seeking a new land in which to build a powerful new nation. They were as learned and powerful as they were cruel, and met with success in all their evil ventures, until at last they slaughtered a band of innocent Flan tribesmen in a particularly vile manner in the Suenha hills." GA, p.96

"These Suel were stereotypical examples of their race, cruel and evil, and they tortured and oppressed any that they could reach." SB, p.63

"The tales also recount how the vile House Malhel fled toward the Dreadwood and was consumed by its own evil

after trying to summon up powers of the earth in a desire to resurrect the Suel Imperium. Similar groups suffered other malign fates, while others fled across the Azure Sea, never to return." LGG, p.64

"The Malhel, a small though powerful noble house refused to give quarter to the other Suel house or to depart the Sheldomar Valley as did the other lesser houses who disagreed with the Neheli and Rhola...The indignant Malhel eventually struck, unleashing powerful magicks and abominations upon the land, killing thousands of settlers. They were finally driven deep into the Dreadwood by a combined host of men and demihumans where the legends say they were eventually consumed by their own vileness." LGJ4, p.12

"In fact, Vecna's penchant for brutality and his obsession for world domination practically brands him as Suloise - after all, the ancient Suel people were (and still are, in some places) noted for their cruelty and policy of conquest." GG, c. pp. 49, 50.

**4)** "This order is purported to espouse the cause of the Suloise as the rightful rulers of all the Flanaess, claiming superiority of that race above all others, and embracing evil as the only hope of achieving its ends." WoG, p.33

"Many of the Suel nobility who escaped the Rain of Colorless Fire dreamed of a return to power and the destruction or subjugation of all rival peoples...they set about to reproduce the glories of ancient Suloise society, from slaveholding, assassination, ritual torture, and the employment of goblinoid mercenaries to the highest magical and material arts...The Brotherhood was founded in the last years of the Baklunish-Suel wars (5091 S.D.) to combat what its members saw as the dilution of Suel virtues and superiority; its express purpose was the 'purification' of Suel blood and behavior, with the concomitant and inevitable rule of Suloise over all lesser peoples." FoI, p.105

"The order is one of Suel racism which seeks to subjugate all of the Flanaess to the rule of the Suloise (despite its widespread use of humanoid troops), and which embraces evil as the only hope of achieving this end." FtAA, p.35

SB p.2 has a description of the philosophy of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Page 4 makes reference to enslavement, torture, and dark sorcery as being traditional Suel practices.

"After the events of the Greyhawk Wars, the goal of the brotherhood is now clear. Followers of a philosophy



established before the Twin Cataclysms, they espouse the cause of the Suloise race as rightful rulers of the Flanaess. Other races will serve as little more than slaves on whose broken backs will be built an empire to rival that of the ancient Suel." LGG, p.98

5) "Perhaps the biggest asset the Oeridians had, however, was the vileness of the Suloise - the majority lied, stole, slew, and enslaved whenever they had inclination and opportunity. There were exceptions, of course, such as the houses of Rhola and Neheli - late migrants who settled the Sheldomar as already mentioned." WoG, p.8

"In the aftermath of the final Baklunish-Suel conflict, the Suel lordling Immris of Rhola rallied his household, crossed the Crystallist Mountains, and made his way across the Sheldomar basin. Like his more illustrious relatives who settled in Keoland, Immris and his people were of that small fraction of Suelites [sic] who were honorable and sought peace, and disdained the use of goblinoid mercenaries." FoI, p.25

"Founded by Oeridian and Suloise tribes who were less warlike than their fellows, Keoland soon ruled the whole region from the Pomarj to the Crystallists..." TAB, p.18

"Most Neheli are firm believers in the concept of *noblesse oblige*, but rulership that was once considered just and honorable is now seen as patronizing and neglectful. The Neheli, like their rivals the Rhola, abhor slavery (banned by the Founding Charter) and only a very limited form of indentured servitude is practiced in isolation." LGJ1, p.11

"The Suel who settled in Keoland were among the last of their people to enter the Flanaess. They too were unlike most of their people, not enjoying the casual cruelties that most of their people considered a part of every day life." This quote can be found on the [OKW](#), on both the "[overview of Keoland](#)" page and on the "[Characters in Keoland](#)" article of the "History and Information" page.

6) Throughout his writings, Gary Holian presents an antidote to the perhaps overly romantic view of the Neheli and Rhola as being bastions of goodness.

"History records that it was only a few years after their arrival in the Flanaess that the refugees fought each other and went their separate ways, disregarding the Last Mage's words." LGG p.64

"According to the *Chronicle of Secret Times*, however, the real nobility of these events was somewhat questionable. The various Suel tribes fought amongst each other for dominance almost immediately upon entering the Flanaess...The *Chronicle* speaks of a secret bargain that was struck with the Whispered One to the north, negotiated by the seers of the Neheli, which involved mutual aid and information in exchange for a truce. Only the sudden fall of the Arch-Lich failed to bring the pact to fruition, allowing the Neheli to claim a bloodless victory over the dark lord. They proceeded to ally with the migrating Oeridians of the tribe of Keogh who had become enemies of Vecna. The Neheli kept secret the dark pact and watched idly as the Oeridians swept south from the Fals Gap and settled large swaths of the central plains where lesser Suel tribes had staked a claim. Only when the skirmishes threatened to draw the Rhola into a large-scale conflict did the Neheli step in to propose a compromise at the Great Council at Niolo Dra." LGJ4, p.12

"Uhas speculates that the order was really founded on the cynical attempt to keep secret from the Oeridians aspects of Suel magic and history they didn't want them to have. So much for alliances of mutual respect." LGJ4, p. 12

7) I have modeled the philosophy, behavior, and obligation of the good Suel after "The White Man's Burden", a poem by Rudyard Kipling. This poem justified 19th Century Imperialism by the West in general and Britain in particular. Kipling argued that Europe was destined to conquer the world, but with this destiny came the obligation to assist non-Europeans in attaining the level and standards of Western Civilization. In imagining an honorable people who nonetheless believed in Suel racial/cultural superiority, this model seemed appropriate.

8) Canon is divided over the nature of the Flan in the Sheldomar and their initial treatment by the Rhola and Neheli. Older sources posit a primitive/innocent Flan, and emphasize the goodness of the Suel houses, speaking of tolerance and cooperation. More recent references speak of a debased Flan (in league with Vecna) who were conquered and driven out by the invading Suel.

My position is that the civilized but wicked Flan dominated by Vecna were restricted to the northern Sheldomar, north of Niolo Dra. Those Flan that the Neheli and Rhola encountered in the lower Sheldomar were more primitive technologically, and, as followers of the Old Faith, dominantly neutral in outlook. Certainly the Rhola and

Neheli fought against them upon first arriving, for they displaced them from the best lands. But the two races rapidly reached an understanding without excessive bloodshed. See also (16) and (26), below.

"Immriss and his people entered into alliance with the local halflings and gnomes, and with them founded a citadel on what they dubbed the Hill of Stars above the banks of the Kewl River. Many of Immris's troops and servants were Oeridian, and they were joined by Oeridian and Flan tribes who were attracted to his relatively peaceful and stable realm." FoI, p.25

"The remaining Suel Houses fought the local Flan and abundant nonhumans for control of the rest of the land...This series of disjointed states between the rivers Javan and Sheldomar became one nation after a series of brief struggles with the Flan." LGG p.64

"These races combined to defeat the remnants of Vecna's Empire and drive the iniquitous Flan survivors to the fringes of the valley before settling into centuries of peaceful and noble rule." LGJ4, p.12

"The Flan are bronze skinned people with black hair. They were already living in the area of Keoland when the other others arrived. As such, they endured several waves of conquerors before the current rulers had arrived. This had soured them on all outsiders by then and they fought several wars before being absorbed or pushed to the fringes of the kingdom." This quote can be found on the [OKW](#), on both the "[overview of Keoland](#)" page and on the "[Characters in Keoland](#)" article of the "History and Information" page.

9) "It was in Greyhill, nearly nine centuries ago, that human and elven emissaries first met and exchanged words of peace under a starlit sky. This cooperation has continued ever since..." LGJ1, p.15

10) That the houses of Neheli and Rhola did not approve of humanoids is shown by a reference from FoI: "Like his more illustrious relatives who settled in Keoland, Immris and his people were of that small fraction of Suelites [sic] who were honorable and sought peace, and disdained the use of goblinoid mercenaries." FoI p.25

The more typical Suel attitude can be found in the quotes that follow:

"Both Baklunish and Suel forces employed mercenaries, bandits, and any humanoids they could hire to swell their armies." FtAA, p.3. See also WoG, p.8

"Many of the Suel nobility who escaped the Rain of Colorless Fire dreamed of a return to power and the destruction or subjugation of all rival peoples...they set about to reproduce the glories of ancient Suloise society, from slaveholding, assassination, ritual torture, and the employment of goblinoid mercenaries..." FoI, p.105

"Along this poor strip of land, the Suloise established the Wild Coast's long traditions of independence, adventuring, and seafaring, as well as treachery, slavery, theft, brigandage, piracy, tracking [sic] with humanoids, and so on. Certain humanoid bands encountered by the Suloise in the Lortmils were encouraged by threats or bribery to join the Suloise as partners in their exploitation of the coast..." TAB, p.55

11) As one example, "The Junrese are rather smugly contented with their way of life and are of the opinion that the sooner this type of culture is generally adopted throughout the continent, the better it will be for all concerned. They see themselves as a hardheaded, practical people, and tend to regard foreigners as shiftless and disorderly." FoI, p.27

12) "During the Wars, Keoland was reluctant to aid Veluna and Furyondy against Iuz, and when Sterich was threatened, King Skotti tried to negotiate a treaty that would reestablish Keolandish control over Sterich in return for military aid. He dithered long enough over the details for Sterich to fall in the interim." FtAA, p.29

"To the north, Ket raiders beset Bissel, and the Ulek forces crucial to its defense dithered between defending that small state and protecting Furyondy against Iuz. Bissel was eventually forced to surrender by the fierce horsemen of Ket. This could have been avoided but for another fell stroke worse than the eruption of humanoids from the Pomarj. From the Crystallist Mountains, great forces of giants and humanoids swept down into the Grand Duchy of Geoff, Sterich, and into the Yeomanry. In the latter, they were repulsed by peasant levies as worthy in battle as many seasoned veterans. Geoff and Sterich fell, the Keolandish armies too distant to oppose the invaders." FtAA, p.7

"It is ironic that, when the major blow of the War fell in this area, Keoland's delay in aiding the brave Sterish people

resulted in the loss of the land to giants and humanoids." FtAA, p. 38

"Because the court delayed in sending reinforcements, seeking to extract additional concessions from the supplicants, Keoland failed to avert the disaster. Giants descending from the Crystalmists attacked the valley nations of Geoff, Sterich, and the Yeomanry, throwing those realms into chaos." LGG, p.66

**13)** "History...DC 10...the Kingdom used to rule all the surrounding countries...DC 15...the King wants to get those countries to be part of the kingdom again". From "What Everyone Knows about Keoland." See Appendix A.

**14)** The winds, and thus the weather, of the Flanaess move from east to west (WoGG, p.22, FFF, p.34, GoF, p.3). The eastern sides of mountain ranges receive rain from the clouds forced over them, while the western sides are made arid by dry, descending air. Thus, prior to human activities, marshes and deep forests dominated the eastern slopes of mountains (Celene, Geoff, Yeomanry, Sea Princes, and, but see below, Sterich). The western sides remain arid hills and deserts (eastern Sea of Dust, eastern Dry Steppes, southwestern Lorridges, eastern portions of Gran March and Duchy of Ulek).

Winds from the southeast in the spring and summer bring storms and much rain inland from the Azure Sea, so the County and Principality of Ulek and southern coastal Keoland have strongly seasonal climates. Jurnre is said to receive "ample rain" (FoI, p.25). Also, "People around the Kingdom are eagerly preparing for the Spring festivals to celebrate the last few days of cool weather before the storms begin sweeping up from the south and the final thaw in the north." [OKW](#) (Growfest 591, Herald's Corner, Character Information). And, "The frequent storms which cross the Azure Sea north of Fairwind Isle to strike the western coast of the Sheldomar Valley often seem to hit [Salinmoor] the hardest." LGJ1, p.16

This tropical coast rainfall kept the southern lands naturally forested almost as far north as Nirole Dra, and along the Sheldomar River for its entire length, before the arrival of the Suel. Their massive programs of forest-clearing, irrigation, and swamp-draining created agricultural land and, over time, altered much of the landscape. For example,

"Two ancient woodlands grow within the borders of Ulek, the remnants of the once great forest that spanned the length of the Sheldomar Valley from the Dim Forest hundreds of miles to the north, and the Dreadwood which lies hundreds of miles to the south." GDU, Geography Section (see Appendix B).

"In ancient days, the forest [of Axewood] was much more expansive, its verges reaching nearly to the outskirts of Nirole Dra. However, prodigious logging of the wood by the Keoish slowly consumed the timberland" LGJ1, p.15.

"Now, forests and cities alike dot the rolling countryside where Taurusilmäa's forest realm once stood. The Gnarley Forest, Welkwood, Suss Forest, and even the Wild Coast are remnants of the ancient coastal woodland that once stretched from the Velderdyva River south to the Drachensgrab Hills, and from the Sheldomar and Lort rivers over to the Selintan and Wooly Bay." HoT.

Finally, and most extreme, "...when Oerth was very young and men had only just come upon it, a time when forests covered almost all of the Flanaess..." FFF p.76.

Thus, the north and east Sheldomar Basin (Duchy and northern County of Ulek, Bissel, Gran March, Keoland proper north of Nirole Dra) were arid hills and open grasslands, while the south and west (Geoff, the Yeomanry, Keoland proper south of Nirole Dra, southern County and western Principality of Ulek and, but see below, Sterich) were heavily forested.

Locally, the river valleys of the Lort, Upper Sheldomar (above Nirole Dra), Upper Kewl (above the Silverwood), and Old River are narrow, as the rivers there are rocky and fast-flowing (FtAA, p.64; GDU, Geography Section), while the Lower Sheldomar and Lower Kewl are quite broad (LGG p.152), with wide flood plains and marshy margins.

The Rushmoors actually receive less rain than one might expect. They are a marshland not entirely from local precipitation but because they have impermeable clay soils and lie in a natural basin. The yearly flooding of the numerous rivers that surround them spills over the banks and inundates the countryside, with nowhere to drain off to. That being said, they do receive more precipitation than one would expect from their location, and have frequent mists: "The south, however, is a land of dark mists and frequent showers, particularly near the forest and swamp." LGG p.153. This is probably the legacy of powerful dark magic in the region (see **(26)**).

The comments above are based on my interpretation of the maps of Greyhawk, and the cited passages. In general, this perspective is in accord with the detailed information on local climate found for most countries in the LGG. There are two noteworthy exceptions. First, the LGG (p.107) states "Sterich claims no notable woodlands within its borders, and has had to conduct considerable trade with Keoland and Gran March for lumber to rebuild fallen towns and villages." This is odd but possible, if the Good Hills and Jotens conspire to deprive the air of any moisture before it reaches the Sterish Valley. Second, the LGG (p.63) purports that "The climate [of Keoland] is customarily temperate year-round and the soils of the central valleys are rich, allowing the kingdom to grow wheat, rye, and other grains in great abundance." Gary Holian (co-author of the LGG and principle author of the Keoland section) maintains that the climate of Keoland is temperate. However, as a list of the local agricultural produce from Jurnre makes clear (FoL, p.25), most of Keoland has a subtropical climate, and rice is a more likely crop than rye. When one examines the position of Keoland in the world (WoGG, p. 18), one sees that the southern coast lies about at 26°N, the city of Niolo Dra is at approximately 30°N, and the northern border of Gran March falls around 35°N. These are subtropical latitudes. On the east coast of the US, for example, 26°N is roughly the southern tip of Florida, 30°N the border of Florida-Georgia, and 35°N the northern Carolinas. The LG Duchy of Ulek Triad (before their dissolution) appeared to believe that the Sheldomar is subtropical. The GDU Ecology Section (see Appendix B) says, "The forests of the Duchy of Ulek are in a geographical position that tends to give them the best mixture of tree species from both what are considered typically Central and Southern woods in the Flanaess." Furthermore, "Perhaps the most common "monster" that rears its ugly head every so often is the giant snapping turtle, and crocodiles bask on the banks of the Kewl below Forfaladuin" (*ibid*).

**15)** "It is commonly held that the Flan peoples of eastern Oerik were simple tribesmen before the events that led to the Suel and Oeridian migrations." GA, p.92

"The original inhabitants of the Flanaess were the Flan tribesmen, hardy and tough nomads whose small, scattered groups made no major civilizing efforts." FtAA, p.3

"The Flan tribesmen were hardy and capable hunters but not particularly warlike, and their small and scattered groups made no appreciable civilizing efforts." WoG, p.8

While the WoG emphasizes the hunting aspect of Flan culture, I presume that some of them had at least a primitive agriculture. True non-farming hunter-gatherers rarely exceed average population densities of one person per square mile, even in good lands. As such, the Flan would have been easily eliminated by humanoids or, if they had survived until contact, completely brushed aside by the Suel and Oeridians. The Savant-Sage (author of the WoG) and the chroniclers he relies upon may have been biased in documenting the efforts of male Flan, only. The same bias led real-world historians to characterize many groups (including some Native Americans, Africans, and New Guineans) as "hunters" when in fact most of the calories in their daily diets came from agriculture, a principally female endeavor. For example, the founding fathers of the US believed that the first step in civilizing "Indians" was teaching them agriculture, when in fact the various indigenous groups of the eastern US already had sophisticated agricultural systems. What they did not have was male participation in these systems. We are told that the Flan of the Jurnre region wore tartan kilts (FoL, p.27), which would require both weaving and dyeing, and therefore imply agriculture.

I picture primitive Flan subsistence in the Sheldomar to have been gathering, herding, hunting, and plowless shifting agriculture ("slash and burn" followed by a few years of planting and harvest, then later abandonment), similar to the Celts of Europe or the Native Americans of eastern North America. Given the subtropical climate of Keoland (see **(14)**, above), perhaps the best analog would be the Native Americans of Southeast North America, such as the Cherokee. Corn, beans, and squash (the "Three Sisters") would have been agricultural staples. Depending on where the Flan lived, hunting, herding, and agriculture would have had a differing prominence in everyday life. The hill herders (like the native Flan Jurnrese), having domesticated animals, would likely have had the highest level of material technology. These people were also under the leadership of druids, and would likely have had the most stable and advanced subsistence economies. "The Old Faith (druidism), as practiced by the common folk throughout the central Flanaess, was the center of culture here. The sovereign was always a member of the druidic hierarchy, whose position was respected by both the human and nonhuman inhabitants of the county, regardless of the ruler's race or patron deity." LGG p.117

The Geoff Triad agrees that the Flan, at least the Flan of Gyruuff, did not have (iron) plows. On their website ([OGW](#)), they say "c. 1775 FT [CY -377] The iron plow is introduced to the Flan by a few Oeridian and Suel settlers who make it to Gyruuff, while seeking to escape the warfare in the main

valley. Farming becomes possible in rocky Geoff, and the wandering Flan tribes begin to establish farms. Within a few generations the clans have broken up into individual families that have settled onto steadings and crofts.” (Grand History of Gyruuff; History; Gyruuff Gazetteer). Their dates for the cultural transformation brought by iron plows are earlier than I have posited for the Flan of the lower Sheldomar, but they accurately describe the process. I would assume that the Flan under Vecna had a high Bronze Age material culture. The more primitive Flan of the southern Sheldomar may have acquired bronze and copper items through trade, but they probably did not produce the raw metals themselves.

