



The Player's Guide To Zeif

v2.0 (3256 BH | 597 CY)

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Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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“For no coin or chalice is more brilliant and no blood or ruby is more crimson; this shield of red and gold by which I live and die, this Sultanate of mine.”

-Sultan Murad the Proud, upon being ordained, 3213 BH

Introduction

This guide is a massive collaboration of the various sources of canon that is available to the region of Zeif in the Living Greyhawk campaign from published sources over the years as well as projects designed and created by the Zeif Triad and their delegates. It is designed as both a means of information centralization as well as a guide and helpful tool for all players wanting to create more flavourful PCs for play in the Living Greyhawk Campaign region of Zeif. Periodic updates (typically bi-annually) will be made to this document to keep it up to date, reflecting new canon created through meta-organizations, modules and interactive events. This document is also available on the Internet in a easy-to-browse format at the official Sultanate of Zeif website (<http://www.zeif.ca>). It is compiled here for your convenience.

It is the hope of the author and the Triad that this document can be printed off and carried by convention organizers and game day coordinators in efforts to supplement and enhance Zeif regional modules, as well as to provide answers to players who are trying to design more flavourful characters. Any suggestions for this document can be posted on the Zeif Website forums, or mailed to the Zeif Triad (triad@zeif.ca) or directly to the author, Jake Robins (mendahu@gmail.com).

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The People and Culture of Zeif

The Baklunish

Zeif's citizens are comprised largely by humans, and are primarily of the Baklunish stock. Physically, Zeif's Baklunish humans are much like their cousins in the Sultanate's neighbouring nations, including Ekbir, Tusmit and Ket. They have skins in dark golden hues, and across the Flanaess, only the Flan have darker skin. Their hair is often straight and fine textured, with colours generally dark, varying from dusky brown to blue-blacks. Their eyes are often green with varying degrees of gray, though some have hazel and pure gray hues. Their features are often characterized by high cheek bones and aquiline profiles.

*"I've travelled far and wide,
but no place am I more at
home than among the friendly
faces of the Baklunish West.
Nowhere else in the Flanaess
can one find a man so eager to
give or so quick to befriend."*

*-Melindor of Verbobonc, famed poet
and playwright, 3246 BH*

The sedentary Baklunish favour exotic colours and almost gaudy styles in their clothing, and the types of colours can vary from man to man, village to village, or beylik to beylik. They often wear single piece garments, like long robes or coats over breeches. Turbans are a commonly worn on the head. Nomads, on the other hand, tend towards pastels and earth tones, and their garments are often much more complex, including puffs, frills, and slits to show contrasting undertones in their clothes. They wear leathers and hides during war time, as well as, of course, their clan's heraldry.

Baklunish are a very tradition-bound people. They place great importance on the past and their ancestors, and as such Baklunish tradition has remained fairly static over their long history. Zeif's people still practice customs which the early forefathers of the Empire once practiced, for example.

As a people, Baklunish are a very calm sort, and they are known for their conservative demeanour in all their affairs. Even heated debates rarely escalate to shouting matches; instead, Baklunish prefer to trap their verbal opponents with their own words. They remain courteous and polite even when confronting hated enemies. The measure to which a Baklunish can maintain this level of self-control is often an indicator of his honour, and as such, even the most vengeful Baklunish can remain composed even when faced with the most angering of circumstances.

Baklunish are also a very artistic bunch, and chief among their arts are singing and dancing. Baklunish incorporate song and dance into many of their ceremonies, from religious holidays to annual nationalist events. There are work songs, meal songs, and many songs for horses. The Paynims are reputed to have some of the finest dancers, belonging to the many Dervish orders on the plains. The Dervish dance is a dizzying

display of rotational movement and honed balance. Some even learn to apply it to a highly effective but rare combat style. Also, Baklunish have a penchant for puppetry, and puppeteers are well-respected and in high demand for entertainment, especially in the larger cities. Many historical events are re-enacted through marionettes in various displays by Baklunish.

The Osfaradd Language

The primary dialect used in Zeif is the Osfaradd dialect, a variation on the Ancient Baklunish language used across the Baklunish West. The dialect itself is quite similar to its root language; in fact, those using the dialect can communicate easily with those using other forms of Ancient Baklunish.

The language itself was derived after the fall of the last dynasty in the Baklunish Empire. The Osfaradd clan was the familial tribe of Ozeif Khan, who rallied the tribes to defeat Ghayar and found Zeif. His family line has brought Zeif's sultans right up until Murad the Proud, the current sultan, and the local dialect which took hold of the region was named after his family.

Appendix 2 has a short list of different Baklunish terms and expressions you can use for your character. While many of the terms are universal throughout Baklunish tongues, many are unique to Zeif's dialect.

The Baklunish Hegira; Calendar of Zeif

The Sultanate of Zeif follows its own calendar called the Baklunish Hegira, which measures the passing of years from a different point than the Common Year calendar used more extensively across the Flanaess. The Baklunish Hegira marks years from the inception of the Baklunish Empire, marking the birth of the first dynasty. The current year for 2007 is 3256 BH (597 CY). To easily convert BH to CY or vice versa, use the following table.

| CY to BH | BH to CY |
|------------------|------------------|
| $CY + 2659 = BH$ | $BH - 2649 = CY$ |

For example, the year 591 CY is 3250 BH ($591 + 2659 = 3250$). Conversely, the year 3213 BH (when Selim the Scoundrel, Sultan of Zeif passed away) is 554 CY ($3213 - 2659 = 554$). *Note:* For your convenience, both year formats are used in tandem throughout this document to negate the need to do the math yourself.

Coinage in Zeif

The Sultanate of Zeif uses a system of currency very similar to the standard gold piece used in other realms. The coins are stylized and named after various genie-kind found in the outer planes, and the mint signifies Zeif's penchant for elementalism. The coins are described by the table below.

| cp | sp | ep | gp | pp |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| dao | djinn | marid | efrit | magus |



Illustration 1: A Zeifan Efrit

The Four Feet of the Dragon

All Baklunish people follow a core philosophical code called the Four Feet of the Dragon, and the Sultanate of Zeif is no exception. The Four Feet embody four principles that Baklunish strive to exemplify throughout their lives, and it has been their tradition since their histories began. It is important to note that these philosophies are hardly clearly defined strictures; there is often interpretation room when acting on them. However, most Baklunish follow the same common interpretation.

The first philosophy is that of Honour. Of all the Feet, Honour has the most vague definition. Baklunish strive to act with honour in all their dealings, friend or foe. An honourable negotiation or battle is preferred above a deceitful or misleading action. Baklunish honourably give respect to all people, and prefer to work with those who also embody it. Traits associated with honour include loyalty, honesty, reverence and lawfulness, though a Baklunish will unhesitatingly act against these virtues if he must to preserve his honour and the honour of his family.

Next is Generosity. Baklunish are some of the most charitable people in the Flanaess. They are expected to give generously with money, food, supplies, or whatever. They are also expected to be discreet; charity is not something that Baklunish do to curry favour or respect. Anonymous donations are common across Zeif and other Baklunish nations. The quantity of charity often grows as

an individual's wealth grows, and these charities are usually directed at people or institutions less fortunate. Hospitality is an important off-shoot of generosity; Baklunish take great pride in offering lodging to others, and will commonly take in travellers to feed and shelter them. There are many free hostels built across Baklunish lands, and most people know that they can find help if they can find a Baklunish human.

The third of the Feet is Family. Family is a loose term to Baklunish; generally it defines any unit of community that an individual belongs to. For example, a Baklunish human may have many families, including his blood relatives, his church community, his military unit, his village, or even his beylik. The sense of community is strong among all Baklunish, and they are fiercely loyal to each of their families and its members. An insult to any in a Baklunish human's family is an insult to her, and it is this sense of bonding that has proven success among all the nations of the West. They take great pride in each of their families.

The last of the Feet is Piety. Baklunish are very faithful people, and they are expected to be pious in their actions. Because there are many different deities in the Baklunish pantheon, they are also very tolerant of other faiths, in order for their piety to co-exist peacefully with others'. Baklunish are heavily involved in their communities church organizations and take religious matters very seriously. Temples are frequent among all of their cities, and the various faiths play important roles in government and economy.

Two Distinct Cultures

Baklunish are often described as having two different types of culture, and the Sultanate of Zeif showcases both equally. The first type is the nomadic Baklunish, who are tribal by nature and live on the plains and scrub lands of Zeif's southern regions. These include the Paynims as well as other nomadic tribes who have closer allegiances to the Sultanate. Baklunish nomads are unique in their cultures from tribe to tribe, but most place high values on the Four Feet of the Dragon as



Illustration 2: The Sultan's Harem

well as the culture of the horse and the mounted warrior. The Baklunish Nomads are known for their outstanding equines, and their skill at war with them.

The second type of Baklunish people is the sedentary agricultural type. These people create vast farmlands, such as Zeif's Retsaba, which spans from the capital to Ceshra. From these farmlands arise great cities and communities, and further from that is the Baklunish people's uncanny knack for trade and economics. Zeif exemplifies this with its great coastal cities and intensive trade network.

Equestrian Values

The Baklunish people are known across the Flanaess for their distinct cultural appreciation of horses and their ilk. Horses have a prominent role in all Baklunish society, and Zeif follows suit. Horses often have as many rights as humans in Baklunish lands, and in some lands (like Ket), horses have more rights than some races such as elves or gnomes. In Zeif, it is not so extreme, but the senseless murder of a horse is likely to draw equal if not more ire from those who were friends with the animal than it would were the victim a man.

Baklunish people's equestrian traditions date back far back into their histories, and their legends and mythology are filled with stories of great heroic steeds and gargantuan mounts tugging their world through the cosmos. Since the Empire's days, the Baklunish have used horses in all aspects of their lives. Most notable is perhaps their use in war. Baklunish are more skilled than any on a horse in battle, and the reputations of Baklunish cavalry inspires fear in their enemies' hearts. Horses have permeated their culture to such degrees that they follows many customs which might be strange to outsiders, such as toasting at meal times to each horse in the family, or sharing hair braids with a favourite horse. Baklunish even celebrate their horses' birthdays, putting flowered wreaths on their necks and feeding them special treats.

The Orcs of Zeif

Zeif is home to many orcs. Roughly a tenth of the population is likely orcish in some way or another. Orcs in Zeif are descendants of the first mercenaries which fought for the Baklunish Empire against the Suel Imperium, more than a millennium ago. Today, Zeifan orcs are an impoverished underclass. They live primarily on the plains of Antal, and the city of Antalotol. Across those scrubs are the various tribes and clans which encompass the population. These tribes are quite "watered down", as some have put it; they do not display nearly as much fierceness as a typical orc tribe, and they have abandoned many of their totems and ways of life.

Most orcs in Zeif work as miners, labourers, or scavengers, and none hold political office, or any other position of power, save for military.

The only real opportunities for Orcs in Zeif lies in the Uruzary Corps, a brotherhood of military heavy infantry which act as the Sultan's personal guard and task force. Every four to six years, lieutenants from the Corps make a visit to the tribes and enact the Fierce Harvest, selecting up to half of the presented orcs from the tribes. The tribes receive a payment for each orc selected, and those so selected are shipped off and inducted into a 20 year service term under the employ of the Sultan. The Uruzaries receive intense training, and today are regarded as one of the more powerful military units in existence in the Baklunish lands. Uruzaries who climb the ladder can achieve officer ranks in the Corps and hold some respectable power. Many eventually retire, however, and whether it was a voluntary retirement or an untimely retirement, they make their way to Mukhazin, a ruined city on the plains inhabited primarily by Uruzary veterans.

Other Races

Races beyond humans and orcs are scarce in Zeif, but are definitely not non-existent. Of the remaining races, the halflings are likely the most common. They have found niches in the cities of Zeif, plying their trade as merchants, or otherwise putting their keen senses and dexterous fingers to work as craftsman and entrepreneurs. Some have found homes in the Vaar, making lone hobbit holes in the hills, and some even take to the seas.

Dwarves and gnomes also find home here, and most are attracted to the mines in the Vaar. The dwarves come for the chrysoberyls, while the gnomes look for opportunities to develop and sell their various mining contraptions. Gnomes are also particularly interested in the workings of Kwalish, and many join the ranks of the intriguing Order of Kwalish.

Elves are perhaps the most rare of any of the demihumans. Forests and trees are sparse in Zeif, and most elves find it hard to deal with it. The closest forests are the Udgru in northern Ekbir and the Bramblewood in Ket, and both are too far to draw elves to the Sultanate. Those that do find haven in Zeif are often exiles or wanderers.

“Ask a foreigner, and he'll tell you its all grass and scrub for as far as the eye can see. Ask a Zeifan, and he'll tell you it's home.”

-Elmas Bey ibnt Varoliye, Beylik of Sundar, 3251 BH

Geography of Zeif

The north shore of Zeif leads into the Dramidj Sea, a vast sea which extends east past the Tuflik to flank the Caliphate of Ekbir and further north up through the Tiger Nomads and further to the mysterious land of Black Ice.. It dips west around Zeif's coast, the Bakhoury Coast before it heads further west into more uncharted lands. The Sultanate's influence is said to extend into much of the Dramidj north of it, including the few archipelagos, notably the Jansib Islands in the northwest and the Ataphads in the northeast. Zeif maintains this territory through use of its vast armada of ships under the command of the Sultan. The mouth of the Tuflik remains the boundary between the Sultanate and the Caliphate of Ekbir, and it is generally accepted that the seas beyond the mouth belong to the Caliph. The Tuflik river flows southeast and marks Zeif's eastern border and remains so until it flows through the Tusman hills into Ket. The city of Ceshra, which lies on the Tuflik's bank, is regarded as the most easterly settlement under the Sultan's control. Zeif's final border, the south, is a hazy one, and slowly degrades into the lawless lands of the Paynim nomads, controlled by old tribes of refugees from the Twin Cataclysms. Beyond these lawless regions, lies the nation of Ull, the only recognized sovereignty that the Paynims have.

The Fertile Lands of the Wadi Khijar and the Retsaba

The Wadi Khijar

The river valley called the Wadi Khijar is one of the largest and only landmarks which dots the vast fields of the Sultanate of Zeif. Once long ago, a great river flowed from the Crystalmists which form Ull's borders, carving a wide valley through the lands now called Zeif before emptying into the Dramidj. Some believe it was the Twin Cataclysms which dried the river, but it is uncertain. Regardless, the name of the original river is lost to time



Illustration 3: The Wadi Khijar

(though most refer to it simply as the Khijar River), and only the wadi's current name remains, which was bestowed upon it by the Paynim tribes who live near it. Today, its bed is fertile, but the large

population of rocks and annual flooding makes for bad farming. As such, the wadi is largely untouched by man, and while vast stretches remain quite barren, marked by occasional scrubs, a few pockets of oasis-like fertility emerge every so often, evidence that water gathers underground due to certain rock formations beneath the surface. Annually, usually during the early year rainy season, seasonal run-off accumulates to a vast degree, and the valley floods for up to three or four weeks. This is an important time for Zeif's wildlife, as well as the people of Zeif. The trade routes from the east to the west are temporarily cut off from each other except by barges (which the local farmers are quick to profit on, though larger, more major transport is regulated by the Mouqollad Consortium, who have licensed barges to transport large goods) as well as a few scant bridges (such as the Kemer al-Kader, the Arch of Fate, which crosses the wadi at its easternmost point, near the beyliks of Anaar, Palas and Bain; *reference: ZEF6-01 Out of Water*), but this time brings benefits as well. In northern Zeif, where the western arm of the Retsaba stretches, the farmers of Zeif have carved irrigation systems where they can capture the run off into pond-like stores from which they water their crops year-long. It also provides for quick transport into Dhabiya, which lies at the mouth of the Khijar before it flows into the sea. At this time of year, the wadi is also a very important holy symbol for the faith of Geshtai, who hold certain ceremonies at its mouth.

The Retsaba

Zeif's northeast shore, from the foothills of the Vaar to Ceshra on the banks of the Tuflik, is called the Retsaba, and it is marked by Zeif's most fertile and profitable soil. It is here that the vast breadbasket of Zeif



Illustration 4: The Fertile Retsaba

lies, almost entirely covered in farmland. The eastern Retsaba is flanked by the Tuflik, and it is from this mighty river that they procure water for their crops. Much of their crops are cultivated and brought into Ceshra for distribution, where parts are exported down the Velderdyva trade route while others are sailed into Zeir-i-Zeif for mass consumption by the Sultanate. The farms nearer to Ceshra are marked by their rolling hills, as they lie on the extremities of the Tusman hills who lie east of the Tuflik. The farms in central Retsaba are blessed by their proximity to the capital, but there is less water and the farmers are forced to grow hardier crops.

Because of this, there are also many ranch lands instead of farms, and much of Zeif's cattle industry is found here. To the east, the farmers depend largely on the annual flooding of the Wadi Khijar to irrigate their crops. The Zeifans have mastered the techniques, and the farmers are largely successful there.

The Arid Regions of the Timarral, the Plains of Antal, the Paynim Lands and the Vaar

The Timarral

The largest bulk off land in Zeif is called the Timarral, and it stretches from the north shores of the Bakhoury coast and the town of Beit Castan, crossing the Wadi Khijar and going all the way to Ceshra. It is largely uncultivated, save for a few stretches in its northern reaches which border the Retsaba, and its grasslands are flat and barren. A few trade routes cross its breadth, bringing supplies to and from the major settlements of Barakhat and Antalotol. Other smaller villages mark its expanse, largely situated near the trade routes or the wadi. The Timarral is also notable for its large population of altimars owned by the Elder Spahis of Zeif's cavalry. The largest are found in the west around the cavalry's stronghold in Barakhat, but many border the south of the region, keeping watch to the south over the masses of Paynims, the Plains of Antal, where Zeif's orc population is centred, and most importantly Ull. The Timarral is home to some of its own nomadic tribes, mostly Paynims who have migrated north.

The Plains of Antal

The Plains of Antal are some of the harshest lands in Zeif, and it is a lawless region ruled by orcs and Paynim nomads. The scrub land is marked by patches of grass as well as plateaus of limestone. Little plant life exists here. The Plains of Antal are home to a large majority of Zeif's orcs, whose tribes live a nomadic lifestyle among the scrub. Paynim nomads also find home here, and disputes between them and the orcs are as frequent as the



Illustration 5: The Scrublands of Antal

sunrises. Antal is marked by one major settlement, the city of Antalotol, a caravan town and rival of Barakhat. At least half of its population are orcs who have come to the town seeking work. It is

situated on a high plateau, giving the city a large purview of the surrounding lands.

The Paynim Lands

South of the Sultanate are the Paynim Lands, which are generally regarded as the southern border of the nation. The Paynims, nomadic tribal horsemen, roam these grasslands as their own territory. The Paynims have no major permanent settlements, and no established government beyond their own traditions and customs. The lifestyle of the mounted warrior prevails above all else, and law has no place here.

The Vaar

The Vaar comprises a small but jagged piece of land in northwestern Zeif, just west of Dhabiya and the Wadi Khijar. They are mostly rocky hills dotted with crevasses and caverns. Zeif has long mined the Vaar for various precious materials found there, and it has long been a major source of the Sultanate's wealth. Included in these materials are the blue granite that forms the walls around Zeir-i-Zeif, as well as the chrysoberyls and peridots which the Sultan is so fond of. Much of the Sultanate's small dwarven population can be found here, trying to make a living in a particularly non-dwarf land,



Illustration 6: The Hills of the Vaar

as well as trying to live peacefully with the large amount of orcs who make their way from the Antal plains to the Vaar looking for work.

Recently, the Vaar has been home to many adventurers with the recent discovery of the famed "Lost City of the Vaar", or Yokolmak Buyuk ("The Vanished Legend"). This city appears to be the ruins of some ancient civilization that once called Zeif home. Over the past year, Murad Sultan has spent time and resources plundering and exploring this newly opened vault of history, and the adventurers of the Sultanate have been his workhorses.

The Gulf of Ghayar and the Bakhoury Coast

The Bakhoury Coast

The Bakhoury Coast lies further south of Beit Castan, comprising the coastline on the eastern side of the Gulf of Ghayar. It is composed today of over a half-

dozen petty emirates who only recently came under control of the Sultanate. The coast is a hub of piracy, shady dealings, and unlawfulness, traits the Sultan would like to rectify. However, he is finding more and more than the Bakhoury Coast is a place of instability, and Zeif's hold on the region is waning.

The Gulf of Ghayar

The Gulf of Ghayar is a large point of water dipping south from the Dramidj, dividing Zeif and the Bakhoury Coast from some other nations which form a region that is largely uncharted and undocumented. The gulf has long been a place of violence and activity. Brave merchants sail from these rogue states to Zeif with gold in their eyes, praying to Istus for safe passage and general avoidance of the piracy which operates here. The fleets of Komal, the Jansibs, and Zeif patrol these waters, often at odds with each other.

Some of the most important activity, however, happens underneath the waves. Many aquatic races are found on the bottom of the Gulf, great cities of merfolk and locathahs.

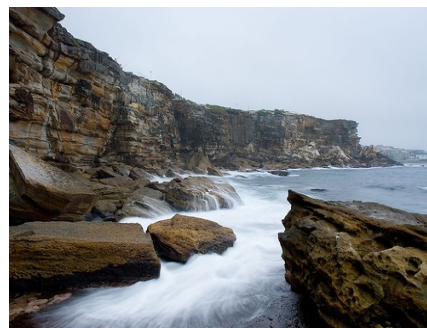


Illustration 7: The Bakhoury Coast along the Gulf of Ghayar

Historically, Zeif had been enemies with these people, and they were involved in the infamous Battle Beneath the Waves, which happened in the Gulf. However, today, thanks to the efforts of some diplomatic past Sultans, the merfolk are at peace with Zeif, and often make visits to the coastal towns, such as Beit Castan and Nafiq. Many have turned to the worship of Mouqol, and are even becoming involved with the Consortium.

Mur

The nation of Mur was once under the yoke of Zeif. The Sultanate held it as a khedivate for decades in recent history, though it eventually proved unprofitable and was granted autonomy. It remains a rare destination for most Zeifans, however, and most know little about it.

Risay

Risay is one of three major nations across the Gulf of Ghayar which have had numerous dealings with the Sultanate yet remain largely mysterious. Some say it is smaller than Komal or Mur, though its boundaries are uncertain.

Komal

Komal is one of the larger nations across the Gulf, and a traditional enemy of Zeif. For centuries its fleets have battled with Zeif's and reportedly consorted with pirates from the Gulf to the three major island chains in the Dramidj. Komal has managed to secure many colonies in these islands, including the port of Yif Qayah, which was formerly held by the Sultanate. Zeif has never managed to secure holdings from the nation, and to this day Zeif knows little of their customs.

The Island Chains of Jansib, Qayah–Bureis and Ataphad

The Ataphads

The Ataphads islands comprise the easternmost of the three major island chains which mark the Dramidj Ocean. Some believe that it was colonized during the days of the Empire by its degenerates and criminals, outcasts from the Baklunish society, though others contend that old Ur-Flan families have intermingled there as well. Today, other terrible races of monsters have somehow bred with them, and the natives of this island are scarcely human and followers of cults and practices that citizens of Zeif wish to know nothing about. Its sands are rarely stepped upon by the common folk, and wise sailors avoid this place.

The Jansibs

The Jansibs are a group of five islands and are the westernmost of the three major chains. Four balmy forested isles surround a larger one dominated by a volcano. The islands are notorious for housing many pirates and other bandits from Zeif and the Gulf, preying on merchant coasters heading to and from the Gulf. Other monsters are said to inhabit them as well. The city of Zirat lies in these isles.

The Qayah–Bureis

The Qayah-Bureis isles are the largest of the three major chains, lying directly north of western-central Zeif. It is home to many isles and some major settlements like Bureis and Yif Qayah. It has been colonized since the early days of Zeif, and has changed hands several times. Today, Zeif has lost its hold on the islands, though it desires the return of the territory. Komal was the last to take the northern regions, but the majority of the isles are disputed territory.

The Major Cities of Zeif

Herein lies descriptions of Zeif's settlements. Included in each is a city stat block as described by the *Dungeon Master's Guide v3.5* on page 137.

