

This Document provides an overview of the major states, factions, and subfaction on the continent of Ephar.

## **States:**

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### **Dormunan Empire:**

#### Goals

- Conquest of the Kingdoms of the Valley.
- Maintenance of peace and prosperity at home.
- Competing internal interests over the increasingly influential role that the Iphotar order plays in Imperial Politics.

#### Relationships

- Serious rival of all Kingdoms of the Valley
- Fairly respectful of the Academy of the Argent Earth, even those members which are not partisan to the empire.
- Cooperative with the Iphotar order.
- Nominally cooperative towards Danizgrad, but control of it would do wonders for Dormunan power in the Region.
- Mistrustful of Prakeryn Throne, though there has been little to no real tension or hostility yet even during the Empire's northward conquests.

#### Figures of Interest

- Emperor Karl Zigmunt Saradache, "The flood that scatters the bones of his foes"
- General Lillibridge, renowned military commander and leader of the past two Imperial campaigns into the north, most recently leading the conquest of the Kingdom of Taigrast.
- Grandmaster Paige Lightsong, leader of the Order of the White Gauntlet, a religious order that has traditionally maintained peace and safety within the Empire's borders, but which is nominally independent from the Imperial administration itself. She is concerned about the Order increasingly being used as a military force

#### History

The Dormunan Empire originated in the Dormuna region as the *Kingdom* of Pelas, named for the lake in its center, in the southwest of Ephar. Around a century ago, the kingdoms of the region were finally consolidated into a Dormunan Empire, and over the past century has expanded and incorporated the surrounding kingdoms, duchies, tribes and cities until it covered almost the entirety of southwestern Ephar. Though it's origins are as a human society dominated by worshippers of Tyr, Torm, Mieliki, and the Duskmatron, the Empire quickly diversified both racially and religiously as it expanded, and measures have been taken to ensure all are welcome as subjects of the Empire, even supporting local conduction projects and traditions, so long as they obey the Emperor. The Dormunan Empire is thus one of the most cosmopolitan societies of its size, intellectually, racially, and economically, on Kairia, and one of the only states in which worship of all the gods is legal.

While the Empire is not primarily governed through system of vassalage and the Emperor has an administrative bureaucracy to carry out his will, in practice the nobility of the provinces assist a great deal

in the day to day administration of the Empire, some themselves becoming members of the bureaucracy for convenience, some using their influence in the area to assist the Emperor in return for favors, and some having much more a vassal/liege relationship with Emperor, supporting the Empire even if they govern much of the day to day in their provinces. Even given this relationship of the nobility, it is not at all unheard of for nobles who do not govern in accordance with the Emperor's law to be stripped of their property, executed, and for their lands to be governed directly by an appointee of the Emperor.

About a decade ago, a new Emperor, Karl Zigmunt Saradache, regarded as an excellent governor, administrator, and grand strategist, ascended to the throne. It is during this time that the Empire has begun its expansion north into the Kingdoms of the Valley, and also that it has become particularly close with the Iphotar Order. Arcane magic has always been fairly restricted in the Empire, but in the past ten years the influence of the Iphotar Order has seriously expanded these restrictions. The Empire of course now also supports the Order in their position of chaos-touched individuals. It is unclear how Emperor Saradache feels personally about the Order, but he minimally seems to think that the advice and support they offer is worth some influence.

### **Free City of Danizgrad:**

#### Goals: (As seen by the current First Councilor)

- Maintain independence of the city as war brews all around it
- Maintain commerce with the Free Coasts, the Kingdoms of the Valley, and indeed the Empire in spite of increasing dangers to it.
- Maintain independence from interests trying to influence the city, including the Iphotar Order and the Academy of the Argent Earth

#### Relationships

- Danizgrad is the main trade city on the continent, so the city is viewed as valuable by the Kingdoms of the Valley and of course the Empire
- The Iphotar order has recently increased its influence in the area, and a law has recently been passed as a result restricting unlicensed magic use.
- Serious political division over the Dormunan Conquests and the City's relationship to it

