

# HISTORY OF THAY

## History of the Region

"The East" is shrouded in mystery to those lands to the west of the Inner Sea. The entire east and south is considered an area of vast magics and strange tyrannies. These considerations are quite close to the truth.

Before the beginning of the current Age, there were four great lands who controlled the east of the Inner Sea. In the north were Narfell and Raumathar, to the south were Unther and Mulhorand. The northern nations were relatively young, coalescing out of wandering tribes about a thousand years before the end of the previous age. Unther and Mulhorand had first appeared as that age was dawning.

The southern nations had long since found the Alamber Sea a sufficient border to keep their interests apart. They fought for trade rights and for possession of the few islands of the sea, but neither seriously invaded the other country. In the north, however, there were no such convenient barriers to the march of armies, and the two giants of the north were constantly at war. In these days, no one knows what their source of enmity was, but stories of their wars and heroes are still the staple of any wandering bard of the eastern Inner Seas.

Eventually, the two nations slew each other with great magics. Stories in books found in Myth Drannor tell of demons summoned, dragons called, and cities burned. The war came to an end with neither nation surviving. This took place about 1500 years ago, just before the explorers of Tethyr and Amn began to open up the Inner Sea to the current age.

Both Mulhorand and Unther moved to fill up some of the space left vacant by this catastrophe. Unther lept across the Eastern Reach to plant cities on that body of water's northern coast; Mulhorand founded the cities of Bezantur, Tyraturas, Amruthar, Delhumide, and Nethjet in an effort to reach the northern survivors of the great war. But both nations were already feeling

the first effects of the other great destroyer of empires: decadence.

Unther could not reach the elves of the Yuirwood with its traders or its armies. Rather than circumvent the forest, it sat where it was and first lost Altumbel, then the North Shore Coastal cities, to forces of rebellion against its smothering bureaucracy, led by the freethinking freebooters who led the migrations east from Amn. Then Unther retreated from the south shore under similar pressures. The city-states that remained formed a loose union known as Chessenta that still remains, though the unity of the cities is laughable to any true nation.

Mulhorand, perhaps because it had a land connection to the north, managed to hold on to its northern conquests longer, but eventually, lost them to a home-grown menace. About four hundred years ago, a sect calling itself the Red Wizards declared its freedom from the god-kings of Mulhorand. They rebelled from the rule of the theocracy and demanded more freedom for magic research.

The sect originally sprang up all over the old kingdom, but its center of strength was in the northern provinces, where the natives did not have the inbred reverence for the god-kings. The wizards led an army to raze the capital city of Delhumide and declared themselves the free nation of Thay. Then they marched south, taking the other cities of northern Mulhorand with little trouble.

Mulhorand roused itself from its stupor long enough to hire an immense mercenary army from Chessenta and send it into the land now called Thay by its new masters. The Red Wizards met this army on the farming plains of Thazalhar. The Wizards met the vastly superior numbers backed with some of the less apathetic priests of the god-kings with sorcery, including what has been described as a major demon, who slaughtered vast hordes of mercenaries before the invaders broke and ran.

Mulhorand effectively shrugged its massive shoulders, further fortified the city of Sultim and the River of the

Dawn, and turned over in its bed of apathy to sleep the sleep of decadence. Since then, Mulhorand has not claimed any part of Thay, though they have had to defend themselves, quite successfully, against two invasions from that upstart country.

## Thay

Their independence secured, the Red Wizards set about to establish their own nation. The first order of business was sending the major demon back where it came from—an effort that cost them several Wizards. Then they established their capitol of Eltabbar (some say this is named after the demon) and began to order their new country.

Initially, the Red Wizards ruled their new nation themselves, gathering in a Council to make any necessary decisions. Each Wizard tried to extend his own powerbase, taking on apprentices and recruiting other wizards. Many magic-users from Mulhorand who had not participated in the rebellion immigrated to Thay to partake of the greater freedom for magic-users there. Within a century there were too many Wizards to operate as a ruling Council. Every decision was reached, when it was reached, only after weeks of debate. Moreover, magic-users are not well suited to governing. To remain good magi they must continually research and practice their craft. This leaves little time for statecraft and governance.

Recognizing the problem, the Red Wizards devised the current system (described in the Politics chapter of this book) of Tharchions ruling provinces and Zulkirs chosen from among the Red Wizards to rule the entire nation.

Thay's history since independence was gained is a cycle of internal strife, unification to try to conquer neighboring lands, and so on around the circle. The first major period of strife was directly after the foundation of the ruling Zulkirs, when objecting Wizards marshalled their forces and attempted to destroy this new government at birth. However they were disorganized



and warred among themselves (several had kingly ambitions of their own) and the Zulkirs slowly established their rule over a period of almost 40 years by military victory and occasional co-opting of opponents into their ranks.

### The Conquering Wizards

Since the establishment of their nation, the Red Wizards have had to trade (or steal) for many things they consider necessary for their lives. They would rather conquer and control the lands that produce these items, so the Zulkirs and Tharchions are continually scheming and planning to gather armies and march on one of their neighbors.

Invariably, those Wizards who are not in on the planning of the conquest decide that either (1) it is really just a scheme by the organizers to take over Thay itself or (2) the organizers will get too powerful and use their new power base to take over Thay and/or exact a revenge on the other Wizards for real or imagined slights. Thus, those left out of the planning either (1) try to subvert those working with the planners into sabotaging the effort or (2) try to take over the homefront power base of the planners while they are off conquering.

The fact that the Wizards not involved in the planning might be very right about the real motivations of the planners does not help build tranquility. Thus, the military history of Thay is one of grand conquests splendidly embarked upon that end in squabbling and disaster. However, the Wizards keep trying.

### Current Operations

At this time, there are three major schemes of conquest in operation.

The first scheme of conquests consists of Szass Tam, Zulkir of Necromancy, and the Tharchion of Gauros, who are attempting once again to conquer Rashemen, this time behind an army of zombies.

The second scheme is masterminded

by the Tharchion of Thaymount and the Zulkir of the School of Divination, who have taken advantage of a period of Aglarondan laxity to march down off the Thaymount and take over the trading towns of Nethentir and Nethjet. There is also a second prong to their attack, but that is not immediately evident to the casual observer.

The third scheme is perhaps the most ambitious. The Zulkirs of Evocation and Conjuraction have combined with the Tharchion of Lapendrar to open a gate to the Elemental Plane of Fire, assemble an army of salamanders and efreeti, and purge the North Coast of competitors to Bezantur once and for all.

Naturally, all this activity has not gone unnoticed. The Zulkir for Enchantment and Charm is most alarmed at all this adventurism, since his plan of steady assassination of heads of state has barely gotten off the ground.

This is the nation that adventurous player characters may be entering at any moment.

### Timeline

- 150 DR Mutual Fall of Narfall and Raumathar

1 DR Founding of Cormyr

163 DR Founding of Altumbel

482 DR Delthuntle and Laothkund break free of Unther

504-679 DR Steady erosion of Unther's control of North Coast Cities

756 DR First fisherfolk in Aglarond

823 DR Mourktar breaks free of Unther

870 DR Adventurers begin to clear the monsters out of the Yuirwood

922 DR Battle of Thazalhar

929 DR Alliance of Chessenta drives Unther back beyond the Riders To The Sky mtns.

934 DR First Thay invasion of Rashemen

937 DR Alliance of the Cities of The Golden Way into Thesk

975 DR Telflamm annexes Nyth and Culmaster and establishes own nation

1030 DR Establishment of Zulkirs as ruling body of Thay

1031-74 DR Internal strife in Thay as Zulkirs continue to establish rule

1065 DR Battle of Ingdal's Arm  
Brindor First King of Aglarond

1082 DR Building of Emmech

1085 DR Building of Giants Wall

1097 DR Founding of Impiltur  
Imphras crowned King

1104 DR Birth of Zulkir Szass Tam

1117-54 DR Breakup of Chessenta Alliance into squabbling city-states

1122 DR Imbrar King of Impiltur

1127 DR Ilmara Queen of Impiltur

1128 DR Althon King of Aglarond

1132 DR Creation of Long Portage

1142 DR Redsail the pirate retires to Aglarond

1159 DR Zulkir Szass Tam becomes lich

1189 DR Elthond King of Aglarond

1169 DR Imphras II King of Impiltur

1194 DR Battle of Singing Sands  
Philaspur King of Aglarond

1197 DR Battle of Brokenheads  
Grey Sisters Queens of Aglarond

1225 DR Lashimbrar King of Impiltur

1237 DR Marriage of Thara of Aglarond to Elthar of Milvarune  
Alliance of Thesk and Aglarond

1257 DR Halacar king of Aglarond

1260 DR Battle of Lapendrar  
Ilione Queen of Aglarond

1294 DR Rilimbrar King of Impiltur  
1317-23 DR Great Plague of the Inner Sea

1317 DR Targuth Athkarr becomes Huhong of Rashemen

1320 DR Simbul Queen of Aglarond

1334 DR Hyarmon Hussilthar becomes Huhong of Rashemen

1338 DR Sambryl Queen of Impiltur

1357 DR The Present

# PEOPLE AND SOCIETY OF THAY

In most of the lands of the Inner Sea, the dominant human racial stock is similar to the men and women of Amn and Tethyr. However, the racial mixture of Thay is almost totally divided between two other racial stocks, with a scattering of the type more familiar to the inhabitants of the western realms of the Inner Sea.

The basic lower and middle class stock of Thay consists of short, hairy, swarthy, sturdy folk; the same stock found in neighboring Rashemen. This body type, called the Rashemi, can be found in the lower free classes and among the slowly-growing middle class of the country. In fact, the middle class is more likely to fall into this category than the lowest class of slaves, since the Red Wizards buy slaves from all over the Realms, and the slaves are of all lands and body types.

The rulers of Thay, on the other hand, are slightly taller and slimmer than their subjects (though not as tall as most Western men), with much less body hair and a sallow rather than swarthy skin. This is the body type most commonly found in the lands of Unther and Mulhorand, which is hardly surprising, since the rulers of Thay are the descendants of Mulhorani who broke away from that ancient kingdom. This body type is called the Mulan.

## The Population of Thay

Thay is an ancient land, and has been the home of three different nations. Compared to many lands, it is quite populous.