**16)** The Flan of the lower Sheldomar had little incentive to adopt settled agriculture, given the warm subtropical climate and year-round abundance of their lands (see **(14)**, above). North of Niole Dra, in the vast prairie, however, the situation was different. While still warm year-round, the land is terribly dry during the summer, meaning that stored crops would be essential to permanent settlements. Crops such as dry rice and wheat would be prominent, and would have led to the development of cities and a more advanced civilization than in the south. Certainly the Empire of Vecna included cities of such civilized Flan. See **(8)** and **(15)**, above, for more on the Flan, and **(26)** below for more on Vecna.

Consider this description of a city of Flan under Vecna: “Vecna had built a great fortress city, the likes of which was never seen again on that world - miles and miles of towers, castles, and cathedrals all dedicated to him. Ykrath was its name, lost now to all but the most obscure and arcane texts. One of the greatest and grandest towers was Vecna’s personal library, the topmost room of which held his most valuable books

and tomes. So powerful was the magical lore of these books that even after Vecna fell and the city was razed by those he had long oppressed, the room lived on in shadow” (VR, p.50).

Some people (notably, Sam Weiss) claim that the Flan of the southern Sheldomar were just as civilized as those in the north, and that they too possessed cities. There is nothing in the canon to support this, as far as I know. If such cities existed, they were certainly destroyed or built over by the conquering Suel.

**17)** When did the Houses of Rhola and Neheli arrive in the Sheldomar Valley? Did they arrive alone, or with other groups? Were they preceded by other Suloise migrants?

Were they preceded by Oeridian migrants? Unfortunately, these simple questions have no easy answers.

**a)** It is clear that the Oeridian migrations in general began first, and also that they preceded the Suloise migrations by more than a decade. From WoG, p.9

“S.D. 5058 Oerid migrations east of peak point.

S.D. 5069 Suloise migrations begin.

S.D. 5094 Invoked Devastation of [sic] Rain of Colorless Fire strike.”

FtARC #1 clears up the meaning of “peak point” and converts the dates to CY,

“CY -458 Oerid invasions beyond western mountains commence.

CY -447 Suloise migrations beyond western mountains commence.

CY -422 Invoked Devastation and Rain of Colorless Fire strike Suel and Bakluni lands.”

*The Scarlet Brotherhood* (p.2) says that by 5070 SD (thus CY -446, one year after the dates given in WoG and FtA for the start of the migrations), the Suloise migrations had already begun depopulating the cities of the Imperium.

*The Adventure Begins* reports that the Oeridian migrations began in the west even earlier, c. CY -465, but that the Oerid did not arrive as far east as the Tuflik Valley (now Ket) until the standard date of CY -458 (p. 55).

Given their (at least) decade-long head start, the Oerid should have been able to arrive in most locations in the western Flanaess well ahead of the Suel. When one examines the migration map on WoG p.10, one sees that there are three initial directions to the southern Oeridian migrations (the arrows depicting migration routes in FtARC #2 are offset from the original, and do not correspond as well to specific geographic features). One advance is east across Ferrond and around the northern shore of the Nyr Dyv. A second advance is southeast and appears to have been halted in the southern Voll. The third main Oeridian migration route shown is south into the Sheldomar Basin. So, while it is clear that the Oeridian migrants entered the Sheldomar, one can still ask whether they arrived before or after the Suel. Unfortunately, the canon does not give a clear answer to this.

The former dominance of the Oerid in the hills of Ulek seems to imply settlement at least concurrent with, and perhaps prior to, the Suel. Racial composition in the County of Ulek (which has the oldest migrant human population) is

given as OFS (WoG, p.14; FtARC #2; LGG p.116), that is, the Oerid contributed the most to the current mix and the Suel the least. Furthermore, the LGG (p.117) states of the County that “The native Flan and halfling peoples were willing to accept Oeridian sovereignty in exchange for protection from the more rapacious Suel, then showed an equal willingness to accept Suloise of more amiable disposition.” This might imply that the Oerid ruled the area of the County at least before the arrival of the houses of Rhola and Neheli, if not before the firstcomer Suel.

In contrast to this position, however, is a passage from TAB (p.55) stating, “The last of the Suloise to migrate beyond the Crystalists, the Houses of Rhola and Neheli, took possession of the vast and fertile Sheldomar Valley. When southward-moving tribes of Oeridians entered the valley and the inevitable conflicts were finished, the two peoples united and created a new civilization to bury their dark memories of old. In this manner, the Kingdom of Keoland was founded in 303 OR.” This seems to imply that the Oerid did not enter the Sheldomar until well after the last of the Suloise migrations had concluded. The LGG (p.64) furthers this idea by stating “The remaining Suel Houses fought the local Flan and abundant nonhumans [but apparently *not* the Oerid] for control of the rest of the land, which was dominated by the near-mythical Empire of Vecna in the north. The nobles of House Rhola made for the Azure Coast, where in

–368 CY they founded the city of Gradsul...Nirole Dra was founded by [the Neheli] within ten years of Gradsul’s creation. The next few seasons brought many changes to the land, as the Oeridian tribes entered the Sheldomar Valley from the north after a great upheaval appeared to bring down the Empire of Vecna from within. The Oeridians were the first people to encounter the Neheli, settling with the latter peacefully.”

Thus canon seems divided on whether or not the Oerid or the Suel were the first migrants to enter the Sheldomar. This is probably because of the emergence of Vecna as an historical cause later in canon development. Sources produced prior to the publication of VL would not have assumed any barrier to the migration of the Oerid into the Sheldomar. Between VL and the LGG, there was a recognition that the Empire would have to be placed somewhere, but no location was mandated. Finally, the LGG established that the realm of Vecna occupied the present-day Gran March. With such a position, it is assumed that any Oeridian migration to the lower Sheldomar would have been blocked until after the death of Vecna and the dissolution of his Empire. For further discussion of Vecna and the placement of his Empire, see (26). For the purposes of this article, I follow the current consensus that the Oerid did not

arrive in the Sheldomar until after the fall of the Vecnan Empire.

As an aside, some authors see the Suel settlement of the Flanaess as occurring well before the Migrations. For example, the community of Dancingleaf in Keoland’s Westgate Barony is said to have been “settled first around -500 CY by a group of Suloise immigrants devoted to the goddess Lydia” [CF!](#); Sheldomar Gazetteer I : Westgate Barony, Keoland.

**b)** A second question concerns the arrival of the houses of Neheli and Rhola, and how they related to the other Suel migrants. The quote from TAB p.55 in (17a) above calls these two houses “The last of the Suloise to migrate...” and the WoG quote in (5) above calls them “late migrants”. The FoI quote in (5) above seems to imply that at least Immris of Rhola led his household independently to the Sheldomar, even if not other members of House Rhola. In contrast, the LGG (p.64) strongly implies in the section quoted in (17a) above that the Rhola and Neheli were two of the twelve houses of Suel rescued and led by Slerotin, the Last Mage of Power. “History records that it was only a few years after their arrival in the Flanaess that the refugees fought each other and went their separate ways, disregarding the Last Mage’s words. The powerful Zelrad family withdrew to the northeast, departing from the Sheldomar Valley entirely to settle in what became South Province of the Great Kingdom. The tales also recount how the vile House Malhel fled toward the Dreadwood and was consumed by its own evil after trying to summon up powers of the earth in a desire to resurrect the Suel Imperium. Similar groups suffered other malign fates, while others fled across the Azure Sea, never to return.” (LGG, p. 64)

Whether or not the Neheli and Rhola arrived by themselves or as two of the twelve tribes led by Slerotin, it is clear that they came soon after the Rain of Colorless Fire, and had thus been preceded by 36 years of Oeridian migrations and 25 years of firstcomer Suloise migrations. I imagine that these previous migrants lived mostly as nomadic raiders on the Flan and on one another (but see (17c), below). The Rhola and Neheli would certainly have had to fight for their existence in this “populated, if chaotic,” Sheldomar.

**c)** While I have presented the pre-Neheli migrant Suel as having been wandering raiders, this may just be Keoish propaganda. Sam Weiss, in particular, claims that pre-Neheli Suel had indeed already settled the region and had used Flan slaves to establish large plantations. Presumably the Suel had also conquered or sacked the supposed southern Flan cities. Since the Keoish myth of the Rhola and Neheli is that they brought civilization to the Sheldomar,

these preceding examples would have been excluded from official histories.

**18)** Most scholars agree that the tale of Trilesimain, The Simple Knight, is much more allegorical than historical. A few, however, insist that tale is based on actual events that occurred around the time of the Suel Migrations. As the tale says, this was a time when “those who call[ed] themselves knights [were] nothing more than armed bandits who terrorize[ed] and oppress[ed] the population.” KOW, pp.3, 4

**19)** “But there are places in the heart of the dark forest [of the Dreadwood] even the elves will not go. More than half of the great expanse is unpatrolled and is widely believed to be the home of bandits, humanoids, and even cultists. Such denizens, as well as the dark history of the place, all contribute to the origin of its name...no further exploration or settlement should be allowed to proceed given the dangers and dark secrets of the place, which according to legend once swallowed an entire house of the Suel early in the migrations.” LGJ1, p.18.

**20)** “These dwarven lords protected the wealth and resources of the southern Ulek hills for ages, establishing their lonely halls in the earth and interacting little with the native Flan who inhabited the flatlands.” LGG p.121.

**21)** “The Flan believe [sic] that ancient sorcerers shared blood with dragons and that this distant kinship was the source of their ability to manipulate magical power...The Suel and Baklunish, on the other hand, were far less superstitious than their neighbors.” LGJ4, p.11

**22)**

“S.D. 5094 Invoked Devastation of [sic] Rain of Colorless Fire strike.” WoG, p.9.

“CY -422 Invoked Devastation and Rain of Colorless Fire strike Suel and Bakluni lands.” FtARC #1.

The *Player's Guide to Greyhawk* (p.14 per the GreychronDEX (v4.2)) also gives the date of the Invoked Devastation as CY -422.

**23)** “The book’s sometimes lyrical prose tells of the Suloise survivors of the Rain of Colorless Fire, beginning with how Slerotin, the Last Mage of Power, led twelve tribes out of ruin and into the valley of the Sheldomar. As the story continues, the Magus, nearly consumed and at death’s door from his exertions, bids the most powerful noble houses to set aside their rivalries and unite to make a home in this valley and be at peace with its inhabitants. He prophesizes that they will one day combine with a noble people and together will lay the foundations of an exalted kingdom. Slerotin enjoins them to look for signs and portents, and to act upon them in the noblest tradition of their ancestors. The Last Mage of Power then quits the ken of mortals in a thunderclap that levels the surrounding trees and scatters them into the form of a glyph pointing toward the northeast, or so the tale goes.” LGG p.64.

The Twelve Tribes of Suel mentioned in the LGG are apparently an allusion to the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Slerotin is Moses, the prophet who leads the Tribes away from the divine destruction of Egypt (the Suel Imperium). Slerotin’s Tunnel through the Crystalmists is analogous to the parting of the Red Sea. Of the Twelve Tribes (Houses), we know the names of at least eight or nine and perhaps more. The Rhola and Neheli are obvious. The LGG mentions the Zelrad and Malhel (see **(17b)**). LGJ1 adds the Lizhal (pp. 15, 18, 19), Linth (p. 19), and Secunforth (although the Secunforth may be a junior branch of the Neheli, and so may not count as one of the Twelve, p.17). And the “Lost Tribe”, trapped in Slerotin’s Tunnel, is the Lerara (WoGG, p.27). On the [OKW](#) “History and Information” page, a document called “[The County of Cryllor - Public](#)” names three other Suel Houses. However, it is not explicitly indicated in this document whether these Houses were some of the Twelve that arrived with Slerotin, or whether they were Firstcomer Suel Houses that were incorporated into the Regency. In any event, they are the Bazrial (p.2), the Droleni (p.4), and the Mizzel (p. 7).

According to the GreychronDEX (v4.2), *Dragon* #241 (p.44) gives the date of the construction of Slerotin’s tunnel as CY -412. If this is an accurate quotation, the date would seem to be in error. CY -412 would be *ten years after* the date for the Invoked Devastation given in WoG, FtA, and PGG (see **(22)**, above), and thus too late for the migration.

“[CY] -422...With the Suel Empire about to die, Slerotin, The Last Mage of Power, has a vision of it’s [sic] impending doom. He gathers a number of Suel Houses together and leads them to the Hellfurnaces. He creates a passage under the Hellfurnaces into what will become the Yeomanry, and leads them through. One House is lost along the way, the

Lerara. Of the others, several scatter after entering the Sheldomar, including the Zelrad. At least one, the Malhel, is utterly destroyed as noted below. One, the Linth, remains, but is reduced in power and status. Two of them, the Rhola and Neheli, will establish the Kingdom of Keoland.)" "Grand History of the Sheldomar"; [CF!](#)

**24)** "The remaining Suel Houses fought the local Flan and abundant nonhumans for control of the rest of the land, which was dominated by the near-mythical Empire of Vecna in the north. The nobles of House Rhola made for the Azure Coast, where in

-368 CY they founded the city of Gradsul. While they began settling the southern coastal lands, the nobles of Neheli took their chances in the northern valleys, heeding the apparent words of the Last Mage and striking for the northeast. Their much feared Seers, who were among the few powerful apprentices of Slerotin to survive the cataclysm, closely advised the leaders of Neheli in all things. Nirole Dra was founded by them within ten years of Gradsul's creation. The next few seasons brought many changes to the land, as the Oeridian tribes entered the Sheldomar Valley from the north after a great upheaval appeared to bring down the Empire of Vecna from within. The Oeridians were the first people to encounter the Neheli, settling with the latter peacefully." LGG p.64.

"Duchy of Dorlin: These grasslands are the ancestral lands of the Neheli, an ancient Suel noble family whose roots date back to the migrations following the Twin Cataclysms." LGJ1, p.11

"Gradsul has always been a possession of the nobles of an ancient Suel house known as the Rhola, who founded it almost a thousand years ago following the migrations. Its name literally means "Haven of the Suel" in the ancient tongue of the settlers, and the territory more than lived up to this mantle, becoming the primary destination of many surviving Suel families escaping devastation in what would become the Sea of Dust." LGJ1, p.12.

"The Silent Ones are found in greatest numbers in Keoland, particularly in the north, the ancestral lands of the Neheli." LGJ4, p.11.

**25)** "Linth, located south of the city of Nirole Dra, is an old province dating back to the founding of the kingdom. While the population is primarily of Oeridian descent, the earldom is the home of the House of Linth, an obscure Suel house generally considered to be in decline." LGJ1, p. 19

"Within the Earldom of Linth, generations of mixed-blood humans have long railed against the Suel noble house that has oppressed them." Blurb for *KEO3-03 - Will of the People*; Year 593 Module Teasers on [OKW](#).

**26)** To a large extent, the difficulty of Vecna as an historical figure is because he has had to be "retro-fitted" into the canon. Vecna is not mentioned in the WoG or the WoGG. In fact, the only first-edition reference to Vecna I have seen is the entry in DMG1 (pp. 157, 161), which does not even specify Vecna as being from the World of Greyhawk. There are references to Vecna in *Dragon* #82 and #188, but I have not read these and have heard that they contain no specific information. Gary Holian has said that Vecna originally was not explicitly placed in Greyhawk, but he has subsequently been put there "by assumption".

While the Empire of Vecna was great, and surely would have affected the migrations of the Suel and Oerid, nothing is said of the matter in WoG because Vecna was not at that point in canon development assumed to be from Greyhawk. Later, with the publication of VL!, the realm of the Spidered Throne begins to be placed, at least in rumor. The FtAA still does not relate how the Empire affected the history of the Flanaess. Finally, the LGG claims that the realm of Vecna occupied the present-day Gran March.

Even the LGG does not specify the exact location and boundaries of the Vecnan Empire, nor has any other canon work. Indeed, the LGG asks rhetorically, "Where were the fabled realms ruled by... Vecna the Whispered One...?", then replies, "No one knows with any certainty" (p. 13).

From the fragmentary clues found in many sources, we can try to piece together the rough extent of the empire. *Vecna Lives!* describes a large empire that stood for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years (VL!, pp. 6, 7). *Vecna Reborn* does not specify a location, but identifies the language spoken by the followers of Kas as being "ancient Flan" (p. 12). *VR* further explains that Vecna was in the process of conquering the world of Oerth (p. 50)!

#### **Nyr Dyv Hypothesis:**

*Vecna Lives!* says that rumors place Vecna's Tower in the Nyr Dyv (p.6) and that the Empire included what is now the Duchy of Urnst (p.6). Vecna is *reputed* to have created the Bright Desert (p.6). Actually he did not, but that he is believed to have done so shows that he was known and is still remembered in the region. Thus, the Vecnan Empire



seems to have included the region around the Nyr Dyv, but how far it extended beyond this region is not specifically mentioned. VL! names a city destroyed by Vecna as "Fleeth", but does not place it in a specific location in the Flanaess.

The timelines presented in *Oerth Journal 1* identify Vecna as an Ur-Flan who studied magic with gray elves before turning to the worship of Tharizdun. In the "Flanae Talley" by Steve Wilson, the claim of Vecna's tower being in the Nyr Dyv is repeated, while in the "Olven Calender" Wilson stated as fact that Vecna created the Bright Desert. Thus, the Wilson OJ1 references treat as fact what VL! claims to be a rumor.

*The Adventure Begins* suggests that Vecna's Tower was actually north of the Nyr Dyv, or on the Isle of Woe in the Nyr Dyv, or perhaps south in the modern area of Urnst or the Bright Desert. However, the dubious scholarship involved in this section of the work makes these references better treated as false rumors. See Maldin's page at <http://www.melkot.com/mysteries/woe.html>

for a passionate critique of the material in *The Adventure Begins*. *Slavers* seems to repeat the ideas given in TAB, including the errors about Tzunk ruling the Isle of Woe. "The Isles are reputed to have been the home of the wizard-priest Tzunk, who used the Codex of the Infinite Planes to rule an empire. Other sources claim that the archlich Vecna ruled his ancient domain from an island in this area" (SLA p. 17). (Note that this quote comes from p.17, not 16 as stated in the Greychronindex v 4.2).

The Vecnan Empire would surely have affected the migrations, conquests, and general history of the Suel and Oerid. If one examines the migration routes of the Oerid (diagrams on WoG, p.10; FtARC #2), one can see that they appear to have been forced north of the Nyr Dyv. Since they had over a decade head start on the Suel (WoG, p.9; FtARC #1), it seems doubtful that the Suel were preventing their migration southward. Rather, I believe it was the Vecnan Empire that was excluding the Oerid from the southern central Flanaess. I believe that Kas allowed the Suel migrants, on the other hand, passage through the empire, and even allowed them to settle within it.