#### Key figures and factions

- Archon Oridal Valro, head of The Merchant Council of Danizgrad, an elected position held for life
- Councilor Murgeg Runegaze, half-orc and leader of the Independent Danizgrad Society, political party dedicated to the preservation of Danizgrad's political independence from outside forces like the Dormunan Empire.
- Councilor Ral Grazidz, human and leader of Citizens for Commerce and Prosperity, political party dedicated to maintaining the free flow of trade and peace in the city, possibly even at the cost of some political freedom

#### History:

Danizgrad is the latest member of the League of the Seven Free Cities, and the only member on the continent of Ephar – the others lie just across the Eldathian Ocean on the continent of Quendir. The League is composed of the Free Cities of Doptol, Oyrinas, Klistin, Mapolis, Esaginia, Phusos, and Itaphis. The League itself was formed only four or five decades ago for two primary reasons, one of which being as trade between the Free Coast and the rest of the world was expanding rapidly the competing interests

and conflicts of the cities became difficult to navigate without a centralized bureaucracy, the other being the the rapid accumulation of wealth lead to more frequent raids from the Fjoldim Islands to the North and the Horselords of the Flame-licked Plains to the West, and consolidating the Coast's military power into the league proved a more effective way to combat raiding. Each city is governed by an Archon, elected from among the powerful merchant families of the city, and each city sends delegates to the Council of the League which governs the League as a whole.

The League has economic connections with states around the world, but in Ephar there are most significant with the Free City of Danizgrad as the main port to sell and import goods from the Kingdoms of the North. More trade connections have also increasingly been formed with the Dormunan Empire as the ascending power on Ephar, though the Empire's aggressive maneuvers in the North (and most recently, it's conquest of Taigrast) has some in the Free Cities concerned about war's effect on the stability of trade.

## **Kingdoms of the Valley:**

### **Wustrar**

#### Goals

- Expansion of agricultural territories
- Strengthening defenses against potential threats
- Establishing trade alliances for economic growth.

#### Relationships

- Stable relations with neighboring kingdoms
- Economic ties with Danizgrad and the Free Coasts for trade, all non locally produced goods are acquired through Danizgrad
- Cautiously observing the Dormunan Empire's northern expansion

#### Key figures

- King Roderic Aldermere, known for his diplomatic prowess and focus on economic development.
- Chancellor Elara Windborne, an influential adviser specializing in foreign policy and trade negotiations.

### **Aedyr**

#### Goals

- Open trade ties with the Prakeryn Throne through the Mouth
- Cultivate alliances to counter external threats.
- Promote cultural and artistic endeavors within the kingdom.

### Relationships

- Historically peaceful relations with neighboring kingdoms.
- Collaborative initiatives with the Academy of the Argent Earth for cultural preservation.
- Growing concern about the Dormunan Empire's expansionist policies

### Key figures

- Queen Isolde Evergreen, revered for her commitment to the arts and cultural heritage.
- General Harlan Stormsword, a military strategist overseeing Aedyr's defense and alliances.

## **Obredo**

### Goals

- Dealing with the Dormunan Threat, the war in Taigrast significantly affected Obredo as well, and both Dormunan and Taigrast deserters, mercenaries and guerrillas have spilled over into Obredo.
- Obredo feels very threatened by the Empire, and the Kingdoms of the Valley assume that they are next in the conquest.
- Form alliances with other powers in the North

### Relationships

- Tense relations with the Dormunan Empire due to perceived threats and tensions from recent conflicts.
- Seeking alliances with other Valley Kingdoms and Free Cities for mutual protection.
- Deep distrust and suspicion towards Dormunan Empire's intentions and expansion.