It is assumed that in any city in Zeif which has a population of 2,000+ will hold a level 5 divine casters for purposes of NPC spell casting. Included in the major city stat blocks are the levels of the higher level divine casters for these purposes.

Zeir-i-Zeif

Zeir-i-Zeif (Metropolis) Sultanate of Zeif: Conventional; AL N; 100,000gp limit; Assets 217,500,000gp; Population 43,500; Mixed (human 88%, orc/half-orc 9%, halfling 2%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Murad the Proud, Sultan of Zeif (LN human make Ftr 15), Galzar Pasha ibn Salizhadar abdu-Istus al-Zeir (LN human male) the Pasha of Zeir-i-Zeif (also called simply the Pasha of Zeif or the Chief Pasha)

Highest level Divine Casters: Pir Nerrim Qadi (LG human male Clr 14 of Al'Akbar), Feyin ibn-Cemul al-Zeir (N human male Clr 19 of Mouqol; Feyin's casting costs are doubled, while material components are unchanged. 9th level spells unavailable without Triad permission or campaign documentation).

The capital city of the Sultanate is known as Zeir-i-Zeif, though foreigners (infidels!) mistakenly refer to it as Zeif City. A near fifty thousand subjects of the Sultan make their home in this coastal metropolis. Zeir-i-Zeif marks a historical site for the Sultanate, for its location marks the landing point of Ekbir's ships as they sailed in to aid Ozef make his final stance and claim victory over Ghayar's satraps and the Imperial Pretenders. His encampment grew over the 900 years to the sprawling city it is now. Today, its blue granite spires and shining riches mark Zeif as a rich and powerful nation among the Baklunish Basin.

Notable Businesses: Crazy Akeem's Coffeehouse (coffeehouse, run by Akeem ibn Malik al-Zeif; *reference:* ZEF6-02 Left for Dead, ZEF6-08 That Look), The Crimson Crescent (Large, high-class Inn/Auditorium known to house great artistic events; *reference:* ZEF6-07 Into the Drink), Daulah Freight-Ways and Travel (shipping/merchant company run by Areef ibn Daulah al-Zeif; *reference:* ZEF6-02 Left for Dead)



Illustration 8: A gate within inner Zeir-i-Zeif

The Palace of Peh'reen

Zeir-i-Zeif's most notable landmark is of course the Palace of Peh'reen, which is the seat of power in the Sultanate. The three-section edifice, built over 700 years ago of the finest marble to be found in the Sultanate by Jehef the Splendid, holds not only the Sultan's mansion, but also his cabinet, the Diwan, and the Harem, the other important institution to the government. The Outer Palace is where the Diwan holds court, and it is here that much of Zeif's administrative duties are overseen. The various ministries which govern the nation are all found here, each headed by a chief minister who represents the people in the cabinet. The entire Diwan is overseen by a Grand Vizier, and a man by the name of Awan Mevet, former royal chamberlain, currently holds this position after a recent removal of the former Grand Vizier, Okolloz Seyish.

The Inner Palace is overseen by the royal chamberlain, and it is here that the Sultan makes his home, among many other residences as well. It is said that the Inner Palace is unrivaled in its beauty, decadence, and sheer luxury. The Sultan keeps the halls well-protected; in fact they are patrolled by the 100 most powerful and disciplined Uruzaries. The Sultan demands this protection not only for himself, but for the twelve vaults as well, which hold the Sultanate's wealth. It is known that the last vault remains empty, predestined home for the acclaimed *Jacinth of Inestimable Beauty*. Finally, the third division of the Palace is called the Harem, and is under the purview of Nara Kur, the Matron Sultana (or the Veiled Sultana, as she is sometimes referred to for her secrecy). She is the Sultan's mother, and was once a concubine before the bore the heir apparent, who is now the current Sultan. The Harem is home to the Sultans body of concubines and consorts, who number well into the dozens. The concubines often vie for favour from Murad, and he grants this to those who are his favourite. Some bear his children and gain elevated status. However, the Harem also serves a second

purpose, and that is as an educational institution. The Sultan reserves the most prestigious academics and scholars to school not only his children (besides the heir apparent), but the children of wealthy noblemen around the Sultanate. Everyone who is a member of the Harem (whether school boy or odalisque) is kept very segregated. Entrance is not permitted to many, and day passes are rare for those who reside within.

The Fortress of the Sea Lion

Zeir-i-Zeif is also home to the headquarters of the Royal Navy of Zeif, called the Fortress of the Sea Lion. It is a citadel built on a rocky island in the capital's harbour, attached to the city by a long fortified causeway. It serves as both the administrative centre for the navy as well as the home of the Kapudan Pasha, the High Admiral of the Navy. The grounds of the Fortress extend to encompass much of the harbour, whether a large portion of the fleet holds port, including the Kapudan Pasha's enormous seven-decked vessel, the *Lion's Mane*. The current Kapudan Pasha is known as Pandhar Reis. The Reis is a large man with a voracious appetite, with a small head for politics. He rarely attends court, but still remains a favourite of the Sultan, and he is generous in his gifts to the sovereign in order to maintain it. Pandhar Reis is more often found at sea, roaming the Dramidj, where he is most at home.

The High Bedestan

The faith of Mouqol maintains its most important holy site in the capital of Zeif, the High Bedestan, which ultimately serves two purposes. While it is an important site for administration and application of Mouqol's faith throughout the capital (it is in fact a temple), its chief purpose is the headquarters for the Mouqollad Consortium, which is a large trade guild who administers much of the mercantile efforts spanning the Sultanate and abroad, all the way down the Velderdyva. The clergy holds court at the High Bedestan monthly, and many of the most revered clerics and merchants gather to discuss the economic trends of the region, receiving news and advice from the Consortium and returning it. The High Bedestan is also home to another important annual event held by the church. The Assayers' Examinations occur during the spring of every year, and they are used for determining who will join the ranks of the prestigious Assayers every year, and who gets to rise to the acclaimed rank of Master Assayer. The end of this festival also marks the beginning of the caravan season, and at this time old trade contracts expire while new one begins. The Examinations represent a great turning point in the trade season, and much of Zeif's strong economy depends on it. Of important note is the recent joining of the Mouqolladi mer-clans who have been making the

festival for the past four years. Special underwater facilities have been built to accommodate the new arrivals, and a couple of the merfolk have gained office in the Consortium and the clergy.

Zeir Imaret



Illustration 9: Zeir Imaret

Mouqol is not the only faith in Zeif's capital, however. The faith of Al'Akbar maintains a large temple-hall called Zeir Imaret. While the temple largely serves as

a hostel (hosting primarily Al'Akbarian pilgrims from Ekbir and beyond, as well as travellers), it also is known as a meeting place for the Qudah, the recognized faith of Al'Akbar in Zeif. They gather here as needed when the Sultan requires religious judgment, as well as to discuss important matters of the faith (including the most important holy mission, the search for the *Cup and Talisman*).

Kabir Kafez

The last notable landmark of Zeir-i-Zeif is Kabir Kafez, a small palace built on the royal mausoleum grounds which is used to house the Sultan's heir apparent. When the heir apparent is chosen by the Sultan, he is sent here to rule over his own domain until he ascends to the throne of the Sultan. He receives the title Sheik al-Kafez, and receives his education from the true ruler of the palace, Black Naubek, the Grim Vizier. The Sheik al-Kafez is kept in isolation until his time, but is considered to rule over Kabir Kafez.

Dhabiya

Dhabiya (Large City) Beylik of Ralavar: Conventional; AL LE; 40,000gp limit; Assets 29,800,000gp; Population 14,900; Mixed (human 90%, orc/half-orc 9%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Rafayda Amir, Sovereign of Dhabiya (NE human female Ftr 9/Blk 6), Gursel Bey ibn Gancii al-Ralavar (N human male), The Bey of Ralavar

Highest level Divine Casters: Shahzadeh the Oracle (N human female Clr 5/Divine Oracle 10 of Istus; Characters must belong to the Church of Istus, expend 1 favour of the Church of Istus, or make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to convince Shahzadeh to cast spells).

The ancient city of Dhabiya, which lies at the mouth of the Wadi Khijar on the coast of the Dramidj, is considered one of the oldest cities in Zeif. It was founded by satraps of the Baklunish Empire before its fall, and bears many architectural reminders dating back to that time (such as the twin-shedu emblem which marks its ancient gates, the old herald of the Empire). The "old" families of Dhabiya consider themselves to have the most long-dated and pure pedigree in all of Zeif (though today they have intermarried with the proper nobles houses of Zeif to ensure their position). They are also reputed to have many ancestral ties to the inhabitants of the Ataphads.

The old families of Dhabiya are renown for their disregard for the official politics and government of Zeif. They remain cloistered in the Upper City, where the city's ruler Rafayda Amir administers the city with little regard to the Diwan's edicts. The old families have many ancient traditions (they retain the use of Ancient Baklunish, for example, and not the Osfaradd dialect used commonly in Zeif), and outsiders who cross them often find that they have offended them by marring some ancient unknown custom, and are subject to what locals call the "evil eye". Anyone so afflicted is best advised to leave as soon as possible.

The lower city operates much more in line with what one would expect. It is a hub of trade from up and down the Wadi, and from the Dramidj. Dhabiya is a centre for much of the western agriculture and a prominent sea-trade and ship-building industry. Many of Zeif's flotilla was built in Dhabiya.

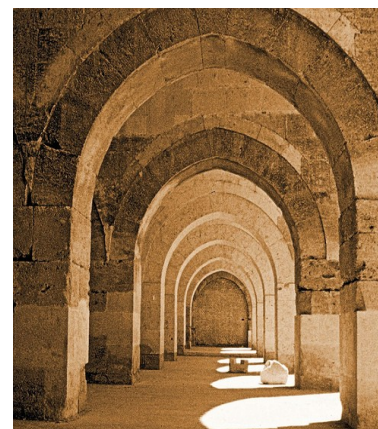


Illustration 10: An aged marketplace in Dhabiya

The Mouqollad Consortium dominates most of the trade, but the old families control some special sectors (such as the illegal slave trade).

The Sanserail

Dhabiya's most prominent landmark is likely the Sanserail, a large pillar-like structure which marks the skyline from miles away. Its foundation was built during the final years of the Empire by the Imperial High Priestess of Istus, who passed with the Twin Cataclysms. When the Empire fell, the temple to the Lady of Fate remained ceremonially unfinished, lacking a roof at the peak of its pillar. Today, the church of Istus operates the temple, reserving the outer halls for the daily rituals and

the inner halls for meditation. The roof is now covered in a canvas which is redressed every three years as part of a special ceremony. The clergy takes the old canvas to old temple ruins from the Empire's day and burns it, a ceremony called the Holocaust of Roof-Canvas. Often, the temple ruins south of Barakhat, the Pillar of Istus, is used, though the clergy has been known to make occasional pilgrimages to ruins deeper in the Dry Steppes.

Nafiq

Nafiq (Small City) Deylik of Balathar: Conventional; AL N; 15,000gp limit; Assets 8,415,000gp; Population 11,220; Mixed (human 89%, orc/half-orc 7%, merfolk 2%, halfling 1%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Yildwar Dey ibn Yusuf al-Zeir (LN human male Rog 4/Ftr 10), ruler of Nafiq and Dey of Balathar.

Highest level Divine Casters: Nasim the Beacon (NG human female Clr 12 of Azor'Alq).



Illustration 11: Decommissioned Naval Base in Nafiq

Nafiq was not always a coastal city, but a base of operations for the Royal Navy of Zeif on the western coastline. It originally operated as a supply base for the fleet who was too far from the capital or Dhabiya to resupply, and was often the staging point for the Navy's many initiatives in the Gulf of Ghayar. Nafiq remained as such for years, until the notable Battle Beneath the Waves,

during which a great battle between Zeif and the merfolk of the gulf occurred. While the event resulted in a destruction of much of the Royal Navy, it eventually engendered negotiations and finally a peace between the Sultanate and the merfolk.

As the peace came to be, the merfolk began returning captured naval officers to Zeif, and Nafiq found itself home to over hundreds of officers and crew who, having faced much trauma in their final career days, decided to retire. With this, Nafiq became its own rightful town. To this day, it has become a retirement spot for many grizzled seamen of the country, and the Sultan provides lodging for these retired veterans (though the funding truly comes from the Mouqollad Consortium).

The walled city also is home to many ceremonies and festivals celebrating the peacefully relations between Zeif and the merfolk, and diplomats and emissaries from the underwater world often travel here to make contact with the Sultanate. Contact has been so great over the last century that special underwater accommodations have been constructed for the visitors, and it is tradition for the retired sailors to join the emissaries in these underwater grottoes as a sign of friendship and cooperation. Facilities exist to promote the cohabitation of both the water-breathing merfolk and the air-breathing men of Zeif, including special air-filled chambers or water breathing potions.

Nafiq is known also known as a pretty rough city, home to many retired veterans from the navy who spent their careers in tavern brawls from Ekbir to Komal. The Nafiq Bar Fight is actually a known thing around Zeif. Such brawls are common from tavern to tavern, and aren't even illegal, though they have specific rules to them. The use of weapons (whether lethal, such as a scimitar or nonlethal such as a sap) is highly frowned upon, as is the use of any magic. However, any improvised weapon found in the bar is within the bounds of a "lawful" bar fight. Once a man is down, a fighter is to move on. The winner by drinks for the loser.

Nafiq is ruled appropriately by a retired naval officer by the name of Yildwar Dey, who is actually a childhood friend of the current Sultan, Murad. His family had enough wealth to afford Yildwar's tutelage in the Harem, though since this time the two have grown apart. Yildwar prefers the less political position out on the coast then entrenched in the back and forth of the Diwan and the capital.

Notable Businesses: The Laughing Lich Meyhane (reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?).

Beit Castan

Beit Castan (Large City) Deylik of Saganat: Conventional; AL N; 40,000gp limit; Assets 31,800,000gp; Population 15,900; Mixed (human 89%, orc/half-orc 7%, halfling 3%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Turfian Dey ibnt Tayyib al-Bakhoura (N human female Rog 5/Shadow Dancer 7), ruler of Beit Castan and Dey of Saganat.

Highest level Divine Casters: Yeganeh (LN human female Clr 10/Contemplative 5 of Xan Yae), Ali-Naghi (LN human male Clr 12 of Zuoken), Kimiya (human female Clr 5 of Geshtai; *reference:* ZEF6-01 Out of Water)

Beit Castan is only recently a proper city in Zeif. Originally, it was a coastal settlement belonging to the Bakhoury Coast, but In 3046 BH (387 CY), the town came fully under Zeifan administration when its famed

Amir, the last of his kind, proclaimed a self-exile and departed from the city. Some believe that this event was the first leading to the eventual subjugation of the Bakhoury Coast, which is now a Zeif controlled hotbed of civil unrest. Regardless of its implications, the exile of the Last Amir granted Zeif a new city that became its most westerly settlement along the coast, and provided it with continued riches to fund its great power.

Beit Castan is renown for its pearl bed, which lies all over its harbour and beyond. Pearls from here are acclaimed to be some of the largest and richest found throughout the Gulf and the rest of Zeif's coastline. The city has made quite a trade of it, selling its wares mainly to customers from the Bakhoury Coast as well as exporting them east to the aristocracies of Zeif's neighbours.

Beit Castan is also a port of illegal smuggling. The Dusk Lash is said to be headquartered her, and is involved in the illegal transport of many goods from the unstable emirates of the Gulf and the Bakhoury Coast. The criminals of Zeif know that Beit Castan is a good place to rid themselves of loot, and a good place to retrieve items not normally available to the common people of the Sultanate. The Dusk Lash is said to be tied to the faith of Xan Yae, and the Goddess is a popular choice of worship along the Gulf's coasts. She has a temple in Beit Castan which is on the docks, and the Dusk Lash makes a headquarters of a small buildings which adjoins it.

Curiously, Beit Castan is also home to one of the best and few licensed privateers outside of the Bakhoury Coast, where such bounty hunters are common. Turfian Dey is also the ruler of the seaside town, and she works the seas in search of the pirates that smuggle the goods from her city on her ship the *Silent Siren* in between duties with the town's administration. She is very skilled at her job and is known to be unbelievably lucky in her affairs. Some believe she is favoured by Istus, but others liken her success to the less frequent naval patrols in the area, leaving more for her to catch.

Notable Businesses: The Temizle Nefes, (Geshtai-operated public bathhouse; *reference:* ZEF6-01 Out of Water)

Ceshra

Ceshra (Large City) Beylik of Barat: Conventional; AL N; 40,000gp limit; Assets 33,200,000gp; Population 16,600; Mixed (human 87%, orc/half-orc 10%, halfling 2%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Hassan Bey ibn Hazdanan al-Zeir (LE human male Aristocrat 11), the Pasha of Ceshra and Bey of Barat.

Highest level Divine Casters: Nivad the Mendicant

(N human male Clr 13 of Daoud; PCs must be a member of the Church of Daoud, spend one favour or influence point with the Church of Daoud, or have less than 1,000 gp in the Final GP box on their most recent AR in order to have Nivad cast spells); Cyra the Wellspring (N human female Drd 14 of Geshtai), Saeed the Fountainhead (N human male Clr 11 of Geshtai).

Ceshra is a city of great importance to Zeif, as it lies on the Tuflik and marks the entryway to Zeif by most of the trade and visitors from Ket and further down the Volverdyva trade route. Though smaller than its historic rival Sefmur the capital of Tusmit, which lies directly across the river, the town is nonetheless a great player in foreign trade. Ceshra deals with imports from Ket predominantly, but also handles many exports from Zeir-i-Zeif, including precious metals and gems taken from the Vaar and the esteemed pearls all the way from Beit Castan. It is in Ceshra that Zeif enacts its massive trade taxes on goods from Ekbir, Tusmit and Ket, which brings them bad relations and a lot of money.

Ceshra has long had relations with the Paynims. Until about two decades ago, they have faced extensive banditry from the tribes, but some peaceful co-relations between the tribes and the Sultan have spared them from such banditry, and now the tribes cross the river and make raids in the Tusman hills. Today, the Paynims can find much work in Ceshra as mercenary escorts for caravans and ships heading out of Zeif down the Volverdyva, as the route is quite dangerous any time of the year.

The city is led by a long-standing civil servant called Hussan Bey, who once worked in the Ministry of the Treasury over forty years earlier. He is notable for having survived both the Sultan's purges, in the ministry and again in Ceshra seventeen years earlier. Hussan is a bitter rival of the Pasha of Tusmit, who rules the city across the river, and despite direction from the Sultan to cooperate with the Pasha, especially regarding his opposition to Ekbir, Hussan remains wary of the man, and has an extensive network of spies in the capital. He constantly sows dissent among the people of Tusmit and is trying to bring the Pasha down, jealous of his favour with the Sultan.

Notable Businesses: Hom the Mapmaker (*reference:* ZEF6-05 Family)

Barakhat

Barakhat (Small City) Beylik of Varanaad: Conventional; AL N; 15,000gp limit; Assets 8,475,000gp; Population 11,300; Mixed (human 71%, orc/half-orc 27%, halfling 1%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Saban Bey ibn Nihat al-Varanaad (N human male), Bey of Varanaad; Koyun Kinja (N human male Rng 14) Sheik of

Barakhat.

Highest level Divine Casters: Parsa the Luminant (NG human male Clr 7 of Azor'Alq); Hesam the Appraiser (N human male Clr 9 of Mouqol).

Barakhat is an open city found in the western central grasslands of Zeif. It serves as a caravan town, dealing with most of the trade of the Paynims and anything else coming north from Ull or the Dry Steppes. The faith of Mouqol holds a large fortified temple and marketplace here, and the Consortium dominates much of the trade which goes on here. The city competes quite fiercely with the city of Antalotol to the east, but largely is considered the winner in that contest.

This is due primarily with the city's ties to the Paynims, who often steer traffic coming north to the west and not the east. Barakhat doubles as the central stronghold of the Spahis, the cavalry of Zeif. It marks the western boundary of the Spahis' influence, and many large altimars, the senior knight's fiefs, can be found in the region. The leader himself, a man called Koyun Kinja Elder Spahi, a Paynim himself, is in fact a vassal in the cavalry, and his fief lies in the trust of his daughter Deshani while he governs the town. His palace in Barakhat is adjacent to the Hall of the Spahis, an hall which the Elder Spahis' use to discuss matters pertaining to Zeif and their involvement. The knights rarely convene; only when matters implicate more than any one's individual altimar does concern rise among them. They are a fairly independent group.

The city is heavily entrenched in the culture of the mounted warrior, and as such the Paynims find haven here. Horse trading is rampant among the dusty crossroads, and many of the tribes of the plains bring forth their goods to trade for food and beer. Many come to enlist as mercenaries in the Spahis, as outside the Hall of the Spahis lies the recruitment office, where the various Elder Spahis place announcements and calls for soldiers.

South of Barakhat lies a very important landmark, the Pillars of Istus. Once a great temple complex in service to the Lady of Fate, dating back to the last years of the Baklunish Empire, the ruins are now no longer used as an active temple, but serve as a grounds for a very important holy ceremony for Istus' faithful: the Holocaust of the Roof-canvas, from the Sanserail in Dhabiya. Every three years the faithful bring the replaced roof canvas from the temple to the north for a ritual burning, in hopes of bringing forth manifestations of the deity. Istus' manifestation has last occurred in 3238 BH (579 CY), and the faithful patiently await the next showing every time they burn the canvas.

Antalotol

Antalotol (Small City) Beylik of Antaloros: Conventional; AL NE; 15,000gp limit; Assets 8,475,000gp; Population 10,700; Mixed (human 47%, orc/half-orc 51%, halfling 1%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Mecnun Bey ibn Mesut al-Zeir (NE human male), the Bey of Antaloros; Nejak Pasha (LE human male Sor 8) Pasha of Barakhat.

Highest level Divine Casters: Orkbahd the Luminant (NG half-orc Clr 7 of Azor'Alq); Lelah the Fountainhead (N human female Clr 9 of Geshtai).

Antalotol is a strategically placed city found in the scrub lands of Antal, built on a high bluff which can see over ten leagues in any direction. The town is a desolate caravan town, plying what little trade it can from the Paynims and the small traffic coming north into Zeif. It is populated heavily with orcs, whose tribes inhabit the plains surrounding the city. Over half of its numbers are orcish, and Antalotol is probably the most orcish city in Zeif. The language here is heavily influence with orc words, and the small amount of culture that Zeif orcs have left can be found in every corner of the city.

Antalotol competes heavily with Barakhat for caravan trade, but is largely unsuccessful. It is as such largely poor and in need of renovations and supplies. The government provides small amounts of funding to the impoverished orcs, but it is largely insufficient. The citizens here work very hard to carve an existence from the dusty plains and the dirty streets. The current ruler is a stocky fellow by the name of Nejak Pasha, a sorcerer who once occupied a position in the Inner Palace, but was transferred as Pasha of Antalotol over twenty years ago. He is rumoured to have orc blood in him, but he largely denies these accusations. He is otherwise a rather stern and unforgiving man, reflecting the harsh life he lives in the scrub of Antal.

Mukhazin

Mukhazin (Village) Beylik of Antaloros: Conventional; AL LN; 200gp limit (double this limit if it pertains to weapons or armour); Assets 7,250gp; Population 725; Mixed (orc/half-orc 99%, other 1%). Authority Figure: Uluj Aga (LN orc male Ftr 16), Commanding Officer

Highest level Divine Casters: Guza Khan (LN orc male Ftr 8/Clr 2 of Daoud; PCs must be a member of the Uruzaries or be a half-orc and expend one favour of the Sultan or the Uruzaries to get him to cast spells).

Not far from Antalotol lies the ruined city of Mukhazin. Mukhazin was once a powerful city ruled by an Orcish Malik loyal to Ghayar, during the days of his satrapy. When the Empire fell, the survivors found shelter

here, but eventually became enslaved to the orcish tyrants here. It remained so until Ozef razed the city in his war against the Pretenders, freeing the people and destroying Mukhazin. Today, the fortress of Dar-Zaribad is built on the old city, and is entirely under the command of retired Uruzaries who had sought exile from Zeif's society.

It is ruled by Uluj Aga, a scarred forty year veteran. The orcs are very unwelcoming to outsiders, of which they receive little. The city is said to be haunted, and many believe it true. Fallen Uruzaries are brought here to be buried, and their spirits are quite believed to guard the city.