### **Rushmoors Hypothesis:**

In contrast to this location around the Nyr Dyv, the authors of the LGG have focused on the Rushmoors as being the center of Vecna's realm. The LGG itself says "Legend holds that, after the defeat of Vecna and the dissolution of his empire (placed in the northern part of the Sheldomar Valley in some accounts), the nascent Keolandish crown

created an order of knights in the frontier region" (p.50). And, "This territory also includes portions of Dim Forest and the Rushmoors, a haunted fen that has plagued the southern march for much of its long history" (*ibid*). Furthermore, "The remaining Suel Houses fought the local Flan and abundant nonhumans for control of the rest of the land, which was dominated by the near-mythical Empire of Vecna in the north...The next few seasons brought many changes to the land, as the Oeridian tribes entered the Sheldomar Valley from the north after a great upheaval appeared to bring down the Empire of Vecna from within" (p.64). Thus, while claiming the location of Vecna's Empire is not known with certainty (p.13), the LGG places it definitively north of Keoland around the Rushmoors, and uses it to explain the absence of early Oeridian settlement in the Sheldomar.

Erik Mona (Savant Iquander, co-author of the LGG) locates the Empire in an article originally posted to the RPGA Message Board and now available on [Canonfire!](#) (entitled Ancient History: *Vecna's Realm*). He places the "Occluded Empire" of Vecna as lying between the Rushmoors and the Nyr Dyv, forming a northern cap to the lands of Keoland. He specifically claims that Vecna ruled from the Rushmoors while Kas held power in "the now-ruined town of Tycheron, along the northern banks of the Volverdyva, not far from modern Dyvers." This would account for the deflection of the Oerid north around the Nyr Dyv as well as the abrupt halt to the northern travels of the Suel on the two western branches of their migrations.

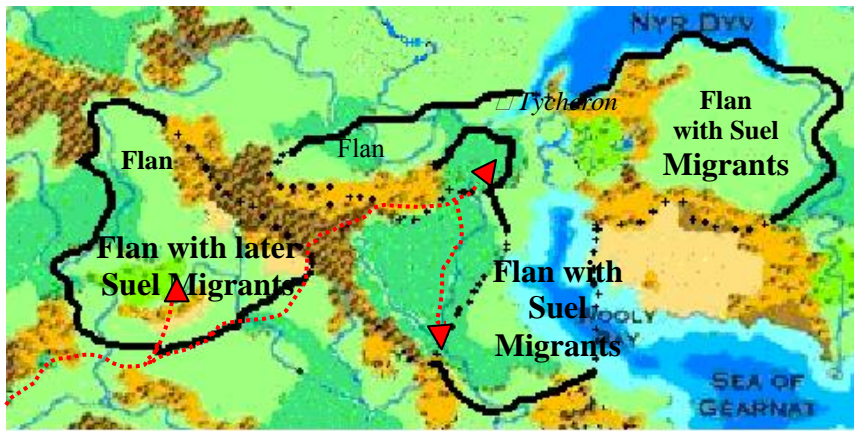
"Greyhawk Grimoires," in the section on Vecna's Ineffable Variorum, repeats the claim that "Uhas of Neheli's famed Chronicle of Secret Times...places Vecna in the Sheldomar Valley when the Kingdom of Keoland was still very young..." GG c. pp. 49, 50.


### **My Compromise Location:**

Putting all of this information together, I would contend that the original "core realm" of Vecna included the lands around the Rushmoors, principally what is now the Gran March. As Vecna's interest in ruling other areas grew, he extended his hegemony over the Flan tribes of the plains of Greyhawk, down the Wild Coast, and possibly into what would be the Duchy of Urnst. A rough map of the extent of his realm at the time of the migrations is shown below.

Greyhawk luminaries Sam Weiss and Erik Mona agree that Vecna's empire would not have included the Duchy of Urnst; Gary Holian has not committed one way or another. I have not read the history of the "Maure" people (presumably given in *Dungeon's* new version of Castle Maure) and so reserve my personal judgment on the matter.

Map of the Vecnan Empire



 Main Suel Migration Routes

## History and Nature of the Empire

In Steve Wilson's *Oerth Journal* 1 timelines, most of the history of Vecna is described as a four hundred year war to exterminate the gray elves who taught him magic. According to Wilson, the Flanaess was divided into four great elven Kingdoms, being Highfolk, Celene, Aliador, and Arrissa. Aliador ruled the plains around the Nyr Dyv from its core of cities in the Griff Mountains, and the Ur-Flan of the plains lived in vassalage to the elves. Vecna destroyed Aliador and slew its King in single combat. Only three elven cities in the Griff Mountains were spared Vecna's wrath, and these because the arch-lich could not find them before his demise.

This theme of Vecna's war against the elves is not taken up in published canon like the LGG, but it is reflected in the works of numerous fans. The former LG Duchy of Keoland Triad used a blend of LGG canon with Wilson's OJ history as the basis for their history of the Duchy (see the GDU in Appendix B). They say, "Although the truth of all things becomes blurred and forgotten with the passage of time, it is generally accepted that before the great migrations of the Suel and Oerid peoples, elves ruled great swathes of land from the Barrier Peaks in the west to the Corusks in the east. However, those great kingdoms suffered with the rise of Vecna and his Empire of the Spidered Throne and never again attained their former greatness. Although not common knowledge, it is held that the seat of Vecna's empire lay somewhere that is today occupied by the Rushmoors, and as such Vecna pushed the native occupants further and further before his armies of terror. One of the great elven kingdoms was called *Forodorn*, and it was unusual in that it was dominated by high elves, even though most of the seats of power in the kingdoms of yore were held by gray elves. Forodorn held rule from the Yatils southeast to the Lortmils, and so lie directly in Vecna's eastern path of aggression. Though Forodorn was powerful, the nascent empire of the Whispered One was terrible and mighty indeed, and all that remained of Lost Forodorn a century after their clash (known as The Sundering) lie to the north in the Vesve (later becoming the Highfolk) and to the southwest, pushed back into Celegnya (known in the Common tongue as Celene), which even in that day was a lesser bastion of gray elven power.

**Joe Katzman wrote of the elven struggles with Vecna in his "History of Taurusilmëa" (see Appendix C). In his work, "Taurusilmëa's forest realm once...stretched from the Volverdyva River south to the Drachensgrab Hills, and from the Sheldomar and Lort rivers over to the Selintan and Wooly Bay." A separate elven kingdom in the Dreadwood was called Mirgalen. With the rise of Vecna and his "Ykrathian Empire", Mirgalen was destroyed and**

**its survivors forced to hide underground. The much greater nation of Taurusilmëa resisted Vecna's advance, but was driven from the Sheldomar basin. Its remnants survived in the refuge of "Celien" (later Celene) by raising an arcane barrier, but lost the vast majority of its lands to Vecna and his minions. Joe served as a consultant to the Vecna graphic novel, a work which I unfortunately have never seen.**

The nature of Vecna's empire is almost completely unknown to us. Personally, I do not envision it to have been an empire in the usual sense of the word, with clear boundaries, an imperial bureaucracy, and a great standing army. Rather, I find it more likely that Vecna exercised dominion over a large number of otherwise independent Flan states. These states each paid tribute to the Spidered Throne and obeyed its commands, but were not themselves organized into a coherent whole. Vecna was little interested in political domination for its own sake, and there were no (human) powers in the western and central Flanaess that could oppose him. Thus, he had no need to rule a nation, *per se*. Instead, he controlled tribes and areas that attracted his attention, whether for their magical importance (the concentration of ley lines underlying the plains of Greyhawk, for example), or their supply of worshippers and sacrificial victims (the densely populated stretches of the modern-day areas of the Gran March and, possibly, the Duchy of Urnst). Thus various roving tribes, city-states, and nations of Flan all acknowledged Vecna as their Overlord (or even as their deity), but they did not consider themselves part of a political whole. Indeed, the various subject lands of the "empire" may have at times fought one another or may not have even known of one another's existence, particularly across the divide of the Lortmils and Gnarley Forest (see the map above).

Control of this hegemony was not administered through a formal apparatus of government. Early in his millennia-long rule, Vecna appeared personally (in the flesh or in visions) to the various Flan leaders, informing them of his will. Later, priests of Vecna served as his messengers. These were posted as advisors to the local Flan governments, stationed in the Flan cities or traveling with the roving tribes. They reported to the Rotting Tower *via* prayer and received their instructions through nightmares. In turn, they informed the Flan leaders what was expected of them. In the last two centuries of Vecna's rule, the arch-lich was seldom present in the Flanaess. Vecna had selected Kas as his lieutenant (VL!, p.7; DMG1, p.161) and had withdrawn from secular rule, concerning himself with planar travel and research into divine ascension (VL!, p.7). The priests of Vecna became a largely autonomous body, controlled by a

hierarchy of high priests who were in only occasional contact with the mind of Vecna. Their divine mandates to the Flan rulers, principally concerning the frequency and nature of sacrifices required, were increasingly supplemented by civil edicts issued by Kas from his capital of Tycheron, roughly in the center of Vecna's lands. As Kas grew in power and authority, he tried to exert greater control, and form a more unified state among the fractious Flan subjects.

Thirty years before the Twin Cataclysms, tribes of Oeridian migrants displaced by the escalating Suel-Baklun conflict began appearing on the margins of the empire. They raided or displaced the native Flan as they moved. Kas did not like their fierce loyalty to their tribes and tribal gods (LGG p.6), and he ordered that they be turned back. The various Flan rulers beholden to Vecna resisted the incursions of the Oerid, with Kas orchestrating a more-or-less coordinated defense. As a result, the Oerid were forced north around the empire, moving through the lands of unaffiliated Flan.

A decade later saw the first arrival of Suel migrants fleeing the same conflicts. Unlike the Oerid, the Suel were corrupt, wily, and deferential (2). Kas accepted them into the empire, allowing them to pass through the Flan lands and even to settle. The Suel founded cities in the Empire, such as Greyhawk City (WoG, p.23, FFF p.34), the lost Suloise City of the Suss (WoG, pp.42, 58; FtAA, p.54; TAB, p.55; LGG pp.88, 142; "Suss Forest" section of the [Geography of Keoland](#) page of the [OKW](#)), Naer's Well (Narwell) and Hardby (personal communication from Erik Mona, who may have been referring to TAB p.56). Note the dominance of the Suel racial strain among the humans of the Wild Coast (WoG, p.14; FtARC #2).

Kas thought to use the firstcomer Suel and their seers as dupes in his growing plans to overthrow the absent Vecna. The Suel, for their part, feigned loyalty to Kas for a generation until they had become well established in the lands of the empire. Many then simply ignored his edicts, entering a state of passive rebellion. By the time the Neheli had reached the northern Sheldomar shortly after the Rain of Colorless Fire, they found a number of firstcomer Suel tribes openly refusing the authority of Kas. Since Vecna had not been seen for a generation, the Neheli assumed that the tales of the Whispered One were merely Flan superstition. The Neheli quickly assumed leadership of the rebellious Suel and busily set about conquering the local Flan to establish a homeland for themselves. While Kas had heretofore failed to report the Suel situation to the planar-traveling Vecna, the Neheli massacres of Vecnan priests quickly attracted the attention of the arch-lich. As the power of Vecna began to manifest in the Flanaess, the initially easy conquests of the

Neheli turned into a bitter fight for survival. Fiends and abominations, hordes of Flan undead, and priests of increasingly powerful ability beset them. VL! says that the Neheli struggled with the "previous lord", Vecna, and his lieutenant, Kas (p.22). I take Vecna's title as "previous lord" to refer to his long absence, abdication of rule to Kas, and/or the state of rebellion of the firstcomer Suel. After several years of struggle the Neheli abandoned their stillborn northern homeland and retreated south to join their Rholan kinsmen in the lower Sheldomar. The Neheli shame at this defeat might explain their reluctance to let the episode be recounted in a public history (VL!, p.22). After the victory over the Neheli, Kas consolidated his hold on the Empire and brought the remaining Suel firmly under his control. His hubris, fed by his sword (DMG1, p.161), was then at its height, and he dared to challenge Vecna. As a result of this challenge, both perished, and the world was made brighter thereby (DMG1, p.161; VL!, p.3)

In Gary Holian's article "Silent Sorcery" in the LGJ4, the *Chronicle of Secret Times* is said to claim that the Neheli made a deal with Vecna to exchange information in return for peace (p. 12). The fact that this is called a "truce" might imply that it came at the end of the Neheli conflict with the Vecnan Empire. Thus when the Neheli-led revolt had become serious enough to demand Vecna's personal attention, the seers of the Neheli negotiated their withdrawal from the region. Perhaps, as posited above, Vecna had been so far removed from the Prime at the time of the migrations that the Neheli did not believe he existed, or still existed, until their actions awakened him to the events in "his" Empire. When the Neheli realized what they were actually up against, discretion proved the better part of valor.

Sam Weiss, in his "The Grand History of the Sheldomar" on [CE!](#), says:

"[CY]-357 Empire of Vecna falls as Kas the Bloody-Handed slays the Whispered One, the Lord of the Spider Throne: History: The Empire of Vecna controlled the lands just south of the Fals Gap. This kept the Oeridians from moving south and the Suel from moving north as long as he was there. It also limited the expansion of the Neheli, making their choice of the northern part of the valley for their new homeland questionable. It is unlikely they foresaw the fall of Vecna, and more likely they intended to sell out, and find a way to get free later. The treachery of Kas changed that."

In contrast to my contention that the empire of Vecna (under Kas) accepted Suel migrants, Erik Mona (in his "Ancient History: Vecna's Realm", available on [CE!](#)) postulated that the Vecnan Empire was Flan only, and accepted no Suel. He further claimed that upon meeting the Vecnan Empire, the Keoish King prepared an invasionary

army in the “Keoish capital”. A military-religious branch of knights was created to battle the lich and sent north. Finding Vecna already destroyed by the hand of Kas, the knights instead founded the Gran March. However, it is clear that the period immediately after the Rhola and Neheli migrations would be too early for a Keoish King, Kingdom, or capital. By the time Keoland was a kingdom, the arriving tide of Oerid would surely have informed the Keoish of the fall of Vecna. And indeed, the LGG itself puts the date of the founding of Gran March much later, at -161 CY (p.65).

At a Greytalk chat session in December of 2004, Gary Holian explained that “Vecna’s Realm” was written before the LGG writers had outlined the history of the Sheldomar, and Erik Mona now agrees that the aftermath of the Neheli-Vecna conflict was too early for a Keoish King, Kingdom, or capital. The now accepted origin of the Knights of the March is that they were formed to “clean up” the northern region of the lingering evil presence of Vecna well after his death.

The “Flanae Talley” by Steve Wilson of OJ1 claims “440 FT Vecna erects a black tower in the middle of the Nyr Dyv... (3805 SD/2752 OC/-1711 CY)”. In the “Olven Calender” Wilson says “2906 OC... Vecna calls on the powers of Tharizdun and unleashes a magical burning force which causes the Bright desert [sic]... (3763 SD/-1557 CY)”. Finally, the destruction of Vecna is described in the “Flanae Talley”; “1000 FT Because of the energies he expended in the attack upon the City of Summer Stars, Vecna is weakened. Kas, aspiring to Vecna’s position, is able to vanquish Vecna. Vecna’s body is destroyed, except for his hand and eye. Kas dies in this battle as well. Some of Vecna’s followers found a “Cult of Vecna”. Vecna’s empire collapses. (4374 SD/3321 OC/-1151 CY)”. The main problem with these references is the dates. Vecna’s destruction is represented as having occurred about 800 years before the Suel migrations. Thus the OJ1 timelines are in marked contradiction to the VL! references above that describe the clash between the Neheli and the Vecnan Empire. It is generally recognized that Wilson’s OJ1 article should be treated as incorrect rumor, at least as regards many features of its description of Vecna.

**27)** Gary Gyax painted a more-or-less flattering portrait of the Oerid in his WoG. See, for example, p.8 of that work. Some have suggested that is because he was writing “in character” as the Nyronian sage, “Pluffet Smedger.” I would point out that only the WoGG was “written” by Smedger. The WoG, with its history of the Flanaess, was “written” by the “Savant-Sage”, a resident of Greyhawk City of unknown racial extraction.

In contrast to Gyax, Carl Sargent emphasized the brutish, warlike aspects of Oeridian culture. Notice that in FtARC #1 he used “Suloise migrations” but “Oeridian invasions”. Furthermore, he wrote that “The Oeridians were fierce invaders. They drove everyone else, Flan and Suel, before them...For two centuries they fought the Suel and the fragmented humanoids for possession of the central lands of the Flanaess. The Oeridians incurred the enmity of the Flanae and the demi-humans of the lands as well.” FtAA, p.3.

Sargent also wrote, “That castle itself is said to be built on the ruins of a high elven city razed by Oeridians nearly nine hundred years ago...” IIE, pp.37, 38.

The LGG takes a somewhat more balanced view, but still emphasizes the warlike nature of the Oerid. “Ancient Oeridians were fierce warriors, yet they also were self-sacrificing and loyal. These traits are not as evident today, but many Oeridians do remain temperamental and prone to violence. They have a preference for strict social order, usually fitting themselves at the top, and their military traditions are strong. Aggression is often channeled into political conflict and subterfuge. The Oeridian skill at warfare is unsurpassed, and many folk have a hard-learned respect for it. In peacetime, they are practical, hard working, and not inclined to intellectual pursuits.” LGG p.6

“The Oeridians are typically olive skinned people with brown hair. While most were extremely barbaric and militant...” This quote can be found on the [OKW](#), on both the [overview of Keoland](#) page and on the [Characters in Keoland](#) article of the “History and Information” page.

**28)** Besides their strong sense of cultural identity, the Rhola and Neheli were unified by their reliance on the Silent Ones, a group of powerful mages who advised all the noble Suel families. These seers perpetually counseled unity, echoing the last words of their master Slerotin.

“When the Suel tribes first emerged into the Sheldomar Valley, the major noble houses settled the land quickly and peacefully under the guidance of their seers. These were ostensibly gifted individuals who were former apprentices of the Mages of Power. These sorcerers acted as sages and wise men for the migrants and soon banded together to form of [sic] a society to protect their secrets.” LGJ4 p.12.

In contrast to the Suel, the only intertribal societies among the Flan of the southern Sheldomar were the loose associations of priests and druids. While these did act as

unifying and protective cultural forces, they were traditionally loath to involve themselves in local politics, and left secular affairs to the many independent tribal chieftains. See, for example, the article "The Religious History of Perrenland" on [CE!](#)

While their may have been some feuding among the various Suel Houses, the fact the Nirole Dra has never in its existence seen a battle is testament to the fundamental unity of the good Suel. Given the strategic and symbolic importance of the city, anyone who wished to move against the Neheli prior to the Great Council would have made some attempt to sack the city. "In nine centuries [Nirole Dra] has never been besieged or touched by warfare. It sports only token walls and fortifications and most of these are adornments that only add to the city's beauty. Nirole Dra's quarters are separated by hanging gardens instead of walls, one more splendid than the next." LGJ1, p.10.

**29)** Earth history is replete with instances of nomadic horse warrior-herders (often fair skinned) raiding and sometimes conquering agricultural peoples (often darker skinned). Generally after a period of turmoil, the horsemen become a ruling elite and the natives a peasant class. Consider the Huns and Magyars in Europe, the Aryans in Greece and India, the Moghuls in northern India, the Mongols in China and eastern Europe, the Semites and Hittites in the Middle East, the Malagasy of Madagascar, the Sioux in the northern Great Plains, and the Apache and Kiowa in the southern Great Plains. Any one of these could be models for Suloise and Oeridian treatment of the Flan – first raiding, escalating until complete conquest, then settlement and rule, accompanied by the development of a class system that was strongly influenced by race.