Counting the slave population, there are about 1.5 million sentient people within the borders of Thay. This is an estimate, as the Zulkirs consider any such information potentially hazardous to the security of the country, and they refuse to take a census. Probably the best-counted members of the society are the slaves, as the slave owners have to keep some record of how many they have and how much they are produc-

ing, but there is no central repository for these records and individual slave owners are leery of letting anyone know the extent of their holdings.

Due to the centrally organized farming, where most is done on large slave farms, there is a higher proportion of population in the cities to the people on the farms than is common in the western realms where the farming is done mostly by small collections of free farmers or serfs of small landholders. About 300,000 people live in the cities, the other 1,200,000 in the wayside villages and slave farms. Of the city dwellers, about half are slaves, but in the country, the proportion of slaves to freemen is about seven to one.

In general, there are three social classes in Thay.

### The Nobility

These are the rulers of Thay, and comprise both the Tharchions and Tharchionesses who rule the various regions and the Red Wizards themselves.

Members of the Bureaucracy are also among the nobility as are the Autharches who rule sub-regions in the name of the Tharchions.

The nobility is almost entirely comprised of the slim, sallow, folk from Mulhorand, but a few of the lower classes have managed to impress some wizards with their magical ability and be elevated to the rank of wizard's apprentice. Some of the Rashemi have now become members of the Red Wizards.

Traditionally, nobles of Thay disdain and abhor body hair (something of a trial for those of Rashemi descent). Men are known to grow facial hair even as they shave their heads. Women commonly shave their heads and decorate their shaved pates with artistic designs. Sometimes the designs are permanent tattoos, but most are just body paint, and frequently changed. This custom is mainly honored among the Tharchions and Tharchionesses, though most Red Wizards also follow the style when they

have the time.

Presumed Red Wizards have been seen outside of Thay with beards and normal body hair. Most of these are obviously of Rashemi descent (part of a program of proving their worthiness by taking on missions to foreign lands), but even Mulani have been seen in such condition. It is thought that, without their specially-trained slave barbers, Red Wizards would rather grow their hair than risk cutting it by themselves or entrusting their heads to local barbers.

There are several noble families in Thay and, as a sign of the possible upward mobility in Thayvian society, new noble families are being started all the time.

In general, anyone appointed to the position of Tharchion (see Politics) or Autharch is automatically noble, and his immediate family (spouse[s], children) is also ennobled. Any other family members including siblings are not ennobled, but, since nepotism is standard in Thay, can expect to become nobility soon.

Red Wizards are also automatically nobles, and they ennoble their immediate families as well.

If the children of a Tharchion do not become Tharchions or Autharches themselves, or children of Red Wizards do not become wizards, they are still nobility. Once a Thayvian becomes a noble, it is almost impossible to take that status away from his family. Only the unanimous decision of the Zulkirs can remove the status of nobility; this is usually done by outlawing the family, arresting all accessible members, and turning the survivors of the arresting process into slaves.

It is not necessary to get all the Zulkirs upset with you to have a downward change in fortunes. Noble families also disappear because of the backstabbing politics of Thay. A family with many sons and siblings and with tentacles of power everywhere in the country can vanish overnight if the right collection of enemies decide the family is getting too powerful for the enemies' good.



Some of the current influential families include:

**The Agneh:** This family has a long history of Tharchions and Wizards in its membership. The most illustrious current member is Mari Agneh, Tharchioness of Bezantur, who was the black sheep of the family because of her past as an adventuring thief until she was appointed to her current post. She has embraced her family again and appointed most of them to official posts within her city government. Many people have noticed that these posts are those with the most prestige for the least work—a situation about which the family members have never been heard to protest. The Agneh clan is the leading family of Bezantur.

**The Canos:** This family is on the rise politically. Though there are no Red Wizards involved with this group, they number a Tharchion, Mikal Canos of Delhumide, and a Tharchioness, Thesaloni Canos of the Aldor. The family has built itself up by its military reputation.

**The Daramos:** This is a new family, based around the Tharchion of Thazaihar and consisting of him, his wife (who rides as a member of his guard) and their two small children.

**The Flass:** This family is on the downturn, though it has had a couple of influential Red Wizards among its membership. The Tharchioness of Eltabbar is one of the family, but she has distanced herself from the clan for some years over an almost-forgotten dispute.

**The Kren:** This is a fairly new family which initially gained prominence due to the efforts of its progenitor, a woman who became a Red Wizard. Her daughter took after her father, however, and is now the Tharchion of Gauros.

**The Mediocros:** This family gained its position two hundred years ago when their progenitor became Tharchion of Eltabbar. Now, the leading member of the family is Valerios Theokillos, Tharchion of Pyarados. The family maintains its seat in that border city and attempt to sponge off their scion, but he

has little time for them. He would much rather deal with his old adventuring friends and they are the ones who have reaped most of the benefits of his largesse.

**The Odesseiron:** This is an ancient family in Thay, its progenitor was one of the wizards who brought the Demon Prince to this plane and fought off the invaders from Mulhorand. For the most part, the Odesseirons have been Wizards. Homen Odesseiron, Tharchion of Surthay, is the first to gain status as a Tharchion. He is also somewhat famous as the first person to be a member of four Schools of Magic simultaneously, even though he never officially gained the title of Wizard.

**The Tam:** This is one of the more ancient families of Thay, not only in lineage but in age of its membership. Its head, Zulkir Szass Tam, is only the third person to hold that position under conditions that are explained in the Notable Persons of Thay section of this book. At this point, we can only say that the seat of the Tam family is commonly referred to as "The Necropolis."

### Noble Titles of Thay

One way of distinguishing the working nobility from the non-working variety in Thay is the titles they bear. A Tharchion or Autharch is a leader of the bureaucracy and the equivalent of a civil servant. They are the working nobility. They are referred to as "Lord" or "Lady" or "Your Eminence."

Red Wizards are referred to as "Master" (the sex does not matter) or "Your Omnipotence." The rest of the nobility is referred to as Daeron or Daeronness (literally "noble-born") and referred to personally as "Sir" or "Mistress" or "Your Excellency" or "Your Honor." Higher ranking nobles (the Tharchions and Autharches) rarely bother with such formal titles when talking to lower-ranking nobles.

High ranking priests are called "Lord Priest" (or other, higher, title) or "Your Omniscience." They have no official status in Thay, but still maintain a lot of

social status. Which churches exist in Thay and how powerful they are is covered under Religions of Thay.

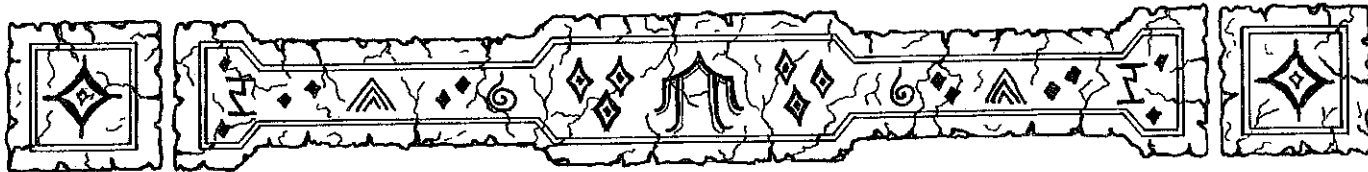
### The Middle Class

Thay has little experience of a middle class, and merchants and tradesmen are generally considered to be just another form of laborer. Since all agriculture is done on slave-run plantations, there is no experience at all of the middle class yeoman farmer that distinguishes so many Western Realms.

In actual fact, with the foiling of several of the Red Wizards' plans for expansion at the expense of their neighbors, tradesmen and traders have become the source of much of what Thay needs to exist. The Red Wizards have recognized this sufficiently to use the legitimate traders of Thay as a cover for their own deprivations among the other kingdoms of the Inner Sea.

Because of the independence of individual members of the ruling class, there is no government regulation of the middle class. This is both a blessing and a curse to merchants and tradesmen. Depending on the Tharch they inhabit, they may be freewheeling entrepreneurs, treating Tharchion and Wizard alike as almost an equal, or they may have to swear fealty to a particular ruler and go to him for permission for any deal they wish to consummate or project they wish to commence. What is worse for these people is that these rules can change with a change in each ruler, which in the assassination-haunted halls of Thay can happen overnight.

The middle class approach to grooming is to be as neat as possible. Because of the rules governing slave grooming, no peasant or merchant is too hairy—shaving is common, and women's hairstyles tend to be shorter than those found elsewhere in the Realms. No peasant wants to be mistaken for a slave.



## Slaves

Because of the need to keep many peasants under arms (and the loss of the same peasants in various attempts at conquest) Thay depends on a slave economy. Legitimate traders go throughout the Realms trying to purchase criminals and any other possible candidates for slavery. Of course, they cannot purchase anyone sentenced to limited slavery for a period of time, as the sentencing authority would have no way of knowing that the criminal had been released after his term was spent. However, enough lands use permanent slavery as a punishment that the slave traders are able to find many candidates for the slave pens of Thay. Some Inner Sea countries use "slavery and sale to the merchants of Thay" as a special punishment for especially heinous crimes.

However, most criminals do not have the special requirements that some slaveholders of Thay have. The Red Wizards meet these needs with their own special slavers—the dregs of the Inner Sea are hired to go out and find the ideal candidates, kidnap them, and turn them over to the Red Wizards to become slaves.

Slavery in Thay is universally dreaded throughout the Realms around the Inner Sea. Aside from the meager food and/or hard labor and/or degradation that is the probable lot of any slave in the few lands that allow for any form of slavery, Thayvian slaves are likely to become subjects of experiments, fed to exotic monsters that demand human flesh, or be slaughtered in depraved ceremonies.

Slaves who have been in Thay for more than a month can always be told apart from the peasantry because slaves are not allowed to cut their hair, no matter where on their bodies it grows.

Since the nobles of Thay are also very careful of cleanliness, this means that part of a slave's daily chores is washing an ever-growing head and, sometimes, body of hair.

Under normal circumstances, the slave hair is piled up in masses on the head of the slave, but any slave who is not on his or her master's business must wear his or her hair down, so that they can be told as slaves immediately.

It is possible for a slave to get permission to cut his hair, but it can never be cut to less than half way down the slave's back.

If a slave's hair must be cut for medical reasons, the first question is whether it would not be easier to let the slave die. If they decide to keep him alive, he is shaved where needed, then kept in seclusion until the hair grows out again.