Illustration 12: Mukhazin

One such story haunts many young child's dreams, a story of a massive spirit army of orcs risen from the grave to send back a raiding party from Ull, only to then turn on the Zeifan Infantry who lost to them in the first place. Mukhazin is a largely unvisited place.

Other Settlements of Zeif

Abar Nur–Ter'I

Reference: ZEF6-06 Piety

Abar Nur-Ter'I is a small village in the Beylik of Elyan. It is known for being the finishing point for the great tournament of Al'Akbar, which starts in Yatirdes.

Cumalizik

Cumalizik (village) Beylik of Tarkad: Conventional; AL NG; 200gp limit; Assets 5,610gp; Population 613; Mixed (human 64%, half-orc 18%, orc 12%, dwarf 2%, gnome 2%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%). Authority Figure: Pelgar bin Uzek al'Mein, male human Ari10; *Reference:* ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?

Cumalizik is a small village south of Antalotol in the Beylik of Tarkad. It has a small mosque to Mouqol and three taverns. Being in the plains of Antal, it is home to

a large number of orcs and half-orcs.

Notable Businesses: The Crossroads Taverna, The Crusty Dwarf Tavern, The Lazy Shepherd Inn.

Istiklal

Reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?

Istiklal is a small village in the Beylik of Kalareen situated along the Tozluyol (the road from Nafiq to Barakhat and Antalotol).

Notable Businesses: The Drunken Sand Giant Inn.

Kale Sosis

Reference: ZEFI6-05 Wurst Festival Ever

Kale Sosis is a new village, built as an outpost in the Beylik of Varanaad. It acts as a staging point for many military operations in southern Zeif, but is also home to Sucuk Birlik, a great "Festival of Sausage" that brings visitors from far and wide.

Notable Businesses: The Hard Wood Inn, the only tavern in the village.

Ordu

Reference: ZEF6-01 Out of Water

Ordu is a small yet bustling village just south west of Zeir-i-Zeif, so close that it can see the capital's glow at night. Ordu, while being small and lying off the main road from Antaloros to Zeir-i-Zeif, remains quite busy during the trade season, as it is a good last stop within a day's travel of the capital.

Notable Businesses: The Altin Geyik (inn).

Sovorn's Palace

Reference: ZEF6-07 Into the Drink

Sovorn's Palace has no formal name as a settlement, but is home to many merfolk deep in the Gulf of Ghayar, and is the capital of Sovorn's mer-sheikdom. It is a small gathering of merfolk built around his fortified palace on the edge of the Scar of Untold Depths.

Sulumak

Reference: ZEFI6-03 The Sultan's Birthday

The town of Sulumak is the capital city of the Beylik of Onnax, a respectable settlement along the road south of Zeir-i-Zeif.

Notable Businesses: The Bayaz Kaplan, one of Sulumak reputed outdoor cafés.

Yatirdes

Yatirdes (large town) Beylik of Elyan: 838gp limit; Assets 178,075 gp; Population 4,247. *Reference:* ZEF6-06 Piety

The town of Yatirdes is a small town in the Beylik of Elyan, and most notable for its role in the great Tournament of Al'Akbar due to its historical relevance. It is said that Al'Akbar once made a great pilgrimage from this place in the year 2217 BH (-442 CY) as he headed to a village to bring a salve to a citizenry beset by plague. Contestants from all around are welcome to join in to retrace the steps of Al'Akbar's famed pilgrimage.

Notable Businesses: The Oasis of Al'Akbar, a two story inn which is a popular starting point for the tournament.

Zeif's Military

Zeif has a long history of military conquest. The Sultanate has had its hands in a half dozen different nations, holding them as colonies at one point in time. Each division of military has had many years to develop and refine itself, and today Zeif boasts fighting forces that inspire awe into its neighbours. The infantry, while once heavily involved in foreign objectives, now deals primarily with urban security; town guards and police. The Spahis, Zeif's cavalry, hires Paynims as mercenaries and patrols Zeif's rural areas from their many headquarters across the plains. The Royal Navy maintains protection for Zeif's vast sea-trade, dealing with the constant threat of piracy as well as maintaining ocean-faring influence in the neighbouring nations Zeif has had its eyes on. Finally, the Uruzary Corps, the Sultan's personal infantry guard, executes special missions and cultivates a reputation for the most fierce, disciplined military unit in the Baklunish West.

“It was like a storm of such profound fortitude. There was dust for miles in the sky, and a tremor so great I could not but spill my drink. And the thunder...”

-Journal entry, unknown person, on the march of the Spahis on the Brazen Horde, ~2965 BH

Zeif's Infantry

The Zeif infantry is one of the oldest divisions of the military. When Ozef Khan founded Zeif, he achieved it through a well-trained army of nomads, which, while mostly cavalry, did include a substantial amount of foot soldiers. Zeif's infantry developed early on as a means to ensure security in the various beys and cities which Ozef and the early Sultans asserted control over. The infantry was truly Zeif's "standing" army. Initially they did very little moving around, and were often stationed in one spot for long periods of time. Because of this early tradition, they easily evolved to encompass a branch which became the town guards for most of Zeif's cities, a system still in use today.

When Zeif began expanding its influence, the infantry got their first real chance to act. While the cavalry initially did most of the spearheading for Zeif's imperial moves, the infantry were charged with securing acquired territory. Many were shipped to the island chain of Qayah-Bureis as well as Zeif's former Khedivate in Mur, not to mention Tusmit and Ket, where they established order and quelled instability common with new colonies. It was during this imperial age that the infantry was at its biggest and strongest. However, as Zeifan hegemony diminished again, the infantry got cut when it came to funding.

Today, the infantry exists still as a ready army, prepared to advance on any territory as the Sultan sees fit. In the mean-time, however, they maintain urban security, policing Zeif's cities' streets and ensuring order in the Sultanate's most concentrated areas, where cavalry are impractical. Each city maintains a division of the

infantry as their guard force, who answers to the pasha or bey of the area, who receives his orders from the Ministry of War. The standing army, those left in garrisons in various places in Zeif, answer directly to the Ministry. Recently, the infantry has been busy on the Bakhoury Coast, where they are stationed to try and eradicate the unlawfulness which has corrupted the region. While the navy acquires the ports and defends the sea, it is the infantry who are in the thick of things and maintaining a standard of security.

The officer class of the Infantry works in a similar fashion as the Spahis and the Navy. Rich families can purchase commissions for their sons and daughters to become officers, and it acts as a means to be rid of an otherwise unemployable offspring. The agas of the infantry are charged with training and hosting these officers in exchange for the commission. While this system sometimes produces inefficient commanding troops, it does alleviate the costs of the units greatly, and is a system which the Sultan does not intend to collapse any time soon.

The Spahis of Zeif

In the Sultanate's earliest years, it maintained a standard cavalry operated directly under the Ministry of War and funded from the Sultan's own pocket. This force was powerful and grew very large as Zeif expanded its influence, especially when dealing with the Paynims and stretching into Tusmit and Ket. Eventually, the cost efficiency of this force diminished greatly, and the Sultanate knew it would have to revamp the system. Yazerak the thunderous did just that in 2755 BH.

Today's system is much more efficient, driven, and most importantly cheap. Yazerak appointed several of his highest ranking officers as Elder Spahis (Elder Honoured Knights), and charged them with hiring, training, and maintaining their own division of Zeif's cavalry. The Elder Spahis were in charge of everything, from who they hired, how much they paid each soldier, as well as the fighting styles of each. However, they bore the costs of these armies alone; the Sultan offered no monetary payment to the Elder Spahis. In return, however, each was granted his own fief, an altimar where he could build a castle and rule over his lands, as well as given a military jurisdiction over a select bey or two nearby to his altimar. He receives all income from his land and uses this to fund his army. Elder Spahis are a form of aristocracy in Zeif; they hold as much prestige and honour as any bey.

The Sultan did, however, decree certain standards of cavalry as part of the agreement between him and his vassals. A uniform was standardized, and each Elder Spahi is held to certain quotas of troops to maintain. The

hierarchy remains constant from altimar to altimar, as well as the military power associated with each rank. In this way, Zeif procured itself a large and growing army, and only at the cost of a few petty fiefs.

The Spahis are known for their quick tactics and swift assaults. Unlike some of the heavier eastern cavalry, the Spahis are typically very lightly armoured and fast on their hooves. Their steeds are lean mounts, some of the fastest in the Baklunish west. They prefer hit and run tactics over all-out assault, and work best when disorganizing enemy ranks instead of slaying them outright. In melee, the Spahis are skilled in the use of lances and spears, as well as swords of all types, most notably scimitars and falchions of different stock.

Worth mentioning is also the skill of the Spahis with regards to mounted archery. Many units in the ranks are "stinger" units, who skirt the battles delivering fast volleys of arrows before darting off around the enemy. Constantly in motion, these archers are difficult to confront, and cause devastation among the enemy lines. Because of this need, all Spahis are trained in the use of bows, and are required to use those that are usable on horseback.

The hierarchy of the Spahis is well defined and each rank has very specific duties. Typically, an Elder Spahi appoints one Kahya (a chief steward) to administer his fief and his troops. Below the Kahya are the Komutan Spahis, who command the troops. There are a number of the Komutans who are assigned to various provinces (the Elder Spahi's assigned pashaliks, beyliks and deyliks) to command the regiments in each, respectively. There is also a Komutan Spahi assigned to the Elder Spahi's own fief. Below the Komutans are the lowest of the Spahi (officer) class, the Spahis themselves. These knights are in command of up to a half-dozen Kaptans.

The Ghulam ranks are composed of Kaptans, who answer directly to the Spahi ranked knights. They can command up to 160 cavalry each. They divide this number into four groups of 40, and assign each a Teoman. These Teoman then subdivide again their 40 into four groups of 10, each commanded by a Komiser Muavini. Below this, are the lowest rank and file troops, the Silahdars.

The Spahis serve primarily as a military unit. In times of war and aggression, the Spahis are sent in alongside the Uruzaries and the infantry as one of three primary ground forces. They are one of the largest and most powerful of the three. When Zeif extends its influence to neighbouring nations connected by land, the Spahis are often the spearhead of the action, first on the scene. However, their duties span much more than this outside of battle.

The Spahis serve their Elder Spahi as a mercenary,

and their job description crosses many different fields. Silahdars and Komiser Muavinis act as local police, settling disputes among the populace, patrol the countryside and the streets of smaller villages, and ensure the protection of the people they serve.

Outside of the major cities, they serve as guards in the absence of a proper city-guard organization. The people of Zeif know that if there is trouble about, a Spahi is a good choice to summon. Spahis also serve some administrative and menial duties within their altimars of service. Teoman are known to collect taxes and issue certain licenses, and they even participate in construction of roads or other public works buildings, directing the Silahdars and Komiser Muavinis who do the bulk of the

manual labour. It is perfectly within the right of an Elder Spahi to utilize his men in anyway he sees fit. He's the one who's paying them in the end.

The Sultan has also been known to call Spahis to his service in times of celebration, war, or other important activities. Generally, if the Sultan needs muscle, he calls in the Uruzaries, but sometimes mounted soldiers are required, such as the case of parade escorts, etc. These



Illustration 13: A Spahi

ceremonial duties are generally reserved for the Spahi class of Spahi, though some Kaptans are sometimes invited. Because the Spahis are mercenaries under the employ of the Elder Spahi who hired them, the Elder Spahi actually maintains the right to refuse this service. However, this is generally regarded as a very bad decision, it has never been done before in the history of the organization.

The Royal Navy of Zeif

The Royal Navy of Zeif is a powerful military institution which has a reputation across the Dramidj sea for its strong force of arms and dominant presence on the high seas. Based out of the capital of Zeif, where the great Fortress of the Sea Lion rests on a rocky outcropping in Zeir-i-Zeif's harbour, the Navy patrols Zeif's coasts from Beit Castan to the mouth of the Tuflik. The size of her flotilla is unmatched across the northwest coasts. The Navy's enemies in the past have included many pirates from different sources. To this day they continue to battle the corsairs of the island chains which surround the nation, as well as any rogue bandits from

the Tuflik. Formerly, the Navy had many confrontations with the merfolk of the Dramidj (of note is the Battle Beneath the Waves, during which the Navy suffered a grave defeat), but today the Sultanate is in alliance with them.

Naval warfare is an art mastered by Zeifans, who have held nearly unchecked superiority across their coasts since the fleet's inception. Typically, Zeif employs the use of large war-galleys powered by oars and sail, outfitted with massive rams on their bows. Often they are outfitted with elevated platforms at both ends of the ships where archers gain vantage. Some are equipped with siege weaponry, typically ballistas and catapults. While the ship fires upon its enemies, it will close the distance, hoping to outmaneuver the ship and ramming it. Then, the enemy is boarded and the ship is taken, so long as the ramming did not do considerable damage.

The Navy today maintains a large population of locathah scouts, which helps the fleet retrieve reconnaissance from its enemies under the cover of the sea. This tradition dates back over three centuries. Also today, the peace between Zeif and the merfolk of the gulf has led to more alliances between the Navy and the people of the sea.

The Royal Navy of Zeif has old roots. It was born not long after the Sultanate was united under Ozeif's reign. After the initial inauguration by Ekbir, the Caliphate granted its successor state a small flotilla of ships to help with its own naval protection. Zeif needed the ships to secure its trade routes, which are largely what has brought the country such economic success today.

Since then, the successive Sultans have continued to build the on the fleet, and within a hundred years, they had proved that Zeif owned the Dramidj. From the Tuflik to the reaches of the Bakhoury Coast, the banner of the Sea Lion became known as the supreme naval force in the area. The Royal Navy remained largely unchallenged for nearly seven hundred years. Their first real defeat came in 3095 BH



Illustration 14: A Tugamiral Reis

(436 CY) during the great conflict known as the Battle Beneath the Waves. The event followed a culmination of tension between the people of Komal and the merfolk of the Dramidj, and the Kapudan Pasha, the High Admiral of the fleet, foolishly led the flotilla into a narrow

straight where they were besieged by the merfolk. They quickly found their oars bound and their hulls breached from beneath the waterline, and the defeat cost them over three quarters of their fleet. The Navy's power over the coasts was crippled for nearly half a century. Today, peace has been achieved with the merfolk.

In the present year, the Navy has recuperated and patrols Zeif's coastline vigilantly. The current Kapudan Pasha is a man called Pandhar Reis, who commands a massive seven-decked galley called the Lion's Mane. He maintains direct control over the whole fleet, despite the Navy being nominally under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War.

The Uruzary Corps

The Uruzary Corps is an old division of the military founded by Jehef the Splendid. They are comprised entirely of orcs (including some half-orcs), who are purchased from their tribe by the Sultanate at a young age and indentured into a twenty year active term. Serving on the Corps is a great honour desired by many orcs, and many climb to great prestige in its upper echelons. It has become a symbol of orcish pride and identity in Zeif, seeing how much of their traditional culture has been assimilated and lost since the fall of the Empire.

Since their inception, the Corps, also called "Ojak", has cultivated a reputation of supreme discipline, loyalty, and ferocity on the battlefield. They are known to follow even suicidal orders. They harbour a philosophy called the *Giribim*, which essentially dictates that the intent of the Sultan is the supreme decision maker, and they discipline themselves so much that this intent becomes their own. Thus, they are capable of making the same choices as their leader without receiving the order. This level of programming and training is what has brought the Uruzaries to their level of power enjoyed today.

Despite this fierce loyalty, the Uruzaries experience a calm, monastic lifestyle. Their hierarchy is defined in terms of positions of the Sultan's household, as they are intended to be the Sultan's personal guard (despite having enlarged to encompass many more duties than this). As such, some Uruzaries are called janitors or cooks as a title of rank. Uruzaries are proud of these ranks, content to serve the Sultan in any way they can.

The Uruzaries, conceived solely as personal guards of the Sultan, have since adopted many duties in the Sultanate. They maintain their guard duties in the capital; the Palace is near overrun with them vigilantly protecting the Sultan and his retinue. However, they are also situated around the city as guards for important sites and even the gates at times. Besides this guard duty, they are also employed in many special military missions,

serving as paramilitaries. Uruzaries have been known to storm criminal hideouts, arrest corrupted government officials (as they did in the famous Purges of Murad), and otherwise serve as national police. They are commandos and special agents, operating directly from the Sultan's will.

“Worry not of what thou can see in thy future, for Istus' eminence hath decided 'pon it already. Instead, feel harmony with what thou knowest, and move from past to future with grace.”

-Excerpt, Holy Psalm of Istus

Religion In Zeif

In the Sultanate of Zeif, worship is directed primarily at a Pantheon of deities specific to the Baklunish people, simply called the Baklunish Pantheon. The Baklunish Pantheon's patronage is spread out throughout the Baklunish Basin, meaning that Zeif shares its deities with Ekbir, Tusmit, and even Ket. Outside of these lands, these deities receive much less worship, though in some places they are not entirely unknown. The Pantheon is headed (though it is probably only a token leadership) by the Goddess Istus, , the Lady of Our Fate. Most of the Pantheon shares her views on neutrality, and only a spare couple have extremes in alignment. Many of them are hero-gods, Baklunish mortals who ascended to the heavens and achieved divine power. The Pantheon reflects much of the ways of life of the Baklunish people; fatalism, cynicism, modesty and righteousness. The information that follows is a list of the deities in alphabetical order, designed to help players understand the deities and choose one for their PCs to worship. Much of this information is summarized in the Living Greyhawk Deities Supplement, available in the downloads section of this website.

When making a new character for the region of Zeif, it is recommended that PCs choose from the following list of deities, as these are the most common in Zeif. This is not to say that other deities (including those in the PHB) are not present in Zeif, only that they are uncommon and unrecognized by the Sultanate. Information on these deities can be found in the deities document (available in the downloads sections).

Al'Akbar, the Restorer of Righteousness

Gender: Male

Rank: Demigod

Portfolio: Guardianship, Faithfulness, Dignity, Duty

Titles: High Cleric, Restorer of Righteousness

Holy Symbol: An Image of the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar

Alignment: Lawful Good

Favoured Weapon: Falchion

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 defending falchion

Domains: Community (CD), Good, Healing, Law, Protection

Be a vessel of kindness and emblem of devotion, for the righteous man is both steadfast and merciful. Be not as the untutored infidel, but rather heed your superiors, and submit to their wisdom and guidance. Let the faithful strive always to nurture the seed of Good in the soil of Law, that by doing so they are received into the Garden of Al'Akbar.

History of the faith

Al'Akbar was once a mortal man, a direct descendant of the Emperors of the first dynasty of the Baklunish Empire. He was born 2166 BH (-493 CY), and he witnessed the early days of the great wars with the Suel. When he was seventeen years old, his family suffered a great embarrassment which is not described in the history texts. Regardless of the cause, he left to live with the Paynims, where he learned to be faithful to the great gods of the nomads. He became a hero to the Paynims, and eventually enacted his own holy pilgrimage to the Pinnacles of Azor'Alq in 2208 BH (-451 CY), where he encountered many divine beings, including the fallen heroes of the first Dynasty. They spoke to him prophecies and named him successor of the Empire and High Priest of the Baklunish, and he returned to his people to preach the holy word and the breadth of the prophecies he learned, most notable being the fall of the Empire. His efforts were unsuccessful, and thirty years later, the Twin Cataclysms befell the land.

The surviving mage-priests of the Empire met at a sacred site called Tovag Baragu, where, led by Al'Akbar, they implored the gods to forgive the sins of their people. Eventually, they were answered, and Al'Akbar was gifted with the holy relics of the faith, the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar. With this power, Al'Akbar was able to lead the survivors away from the ruined land, destroying the enemies which blocked their passage. The last sovereign of the Empire renounced the throne and delivered unto Al'Akbar the fate of the Baklunish People. Al'Akbar led them north and east, where he found the lands of Ekbir and settled them. With one last pilgrimage to the Pinnacles to confirm his divine quest, he ruled over Ekbir for ten years, constructing a great mosque to himself and founding the country of Ekbir. He died at the age of 89 and ascended into divinity, and today remains a demigod.

Details of the Faith

The faith of Al'Akbar today is split into two distinct branches, the Exalted Faith and the True Faith. The Exalted Faith recognize the holy supremacy of the Holy Caliph of Ekbir, and is common through Zeif, Ekbir, and Tusmit. They are scholars and recognize academic achievement. They promote diplomacy, art, poetry, and use the Ancient Baklunish tongue. They tend towards a NG or LG alignment, and mostly bear the title of Qadi, which means judge. The True Faith recognizes the supremacy of Grand Mufti of the Yatils, and have a much more fundamental approach to religion, recognizing hard work and plain speech. They tend towards a more LN alignment, and are known collectively as Mullahs. Both faiths serve as ministers, judges, scholars, teachers, and general civil servants, as well as healers advisers and

guardians for the military. They make ritual prayers at dawn and dusk, and are generally tolerant of infidels so long as they uphold the faith's ideals.

The Cup and the Talisman of Al'Akbar form a very important relic for both faiths. In 2878 BH (219 CY), the relics were stolen during a holy procession in Ekbir by a band of strange elves flying on winged eagles. The event brought into question the different ideals of the faith, and the Grand Mufti eventually ended up seating responsibility, though he denied it. The great schism occurred, separating the faith into the Exalted and True, and to this day they remain at odds. The Cup and the Talisman have not ever been found, and it remains a holy quest for all members of Al'Akbar's faith.

The Faith in Zeif

The recognized faith of Al'Akbar in Zeif is the Exalted Faith, and is known as the Qudah. They hold assembly at the main temple to Al'Akbar in Zeir-i-Zeif, called Zeir Imaret. Zeir Imaret serves not only as this assembly hall and temple, but also as a hostel for travellers or homeless, and even as a hospital to care for the sick or wounded. The Qudah has long sought to strengthen and support the lawful institutions of Zeif (attaining political power for themselves, for which they have long contended with the Mouqollad for), but they are known to have heavy activity protecting and preserving quality of life for the common man of Zeif, which is why the faith holds so much popularity among the commoners.

Al'Akbar's chief representative in Zeif is Pir Nerrim Qadi (LG Baklunish male, Clr14). This tall, highly energetic leader is, at age 36, the youngest Pir Qadi in three centuries. He has the unenviable responsibility of reconciling the ethical requirements of the Exalted Faith, under the authority of the Holy Caliph of Ekbir, with the duties imposed upon his assembly by the laws and government of Zeif.

Azor'Alq, the Son of Light

Gender: Male

Rank: Hero-god

Portfolio: Light, Purity, Courage, Strength

Titles: Son of Light, Banisher of Darkness

Holy Symbol: An armed man standing atop a stone summit

Alignment: Neutral Good

Favoured Weapon: Scimitar

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 flaming scimitar

Domains: Good, Sun, War

Strength grows in the light of courage. The bright sword of Azor'Alq, once drawn, may be sheathed again

only in victory. A true leader is the first to join battle, and the last to seek rest. The flame of truth must be tended with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, so that the purity of its light may dispel the tyranny of darkness.

History of the Faith

Like Al'Akbar, Azor'Alq was once a man, and a hero of the first dynasty of the Baklunish Empire, living over three thousand years ago. The earliest records of his existence in the holy texts recount his valiant defense of the royal family from fiends of darkness as they fled from their defiled homeland across a desolate mountain range somewhere in the west. Tales of his ascendancy are unaccounted for, but to this day the bards still sing of his courage. He now resides on the Material Plane in the Pinnacles of Azor'Alq, a great fortress somewhere in the Dramidj Ocean, where he is served by his paladins, the Thousand Immortals.

Details of the Faith

Azor'Alq promotes unwavering good and unmerciful destruction of all that is evil. He has a particular penchant for destroying fiends and undead, the two creatures which he abhors the most. He is sometimes mistaken for a fire-worshiper, due to his desire to put light in all darkness. He is called upon by warriors and any who lack courage. They are known to have affinity with dragons, and some legendary followers were known to ride them as mounts.

The Faith in Zeif

Nafiq remains the largest bastion of Azor'Alq's faith in Zeif, where its main temple, the Pharos of Azor'Alq, lies. It bears a large beacon of fire which constantly remains lit, and is used as a lighthouse by sailors coming into port. Ushah Pala abdu-Azor'Alq (LG Baklunish male, Rog 2/Pal 5/Shadowbane Inquisitor 7) is the current head of the faith in Zeif, after the former head was assassinated under mysterious circumstances in 3250 BH.