**30)** "History records that it was only a few years after their arrival in the Flanaess that the refugees fought each other and went their separate ways, disregarding the Last Mage's words. The powerful Zelrad family withdrew to the northeast, departing from the Sheldomar Valley entirely to settle in what became South Province of the Great Kingdom...Similar groups suffered other malign fates, while others fled across the Azure Sea, never to return." LGG p.64.

"According to the *Chronicle of Secret Times*, however, the real nobility of these events was somewhat questionable. The various Suel tribes fought amongst each other for dominance almost immediately upon entering the Flanaess. Many of the lesser tribes such as the Zelrad were driven out of the valley entirely, to settle elsewhere. The Rhola and

Neheli went their separate ways, settling different stretches of the Sheldomar River...The Malhel, a small though powerful noble house refused to give quarter to the other Suel houses or to depart the Sheldomar Valley as did the other lesser houses who disagreed with the Neheli and Rhola." LGJ4 p.12

**31)** As one example, consider the nation of Jurnre. "Immris and his people entered into alliance with the local halflings and gnomes, and with them founded a citadel on what they dubbed the Hill of Stars above the banks of the Kewl River. Many of Immris's troops and servants were Oeridian, and they were joined by Oeridian and Flan tribes who were attracted to his relatively peaceful and stable realm. In time the new society was augmented by a steady stream of refugee Suelites [sic] who had repented of war. Immris's expert leadership and the shared dangers of those times welded these diverse peoples into a city and nation they called Jurnre." FoI, p.25

"According to ancient practice, the members of the city guard wear face paint and tartan kilts indicating their rank and ward - apparently an echo of the time when ordinary troops were largely Flan and Oeridian tribesmen." FoI, p.27

Jurnre served as an early shining example of racial tolerance and harmony, and set the tone for developments in the rest of the future Keoland. Even today the people of Jurnre are the most "mixed" and the least "Suel", including the rulers. Presumably, this is why the city has earned the particular hatred of the Scarlet Brotherhood. "Plotting the destruction of the heretical city of Junre is a secondary priority for the area." SB, p.23.

Where did Immris get his original Oeridian servants and troops if he had just left the old Suloise empire and the Oerid were not yet in the Sheldomar? I would assume that they were members of his household before he left. As the Suel in general employed mercenaries (**10**), and as the Oerid were displaced long before the Rhola migrated (**17a**), the good houses may have already had some Oeridian dependents before their migrations. Consider also, "The Suel Imperium was governed by contesting noble houses, and the fleeing bands that entered the Flanaess were often lead by nobles with their families and many retainers." LGG p.8.

**32)** The climate of the Tilvanot Plateau is said to have "resembled that of the lost Suel homeland with its steady but cool temperature and misty skies." FoI, p.105. See also SB, p.33 for details of the weather of the Tilvanot Peninsula.

Central Keoland would be hotter than this with more, albeit strongly seasonal, precipitation and flooding in the river valleys (see (14), above).

### 33)

a) "Much of what is bought and sold in Jurnre is derived from the nearby countryside: rice; oranges, lemons, and limes; karafruit; cheeses; tobacco; peppers; cotton; fine lumber from the County's carefully managed woodlands; and the powerfully sweet honey derived from the local citrus orchards as well as the yet more powerful mead which is brewed from it." FoI, p.25

Sam Weiss has stated his opinion that the Flan, as Native American analogs, were growing only those crops available in the pre-Columbian New World (thus corn, but not rice or wheat). I don't see the need to drag real world biogeography into Greyhawk, but I do think it is a reasonable assumption that the Flan of the lower Sheldomar did not use draft animals, even though the halflings around them did. This fact alone would restrict many of their crops to "American" ones, not "Eurasian" field grains.

b) "...a black dragon of considerable size razed the city [of Steffenmoor] in 202 CY. The city boasted a large network of dams along the Sheldomar, and the beast did so much damage that the ten square miles of land around the city became a field of muck" pp.6, 19 of [The Earldom of Linth - Player's Primer](#) on the "History and Information" page of the [OKW](#).

### 34)

Gradsul:

"The nobles of House Rhola made for the Azure Coast, where in -368 CY they founded the city of Gradsul... Nirole Dra was founded by [the Neheli] within ten years of Gradsul's creation." LGG p.64

"Gradsul has always been a possession of the nobles of an ancient Suel house known as the Rhola, who founded it almost a thousand years ago following the migrations. Its name literally means "Haven of the Suel" in the ancient tongue of the settlers, and the territory more than lived up to this mantle, becoming the primary destination of many surviving Suel families escaping devastation in what would become the Sea of Dust." LGJ1 p.12

"[CY] -368 Gradsul founded: History: The capital of the Rhola, this is the first major settlement in what would become Keoland. It is located at the mouth of the Sheldomar

River, giving it control over half of the valley, as well as being an excellent deep water port for control over the western Azure Sea." "Grand History of the Sheldomar"; [CF!](#)

#### Nirole Dra:

"The sleepy capital of the Kingdom of Keoland has constituted an independent territory since the formal founding of the nation. Nirole Dra (pop. 25,000) was established soon after the migrations by the nobles of House Neheli as a governing demesne for the Duchy of Dorlin. However, its active control eventually passed to a bureaucracy appointed by the council of Nirole Dra when it became the capital of the united kingdom some decades later. It is one of the oldest and most impressive standing cities in the Flanaess." LGJ1, p.10

"[CY] -359 Nirole Dra Founded: History: The capital of the Neheli until it was given over as capital of the Kingdom. It is ideally set to dominate the central part of the valley." "Grand History of the Sheldomar"; [CF!](#)

#### Jurnre:

FoI is set in CY 576 (p.110). It mentions the founding of the city of Jurnre "nearly nine hundred years ago" (p.25) as one of the first post-Devastation cities in the Flanaess. This would put the founding date of the city at -324 CY at the oldest. However, Immris himself, a migrant from the Imperium, seems to have taken part in the founding of the city (see the FoI, p.25 quote in (31), above). This would make Immris a very old patriarch indeed, if his journey to the Sheldomar had occurred 100 years before, shortly after the Invoked Devastation (22). It seems more likely that the city is older, a contemporary of Nirole Dra. It could have been merely a large a market town until the later date given in FoI, however. Thus we can assume that the FoI date actually commemorates the recognition of Jurnre as a true city, not its actual founding by Immris.

Furthermore, "when Rauxes was little more than a collection of huts, Jurnre was already a city with stone walls and paved streets" (see the FoI, p.25 quote in (31), above).

**35)** "Immris and his people entered into alliance with the local halflings and gnomes, and with them founded a citadel on what they dubbed the Hill of Stars above the banks of the Kewl River." FoI, p.25

**36)** "The province is administered from Dorglast Castle (pop. 1080), an ancient fortress that completely encircles a small township some 90 miles northwest of Nirole

Dra...Dorglast Castle is a sprawling walled complex formed by a half-dozen small citadels connected by a labyrinthine set of walls and towers. Reportedly, this jumble of edifices comprises no fewer than two thousand chambers, a figure which may or may not include the vast dungeons below the town...The most prominent of the citadels and the first to be built nearly a millennium ago is the palace of the duke, called Gollunfane. The other citadels hold numerous apartments, the living quarters of various lesser nobility, many of whom rule minor provinces of Dorlin in abstentia." LGJ1, p.11

"Neheli's Own – NPC's", "Neheli's Own – Nehelian Horse Rider (Prestige Class)", and "Neheli's Own – Past and Present".

**37)** In such instances, the length of time a family had been settled, or the number of its victories and defeats, would be important. Thus the Neheli had good reason to hide their history of migration and conflict with Vecna and Kas, and most noble families were complicit in the public avowal (and private sequestration) of copies of *The Chronicle of Secret Times*.

**38)** "The primary training base of the Duchy's forces is known as Axeguard. This fortified town is centrally located at the intersection of the Sheldomar Pike and the Duke's Road, and the wide open grasslands are excellent for training young horsemen and raising steeds to serve in the cavalry." GDU, Military Section (see Appendix B).

"The March of Blerfield is horse country - wide-open plains roamed by herds of Keobreds, warhorses that are world renowned for their speed, stamina, and intelligence. Blerfield is located in the grasslands of central Keoland with its southern and western borders formed by the great curve of the Good Hills. Plenty of small streams, ponds, and lakes are found in this area. Its northern and eastern borders extended out into the heartland of the kingdom, with its northeastern corner being only about 90 miles from Nirole Dra. Farming communities replace horse country in this region." [Provinces of Keoland](#), on the "History and Information" page of the [OKW](#). Note that the description of Blerfield is *not* taken directly from the LGJ1, unlike the majority of [Provinces of Keoland](#). Blerfield is region (15) on the map of Keoland included with LGJ1.

**39)** The elite cavalry who rode to defend the honor of the Neheli house later adopted the name of "Neheli's Own" when they were incorporated into the national forces of the Regency. Marc Tizoc González has written four articles about them on [Canonfire!](#) Look for "Neheli's Own – Magic",



## Appendix A - "What Everyone Needs to Know About Keoland"

By Sam Weiss

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An earlier draft of this appeared on the former official Living Greyhawk Keoland website in 2003.

This more complete, but still unfinished, version is from the personal notes of the author and does not currently appear on the new Keoland website.

Geography  
Knowledge (Geography)  
DC +5 for Knowledge (History) or (Local)

The Country  
DC 5  
The country is called Keoland

DC 10  
it is comprised of 23 provinces, 2 semi-autonomous vassals, a capital and royal district, and a new protectorate  
it can be roughly divided into 8 regions  
it is in the southwest part of the Flanaess

DC 15  
<insert names> are the provinces, etc.  
the borders with the Yeomanry are currently disputed

Rivers  
DC 10  
the Sheldomar River is the eastern border  
the Javan River is the western border  
the Zol River is in the Heartlands

DC 15  
the Sheldomar begins in the Rushmoors  
it is navigable to cogs as far as Nirole Dra  
it is navigable to barges as far as Shibolet  
it is extremely wide, a mile and more south of Nirole Dra  
it has three main tributaries:  
the Lort River between the Gran March and Duchy of Ulek which joins in the Barony of Mill Creek  
the Kewl River between the Duchy and County of Ulek which joins at the northern part of the Duchy of Dorlin  
the Old River between the County and Principality of Ulek which joins about 30 miles south of the Kewl River at the  
town of Keaford in the Duchy of Dorlin  
seven provinces and Nirole Dra are on the Sheldomar:

Duchy of Dorlin  
County of Marlbridge  
Barony of Mill Creek  
Barony of Axewood  
Earldom of Linth  
Barony of Riverwatch  
Duchy of Gradsul

the Javan begins in the Barrier Peaks  
it is the longest river in the Flanaess  
it is navigable to cogs as far as Cryllor in the County of Cryllor  
it is somewhat navigable to barges to where it meets the Realstream  
it has three main tributaries;  
the Realstream which flows through Bissel, the Gran March and Geoff and joins just beyond the border in the Oytwood  
the Davish River which flows through Sterich and joins near Flen  
the Hool River which flows through the Hold of the Sea Princes and joins in the Hool Marsh  
six provinces and Westkeep lie along the Javan:  
March of Mandismoor  
County of Flen  
County of Cryllor  
Barony of Westgate  
Viscounty of Nume Eor  
Viscounty of Salinmoor

the Zol begins in the Good Hills  
it disappears underground in the middle of the Kingdom  
it flows through three provinces and the Good Hills Union;  
March of Sedenna  
March of Middlemead  
County of Nimlee

Seas  
DC 10  
the Azure Sea is part of the southern border  
the Sheldomar and Javan Rivers both flow into the Azure Sea  
two provinces lie along the Azure Sea;  
Duchy of Gradsul  
Viscounty of Salinmoor

DC 15  
the Principality of Ulek and the Hold of the Sea Princes border the Azure Sea  
the Kingdom battles the Scarlet Brotherhood for control of the Azure Sea  
there are some monsters in the Azure Sea

## Swamps

DC10

Rushmoors are the northern border

Hool Marsh is part of the southern border

DC15

the Rushmoors are claimed by the Gran March

the Rushmoors have an Evil reputation

two provinces border the Rushmoors;

March of Mandismoor

Duchy of Dorlin

portions of the Hool Marsh are a protectorate of Keoland  
portions of the Hool Marsh are claimed by the Yeomanry  
the Hool Marsh has a reputation for being full of  
monsters and bandits

two provinces, the Dreadwood Protectorate, and the city  
of Westkeep border the Hool Marsh;

Viscounty of Nume Eor

Viscounty of Salinmoor

DC 20

Geoff and Sterich border the Rushmoors

foul monsters like undead and lycanthropes are rumored  
to come from the Rushmoors (never discussed openly)

lizardfolk live in the Hool Marsh

DC 25

the village of Saltmarsh had an alliance with a group of  
lizardfolk before the wars

DC 30

Vecna ruled from the Rushmoors (a capital offense to  
mention in Keoland)

## Hills

DC 10

the Good Hills are parallel to the Javan River

the Good Hills Union occupies most of the hills

the Good Hills extend into the Dreadwood

Gnomes and Halflings are the most common inhabitants  
of the Good Hills

DC 15

nine provinces lie in or border the Good Hills;

March of Mareman

March of Sedenna

March of Middlemead

March of Blerfield

County of Flen

County of Cryllor

Barony of Sayre

Barony of Grayhill

Barony of Westgate

DC 30

there are connections to the Underoerth in the Good Hills  
(never mentioned openly)

## Forests

DC10

the Dreadwood is to the south, from the Javan River to  
the Azure Sea

the Axewood is to the north of Niole Dra along the  
Sheldomar River

DC 15

the Dreadwood has a very bad reputation

the Dreadwood is a protectorate of the Kingdom, ruled  
by wood elves and most of the people there are wood elves

a special group called the Dreadwalkers protects the  
Dreadwood

the Barony of Grayhill is fully within the Dreadwood  
where it meets the Good Hills

six other provinces border the Dreadwood;

Duchy of Dorlin

Barony of Raya

Barony of Sayre

Barony of Westgate

Viscounty of Nume Eor

Viscounty of Salinmoor

the Axewood has a reputation as a faerie wood  
the Axewood is half within Keoland and half within the  
Duchy of Ulek

it is ruled by a half-elf and has mostly wood elves and  
high elves living in it

DC 20

unnatural things live in the Dreadwood (borders on  
breaking the law)

a secret group called the Dreadstalkers lead the  
Dreadwalkers

DC 25

spider creatures live in the Dreadwood

some of the spiders are intelligent (forbidden to be  
discussed)

DC 30

the House of Malhel destroyed itself in the Dreadwood  
after calling up unnatural energies (absolutely forbidden to  
be discussed)

## Neighboring Countries

DC 10

to the east along the Sheldomar from north to south;

Duchy of Ulek

County of Ulek

Principality of Ulek

to the west along the Javan from north to south;

Grand Duchy of Geoff

March of Sterich

Yeomanry League

to the north;

Gran March (which also lies along the Sheldomar)

to the south

Hold of the Sea Princes

\*In Keoland, the Hold of the Sea Princes is called the Monmurg Lands or the Principality of Monmurg

DC 15

beyond the eastern countries is a great mountain range called the Hellfurnaces or Crystalmists at different points

beyond the western countries is a small mountain range called the Lortmils

beyond the Gran March is the March of Bissel

beyond the Principality of Ulek is the Pomarj

beyond the Hold of the Sea Princes and the Azure is the Amedio Jungle

DC 20

beyond the Hellfurnaces is the legendary land everyone came from

beyond Bissel is Ket to the east and Veluna to the west;

Ket is an evil land that invaded Bissel during the wars

Veluna is a good land that helped Bissel during the wars

beyond the Lortmils is the elven land of Celene

## Regions

DC 10

The Rhola Lands are;

Duchy of Gradsul

Earldom of Gand

Barony of Raya

Barony of Sayre

The Neheli Lands are;

Duchy of Dorlin

County of Marlbridge

Barony of Axewood

Barony of Mill Creek

Barony of Dilwych

The Heartlands are;

March of Mandismoor

March of Mareman

March of Sedenna

March of Middlemead

March of Blerfield

The Linth lands are;

Earldom of Linth

County of Nimlee

Barony of Riverwatch

The Javan Counties are;

County of Flen

County of Cryllor

Barony of Greyhill

Barony of Westgate

The Good Hills Union

The Dreadlands are;

Dreadwood Protectorate

Viscounty of Salinmoor

Viscounty of Nume Eor

The Principality of Monmurg contains the city of Westkeep

Politics

Knowledge (Nobility)

Or DC +5 for Knowledge (History) or (Local)

DC 5

The King is Kimbertos Skotti Lizhal

the name of their Provincial Ruler.

the name of their local ruler.

the names of important people and officials in their home village.

DC10

He has a powerful magical advisor

His name is Lashton.

the names of all the local rulers of their province.

The Council of Niolo Dra is the highest council of the land

Nobles, Guildmasters and some special organizations make up the Council

there is a lot of plotting and numerous factions in the Council

Guilds and Crafts

Craft (<specific Craft>) or Profession (<specific Profession>) or Knowledge (Local)

DC 5

Everyone will know the name of the local outfitters.

DC10/20

the names of Guildmasters

DC 5/30

the name of your Master if an apprentice  
the name of his other apprentices and journeymen

History

Knowledge (History) or (Local)  
or DC +5 for Knowledge (Nobility)

DC 10

the Kingdom is nearly 1000 years old  
the Kingdom used to rule all the surrounding countries

DC 15

the King wants to get those countries to be part of the  
kingdom again

Culture

Knowledge (Local)  
or DC +5 Knowledge (History)

Everyone knows arcane spellcasters have to be watched  
closely for signs of witchcraft.

Everyone knows there is no state recognized and  
supported religion.

Everyone knows religious groups are restricted in leasing  
land.

Note on Profession (<specific Guild>)

This covers information and abilities relevant to running  
a successful Guild business. How to open a shop, pay taxes,  
keep records, train apprentices, bribe officials, and other  
direct, non-crafting related activities.

Note on Knowledge (<specific Guild> or (Keoland Guilds))

This covers information on who is who within a guild,  
what they control, where they get their supplies, and other  
indirect, non-crafting related activities.

These two skills overlap slightly. Neither can substitute  
for, or provide any benefits to, a Craft skill. They could  
however provide synergy benefits for interaction skills when  
dealing with members of a particular Guild.

## Appendix B - A Guide to the Duchy of Ulek

This article was produced under the auspices of the former Living Greyhawk Duchy of Ulek Triad. This Triad has subsequently been disbanded and the state of Georgia folded into the Gran March region. I was given permission to reproduce the article here by Russ Timm, who is its primary author. It may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without his express permission. Russ sent me the article as a PDF file, and I have taken the liberty of reformatting it for Word.

# A Guide to the Duchy of Ulek

Version 1.1  
February 24th, 2002

Welcome to the Duchy of Ulek, home to the LIVING GREYHAWK Southeast Region III, the great state of Georgia. Here you will find a land come to be dominated by high elves only recently by their reckoning of years, a land that hasn't seen large-scale violence in over a century when the legions of humanoids were driven out of the Lortmils in the Hateful Wars. This makes the Duchy a stark contrast to many of the other places in the Flanaess, a land where the weary may rest and retire in peace...at least until our Triad got a hold of it.

The first document that you will want to browse is the Duchy of Ulek Regional Gazetteer, found below. This document should give you, whether a player or referee, a concise overview of the Duchy as of 591 C.Y. This document will probably be updated in the future as the Triad's mad schemes and plots come to fruition in the years to follow.