## Demí-Humans in Thay

Besides the dominant human population of Thay and the inevitable orcish tribes in the Thaymount and Sunrise mountains, the largest single humanoid tribe in Thay is gnolls. Gnoll mercenaries made up part of the Red Wizards' army of rebellion, and their reward was continued employment in the armies of the Thay and retirement to communities on the borders of the country, particularly the Thaymount and Gorge of Gauros.

Under these conditions, antithetical as they are to the usual form of gnoll habitation, the descendants of the mercenaries thrived. They have made a home for themselves in Thay and can be found throughout the country, usually working as mercenaries and law-enforcers. Thayvian law being what it is, gnolls get a great deal of pleasure out of enforcing it. Unlike their wilder brethren, Thayvian gnolls are neutral evil, not chaotic evil.

It is said that there are dwarves and gnomes in the Sunrise mountains, but they have little to do with the Red Wizards; their sole contact is with the raiding parties that enter the Sunrise Mountains looking for slaves.

Of elves there are none in Thay, except as slaves. Thayvian wizards do not buy adult elves as slaves, but occasionally buy children that they can be sure have not yet learned magic. The

drow underneath Aglarond are said to have embassies in Thay, and they may have their own colonies under Thay, but they are not part of the life of the country. Elven adventurers in Thay are remarked on and watched closely.

Halflings are present in Thay as slaves, and, to some extent, as free citizens. Some halfling mercenaries did a favor for a Red Wizard and retired to Bezantur on the proceeds. Their families joined them and now there are halflings in all the cities. The halflings who settle in Thay find the paranoia of Thay's rulers a fertile field for scams and con games—and there is always work for a good thief who doesn't take up much space.

Centaurus can be found throughout Thay, usually as guards on the slave farms. These centaurs were originally inhabitants of Aglarond who were driven out by the half-elves because of their thieving ways and were welcomed by the Tharchion of Thaymount as mercenaries. There is a centaur legion (sponsored by one of the Red Wizards) in the standing army of Thay, and centaurs usually have the run of the roads of Thay.

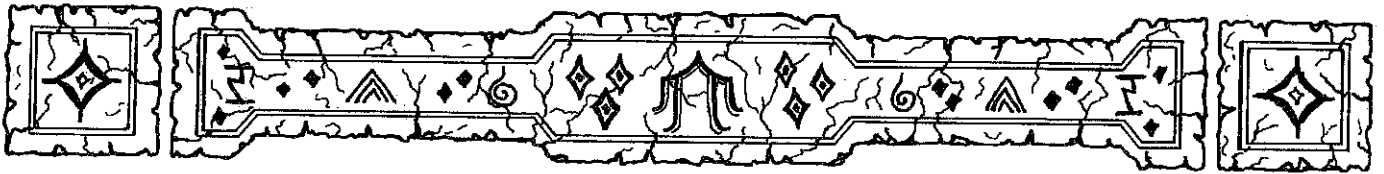
This does not prevent centaurs from becoming slaves for real or imagined infractions.

Sahuagin are found in Bezantur and on the Aldor fairly frequently. In Thay the sahuagin have found a society they understand, and such trading as they do with the air breathers is done through Thay. Their kingdom in the Alamber Sea is a firm Thayvian ally (as firm as any alliance with the sahuagin can be).

## The Society of Thay

Essentially, Thay is an evil society. Overall, the alignment of the country is neutral evil, but this can vary from lawful evil (usually but not always exemplified by the Tharchions and Zulkirs) to chaotic evil (usually exemplified by the actions of many of the Red Wizards who are not Zulkirs).

But wherever one may be in Thay, the



rulers and most of their followers are driven by greed and megalomania and paranoia. Each member of the society seems to be dedicated to raising himself to the highest possible pinnacle of success, preferably on the backs of his friends, family, and associates. Not everyone living in Thay feels this way, but it is the way of the majority. It helps explain why members of the ruling class have many acquaintances and associates, but very few friends.

This makes for an almost chaotic evil society, but chaos is kept away by a structure of traditions and laws that allow for the Red Wizards having almost total freedom to do as they please, but just enough restraint through societal pressure and the threat of retribution by all the other wizards to keep Thay from disintegrating into a million tiny magocracies, each with a king mage on top trying to destroy all the other little magic kingdoms.

Part of the unwritten traditions and motivations of the Red Wizards is their envy of the god-kings of Muhorand. They rebelled from that land to escape the overlordship of these avatars of powerful gods, and established a society that they hope will lead them to the same position through magic instead of worship. Thus, each wizard usually sees himself as a sort of proto-god, and each realizes that he needs a society of worshippers to maintain his power, so they maintain their society as the god-kings have maintained theirs.



# Geography of Thay

## General Description

Thay is a vast realm, bounded on the north by the river and lake of Mulsantir, its gateway there being the city of Surthay. To the northwest it claims the Surmarsh, a vast marsh and fenland that lies between the rivers Thay and Sur. The central core of Thay then runs south past the eastern slopes of Thaymount and the eastern bank of Lapendrar, the River of Sorrows, for many miles, until turning southeast along the edge of the Priador (high plains) to the many-spired city of Bezantur. Bezantur, on the Alamber Sea (sometimes known as the Sahuagin Sea) is Thay's southern gateway, and has traditionally rivaled the free cities of Thasselen, Murbant, Escalant, Taskaunt, Lasdur, and Hilbrand that share the north shore of the Sea.

From Bezantur, the land claimed by Thay is the seacoast east to the mouth of the River Thazarim, and northwards up that river's west bank to the Sunrise Mountains and then north to the outflow of the Mulsantir.

Thay frequently attempts to swallow the lands along these borders, and currently has destroyed several of the free cities and captured Nethentir and Nethjet, trading cities between Aglarond and Thay.

Within these borders, at the heart of the realm, lies Eltabbar, seat of the Red Wizards and capital of Thay. From the north, one reaches the city of Thay up the river Thay, to the vast Lake Thaylambar. Eltabbar lies upon a bay of that dragon-turtle-inhabited water. From the west, one reaches Thay up the Lapendrar from Escalant, or overland from Nethjet on the river Umber, to the independent city of Amruthar (which is still independent, though now circled by lands claimed by Thay), from whence by bridge a road runs to Tyraturos, where roads north from Bezantur, south from Eltabbar, and west from Pyarados on the Thazarim meet. (The Thazarim is navigable as far north as Pyarados.) The Sunrise Mountains form an impenetrable barrier to the east, and

Elminster knows nothing of what lies beyond them. There are tales of both lamia and evil naga in these mountains, but, he cautions, there are such tales everywhere, and but few of them are true.

Most of the country is on the great, irregular plateau formed by the First Escarpment of the Priador and which rises eastward almost imperceptibly toward the Sunrise Escarpment and the Sunrise Mountains. The land is gently rolling and broken only by occasional streams or one of the major rivers, the peaks of Thaymount, which are encircled by the Second Escarpment, the spires of the cities, and the farming communities and wizard towers that can appear every time a traveler mounts the top of one of the many hummocks in the trail.

Carefully set along each road and navigable river are the tax stations, which are usually accompanied by an inn and some other residences. At each tax station, the owning Wizard's tax collectors collect the taxes for crossing his lands from every traveler. Travelers attempting to travel cross country find themselves in trouble with wandering military patrols and the strange creatures that many wizards keep patrolling their grounds for exactly the purpose of keeping out trespassers.

Most of the land is under cultivation, but the lonely farmhouses seen in other lands are not found in Thay. All arable land is in the hands of the Wizards or Tharchions and their subordinates, and the farm workers (usually slaves) live in the central farming towns and hike or ride to their assigned fields.

This form of cultivation is not terribly efficient, but there is so much land under cultivation that Thay can still export some grains and fruits to neighboring lands.

There are no forests in Thay. The only trees are occasional copses of exotic species that decorate Zulkir-owned streams and decorative trees from other lands planted in the cities and towns.

## Lake Mulsantir

This large body of water divides Thay and Rashemen, and is mostly a Rashemi lake. Thay occasionally attempts to gain ascendancy on the lake, but suffers from the simple problem of having little wood with which to build warships. The Witchboats of Rashemen are too much for the Wizards to match without decent wood for their ships.

## The River Thay

This river runs between Lake Mulsantir and Lake Thaylambar, and is navigable almost its entire length. Because of this navigability, there is not the extensive road network in northern Thay that is found in the southern Tharches. Instead, everyone uses the river. The land between the River Thay and the much-less-navigable River Gauros is a mass of slave-farms and wizard towers divided by dirt paths. The main centers of population are along the river.

## The Long Portage

This is the one part of the River Thay that cannot be traversed upstream. The River comes down off the First Escarpment to the level of Lake Mulsantir down a gentle decline that does not stop boats from traveling downstream, but is too rough and fast to pole or row boats upstream.

For about a century after Thay became a nation, the Guild of Portagers charged exorbitant rates to haul vessels up the river. Then the Wizard Shevas Tam (father of the current Zulkir of the School of Necromancy) was confronted with a demanding chief of the Guild and killed him. Shevas Tam then had his minions slaughter most of the Guild members and Shevas Tam turned them into zombies.

Now the Guild consists of the zombies of the original Guild and any replacements needed (acquired through criminals put to death in Surthay and Eltabbar) as the zombies wear out. The Tam family maintains the zombies and collects a modest fee from each traveler.





The fee might be higher, but the family has little attention to spare for this enterprise, and really hasn't checked to see if the "Guild" is paying for itself lately.

### **Lake Thaylambar**

This very large lake is in central Thay. The former Mulhorand capital of Delhumide and the current capital of Eltabbar are on opposite sides of the lake.

The lake is said to contain dragon turtles, and fishing boats sometimes disappear forever. Weather control spells keep storms from disturbing the water, so some beast such as dragon turtles may be responsible. The Tharchions of Eltabbar and Delhumide sometimes lead hunting expeditions into the depths and come back with something, minus some boats and followers.

### **Sarmarsh**

This large marsh is fed by both the River Sur and River Thay, and is a night-marish bog broken up by occasional hummocks of high ground and small huts of refugee slaves and criminals who eke out an existence as best they can.

One menace all must deal with in this bog are the lizard men who hold sway as they do in so many of the swamps they have been driven to since man first arrived in the Realms.