The faith of Azor'Alq in Zeif remains constantly at odds with the faith of Xan Yae and their sponsored guild of smugglers called the Dusk Lash (who they invariably blame for the assassination of the former leader). No direct conflict occurs in general, though they are hardly diplomatic to each other. Followers of Azor'Alq are also known to be cold towards the Suel, remembering the deeds their empire committed over a millennium ago. Strangely, they have a good relationship with most of the orcs of Zeif, due to their dedication to courage and honour with the Sultanate over the years.

Daoud, the Mendicant

Gender: Male

Rank: Hero-god

Portfolio: Humility, Clarity, Immediacy

Titles: The Mendicant, Unraveller of Deceptions

Holy Symbol: A multi-coloured patch of cloth or tangle of yarn, with seven threads depending from the bottom, one from each distinct colour of the spectrum

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Quarterstaff

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 defending quarterstaff

Domains: Magic, Travel

Seek the boundaries of fortune, good and bad, for there the threads of destiny are exposed. Never desire more than fate provides and never accept less than fate demands. A fabric of lies must be cut with sharp words.

History of the Faith

Over two hundred years ago, Daoud was lived as the son of a wealthy Baklunish noble family in Tusmit. His family exemplified the Four Feet of the Dragon, and he grew into prosperity and acclaim, even eventually becoming a legendary philosopher-pasha of Tusmit. It was in his middle years that fate struck him ill. The reasons of his downfall are undocumented and speculated, though his followers today stress that the reasons for his transformation are unimportant. It is only important that it was the harsh hand of fate which stripped him of his titles and acclaim, and exiled him from his homeland by the Caliph of Ekbir, who currently held power over Tusmit.

He crossed the Tuflik to live in Geshra as a mendicant priest of Istus, spending his days at a place now called Daoud's Quoin, a fallen minaret on the streets. He lived in utter poverty and contemplated the harshness of his mistress, the Lady of Our Fate. It was here that he developed his new philosophy, gathered followers, and eventually ascended into godhood through a portal that opened in the quoin.

Details of the Faith

The faith of Daoud preaches a different type of philosophy, contrary to the popular Four Feet of the Dragon. In the place of Honour, Family, Generosity, and Piety, he put Honesty, Humility, Poverty, and Endurance, a philosophy he calls the Path of the Seeker. The followers are brutally honest in their affairs, and they do not treat wealth or social status as any sign of power or respect; in fact they abandon all such things in themselves, seeing them as unnecessary and blasphemous to Daoud's teachings. They place their trust in the hands of fate, seeing its inevitable pull as the

proper path of life.

The Faith in Zeif

Daoud's faith is centred in Ceshra, where the Mendicant ascended. There, dressed in tattered rags, Nivad the Mendicant, servant of Daoud (N Baklunish male, Cleric 13 of Daoud), preaches to the beggars and passersby. Otherwise, there is very little organized or centralized groups of the faith.

The one thing the faith is centrally involved in is the Uruzary Corps. It was during their occupation of Ceshra that the Uruzaries adopted Daoud's clerics as their chaplains. They related to the Daoudian's dry humour and disregard for social status, and today the faith of Daoud is their official religion.

Geshtai, the Daughter of the Oasis

Gender: Female

Rank: Lesser Deity

Portfolio: Lakes, Rivers, Wells, Streams

Titles: Daughter of the Oasis

Holy Symbol: A waterspout

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Spear

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 frost spear

Domains: Plant, Travel, Water, Weather (CD)

Tranquility is a benign state, and it should take an extreme act to disrupt it for more than a moment. When such a disruption comes, turn its force back upon itself to negate it, like the stone that breaks the surface of a lake only to be covered and lost. Water, like tranquility is hard to find but necessary to vitality. Water is more precious than gold, for a thirsty man gets no sustenance from his wealth.

History of the Faith

Geshtai's influence has long been important in Baklunish life. Since the early days of the empire they have recognized the importance of fresh water, and her faithful have always held respect with the various power heads throughout Baklunish history. She has been particularly popular among the Paynims, who follow her guidance to water sources hidden in the dry plains. After the fall of the Empire, when the survivors were forced to flee into the lands where water was more scarce, her following only increased.

Details of the Faith

Today her clerics act as guardians and caretakers of Zeif's water sources, whether they are lakes, streams, rivers, oases, or hidden wells. They protect them from

Geshtai's enemies, who promote disease, poison, and fire. She especially dislikes Pyremius because of this. She is heavily revered by travellers, nomads and farmers, who all depend on her water to live. Her clerics can be found wandering parched lands and directing lost men and women to water, and they explore all the sources to be found in their territory, studying the flow and nature of water. Though often tranquil and patient, a follower of Geshtai can be incredibly enraged by those who use destructive magic on water.

The Faith in Zeif

The faith of Geshtai is centred in Ceshra, which borders Zeif's largest freshwater source, the Tuflik river. The temple is built on its banks and actually descends into the river. The leader of the faith is a Cyra the Wellspring (N Baklunish female, Druid 14). She often makes pilgrimages along the length of the Tuflik River, looking for signs of contamination or drought. Her constant traveling companion is a dire otter named Akici. Followers of the faith in Zeif also show their numbers during the annual flooding of the Wadi Khijar, and some important rituals are held there during this season.

Istus, the Lady of Our Fates

Gender: Female

Rank: Greater Deity

Portfolio: Fate, Destiny, Divination, Future, Honesty

Titles: Lady of Our Fate, The Colourless and All-Coloured

Holy Symbol: Varies; Gold Spindle

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Web of Istus (net)

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 distance net

Domains: Celerity (CD), Chaos, Destiny (RoD), Knowledge, Law, Luck, Mind (CD), Oracle (CD)



Illustration 15: Istus' Holy Symbol

Everything is connected to every other by invisible strands that push and pull over time. The choices a person makes in life affect the pull of some strands, allowing one to alter fate in a small way, but some of these webs of fate have a strong and inevitable pull that cannot be escaped. The perceptive can come to understand these strands and watch them to predict the future. Accepting your destiny is the greatest

service you can make to yourself, for dishonesty about your role in the world leads to ruin and disaster.

History of the Faith

Istus has been a chief deity among the Baklunish since the Empire's days, where she was the chief religion of the state. She has long remained aloof from the other deities in her pantheon, preferring to concern herself only with the fate of the universe. Her influence passed on to Zeif easily after the Empire was destroyed. In Zeif's early days, Al'Akbar held most of the sway, but when Ozef the Warrior, founding Sultan, was killed in a horrible attack, the old families of the region pressed their influence, and Istus regained her position as chief deity.

Details of the Faith



Illustration 16: Istus' Holy Symbol

Istus is the chief deity among the Baklunish Pantheon, but she rarely acts as a figurehead or leader. She is in fact quite aloof from her fellow powers, preferring to deal solely with the fate of the universe and all who live in it. She is said to sometimes be accompanied by a cloud-like prince from the Plane of Time. She otherwise appears as a Baklunish woman of any age, carrying her mystical golden spindle from which she creates the strands of fate.

Istus' clerics have seen the absolute extremes of fate, and are quite cynical or stoic as a result. They are often unmoved by unlikely events, seeing it simply as fate. Some, however, worship her because they believe they have been well rewarded by fate. They serve often as diviners and oracles, making predictions on the next decision that Istus will make about fate.

The Faith in Zeif

Istus has long been a part of Baklunish culture, and when the Empire collapsed, its influence transferred and lived on through Zeif and the other Baklunish nations. Today, Istus' faith can be found throughout the Sultanate, and her teachings have permeated every nook and cranny of the nation (for example, the walls surrounding Zeir-i-Zeif are decorated with mosaics in Her honour). Today, her faith is centred in the city of Dhabiya, in the pinnacle temple called the Sanserail. It is the oldest temple in Zeif, having been founded during the Empire's days by the last Imperial High Priestess. It was never completed, but still serves as a holy grounds. The roof, instead of being domed, is covered in a canvas which is replaced every three years in a ritual called the Holocaust

of the Roof-Canvas. The followers remove the old canvas and transport it to the Pillars of Istus, a great holy site in the Timarral. There, they burn the canvas and pray to the Lady of Our Fates. On some occasions, they are blessed by the manifestation of the First Servant of Istus, a great whirlwind which consumes the ashes and sacrifice, giving portents of the future to its followers. This has not occurred since 3238 BH (579 CY), and the followers of Istus patiently await his return.

Mouqol, the Merchant

Gender: Male

Rank: Lesser Deity

Portfolio: Trade, Negotiations, Ventures, Appraisal, Reciprocity

Titles: The Merchant

Holy Symbol: A set of scales and weights

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Dagger

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 defending dagger

Domains: Knowledge, Pact (CD), Travel, Trickery

Reward is not gained without risk. The perfect bargain satisfies both necessity and desire. The wise know the worth of a thing as well as its cost. Greed makes the wealthiest into debtors. All life is a matter of exchange.

History of the Faith

Mouqol's faith dates back to before the Empire, for he was present in the war between Light and Darkness which precipitated the mythic Hegira, which marks the beginning of the Baklunish Empire. Since those days he has overseen the constant trade and economy that the Baklunish are so known for. When Zeif was founded, Mouqol was there; his clerics established the first of the many trade negotiations between Zeif and its neighbours. Today, his faith and his organization, the Mouqollad Consortium, governs the economy from the Bakhoury Coast to Ket.

Details of the Faith

Mouqol is the deity of trade, and the marketplace is his holy ground. He establishes many temples and churches right in the centre of such bazaars, collecting taxes to fund their insurances of fair trade within its purview. They tend not to hoard their wealth, preferring to donate it to charitable works. His clerics are master negotiators and appraisers, some of the most skilled merchants in the Baklunish West.

Clerics of Mouqol believe in fair trade and seek out magical deception or fraud, eradicating it. They prize the ability to discern the true desires of their customers and deliver unto them the most precious treasures. They

travel plenty, seeking out new marketplaces and trade opportunities.

The Faith in Zeif

Mouqol's faith in Zeif is centred in the High Bedestan in Zeir-i-Zeif, which serves as a marketplace, a temple, and a headquarters for the Zeifan branch of the Mouqollad Consortium. The Worthy Elders of Mouqol hold court here on a monthly basis to discuss the economy and trade situations domestically and abroad. They are lead by the Most Worthy, Feyin ibn-Cemul al-Zeir-i-Zeif (N Baklunish male, Cleric 19 of Mouqol), an aged priest whose contemplative demeanor belies his skill as a master negotiator. When Feyin trades with non-Baklunish, he goes by the name Feyin Cemul.

Mouqol's faith is not limited to the Baklunish humans in Zeif. Recently, His name is being spoken among the merfolk tribes of the Dramidj, particularly in the Gulf of Ghayar. These merfolk seek trade with Zeif, wishing to trade the precious underwater treasures that humans cannot procure. They are regularly making trips to the cities in Zeif where they can hold court with the Consortium. Special underwater lodgings are appearing more and more in Zeif, seeking to accommodate the sea folk.

Xan Yae, the Lady of Perfection

Gender: Female

Rank: Lesser Deity

Portfolio: Twilight, Shadows, Stealth, Mental Power

Titles: Lady of Perfection

Holy Symbol: Black Lotus Blossom

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Falchion

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 defending falchion

Domains: Knowledge, Mind (CD), Trickery, War

Reality depends upon three metaphysical ideals: the Universal Mind (the universe and all things in it exist because the mind created them and maintains them), the Perpetual Harmony (life is balanced, symmetry is in all things, achieving a similar state puts one in harmony with nature), and Internal Peace (martial and mental activities must be mastered to attain a higher level of existence). Flamboyance and wasted energy have no place in the Lady's realm. The extremes of good and evil must be sought out and tempered with harmony to maintain balance.

History of the Faith

Xan Yae's beginnings are uncertain, for Her approach was in shadow. For centuries, she has worked in the background of Baklunish history, and today she is found not only in the Baklunish West but other hidden places

across the Flanaess. She likely predates the Empire.

Details of the Faith

Xan Yae's faith is a faith of harmony and balance, and a fervent believe in maintaining them. She prefers her clerics to operate subtly, seeking to right extremes in beliefs to a balanced way without wasting energy on flamboyance. Her faith is an active one, constantly hunting extremes in government, alignment, or other radical factions and bending them to balance. Her followers hone their mastery of the self, becoming skilled warriors or practitioners of the mind.

The Faith in Zeif

Xan Yae's faith is mostly hidden in Zeif, but does have a central headquarters in the city of Beit Castan. This temple is a windowless structure of mysterious secrecy. The faith is known to be involved in the Dusk Lash, a cabal of smugglers who operate out of Beit Castan, though they have remained detached enough to avoid arrest or other legal complications.

Zuoken, the Servant of the Lady

Gender: Male

Rank: Demigod

Portfolio: Physical and Mental Mastery

Titles: Master of Da'Shon and Edel, Servant of the Lady

Holy Symbol: A striking fist

Alignment: Neutral

Favoured Weapon: Fist of Zuoken (unarmed strike)

Weapon of the Deity spell: +1 improved unarmed strike, defending

Domains: Celerity (CD), Mind (CD), Strength, War



Illustration 17: Zuoken's Holy Symbol

strive to achieve the pinnacle of physical and mental ability. One must pursue harmony to achieve perfection, so every issue must be considered from both sides so that a balance may be struck between the two, allowing a harmonious resolution.

To learn Da'Shon is to be on the path to perfection, for the use of weapons is a hindrance to the ability of mankind to attain the goal; once the goal is reached, one can use such things without fear of losing sight of perfection. One must

History of the Faith

Zuoken was once a mortal in the service of Xan Yae, a master of the Edel ("gift of fate", or psionics) and the Da'Shon ("Falling Hail", a complicated form of martial arts practiced by his sect of Xan Yae). His mastery was so great that he ascended to divinity through sponsorship of his Lady.

In 3164 BH (505 CY), Zuoken suddenly stopped manifesting to his faithful. Investigation revealed that the deity was somehow captured and imprisoned somewhere in the central Flanaess. His followers crusade endlessly to find and free their deity to this day.

Details of the Faith

Zuoken's faith teaches Da'Shon and the way of Xan Yae. They are ultimately similar to Xan Yae, though the focus on shadows and twilight seems to be replaced with complete physical and mental mastery, and other perfection of the self. Zuoken's faithful seek to master their bodies, find and free their patron, and are known to attack on sight members of the Scarlet Brotherhood.

The Faith in Zeif

Zuoken has no major temple in Zeif where matters of the faithful are discussed. He possesses a small shrine in the Garden of Shadrakir, which is tended by Ali-Naghi, the Disciple of Balance, servant of Zuoken (LN Baklunish male, Cleric 12 of Zuoken). His sister, Allahbas, the Disciple of Balance, servant of Zuoken (LN Baklunish female, Monk 12), teaches the ways of Da'Shon to a select group of disciples. Zuoken's faithful are also known to set up hospitals where they take care of the aging, for understanding and accepting the changes time has on the body is an important aspect of Da'Shon.

Historical Survey of Zeif

The Post Empire Days

(2237 BH – 2353 BH; –422 CY – –306 CY)

In days past, there existed two great empires in the lands west of what we now call the Flanaess, the two of them dominated by the Suel and the Baklunish respectively. Relations had always been tense between the two nations, but in their final days, they fought in some of the largest wars that Oerth has seen. Both sent mercenary armies of orcs and goblins at each other, but this only resulted in bloodshed and death. No serious territory or victory was achieved.

Their conflict escalated to a fateful point in 2237 BH (-422 CY). The great Suel Imperium brought down the Invoked Devastation upon the Baklunish Empire, and much of its land and people were destroyed, reduced to dust and what is now known as the Dry Steppes. There were survivors, however, and they were a group of Baklunish mage-priests who gathered at a sacred site called Tovag Baragu. There, they combined their strength and struck revenge on the Suel. The Rain of Colourless Fire befell their enemies, and in turn the Suel nation was reduced to ashes, a land we now call the Sea of Dust.

Those Suel that survived fled east to settle in the lands of the Flanaess. The Baklunish fled north. It is during this time that the cleric Al'Akbar founded Ekbir on the eastern shores of the Dramidj. Other survivors fled among the Paynims, taking up the nomadic lifestyle on the plains of the lands which are now Ull and Zeif. Some, however, would not see the Empire so easily defeated.

A man called Ghayar Khan, who was nothing but a civilian during the last dynasty, gathered survivors and fooled them into believing he was the last descendant of the royal family. He led his followers to the lands around the Gulf which now bears his name, and settled the lands now known as Risay, Mur, Komal, and the Bakhoury Coast. He installed false satraps along the coasts, and subjugated any survivors who did not accept his rule. He eventually pushed his influence eastwards, and within a decade claimed dominance over much of what is now Zeif. Still he claimed to be the rightful heir to the Empire, and proclaimed his lands the new Empire. Ghayar and his Satraps eventually became known as the Imperial Pretenders.

Ghayar pushed his limits in greed, and drew himself thin across the vast plains. The Paynims and other survivors who now lived under his false dictatorship, eventually grew distasteful of the Pretenders. One such

“From Empire to Empire, our people move on. For that is the nature of the Baklunish; forever strong, forever proud, forever free.”

-Ozef Khan, upon the defeat of Ghayar Khan, ~2353 BH

clan, the Osfaradd clan, set into motion the events that would eventually create the Sultanate of Zeif.

The clan was led by a great war leader called Ozef Khan. He travelled across the lands calling upon the aid of any warrior who would fight for him, challenging all Baklunish to resist a dictator who was not of royalty. To him, the Empire was dead, and no false ruler would dominate his people. He led a campaign against Ghayar, and fought for a short couple of years. Ghayar had not the resources to fight the gathered strength of the Paynims, especially not when in the final days of the war, Ozef brought help from the fledgling nation of Ekbir.

Ekbir had been founded by Al'Akbar, and though the priest only ruled it for ten years before passing on and ascending to divinity, the stories of Al'Akbar's pilgrimages to the Pinnacles of Azor'Alq and the holy site of Tovag Baragu lived on. They knew that the last remnant of the royal family had renounced the throne on one such pilgrimage and surrendered the fate of the Baklunish people to Al'Akbar. They saw the Paynims and the survivors of the Empire as their people, belonging to the Caliphate, and they felt that Ghayar's rule was illegal. They sent ships and soldiers to Ozef, and they landed on the north shores of Zeif, where Ozef had made a final stand against the enemy Khan.

Ozef defeated the Imperial Pretenders and within a few months had routed the last of the satraps from his lands. The Holy Caliph of Ekbir decreed that Zeif would be a new nation, a partner to Ekbir and rightful lands for Baklunish, and in 2353 BH (-306 CY), Ozef was crowned the first Sultan of Zeif. Zeif was granted a small amount of soldiers and vessels who would defect to the Sultanate, and the grounds of Ghayar's last stand became the foundation for Zeir-i-Zeif, the capital city. A new nation was formed, and Ekbir hoped that Zeif would grow into a valued ally and devoted of Al'Akbar. However, things would eventually not go as well as they thought.

The Beginnings of a Sultanate

2353 BH – 2529 BH (–306 CY – –130 CY)

2353 BH (–306 CY): The Sultan's Truce and the Tradition of War Titles

In Zeif's early days, many issues of integration and instability plagued Ozef's rule. The remaining satraps and emirs of Ghayar, who were not comfortable giving up their lands, challenged the new Sultan's rule. The roving Paynims desired to remain free from any yoke of a new autocracy. The descendants of the orcish mercenaries of the Baklunish-Suel wars had fled north from the Dry Steppes and were settling into what would

become Antal. Finally, there was the heavy presence of Ekbir's missionaries in Zeif. Their presence forced Ozef to compromise his ideas with the Caliph's desires.

The first Sultan knew that he would have to establish his absolute power and created the *Sultan's Truce*. The *Truce* declares that the sultan is the single ultimate and proper authority in the Sultanate and automatically dismissed all claims against the Sultan, recognizing him as the absolute ruler of Zeif.

Zeifan Lineage

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Ozef the Warrior | 2353 – 2366 (13) |
| Marut the Mournful | 2366 – 2402 (36) |
| Tembel the Lamented | 2402 – 2441 (39) |
| Jehef the Splendid | 2441 – 2529 (88) |
| Ismuyin the Wise | 2529 – 2577 (48) |
| Ayusen/efez the Serene | 2577 – 2608 (31) |
| Irmun the Beggar | 2608 – 2625 (17) |
| Zeyim/efez | 2625 – 2668 (43) |
| Melek I the Cleaver | 2668 – 2702 (34) |
| Payezif I the Poet | 2702 – 2746 (44) |
| Yazerak the Thunderous | 2746 – 2770 (24) |
| Mirzad the Holy | 2770 – 2811 (41) |
| Beroz the Mariner | 2811 – 2847 (36) |
| Kouroz the Cruel | 2847 – 2892 (45) |
| Keshkadar the Golden | 2892 – 2944 (52) |
| Melek II the Restless | 2944 – 2982 (38) |
| Payezif II the Pure | 2982 – 3019 (37) |
| Garod/efez the Reviled | 3019 – 3041 (22) |
| Firouz the Dark | 3041 – 3062 (21) |
| Mansur the Damned | 3062 – 3091 (29) |
| Turuvez the Triumphant | 3091 – 3122 (31) |
| Muktar the Crafty | 3122 – 3148 (26) |
| Kamuran the Fortunate | 3148 – 3189 (41) |
| Selim the Scoundrel | 3189 – 3213 (24) |
| Murad the Proud | 3213 – Present (43+) |

With the *Sultan's Truce* in place, Ozef was now empowered to remove the petty beys, emirs and satraps who were dissenting, replacing them with his own loyalists and smoothing out administrative duties in the process. Ozef backed his claims through force of arms.

The dissenting rulers either quickly fell in line or were relieved of their duties.

One problem with the *Truce*, however, was that Ozeif lacked a proper existing aristocracy. He couldn't leave the former satraps of Ghayar in charge of his states but the only recognized nobles in Zeif were members of his own clan, the Osfaradd, and most of his close allies were Khans in his army, not politicians. It was because of this that the tradition of war titles came about. Through the *Truce*, Ozeif began granting the heroes of battle the title of *effendi*, a gracious title of honour, and granted them positions of power over timars in the area. This is how Ozeif formed an upper class, and the tradition of granting war titles still exists today, though it is often reserved only for the most deserving heroes.

It should be noted that those ousted by Ozeif during the *Truce* were not removed from power for long. Many of them, including Ghayar expatriates and old families of the Empire, eventually regained their status through intermarriage and adoption with Ozeif's new caste.

2366 BH (–293 CY): Ozeif's Death

Although Ozeif the Warrior had only a short reign in comparison, his influence was critical. Not only did he defeat the Imperial Pretenders, uniting Zeif and becoming its first Sultan but during his thirteen years in office, he planted the seeds that would allow Zeif to grow into the greatest nation in the west and largest successor state to the Baklunish Empire. However, his ideas of unity between all the people of the Baklunish Basin, particularly Ekbir, were short lived.

In 2366 BH (–293 CY), he accepted an invitation from the Caliph of Ekbir to visit the Caliphate. En route to the neighbouring nation, his vessel was attacked at the mouth of the Tuflik River by a great sea-monster, the dragon-turtle Xoshour. Some witnesses claim to have seen the Sultan from shore, fighting valiantly unto his death, the hope for a union between Zeif and Ekbir dying with him. Ozeif's remains were not recovered and remain lost to this day.

Ozeif's death brought about much change in Zeif. The nation took on a life of its own, shaking off the yoke of Ekbir that Ozeif had attempted to preserve during his reign. Ozeif's religion, the faith of Al'Akbar eventually faded as chief religion of the state. Though worship of Al'Akbar remained popular, events would conspire to make way for the ascension of the faiths of Mouqol and Istus as the more prominent religions in Zeif.

Over the next hundred years, Zeif would grow incredibly in size and wealth, and Ozeif's successors would attempt to extend Zeif's borders to encompass many of the surrounding lands merging them into a

single Zeif controlled empire.