The particular documents that detail various significant towns and cities in the Duchy are modeled after the "Cities of the Heartlands" found in the Forgotten Realms Adventures Hardcover. Here then is an explanation taken from that valuable resource and modified where necessary.

**Who Rules:** This person or group holds official and bureaucratic power.

**Who Really Rules:** Often the same as the official ruler, but this person or group is the one who makes it all work and makes sure things are done or not done.

**Population:** Figures are based on the last census, head count, or tax rolls, with additional figures for particular situations.

**Major Products:** This entry lists the items the city and/or surrounding area is known for. It is not an exhaustive or exclusive list, though a traveler will usually be able to find these items under normal circumstances.

**Armed Forces:** This section details both the official and unofficial military organizations, including militia, guard, national army, and loyal mercenary bands that make the city or town their home.

**Notable Mages & Sorcerers:** This section gives a brief description of the prominent arcane spellcasters that can usually be found in the city or call the city their home. Adventuring wizards and sorcerers are often out on their own missions, and those who have settled down often carry a heavy backlog of requests from local officials and merchants.

**Notable Churches:** These are listed in descending order of importance in the community. Usually the high priest of the temple is given a full description. The number of supporting clergy is often given, but not their exact specifications. A temple has, in addition, an unlisted number of general worshippers and supporters. Those churches listed in this section generally have a congregation consisting of at least five percent of the particular city or town. Shrines are also listed, and are staffed by fewer than five priests if any. There may be other shrines, but those listed have been present in the city or town for at least five years.

**Notable Rogues' and Thieves' Guilds:** This section concerns itself with prominent and long-standing guilds, in addition to those larger secret societies and organizations which operate covertly, or overtly, in the city or town's daily life. It does not include independent operators, street gangs, or aspiring rogue organizations.

**Equipment Shops:** These shops are listed as full, partial, or poor in quality. A full listing means that all standard items selling for 500 suncrowns or less is readily available in the city, and more expensive items can be acquired or manufactured for those willing to wait or pay the price. Some items may be readily available and others not available at all depending upon the location. A partial listing means that most equipment selling for 100 suncrowns or less is available. More expensive items may be available, but may also cost much more than you might pay for them elsewhere. A poor listing means that only items worth 10 suncrowns or less will be found here and then in limited quantities. Anything worth up to 100 suncrowns might be found only rarely and nothing worth more than 100 suncrowns will be found in this shop.

**Adventurer's Quarters & Taverns:** This section refers to the inns, boarding houses, bars, and taverns that cater to the wandering trade of monster-slayers and mercenaries. It is

not an exhaustive list, but deals with the most prominent of these places. Quarters are given a double listing for quality and price. Quality of an establishment is a reflection of the privacy and furnishing of the rooms, the worthiness of the kitchen, the cleanliness of the help and the amount of water in the ale. Excellent implies first class accommodations.

For inns, private rooms with baths; for bars and taverns, excellent food and drink. Good means fine quarters and food; not the best, but above average. Rooms may or may not be private, with a communal bath. Fair indicates average to below average quarters, passable and filling meals, cheap drinks. Poor means the quality is well below average – thin walls, watered drinks, surly help. Rooms are cleaned yearly whether they need it or not. Price indicates how much everything costs. Expensive establishments charge double the going rate, while cheap establishments are half price. Moderate is an indicator of goods and services that are priced approximately as indicated in the Player's Handbook.

**Important Characters:** This section describes those important individuals who have not been previously mentioned in earlier sections. Sages are also included in this section, and unless otherwise detailed, assume a sage has at least fifteen ranks in the appropriate Knowledge Skill(s).

**Important Features in Town:** This section includes all the notable landmarks in town not covered elsewhere. It may also include more details about a particular landmark described earlier.

**Local Lore:** This section provides some of the history of the city, as well as current problems, conflicts, and potential adventure ideas.

## ULEK, DUCHY OF

**Ruler:** His Noble Radiance, Duke Grenowin Araglahel of Ulek (NG male elf Wiz 11/Ftr 2)

**Capital:** Tringlee (pop. 14,500/ hex S4 –107)

**Major Settlements:** Adurlell (4,300/Y4 – 107), Axegard (13,200/Y4 –109), Forfaladuin (3,200/U4 – 111),

Numbelnost (4,800/ W4 –109), Waybury (11,500/Z4 – 107)

**Population:** 168,646

**Demi-Humans:** Half-elves (125,504), High Elves (55,889), Sylvan Elves (18,629), Gnomes (11,766),

Halflings (7,844), Other (3,922) \*

**Humanoids:** None (including half-orcs)

**Resources:** Foodstuffs, Cloth, Gold, Electrum, Silver, Gems (I-II)

**Predominant Alignment(s):** CG\*, NG, N, CN

**HISTORY:** The history of the Duchy of Ulek, (or *Lothromenoron* as it is called in the Elvish tongue) is

both longer and shorter than one might think, and is inexorably tied to the history of Keoland. It is also inexorably tied to the history of one noble house of high elves, House Araglahel 1.

Although the truth of all things becomes blurred and forgotten with the passage of time, it is generally accepted that before the great migrations of the Suel and Oerid peoples, elves ruled great swathes of land from the Barrier Peaks in the west to the Corusks in the east. However, those great kingdoms suffered with the rise of Vecna and his Empire of the Spidered Throne and never again attained their former greatness.

Although not common knowledge, it is held that the seat of Vecna's empire lay somewhere that is today occupied by the Rushmoors, and as such Vecna pushed the native occupants further and further before his armies of terror. One of the great elven kingdoms was called *Forodorn*, and it was unusual in that it was dominated by high elves, even though most of the seats of power in the kingdoms of yore were held by gray elves. Forodorn held rule from the Yatils southeast to the Lortmils, and so lie directly in Vecna's eastern path of aggression. Though Forodorn was powerful, the nascent empire of the Whispered One was terrible and mighty indeed, and all that remained of Lost Forodorn a century after their clash (known as The Sundering) lie to the north in the Vesve (later becoming the Highfolk) and to the southwest, pushed back into Celegnya (known in the Common tongue as Celene), which even in that day was a lesser bastion of gray elven power.

Vecna's forces were never successful in toppling the Fey Majesty of Celegnya, and for centuries one of the dominant tribes of Ur-Flan, the Ur-Lek, lived in the lands east of the Sheldomar River and west of the Lortmils, an area that would later take their name. Here they continued their vile and evil habits, and continually clashed with the sylvan clans and good creatures that remained in both the Silverwood and Axewood. They enlisted all manner of beasts and undead (being perhaps the greatest collection of necromancers the Flanaess has ever seen), who would tirelessly work throughout day and night to chop and burn the woodlands. In the centuries that their corruption held sway, they managed to reduce the native forests to a shadow of their former selves.

However, like all great empires before or since, increasing pressures from migrating Suel and Oeridians, as well as internal strife, caused the Empire of the Spidered Throne to topple around –350 C.Y. In the decade following the fall of the empire, the Ur-Lek began to receive a massive and organized reprisal that was long overdue. In –344 C.Y., forces of Celegnya led by a high elven warmaster by the name of Auwagn Araglahel seized Trinleach from the Ur-

lek, and renamed the city Tringlee, a name that it had held centuries before. In a very emotional moment, the great roanwood treant Roanleir was awoken from his centuries long slumber<sup>2</sup> and he spoke to the liberators; Auwagn promised that as long as one high elf still lived within its walls, Tringlee would never be taken again.

In reward for his service, Auwagn was named the Custodian of Tringlee by His Fey Majesty Llandrier of Celegnya. Though never talked about, the high elves had long been treated as somewhat unwelcome second-class citizens in Celegnya, and so left by the score to settle in the lands surrounding Tringlee. In the meantime, the Kingdom of Keoland had been established in -342 C.Y. and in -340 C.Y., forces led by Immris of Rhola took Jurnre from the Ur-Lek. Two years later, the last remnants of the Ur-Lek were shattered by forces of Keoland and Celegnya in the plains southeast of Kewlbanks in a conflict that became known as the Battle of the Carrion Fields; Auwagn, seeing the storm on the horizon, returned to Tringlee and bid that the warlocks prepare for the inevitable conflict with the Throne of the Lion. In -312 C.Y., the Keoish, continually expanding their influence, established the military outpost that would become known as Numbelnost. This preceded a royal edict by Malv of Rhola in -308 C.Y. that established the Ulek Territory, consisting of all lands between the Lortmils and the Sheldomar River. This edict implied Keoish hegemony over the area, but was of course, far from the actual reality, as Celegnya and some of the dwarven kingdoms of the Lortmils already had claimed some of that land as spoils from the conflict with the Ur-Lek. It did not take long for push to come to shove, as in -306 C.Y., insufficient Keoish cavalry and footsoldiers encroached upon the western borders of Celegnya and were rebuffed in the Lorthills. Subsequently, Keoland adopted a policy of maintaining defensive vigilance towards the elven kingdom in order to be able to concentrate on expansion in the west and north.

In -288 C.Y., at the bidding of His Fey Majesty, Auwagn traveled north to the stronghold of Hoch Dungalorin<sup>3</sup> to speak with Thane Olbryn Hammerhowl about uniting against Keoland and other mutual enemies. This was the first time the elves had negotiated with the dwarves in peace in nearly half a millennium, and would establish a good relationship between dwarves of the northern Lortmils and heirs of House Araglahel that continues to this day.

In the decades that would follow, the Keoish continued to expand into the western half of Ulek. In -268 C.Y., Axegard was established on the far side of the Sheldomar to encourage logging in the Axewood, the by-products of which are sent down river to Nirole Dra and beyond; Beluchar of Neheli moves the seat of the Barony from

Linnoden to Axegard. In -247 C.Y., Waybury was established at the northernmost point of the Lort River to facilitate trading with dwarves in the northern Lortmils; Anzamander of Rhola is named the first Margrave of Istruin. The only other event of note to close out this century was the disappearance of Caluwagn I in -222 C.Y., the eldest son of Auwagn, who went into the depths of the Oerth to war with his dark cousins and other evils of the Underdark and never returned.

For the next few centuries, things were rather peaceful between the Lion Throne and Celegnya, as the Kingdom of Keoland continued to establish vassal states such as Sterich and the Gran March. In 201 C.Y., what has become a disturbing trend began, as a Euroz horde under Ukak the Elfrender stormed out of the northern Lortmils and nearly razed Waybury to the ground. In 286 C.Y., Tavish I ascended to the Throne of Lion, and began making negotiations with his neighbors to the east. In 290 C.Y., Adanlyr Araglahel, greatgrandson of Auwagn, began negotiations with the prominent chiefs of the sylvan clans of the Silverwood.

Finally in 292 C.Y., the Peers of Ulek joined the Council of Nirole Dra and the Custodian of Tringlee, Adanlyr Araglahel, was recognized as the first Duke Palantine of Ulek by the Lion Throne.<sup>4</sup> Adanlyr also assumed the title of Noble Radiance of *Lothromenoron* and proclaimed himself heir to the Shining Crown of Lost Forodorn, which did not go unnoticed by the Highfolk. The other *elhamahr* (major noble houses) and *eltamahr* (hereditary heads) of the Duchy of Ulek were established from sixteen high elven families and four sylvan clans and the *argonth*, large white marble pillars, were placed to demarcate many of the borders. Adanlyr also replaced the human rulers of Keoish fiefs, including the Margravine of Istruin and the Baron of Axewood, with his brother Ësian (though this was functionally a moot point, as his brother ended up marrying C'Brynn, who at the time was the Margravine, and thus remained Margravine anyway) and sister Suialwën respectively. Numbelnost remained as a Keoish garrison, and so that prize was unclaimed by any particular ruler. Celene could do nothing about this, as they had their own problems maintaining independence from the Lion Throne.<sup>5</sup>

Shortly thereafter in 307. C.Y., dwarves of Clan Oimaeglin drove the great red dragon known as Zaddridur from his lair in the Lortmils and he torched most of Waybury before relocating in the Barrier Peaks. In 313 C.Y., an expedition from the Duchy found and slew Zaddridur and his head graces the Hall of Heroes in the temple of Kord in Waybury to this day. In 320 C.Y., Adanlyr Araglahel, having accomplished his goals and his energy spent, passed the Shining Crown to his son Gallowagn, and took his leave of

the Flanaess. The 5<sup>th</sup> century began much as the 4<sup>th</sup> had, with another disaster in northern Ulek, as purple worms plagued the area surrounding Waybury for much of the year, killing many inhabitants and livestock. The political structure continued to serve everyone well, until the Lion Throne initiated a series of wars to increase their territory beyond Bissel. Many nations took the opportunity to throw off the yoke of Keoland during this time, and evicted the king's garrisons. The *Ulek Rebellion* as it came to be known, was successful, due in large part to the cooperation of the three Ulek states, but also because of the distractions caused by other rebellions in the kingdom. Eventually Keoland was defeated in the Small War beginning in 438 C.Y., and forced southward. After the death of Tavish III in 453 C.Y., Tavish IV, with little will to go warring, reversed the policies of Keoland and the Duchy broke off formal relations in 461 C.Y. After lengthy negotiations, the Duchy of Ulek was granted full autonomy in 463 C.Y. Anladon II, in his 4<sup>th</sup> year of rule in the Barony of Farwood (and a subject of his 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin Lunuil, Margrave of Taurhunduil), under pressure from Keoland 6, withdrew his fief from the Duchy and became the Baron of Axewood; Daedallach, brother of Lunuil, was forced to make the same choice with his holdings in the Barony of Mosstree. He chose to leave his lands to the Keoish rather than turn against the Shining Crown. The century ended as it began, when in 496 C.Y., an insane mage went berserk with a *fire wand of the suloise* at the Waybury Moot (which had been established in 484 C.Y.), destroying not a few buildings and residents before being slain. In 498 C.Y., the Prince Consort of Celene was killed in an ambush and thus began The Hateful Wars, which would last the next twelve years 7. Gallowagn, satisfied and tired after a half century of unrest, passed the Shining Crown to his son Grenowin and also took his leave of the Flanaess. In this same year, Senestall II ascended to the Throne of the Lion, making 510 C.Y. rather eventful indeed.

Following the resolution of the Hateful Wars, the Duchy continued to prosper, maintaining good relations with its neighboring countries and continuing to grow in influence as a trading hub, especially between human cities of the central and western Sheldomar Valley and Veluna and the communities of the Kron Hills. The opening of neighboring Celene proved prosperous for the Duchy, as Celene's fine products flowed exclusively through the Duchy into the rest of the western Flanaess, and this trade, when added to that of the Duchy's own products, brought great wealth into the land. In 564 C.Y., Kimbertos Skotti ascended to the Throne of the Lion, and in 566 C.Y. he attended the Waybury Moot and surprised everyone by entering the archery contest and nearly winning. He gets to meet many of the elven nobility including Duke Grenowin and his sister Nevallewen, the Margravine of Istruin. In 570 C.Y., while other notable events

were occurring to the east a few miles north of the Free City of Greyhawk, Anladon II sought an audience with his cousin Grenowin and traveled to Tringlee for the first time in nearly half a century. Rumors flew as word got out that the Duke nearly lit his office on fire after putting his *flametongue, Danzarda the Preserver*, through his desk in an uncharacteristic fit of anger. The exact nature of this discussion has never been revealed, though it is known that Anladon II and Grenowin have been on good terms since.

The Greyhawk Wars brought its own problems to the Duchy. A signatory of the Treaty of Nirole Dra, the Duke sent a large portion of his forces northward to aid Furyondy in its war with Iuz. This left the Duchy ill prepared to aid its eastern and southern neighbors when the forces of Turrosh Mak poured out of the Pomarj. The offensive forced the Duke to recall half of his forces from Furyondy to halt the orcish advance. Up until the time of the Greyhawk Wars, the Duchy prospered. It is the most accessible of all elven lands to humankind and other demihumans, and this atmosphere has made the Duchy and the Duke popular both in his lands and abroad. For as long as it has existed, the Duchy has had strong (though mixed) ties with Celene. However, there is a strong sentiment for the exiled men of Geoff and Sterich, and for the dwarven hardship faced in the Principality of Ulek to the south. Many of the more powerful nobles in Ulek support an immediate military solution to help drive the humanoid hordes out of the southern lands. These nobles are also strongly in support of the Knights of Luna in Celene, and desire to help change Celene's isolationist policies. A complication stemming from the Wars was Celene's refusal to aid the beleaguered dwarves of the Principality and the Lortmils during the most crucial times of Turrosh's offensive. Although there are two sides to every story (and the version would depend on whether the teller was a dwarf or an elf), this has caused bitterness to say the least, among those involved. The Duke is caught in the middle, as he is committed to a conservative and diplomatic approach with regard to Celene and the solution of these problems. However, there is no few numbers of his nobles who seek the Duke to take some form of action against Yolande (and these are probably spurred on by the more radical Knights of Luna).

**GEOGRAPHY:** The Duchy of Ulek is a fair land that lies immediately south and west of the central Lortmil Mountains. This northeastern boundary provides a protective barrier for the Duchy, which shelters it from many of the depredations experienced by its northern neighbors. This low chain of mountains, often fading into hills, contains a handful of imposing peaks. Historically, the demihumans of these mountains have fought long and hard to drive out the humanoids and monsters, culminating in the Hateful



Wars which led to the creation of the Pomarj, from whence many red glowing eyes look back to their “birthright” and seek to regain it. The hill dwarves, mountain dwarves, and gnomes of these mountains are supported by the Ulek states, less actively by Celene, and indirectly by small tribes of aarakocra that fly the central spine of the Lortmils. The wealth of the Lortmils is great, with excellent gems, ores, and precious metals. Some of the dwarven clan leaders are said to be as rich as princes, and are approached by emissaries from Furyondy and even Nyronnd for aid. Dwarves are not, however, susceptible to such overtures. The Sheldomar River and its tributaries serve as the border between Keoland and the Ulek Tri-States, and the river is navigable from Nirole Dra (the capital of Keoland) to Gradsul, a port city on the Azure Sea. Perch and tench (an extremely hardy member of the carp family) are abundant through much of its length. The Lort River, the northernmost tributary of the system, is a short headwater rising from the Lortmils, and the Kewl River starts high up in that same mountain range, and serves as the boundary between the Duchy and County of Ulek. The Old River forms the western boundary of the Principality of Ulek, and serves to mark the border with both the County of Ulek to the north and Keoland to the west. These tributaries are not navigable for much of their lengths, being fast moving, muddy, and rocky, although the Kewl is navigable along its border with the Silverwood. Old River is trustworthy for its first fifty or so miles from the point where it meets the Sheldomar.

Two ancient woodlands grow within the borders of Ulek, the remnants of the once great forest that spanned the length of the Sheldomar Valley from the Dim Forest hundreds of miles to the north, and the Dreadwood which lies hundreds of miles to the south. The Axewood is a small forest that straddles the border of Keoland and the Duchy of Ulek some 150 miles west of Tringlee and 60 miles north of Nirole Dra. Wood elves and treants dwell here, as well as a number of small sprites (atomies and grigs). The other forest, the Silverwood, lies entirely in the confines of the southern reaches of the Duchy. Lying between the Sheldomar and Kewl rivers, this wood is home to some 8,000 sylvan elves and other demihumans (gnomes mostly). The elves are said to nurture the trees in unique ways, so that they take exquisite forms and are wholly disease-free. Certain species of trees, notably the ipt and roanwoods, are particularly beloved by the elven inhabitants, and it is said they prize these trees more highly than silver. Other rumors have it that certain valuable species of gum trees that have silver leaves are the source of the name of the largest forest within the Duchy.