These lizard men are divided up into tribes and occasionally raid outside the swamp, but mostly they hold to treaties they have made with the Tharchion of Surthay.

Sometimes they will try to hunt up a runaway slave or criminal that the Thayvians are particularly anxious to catch, but their main function in the alliance is to hold the marsh against invaders. Since the only possible invaders are the people of Thesk, they are not often called on to fulfill their part of the bargain.

### **The River Sur**

This wide, shallow, and fever-infested river is usually considered the border between Thay and Thesk, though no one but assorted Thesk-allied herders grazing their cattle inhabit the area between this river and the Theskian Mountains. The villages that can be found along the river are small farming and fishing villages who trade with the nomads and pay occasional taxes to Thay tax collectors.

### **Thaymount**

These mountains poke out of the plain of the Priador and form the Second Escarpment and the source of the Rivers Umber, Eltab and Laprendrar. In times of weakness, the western border of Thay is the Second Escarpment down to where it intersects the River Laprendrar. These mountains are always known as the Guardpost of the Western Borders, and act as the headquarters for the Tharch of the Thaymount.

### **The Gold Mines of Thay**

The Thaymount is a volcanic region and much newer geologically than the ancient Sunrise Mountains. Part of what the volcanoes brought up to the surface are extensive veins of gold ore, which were discovered by the rebellious Red Wizards and exploited as funding for their revolution against Mulhorand.

Since that time, the gold mines have been a major source of Thayvian wealth. They traditionally fall under the purview of the Tharchion of Thaymount, and he pays a fixed tax on the gold to the Zulkirs. Thus, the more he can get out of the mines, the more he can keep, and if the mines run out of gold, he is still stuck with the tax payments.

Like so much of Thay, the mines are worked by slaves. Being a slave in the mines of Thay is considered among the worst possible fates for a Thayvian slave, whose position is never enviable.

### **The Citadel**

This ancient fortress was part of the Thaymount when the Kingdom of Raumathar first claimed the land in the previous age. Who built it and why is still unknown, though various Red Wizards have sent missions deep into its bowels to try to learn its secrets. As best as anyone can tell from the subject of some of its very faded wall paintings, it might have originally been built by lizard men, before they were driven into the swamps by mankind so many thousands of years ago.

Parties exploring the Citadel's deepest dungeons have found great treasures, but many have never returned. There is some evidence that there is an extensive troglodyte population somewhere in its deepest reaches, and the drow may have a colony there.

### **The River Umber**

The River Umber tumbles out of the Thaymount as a narrow, fast, stream of little use to anyone except as a source of water to the few slave farms owned by the Tharchion of Thaymount and his followers.

Once it cascades down from the Second Escarpment to the plains of the Priador, it slows down and widens out into the narrow lake called only The Upper Lake Umber. This is a largely unpopulated area as it is claimed by both Thay and Aglarond, and only a few fisher families live along its length.

From this lake, the Lower Falls takes the water to the main body of Lake Umber, which has the unwallled trading towns of Nethentir and Nethjet on its north and south shores, respectively.

This area is continuously being fought over by Thay and Aglarond, and has just changed hands again with the current advent of the armies of Thay. There are very few farms except for subsistence farms used to supplement the diet of the inhabitants. Most of the local residents are fishermen who try to ignore whoever claims to be their masters.





### **The River Eltab**

It is said that this river did not exist before Thay won its freedom from Mulhorand, and its creation was part of the spell which summoned a demon prince to help the Red Wizards.

Whatever the truth of this story, the river supplies the water of the city and helps create its unique waterways before it goes on to feed Lake Thaylambor.

### **Sunrise Mountains**

This mountain chain has always been the eastern border of Thay. These mountains have a reputation for impassability, but it is actually possible to get past them in summer though not with anything bigger than a donkey. Beyond the mountains are arid plains, called the Plains of Purple Dust for reasons that are obvious if you look at them. No one has entered them and come back.

To the east of Thay and Rashemen, to the north of the Plains of Purple Dust, are reputed to be the lands of Raurin and Durpar, known from annals of trading agreements from the days of Narfell and Raumathar. No one has been seen from these lands for centuries.

### **The River Thazarim**

In the days of Mulhorand's rule of this area, this river, between the falls where it comes off the Sunrise Escarpment to the falls from which it tumbles off the First Escarpment, was the core of a fertile farming area. Slave farms still populate the western bank of the river, but the eastern bank is devastated and abandoned, still desolate after the battle that created Thay as a separate nation.

The river itself is used as a travelway along its length between the Escarpments, but the steep falls at each end of this length make boat travel impossible without portaging the river craft. The lower reaches of the river support some slave farms on the west bank and continue the devastated state on the

eastern bank. Upstream, the river is narrow, fast, and rocky—impossible to travel on muscle-powered boats. The area upstream is largely unpopulated except for one trading and last-minute supplies village situated on the Sunrise Escarpment, just above the falls.

### **Alamber or Sahuagin Sea**

This body of water is the easternmost part of the Inner Sea. It serves as the border between the ancient kingdoms of Mulhorand and Unther, and is the home of a major sahuagin kingdom, whom the Red Wizards are on at least speaking terms with.

The northernmost island of the Sea is the Aldor, which is the Thayvian naval base. Currently, the dominant naval and merchant power in this area is Thay; both Unther and Mulhorand merchants find it more convenient to ship their goods in Thayvian hulls and accept Thayvian payments for their goods than build their own ships and find their own markets.

However, there are pirates in the area that live in small, secluded villages along the coast of Thay and Mulhorand and on the smaller islands to the south of Aldor. They prey on the smaller coastal trading vessels and occasionally surprise the crews of larger vessels who bring their ships into shore to camp for the night or make emergency repairs. When the Thayvian navy finds and raids one of the pirate villages, the pirates attempt to pass themselves off as fishermen. Sometimes they are successful at this deception, and sometimes the Thayvian marines don't really care and capture and enslave the population of the fishing village anyway—even if it turns out to be just a fishing village.

Piracy on the Alamber is a tricky profession, but the potential rewards are great. By now, pirates have learned to avoid any ship flying the red-and-gold-flame-on-black banner of a Red Wizard unless their spies have indicated that the banner is a ruse.

### **The River Laprendar**

This is the second longest river in the area, and the longest in Thay. It is known as the River of Sorrows because of the miners who have died in the gold mines near its headwaters and because of the men of Aglarond and Thay who died trying to cross or defend the river during Halacar's ill-fated invasion of Thay in 1260 DR.

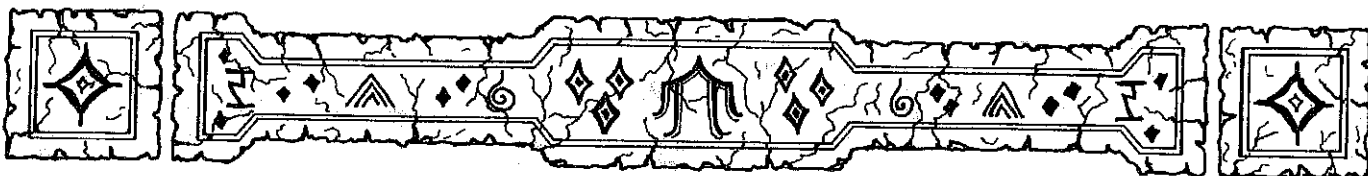
### **The Escarpments and the Priador**

Thay is broken up into three distinct rises from the ground level of the other surrounding kingdoms. Each is marked by a sudden sharp rise, called an Escarpment, out of the relatively flat plain surrounding it. These Escarpments are not completely vertical, and most are easily climbable, but the incline is very precipitous compared to the surrounding countryside. The easiest inclines are those around some of the rivers, though others are still very steep falls, and where the main roads of southern Thay were built centuries ago.

The Priador is the name for the gently rolling plain that tops the First Escarpment. It is broken only by the various rivers and Lake Thaylambor, and is the central area of Thay. The entire region is broken up into thousands of slave farms and small wilderness areas kept as private game preserves by the Red Wizards and Tharchions.

These game preserves are full of monsters that the Wizards need for spell and potion ingredients, and most of them have no bounds on where they can travel, so travel anywhere around these preserves can be very hazardous.

Travelers who are accosted by such monsters are usually allowed to defend themselves as best they can, but there is no liability to the owner if his monsters kill someone (though, of course, this sort of thing has caused intense feuds when the victims were members of an influential family and the monster's owner refused any or adequate recom-



pense). And, of course, sometimes travelers who are successful in defending themselves may incur the wrath of the owner if the monster was an especially prized or hard to replace species.

## Main Cities

### Eltabbar

Though it is the capital of the country, and the residence of at least half the Red Wizards, it is the second largest city of the land. Its population is between 80,000 and 100,000 people, about half of whom are the slaves of the Tharchioness and the Red Wizards in residence. Merchants and other non-government non-magic-users are less than enthused about sharing a city with so many paranoid magic-users, and prefer to do business in Bezantur.

The city is walled, with very few buildings outside the walls. The River Eltab comes in under the walls and provides a central core of canals that divide the government area of the town from

the business and residence area. The spaces between the canals are divided up into parks, each of which is owned wholly or in part by one of the Red Wizards or the Tharchioness.

Streets are wide and relatively straight here. Distances are easily measured, which encourages people to try to map the town, with results as specified below. There is also an extensive surreptitious trade in "maps of the city," which are erroneous at best, deceptive at worst.

Mapping the city is a problem because it is built in the form of an immense glyph. This is actually the symbol that keeps the demon prince Eltab imprisoned and available to the Red Wizards. This was a mighty magic devised by Jorgmacdon, the first Zulkir of the School of Conjunction, and his family is still powerful in the country, even though it has not produced anyone to match him since that time.

Whether the canals are part of the glyph holding the Demon Prince, or perhaps the presence of the water itself

is necessary to the spell holding him, is not common knowledge. The DM can make his own decision here.

Because the shape of the city is actually the glyph holding Eltab prisoner, it is illegal and severely punished for anyone to make a map of Eltabbar. If someone actually manages to draw an exact map, and then the map is destroyed, it weakens the bonds on Eltab. Each map made divides up the power of the binding further among all the maps and the streets themselves. If enough maps are destroyed, Eltab is freed, and his likely actions could destroy a large section of the Forgotten Realms, Thay not the least among them.

The official explanation for this ban on maps of Eltabbar is a matter of security. If someone knows how the city is laid out, they can invade it more easily. This logic has since progressed to an edict forbidding the mapping of any city of Thay.