2454 BH (–205 CY): The Creation of the Uruzary Corps

Orcs have always had a place in the Baklunish Empire, the reign of the Imperial Pretenders, and the Sultanate of Zeif. They were once mercenaries, fighting the Suel in the great wars, which escalated to the Twin Cataclysms. Ghayar used them as maliks, powerful tyrants with authority near that of a king, granting them states in his empire, the most notable of which was the satrap of Mukhazin, where the ruined city of the same name now lies.

Orcs were rebellious in Zeif's early days, resisting Ozeif's control and seeking an identity and purpose on the plains. Ozeif repeatedly tried, and failed, to subjugate the orcs, while Ozeif's successors even banned them. It wasn't until the reign of Jehef that the orcs finally received a chance to change their destiny.

Jehef was one of the most successful Sultans Zeif had known, largely responsible for the early growth and eventual dominance of Zeif over its neighbours, but when he first came into power, Zeif faced many problems: Bakhoury resistance, pirate raids, and constant paynim disturbances. The worst problem were the orcs. They attacked caravans and villages, living up to their reputation as fierce warriors.

Jehef knew battling the orcs would be a long and costly path. Recalling how the ancient Baklunish Empire has utilized the orc warriors as shock-troops, Jehef turned the orcs' fury and momentum against his enemies by founding the Uruzary Corps.

Attempting to harness orcish rage, Jehef inducted hundreds of the most battle-hardened orcs into a special Sultan-controlled military task force, providing command positions for the orc khans (leaders). Over the next few years, Jehef had this force trained in infantry combat, using discipline and dogma to cow the orcs' chaotic nature. Eventually, he had a small but powerful force of elite orc soldiers to act as his personal guards and they became the Uruzary Corps.

The Uruzary Corps has grown since this time, and has become a beacon of glory for the orc tribes. Today, it is a great honour to serve on the corps, and most young orcs aspire to join. The Uruzary Corps are fearsomely loyal to the Sultan and are feared by all of Zeif's neighbours, serving as a guard unit, a task force, and an army.

2481 BH (–178 CY): The Commissioning of the Palace of Peh'reen

The Palace of Peh'reen was commissioned by Jehef the Splendid as tribute to himself. Unsatisfied with the current royal dwellings, Jehef used his vast fortune to finance the commission of a grand palace in 2458 BH (-201 CY). The palace, now known as the Palace of Peh'reen, was constructed over a period of twenty-three years, finally completed in 2481 BH (-178 CY). Construction of the palace was completed by employing nearly twenty thousand workers from Zeif and surrounding countries.

So extravagant was Jehef that he paid for colossal brick scaffolding rather than wait for enough wood to be imported for standard wooden scaffolds to be constructed. The brick scaffold was so enormous that it estimated that it would take years to dismantle. Again Jehef displayed his wealth by decreeing that anyone could keep bricks taken from the scaffold. Legend has it that the scaffold was dismantled by peasants overnight.

The Palace of Peh'reen is comprised of three main parts: the Inner Palace (home of the sultan and his Uruzary body guards) which was completed first in 2469 BH (-190 CY), the Harem (home of the sultan's numerous concubines and consorts) which was completed second in 2475 BH (-184 CY) and the Outer Palace (home the ministerial offices and the Chamber of the Diwan) which was completed last in 2481 BH (-178 CY).

Many beys, deys and sheiks sent material and manpower to be used in the completion of the Palace of Peh'reen. The famed bronze gates of the palace were a gift from the caliph of Ekbir, given to Jehef upon completion of the Inner Palace.

The palace was said to truly be complete when Ismuyin, Jehef's grandniece and next Sultan after him founded Zeir-i-Zeif's walls from blue granite, mined at home in the Vaar. Ismuyin called it the Sultana's Girdle, and it protected the capital and the palace. At each of its gate, the Sultana personally designed mosaics depicting and honouring Istus. The Sultana's Girdle is one of the most beautiful pieces of architecture in Zeif.

The palace has suffered from varying states of disrepair and neglect over the past 350 years but Sultan Murad has recently commissioned the restoration of several sections of the Palace of Peh'reen as part of his vision of returning pride to the once great nation of Zeif.

Zeif and its Neighbours: Growth and Development

2529 BH – 2850 BH (–130 CY – 191 CY)

2529 BH (–130 CY): The Merchant's War

It was under the rule of Jehef the Splendid that Zeif was at its peak in size, wealth and power. The pockets of many grew full under Jehef's sovereignty. It seemed as if there would be no end to Zeif's prosperity.

However, as the rewards grew, so, too, did the stakes. Competition between merchant clans became fierce. Many resorted to sinister tactics such as arson, vandalism, theft and even private assassination to secure favourable business arrangements or dissuade competition.

Many complained about the conditions but the merchant clans paid large tributes to the many viziers and rulers in return for a limited degree of autonomy and the situation continued to escalate unchecked.

During this time, the Mouqollad Consortium did not exist as it is does today. Priests from the temple of Mouqol attended marketplaces to oversee fair business practices but those that could not be bought or intimidated were run off or killed. The Temple of Mouqol, led by Worthy Elder Jafiq Al'Qalil, lobbied Jehef and the Diwan to restore order to no avail. The viziers and the Sultan continued to turn a blind eye as long as their coffers continued to flow. However, Worthy Elder Jafiq Al'Qalil was a skilled diplomat and negotiator. Aware that Jehef would soon need to step down, he began to seek out allies and like minds.

In the spring of 2529 BH (-130 CY), Jehef the Splendid died under a cloud of controversy. Jehef had no male heirs to assume the role of Sultan. Many stepped forward to make claim to the throne but in the end the only legitimate claim was from Jehef's grandniece Ismuyin. Later that spring Ismuyin was appointed the first and only Sultana of Zeif to date.



*Illustration 18: Sultana Ismuyin
(2529 BH - 2577 BH)*

Initially Ismuyin struggled to exert control over her cabinet. However, during a particularly hot summer in 2529 BH (-130 CY), her situation would change.

The merchant clan private wars escalated to all out conflict. Mercenaries hired by rival merchant

clans were openly engaging one another in armed combat in the streets of Zeir-i-Zeif. The week-long battle resulted in extensive property damage and casualties.

During the “Merchant’s War”, Jafiq Al’Qalil gained audience with the Sultana. Jafiq urged her to take control of the situation. Inexperienced and unsure of herself, Ismuyin sought council from those present. It was Jafiq who gave her the confidence she needed by offering a sound course of action.

Ismuyin sent the Uruzary Corps along with the city guards to put an immediate end to the fighting. She then declared the formation of a trade organization to oversee fair and equitable business practices. Ismuyin appointed Worthy Elder Jafiq Al’Qalil as head and placed control of the organization with the priests of Mouqol.

Some of the more prosperous merchant clans rallied against this new “Mouqol Trade Consortium” but to no avail. The Sultana gave preferential treatment to the group and the new organization had gathered many of the merchant clans under its banner with the promise of an equal share of profits and respite from the violent market which had previously dominated Zeif’s economy.

Within the next fifty years, the now dubbed Mouqollad Consortium grew significantly in size and stature. Its fair and ordered practices were a welcome change to the strife of old and most opponents had since allied with or backed down from the group’s collective power. Soon the group’s influence spread throughout all of Zeif and even into neighbouring Baklunish countries. In 2602 BH (-57 CY), the High Bedestan in Zeir-I-Zeif was completed firmly establishing the Mouqollad Consortium’s presence.

The wide spread influence and incredible wealth of the trade organization also had a tremendous effect on the faith of Mouqol establishing it as one of the predominant faiths in Zeif culture.

2614 BH (–45 CY): The Eastern Fortification of Lopolla

In the 27th century BH, Zeif was growing thirsty with expansionism, and Irmun greatly desired to make Zeif into an Empire. By this time, trade coming from the Velderdyva was increasing. The city of Sefmur, which guarded the Tuflik, acted as a gateway to Ket and beyond. Sefmur handled the trade that brought in much of Zeif’s income. However, Ket, the middle-nation between Zeif and its trade partners, was sapping valuable revenue and goods for its own as the shipments passed from east to west or vice versa through Ket territory. Irmun realized that seizing this choke point would greatly increase his earnings.

The land of Ket was an easy victory for Irmun. It

held no government in the early 27th century BH. The land was mostly filled with nomads and small independent villages, founded when refugees of the Twin Cataclysms moved east. In 2617 BH (-42 CY), Irmun moved his army eastward and founded the city of Lopolla, which would be his easternmost outpost. He claimed Ket as a province of Zeif, and began imposing his laws on the land.

The Kettite people were indifferent at first. Zeif’s armies provided protection from monsters in the Yatils and the Bramblewood, which covered most of Ket at the time. As an unorganized nation, Ket lost little in the way of tax revenue when Zeif subsumed control of her since the unorganized nation lacked the structure and organization to properly collect those taxes. The colony existed peacefully for over two hundred years, and Zeif procured much in the way of trade power throughout this period., It wouldn’t be until the Brazen Horde stormed through the Baklunish Basin that Zeifan hegemony would be challenged in Ket.

2755 BH (96 CY): The Creation of the Spahis

Yazerak’s reign was marked by his lack of proficiency in economic matters. He was said to have fired many financial advisers over the course of his short 24-year term, claiming them ill-suited for the job. However, many came to speculate that the advisers were dismissed for trying to keep the Sultans poor spending habits in check. The Sultanate’s budget was at its worst by 2755 BH (96 CY), and Yazerak was forced to come to terms with his growing poverty. It was then that Yazerak made what is regarded as his best budgetary move. He transferred ownership of Zeif’s cavalry to the Spahis.

Yazerak was fond of trumpeting Zeif’s powerful cavalry around in shows of martial prowess. However, they were an expensive military unit, costing hundreds of thousands of efrits in housing, food, weapons, and especially mounts. Yazerak decided to offload the enormous cost by implementing a system of vassalage to manage the cavalry.

Yazerak chose a dozen of his most powerful knights (dubbed Elder Spahis) and granted each a altimar in key points across the Sultanate. Most were located in the west or south to keep checks on the Paynims and the orcs. The Spahis were expected to maintain the current cavalry duties, namely patrolling and policing their assigned areas. In return, the Spahis were given jurisdiction over their altimar and all income generated from it, as well as jurisdiction over neighbouring timars. It was with this new income that each Spahi was required to fund and coordinate his own forces.

In one swift move, Yazerak quickly changed the

infrastructure and relieved himself almost completely of the cost of maintaining Zeif's cavalry. The decision proved so successful that the Elder Spahis' units even grew in size as Elder Spahis were forced to hire more men to satisfy quotas. Many Elder Spahis hired Paynims, whose natural affinity with mounted combat made it easy to cheaply lure them into mercenary positions in the various Elder Spahis' forces.

While the move helped ease Yazerak's financial troubles, he still found himself deeply in debt. His next course of action lead to the War of Possession, and gave the Spahis their first real test.

2769 BH (110 CY): The War of Possession

Yazerak's irresponsible spending habits had drained the royal treasury. Only the sight of a near empty vault would waken him to this fact and force him to implement several cost saving initiatives. Some, like the creation of the Spahis, were successful and well received; others were not. It was Yazerak's least popular idea, the taxation of water, that caused Zeif to erupt into civil war and put an end to Yazerak's twenty four year reign.

In 2760 BH (101 CY), Yazerak claimed control of all supplies of water, building government outposts at the larger sources to control water distribution and collect money. He charged the newly created Spahis with guarding the water supplies from thieves as well as collecting the water tax money in more remote locations.

While the water tax initially brought money back to the royal coffers, it greatly angered the people of Zeif. The penalty for not paying the tax was reduction in water rations and even denial of water.

Initially, the Spahi were able to maintain order but as the years passed and the situation grew more desperate, the level of civil unrest increased. Many died from thirst but many more went hungry and malnourished. The price of food had increased to compensate for the rise in production costs placing further financial strain on the citizens. People were going hungry with many resorting to criminal activities to afford food and water for themselves and their families. Spahi patrols policed the streets struggling to control the chaos caused by a desperate populous.

In 2767 BH (108 CY), the situation finally came to a head when huge water riots broke out in Zeir-i-Zeif. Hundreds of people converged on government water huts and razed them to the ground, demanding the water tax be revoked. Yazerak quickly put down the riots by sending in several Spahi units. Violence erupted and though many were injured or killed in the clash, the riot was momentarily quelled.

Zara, a priestess of Geshtai, had been become a

figurehead in the fight against the water tax. From the taxes inception, Zara had organized demonstrations against the various levels of government in protest. When word of the Sultan's attack on the people of Zeir-i-Zeif reached Zara's ears, she was outraged. Zara organized the people of Zeif and began a march of protest north from Ceshra towards the capital. Many joined Zara's band along the way, numbering nearly one thousand strong by the time they reached the outskirts of Zeir-i-Zeif in 2769 BH (110 CY).

As the group made camp outside the city, Zara was summoned to meet with the Sultan. There, she demanded the Sultan make the water free to the people once more. Yazerak denied Zara's request, ordering her to disband her army and leave. When Zara declined, Yazerak angrily ordered her executed as an example to those that would defy him. Zara's followers were incensed by the Sultan's actions and in a moment of rage and anguish, took up arms and marched on the palace.

Once again, Yazerak decided to solve his problem with force and called upon his beloved Spahis to turn back the mob. However, when the Spahis rode out to do battle, they were suddenly enveloped in a huge mysterious cloud of wind and dust, knocking many from their horses and scattering the men. Inspired by a what the protesters believed to be divine intervention, the mob quickly overcame the remaining Spahi and proceeded to the palace. The Sultan's Uruzaries met the throng in battle but the sheer number of the mob proved overwhelming. The people poured into the castle and within an hour had Yazerak executed.

To satisfy the people, Mirzad the Holy, Yazerak's successor, immediately revoked the water tax and handed over all legal water claims to the faith of Geshtai, who made the water free to all and continue to do so to this day.

With the people's demands met, order soon returned Zeif, putting an end to the War of Possession.

2788 BH – 2814 BH (129 CY – 155 CY): The Banishment of the Sorcerers and the Arcane Sanctum

On a warm afternoon in the summer of 2780 BH (121 CY), citizens in Zeir-i-Zeif's marketplace were witness to an event of great magnitude. A powerful creature with eyes of fire yet walking in constant shadow descended on the city's central bazaar in a murderous rampage. Many people died and much property was destroyed before clerics of Mouqol were able to destroy the creature.

It was learned that a group calling themselves the Cult of Fire were responsible. The Cult of Fire revealed

themselves publicly as a group of arcanists whose ultimate goal was a mass sacrifice to their evil god with the intent to gain greater magical powers as a reward.

Soon, more and more these terrifying creatures appeared to plague Zeif, yet, the Cult of Fire continued to elude authorities. Property and lives were being lost and no one seemed able to do anything. The public grew terrified and neared hysteria. Upon learning that a group of unknown arcanists were the ones responsible for such chaos, the situation only worsened. Angry mobs gathered and began attacking known and suspected arcanists.

The Sultan at the time of this occurrence was Mirzad the Holy, a devout worshiper of Al'Akbar. The Diwan (the Sultan's cabinet), lead by the Grand Vizier Amir Qaqesh, pressured the Sultan to outlaw arcane magic and arrest all those suspected of practicing it before the situation grew out of control.

The Sultan rejected his Viziers' recommendations. He attempted to maintain order by adhering to the teachings of Al'Akbar, preaching respect and a sense of community. The Sultan would continue on this path until 2784 BH (125 CY), when the Cult of Fire made an unsuccessful attempt on his life. The reaction from the people at this turn of events was riotous and in many cities arcanists, innocent or not, were being tried and executed by vigilante groups.

The assassination attempt and its aftermath was more than the Sultan could handle. To protect the innocent arcanists from persecution and to put an end to the terror caused by the Cult of Fire, the Sultan finally gave into his Viziers' pressure and issued a ban on the practice of arcane magic and banished all arcane magic users from Zeif.

Unbeknownst to but a few, the man behind these events was the Grand Vizier himself. Today, he is simply referred to as the Black Vizier for his true name was wiped from historic records. The Black Vizier was a powerful necromancer with high aspirations. For nearly twenty years he had been slowly working his way into a position to enact his plans to rule Zeif and at last they were coming to fruition. He had engineered the Cult of Fire as means to rid Zeif of those who might be powerful enough to oppose him. With the land's most powerful arcanists banished, the Black Vizier was able to move to the next step of his plan: dismantling the Qudah and the faith of Al'Akbar.

The Black Vizier's only real opposition was the faith of Al'Akbar. He used powerful magics to control the Sultan's actions and through the Sultan, he began to slowly dissolve the faith, greatly reducing its abilities and influences. Many of its leaders were sent on diplomatic missions of peace to far away lands. Many

others were relocated to more remote areas of Zeif to spread the word of Al'Akbar. The end result was the same. The Black Vizier was able to divide the priests and lure each one into a deadly trap. Key individuals were replaced with creatures disguised to mimic the individual's appearance. Others sent occasional correspondence or were simply never heard from again.

For over twenty years, the Black Vizier worked behind the scenes secretly controlling the Sultan and Zeif. The Black Vizier's true plans went unsuspected and undiscovered until 2808 BH (149 CY), when a mid level priest of Al'Akbar secretly witnessed the true form of one of the heads of the Qudah: a creature with eyes of fire like those summoned by the Cult of Fire twenty five years earlier.

The priest realized the possible ramifications and wisely chose to seek outside assistance. He managed to make contact with several of Zeif's former mages and secure their aid. The arcanists posed as low level acolytes of Al'Akbar and began to investigate the matter further, using assistance provided by the faith of Al'Akbar to secure their cover and assist their investigation.

What the arcanists found was even greater than expected. They uncovered a plot to control Zeif that lead straight to the Grand Vizier. In early 2811 BH (152 CY), the arcanists were ready to act. They confronted the Grand Vizier and his minions at the palace in an epic battle. The Grand Vizier was nearly victorious against the group of arcanists but the Sultan was able to break free of his control long enough to provide his fatal blow. Unfortunately, in doing so, the Sultan suffered a mortal wound and was lost as well.

Shortly after these events, Beroz became Sultan. He revoked the laws banishing arcane magic and its practitioners. He then charged the group of arcanists responsible for the Grim Vizier's defeat with the task of establishing a state sponsored school of magic. The school's mandate was to oversee the instruction of responsible magic use. The group accepted and in 2814 BH (155 CY), the Arcane Sanctum opened its doors officially marking the return of arcane magic to Zeif.

2813 BH (154 CY): Western Colonization (Bureis)

The Zeif Sultan Beroz was an adventurous man who spent large parts of his reign exploring the Dramidj Ocean by ship earning his nickname 'The Mariner'. While Beroz made many journeys, it was his first voyage as Sultan that most remember. It was on this first voyage that he explored the Qayah-Bureis chain of islands, claiming them on behalf of Zeif.

In 2811 BH (152 CY), Beroz became Sultan. Shortly

afterwards, Beroz took several ships and sailed throughout the many islands in the central Dramidj Ocean, focusing particularly on the Qayah-Bureis chain. Zeif traders had frequented the Qayah-Bureis islands in the past but no real effort had been made to explore or colonize them. Seeing an opportunity, Beroz declared Zeif's intention to claim and colonize the Qayah-Bureis islands. For nearly two years, Beroz and his ships sailed throughout the area, mapping and laying claim to some of the more promising locations.

However, the Sultan's actions were not welcome by many of those that inhabited the region. The Komali people in particular actively opposed the Sultan and the idea of Zeif occupation. They claimed the islands were rightfully theirs and fought to drive out the Sultan and his men.

In 2813 BH (154 CY), Beroz returned to Zeir-i-Zeif and made his claims to the Qayah-Bureis islands official. He sent ships to some of the larger islands and began establishing Zeif run ports as well as small naval outposts to help enforce his claims. The largest of these ports was Yif Qayah, a frequently used port that Zeif seized and upgraded to handle larger ships. Yif Qayah would now act as home for many Zeif colonists and as the central hub for Zeif shipping throughout the islands.

Still the people of the islands, led by the Komali, fought the Zeif occupation. It was only after several overwhelming defeats at the hands of the Zeif navy that the Komali people were forced to release their claims to several of the islands in the Qayah-Bureis chain.

With the Komali threat neutralized, Zeifan interests in the Qayah-Bureis islands prospered. The Qayah-Bureis islands belonged to Zeif for over two hundred years before the Komali people returned to take back their lands. With the crushing defeat of the Zeif navy in the Battle Beneath the Waves in 3095 BH (436 CY), the Komali took control of the port of Yif Qayah and several of the surrounding islands. Many of the other island inhabitants rejected Zeif sovereignty and also retook their land. Zeif could no longer control the Qayah-Bureis islands, and they have remained outside of Zeif control since that time.

Waning Influence

2850 BH – 3133 BH (191 CY – 474 CY)

2855 BH (196 CY): The Disappearance of Kwalish

In late 2883 the renowned inventor Kwalish was summoned to Zeir-i-Zeif by Sultan Kouroz "the Cruel" and asked to construct powerful war machines to bolster Zeif's military might. When Kwalish refused to make

such devices Kouroz captured and imprisoned Kwalish. Kouroz placed Kwalish in a magic proof room and under threat of death, forced the inventor to design and build the machines Kouroz craved. Realizing that escape was nearly impossible, Kwalish soon went to work designing and building a strange device.

By mid 2855 BH (196 CY), Kwalish finished his device. During its demonstration to Kouroz, the clever Kwalish revealed that he had secretly built a means of escape, and cunningly disappeared from the palace.

Outraged, Kouroz sent Uruzaries to the Arm of Kwalish (Kwalish's tower located off the coast of Zeif near Nafiq) to recapture Kwalish and recover the device, but they were unable to gain entry. The Sultan stationed his soldiers to observe the Arm of Kwalish for over a year but never did it show signs of life. Kwalish has not been seen since.

While most think Kwalish dead, there are those that speculate Kwalish is still alive and that he has found peace elsewhere. Some theorize that Kwalish's trip was one way and that he may be looking for a way back while others suggest that Kwalish found a secluded spot in which to create and has no interest in returning to Zeif. In the meantime, his tower sits vacant awaiting its master's return.

2871 BH (212 CY): The Slaughter of the Sea People

While modern Zeif historians argue over what exactly led to the decline of Zeif's imperial days, they can all agree that the tyrannical rule of Kouroz the Cruel certainly played a major part.

During the reign of Beroz the Mariner, Zeif enjoyed a peaceful and beneficial relationship with the Merfolk of the Dramidj Ocean and the Gulf of Ghayar. It was through this relationship that Kouroz the Cruel was able to lure merfolk soldiers into a devastating ambush known in Zeif history as The Slaughter of the Sea People.

Kouroz had eyes on the land of Komal, west of Zeif across the Gulf. The Komali people had been proving themselves a difficult problem for Kouroz and his plans of expansion. They had a growing relationship with the merfolk which Kouroz, who feared such an alliance, sought to end. Kouroz met with Locathah leaders and persuaded the Locathah to assist him in his fiendish plan.

As the Locathah massed for war, Kouroz met with the merfolk's Sidi (the ruler of all merfolk) and sought his aid in helping to wipe out a scourge of Locathah, who he claimed were massing for some kind of attack. The Sidi agreed to aid Kouroz and sent a large force of merfolk warriors to aid the Zeif navy in a supposed raid against the Locathah near the Qayah-Bureis islands.

As the merfolk entered battle, the Zeif navy turned on them. Caught between their supposed allies and the locathah, the waters ran red with blood as nearly all the merfolk soldiers were killed.

Kouroz's plan was successful. He had destroyed a large portion of the merfolk military and ended any threat that a Komal/merfolk alliance would have posed, paving the way for further Zeif conquest in the area. However, Kouroz's deception was the basis for over 250 years of strife between Zeif and merfolk, strengthening the Komal/Merfolk alliance, costing the lives of thousands of Zeif sailors through raids and sunk ships and ultimately culminating in the naval disaster known as the Battle Beneath the Waves.

2878 BH (219 CY): The Theft of the Relics in Ekbir

In 2878 BH (219 CY), during the Procession of Blessing ceremony in Ekbir, the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar, two famous holy relics of the faith, were stolen by strange elves riding giant eagles. The thieves escaped and were last seen heading towards the Barrier Peaks. The Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar have not been seen since, and the thieves were never discovered.