### Key figures

- King Dalibor, a weak king in my perception, actively working on diplomatic initiatives and seeking alliances to safeguard Obredo's sovereignty

## **Taigrast**

### Goals

- Recently overrun by the Dormunan Empire. Though resistance remains, the Empire has control over all important towns and thoroughfares.
- Guerilla elements seek to regain some amount of independence

### Relationships

### Key figures

- King Tolron (deceased)

- Queen Shahren and children of Tolron (unknown)
- Commander Sanendyl Virfiel, elf leader of guerrilla resistance

## **Prakeryn Throne:**

### Goals

- Collect the "Shards of Rasori," purplish shining stones that the Throne believes to hold religious significance independent of the power of the traditional gods.
- Solidify control over the the regions of the Blade Field, The Mouth, and the Ashlands though treaties with tribes and building outposts.

### Relationships

- Threatened and Mistrustful of the Empire's expansion, particularly given their new border with the Throne's holdings at The Mouth, following the conquest of Taigrast
- Very light trade with Taigrast which has recently been shut off with its conquest.
- Various alliances and rivalries with the tribes of the Ashlands and the Blade field, considers them to be protectorates/tributaries, but though not all tribes necessarily feel this way.

### Key figures

- The Holy Queen, old, nearly ancient ruler of the Prakeryn Throne.

### History:

The Prakeryn Throne's history dates back to the formation of the first city and followers devoted to the enigmatic "Shards of Rasori," approximately 333 years after the banishment of the Traitor's Pantheon. The Throne's foundation was rooted in a belief system centered around peculiar purplish shining stones known as the "Shards of Rasori." These stones held perceived religious significance, believed by the Throne to possess power independent of the traditional gods worshipped in other parts of the world. As the Prakeryn Throne sought to solidify its power and expand influence, it established treaties with various tribes of the Ashlands, strategically positioning them as tributaries and protectorates. These alliances granted the Throne significant political leverage and military support, fostering a hierarchical structure that consolidated its authority over the region.

## **Tetrarchy of Vaghrum:**

### Goals

- Preservation and study of pre-Conjunction relics and ancient artifacts.
- Maintenance of technological advancements derived from pre-Conjunction knowledge.
- Ensuring the isolationism and stability of the Tetrarchy's domains, especially around the Primordial Titan's ruins.

## Relationships

- Limited but strategic diplomatic ties with neighboring regions, primarily for trade in rare relics and artifacts.
- Neutral stance in most regional conflicts, focusing on academic and technological pursuits.
- Quiet concern regarding potential disruptions caused by the Dormunan Empire's expansion, particularly near the ruins of the Primordial Titan.

## Key figures

- Steward Torgrim Stoneheart: Renowned for overseeing the security and defense of the Tetrarchy, ensuring protection for archaeological sites.
- Steward Thessa Brightspark: Adept at managing the academic and scholarly pursuits, overseeing relic research and dissemination of knowledge.
- Steward Durgan Ironhand: Skilled in engineering and technological advancements, spearheading innovations based on pre-Conjunction relics.
- Steward Astrid Frostbeard: A diplomat and negotiator, handling external relations and trade agreements beneficial to the Tetrarchy.

## History

The Tetrarchy of Vaghrum is a primarily Dwarven society in Stolnadir that is built into the western portion of the Vaghrum Mountains. Named for its capitol city, the largest and the one closest to the edge of the mountain, many foreigners assume that the capital city is the entirety of the Tetrarchy. In fact, several other smaller cities and colonies exist further and deeper in the mountain, ancient railcars connecting them to the capital. Sealed under the mountains is also the ruined body of Emperor Kort, the Primordial Titan of Earth, into which some of the furthest colonies of the Tetrarchy are built. The Tetrarchy of Vaghrum is the only society in Ephar that can directly trace its lineage to before the Second Conjunction and the Divine War; the Kingdoms of Vaghrum used to stretch over the entirety of Stolnadir before they were forced under the mountain or destroyed in the chaos of the Divine War. Still, the Tetrarchy is probably the one of most technologically advanced societies on the continent, even if much of it comes from pre-Conjunction relics that are not fully understood.