The Zulkirs are on the alert for maps made of Eltabbar, and confiscate any they can find. Maps that have been con-





fiscated are kept in the Wizard's Tower, under great wards of protection and stasis to keep them safe.

The city is frequently disturbed by rumblings and shakings. Non-wizard residents think them simple earthquakes. The Red Wizards know that someone has destroyed another map of Eltabbar.

### Bezantur

This port was first known as Kensten when it was the southern port of Raumathar. It was destroyed in the war between Narfell and Raumathar and Mulhorand rebuilt it as Bezantur to be a seaport on the same site. While there is no river access to this port (aside from some streams coming down from the First Escarpment), as there is with Escalant to the west, the natural harbor is the best on the coast, with ample depth for the largest ship and protection from the fiercest storms for over a hundred ships.

Bezantur is the largest city of the realm. The population, which has never been counted as long as Thay has owned the city, is somewhat in excess of 100,000 people. Far-travelers who have seen Waterdeep compare the two as being almost equal in size, but each traveler has his own idea as to which is larger.

Most seaborne merchants bring their goods for Thay through this bustling port. It is easily the most cosmopolitan of Thayvian cities.

The city is built around its harbor and enclosed by walls that do not encompass the extensive market town that has taken shape outside its walls. The walls do not cover the actual waterfront, the entrance to the harbor is guarded with forts. The central citadel is fully walled.

Bezantur is also known as "The City of a Thousand Temples," and "The Free City." The first reference is to the large number of churches (though not really a thousand) to different deities that can be found everywhere in the city, catering to the needs of the many travelers who stop in. Elsewhere, temples and clerics are not supported by the author-

ities, so Bezantur is by far the "holiest" city of the Realm. The other name comes from the tax-free nature of the city, where no one is taxed, and everyone is prey to the thieves. See the Politics section for further explanation of this situation.

### Tyratauros

This trading town was built by Mulhorand, and is the third largest city of the realm. This is the crossroads city where the High Road from Eltabbar to Bezantur meets the Eastern Way from Amruthar to Pyarados. Most goods going through southern Thay pass through this caravan town, but not much of it stays there (except for the taxes collected by the Tharchion). From here goods go to and from Bezantur, Pyarados, Amruthar, and Eltabbar.

This city is not walled, though there are fortified manors and a central walled citadel. Its market is famed throughout the East as "the place where anything, or anyone, can be bought." This refers to, among other things, the extensive slave market that happens every day in the central market area of the town.

### Pyarados

This is a relatively new city, The City of the East, built by Thay and nestled under the shadow of the Sunrise Mountains and controlling the upper reaches of River Thazarim and the guardian of the Thazalhar Battle Plain. Adventurers getting ready to explore the Sunrise Mountains (and who can obtain official permission) outfit here at exorbitant prices.

This is a large city, with over 50,000 people, and only the central area of the city is guarded by a wall, which is supplemented by that around the fortress of the Tharchion.

### Surthay

This is another new city, built to guard Lake Mulsantir against the invasions from Rashemen that the Red Wizards

fear from that notably non-aggressive country. Once the Rashemi were seen to be homebodies, Surthay became the stepping off point for many military invasions of Rashemen. At this point, the Red Wizards have not learned the folly of these expeditions.

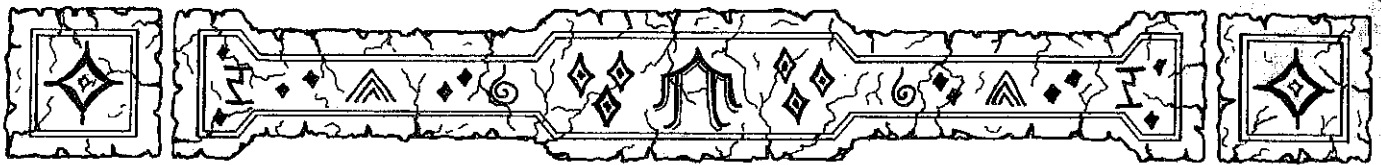
Despite its position on the lake, Surthay is not really set up as a port city. There is access from the lake to the central marina of the city, but the good natural harbor has not been properly exploited. This is because the Witches of Rashemen still control most of the lake, and tend to sink most Thayvian vessels they encounter. Only Thayvian fishing vessels that hug the southern shore have any survivability on Lake Mulsantir.

Surthay contains about 40,000 people and slaves, and is walled very strongly with high walls and many towers carrying siege engines. There are no outlying buildings permitted around Surthay. Most of the primary wizards of the School of Abjuration have towers here or in the immediate area.

### The Ruins of Delhumide

This was the capital of the province when it was part of Mulhorand and a major city of Raumathar before that. One of the god-kings had his seat there, though he was not there (the usual situation) when the Red Wizards first unleashed their controlled Demon Prince and sent him against the holy guardians of the city. When the demon won the struggle, Delhumide was a ruin, and the rule of the god-kings in the north was broken.

Now the city is a broken ruin, with no buildings of more than one story intact. The inhabitants are the armed forces of the Tharchion of Delhumide, various parties of researchers and explorers, and the remaining magical guardians left by the previous owners. These latter are supplemented by denizens of the earth who have begun investigating the extensive dungeons underneath the ruins and made life very interesting for the Thayvian explorers.



### **The High Road and the Eastern Way**

These two roads were built by Mulhorand along the same model as the major roads in that sleeping kingdom. The Red Wizards have maintained these roads better than the god-kings have maintained theirs.

The roads are elevated from the surrounding land and made of hard packed earth covered with paving materials that owe as much to alchemy as common craft. The surface is hard and fast, letting the horsemen of Thay move quickly from spot to spot along it, and letting commerce move quickly as well.

Using the roads is such a benefit in Southern Thay that most merchants don't mind that the roads make the tax stations that much harder to avoid.

### **The Tax Stations**

All along the rivers and roads of Thay are a series of villages about one day's travel apart. These are built around military posts and generally feature a defensible tower and a garrison of about 30 men at arms. These stations tend to accumulate hangers-on, so that thriving villages now surround them, usually featuring at least one inn or tavern and several people providing other services for travelers such as a smithy, a wheelwright, a livery stable, and so forth. This is one of the few openings for private enterprise in Thay, and craftsmen make full use of this opportunity.

Tax stations were built by the Zulkirs but each is maintained by the Red Wizard or Tharchion most concerned with the area. Each tax station takes its toll of travelers for upkeep of the roads and the garrison also arranges for road repairs or, on the rivers, upkeep of docks and other facilities. The workers on these jobs are not the residents of the village, but the slaves from whatever local slave-farm is appropriate.

### **Surrounding Realms**

The geography of Thay is as constrained as much by the boundaries of the lands around it as it is by its own physical features.

#### **Aglarond**

A small realm that keeps to itself, Aglarond exerts little influence in affairs of state outside its borders. It is important in the overall balance of the Inner Seas lands, however, simply because its presence prevents Thay from overwhelming the northern "East". Aglarond's strength—and danger, because she stands in magical opposition to the Red Wizards of Thay, who do not kindly suffer rivals—is its current ruler, a female archmage of fabled powers, known only as The Simbul.

Aglarond lies on the northern side of a peninsula jutting out into the eastern end of the Inner Sea; a sparsely inhabited, heavily-wooded realm of few farms and no large cities. Jagged pinnacles of rock stand at its tip, and run along the spine of its lands; to the east, these fall away into vast and treacherous marshes that largely isolate the Simbul's realm from the mainland. Travel in Aglarond is by griffon, ship, or forest trails. It trades lumber, gems, and some copper for glass, iron, cloth goods, and food when freetrading vessels come to port—but sends out no trading vessels of its own. The ships of Aglarond are fishing vessels and the few small biremes and triremes of its navy.

The southern border of the nation is the southern reaches of the Yuirwood, the woods in which the elves lived that became part of Aglarond's unique half-elfen heritage. To the south of the Yuirwood are the independent Cities of the North Coast.

Aglarond cannot boast a field army of any size, nor a powerful navy, but within its woods The Simbul's foresters are expert and deadly troops, adept at fire-fighting and at using "coastboats" (long, canoe-like open boats handled with

lateen sails, oars, and poles) to raid by night. They are equally adept at traveling in the treetops and fighting amongst them.

The foresters are alert and grim; the menacing might of Thay is uncomfortably near, and Aglarond's blades are all too few.

Little is known of the Simbul's aims and true strength, but she is seen to constantly roam the northern Realms, working to influence all manner of events (presumably to better Aglarond's safety, although she is said to be a member of the Harpers, whose aims are more widespread) in disguise, or behind the scenes.

#### **Impiltur**

This young land comprises the area across the Easting Reach from Telflamm and Thesk and Aglarond. It has no contiguous borders with Thay, but it is a friend of most of the nations that do border Thay, and supports them in their wars against the Red Wizards.

Impiltur's neighbors are Lothchas the bandit lord in the Desertspire Mountains and the Ice Gorge to the west, where the hobgoblins lived until their power was broken by Impiltur, and to the east and north the Great Dale and the woods to the north of it. In the open wastes where Narfell once flourished dwells the Nentyarch, a mysterious mage of great power who rules grim men and strange beasts, living in peace—unless the wood is entered by those he has not invited; these simply vanish. This area is known as Ashanath and little more is known of it.

#### **Telflamm**

This city-state comprises the city of Telflamm and the subject-cities of Nyth and Culmaster. Its prosperity rests in being one of the terminal cities of the Golden Way and its excellent port, which makes it the favored terminal, even though goods have a higher price because they must pass out of the realm



of Thesk to reach Telflamm.

Despite an ongoing trade rivalry, Telflamm and Thesk are allies in many things, and Telflamm supports Thesk in its struggles with Thay, since Telflamm would have no chance if Thay were its neighbor.

Telflamm is a walled city of perhaps 20,000 population. Much of it is transient, as Telflamm is a favorite spot of debarkation to the East or embarkation for the West. People looking for the assistance of adventurers often come to Telflamm and adventurers go there looking for patrons.

The army of Telflamm is entirely mercenary and used solely for patrolling its roads and keeping the city and its dependents safe. If called on to support Thesk militarily, the coffers of the city would be opened to buy more mercenaries to help their ally. Their own troops would stay to defend the home front.