In the aftermath of the theft the grand mufti, a chief religious adviser in Ekbir was deemed responsible for the loss of the Cup and Talisman and exiled from his homeland. He vehemently denied the accusations and left with his followers, eventually finding refuge in the Yatil Mountains. There he espoused new teachings of Al'Akbar, causing the famed schism in the faith. The original teachings were referred to as the Exalted Faith, which emphasized diplomacy and academic achievement. The mufti's new teachings were known as the True Faith, which focused more on hard work, plain speech and obedience.

The schism within the faith of Al'Akbar had a sizable impact on Zeif. The powerful influence of the True Faith in Ket was a major reason for the severing of Ket from Zeif and set the tone for Zeif attitudes towards the teachings of the True Faith.

Why would Zeif reject the teachings of the True Faith?

The Qudah (the Zeifan assembly of the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar) were then and remain today the only clerics of Al'Akbar officially recognized by the government. Since the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar maintains sole influence with the government, it is in the position to hinder the spread of the True Faith within Zeif and likely played an influential role in the severing of Ket, though this theory remains unsubstantiated.

Also, Zeif's early prosperity and relatively stable

religious history has given little reason for Zeifan followers of Al'Akbar to convert to the True Faith. The Exalted Faith (as it became to be known) was well established and widely accepted early in Zeif's history, well before the creation of the True Faith. While the wealthy in Tusmit turned to the True Faith in protest of the high taxes incurred from the building of Exalted Faith hospices and schools, Zeif avoided a similar incident by having said systems in place already.

While the schism of the faiths brought about much change in the Baklunish Basin, Zeif remained largely untouched, rejecting the faction. Today, the Exalted Faith continues to hold sway over the Sultanate.

2917 BH (258 CY): First Khedivate in Mur

In 2892 BH (233 CY), when Kouroz the Cruel was assassinated under mysterious circumstances, it was hoped that his successor, the handsome Sultan Keshkadar the Golden, would carry Zeif into a better era.

Keshkadar was not the leader that many had hoped. While he did not lack in skill, he was not a great warrior like Ozeff nor a brilliant mind like Zeyim/efez. Keshkadar compensated for his weakness by utilizing his strength: his ability to recognize men of superior skills and utilizing their talents. One such man was the renowned kapudan pasha, Nuzad bin Farim al-Zeif.

Nuzad led Zeif's navy to several decisive victories as Zeif continued to expand westward. Some belittled Nuzad's accomplishments claiming that Zeif's enemies had been reduced to ruin during Kouroz's ruthless expansionist agenda and that since they lacked the hated figurehead of Kouroz the Cruel to rally against, they lacked the motivation to fight. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Nuzad continued to produce results. In 2914 BH (255 CY) Nuzad reached further west than any other Zeif commander when he landed on the beaches of Mur.

Over the next three years Zeif continued to move forces into Mur and in 2917 BH (258 CY) Zeif had set up its first Khedivate there. Again, Keshkadar chose wisely, appointing the prominent Vizier Naml bin Rahdi from the Ministry of Weights and Measures as the Mur's first Khedive.

Not only was Naml Khedive a keen mind and savvy businessman but he had also had an empathy with the people of Mur. By the end of his twenty-three year term as Khedive, Naml bin Rahdi had become respected by the people of his Khedivate for

his fair and honest dealings. He was also well respected by many back in Zeif for his role in establishing a lucrative trade business between Mur and Zeif.

2958 BH (299 CY): The Brazen Horde and the Secession of Tusmit

When Ozef founded Zeif, he claimed all the lands east to the Tusman hills, including everything that is now Tusmit, though his claim was weak, and the only thing preventing the loss of the territory was the Sultans' skilled placement of loyal pashas. In the early years, Tusmit was weak, and the early rulers of Zeif easily manipulated the government and named close friends, politicians, and khans as the Pashas of Tusmit, leaving the territory independent but loyal nonetheless. Tusmit has always officially been independent, but the pashas of Tusmit remained loyal to the Sultans of Zeif. It was these loyal puppet pashas that effectively kept Tusmit part of Zeif for nearly 700 years.

In the first half of the 30th century BH, a great force called the Brazen Horde entered Zeif from the west, led by a great khan who was rumoured to be from Komal. Melek II had summoned this horde as a last ditch effort to deal with the Paynim problems of late, hoping to put a nation of nomads between Zeif and the Paynims. It worked extremely well for him at first, though the far-seeing consequences of his actions were to be troublesome indeed.

The horde moved through the Paynim lands fluidly, assimilating some of the Paynim into the horde and joining forces with many of the other Paynim tribes. Soon, however the horde became intent on richer, less defended lands and began moving north. The Horde stretched into Tusmit and Ekbir's more southern lands, ravaging the lands and people as they passed through. Still the Horde continued, wreaking more damage as they moved into Ket and even the lands past, including Veluna.

Upon learning of Melek's involvement, Ekbir and Tusmit became quite angered. Ekbir demanded reparations for the damage the horde had done. The lands to the south were in ruin. Trade and production of trade goods were lost. Worst of all, a horde of nomads were now settled all over the Baklunish Basin. Tusmit criticized the Sultanate for their carelessness in allowing the Horde to get so far, and for the first time in years, the pasha spoke out against the Sultan. Tusmit threatened civil war and claimed it would cultivate its independence.

Rather than fight a war Melek knew he would lose (for Tusmit held many of his armies and would certainly

be bolstered by Ekbiran forces), he preempted Tusmit's claim to secession and offered it to Ekbir as reparations. Melek withdrew many of his forces and secured his eastern front, as well as maintaining control of the western half of Sefmur (the part which lies on the west bank of the Tuflik, now called Ceshra). Ekbir accepted and replaced Tusmit's Pasha, quickly quelling any uprising that might occur.



Illustration 19: The Spahis march on the Brazen Horde

Melek's invitation to the horde proved to be a bad idea, and he had to accept the loss of Tusmit as a result of it. Worse, he had to deal with the displaced Paynims and horde tribes, who were settled all over his lands and much of the rest of the Baklunish Basin, including the far province of Ket, which would bring more news in the future.

2972 BH (313 CY): The Paynim Unrest and the Severing of Ket

When the Brazen Horde effectively invaded the Baklunish West, Melek faced many problems. Initially, he lost the province of Tusmit, having to gift it to Ekbir as reparations for the damages the Horde had caused. For the decade and a half which followed, Melek would have to deal with more of his mistakes.

In all of his lands, the displaced Paynims and members of the Horde were causing problems. They raided caravans and generally plagued much of Zeif's infrastructure, economy, and security. This was true not only for Zeif proper, but the province of Ket as well, where the Horde was quite successful in imposing their laws and views on the people of Ket. Melek needed Ket greatly; the profits from the choke point on the Velderdyva trade route were crucial in funding Melek's military, which he greatly required at this point in time. He had displaced paynims to deal with and two other colonies to maintain.

Melek knew that he could not spread his military too



Illustration 20: Melek II (2944 BH - 2982 BH)

thin and try and deal with both Zeif and Ket's horde problems. Regrettably, he withdrew all but a skeletal force from Ket and focused on ensuring Zeif's security. For over fifteen years he battled the enemy in Zeif, beating back the Horde which had managed to settle nearly to the coast. In this he was successful, and by the end of his reign he had secured much of Zeif. Many regarded this as his one true accomplishment, despite

having caused the problem in the first place.

However, in the aftermath of the Horde, Melek faced more trouble. Back in Ket, the Horde had nearly taken over, and little help from Zeif arrived to help them. Furthermore, the empire of Keoland was beginning to extend its influence northward in efforts to secure its borders. It saw Ket as a liability and began exerting its control over the land, yet still no help came from Zeif. Kettites were growing impatient with Zeif's ineptitude to secure its holdings, and in 2972 BH (313 CY), the Bey of Lopolla claimed independence from the Sultanate. Melek was powerless to prevent it, and had to accept another loss at the expense of his mistake.

Melek II was frowned upon by many critics after his death. He had lost two of Zeif's most important colonies due to a blunder on his part. While Melek II had managed to secure his nation against the Paynim Unrest, Tusmit and Ket would never again be part of Zeif.

3050 BH (391 CY): The Order of Kwalish Founded

Kwalish was said to have left many unfinished works behind him when he disappeared in 2855 BH. Many sought to emulate his genius in the two centuries that followed, but no one could match his ingenuity or level of craftsmanship. It became increasingly clear to those in the field that no one person could equal the inventor Kwalish.

In the early part of the 31st century BH, a small cabal of inventors and craftsman came together to share their knowledge and study the works of Kwalish. For years they met, bringing many brilliant minds to the study of Kwalish's works. As time wore on, however, many members died or left the order to pursue other goals. While the loss of one mind's knowledge went unnoticed,

the loss of many did not. It became apparent that the art of invention perfected by Kwalish would eventually become lost as generations passed. The group needed to record and document Kwalish's magnificence, and keep it safe so that others could build on the knowledge. In this spirit, the Ascetic Order of Earthly Protection, or the Order of Kwalish, was founded.

In the two centuries that followed, the Order has been responsible for many advances in technology in Zeif, as well as maintaining their initial goal of documenting Kwalish's work. Today the Order has a membership comprised of some of the finest scholars, alchemists, inventors, craftsman, wizards, engineers and architects. The Order's reputation is that of excellence, and it is this reputation that has earned them the patronage of the Sultan on several occasions.

3095 BH (436 CY): The Battle Beneath the Waves

In 2871 BH (212 CY), Zeif naval forces betrayed their Merfolk allies to a Locathah ambush devastating the Merfolk forces in the southern Dramidj Ocean. With little to oppose Zeif's mighty navy, Zeif continued its slow progress into the lands west of Zeif across the Gulf of Ghayar. The fiercest opponents to Zeif occupation were the people of Komal.

For over two hundred years the Komali willfully continued to fight the Zeif invaders, using guerrilla tactics in an attempt to disrupt Zeif supply lines, cripple Zeif's navy and demoralize Zeif's troops. Obstinate and proud Zeif leaders refused to see the people of the west as a real threat, allowing them to continue to build in numbers. Quietly the people of the west, led by the Komali and their Merfolk allies, had become a powerful force. Carefully they planned and prepared for the eventual defeat and expulsion of the Zeifan invaders.

In 3095 BH (436 CY), the Komal were ready to strike. Using a series of raids against the Zeif port of Yif Qayah to anger Zeif leaders and supplying the Zeif navy with the supposed location of the Komal fleet, the Komal/Merfolk alliance lured the Zeif royal naval commander kapudan pasha Ghazi bin Hassim and his ships into a trap.

Ghazi bin Hassim reached his position not through skill and experience but bribery and nepotism and despite intelligence indicating gathering Merfolk forces in the area, Ghazi refused to see the Komali as a threat. He decided to seize the opportunity to lead the Zeif navy in this important military campaign and end the Komal nuisance once and for all. Thus the kapudan pasha sent a large portion of the Zeif fleet against the Komali rebels in a vain bid to garner accolades and secure his name in Zeif military history.

Overconfident, Ghazi sent his fleet into the shallow waters of the Ikayal Straight. Beneath the water's surface Merfolk forces moved in to sabotage the war-galleys, disabling oars and breaching ship's hulls below the waterline. Unprepared and inexperienced, Ghazi bin Hassim's command was ineffective. The royal navy floundered and the overwhelming victory became a horrible disaster. Nearly one third of all boats comprising the Zeif fleet were lost in the waters that day and many of Zeif's experienced naval officers were killed or captured by Merfolk forces.

The Zeifan fleet was forced to retreat, yet still the Merfolk pressed the attack, the memories of the Slaughter of the Sea People fresh in their minds. By the time the fleet reached safety, nearly another third of it was lost.

The effects of the Battle Beneath the Waves were almost immediate. The Zeif port of Yif Qayah was captured and claimed by the Komal, inspiring the others that had been previously subjugated by Zeif to rise up against their oppressors and form their own governments. Zeif's supplies of certain goods were cut off, crippling some aspects of Zeif trade and weakening its economy.

Particularly troublesome was the dramatic increase of piracy in the Dramidj. Zeif's navy was now ill-equipped to deal with the threat and many Mouqollad Consortium trade convoys were stripped of their precious cargo with only blood and death as their reward.

To further Zeif's humiliation, the Merfolk, following Zeifan law, enslaved hundreds of its sailors captured during the Battle Beneath the Waves in reparation for the damage caused by the Zeif betrayal nearly two hundred and twenty-five years ago.

Zeif's naval officers remained enslaved for nearly thirty years before Zeif leaders were able to negotiate their release as part of the Dramidj Peace Agreement in 3121 BH (462 CY).

3121 BH (462 CY): The Dramidj Peace Agreement

In the aftermath of the Battle Beneath the Waves in 3095 (436 CY), Zeif was nearly helpless to defend herself against the many threats waiting in the surrounding waters.

Acts of piracy went unchecked. The small number of remaining Zeif ships were unable to fully patrol the vast waters surrounding Zeif. Existing criminals, vengeful merfolk or those simply opposed to Zeif took to looting or sinking trade ships sailing Zeifan waters. The number of pirates seemed to grow

exponentially. The numerous attacks had a crippling effect on the economy, as many stopped sailing into Zeif because of the danger posed by pirates in the area. Those brave or foolish enough to sail the Dramidj found that their ship's cargo rarely reached its final destination.

The lack of naval support also weakened Zeif's hold on many western territories, which in turn threatened to end Zeif's supply of many valuable imports used to finance Zeif's military campaigns. As it became more costly to protect Zeif's assets, Zeif gained less and less income from her overseas colonies. Turuvez the Triumphant was eventually forced to take action or face the collapse of the once great Empire of Zeif.

Faced with dwindling gold reserves as well as the inability to protect his shipping lanes, the pressure on Turuvez was great. His leadership was called into question. Unwilling to accept defeat, Turuvez turned to an unexpected source for assistance: the Merfolk of the Dramidj.

The Merfolk were as much a threat to Zeif ships as the pirate raiders. Turuvez knew fighting a war on two fronts was foolish. He wished to end Merfolk aggressions, allowing him to concentrate against the pirate threat.

The task of repairing the damage caused by over two hundred years of animosity was not easy but Turuvez was persistent and eventually the Merfolk were willing to begin talks. Many doubted Turuvez, questioning his motives openly criticizing his actions. Turuvez persevered, however, and in 3121 BH (462 CY) he and the Merfolk Sidi Occlu'um the Forgiving brokered the Dramidj Peace Agreement, ending hostilities between Zeif and the Merfolk as well as appropriately compensating the Merfolk for the release of Zeif's captured sailors.

The Dramidj Peace Agreement re-established trust, fostered good will between the two peoples and proved to be the initial step towards the current camaraderie enjoyed between the Sultanate and the Merfolk of the Dramidj.

3133 BH (474 CY): Mur's Khedivate Autonomous

The granting of autonomy to the Mur Khedivate came about for primarily financial reasons.

Despite a newfound peace with the Merfolk people, Zeif's navy was still spread thin. As trade was

deemed vital to Zeif's prosperity, protecting important shipping lanes from piracy was given primary importance. The support of the Zeif military in places such as Mur, therefore, took on secondary importance. Also, the cost associated with maintaining a Khedivate in Mur (as in other places) was proving uneconomical. The money needed to place troops in Mur was beginning to outweigh the amount of profit generated from the Khedivates.

The reigning Sultan, Muktar the Crafty, realized the futility in throwing good money after bad and decided to pull out from several parts of the western lands. Earning his nickname, Muktar managed to turn the loss of Zeif assets into a windfall.

In 3133 BH (474 CY), Muktar granted autonomy to the Mur Khedivate in exchange for somewhat favourable trade conditions between it and Zeif. Muktar was relieved of the financial burdens associated with Mur while continuing to secure the continued flow of important trade goods from Mur to Zeif with Mur footing some of the costs associated with procuring the items and preparing them for shipping.

Modern Day Zeif: A New Sultanate

3133 BH – Present (474 CY – Present)

3158 BH (499 CY): The Bakhoury Subjugation

With the weakening of Zeifan naval power more than sixty years prior, the pirate princes along the Bakhoury Coast had grown in strength and daring. Not only were they able to gather more ships to their cause, but several settlements became openly supportive of the pirates. By 3158 BH (499 CY), the Bakhoury Coast was a lawless and dangerous place, where few legitimate trading ships would dare to travel.

However, Zeif had not been idle during this time. The previous Sultan Muktar the Crafty had brokered a peace agreement with the Merfolk of the Dramidj Ocean. The Zeif navy was no longer facing merfolk raids that continued to cripple their ships, allowing the Zeif navy to sail surrounding waters with greater safety and focus on protecting trade vessels from piracy and other threats.

In addition, the Zeif navy had spent the time steadily re-building and improving its naval fleet. Though the total fleet size was still smaller than it had been before the Battle Beneath the Waves, it almost matched the previous fleet in fighting power due to several changes in ship design and construction. Zeif was also able to consolidate its fleet by pulling out of many of its holdings in western lands, freeing many of its existing ships from

their duties of protecting Zeif Khedivates in places like Mur. The Zeifan Navy was slowly regaining its reputation as the most powerful navy in the Dramidj Ocean.

It was a desire to firmly re-establish this reputation that led Sultan Kamuran ("the Fortunate") to order the subjugation of the Bakhoury Coast in 3158 BH (499 CY). He declared his intent to "liberate a people too long removed from the light of Zeifan order." Kamuran mobilized a sizable force of warships and troop transports, and ordered the fleet to sail for the Bakhoury Coast.



Illustration 21: Pirates attack a merchant vessel

The subjugation began successfully. The Zeifan forces were able to retake and garrison several towns and villages long held by various pirate princes. The Navy also succeeded in creating forward shipyards and supply depots, eliminating the need for ships to make a long journey back to a safe port for repairs or maintenance. Indeed, great spans of coastline were brought back into "the light of Zeifan order" in a relatively short time. The Sultan was pleased, but the navy was not.

The navy was yet unable to strike a decisive blow against the pirates. Utilizing information provided by the Dusk Lash (a secret smuggling ring), the pirate captains continued to stymie the Zeif navy using hidden bases along the Bakhoury Coast to elude their captors. The pirate captains were so successful in avoiding the Zeif navy that it would take more than fifty years before Zeif naval forces were able to reduce piracy along the Bakhoury Coast to an acceptable level.

3186 BH (527 CY): The Sand Battle

The Bakhoury Subjugation, a campaign that Sultan Kamuran had originally promised would last "as long as it took the beach scum to beg forgiveness", had dragged on for 28 years with no begging in sight. While both the Sultan and the Navy could point to several early victories, the "beach scum" had managed to fight the

Zeifan Navy to a stalemate, and by 3186 BH (527 CY) could actually point to a few major victories of their own. The “Sand Battle” is considered the most telling of these victories, as it pointed out several short-comings in the Navy’s operations.

The Zeifan Navy had for a long time been frustrated by its inability to pin down the enemy fleet. Indeed, the pirate commanders realized early on that they could not win such a confrontation; they could not match the sheer power of the Zeifan Navy. They wisely moved the fighting to their terms. The pirate forces maintained a campaign of deception and hit-and-run tactics, never giving the Sultan’s naval might one single target to strike; this proved incredibly effective. The Navy was ill-equipped for naval skirmish fighting, and suffered from a lack of accurate intelligence gathering.

In 3186 BH (527 CY), the pirates exploited their advantage to great effect. Word came to the Naval commanders that a pirate “fleet” would be amassing at Salakesh Cove, with the intention of launching a surprise attack against the nearby Naval supply base. The local fleet commander, overjoyed at a chance to finally fight the pirates on his terms, never bothered to question the source of this “intelligence”. He sailed with his entire force, almost a fifth of the Zeifan fleet involved in the subjugation. When he arrived under the cover of a fortuitous fog, there, as promised, was a large fleet of ships lying at anchor. Fearing some sort of trap, he sent his locathah scouts forward to investigate. They confirmed the presence of the ships, and that was enough for the commander. Outnumbering them more than two-to-one, he gave the order to attack, and the might of the Zeifan Navy bore down on the unsuspecting pirate fleet. It was then that the pirates’ trap was sprung.

The pirates had spent a great deal of time preparing the area. With the help of several earth- and water-elementalists sympathetic to their cause, they had changed the location and size of several sandbars. Had the hot-headed commander listened to a full report from his scouts, he might have avoided what happened next. Under full sail and oar, the Zeifan fleet rammed headlong into a giant sandbar they had no idea even existed. While several ships at the rear of the fleet were able to veer off in time, easily two-thirds of the attacking ships ran aground and were stuck or damaged. Adding insult to injury, the “pirate fleet” which had stood the scrutiny of the Locathah scouts, vanished as the now-obvious illusion was dispelled. While the Zeifan forces were left “fighting sand”, the real pirate fleet (really only six ships) struck the now-defenseless supply base, stripping it bare and crippling it. In the short-term, the Zeifan Navy’s strength was seriously curtailed; in the long-term, it became obvious that several changes would have to be made in the structure of naval operations. Indeed, the

“Sand Battle” is often viewed as the seminal event leading to the development of the modern-day Zeif Navy.

3207 BH (548 CY): The Siege of Zirat

When he came to power in 3189 BH (530 CY), it was entirely possible that Sultan Selim intended to rule Zeif benevolently. Indeed, the young Sultan began his reign loved by the people, and by all appearances was a devout man. When exactly this changed is not clear. What is clear is that Selim became seduced by the hedonistic possibilities of his station. He began to indulge every pleasurable whim, and gathered around himself a court that supported this indulgence. Still craving the love of his people, however, Selim took pains to hide his lifestyle from those outside Peh’reen. While the viziers were well aware of Selim’s slide into decadence, the people of Zeif remained blissfully unaware.

However, such a state could not last. As Selim continued to give in to decadence and vice, he became more reckless. He began making contact with pirates and smugglers, looking for any novel or forbidden pleasure. Thrilled with the exotic sensations provided by his new acquaintances, Selim began consorting with these criminals even inviting them to attend his court on occasion. It became a poorly kept secret around the palace, even earning his network of sea-born criminals the nickname “Selim’s Navy”.

Blinded by his own vanity and lusts, Selim was caught completely unaware when his new found allies turned upon him. Using their newfound influence with the Sultan, one of the pirate crews carried out a bold theft from the Palace of Peh’reen. Using papers bearing Selim’s seal, the disguised pirates gained entrance to the Inner Palace, and successfully made off with a valuable treasure. When Selim learned of this treachery, he was furious.

Selim ordered the Royal Navy to lay siege to Zirat, the stronghold for many of the pirates with which he once did business. The Royal Navy besieged Zirat for more than a week, before finally overrunning the pirate settlement. On orders from Selim all captured pirates were publicly executed.

Despite his actions, however, the damage had been done, and Selim’s reputation would never recover. As word of his behaviour spread, so did the disdain of his people. Although no one had the temerity to say it to his face, people all across Zeif began openly referring to Selim as “the Scoundrel”. Knowing he could never regain his people’s respect, he sought the comfort of oblivion, slipping further and further into decadent decay. Selim achieved nothing of note during the remainder of his reign, and in 3213 BH (554 CY), after another drunken

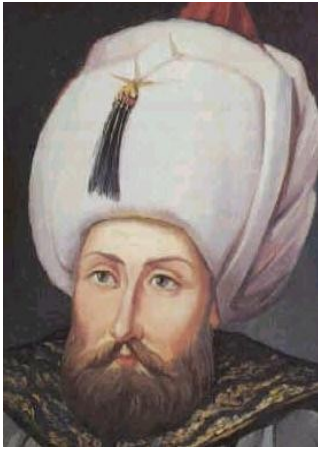


Illustration 22: Selim the Scoundrel (3189 BH – 3213 BH)

night in the seraglio, the Scoundrel failed to wake up.

3213 BH (554 CY): The Purge of the Ministry of the Treasury

Under Selim the Scoundrel the internal bureaucratic structure of Zeif had rotted, falling into decay and corruption. Foreign relations were strained, and trade was at a virtual stand-still. It was obvious that Selim had long abandoned the Four Feet of the Dragon, and the people of Zeif had lost any hope that the Sultan would watch over them.

When Sultan Murad came to power in 3213 BH (554 CY), he had a vision for Zeif. He desired to return the nation to its former majesty and influence. More than that, he wished to restore pride to the Baklunish people. One of the first steps he took to achieve this goal was the purging of the Ministry of the Treasury. Murad removed all officials rumoured or known to be corrupt from their roles in the Ministry and had them jailed. The Vizier received special attention; he was publicly executed, and his entire family was sold into slavery.