The excavation of pre-Conjunction relics is a major enterprise, but also heavily regulated by the Four Stewards, the governing council of the Tetrarchy. Excavation around the body of Emperor Kort, though valuable, is especially strict, given the presence of all sorts of ancient and wild magics around it, to say nothing of the risks that messing about with a sealed Primordial Titan may bring, even if it is dead.

Aldimar Rumnaheim stands out as an ambitious and enterprising archaeologist within the Tetrarchy of Vaghrum. Known for multiple daring expeditions into the depths of the Primordial Titan's ruins, Rumnaheim has gained both fame and notoriety for his relentless pursuit of ancient knowledge. His expeditions into the sealed caverns of the Titan have yielded invaluable relics and texts, contributing significantly to the Tetrarchy's understanding of pre-Conjunction technology and culture. However, Rumnaheim's methods often skirt ethical boundaries, leading to friction with more cautious members of the Tetrarchy's academic community.

## **Other Factions:**

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### **The Shadowdancers:**

An occult order of warriors, mages, and secret police that serve the Holy Queen.

#### **Goals**

- Explore and safeguard occult knowledge, enhancing their magical prowess.
- Discover who is behind attempts to steal shards of Rasori
- Protect and prevent unauthorized access to the Shards of Rasori, ensuring their security for the Throne's interests.

#### **Relationships**

- Only independent relationship of note is to the Prakeryn Throne and the Holy Queen

#### **Key figures**

- Shadowmistress Mirren Blackthorn: leader and specialist in occult rituals and the protection of ancient knowledge.

#### **History**

The Shadowdancers trace their origins to the early formation of the Prakeryn Throne and the devotion to the Shards of Rasori. As sworn loyalists to the Holy Queen, their primary mandate was to serve as the silent enforcers of her will, operating in the shadows and executing missions deemed necessary for the Throne's stability and power. Over time, their practices evolved to include the mastery of occult magic, particularly the ability to traverse shadows, allowing them to move swiftly and stealthily. Their commitment to occult lore and protection of the Shards of Rasori became intertwined with their duties, leading to a reputation for wielding dark arts while guarding the sacred artifacts. The Shadowdancers' influence within the Prakeryn Throne remained secretive and shrouded in mystery, ensuring their operations stayed concealed from prying eyes, thus maintaining their effectiveness as covert operatives.

### **Iphotar Order:**

#### **Goals**

- The control and suppression of chaos-touched individuals
- Regulation of arcane magic in the general population.
- Technically secular organization, but many if not most of the order is a worshiper of some god or another.

#### **Relationships**

- Offers support to factions and states across the continent, has a wing in the courts of many realms.
- Recently a special relationship with the Dormunan Empire, offers lots of support and advice in exchange for favorable policies.
- Similarly, a recently recently a growing presence and influence in Danizgrad

#### **Key figures**

- High Inquisitor Rainis Brylee
- High Inquisitor Bellara Cryss, recently deceased in a mysterious magical attack aboard a ship carrying

### History:

The Iphotar order is concerned about chaos-touched people and promotes the regulation of arcane magic. They have presences throughout the continent (though mostly in the west) offering advice and resources for support where they can. In the past decade or so they have cultivated a very close relationship with the Dormunan Empire offering advice and support in exchange for favorable policies like bans and required licenses for arcane magic of a certain level, and quarantining of chaos touched. The Iphotar Order is concerned about chaos-touched because unstable and unpredictable magic can happen around them. That's about as much as the general populace knows. Specifically, most magic used by mortals is made up of "Resonance," which is an ordered and focused variety of the Primordial Chaos that the planes exist in. The Resonance used by most magic users is thus already organized in a specific way, and they simply use that preorganized magic. Chaostouched mortals however are sometimes able to manipulate the Primordial Chaos itself and create new resonance

### **Order of the White Gauntlet:**

#### Goals

- Maintain stability within the Dormunan Empire by offering protection against threats, especially from monsters supernatural entities.
- Serve as defenders against external threats, focusing on safeguarding key individuals and locations.