### Thesk

This is the land between Aglarond and Impiltur. The government of this land is an oligarchy made up of the rules of the trading cities along the Golden Way from Two-Stars to Milvarune which acts as a capital (mostly because it is so far removed from Thay). The nomadic tribes who run their flocks in the Thesk Mountains in the center of the land and the plains around the mountains also protect the cities by acting as a thorn in the side of any invading army from Thay. Their tactics are ideally suited to hit-and-run and they work in such a scattered fashion that mass destruction spells cannot damage very many at a time.

It is against foes like these that Thay has developed its cavalry, but the nomads are still capable of riding rings around any Thayvian unit.

The nomad magic users are mostly shamans, but shamans who have grown in power (perhaps because of the proximity to Thay) so that they are equivalent to Druids. They have many of the same spells as druids, with some

differences because of their plains and hills existence.

However, the courage and skill of the nomads and shamans, and the mercenaries from the trade towns and cities are not the main reason Thay has not conquered the place. In fact, the military-minded leaders of Thay are aware that conquering Thesk would leave them with very vulnerable flanks to Rashemen and Aglarond. The Red Wizard policy is to secure the flanks first.

### Mulhorand

This ancient empire has been in existence for over four thousand years, and its borders have fluctuated for most of that time. However, since Thay broke away about four hundred years ago, the borders of Mulhorand have remained much the same.

Almost the entire east coast of the Alamber Sea is under the sway of Mulhorand. From the River of the Dawn in the North to the River of Swords in the south, the god-kings of Mulhorand hold their lands in a slothful grip. To the north of the capital of Skuld, City of Shadows, only Sultim is a major city. The rest of the land is mostly farmlands occasionally broken by small towns like the crossroads town of Maerlor and the ford-town of Rauthil.

Below Skuld, there are many cities including Gheldaneth and Neldorild. All of these cities are full of monolithic buildings of white stone and the prayer-towers of the god-kings, all surrounded by the squalid huts of the slaves and lower classes. The cities are surrounded by gigantic walls patrolled by mercenary soldiers from Chessenta.

### Rashemen

This is the easternmost of the known Realms. It has been dubbed "The Far Land" by merchants of the Western Realms. To its east lie uncounted leagues of rock-and-grass wastelands, and several rumored—but unreached in recent memory—kingdoms of men.

The land of Rashemen is home to a race of short, muscular men who herd goats and rothe', and are adept at stone-and bonecarving.

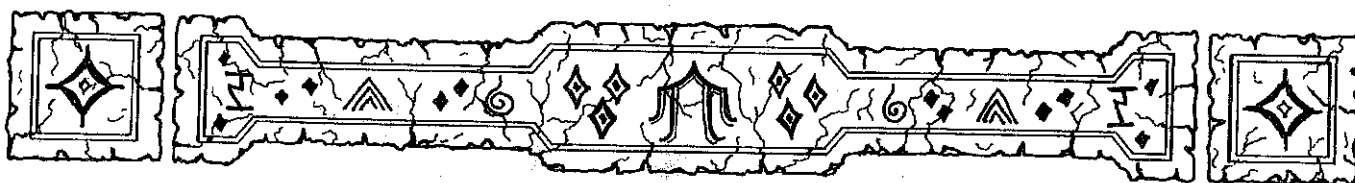
"Land of Berserkers" some ballads call Rashemen—and indeed, such is the fearless savagery of its warriors, and their stamina, that at least sixteen armies from Thay have been slaughtered or turned back from Rashemen in the last seventy winters, and the Far Land remains free.

Rashemen is ruled by a Huhrong (Iron Lord), or senior war leader, whose palace towers above the roofs of the surrounding city of Immilmar. The Iron Lord commands Rashemen's standing army, which consists of warriors armored in heavy fur and leather tunics, with hand weapons, short bows, lances and mountain ponies. Most patrol the border with Thay—the shores of Lake Mulsantir and the broken lands east of the Gorge of Gauros.

There are many lesser lords, each with his own followers and businesses—but the succession of rulership, and the posts of warleaders of the army, are chosen by the Witches. The Witches dwell mainly in Urling, and provide sorcerous, unmanned, boats (the feared "Witchboats") that patrol Ashane, the Lake of Tears, as far north as the Pool of Erech, and the Mulsantir-waters as far south as Surmarsh and the harbor chains of Surthay, unleashing fell beasts and poisonous gases upon the vessels of Thay.

The Witches also govern the common warriors of Rashemen through the making of "jhuild" (firewine), the potent amber drink that the warriors of the land imbibe heavily before fighting. The Witches are believed to all be female, are known to be over sixty (and probably over a hundred) in number, wear black robes and face-masks, bear magical rings, wands, and whips, and have much-feared (but largely unknown) magical powers.

The continued existence of Rashemen speaks of the real magical power of the Witches. Witches are worshipped and revered in Rashemen—it is



death to harm or disobey a Witch—and are known to seek out and take men as lovers for brief periods, presumably as some sort of planned breeding program. If Witches leave Rashemen, they must abandon their black garb and conceal their powers, but none are known to have done so.

Wool, furs, and carved stone and bone—and rare, much-prized casks of firewine (which deadens pain and inflames lust and other aggressive emotions)—are the trade goods of Rashemen; in return cloth and woodwork, lumber and foodstuffs are imported. There are three trade routes from the Far Land: the Long Road to the North, via the Great Dale to the West, and the Golden Way to the southwest. Rashemen is self-sufficient in war-metals and northern herd animals, and makes much heavy, smoky-flavored cheese for use within its borders (the stuff is very nourishing, but an acquired taste, and little-exported).

Snow-racing (naked and afoot, across country) and the hunting of snow-cats are popular sports among both sexes in Rashemen; widespread hobbies include the collecting of rare and beautiful stones (including gems), exploring old ruins in the north of the realm (remnants of a previous kingdom, Raumathtar, neighbor—and foe—of the more famous, but equally vanished, realm of Narfell, that lay to the west), and going on "growing up" trips out of Rashemen—a journey that every male of the realm makes when a youth. If he comes back to Rashemen, such a journeyer is considered a man. For most, the *dajemma* (or journey) is a sightseeing tour around the Inner Sea Lands, but the cumulative effect of the *dajemmas* is to build trading contacts, pick up a lot of incidental information about the Inner Sea Lands, and gain continuous news of politics (and military activities) in the Inner Sea region.

Sages, merchants, and mercenary captains generally agree that Rashemen has no designs upon the lands around; like most of Thay's neighbors, its primary concern is survival. Rashemen's

warriors are to be feared—but they are seldom encountered outside the Far Land save as drunken youths "on *dajemma*," and do not have the reputation of, say, the mercenary companies of the Sword Coast lands, or the Black Helms of Tethyr. For most inhabitants of the Inner Sea lands and Sword Coast, the Far Land remains a mysterious land much sung of in minstrel's tales, as the setting for this or that feat of brawn.

The total population of Rashemen is no more than 100,000 people, but they abhor slavery and every person is a free citizen of the country.

### City of Amruthar

This theoretically independent city rests just over the River of Sorrows (Lapendrar) from the core area of Thay. At some times it has been almost entirely encircled by Thay's lands, but it maintains its own government—a puppet of Thay's.

The city is well-walled and actively patrolled by the soldiers of the ruler, called the Heirarch. He has a Council of the most influential people of the city, who are divided up into several political factions described elsewhere.

About 30,000 people live in Amruthar and the farming villages within a day's ride of the city.

### The Cities of the Coast

Most of these nine "cities" were founded by Unther when it tried to expand into this area. Now they are independent trading towns, all trying to vie against Thay's Bezantur and each other for the cross-sea trade from Chessenta. The western cities of Delthuntle and Laothkund are the largest of the lot, with populations around 70,000 each—almost the size of Bezantur. Hilbrand and Escalant of the east have some pretensions to competition with Bezantur in trade, but no chance of competition in size. They have perhaps 30,000 inhabitants each. The rest of the "cities" are actually unwalled towns of between 5,000 and 15,000 people.

Most of the smaller "cities" of the east, such as Lasdur, Taskaunt, Murbant, and Thasselen have been attacked and captured or destroyed by Thay at one time or another in their histories, and Escalant and Hilbrand have each been burnt to the ground once. At this time, Hilbrand has just surrendered to the Tharchion of the Lapendrar and Escalant is under siege by fire elementals.

The coast also has several other villages which are mostly fishing villages and owe allegiance (or at least tax money) to one or another of the larger towns.

### Thazalhar

This devastated barren buffer zone between Thay and Mulhorand is bordered by the River Tazarim to the west and north and the River of the Dawn to the south. The Sunrise Mountains are its eastern border. There are no regular residents except for the Tharchion of the region and his troopers. Trading caravans and raiders of trading caravans traverse it, and most goods go by sea on the far safer Bezantur-to-Sultim route.

Its short coastline is home for several pirate families that prey on the smaller vessels of that trade.



# CURRENT ECONOMY OF THAY

Thay is a slave-based, agrarian economy. Most of the foodstuffs produced are grown on slave-run farms owned by the great lords of the nation. The individual free farmer found in most parts of the Western countries is unknown in Thay. The closest thing to this form of crop care is the small subsistence gardens grown by some town dwellers in window boxes and planter boxes on their roofs.

The great farms grow several different forms of wheat, orchards full of fruit (mostly citrus) and pastures full of cattle. Because these farms are slave-run, they are not very efficient, but usually make up in bulk produced what they lose in quality of care.

Because of the number of wizards in Thay, many of whom are land-holders, there is rarely drought in Thay. In fact, surrounding nations often have excessive droughts in those dry years when the overwhelming wizardry of Thay (and, to a lesser extent, the Witchcraft of Rashemen) draws whatever stormclouds are available anywhere in the Inner Sea region to the fields of the Red Wizards. For this reason, Thay is often the breadbasket of the entire eastern Inner Sea region.

Nations and city states that normally would have no relationship with Thay must deal with the agents of the Zulkirs to get the grain they need to feed their people. Telflamm and Thesk, especially, populous city-states that import most of their grains and produce in the best of years, must often come hat-in-hand to the Red Wizards for their food.

If the agriculture of Thay were under the control of the government of Thay, the Red Wizards would own the eastern Inner Sea economically if not politically. However, despite the fact that the land-holders of Thay are the government of Thay, agriculture is not an instrument of government policy. Each Red Wizard and Tharchion is his own agent, and they often compete for foreign orders, so conquering the Inner Sea through the stomachs of its people has not taken place, much to the relief of the sages who study matters economic.