Then, in a decision designed to return faith to the people, Murad opened the trials of the jailed ministers to the public. Fittingly, he set up an open court in the Market of Zeir-i-Zeif, and any citizen of Zeif who felt that they had been wronged by the Ministry was invited to air their grievances. In some cases, the “invitation” was quite insistent, and many citizens were compelled to testify. People travelled, or were brought, from all over the land to speak, causing the trials to last for over a month. Through it all, from sun-up to sun-down, Sultan Murad sat in judgment of all the accused. Very few of the ministers deemed corrupt by Murad escaped punishment. Most were either executed or sold into slavery along with their families, and the proceeds from these sales used for reparations.

The end results of Murad’s purge were mixed. There was no doubt that he had revitalized the Ministry of the Treasury and put Zeif back on a path to prosperity, but his attempt to win the hearts of his people met with, at best, mixed success. The reparations that were paid to injured parties brought Murad some measure of popularity, but the majority of his citizens now looked upon their sultan with a mix of suspicion and worry, wondering where he might direct his next purge.

3237 BH (578 CY): The Purge of Ceshra

Ceshra was plagued by its own success. A few years earlier, the Sultan and other important nobles had bargained with the Paynims to curb the Paynim raids against Ceshra and other Zeif holdings, focusing Paynim energies towards Ull. Soon Ceshra enjoyed a peaceful setting without fear of banditry. However, with the end of the Paynim raids, a new problem arose. Citizens were so content in Ceshra’s newfound peace and resulting prosperity that they failed to see or simply ignored the rampant corruption amongst the local merchants and politicians. In particular, the infamous Dusk Lash, with the aid of some less scrupulous merchants, had organized a successful black market operation on the Tuflik, easily passing their goods in and out of the country without fear of loss to Paynims. Ceshra’s new concern was easily hidden in the city’s pleasant atmosphere.

Murad, however, was not to be fooled. After the Treasury Purge, the Sultan had placed operatives in key locations across Zeif, Ceshra included. These operatives’ sole purpose was to report anything which might indicate an unacceptable level of corruption. So while the Dusk Lash was setting up its smuggling operation, the eyes of the sultan carefully noted not only who the criminals were, but the individual government officials with whom they conspired. When Murad felt he had all the information he needed, he struck.

Ceshra awoke one morning to find itself occupied by a combined force of Spahis and the Uruzaries. While the Spahis ensured that no one passed out of the city, the Uruzary Corps had been busy since before dawn carrying out a series of arrests that cut the heart out of the Dusk Lash operation in Ceshra. The Uruzaries, working on information provided by the Sultan’s agents, rounded up and arrested all known corrupt individuals, government officials and criminals alike. Once again, the Sultan held public trials, and once again virtually all those arrested were either executed or sold into slavery. In a matter of days the entire government of Ceshra had been replaced, with the exception of one. Hassan ibn Hazdanan al-Zeir, an aristocrat that had also been exonerated in the Purge of the Treasury, was appointed the new bey of Ceshra by Murad, and charged with keeping corruption under control in the area.

3238 BH (579 CY): The Last Manifestation of Istus

On a high tel south of Barakhath sit the Pillars of Istus, an ancient temple of the goddess built in the last days of the Baklunish Empire. Though the temple is little more than ruins, they play host to one of the most important rituals of the church of Istus.

Every three years, the roof canvases of the Sanserail, the oldest active temple of Istus, are removed and replaced. The old roof canvas is then transported to the Pillars of Istus and used in a special ceremony dedicated to The Lady of Our Fate. At nightfall on the appointed day, the canvasses are burned in a ceremony on the steps of the Pillars. The burning is then followed by a night of feasting and celebration. At the most successful of these ceremonies, the First Servant of Istus manifests as a fiery column that stretches into the air, consuming the ashes of the sacrificed canvas. After these manifestations, the attending clerics are known to spontaneously speak prophecy, and it is recognized that these auguries come directly from The Lady herself. Because of this special connection with their goddess, the clergy devoutly hope for a manifestation at each ceremony.

Unfortunately for the church of Istus, 3238 BH (579 CY) was the last manifestation in recent history. It was also the most disturbing. That year's ceremony saw a particularly large gathering of the devout, and everyone attending had high hopes for manifestation. As if in reply to their hopes, an enormous column of flame, larger than any before, rose from the fires and consumed the ashes of the canvas. But unlike the other manifestations, this one remained even after there were no ashes left to consume. As it hung in the night sky, towering over the onlookers, all the attending clerics of Istus began to speak at once. Little was understood of what they said; most witnesses claim to have heard only gibberish, or words in no language with which they were familiar. When the column of flame finally burnt away, the clerics' ceased speaking very suddenly, seemingly unaware of their actions.

Since then, the church of Istus has been uncharacteristically reluctant to discuss the events of that day. Although the official stance of the church has been that there is no memory of what was spoken by its clergy at that ceremony, it is believed by some that the church knows too well what was spoken, and fears what was said. Whatever the truth, the faithful

still gather every three years at the Pillars of Istus, hoping another manifestation will ease their doubts and fears. So far, this has not been the case.

“A Dey is much the same in most respects. I like to think of them as a Beys with benefits.”

-Yildwar Dey ibn Yusuf

Timars of Zeif

This section of the document details the divisions of the 38 timars which comprise the nation of Zeif. Currently, this section does not go into detail of Zeif's colonies, namely the various states and territories under the Sultanate's control on the Bakhoury Coast. Instead, this document defines the timars traditionally on official Zeif soil.

The numbers indicated on each description corresponds to the Timar map in the appendix of this document. Consult it for locations of the provinces.

Definitions of Terms

This document uses various terms for timars, including their political designations and the titles of those who rule them. They are defined herein.

Timar

A timar is a general territorial designation used in Zeif. A timar can be anything that is a clearly defined stretch of land under rule of a delegate by the Sultan, generally larger than a city. Timars include beyliks, deyliks, pashaliks, sheikdoms, emirates, satrapies, as well as the altimar fief granted to Elder Spahis.

Altimar

An altimar is a Zeifan equivalent to a fief. Altimars are small enough to rarely show up on a full map of Zeif. They are generally granted to knights (Spahis) by the Sultan in a system of vassalage, where they trade the land for service from the knight. Typically, Spahis fund and manage their own divisions of cavalry on their altimars and are granted police jurisdiction in selected timars nearby.

This document does not go into detail about the altimars of Zeif.

Bey (Beylik)

Beyliks are Zeif's most common form of timar. A beylik is land owned by the Sultan, who has delegated a bey to rule over it in his name. Beyliks can be of any size, though to maintain a level of efficiency, they are kept manageable in girth, which is why there are so many of them. Typically, a Sultan assigns new beys whenever an older bey retires, though occasionally, the he permits a bey to pass on his duties to an heir, usually someone close in his family such as a son/daughter or even a niece/nephew, a practice becoming more and more common as the family dynasties of the beys become

stronger.

Historically, beys were no more than chieftains and tribal leaders. When Ozef Khan battled Ghayar and his satraps, he rallied the tribes of many paynims and other baklunish nomads among the plains of Zeif. His greatest generals were these leaders, and after Ghayar was overthrown, Ozef granted them military honour and aristocracy; he started calling them beys and they were given control of their own provinces. These were the beginnings of the system used today, though it has expanded and become more complex since that time. For more information on this, see the history section of Zeif.

Though the Sultan reserves the right to overthrow any legislation a bey might pass, and of course retains the right to overthrow the bey himself, beys typically hold near autonomous power in their timar. They are aristocrats of the highest order, nobles who answer to little save word from the Sultan and his viziers. Beys control infrastructure in their province and are charged with maintaining them; they promote trade with local merchant clans, increasing their wealth; they even have nominal control over infantry forces in their region, though the Sultan and the Ministry of War always assume the control in times of war. They do not have power over the Spahis, who, working from their altimars, are assigned beyliks as part of their jurisdiction and work as mounted police in rural areas. Beys will, however, work closely with Elder Spahis when dealing with major threats to internal security.

Dey (Deylik)

In Zeif's west, along the Bakhoury Coast, life is a bit different, and it calls for a different ruler. The Sultan first imposed the Deys when the coast was subjugated. In nearly all respects, a deylik and its ruler are identical to that of the beyliks; in fact, the system is modeled entirely from that, with a few modifications to ensure stability among the region. The simple fact is that deys need more power and more leniency when dealing with the growing pirate problem along the coast, and the various crime operations plaguing their cities.

Deys are typically given a higher military authority. Currently, Zeif holds only two deyliks, which comprise the cities of Beit Castan and Nafiq respectively. Each town has a contingent of naval forces and ground forces which are special divisions. Besides being specially trained and experienced, these divisions are immune to control by the military leaders elsewhere the country. A dey, for example, has the right to refuse the Kapudan Pasha if he asks for ships from this contingent. Only the will of the Sultan can remove the forces from a deys control.

Deys often have to revert to less respectable means to achieve their goals. As part of their special power, the Sultan and the Diwan might "look away" while these deys execute some operation which crushes crime in the region. Practices frowned upon might include torture, assassination, swift justice (sentence without trial), etc. Also, deys are often granted more money than beys (receiving a higher percentage of export revenues, for example) to deal with their problems.

Of course, this leaves a lot of room for corruption among the deys, who could perhaps easily abuse the power granted to them. For this reason, the Sultan holds all power to remove deys and select new ones. Unlike beys, deys never pass on their titled to an heir; the Sultan chooses a new one every time the old one retires. However, while a great deterrent, betrayals are not entirely uncommon among the deys. The last Sultan was forced to execute one of his deys because he was receiving protection payments from pirates in the gulf.

Emir (Emirate)

Emirs, sometimes called amirs, bear titles which denote more station and respect than a bey, though their power and control is no different. When a military commander (from any branch save the Uruzaries) retire and take to politics, they often gain the honorary title of emir. Many retired officers seek only minor politics, becoming sheiks or pashas or villages and towns, however, occasionally they seek the office of a bey. No matter what position they eventually attain, the title of emir often replaces the standard title. The name of their timar also reflects their military honour, such as in the case of the Tyran Emirate, which functions in all respects like a beylik.

The title is optional; an officer need not take it when he attains office. However, emirs gain a lot of pull in politics on a national level. It is said that emirs bring to politics what they once brought to war: innovative tactics, sound execution of their operations, and most of the time, victory. While they possess no formal authority over a bey or dey, they are held in higher regard among officials, and simply happen to "get away with things".

Sometimes, though rare, an emir will adopt both titles. Some find this practice refreshing (for an emir is confusing; it could be any type of governor, and there is no way to know without asking, which can be embarrassing), though most find it a bit arrogant. When this happens, the title of emir is first; for example, Abdul Emir Bey ibn Abdollah.

Finally, as a point of pride, emirs often demand personal military forces which are granted immunity (such as in the cases of the deys), though it is up to the Sultan whether this request is granted; it is certainly not

a right as enjoyed by the deys.

Pasha (Pashalik)

Unlike other nations in the Baklunish West, in Zeif, the term Pasha is much less rigid. The most common form of Pashas rule over smaller or less important cities in Zeif, such as the Pasha of Antaloros. Such a designation is oftentimes more of a delegation of duties unwanted than a recognition of honour. When a dey or bey doesn't want to deal with a city it doesn't like, a pasha might be in order. These pashas act in most respects like a mayor, though they serve life terms (provided they don't retire early, which is often the case with pashas). They have control over city legislature and the town guard, though ultimately they answer to their bey/dey and the Sultan.

Pasha is also used as a military title of high honour. The Kapudan Pasha, the high Admiral of the Royal Navy of Zeif, traditionally bears the title. However, in the branches of the infantry, the title is often pegged on to existing denotations of rank in the case of supreme demonstrations of service. A general, for example, might be allowed to call himself pasha after a significant victory while defeating an enemy's troops. Many pasha titles were handed out when Zeif controlled the lands all the way to Lopolla. The Uruzaries also use this practice, though the granting of titles to them is a much more restricted practice and definitely rare.

Finally, pasha can sometimes be a title of honour and formality absent of actual rank or station. Similar to knighthood in the eastern monarchies, the Sultan, or even a bey or dey, might bestow upon any individual the title of pasha to recognize service to the state or loyalty to the Sultan. The Sultan has traditionally been pretty lenient in handing these titles out; in fact, it is believed that soon Pasha will become so common that it will devalue itself to the level of effendi, which once held high esteem and now is a common greeting, like sir or mister.

Sheik (Sheikdom)

Sheiks are one of the lowest titles used in Zeif. Often, nomadic leaders and large clans, tribes or family units will designate a leader, called a sheik. Occasionally, these leaders will ascend to govern small villages where nomads have settled. Most of the time, the title of sheik lies outside the boundaries of official Zeifan hierarchy, though it is always held with some degree of respect.

The biggest difference between the title of sheik and other titles is that it does not require official sanction. Sheiks do not have to be named "sheik" by higher authority. Any man who deems himself worthy of sheik can call himself that, though that practice is sometimes

viewed a bit haughty. Typically, when the individual has garnered enough followers, they simply begin referring to him as sheik, and the title sticks.

The Timars

The timars detailed herein are numbered and refer to their number on the political map of Zeif.

1. The Deylik of Saganat

Saganat is the westernmost timar in Zeif, and is the staging point for many of Zeif's campaigns into the Bakhoury Coast.

Ruler: Turfian Dey ibnt Tayyib al-Bakhoura (N human female Rog 5/Shadow Dancer 7), who also acts as the ruler of Beit Castan, the capital city of Saganat.

2. The Beylik of Barashal

Barashal was formerly the westernmost province of Zeif, before Saganat was officially annexed. Amid the grasslands of this beylik, Muran Bey lives in a prestigious ulu kamara (grand house) located near the Oasis of Barashal, alongside a small village; *reference:* ZEF6-01 Out of Water.

Ruler: Muran Bey ibn Selim al-Barashal (N human male, Ari8)

3. The Karisara Emirate

Karisara is a vast province governed by a retired Spahi.

Ruler: Altug Emir ibn Alparslan al-Barakhat (LN human male)

4. The Sadhan Sheikdom

Sadhan is a relatively unimportant province in western Zeif. It is populated very little, and largely depends on Barakhat for its supplies.

Ruler: Fakir Sheik ibn Gunter al-Sadhan (NE human male)

5. The Deylik of Balathar

Balathar is the home province of Nafiq, and another naval staging point.

Ruler: Yildwar Dey ibn Yusuf al-Zeir (LN human male Rog 4/Ftr 10), who also rules the city of Nafiq.

6. The Beylik of Katari

Katari is a coastal timar largely dependent on Balathar. It is a beautiful province often sought after as a retirement destination for naval officers.

Ruler: Feriha Bey ibnt Faik al-Lysia abdu-Al'Akbar (NG

human female)

7. The Beylik of Varanaad

Varanaad is a vast beylik with the notable city of Barakhat as a lone landmark across its rocky plain.

Ruler: Saban Bey ibn Nihat al-Varanaad (N human male), who is a former paynim nomad. He also chooses not to run the capital of his beylik, instead designating Barakhat to a sheik, Koyun Kinja, an Elder Spahi.

8. The Beylik of Kalereen

Kalereen is a fairly wealthy timar, benefiting from its access to three major trade routes in Zeif.

Ruler: Vahit Bey ibn Orhan al-Zeif abdu-Mouqol (N human male)

9. The Beylik of Anaar

Anaar is a less wealthy timar on the rocky side of the Wadi, but has frequent activity due to its major trade route.

Ruler: Ender Bey ibn Baris al-Dhabiya (N human male)

10. The Beylik of Madara

Madara is a remote province in the foothills of the Vaar, with a panhandle touching the west coast. It is quite rocky and uninhabited, save for some remote fishing villages and other mining operations. Madara is home to the ZKK town of Parshadon (Vancouver).

Ruler: Hursit Bey ibn Bugra al-Bakhoura (LE human male)

11. The Beylik of the Vaar

The Vaar is a rocky and hilly province in the most northern reaches of Zeif. The Sultanate's considerable gem resources are found here.

Ruler: Burciye Bey ibn Bulent al-Dhabiya (N human male)

12. The Tyran Emirate

Tyran is a populous timar opposite Dhabiya, privy to its trade route to Zeir-i-Zeif. A lot of fishing goes on here, and it is home to a major naval base.

Ruler: Caglayan Emir ibn Bahri al-Zeir (LN human male), who was once a powerful naval officer before he lost his left arm in battle, forcing him into politics.

13. The Beylik of Ralavar

Ralavar is a very important province, home to Dhabiya, one of Zeif's oldest and most important cities.

Ruler: Gursel Bey ibn Gancii al-Ralavar (N human male), who defers control of Dhabiya to Rafayda Amir, a member of the old families of the city.

14. The Beylik of Meteen

A populous farming province, Meteen is blessed with its proximity to the Wadi Khijar, from which it draws irrigation.

Ruler: Dilruba Bey ibnt Dincer al-Meteen (LN human female)

15. The Beylik of Lysia

Lysia is home to farmers, fishers and ranchers along the major trade route between Dhabiya and Zeir-i-Zeif. Lysia is home to the ZKK town of Korsan (Calgary).

Ruler: Yavuz Bey ibn Yurdakul al-Lysia (N human male), who was once a farmer in the area before he ascended to a position of power.

16. The Beylik of Acoma

Acoma is mostly a farming and ranching land near Zeir-i-Zeif.

Ruler: Yurda Bey ibn Yurdun al-Zeir (N human male)

17. The Beylik of Palas

The beylik of Palas is a small farming province off of the Wadi.

Ruler: Cicek Bey ibnt Cenk al-Palas (NG human female)

18. The Beylik of Bain

Bain is a relatively unpopulated province off of the Wadi. It is home to many Paynims.

Ruler: Cengiz Bey ibn Gulhan al-Paynim (N human male), who was once a paynim nomad.

19. The Beylik of Onnax

Onnax lies along a major route from inner Zeif to the capital and thus sees a lot of traffic, but no major settlements dot its land, save for its capital, Sulumak.

Ruler: Abdullah Bey ibn Lutfu al-Ceshra abdu-Geshtai (N human male)

20. The Sultanate of Zeif

Though not technically a timar (it has no bey and is considered the territory of the Sultan), it is nonetheless a territory.

Ruler: Sultan Murad the Proud (LN human male Ftr 15)

21. The Beylik of Antaloros

Antaloros is the largest province on the plains of Antal, and home to its capital. It is home to many orcs.

Ruler: Mecnun Bey ibn Mesut al-Zeir (NE human male), who defers rule of Antalotol to Nejak Pasha

22. The Ghars Sheikdom

Ghars is one of the more detached provinces from the Sultanate, and is overrun with paynims and orcs. It is dangerous and desolate.

Ruler: Hisam Sheik ibn Hassan al-Dhabiya (NE human male)

23. The Beylik of Tarkad

Tarkad is a desolate province primarily populated with orc tribes.

Ruler: Mahir Bey ibn Menderes al-Antalotol (LN human male)

24. The Karada Emirate

Karada is a border province that deals with many troubles from paynims and orcs.

Ruler: Ozan Emir ibn Aytekin al-Barakhat (LN human male), who is a retired Spahi.

25. The Beylik of Sakarta

Sakarta is a vast under-populated wasteland home to little but a few scant orc tribes and nomads.

Ruler: Rauf Bey ibn Naci al-Nafiq (LE human male), who is said to have nefarious contacts in the capital.

26. The Kenja Amirate

Kenja is another hotbed of violence, and home to orcs and paynims.

Ruler: Soykan Amir ibn Tansel al-Paynim (LN human male), a Paynim and former Spahi.

27. The Shald Sheikdom

Shald lies far from everything, and is a hot spot for many illegal activities. Its Sheik can easily be paid to

look the other way.

Ruler: Suzan Sheik ibnt Tevfik al-Bakhoura (NE human female)

28. The Beylik of Ordesca

Ordesca is a large province with little in it. Orcs are rampant here, but no trade routes or water sources are near.

Ruler: Tumay Bey ibn Toros al-Zeir (N human male)

29. The Beylik of Antasati

Antasati is a dry and empty place. Paynims are fond of it, and a few orcs.

Ruler: Ulviye Bey ibn Vedat al-Paynim (N human male), a paynim.

30. The Beylik of Naura

Naura is a vast ranch land in central Zeif.

Ruler: Dogukan Bey ibn Dogu al-Naura (LN human male)

31. The Beylik of Sundar

Sundar is a rich and fertile farming province, blessed by its proximity to the capital, the Ekbirran city of Kofeh, and the Tuflik river. Sundar is home to the ZKK town of Kurteq (Edmonton).

Ruler: Elmas Bey ibnt Varoliye al-Zeir abdu-Istus (N human female)

32. The Beylik of Akheer

Akheer is a farming province, one of a few blessed by their nearness to the Tuflik.

Ruler: Galip Bey ibn Husnu al-Ceshra (N human male)

33. The Beylik of Salais

Salais is a farming province halfway between Ceshra and Zeir-i-Zeif.

Ruler: Ibrahim Bey ibn Ibran al-Salais (LN human male)

34. The Beylik of Thorgoth

Thorgoth is a fairly desolate place populated mostly by orcs and paynims.

Ruler: Nazim Bey ibn Ertan al-Zeir (N human male)

35. The Beylik of Sharda

Sharda is a far away beylik that is populated with many orcs and paynims.

Ruler: Yazad Bey ibn Yunus al-Zeir (LN human male)

36. The Beylik of Elyan

Elyan is a small province near Ceshra situated along a small river. It has many farms and open grasslands. Elyan his home to the great Tournament of Al'Akbar, a race across the Beylik made in honour of a great pilgrimage done once by Al'Akbar from Yatirdes to Abar Nur-Ter'I; *reference:* ZEF6-06 Piety.

Ruler: Zihni Bey bin Zihn al-Ceshra, “the Dragon”. Zihni Bey is known as the “Dragon” because of his renowned adherence to the Four Feet of the Dragon (LN human male).

37. The Beylik of Andami

Andami is the southernmost and easternmost timar in Zeif, very near Ceshra. It is home to many farms and river communities profiting from trade coming up the Volverdyva.

Ruler: Buket Bey ibnt Bukta al-Andami (N human female)

38. The Beylik of Barat

Barat is a rich timar dominated by the city of Ceshra, which profits from the large amount of trade between Ket and Zeif.

Ruler: Hassan Bey ibn Hazdanan al-Zeir (LE human male Aristocrat 11)

39. The Beylik of Yadarr

Yadarr is a rich province built on farming and trade with Tusmit and Ket.