There are also three major roads that cross the Duchy. The Duke’s Road goes northeast from Nirole Dra along the

Sheldomar, first to Linnoden and on to Numbelnost, where it then turns east to Tringlee. The Riverwood Run leads east across the Sheldomar from the capitol of Keoland to the river port of Forfaladuin, and then skirts the Kewl all the way to Tringlee. From there, it becomes the Pass of Ulek, paralleling the Kewl high into the Lortmils and onto Enstad, the capital of Celene. The Pass can provide an extremely beautiful nature walk during autumn, as the foliage explodes in a myriad of fall colors. The Sheldomar Pike is one of the most beautiful trails an adventurer may happen across, and is the antithesis of the Road of Skulls in Iuz. This highway spans the distance from Shiboletth to the capitol of the County of Ulek in Jurnre. Although it used to go through Lortford, the current political environment has dictated that it goes northeast to Waybury instead, and then south to Axegard. Along the way, the pike passes through Axegard, Numbelnost, and Forfaladuin. Planted in and around the pike are many varieties of beautiful trees and flowers that usually vary every few miles or so to help travelers track the distance.

Another roadway of note is the Silver Path, leading from Waybury to Devarnish in Veluna. This path was established shortly after the Hateful Wars, and is used by lone travelers, small groups, and small caravans to trade silver and other commodities with some dwarven clans of the Lortmils and gnomes of the western Kron Hills. It is relatively safe from marauding predators, but due to its winding and vertical nature, it is a long trip and still subject to the hazards of nature during the colder months. Some of the merchants based in Waybury have brought up the idea of expanding the capability of the Silver Path to handle heavier (and more profitable) traffic, but the effort required to do so makes it unfeasible and nigh impossible.

**ECOLOGY:** The climate in the Duchy is favorable for most of the year, similar to most of the countries in this latitude. Summer lasts for nearly half of the year, and freezing temperatures only occur intermittently during the winter months. Snowfall is a truly rare occasion outside of the Lortmils, and even then only a few peaks are snowcapped year round. The forests of the Duchy of Ulek are in a geographical position that tends to give them the best mixture of tree species from both what are considered typically Central and Southern woods in the Flanaess. The following list details the most important species to be found within the Duchy: apple, apricot, ash, bay, beech, briar, bronzedwood, camphor, cedar, cherry, chestnut, chokecherry, crabapple, elder, elm, fig, galda, grapefruit, gum, hawthorne, hickory, hornwood, ipp, ipt, kara, larch, lemon, lime, locust, mangrove, maple, mulberry, myrtle, oak, olive, orange, peach, pear, phost, pine, plum, poplar, roanwood, thorn, tulip tree, usk, walnut, willow, yarpick, and yew. There are

also the semi-intelligent and carnivorous plants to be found in remote areas of the forests. Choke creepers, hangmen trees, giant sundews and kampfults won't hesitate to end the life of an unwary or wounded adventurer.

Although the Duchy is a relatively safe land, there are the odd encounters with dangerous life-forms. Humanoids are virtually non-existent within the borders of this country, and large groups of humanoids haven't walked the plains of the Duchy since before the Hateful Wars. There do remain hidden pockets of some humanoid races, though none are larger than orcs or bugbears. The smaller races, such as kobolds, jermalaine, xvarts, and goblins tend to fare better, though the most common humanoid plaguing the forests are the elusive kech. Igundi, skulks, kenku, adherers, and doppelgangers have also found a niche in various parts of the Duchy. Needleman plague the Silverwood like few other places in the Flanaess, thriving on the predominance of elves. Also among the tiny creatures of the land are gremlins, fremlins, galltrits, killmouli, and booka, though the latter two are much more tolerable than the members of the gremlin family. It is more common to encounter wild herd animals on the plains, and on occasions, their monstrous variants. Predatory animals, such as brown bears, wolves, lions, cougars, and coyotes can also be found in more isolated areas of the Duchy.

Among the true monsters, there is no shortage of isolated hazards. Anhkegs and ant lions are known to grab unwary travelers on the plains, and in the depths of the forest, owlbears can make short work of loggers, elves, and adventurers alike. In addition, encounters with stag, slicer, or the fearsome deathwatch beetle are not unheard of either. Finally, zygraats are a bizarre looking creature that can be found in both woodlands, as they prey on the faerie creatures within. The truly worrisome monsters are few and far between. On occasion, a solitary wyvern will terrorize the hillsmen and their herds. There are rumors that a red dragon or two may still lair within the Lortmils, but such creatures would have to be crafty and secretive indeed to avoid the attentions of their eternal enemies, the dwarves. It is highly doubtful that any dragons reside in either the Axewood or the Silverwood. If such a beast did, however, it would be unusually intelligent, powerful, and careful to be able to avoid the attention of the elves and the good aligned creatures of those woods. Whether or not any Greyhawk dragons have taken up residence in Tringlee or Waybury is another unknown.

There are no large, stationary bodies of water within the borders of the Duchy, and the Sheldomar River and its tributaries are well traveled and safe. There is an abundance of fish species, and fisherman and adventures alike should

be aware of the dangers presented by some of the giant members of certain of these fish, notably catfish. In the slower moving shallows below Nirole Dra, dragonfish are also a lethal hazard to unprotected feet wading in the water. Nereids and water nagas are not unheard of in some of the remote areas of the rivers, especially where the Sheldomar passes through the Axewood. Fortunately, there is not much to fear from more exotic and dangerous water-based predators, as there is little room and even less tolerance by the people who inhabit the shore communities for such creatures. Perhaps the most common "monster" that rears its ugly head every so often is the giant snapping turtle, and crocodiles bask on the banks of the Kewl below Forfaladuin. There are exceptions to this, when some ocean going monster travels north up past Gradsul and into the Sheldomar.

Sylvan and faerie creatures thrive in this land. Brownies, buckawns, atomies, grigs, sprites, quicklings, pixies, mites, snyads, faux faeries, leprechauns, and stwingers all inhabit the forested areas of the eastern Sheldomar Valley, seeming to exist for the sole purpose of harassing the forest's larger two-legged inhabitants. Pseudodragons and faerie dragons also haunt the woods, and dryads, nymphs, and korred reside in remote glens. There is also a significant population of centaurs and voadkyn, and no shortage of treants within the Silverwood. A truly lucky soul might even catch a glimpse of the rare unicorn, which also is known to inhabit that rich woodland.

**POLITICS:** Before the Empire of Spidered Throne held sway, the Shining Crown had graced the head of an elven ruler of this land, and after the Duchy was established, it once again graced the head of elvish nobility. The current ruler, Grenowin, is now in his 82<sup>nd</sup> year of office, and the Shining Crown has been passed down through his family since the Duchy was established in 292 C.Y. The Duke is more of a monarch than the King of Keoland, and as such, he holds near complete power over what can and cannot be done within the Duchy's borders. This near absolute power is tempered by an abundance of many of the qualities that make a good ruler, plus a general intolerance for tyranny of any kind. Combined with his elven longevity, he possesses political savvy and wisdom rivaled by few in the Flanaess.

As one might expect, elves dominate politics in the Duchy, as all major titles and holdings are restricted to those of elvish blood (and one could easily go as far to say of the high elven variety). Humans and halfelves may hold minor titles and estates, but inevitably serve an elven liege. Gnomish strongholds in the Lortmils are generally left to their own affairs, while the gnomes of the southern plains have little political influence. The sylvan elves are entrusted

with the Silverwood and all lands south of Niolen Dra. The sylvan elves are organized in clans, rather than houses. There is no overall hierarchy among the wood elves, but each village has its own leadership. The exception to this is Clan Silruin, which is one of the major noble families and resides in Adurlell, the capital of the March of Dunwater.

Most of the Duchy is divided up into large holdings, which are then further subdivided among vassals. The largest holding is that of House Araglhel headed by Duke Grenowin, who is also head of the Archbarony of Gliddinshar. This archbarony extends northward from the banks of the Kewl River to include all of the Kewlstone Hills and the area surrounding Ulek Pass. Directly below the Duke are seventeen other major elven noble families with holdings throughout the Duchy. Those holdings bordering the Gran March or Keoland came to be known as marches, whereas all other holdings were either earldoms or counties. This distinction depended on whether a male was the head of the noble house (in the case of the former) or a female was head of the noble house (in the case of the latter). Lesser nobility is either known as Baron/Baroness or Viscount/Viscountess. The borders between the major holdings, as well as the northern borders in the Lortmils are denoted by *argonth*, large, white, four-sided pillars. In reality, the actual borders aren't as well defined, and through the centuries borders have changed, either due to events, political dealings, or the whims of the houses involved.

Major Elven Noble Houses (*elhamahr*) & Titular Heads (*eltamahr*):

- ☉Margrave Ebarduis Asharin of Aglonde
- ☉Margrave Raslaur Silruin of Dunwater
- ☉Margrave Lunuil Evinglarch of Taurhunduil
- ☉Margravine Lastryng Fallingstar of Evelar
- ☉Margravine Nevallewen Araglhel of Istruin
- ☉Earl Tasylerith Namberthil of Emerdwere
- ☉Earl Carafin Albrui of Jasperin
- ☉Earl Valshabbar Couranthol of Chalcedor
- ☉Earl Eliasharym Moonbow of Saphrisarn
- ☉Earl Tangis Greymantle of Montaven
- ☉Earl Diorfin Kharaglin of Riverdale
- ☉Earl Carfangin Shimmerfal of Anduath
- ☉Earl Dormannis Ruvindal of Echofar
- ☉Earl Regin Delshember of Silverlode
- ☉Countess Aratheia Hartshorn of Nelvinaar
- ☉Countess Vichella Ephemduar of Carnelis
- ☉Countess Anastessa Eversong of Goldenfields

There are no hostile nations bordering the Duchy, as they maintain good relations with Keoland and The Old Country's other former lands, from the Gran March to the Principality of Ulek. In addition, the Duchy of Ulek

maintains a working relationship with many of the dwarven clans of the Lortmils and of course, has always had a strong kinship with the elven nation of Celene, though this has been subject to internal strain since the Greyhawk Wars.

Although several hundred miles away, Grenowin is well aware of the danger the Empire of the Pomarj presents to all of the Ulek states, and many troops and adventurers journey southeast from the Duchy to aid the forces of the Principality of Ulek in their struggles with Turrosh Mak. Another tangible threat to the Duchy of Ulek, and all good lands of the Flanaess is the Scarlet Brotherhood. After the Greyhawk Wars, everyone took note of this sinister organization, including Duke Grenowin. Lastly, there are those who remember Keoland's imperialistic era, and are wary that a future king might want to return Keoland to its former glory.

**MILITARY:** The military of the Duchy is small but effective, and is noted for its many high elven warlocks. The most common activity performed by the army is patrolling the plains of the Duchy, and at most times some one-quarter of the total force are out on patrol. At any given time, the size of the army numbers approximately 5,000 strong. The majority of the armed forces are human and half-elven, with high and sylvan elves making up the balance. Gnomes are known to serve, but are very rare. The military is comprised mostly of vassals of the various *elhamahr*, who serve for a year or two before relocating back to their land of residence. The elves, being much longer lived, tend to rotate service every couple of decades or so, and also dominate command positions.

About 35% of the total force are comprised of cavalry, for whom the Duchy is quite renowned, and it serves the needs of the country quite well. Heavy and medium cavalry are nearly exclusively comprised of humans, who favor maces and lances as their weapons. The light cavalry is the province of the high elves, and the horse archers and lancers of this type are fearless and proud; they consider themselves to be the elite of the military. The exclusion of all non-high elves from this particular branch of the military and the high numbers of nobles in the ranks further reinforce this sense of elitism. Infantry makes up another 35% of the total force, and this is nearly entirely comprised of humans and half-elves, who favor bills and pikes as their weapon of choice. The final 30% are comprised of archers, most of who are sylvan elves from the Silverwood.

In addition to this, each elven noble house (of which there are quite a few) generally has a household force which may number from 30 to 100 men-at-arms. These troops are armed by the whim or need of the elven lord or lady to whom they owe allegiance. In addition to this, it is possible for Duke to

issue the call for the "Grand Host of Ulek". This includes all of the forces of the elven lords and an additional 25 to 50 civilian men or women from each noble's holding capable of bearing arms. This force may number up to 5,000 strong, thereby doubling the effective size of the army.

The Duchy is loath to spend money on mercenaries to train new troops, and instead recruits veterans from the military to spend one-year rotations in training camps as instructors. This saves the Duchy money as well as promoting trust and morale among the army. And rather than maintaining expensive (and unnecessary) fortresses throughout the Duchy, patrols normally billet with local city guards or form camps near smaller towns and villages. The primary training base of the Duchy's forces is known as Numbelnost. This fortified town is centrally located at the intersection of the Sheldomar Pike and the Duke's Road, and the wide open grasslands are excellent for training young horsemen and raising steeds to serve in the cavalry. The expansive plains of the eastern Sheldomar Valley also provide excellent opportunities to work on combined tactics and maneuvers, including battlefield magic. Most patrols originate from this base, and at any given time nearly half of the strength of the army is located here. When a particular formation or unit is preparing for a tour of the Pomarj border, they will frequently train in this area prior to deploying to the Principality of Ulek.

Since the Greyhawk Wars, there has been an additional military burden taken up by the Duchy: forwarding a force to assist in patrolling and maintaining the Principality of Ulek's border with the Pomarj. This force is typically about 500 members strong, and is comprised of the same percentage makeup as the rest of the army. This force typically rotates every six months and is self-supporting while in Prince Corond's lands, and the Duke absorbs all costs for these forces. In addition, the forces of the Duchy are principally involved in maintaining the safety of the Pass of Celene, although technically within the County's borders.

The elves of the Silverwood and the demihumans and woodsmen of the Axewood maintain their own patrols within the woodlands, but may request assistance from the army on rare occasions. Since the Greyhawk Wars more effort has been put forth in recruiting mages and priests to serve in the military, but this has met with limited success. Other than the warlocks, wizards have little interest in being subject to the whims of some knight on horseback. The predominant faiths within the borders of the Duchy don't exactly lend themselves to the war effort either, but this is changing, as a slow and steady influx of immigrants from the Gran March and the Lost Lands have brought their more

militaristic clergy with them. Such faiths are slowly building a presence especially in and around Waybury.

The warlocks, or *anglarin*, are members of a renowned order of arcane spellwielders limited to those of high elven birth. The exact numbers are unknown to most anyone outside their order, though a consensus of knowledgeable outsiders would have you believe there are between 500 to 1,000. Although the capabilities of the individuals vary widely, every member is able to cast at least one 2<sup>nd</sup>-level arcane spell and is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and all armors. In addition, every member has defeated a foe through force of arms alone, without recourse to spellcasting or special abilities <sup>10</sup>.

Finally, the order known as the Knights of Luna cannot be dismissed as a potent, albeit small, independent military force within the borders of the Duchy. As of 585 C.Y, this group was nearly 200 members strong. All members are either elven or half-elven, and most members are fighters, rangers, fighter-mages, or warrior-priests (usually of Corellon Larethian).

**RELIGION:** In keeping with the Duchy's very cosmopolitan and multi-cultural setting, many deities are worshipped here. The Duchy is fairly unique among lands of the Flanaess with respect to the collection of Powers venerated by humans. Few and far between are the worshippers of lawful or martial deities, as the Duchy has had a relatively trouble free existence since the end of the Short War. Nature deities such as Beory, Ehlonna, and Phytton are venerated throughout the Duchy. Phaulkon and Fharlanghn are also widely worshipped in many places. Perhaps the closest thing to a martial deity the human residents of the Duchy pay homage to is Kord the Brawler, and northern Ulek has as great a concentration of his followers as anywhere in the Flanaess, with the exception of the Thillonrian states.

Other human Powers are also worshipped within the Duchy's borders, but to a much lesser extent. Notable among these are the deities favored by bards, like Lydia, Lirr, Myhriss, and Olidammara. Even the elven demigod Ye'Cind has a small following in the cities.

Of the elven gods, Corellon Larethian is the most favored by the High Elves, and Sehanine and Hanali Celanil are also widely worshipped. Among the Sylvan folk, Solonor Thelandira and Ehlonna have many followers, and there are a few who venerate Erevan Ilesere and Rillifane Rallathil. The gnome's most favored deities are Garl Glittergold and Baervan Wildwanderer, although Baravar Cloakshadow and Segojan Earthcaller also enjoy some adherents.

The priests within the Duchy are all given respect due their social status as in other lands of the Flanaess, but unlike many other regions, the priests have little political power, and many have little use for such. Elven priests (especially of Corellon Larethian) are an exception to this. Political machinations and intrigues generally don't concern the clergy of the aforementioned powers. Having said that, priests are still often considered leaders of their communities, and are often called upon to settle disputes.

**CULTURE:** The cosmopolitan culture of the Duchy of Ulek is a result of the mixture of the best of many races. The cities and towns reflect the fine elven architecture, and the more traditional "tree-cities" of the sylvan elves in the Silverwood are among the wonders of the region. Utility and beauty are balanced in most things produced in the Duchy, and the citizens are immensely proud of this. Each town, city, and stronghold is graced with fine parkland carefully tended by its inhabitants, and each of these parks or gardens has in its center one roanwood tree.

Many are the languages spoken in this land. Among them one might hear variants of elvish, gnomish, dwarvish, and the Common tongue in addition to the rarer Keolandish or Velondi. As might be expected, humans, gnomes, and both sylvan and high elves are the most common inhabitants of the Duchy. In addition there are thousands of half-elves, who are perhaps more common here than in any other place in the Flanaess, because the Duchy of Ulek is one of the few places where the strengths of both humans and elves are appreciated. The human and half-elven bards of Ulek are among the finest bards in all of the lands, due to their close association with elven minstrels. Courts of other lands often seek these bards, and to have a bard who is a native of the Duchy is thought to be a great coup for rulers across the Flanaess. There do exist isolated small groups of Lightfoot halflings throughout the southern parts of the Duchy; the largest concentration of them being in Forfaladuin, the capital of Riverdale. Dwarves are only found in the Lortmils, or in towns when they have some business to conduct. The Stout Folk are an even rarer sight after the events of the Greyhawk Wars. Finally, there are no half-orcs within the Duchy, for obvious reasons. Although the populace of the Duchy is generally a free-spirited lot, any half-orc even passing through the Duchy is putting his life in others' hands.

Among the adventuring professions, practically every variety has passed through the Duchy's borders at one time or another, though some are very rare. Fighters, rangers, thieves, clerics, and bards are quite common and make up the majority of adventuring types. Druids, sorcerors, and

wizards are less common, but still aren't a rare sight. Barbarians are rare, and almost none hail from the Duchy. They are most likely to be seen around Waybury at the time of the great Fair. Monks are even rarer than this, though some come to put their skills to the test in unarmed combat at the Waybury Fair. Even still, a sight rarer than a unicorn in the Silverwood, is that of a paladin. Although few inhabitants have a problem with the do-good nature of such a person, a paladin's code, overt lawfulness, and attitude tend to rub people the wrong way quickly. The Duchy already has a large group of elven fighter/mages who serve the same purpose that a wandering paladin might, and they tend to take a dim view of persons infringing upon their authority.

The Duchy is also known for its fine gnome gem-cutters, whose works are considered to be extraordinarily beautiful. Both semi-precious and precious gems from the Lortmils adorn the work of jewelry crafters, and the work (especially when set against silver worked by the elves of Celene) is very sought after, even in cities as familiar with fine work as Greyhawk.