Thay is a major market for slaves to run its farms and serve other functions. Every slaverunner in the Realms dreams of selling his coffer of slaves in Eltabbar. Because the wizards need every slave they can get, Thay does not export slaves. There is no record of anyone (perhaps the family of a slave kidnapped into servitude) successfully buying back a Thayvian slave. There are stories of people trying to buy back a slave and becoming slaves themselves.

Slaves do escape, and some are rescued by friends and family, but once a slave has been purchased in Thay, he can never legally (according to Thay laws) be a free man again. Slaves cannot be manumitted. They can be retired to lives of leisure if they have pleased their masters greatly, or turned out of the estates of their master for some transgression, but they are still slaves. If found running around free, they can be enslaved by any free person who finds them.

## The Crafts of Thay

The Red Wizards have two other exports of value. One is the gold from the mines of the Thaymount and along the Umber and Lapendrar rivers. The Lapendrar river at least partially gains its name of "The River of Sorrows" because of the laments of the families of the miners lost along its shores in the wizard-owned mines. The name also derives from the sorrow of the families of Aglarondan soldiers who died in King Halacar's ill-starred invasion of Thay, when half the army was drowned in a wizard-caused flash flood that caught them in the middle of the river.

Thay also has silver and platinum mines in both the Thaymount and the Sunrise Mountains, and good sources of copper and iron. There are even sources of assorted gems and precious stones such as jade.

The other major Thayvian export is tied into both the mines and the rich variety of animals, both natural and monsterish, that inhabit the Realm. The

craftsmen of Thay have little opportunity to work with wood (some specialists carve and work imported wood), but their carving and joining of the bone of exotic beasts, such as the dragon turtles of Lake Thaylamar, and inlaying of their creations with the precious metals of Thay, creates artwork that is admired and coveted in all the Realms.

Some Wizards enhance the work of their craftsmen with magic, creating magical items that are also desired everywhere. Nothing they export is of much use militarily, but some items, such as crystal statuettes that glow in the dark, are useful for adventurers. The Wizards specialize in enchanting objects with cantrips.

## Government Control

The Red Wizards have made two rules that are usually followed in their business dealings.

The first rule is that no enchanted item that has military usefulness may be sold outside the country or to a representative of some power outside the country. Thus, no magical offensive or defensive weaponry is sold. Items like the afore-mentioned glowing statuettes are in a gray area that is ignored at the moment, but could come under the ban if too many hostile adventuring bands showed up in Thay using them. Potions are another gray area which are usually ignored because their use is so limited and so little of any one potion can be produced at any one time.

The other rule is that Thayvians cannot sell food or items to citizens of nations that Thay is invading at the moment. This sometimes has resulted in flurries of sales to a nation such as Aglarond or Rashemen or Mulhorand just before the armies marched, and some invasions have been foiled because the sages of the soon-to-be-invaded nation saw this activity for the warning it was and warned their rulers of the invasion.



# CURRENT POLITICS OF THAY

## Regional Rulers

The land of Thay is divided up into 11 administrative regions, known as Tharches. Each is ruled by a Tharchion or Tharchioness, who is drawn from the nobility of Thay (see Society of Thay). In each region, the ruler's word is law, though each rules in a different way from his colleagues.

No Tharchion has ultimate authority for the nation, because that is in the hands of the Red Wizards. The authority of a Red Wizard supersedes even that of a Tharchion. The Red Wizards are a loose confederacy that rule the country as a whole; some of them take a particular interest in ruling or managing small parts of the country, others take no interest in anything outside of their own researches and adventuring.

The Red Wizards are evil and paranoid in the extreme. They seek to maintain their own power in their nation while undercutting the power of other realms, which they perceive as dangerous to their existence. Other magic-users who are not of their cult (especially those mages who are involved in ruling rival nations, particularly the Simbul of Aglarond) are viewed as threats to be eliminated. The total number of Red Wizards is unknown.

## The Zulkirs

From among the politically interested wizards, the Red Wizards choose Zulkirs to speak for the Red Wizards. There is one Zulkir for each School of Magic, and once chosen they keep the position for life unless they voluntarily resign. The Zulkir for Necromancy, Szass Tam, withdrew from the company of his fellows some years ago and pursues his own devices—but he is still the Zulkir for Necromancy and no one can step forward to replace him.

Zulkirs are chosen from among those of the right School who want the job. They are not necessarily the most powerful of their School, just the one who wants to have something to do with

running the country. If no one of a school wants the job, then the school is unrepresented.

The Zulkirs examine each candidate to make sure that he has the proper proficiency in general magic (i.e., is a wizard—a magic-user of 11th level). If more than one candidate presents himself and seems qualified, he must contest against the other candidates in proficiency with his school's magic. For the wizards of divination, this is not a major problem; the one with the best answers wins the position.

However, contests in Conjunction/Summoning, Alteration, or Invocation/Evocation can be, and frequently are, deadly.

## Badges

The Red Wizards and their minions use several badges; that most often seen outside Thay is a leaping red flame (outlined in gold) on a black or deep purple field.

Known Red Wizards found outside of Thay are not of less than 9th level and possibly as much as 15th level. There is a 50% chance of the wizard having bodyguards (usually ogres or other non-human creatures), and an equal chance of having 1-4 low-level (1-8) aspirants to the Red Cloth. The Red Wizards do not go in for subtlety, and wear their crimson robes haughtily in all but situations calling for the utmost discretion.

Besides "showing the flag", this display also serves to cover the activities of the Red Wizards, often of less than 9th level, who act as spies and agents provocateur in the Realms (see Personalities).

## Political Factions

There are two major factions among the Red Wizards. The Imperialists are devoted to an expansionistic and imperialistic policy of swallowing neighbor states and eventually the entire Realms. They have attempted this many times, but they are invariably stopped. Many of the Imperialists blame their lack of

success on the inactivity of the most potent Wizards of the realm, who happen to be the other major faction and are known as the Researchers.

These worthies believe the true vocation of the magic-user is research and careful application of the research to acquire new and more potent wizardries. While a Researcher might go adventuring or use his powers to help his own fortunes, as a group they are notoriously uninterested in assisting the land of Thay in conquest. Researchers are essentially selfish. If the enterprise does not benefit them directly, they have no interest in it.

Neither political faction is particularly organized, the Red Wizards are too paranoid and megalomaniacal for that. Many an Imperialist considers some Researcher a best friend and another Imperialist a bitter personal enemy. By their nature, Imperialists are more organized than the Researchers, but most adventuring bands are better organized than the "leadership" of the Imperialists.

The main leader of the Imperialists is Lauzoril, Zulkir of the School of Enchantment (see Personalities). He is not known generally to be a Zulkir, but his machinations have come to the attention of the Harpers, and sparked an enmity that is growing more intense as the years of enmity go on.

The main leader of the Researchers, as much as they have leaders, is Sabass of Thay (see Personalities).

Actually, the imperialist dreams of the Wizards have been hampered mainly by internal strife among various factions and personality cults among the Red Wizards, and by the fact that the cult neither trusts mercenaries or high-level adventurers who are not of their cult. Of the large number of invasions of Rashemen, three out of four have been by some particular faction leader of the wizards seeking to expand his domination at home by bringing victories from the field.

# PLAYERS' GUIDE TO THAY

## Glossary of Things Thagvian

**Aglarond**—Neighboring country to the west. The population is mostly half-elves and the country is ruled by the mysterious Simbul.

**Alamber Sea**—Also called the Sahuagin Sea for the kingdom of those people that resides in the depths. This separates the ancient kingdoms of Mulhorand and Unther and is mostly plied by ships from Thay.

**The Aldor**—Island where the Wizards' Reach meets the Alamber Sea. The entire island is a naval base for the Red Wizards.

**Altumbel**—Peninsula holding the city of Spandeliyon, called the City of Pirates. Known as the least lawful city on the Inner Sea, it was founded by the refugees from Aglarond driven out by the half-elves who now rule the country.

**Amritnar**—Neutral city on the River Lapendrar. Not possessed by Thay, it acts as a entry port for goods going to Thay.

**Assassins**—Said to be the main political expeditors in Thay.

**Autharch**—Subsidiary noble, answerable to the Tharchion or Tharchioness who appointed him.

**Bezantur**—Seaport city of Thay, the largest city of that country, comparable to Waterdeep in size. "Ruled by thieves."

**"Bread Basket of the East"**—Another name for Thay, which supplies grain (at high prices) to most of the eastern Realms.

**Chessenta**—Collection of city-states on the south coast of the Wizards' Reach who rebelled from the ancient kingdom of Unther and now vacillate between open warfare and armed peace with

one another. An excellent market for mercenaries.

**The Citadel**—Mighty fortification in the Thaymount, built by pre-human residents who are said to still reside in devolved form in its lowest dungeons.

**Cities of the North Coast**—Four cities and six towns, each independent but formed into a loose alliance of defense against the colossus of Thay. Currently, four of the smaller towns are in flames from an attack by Thay.

The cities are, from west to east, Delthuntle, Nethra, Teth, Laothkund, Hilbrand, Lasdur, Taskaunt, Escalant, Murbant, and Thasselen.

**Delhumide**—Ruined city that had been a capital of Thay in ancient times. Said to be laden with hidden magic.

**Eltabbar**—Capital city of Thay, a city of wizards. The Tharchioness is such a beauty that she is known as the First Princess of Thay (though only outside the country).

**First Escarpment**—Cliffs that form the plateau of the Priador. Forms part of the main border of Thay except in times of conquest.

**Giants' Wall**—Cyclopean wall erected by giants as a returned favor to the first king of Aglarond to defend the country from the incursions of Thay.

**The Golden Way**—A traderoad leading from the empires of the East through Rashemen to Thesk and Telflamm.

**Impiltur**—Young kingdom to the north and west of Thay. Ruled in fact by a council of lords in the name of the wizardess who wears the crown, who is named Sambryl.

**Lapendrar**—"River of Sorrows," so named because of the gold miners who have died working along its banks and the army from Aglarond that died in battle there. Forms the western bound-

ary of much of Thay except in periods of conquest.