#### Relationships

- Collaborate closely with the Dormunan Empire's leadership, often acting as an extension of its military in critical situations.
- Work in tandem with the Iphotar Order on matters related to chaos-touched individuals, though their methods might differ.
- Strong connections with the religious institutions of Tyr, Torm, and Mieliki.

#### Key figures

- Paige Lightsong, Grandmaster of the Order and far and away the most powerful knight in the it's history, Often regarded –high level magic users excepted– as one of the most powerful individual mortals on the Prime Material Plane

#### History

The White Gauntlet itself is a religious military order that traces it's origins to before the formation of the Dormunan Empire that trained knights errant who travel around to villages and offer protection against monsters and bandits in a time where a powerful and secure state was not present. The White Gauntlet has since become heavily supported by and associated with the Dormunan State, and serves almost as an additional branch of its military. White Gauntlet troops are often sprinkled in with the main military to defend important locations, or as guards for high value targets (White Gauntlet bodyguards are sought after by commanders undertaking risky maneuvers and campaigns), but are traditionally not deployed as an aggressive force unless some arrangement between the Emperor and the Grandmaster



of the Order has been made –though the Grandmaster often aligns with the Emperor’s wishes. Grandmaster Paige Truestrike currently leads the Order, and though you wouldn’t know her personally, you would have seen her before and know her by reputation. A former adventurer herself, she joined the order much later than most, but joined at a high level and quickly made her way up to her current position.

## **Academy of the Argent Earth:**

### Goals

- Gather, preserve, and disseminate historical and arcane lore, ensuring the conservation of knowledge across Ephar.
- Traditionally serve as neutral advisers, aiming to maintain balance and stability amidst regional powers and conflicts.
- Encourage academic endeavors, sponsoring research, and exploration into various fields of study.

### Relationships

- Offer counsel and resources to rulers, seeking to maintain peace and balance in the Kingdoms of the Valley and Dormunan Empire.
- Conflict with Iphotar Order. Often clash over approaches towards chaos-touched individuals and magical regulation, occasionally leading to tension and opposing viewpoints.

### Key figures

- Archmage Vicmar Utier, Eminent scholar and leader within the Academy, renowned for expertise in historical and arcane lore.

### History

Founded centuries ago by a coalition of scholars, mages, and librarians, the Academy of the Argent Earth arose from a collective pursuit of knowledge, seeking to preserve arcane wisdom and historical lore across the Kingdoms of the Valley and the Dormunan Empire. Initially established as a neutral bastion of scholarly endeavors, its foundations were rooted in the principles of academic freedom, intellectual exploration, and the pursuit of truth.

In its nascent years, the Academy served as a repository of arcane texts, historical manuscripts, and diverse scholarly resources. It attracted intellectuals from various disciplines, fostering a vibrant academic community dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of Ephar's past. The Academy's influence expanded steadily, offering advisors and resources to rulers while maintaining a staunchly neutral stance amidst regional conflicts.

Over the centuries, the Academy became a beacon of intellectualism, producing groundbreaking research in diverse fields, from arcane studies to historical chronicles. Its scholars contributed significantly to understanding ancient civilizations, arcane phenomena, and the implications of pre-Conjunction relics on contemporary society. The Academy's libraries amassed an unparalleled collection of knowledge, attracting seekers of wisdom from far and wide.

The Academy's ethos of neutrality solidified its role as a trusted advisor and mediator in regional disputes, leveraging its vast knowledge to maintain peace and stability. Its diplomats

and scholars engaged in diplomatic missions, fostering alliances and treaties aimed at preserving a delicate balance of power across Ephar. They acted as arbitrators in conflicts, advocating for reasoned discourse and understanding.

Recent times have seen internal discord within the Academy, stemming from differing views on its traditional neutrality. While the majority uphold the Academy's impartial stance, a faction has emerged advocating for more active involvement in regional affairs, challenging the institution's historical commitment to neutrality. This internal struggle has led to debates and rifts within the Academy's leadership, creating tensions among its members.