The mines within the Duchy's borders have a wealth of precious metals, and ornamental and semi-precious gems (The County of Chalcedor and the County of Carnelis are named for the large amounts of chalcedony and carnelian found in the mountainous regions of those holdings respectively). And while on the topic of precious metals, a note should be made about currency within the Duchy, as many types of coin are to be found within its borders. The Duchy mints its own currency in the capital. Least among its monies is the copper *oakleaves*, so named for the likeness impressed on both sides of the coin. The *bellflower* is the Duchy's equivalent of the silver piece and bears a likeness of the star-shaped flower from a top-down perspective. The *shooting star* is an uncommon currency composed of electrum. It bears the likeness of a meteor shower above the mountains of the coat of arms on both sides of the coin. It is unique among the Duchy's currency in that it is the only piece not to share a name with its counterpart in Celene. This reflects the nature of electrum and its origin in the mint in Waybury; this distinction is a tribute to the power of the half-elven dominated guilds in that same city. The gold standard of the country is the *suncrown*; the front bears a likeness of the fiery orb behind the likeness of Grenowin's crown. The top of the coin bears the elvish script "His Noble Radiance" while the bottom "Grenowin". The back of the coin is impressed with the coat of arms of the Duchy. The platinum coin of the Duchy is known as the *moonveil*, and is finely crafted. Dominating the front center of the coin is the likeness of Roanleir, doing its best to hide Luna and the Handmaiden in the background. Around the periphery of

the coin is written “One Tree, Many Branches” in elvish. In addition to its own coins, most of the currencies originating within the Sheldomar Valley can be found here and are openly accepted with equal value. Predominant among these are the coins of Keoland and the County of Ulek, as well as Celene.

Adventurers need not be concerned with the majority of taxes in the Duchy, but a few are worth mentioning, as the nobility often views successful adventurers as unclaimed bags of gold. Unlike some states of the Flanaess, the Duchy imposes no Freesword Tax (licenses for weapons and armor), but rather taxes the sale of such items. All martial and exotic weapons and all armors are subject to taxation. Another adventuring commodity that is taxed is the sale of horses. Another tax intended to relieve the successful adventurer of the burden of all that precious metal is the Exchange Tax. While the Duchy generally freely interchanges bronze, copper, silver, and electrum, gold and platinum from foreign lands must almost always be converted to suncrowns and moonveils (Celene also uses the same currency as the Duchy, and so is one of the exceptions to this). Such exchanges are taxed at 5% of the total value in addition to whatever the guild responsible for such a transaction might charge. <sup>11</sup>

Unlike free cities in the Flanaess, the Duchy has a system of law that reflects its free and good nature, and yet addresses its feudal class system dominated by elves. The laws are not as much a written code and classification, as they are an understanding for resolving crimes. The Duchy is somewhat unusual in that administrators of the law can be just about anyone from priests and knights to the Duke himself. Instead of lawyers and judges *per se*, victims of a crime may enlist a better to aid them in seeking justice. Disputes between two parties may also be resolved this way, as both parties agree on a candidate to resolve the dispute and approach him or her to resolve the conflict. In the first case, a woman whose husband has been murdered might call upon community leaders, or an agent thereof (such as an adventurer), to find the murderer and deliver a fitting punishment (such as death) as agreed upon beforehand. In the latter case, two commoners arguing over whether one’s dog killed the others chickens would agree on a particular priest or town elder and present their cases to him or her if the priest accepted. Such resolution generally has no appeal, which is understood by all involved. Also unlike some places, administrators of the law and justice are allowed to use magic spells, such as *detect lie* and other divination magic, to find the truth and mete out the appropriate punishment. Crimes are generally considered major, minor, or monetary. The law is not also equally applied either; generally, elves receive lesser punishments and if the victim, the offender tends to receive a greater punishment. Also a

noble tends to receive better treatment than a commoner does for the same crime.

Monetary crimes are those which involve a loss of wealth or assets, but do not involve harm of a citizen of the Duchy. Examples of such crimes include arson, blackmail, burglary, embezzling, fraud, and tax evasion. Generally fining the offender for three times the amount involved is the punishment for such crimes. Service to the victim is also acceptable.

Major crimes are those which merit death or permanent exile as punishment. Given the nature and longevity of many of the Duchy’s inhabitants, long terms of imprisonment are seen as an unnecessary burden on the country. Major crimes include blasphemy against a priest or temple, grievous assault on a noble, genocide, impersonating a noble, incitement to riot, libel against a noble, magical interference with the integrity of a person, murder, mass murder, sedition, slander against a noble, slavery, tomb robbing, and treason. Magical threats to the general populace also fall under this category. These include things like summoning highly dangerous creatures (such as demons, etc.), active worship of evil deities, animating the dead, and casting or using highly dangerous magic (such as *fireball* or a *sphere of annihilation*). Whether an offender is exiled or executed usually depends on the damage to property and if any innocents were killed or not.

Minor crimes cover just about everything else that might be considered criminal. Punishments for such crimes vary widely, and are suited to fit the crime. Attempted crimes or conspiracies to commit a crime are usually not punished, unless it is a serious crime, or the intended victim is an important person. Lastly, as a general note, the Duchy has very few restrictions on possession of a particular item <sup>12</sup>, and punishes its misuse instead.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> House Araglahel is currently in its sixth generation descended from Auwagn.

I. .Auwagn b. -476 m. Aelnilna

II. i. . Caluwagn I b. -364

ii. . Aelrhos b. -327 m. Gulyohn

iii. . Ainabrin b. -261 m. Thiguil

III. iia. . Niondrieng b. -189 m. Aiduir

iib. . Taluwen b. -165

iiia. . Caluwagn II b. -167 m. E’Finwëln

iiib. . Candrhos b. -141 m. Celedwere

IV. iiai. . ADANLYR b. -63 m. Agwinyn

iiiai. . Ęsian b. -45 m. C’Brynn of Istruin

iiiaiii. . Suialwën b. 1 m. Culaquin Evinglarch

iiiaii. Giliadh b. -50 m. Alutain

iiiaii. . Caluwagn III b. -34  
V. iiaia. . GALLOWAGN b. 181 m. Ladrien  
iiaib. . Nenlyana b. 195 m. Romlyn  
iiiaia. . Aelgyon b. 109 m. Badhuir  
iiiaib. . Anladon I b. 115 m. iiaia. . G'lidwnn b. 98  
iiiaib. . Calcynn b. 114 m. Nimnuil of the Fey  
iiiaic. . Adliel b. 146 m. Hwain of Clan Silruin  
VI. iiaiai. . GRENOWIN b. 380  
iiaiaii. . Nevallewen b. 446  
iiabi. . Anyel b. 301 m. Ruir  
iiaibii. . Cyæn b. 319 m. Belellach  
iiaibiii. . Sharbryon b. 322 m. Farodrhyss  
iiaibiv. . Uwevanna b. 334 m. Daeduir  
iiaibv. . Finyona b. 346 m. Eliasharym Moonbow  
iiaiaia. . Nimbrin b. 270 m. Huwor b. 386  
iiaiaiai. . Aelbrand b. 282  
iiaiaibi. . Lunuil b. 247 m. Ehlosin  
iiaiaibii. . Daedallach b. 261 m. Leduir  
iiaiaibi. . Cgaelin b. 245  
iiaiaibii. . Nemnuir b. 261  
iiaiaibiii. . Thonndhal b. 273  
iiaiaici. . Hwaid b. 253  
iiaiaicii. . Annon b. 276  
VII. iiaiaiaia. . Anladon II b. 424  
iiaiaibia. . Aonya b. 375  
iiaiaibiaa. . Normil b. 404

<sup>2</sup> The story surrounding Roanleir is an interesting one. When the Ur-Lek encroached upon the city of Tringlee and it was clear that the city would fall, the *iluiel* (an elvish title equivalent to a duke) of Tringlee gathered with some of the powerful wielders of divine magic that remained in the city. After speaking with Roanleir, they bid him farewell and sealed the great treant in layers of warding magics to protect him until the time should come when elves should hold the city again. To this end, Roanleir gifted the *iluiel* with one of his leaves that should act as the key to undo the spell, and then became like unto stone. For centuries, the Ur-Lek tried to destroy the great treant, and it was often considered a test of might and prowess to attempt to do so. Finally, when Auwagn liberated the city, Roanleir spoke unto the assembled elves and among other things, stated that as long as no one who lacked elven blood ever touched him again, that there would always be a male heir of House Araglahel to rule the city. Thus, for anyone not of pure elven blood to enter the Court of Roanleir is to risk a punishment of death. Likewise, it is in Roanleir's image that a roanwood tree graces the center of all settlements of any notable size in the Duchy, and it is his image that graces the moonveil, the platinum piece of the land.

<sup>3</sup> Hoch Dungalorin is a stronghold that lies at the head of the Kewl River (also known as the *Yduin* in Elvish) to this

day. The current thane, Bolor Blackaxe, is on good terms with both Duke Grenowin and Prince Corond of Ulek.

<sup>4</sup> While on the subject of the founding of the Duchy of Ulek, a note should be made about its coat-of-arms. The Duchy owes its coat-of-arms to some unknown Keoish herald, who came up with the heraldic device while approaching the city on the Riverwood Run shortly after sunrise, hence the purple mountains and the golden sky. The flaming arrows stem from the original warbanner of the army led by Auwagn, which might have ended up as the coat-of-arms of the nation, except that they seemed to reminiscent of the holy symbol of the human Power Hextor. Not that the elves really cared what human anything the symbol of their city looked like, and so to appease both elven and human sensibilities, a compromised was reached which is reflected upon the heraldry that has not changed for 300 years.

<sup>5</sup> The Lortmils have proven a difficult obstacle to designs of conquest, and even the uncooperative Suloise were quickly hustled out of Celene around the founding of Keoland. However, even Celene had to make some concessions, and granted Keoland some minor garrisons around Courwood and Enstad. Her Fey Majesty was not happy about the secession of the nascent Duchy, but only slightly so. Although the relations between the two countries have always been close and they consider themselves allies, to say that the two elven nations haven't had issues with each other from time to time is failing to appreciate the complexity of their history. Indeed, it is perhaps a more telling observation that there are more fey creatures that are citizens of the Duchy than there are fey elves that are citizens of the Duchy.

<sup>6</sup> The Keoish side of the story asserts that Anladon II was not pressured in the slightest and chose to side with the Lion Throne of his own accord. Whatever the case may be, learned observers whisper that Anladon has more than his proverbial share of his (and other peoples') skeletons hiding about the rustic grounds of Linnoden. It's fairly certain that Lunuil, Margrave of Tarhunduil, might like to add Anladon to that collection.

<sup>7</sup> The rulers of the fiefs in the Pomarj would probably consider 513 C.Y. as the true end to the Hateful Wars, as that is the year in which it is generally considered that the Pomarj fell to the forces of humanoids driven southeast from the Lortmils.

<sup>8</sup> This of course infuriates the Margravine of Evelar to no end, as any trade that might come from the March instead ends up in Waybury. And here you thought all elves got along.

<sup>9</sup> The sylvan clans quickly grew tired of the all-too-human politics of the high elf houses, and three out of the four gave up being *eltamahr*. As long as Adanlyr left them to their ways in the Silverwood, they could care less what happened in Tringlee. By necessity, the southernmost of the clans, Clan Silruin, had to remain *eltamahr* due to the proximity to Jurnre and the potential strategic importance of the confluence of the Sheldomar and Kewl rivers. Although the sylvan elves disagreed that there was any strategic importance, they realized it was a better option than having another high elven House take over rulership of part of the Silverwood.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, every *anglari* is qualified to become a *spellsword* (as per the Tome & Blood prestige class) upon acceptance into the order if they so choose, and many do. Of those that don't, a rare few continue to hone their skill-at-arms at the expense of mastering the arcane arts further. Many others, whether sorcerer or wizard, accomplish a personally satisfactory level of expertise with the mundane arts of war and choose to pursue greater understanding of arcane mysteries.

<sup>11</sup> Note to Players: Martial and Exotic weapons cost an additional 5% beyond the cost listed in the 3rd Ed. PHB. Likewise, all Light and Medium armors cost an additional 5%, and Heavy armors cost an additional 10%. All pack animals and Riding Horses cost an additional 5%, while all warhorses, whether Light, Medium, or Heavy, cost an extra 10%. There is no additional Cost of Living *per se*.

<sup>12</sup> e.g., possessing a *hand of the mage* will make you extremely unpopular.

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## Appendix C - The History of Taurusilmëa

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### The History of Taurusilmëa

Hundreds of years have passed since the great elven kingdom of Taurusilmëa ("forest under starlight") collapsed upon itself under the awful pressure of attacks from Vecna's Ykrathian Empire. In its place remained the warded core realm of Celien, later corrupted to Celene by common usage.

Now, forests and cities alike dot the rolling countryside where Taurusilmëa's forest realm once stood. The Gnarley Forest, Welkwood, Suss Forest, and even the Wild Coast are remnants of the ancient coastal woodland that once stretched from the Velderdyva River south to the Drachensgrab Hills, and from the Sheldomar and Lort rivers over to the Selintan and Wooly Bay.

### In the Beginning: Taurusilmëa

The populace of this elven nation was a broad mix of gray, high, and wood elves, with many gnomes besides and a dwarven kingdom in its center among the Lortmil mountains. Its very name encompassed the elves' feeling of a realm as vast and wondrous as the heavens above.

For millennia the elven kingdom endured, secure in the power of its civilization and its magics. Even the Masters of the Isle of Woe respected its might, and some elven sources even postulate that the cataclysm which destroyed the Lords of Woe and sank their island was in fact the work of an elven High Magic ritual. Conflicts with the God-Kings of the human empires around Taurusilmëa were resolved by diplomacy if possible, by force if necessary. None of those wars lasted for very long.

The realm possessed numerous portals, but not to the extent of other elven kingdoms like Calendorien. These were nearly all teleportation devices joined to other places within the realm or keyed to other elven realms, not true *gate* spells leading to other worlds or planes. Those few portal systems reaching beyond that were the province of the occasional mage, sage, or priest who investigated the larger world around.

One of the more esoteric uses of portals in this kingdom was for artistic purposes, particularly for what the elves called Song Paths. Great works of poetry were written so that they could be sung for hours at a time, and portal networks were created that would be activated as each singer walked over certain large, flat, enchanted stones set in the ground. The singer would be transported from place to place in rhythm with the song, the scenery in keeping with its message and tone. Minor portal systems, independent of each other, were created linking numerous spots in the realm's vast lands and even other elven homelands. Few song paths spread farther than this, and many were purposefully deactivated after a few decades of use.<sup>1</sup>

The natural world and its endless cycles were Taurusilmëa's focus, and the elves believed the living world would go on forever.

### The Ykrathian Wars

The rise of the Ykrathian Empire, commanded like the modern-day Empire of Iuz by a risen creature of near-divine status, changed many things for the kingdom. Intelligently directed humanoid attacks from the Drachensgrabs created pressure on the kingdom's southeastern borders, while humanoid armies from the Abbor-Alz created trouble to the north. And the Ykrathian empire grew, pouncing upon these engineered distractions to drive the elves out of lower Ulek province and behind the banks of the Elde River<sup>2</sup> with mighty deforestation magics and wave upon wave of humanoids and undead. With the humanoids' path now clear to the Drachensgrabs, the kingdom's southern borders near those hills swiftly became dangerous places indeed.

Slow to react to the growing threat and lacking singular elven heroes with the unearthly power of Calendorien's Llan<sup>3</sup>, The Tarnusilmë (honorific for ruler of the land) and his peoples faced the growing horror that their kingdom, grand as it was, could eventually fall and be forgotten at the hands of the arch-liche's dark magicks and undead armies.

Soon war with the Ykrath raged behind the banks of the Lort. The dwarves, already under pressure themselves in the northern foothills of the Lortmils, read the signs and began a phased withdrawal into their mountain fortresses. Only a few bands of volunteers remained behind, and without the dwarven troops the elves steadily lost ground.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Roger E. Moore for the Song Path concept. See "Voices of the Lost" on the wizards.com site.

<sup>2</sup> Now commonized to "Old River"

<sup>3</sup> q.v. "The Geoff Project," esp. Llanfairfechan and Llantryn Wells

These developments wounded the elethin deeply. Faced by the dark might of the Ykrath and what they saw as abandonment by trusted allies, no few of the elves began to succumb to despair. Resentment of their former allies was the least of its effects. House Arontarth and House Valkareg descended into dark sorceries, even summoning and consorting with fiends as they desperately sought an opposing source of power to deal with the threat on their borders. The shock of their fiends' ravages in southern Ulek created sorely-needed diversions to the north, but many of the creatures became uncontrolled and marauded north and east as well. Several even came across abandoned song paths and other portal magic – and found that their native abilities allowed them to use these as bridges to other nodes.

The sources of these intrusions were swiftly traced by the High Mages, and interrogation of the surviving fiends revealed all. House Valkareg was caught.

Taurusilmëa was now faced with a devastating problem. While the treason of the Valkarren in consorting with fiends could not be dismissed, their actions had inadvertently shown the elves an important weakness before the Spidered Throne could exploit it. The very portals of song and transport that once bound the elven realm together would have to be closed, lest enemies use them as a dagger into its very heart.

The elven houses set about this task with typical efficiency, but broken hearts. Noble houses like Iliathiir, Mistyiril and others whose bards and mages had built shining works of Art and beauty were forced to break the very webs of song and magic that represented their proudest and greatest achievements.

Of House Valkareg's fate, little is known. It is said by some that a gathered force of the elflords destroyed their wayward brethren utterly, in a battle blessed by Corellon himself and reminiscent of the great Kinslayer Wars. Others contend that the Valkarren were granted a kind of mercy for the insight they had brought Taurusilmëa and became moriquendi, "dark elves" exiled from their kin. This tale tells that they were even granted the southern tip of the Suss Forest for their demense as the kingdom withdrew northward, neatly placing a buffer between the southeast border and the minions of the Ykrath. Who can say which story is true? It has been many centuries since any have seen elves in the southern Suss, and House Valkareg is spoken of no more by the elves of Celene.

Nor was this the only withdrawal contemplated by the kingdom. Over the next decade, attacks of increasing ferocity

slowly eroded Taurusilmëa's boundaries. Hordes of humanoids and undead commanded by necromancers and worse assailed them from east and west, in a screaming wave that brooked no respite. Even with elven High Magic, the kingdom could not but give ground before the terrible might of the Spidered Throne.

Great House Arronarth bought time with its own unspeakable fall, bringing the full might of their High Magics and secret fiendish pacts to bear. Their dark act of Götterdämmerung horrified the elethin, even as it stopped the Ykrathian Empire in its tracks at the foothills of the Lortmils. It is whispered that Vecna himself barely survived the *N'runalla Nwalkàraumo Naermarth* ("cruel storm death-cry of dreadful doom") High Magic Ritual and the summoned fiends of the Arronarth. His armies decimated, his very being wounded, even the greatest lich of all was forced to seek respite.

That High Magic ritual (now referred to as the "*Dagnirthaur Unnurún*" or "Deathless' Bane Abomination" by the very few elves who will speak of it) had consumed many things: House Arronarth, the nearby dwarven citadels of Lukkaz-Lûr and Bursarkhad, much of northern Ulek province... and the confidence of the elves that this war could be won. Even the cost of victory, they reckoned, was far too great.