**Lauzoril**—Prominent Red Wizard who has declared a vendetta of sorts against the Harpers.

**Mulhorand**—Ancient empire of the god-kings south of Thay. The Red Wizards are said to have come from there.

**Mulsantir**—Lake and river that mark the northern boundary of Thay and the border between Thay and Rashemen.

**Narfell**—Ancient kingdom that sat between modern Impiltur and Rashemen. Its ruins are still rich.

**Nentyarch**—Wizard-ruler of the wilderness between Impiltur and Rashemen, where the ancient land of Narfell had its roots. Anyone entering the territory without the good will of this ruler does not return.

**The Plain of Purple Dust**—Desert on the east side of the Sunrise Mountains. Any lands on the other side of this desert are known only in ancient legend.

**The Priador**—Flat plateau on which most of Thay rests.

**Pyarados**—City of Thay. Jumping-off place for adventurers going into the Sunrise Mountains.

**Rashemen**—Country to the north of Thay, protected by the Witches of Rashemen.

**Raumathar**—Ancient kingdom that sat where Rashemen now is. Died in war of mutual elimination with Narfell.

**Skuld**—City of Shadows, capital of Mulhorand.

**Slave Farms**—The agriculture (except for kitchen gardens) of Thay takes place on these immense plantations which are owned by the Red Wizards and Tharchions of Thay.



**Slavers**—The scum of the Inner Seas are hired by Thay to kidnap citizens of other Realms to become slaves in Thay.

**Slavery**—Basis of the economy of Thay. Two-thirds of the people of the nation are slaves. No one in the Forgotten Realms wants to be a slave in Thay.

**Sunrise Mountains**—The eastern border of Thay. Virtually impassable. Said to be the home of lammasu and griffins.

**Surmarsh**—Extensive swamp area to the west of Lake Mulsantir between the Rivers Thay and Sur. Home of criminals, refugees, and lizard men who are allied with Thay.

**Surthay**—Northernmost city of Thay, a lakeport on Lake Mulsantir. The Northern Bulwark.

**Szass Tam**—The Zulkir of Necromancy in Thay. He is said to know undead as no one has known them before.

**Telflamm**—A city-state on the shore of the Easting Reach, one of the terminal points for the Golden Way. Ally and trading rival of Thesk.

**Tharch**—Political division of Thay, ruled by a Tharchion or Tharchioness.

**Tharchion or Tharchioness**—Ruler of a Tharch. Almost absolute rulers within their domains, but answerable to the Zulkirs.

**Thay**—The nation ruled by the Red Wizards. Cities of Thay include Eltabar, Bezantur, Tyraturos, Pyarados, and Surthay.

**Thaymount**—Small range of mountains, probably volcanic, that rise out of the Priador and form the West Wall of Thay when she has shrunk her borders in times of retreat. The Citadel guards these mountains, and the rivers Lapendrar, Umber, and Eltab are fed from their heights.

**Thesk**—An alliance of trading towns and cities along the western end of the Golden Way. The largest city and capital of the country is Milvarune. The other main city is Phsalt, city of sages. The other towns are Thassalra, Phent, Inkar, Tammar, Two-stars, and Tezir-On-The-Marsh.

**Tyraturos**—Crossroads city of Thay, where the High Road and the Eastern Way meet. Sometimes called the "capital of Southern Thay". The greatest interior markets of Thay happen here. The slave markets are particularly extensive.

**Witches**—The true rulers of Rashemen. It is said that only their magic has kept Rashemen free from domination by Thay.

**Wizards' Reach**—The arm of the Inner Sea that divides Aglarond and Thay from the cities of Chessenta. The Cities of the North Coast are arranged along the north coast of this arm.

**Yuirwood**—Largest forest in the area of Thay. Former home of the Yuir elves, who are some of the progenitors of the half-elves of Aglarond. Now forms the border between Aglarond and the Cities of the North Coast.

**Zulkirs**—The Red Wizards who actually rule Thay. There are said to be eight Zulkirs, one for each school of magic. The actual names of these wizards are not usually known.

## Rumors

The following rumors can be found in different places in the Forgotten Realms, as indicated by the headings. If you want to follow any of these up, talk to your DM.

### Gathered in Far Lands

- Agents of the Red Wizards of Thay have openly slain merchants in Westgate and Scardale-port, and it is whispered that the fell Red Magic Cult is stirring again; perhaps the Red Wizards will resume their quest for world domination soon, in the Inner Sea Lands.

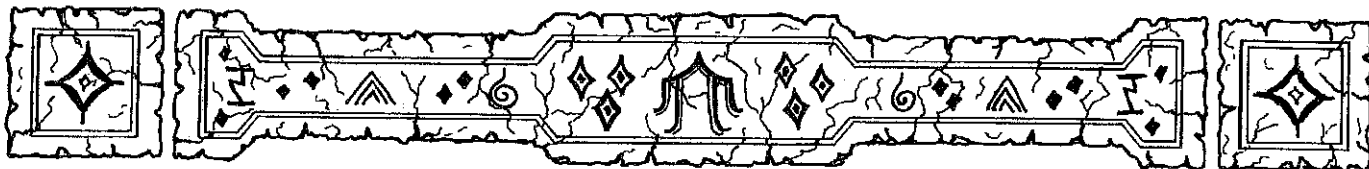
- A tavern in Ordulin, The Stranded Fish, has been set afire and destroyed in a brawl between local bravos and a bearded, robed mage of great power, thought to be one of the Red Wizards of Thay. The mage escaped the blaze, and his present whereabouts are unknown. It is certain that agents of the city's Council, and the City Guards, are looking for him.

- The incidence of abductions throughout the inner Sea area is growing greatly. Authorities are afraid (for reasons they'd rather not discuss) that the Red Wizards are adding to their slave coffles. Many young men and women with some experience in adventuring, though not as magic-users or clerics, are going missing.

### Close To Thay

- Armies of "walking dead" are said to be advancing steadily northwards from Thay, led by armored skeletal warriors of great power and fell aspect. Impiltur fears that Thay will overwhelm all the Eastern Lands, and then turn west to crush the Coastal Cities, Impiltur, and Aglarond.

- The Red Wizards of Thay have sent legions of elementals against rebellious neighboring satraps, destroying four of them (the coastal cities of Lasdur, Taskaunt, Murbant, and Thasselen) utterly, taking those lands (and that of



Hilbrand, which surrendered without a fight) under Thay's banner. Escalant, the most powerful of the cities, is currently under siege.

- It is thought that such vast numbers of elementals could not be summoned by spell, but rather a *gate* or portal was opened directly to the Plane of Elemental Fire. The sages of Phsalt warn that if all the hosts of Thay were mustered and hurled against these new forces, Thay would quickly go down to defeat. Whatever means the Red Wizards have for gaining such forces must be ended, they say, and magical forces must be gathered immediately to match this present strength.
- The adventurers' band led by the fighter Mane, formerly resident in Shadowdale, has disappeared in the South. There is talk of their defeat and death in the Yuirwood, but others say they have fallen in battle with the Red Wizards in Thay, or even that Mane has become chieftain and war leader of the nomads of the Shaar. Nothing is certain, however; all is speculation.
- Strange creatures have been sighted in the Yuirwood (west of Thay), and are thought to be spreading. Throughout the fall, trolls seemed to be growing more numerous, and then owlbears were reported. As the weather grew colder, a bulette was seen, and it was rapidly followed by other, nameless or unique, creatures, things which seem to be expanding outwards from the depths of the woods. The adventurer Sparleye was last seen in this area with his company, the Men of the Purple Arrow. Others who have gone into the woods have not returned, and traders are avoiding the area.
- Selfaril, High Blade of Mulmaster (one of the cities in opposition to Zhentil Keep) is said to be seeking a wife: The Tharchioness of Eltabbar, First Princess of Thay. The young, bald-headed Tharchioness has sent a golden earring soaked in her perfume to Selfaril, and he has sent her in return a cloak of snow-white Yeti fur. Having thus

exchanged gifts, they may now visit together with no gossip of scandal, instead of only through envoys, and yet part honorably, if they do not want to be mated. Selfaril wants Thay as an ally against Zhentil Keep, and dares not spite its ancient customs.

- To the south of old, vast Thay, the even more ancient kingdom of Mulhorand has been jolted in the past year: the Statues That Walk have begun to move once more. Over a thousand stone statues of time-lost origin stand all about this dusky-hilled country. At odd but long separated intervals, these stone men animate and walk about apparently towards specific (now-vanished?) destinations. They stop at times and then move on again, fight any who bar their way or attack them, and at times hew at rocks or clear pathways through certain areas. This latter behavior is a frightening thing when these areas are many-towered cities or tanglewood forests. The stone men are mute and apparently non-intelligent and no one has yet found a way to control them. Some have crossed through the border walls into Thay as well as into Unther, a desert land that lies south and west of Mulhorand. Tholaunt, Divine Precept of Mulhorand (one of the "god-kings" of Mulhorand) says the coming of the statues to life is not his doing nor that of any of his family, as far as he can tell, and adds that the power of controlling the statues is not known to his family. Some have whispered of strife within his family, though, and say that the Statues may be under the control of another.
- In Aglarond, report is that The Simbul, the famous dweomercrafter who rules that country, appears to have left her court shape-changed (perhaps as a cat or falcon) and vanished. Upon her high seat she left a signed letter directing her council to govern Aglarond wisely and dispose of several specific matters (no details are known) thus and so. It is thought she may have headed north to speak with the elves around the Great Dale (with whom she has an

uneasy alliance), and/or to observe events in the strategic Dalelands and discuss things with the remaining elves in Myth Drannor. There are rumors of war between Zhentil Keep and the northern dales and Scardale and its neighboring dales, as well as the sudden announcement of the formation of the Iron Throne, a merchant alliance, which intends to operate in the area. The Simbul is known for her unpredictable behavior and mastery of magic, and the tale most often told of her is her unaided destruction of the Red Sword mercenary company at Mistbridge.

- Huge balls of fire, four or five in number, appeared in the sky above the Towers of the Blade in Mulmaster shortly after the Simbul left Aglarond. There as a battle involving magic within the Tower and rumor has it that the Simbul was involved.

### Quest for Gems

The Nentyarch, ruler of vast lands east and north of Impiltur, has sent agents into the realms, seeking black gems for some unknown magical or religious use.

### In Thay

Iyachtu Xvim has been seen in Thay recently, on some quest for his father.