Ruler: Bunyamin Bey ibn Yaman al-Yadarr (N human male)

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

This appendix is to help players understand the various terminology used in Zeif which might be foreign to Western players (which most of us are). If you know something that should be in here, please feel free to contact the author and he can get it in the next release.

| Zeifan Titles (Military, Civil, Social, etc.) | | Geographical Items (Cities, Regions, etc.) | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Aga (Agha) | A military leader. High ranking infantry. | Altimar | A rural fief administered by Spahi Elders; where Zeif's Cavalry is based. |
| Amir (Emir) | A governor of an Amirate, reserved for those who once held military rank. | Amirate (Emirate) | A small state ruled by an Amir. |
| Bey | A governor of a Beylik. | Antal | A region in southeast Zeif; dry, arid, desolate, and home to many orcs. |
| Caliph | A religious leader who governs church and state (as in the Caliph of Ekbir, of Al'Akbar). | Antalotol | A city in southeast Zeif, on the plains of Antal; more than half-populated by orcs. |
| Chamberlain | An officer who manages the household of a sovereign; a chief steward. | Ataphad(s) | An island chain north of Zeif, said to house savage people who use slaves as sacrifice. |
| Dey | A governor of a Deylik. More powerful than a Bey. | Barakhat | A city in central Zeif, in the Timarral; headquarters of the Spahis. |
| Emir | See Amir. | Beit Castan | A city in southwest Zeif, on the coast. |
| Kapudan Pasha | The High Admiral of the Royal Navy of Zeif. | Beylik | A province in Zeif ruled by a Bey. |
| Khan | A military commander, common among Paynims. | Bureis | A city in the Qayah-Bureis isles. |
| Khedive | A governor of a Khedivate. | Ceshra | A city in southeast Zeif, opposite Sefmur (Tusmit) on the Tuflik river. |
| Mahdi | A religious messiah, used among the Paynims. | Deylik | A province in Zeif ruled by a Dey. |
| Malik | The head of a state, such as the Maliks of Ghayar, who ruled his timars; they held immense power. | Dhabiya | A city in northern Zeif, on the mouth of the Wadi Khijar where she empties into the Dramidj. |
| Matron Sultana | The Sultan's mother; she rules the Harem and wields considerable power. | Dramidj (Ocean) | The ocean which marks Zeif's northern boundary; a warm sea. |
| Mullah | A religious judge, as in the True Faith of Al'Akbar. | Ekbir | Zeif's founding neighbour nation to the east. |
| Pasha | A military or civil officer; often governs cities or small states (Pashaliks). | Emirate | See Amirate. |
| Pir Qadi | Head priest of the Qudah. | Ghayar (Gulf) | A gulf west off the Bakhoury Coast. (See also "Ghayar" under "Other") |
| Qadi | A religious judge, as in the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar. | Ikayal Strait | Location of the infamous "Battle Beneath the Waves". |
| Reis | A captain in the Royal Navy. | Jansib(s) | An island chain northwest of Zeif; said to harbour pirates. |
| Sheik | Leader of a family or village; commonly used among merfolk. | Ket | A neighbouring country, east of Tusmit down the Tuflik River. |
| Sidi | The head of the Merfolk state. | Khedivate | A colonial state. |
| Spahi | An officer in Zeif's Cavalry. | Komal | A country west of the Gulf of Ghayar. |
| Sultan | The head of state of a Sultanate, akin to a King. | Mukhazin | A ruined city now home to retired Uruzaries. |
| Sultana | A female Sultan, akin to a Queen. | Mur | A country west of the Gulf of Ghayar. |
| Vizier | A government minister; represents the various ministries in a government. | Nafiq | A city in western Zeif, on the coast of the Gulf of Ghayar. |

| Religion (Deities, faiths, cults) | | Pashalik | A small territory ruled by a Pasha. |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Al'Akbar | God of faithfulness, duty, dignity & guardianship; two notable sects (True and Exalted faiths). | Qayah-Bureis | A large island chain north of Zeif. |
| Daoud | Legendary philosopher pasha of Tusmit. Stripped of status and wealth and lived as beggar in Ceshra before ascending to Divinity. | Retsaba | A fertile farming region in Zeif from Dhabiya to Ceshra along the north coast. |
| Geshtai | Goddess of springs and wells. | Risay | A country southwest of the Gulf of Ghayar. |
| Istus | Goddess of Fate and Destiny. | Sheikdom | Small territory ruled by a Sheik. |
| Mouqol | God of trade, negotiation, ventures, appraisal and reciprocity. | Timarral | A region, comprising the bulk of Zeif from Ceshra to the Bakhoury Coast. Mostly dry and infertile. |
| Mouqollad Consortium | A united group of merchants that oversee trade in Zeif. Headed by powerful priests of Mouqol. | Timar | General territorial designation; can mean any type of province under control of the Sultan (beyliks, deyliks, pashaliks, emirates, sheikdoms). |
| Qudah | Zeifan assembly of the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar; only recognized clerics of Al'Akbar in Zeif. | Tuflik (River) | A river which comes from Ket and empties into the Dramidj Ocean. |
| Xan Yae | Goddess of twilight, shadows, stealth and mental powers. | Tusmit | A neighbouring country, across the Tuflik from Zeif and south of Ekbir. |
| Zuoken | Demigod of physical and mental mastery. | Vaar, The | A region in the northern Zeif; rocky , hilly and home to Zeif's gem resources. |
| Landmarks and Edifices | | Velverdyva, The | Often refers to a river based trade route; from Zeif/Ekbir to the Nyr Dyv. |
| Bedestan, The High | Headquarters of the Mouqollad Consortium in Zeir-i-Zeif. | Wadi Khijar | Dry river valley that separates east and west Zeif; from Dry Steppes to the Dramidj. Floods two weeks/year. |
| Daoud's Quoin | Sacred place for worshipers of Daoud in Ceshra. | Yif Qayah | A city in the Qayah-Bureis Isles; once owned by Zeif, yielded to Komal after Battle Beneath the Waves. |
| Dar-Zaribad | Fortress built on top of Mukhazin ruins, populated by retired Uruzaries. | Zeir-i-Zeif | The capital of Zeif; north shore of the Dramidj Ocean, sometimes called Zeif City by foreigners. |
| Diwan | Zeif's cabinet. Composed of viziers who govern the Sultanate as advisers to the Sultan. | Other Terms | |
| Imaret | An inn or hostel for pilgrims. | Ghayar | Leader of the Imperial Pretenders; ruled Zeif after the fall of the Empire. Ozef Khan defeated him. |
| Kabir-Kafez | The Prison Palace, home of the Heir Apparent, built atop the royal Mausoleum. | Osfaradd | The Royal Family name; also a dialect of the Baklunish language spoken by the citizens of Zeif. |
| Peh'reen | The Sultan's Palace in Zeir-i-Zeif | Paynim(s) | The nomadic tribes south of Zeif. |
| Sanserail | Holy building dedicated to Istus. oldest structure in Zeif. | Uruzary Corps | The Sultan's famed Elite Guard. |
| Shadrakir | Famed garden in Beit Castan; named after Shadrakir the Seer. | | |

Appendix 2: Baklunish Terms and Expressions

| Phrase | Pronunciation | Meaning |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Assalamu alaikum! ¹ | ahs-sah-LAH-moo ah-lah-EEK-oom | Peace be with you! [formal greeting] |
| Walaikum assalam | wah-lah-EEK-oom ahs-sah-LAHM | And peace unto you also. [proper expected response to formal greeting] |
| Merhaba | MEHR-hah-bah | Hello [casual greeting] |
| Hoş geldiniz! | HOHSH GEHL-deen-eez | Welcome! |
| Nasılsınız? ² | NAHS-suhl-suh-nuhz | How are you? |
| Hoşçakal ³ ; güle güle ⁴ | HOHSH-chah-kahl; GUU-leh GUU-leh | Goodbye |
| Evet | eh-VEHT | Yes |
| Hayır | HAH-yuhr | No |
| İyi | EE-ee | Good |
| Pardon? ⁵ | pahr-DOHN | Pardon me? |
| Üzgün | UUZ-guun | Sorry |
| Lütfen | LUUT-fehn | Please |
| Sağol ⁶ | SAHH-ohl | Thank you |
| Effendi | eh-FEHN-dee | [Title of respect with many applications. It can be used to refer to a government official or person of authority, a person of higher status, or simply a gentleman.] |
| Baba | BAH-bah | <i>Father</i> |
| Anne | AHN-neh | Mother |
| Oğul | ohh-OOL | Son/boy |
| Kız | KEEZ | Daughter/girl |
| Arkadaş | ar-kah-DAHSH | Friend |
| Para | PAH-rah | Money |
| Ticaret | TEE-cah-reht | Trade/commerce |
| Kismet | KEES-meht | Fate |
| Su | SOO | Water |
| Şehir | sheh-HEER | <i>City</i> |
| Kasaba ⁷ | kah-SAH-bah | <i>Town</i> |
| Zabita ⁸ | zah-BEE-tah | <i>Police/city watchmen</i> |
| Meyhane ⁹ | meh-HAH-neh | <i>Tavern/inn</i> |
| Bira ¹⁰ | BEE-rah | <i>Ale</i> |
| Lokanta | loh-KAHN-tah | <i>Café/restaurant</i> |
| Kamara ¹¹ | kah-MAH-rah | <i>House</i> |

1 This is the formal phrase used when greeting someone. The more informal or casual greeting, used primarily between close friends or acquaintances, is *merhaba*.

2 Notice the letter i here is undotted. The undotted i [ɪ] is pronounced like “uh”, the dotted i [i] is pronounced like “ee”.

3 *Hoşçakal* is used when you are the one leaving; *güle güle* is used when the other person is the one leaving

4 Undotted u’s [u] are pronounced “oo”, double-dotted/umlaut u’s [ü] are pronounced like “tu” or “utiliser” in French.

5 This is probably a word co-opted from the Common tongue. There is a formal Baklunish word, though this is used more often now for simplicity.

6 The accented g (ğ) is a silent g; it serves to elongate the vowel preceding it. Reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?.

7 Reference: Zeif Kasaba Kurmak (Zeif Town Project)

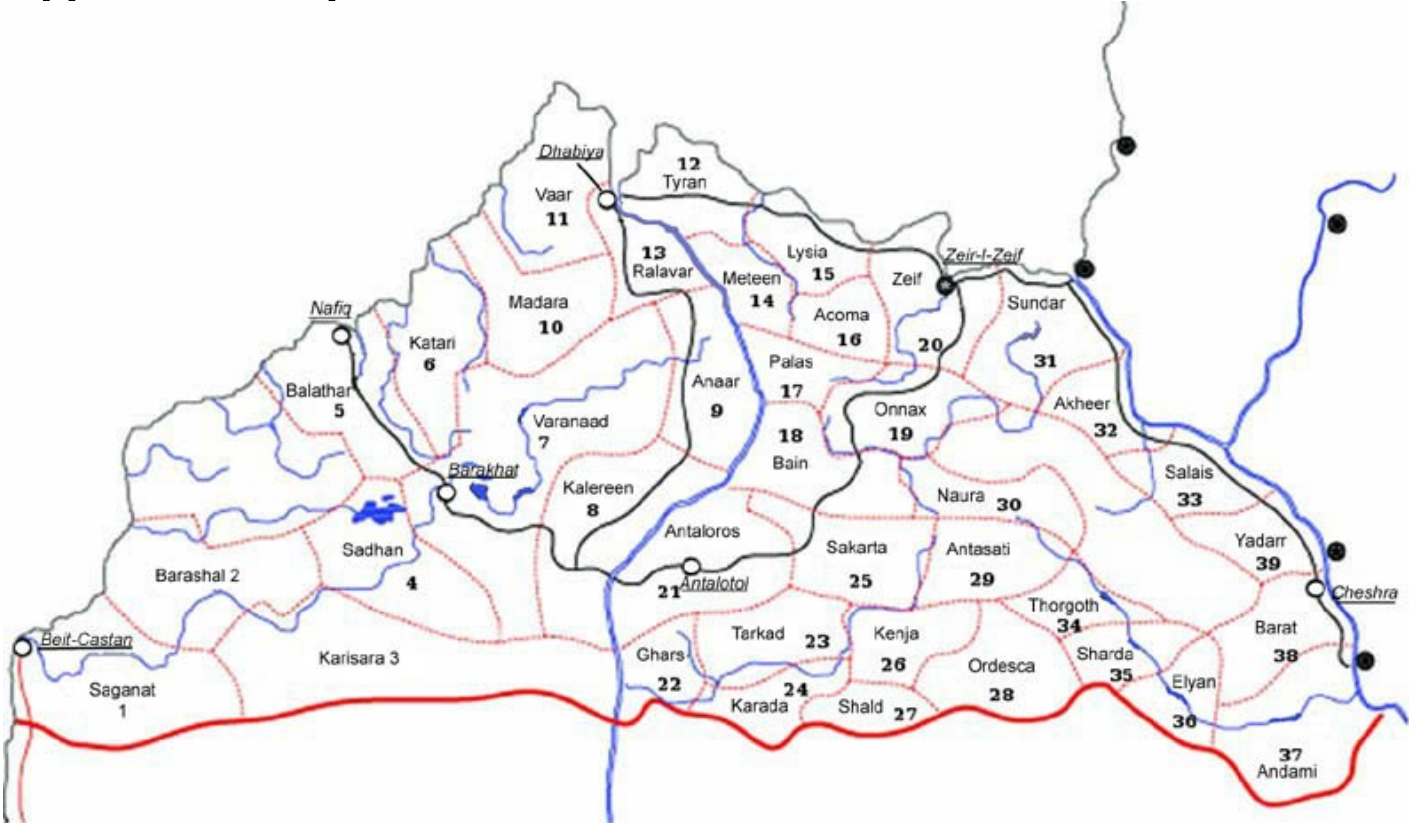
8 Reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?

9 Reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?

10 Reference: ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry?

11 Reference: Zeif Kasaba Kurmak (Zeif Town Project)

Appendix 3: Maps of Zeif



Appendix 4: Regional Scenarios for Zeif

Introductory Scenarios

ZEFI6-01 Mouqollad al-Zeif

By Michael Ray Deal

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, January 2006

The big city of Antalotol beckons you with promises of income and adventure. SKILLED adventurers need only apply.

ZEFI6-02 Do Dragons Cry

By Belinda Hamilton-Gibson

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, February 2006

Another day in Nafiq heats up with the arrival of a gnome and a lucrative job offer. Are you brave enough to fight the heat and sun and travel to Antalotol, near the southern border of the Sultanate of Zeif? An introductory module for level 1 characters only. Suited to the Spahis and Harem characters.

ZEFI6-03 The Sultan's Birthday

By Stephane Bolduc and Cory Fliegel

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, February 2006

It's the time of the Sadakat Festival to honour Murad The Proud, Sultan of Zeif. You are heading to the Sultanate's capital Zeir-i-Zeif. You travel with the Genie's Fury Trade Company to help guard against bandits. This is an Introductory module designed for first level characters ONLY. Players above 1st level may not play this module.

ZEFI6-04 Sailing the Tuflik River

By Stephane Bolduc and Cory Fliegel

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, November 2006

Life on a merchant ship may bring some unexpected adventures, but the waves are not always as dangerous as the storms that trouble the hearts of men. An introductory adventure set in the Sultanate of Zeif for 1st level characters.

ZEFI6-05 "Wurst" Festival Ever

By Greg Gerritsen and Cory Fliegel

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, November 2006

It starts as it usually does. Minding your own Pints and Quarts in a local tavern in Kale Sosis when a fight breaks out. The guards decide to put you to work instead of jail and now you're out hunting in the Beylik of Varanaad for a band of orcs that crashed the annual Sucuk Birlik (Festival of Sausage).

ZEFI6-06 Daima Mucehver

By Andreas Zimmerman

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, November 2006

A merchant's son is kidnapped near the Vaar Hills. He has been missing for a week. Scouts have been sent to find him, never to return. Are you brave and resourceful enough to enter the dead mining town of Daima Mucehver? A challenging three-round Introductory module for characters level 1 ONLY. Those above this level may not play. This Introductory adventure is a "triple rounder" and can give enough experience to move a character to 2nd level.

Zeif Interactive Scenarios

ZEFS6-01 The Dragon

By Various

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)



[APL 10](#)



[APL 12](#)



[APL 14](#)



[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Weathertop 2006, Vancouver, B.C.

Characters from the Duchy of Urnst have escorted an important shipment to Zihni Bey bin Zihn al-Ceshra, the leader of the Beylik of Elyan. Foreigners and locals alike are welcome to feast at the Bey's palace and learn the meaning of "The Four Feet of the Dragon", the philosophy that defines the Zeifan way of life. A Living Greyhawk one-round Zeif regional interactive for characters level 1-15 (APLs 2-16).

ZEFS6-02 The Lost City of the Vaar

By Various

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)



[APL 10](#)



[APL 12](#)



[APL 14](#)



[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Campcon V, Calgary, AB

A recent tremor has shaken the Sultanate. Now a forgotten passage leads to a lost city. Do you have the skills to research this lost city and the bravery to explore it?

ZEFS6-03 The Wyrn

By Various

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)



[APL 10](#)



[APL 12](#)



[APL 14](#)



[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Conviction VI, Calgary, AB

A wedding of Beys brings one and all to the capital and the home of the Sultan. But more than a cordial reception is intended for one of the guests. A Single round Battle Interactive for levels 1-12 (APL 2-10). Conclusion of the Four Feet of the Dragon series (ZEF6-03 Honor, ZEF6-04 Generosity, ZEF6-05 Family and ZEF6-06 Piety).

ZEFS6-04 To Live and Die in Dhabiya

By EGOR

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)

[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)



[APL 10](#)



[APL 12](#)



[APL 14](#)



[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Con of Cold 3, Edmonton, AB

The exploration into the Lost City of the Vaar uncovers new passages everyday. The Sultan wants its secrets discovered, but could further exploration lead to secrets better left unknown? Large numbers of adventurers are needed to delve into a dark world that may be a little too close to the mysterious underworld of Dhabiya. A one round Living Greyhawk interactive set in the Lost City of the Vaar for APLs 4-16 and introduction to the Zeif elite arc "The Slave Pits of Dhabiya".

Zeif Regional Scenarios

Year 6

ZEF6-01 Out of Water

By Ian Seale

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Weathertop 2006, Vancouver, B.C.

The Merfolk have long been allies of the Sultanate of Zeif. When the Merfolk are in need of help, will the citizens of Zeif come to their aid? Part one of the Eternally Yours story arc. A one-round Sultanate of Zeif regional adventure for APLs 2-6.

ZEF6-02 Left for Dead

By Alan Jackson and Dave Paron

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Weathertop 2006, Vancouver, B.C.

Who would have thought the road to high adventure could have started in Crazy Akeem's Coffee House? A trip to the Zeir-i-Zeif market; an introduction to new people; and a contract for adventure on the high seas: all this over a steaming cup of coffee. A one round adventure set in the Sultanate of Zeif for APLs 2-6 (characters of levels 1-8).

ZEF6-03 Honour

By Jonathon Ingram

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Campcon 5, Calgary, AB

An ancient text discussing the Four Feet of the Dragon has been discovered in the ruins of Mukhazin. Zihni Bey bin Zihn al-Ceshra, the discoverer of the scroll, has promised its delivery to the clergy of Istus. But the way is long and dangerous, and priceless relics need protection. Can you uphold your sacred word and earn your reputation as one who follows the Four Feet of the Dragon? An adventure for characters of levels 1-10 (APL 2-8), part 1 of the Four Feet of the Dragon series.

ZEF6-04 Generosity

By Warren Banks

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Campcon 5, Calgary, AB

Most adventurers rely on sword and spell to recover valuable treasures but how many are prepared for the cunning and skill of the auction house? One mans junk is another mans treasure. Can you tell which is which? An adventure particularly well suited for savvy merchants of APLs 2 to 8. Generosity is the second adventure in the four part The Feet of the Dragon series. While it is not mandatory to play ZEF6-03 Honor first, it is recommended.

ZEF6-05 Family

By Brett Beattie

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)



[APL 4](#)



[APL 6](#)



[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
General Release, June 2006

When a complete stranger pleads for help to save the lives of his fellow man you must rush to retrieve the rare al-hazarde. True heroes don't question a person in need, they simply act. Chapter three of "The Four Feet of the Dragon" one-year arc. It is recommended (but not required) that PCs play ZEF6-03 Honor and ZEF6-04 Generosity before playing this module. A one round module for heroes of APL 2-8.

ZEF6-06 Piety

By *R.C. Gray*

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)

[APL 4](#)

[APL 6](#)

[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Conviction VI, 2006

Come one, come all! Glory awaits you in the Tournament of Al'Akbar! Do you dare face the same challenges faced by a god? Do you dare endure these same dangers and risk your own life for fame and fortune? Step right up, and join the competition! Follow in the High Cleric's footsteps and perhaps you may find yourself a god amongst mortals! A one-round Core adventure set in Zeif for characters level 1-11 (APLs 2-10). Part 4 of the "Four Feet of the Dragon" arc.

ZEF6-07 Into the Drink

By *Jake Robins*

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)

[APL 4](#)

[APL 6](#)

[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Conviction VI, 2006

A summons from the Sultan has got adventurers meeting with friends from the past for a trip to a different world. The Gulf of Ghayar has long been a landmark in Zeif, but this trip is guaranteed to put a fresh new look on it. What trouble awaits these heroes when they venture into the drink? A one round regional undersea adventure set in the Gulf of Ghayar for APLs 2-8; part two of the "Eternally Yours" arc. This adventure is geared towards members of the Royal Navy of Zeif, characters loyal to the Sultan, social-oriented characters, and characters particularly fond of all things watery.

ZEF6-08 That Look

By *Kent Ertman*

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)

[APL 4](#)

[APL 6](#)

[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
Con of Cold 3, Edmonton, AB

There are dark things squirming in the rotten heart of Zeif. But to go to Dhabiya and root them out means risking more than just your life and eternal soul. A one-round Sultanate of Zeif regional adventure set in Dhabiya for APLs 4-12. Part one in the three year "Elite" story arc "Slave Pits of Dhabiya".

A SERIOUS WARNING FROM THE TRIAD: This is a very dark and dangerous adventure. The permanent death of your character isn't the worst thing that could happen, and this isn't just a scare tactic. Before you send your favorite character to Dhabiya, consider VERY carefully what you are prepared to lose because this adventure will take it.

ZEF6-09 All This for a Wedding

By *JP Chapleau*

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#)

[APL 4](#)

[APL 6](#)

[APL 8](#)

[APL 10](#)

[APL 12](#)

[APL 14](#)

[APL 16](#)



Premiered At:
General Release, January 2007

The announcement has spread far and wide: Murad the Proud, Sultan of Zeif, is sending one of his daughters to be wed to the son of Muammar Qharan, Pasha of Tusmit. Some say that all the noble daughters of Zeif have been trained as master spies. Some wonder what benefits this union will bring to either nation. Some wonder why the personal bodyguard that preceded the bride to Tusmit looks so much like the Sultans army. Others wonder if, in the midst of all the political machinations, she will ever make it to Tusmit alive. Note that the Tusmit Regional adventure TUS6-08 is virtually identical to this one. You may not play both adventures. A one-round Sultanate of Zeif regional adventure set in Tusmit and the Sultanate of Zeif for characters level 1-14 (APLs 2-12).

Year 7

The following previews are available as of the release of this document. Be sure to check out the Zeif website for the most up to date information on available regional modules for the Sultanate!

ZEF7-01 Parshadon

By Warren Banks and William McDuff

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Weathertop 2007, Vancouver, B.C.

Coming Soon! Part 1 of the Town Tours arc.

ZEF7-02 Tide of Battle

By Ian Seale

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Campcon VI, Calgary, AB

Coming Soon! Part 3 of the Eternally Yours arc.

ZEF7-03 Inner Turmoil

By Jason Woodall

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Campcon VI, Calgary, AB

Coming Soon! Part 2 of the “elite” Slave Pits of Dhabiya arc.

ZEF7-04 You Break It

By Brett Beattie

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Duchy/ZEIF BorderCon, Vancouver, B.C.

Coming Soon! Cross-regional (Duchy of Urnst) Western Fals Trading Company Arc.

ZEF7-05 One Person's Junk

*By Belinda Hamilton-Gibson, Larry
Vickers and Abbey Johnson*

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Conviction VII, Calgary, AB

Coming Soon! Part 2 of the Town Tours arc.

ZEF7-06 Deliverance

By Duncan Armitage

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
ConFusion, Victoria, B.C.

Coming Soon! Part 3 of the “elite” Slave Pits of Dhabiya arc.

ZEF7-07 Deep Six

By Jake Robins

[Play History \(External Link\)](#)

[APL 2](#) [APL 4](#) [APL 6](#) [APL 8](#) [APL 10](#) [APL 12](#) [APL 14](#) [APL 16](#)

Premiered At:
Con of Cold IV, Edmonton, AB

Coming Soon! Part 4 of the Eternally Yours arc.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| ZEF7-08 Kurteq | <i>By David Gibson</i> | | | | | | Play History (External Link) |
| APL 2 | APL 4 | APL 6 | APL 8 | APL 10 | APL 12 | APL 14 | APL 16 |
| | | | | | | | Premiered At: Con of Cold IV, Edmonton, AB |
| Coming Soon! Part 3 of the Town Tours arc. | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| ZEF7-09 Sukarta | <i>By Craig Alpen</i> | | | | | | Play History (External Link) |
| APL 2 | APL 4 | APL 6 | APL 8 | APL 10 | APL 12 | APL 14 | APL 16 |
| | | | | | | | Premiered At: General Release, November 2007 |
| Coming Soon! Part 4 of the Town Tours arc. | | | | | | | |

Appendix 5: Bibliography, References, and Licensing

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Weining, Fred. "Zeif: Rock of the West." Living Greyhawk Journal Vol. 1 #5 Jul. 2001: 10.

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