#### The Great Retreat to Celien

And so it was that the elves began to plan their Great Retreat, a plan that would lead to new heights of refinement for High Magic Mythals and enable the founding of a warded but much-diminished realm secure even against the arch-lich and his minions.

Desperate battles would yet be fought in the decade before the raising of the Great Mythal, including the heroic stands of the gnomes and elves around Celien Pass and the Battle of Alerad<sup>4</sup> against the orcish warlock Torguzog and his humanoid legions. House Fëadêl in the Silverwood remnant would also carve their names among the Art of the great, reducing the lich-lord Koresselov and his entire undead army to fertile soil as they approached from the north across the Dagnirthaur Waste. Their *Ar-N'Tel'Orrar*

<sup>4</sup> Alerad was an elvish city. When the Great Mythal was raised, the city was abandoned and many of its towers and structures returned to the earth in N'Tel'Orrar High Magic Rituals. The remaining ruins were eventually settled by humans, and today this location is named "Elredd". Unfortunately, the humans would prove less successful than their elven predecessors; the city fell swiftly to Turrosh Mak's humanoid armies during the Greyhawk Wars.

High Magic Ritual also allowed the land to begin healing, and with the raising of the Great Mythals the armies of the Ykrathian Empire began at last to turn toward easier targets.

The elves had survived the best efforts of Vecna to destroy them, a rare distinction indeed. Yet the price had been fiendishly high. Taurusilmëa was no more, imploded from a grand and glorious realm whose very name suggested its vastness to a warded and hidden core named Celien (lit. "land of running", or refuge). Many of the High Mages had been lost, along with no few noble houses like Ilioran, Y'venni, Faerendyl, and others whose efforts against the Ykrath left no survivors to carry on their proud lineage. A deeper sorrow covered the names of the Unspoken Houses, who had turned to Outer Darkness and had their very souls sundered from the elven people in their fall.

And so this part of Oerth's history remains largely unrecorded: the Ykrath from shame, and the elves from sorrow. Few even among the elvenkind know the full tale, and very few of those will speak of it.

Soon the Twin Cataclysms of The Invoked Devastation and The Rain of Colorless Fire would disrupt the very weave of magick, collapsing the Celien Mythal less than 200 years after its founding and changing the very nature of magic on Oerth.

The elves greatly feared the renewed war they felt sure was coming, but as it happened the Ykrath had their own problems. Waves of Oerid and Suel refugees washed over the Empire. Caught between the cavalry and constructs of the Oeridian war machine and the treacherous magics of the great and ancient Suel,<sup>5</sup> the Ykrathian Empire was overwhelmed. The Spidered Throne was at last broken, its two greatest figures seemingly destroying each other in a story that would be sung through the ages. Some of the greatest disciples of The Whispered One (Acererak The Black, Kadath) simply vanished, while others of The Forsaken (Vykuul, Dobrodeia, Maradash, Xoth Varkûr) would plague the region for some time to come.

Yet these were problems for another day. Great indeed was the elven rejoicing when the noble House Rhola and House Neheli fled the Suel Imperium to establish their domains in the Sheldomar basin. Shortly thereafter, the Oeridians would also be welcomed by the elethin and other demi-humans of these lands. House Erendyl joined with the

great merchant house Chossum and the elves of the Silverwood to begin to rebuild northern Ulek province between the Lort and the Kewl. The Dagnirthaur Waste would flower again, and the new realm attracted many of the elves of Celien who had chafed at the self-imposed confinement of the Great Mythal ward.

There would be trials and tragedies ahead, not the least of which was the catastrophe that befell the small southern elven realm of Mirgalen in the forest now known as *Taur-en-Gaurth*, or "Dreadwood." The rogue Suel House Malhel's attempt to recreate Invoked Devastation magics met elven High Magic, and the clash warped The Weave of Life and Magic itself. While House Malhel was destroyed utterly, Mirgalen too was gravely wounded; in order to check the spreading Entropic Conjunction, the realm was forced to retreat into a shadow of its former size and glory. Their immense help to Taurusilmëa in its hour of need could not be repaid, and Celien stood by and watched in bitter sorrow as their old elven allies shrank and declined.

Corrupted by human usage, "Celien" eventually became "Celene". Eager to forget the nightmares they had endured, the elves gladly accepted this change as their own.

The ancient elven kingdom is dead... long live the kingdom!

**Postscript:** In many ways, the trauma of Taurusilmëa's fall has not ended for the elves, and echoes of these experiences and debates continue to ring through the halls of Queen Yolande's court in the wake of the Greyhawk Wars. No few noble houses, for instance, regard Celene's withdrawal from the Greyhawk Wars as a fitting punishment and response to the dwarves of the Lortmils, who had abandoned the elves in a similar fashion so long ago. The fact that the elves are deeply reluctant to discuss this history with others does nothing to help outsiders understand the history and emotions behind their recent decisions.

Other effects of the *Niendanto Mirgalen* also persist to this day: in magical monstrosities loosed into the world by this clash of High Magics, in areas of the *Taur-en-Gaurth* where even the elves will not tread, and as a cautionary tale in Celene about weakening oneself by aiding others.

Echoes may even be found in the current machinations of the Scarlet Brotherhood. Their conquest of The Sea Princes and subsequent push into Keoland's southernmost lands during the Greyhawk Wars may have been motivated by the desire to regain some of the secrets and powers of House Malhel, or to explore the effects on the Entropic conjunction to some unknown purpose. Elves of the *Cast-en-Gaurth* (the name Mirgalen's elves now call themselves on those occasions

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<sup>5</sup> In WGA4, "Vecna Lives," pp. 22, the text clearly refers to strife between House Neheli during their Great Migration and Vecna's empire, which was based in the Sheldomar basin.

when they refer to themselves as a single group - literally, "Caretakers/Keepers of Dread"; this is also a secret society among the Dreadwood elves that watches over the remaining areas affected by the Entropic Conjunction, and works to heal the Weave) have reported seeing Scarlet Brotherhood mercenaries and agents heading into the most dangerous regions of that forest.

# The Temple of Elemental Evil, from the Rise of Iuz to His Release

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by Stylianos Scarlatos with Scott Casper

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Letter to Savant Sage

Pastorate of Logical Discourers and Enquirers  
Mitrik, 8 Readying 595 CY

My Kind and Venerable Master,

In the text that follows, please find investigations on central Flanaess modern history. The period examined involves the Temple of Elemental Evil and Iuz, before his release by Robilar. References were used from the time of the flourishing of the Greyhawk Construction Company, including a treatise previously hidden in the special Zagig Yragerne section of the Great Library. This work of yours cited is none other than the Coloring Album, a peculiar, but informative, source that even the redoubtable Iquander has used before. Though that brilliant scholar's treatment of Serten's death does not match the Album's treatment, Iquander has otherwise found the Album to be a reliable source.

Finally, I would like to make a humble request. All these years I have served with devotion and justness. Please allocate me in another way than General Cleaner for the Greyhawk Construction Company. I leave this new position in the company to be announced upon your wise discretion.

Your unbent follower,

Tzeliobas

The Temple of Elemental Evil, from the Rise of Iuz to His Release

By 479 CY, Iuz was in command of his stepfather's petty fiefdom. It was then when he commenced with an insidious strategy. Using coercion both mundane and magical (though not yet a demigod, his powers were reputedly greater than most cambions), he formed alliances with his neighboring despots only to then turn them against each other. In the chaos that ensued, Iuz ensured the death of each neighbor and then assumed command of the armies

and lands of his allies. Since the end of each battle saw the repetition of this same pattern, his army and territory were always growing. Within a year he added the three neighboring fiefs to his own. Within a decade he controlled the entire region now known as the Land of Iuz (not to be confused with the Empire of Iuz, a later development). King Avras III of Furyondy got concerned and marshaled forces, only to fall upon bitter internal political squabbling on part of the Great Lords of the south.

Iuz was not content. With the assistance of his mistress, Zuggtmoy, he sought the disruption of the good states of the south. While Iuz's monstrous troops pressed the forces of weal and order at the Vesve and the border of the Northern Reaches, Zuggtmoy was launching a major project right under the noses of their enemy; the promotion of a ruse religion related to the so called elemental evil.

The acquaintances of Iuz's mother, Iggwilv the Witch, were pivotal in finding an unexpected and isolated location for their plans to unfold. It was important for the elemental evil ruse to have a secret religious stronghold. Amongst Iggwilv's entourage was a night hag named Strovolla, who was the lover of the lich Grusyyn of the Iron Skeletons fame. Grusyyn the Mad was persuaded to give them his keep and plans for a cathedral to be built on that spot were set. The location was high in the northern fringes of the Gnarley Forest, not far from the Nyr Dyv. It was merely a few days by horseback west from Dyvers. Meanwhile, Iuz and Zuggtmoy turned their attention to creating abyssal gates and the artifact Yellowskull to tap the elemental planes (1).

Was it Grusyyn who tipped off his friend Zagig, or was it the zealous watch of St. Cuthbert? Regardless, something catalyzed the formation of an unusual assembly of heroes. The Mad Archmage banded with four of his peers, Heward, Murlynd, Keoghtom, and Kelanen - plus St. Cuthbert himself. It was Zagig's plan to confront Iuz alone and offer him a gift of Zagig's personal symbol. Upon delivery however, the symbol metamorphed into Zagig's five companions. Heward distracted Iuz with a tune. Keoghtom's arrows flew. Kelanen's blades slashed. Murlynd's 45s spat thunder that tore at Iuz's clothes. Zagig grappled the Dark One (2). St. Cuthbert pummeled Iuz with his cudgel. It was

not long before Iuz was overpowered and carried to a prison of Zagig's devising in the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk. Before departing Oerth, St. Cuthbert left a talisman behind to summon him in case of future need. By the records of the Chamber of Four and the Pastorate of Logical Discourses and Enquirers it is clear that the above facts date to 505 CY (3).

The unpredictable turn of events was relief for the new King, Belvor II. However, the unstable political situation in the Kingdom of Good at the time did not afford him to exploit them as he would have liked. During that time, Dyvers proclaimed independence and the southern nobles balked at the taxes the defense of the north required (4). The spiritually lax people of Furyondy saw no religious changes during this time, but the patriarchs and high priests of several popular demigods had quickly discovered that their access to the more powerful miracles was disrupted, no matter what atonements or abasements were made. This was more of the work of mad Zagyg, who had imprisoned more than just Iuz, but also Heironeous, Trithereon, and others (5).

This trouble in the spiritual circles of Furyondy was relaxed by the advent of Fragarach. The divine sword came to Oerth from Tir-nan-og, a region within the outer plane of Concordant Opposition. The book "<http://www.canonfire.com/htmlnew/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=326&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>" Murlynd's Early Adventures & Subsequent Ventures recounts the tale of how Murlynd was awarded the weapon for helping King Lugh defeat fomorian giants. Fragarach was passed to the only son of the King of Furyondy, Prince Thrommel-Avras IV, the would be King Thrommel III. The kingdom's most powerful high priests and wizards of weal managed to produce six lesser copies of Fragarach. These swords empowered the warrior elite, paladins and other leaders. Around almost this same time frame, further auspicious events took place. Reverend Sertern of St. Cuthbert recovered the Holy Talisman of St. Cuthbert from the ruins of the first Temple of Elemental Evil (Castle Grusyin).

Zuggtmoy, after Iuz's banishment, assumed action. Still intent on protecting the interests of Iuz as well as her own plans regarding the elemental evil cult, the demoness had to immediately find dispensable false Iuzs to serve in his stead. The false Iuzs prevented the complete dissolution of Iuz's already chaotic army as well as fooling the priests of Iuz who were masquerading as elemental evil priests. The initial Temple, however, had proved too easily compromised, so her next step was to have a new, more remote Temple constructed by the village of Hommlet. These actions

proved unique challenges, even with the backing of a powerful demoness. However, this delay in relaunching the Temple ruse may be due in part to the fact that the Yellowskull was missing for some time.

The architecture of the new temple can be traced to Medenic Plokus and Levles Valavalovles, two prominent architects from the Great Kingdom who had been responsible for cathedrals of Hextor in Medegia. The ornament of the cathedral is typical of their work, while the general layout was a perversion of the pantheistic cathedrals more popular in the eastern Flanaess for the past century (the length of the chapel dedicated to the cathedral's main benefactor, with shrines to related gods in the wings). Though both architects have since met untimely demises, their records show "men of business" from Dyvers had approached them as long ago as 562 CY.

Other challenges included stocking the temple with fresh recruits. Many of the monsters that had guarded the old temple were remnants of monstrous bands that had fled the Lortmils after the Hateful Wars. Some lesser monsters were drawn to the temple from the Wild Coast, but the majority had to be transported from the Land of Iuz, all the way on the other side of Furyondy. This might have stumped even Zuggtmoy, had she not recovered the Yellowskull already. It is conjectured that she used this relic to transport large numbers of monsters to pocket elemental planes at one location and remove them at another location. When it came to building material, more mundane methods were used and, consequently, can be removed from the realm of conjecture. That numerous thefts of stone occurred from dwarven quarries in the Lortmils in the 560s can be verified by their records. The ranger Otis (who has sadly never penned his memoirs, but is still available for interview) observed hill giants were used to move the stone quickly to the site and dirt away from the site during this time.

It was the work of fair-minded locals like the ranger Otis who brought about the next downfall of the temple, bringing their observations to the attention of authorities. By 569 CY, an alliance of Furyondy, Veluna, and the demi-humans of the region launched an army large enough to smash the temple's hordes of chaotic evil at the Battle of Emridy Meadows. The battle is too well documented in Sage's "A Guide to the World of Greyhawk," to bare repetition here (6). Immediately after the epic victory, Zuggtmoy was confined into the dungeons beneath the miasmal temple.

There were certain casualties. Fragarach was lost on the battlefield. Sertern (sometimes confused with Serten of Pholtus) had perished in the battle (7). Sertern was a cleric of repute, widely known for the recovery of the Holy Talisman

of St. Cuthbert, despite how history has muddled his name. He was given an ostentatious funeral at the Cathedral of the Holy Cudgel in Verbobonc. The Citadel of Eight, believing their associate Serten had fallen, hastened from exploring Castle Maure to attend. Mordenkainen, Bigby, Riggby, and Yrag were distressed with this prank, the source of which is still unknown. It is believed that Mordenkainen, during his time in Verbobonc, met with PrinceThrommel. Not long after the funerals, unnamed adventurers delivered a 'pair of highly unusual dispelling magics' to Castle Robilar (8). The rest is a frequently encountered story, although a contradictory one. In 570 CY, Robilar and company delved deep under Castle Greyhawk and liberated Iuz and the rest of the nine imprisoned demigods. The dispelling magics were not even used because of the unusual method of imprisonment, as Robilar himself has often recounted at the Green Dragon Inn of Greyhawk City.

Finally, there is the sensitive and complicated issue regarding the true powers involved in the elemental evil cult. In the seminal work by Sage and Frnak on the Temple of Elemental Evil this chapter is missing, perhaps due to the chaotic work practices of Savant Sage himself. Consequently, the above source has evoked disputes among the learned ever since.

Significant for the interpretation is the presence of Lolth in Zuggtmoy's scheme during the relaunch of her ruse religion. Lolth deployed spies within the second Temple's ranks, Lareth and Falrinth being the most prominent ones. Why was Lolth so interested in spying on Zuggtmoy's cult? The answer is well hidden within the nethermost recesses of the Temple's dungeons; a temple within the Temple to an imprisoned primordial god. This god is none other than the incomprehensible (by human standards) Elder Elemental God, revered by the Eilservs, the dominant drow house opposing Lolth. It is clear that, should the Elder Elemental God ever be freed, Eilservs would grow in power to the detriment of the faith of Lolth. The physical location of the Elder Elemental God's temple is so well hidden that adventurers who have scoured the temple in recent years can only guess it is accessible through the elemental nodes. Since the elemental nodes were created together with the Yellowskull, the undiscovered temple could be approached by the very first attempt to establish the ruse religion, c. 503 CY. Zagig was swift to act, but who knows whether Eclavdra had her agents claim the Yellowskull. Perhaps as-yet unknown forces are at work concealing the temple's location.

Zuggtmoy, being a demonic genius, knew quite well what she was doing when she appropriated the Elder Elemental God's sphere of influence. While her priests convinced her that elemental evil would attract more

followers than her fungal cult, she was already preparing the Yellowskull apprenticed by true Iuz and chose an unholy symbol that mimicked the Elder Elemental God's own. Outside the Temple, the cult used Zuggtmoy's "Eye of Fire" symbol, while inside the Temple the true Eye of Fire symbol (a triangle with a Y inside it, the points of the Y touching the corners of the triangle) was used. In this way Zuggtmoy hoped to tap the Elder Elemental God's power. If she were successful, other dark powers no doubt intended to usurp her and do the same.

## Endnotes

(1) In certain official records it is noted that Iuz disappeared in 503 CY, during the reign of King Belvor II. This was probably a machination of Iuz to deceive the King, so that they could create the Yellowskull and organize their chaotic evil cult with Zuggtmoy. Then, they could take Belvor II by surprise, attacking by both opposite sides (north and south).

(2) Iuz at that time was more often called the Dark One, due to his dark skin. Old One is a later ascribed nickname by his orc subjects, which was readily adopted by scholarly circles, usually producing mistaken connotations about Iuz's age.

(3) Another date also usually met in official records regarding the disappearance of Iuz is 507 CY. This later date relates to the disappearance of a false Iuz (see following text). This false Iuzs concept effectively eliminates the contradictory presence of Iuz during the construction of the second Temple of Elemental Evil near Hommlet (565-569 CY). These false Iuzs, according to the fundamental text on Flanaess by Pluffet Smedger et al, were either illusionists or minor demons with delusions of grandeur.

(4) Almost three decades passed, and during that time Belvor II (c. first two decades of 6th century) was succeeded by the short reign of Belvor III (522 - 537 CY, a.k.a. Thrommel II for making unification plans, ironically allowing the secession of Dyvers, he died unexpectedly in his sleep), then the premature inheritance of the throne by thirteen-year old Belvor IV (he assumed the throne from Lord Throstin, Regent of the Realm).

(5) After the seeming bankruptcy of the Greyhawk Construction Company, a consortium of scholars diverted from the tenets of Delleb. Instead of considering witness testimonies first, they twisted excerpts from Delleb's dogma, so that they can "discover" answers in the books ex parte.

The most notable of those efforts is Iquander's <http://www.canonfire.com/htmlnew/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=77&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>>The Final Word on Iuz and Company celebrated treatise.

(6) The description of the battle of Emridy Meadows occupies well over one sixth of the text (chronological table excluded) of the historical section of the book. This expended text space is long, considering that the historical section encompasses events over one millennium past.

(7) The numerous misconceptions regarding Serten are too lengthy a tale to be elaborated here. Interested readers, in order to capture some deal of the proportion of the problem, are urged to search for "the Serten Letters" in libraries of prominence. The aforementioned letters have circulated into the hands of the gnome sage Dr. Margana Eman.

(8) The intelligence in quotation marks is from Sargen's "Iuz the Evil" (Murlynd volume name), pp. 5, cataloged in the Great Library with no. 9399. The questionably sane mage-scholar, once a prisoner of the Temple of Elemental Evil near Hommlet for philosophical divergence, has penned astounding analysis about the Greyhawk Wars, and the related state of affairs of central and eastern Flanaess (see also, Sage and Frnak, "The Temple of Elemental Evil" (Murlynd volume name), Great Library, no. 9147, pp. 114).