

Ashnoor Today



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Overview of Island of Ashnoor

As of the writing of this document, the current year is 1254 AE.

Ashnoor is an ancient land, steeped in mystery, myth and legend. Ancient abandoned cities within the area now known as “The Old Lands”, speak to a time where it was once vast population of high culture and technology.

A truly, race blind society. Souls of many mythical races co-inhabit its lands to such an extent that it is considered to norm. Conflict instead stems from faction allegiance for *The Kingdom of Geldheim*, *The Hadovean Empire* and in some rare cases *The Erayax Horde*.

The Kingdom of Geldheim is old. So old no one truly knows it’s origins. In fact, truth be told, one constant line of monarchy cannot be proven. Yet legend has it that the monarchs go all the way back to when the TEN roamed the world among mortals. Despite the lands having been depleted a few generations ago in a legendary war of attrition over rightful succession, the Kingdom claims dominion over all, even lands not seen in Millennia.

The Hadovean Empire also lays claim to the lands of Ashnoor. They claim victory from the war of succession and coupled with what they claim is the stagnant nature of the Kingdom and its tired tradition of monarchs staking a claim based on a long-forgotten blood line.

As the legend has it, a great war between these two factions raged almost non-stop for over 2 decades, with armies beyond counting. Hostilities only ended after almost an entire generation were wiped out from both.

Then came *The Erayax Horde* from the northern reaches, led by the ruthless and malevolent Orc **Vorbroth**. Taking advantage of the weakened state of his adversaries, his intentions were clear. To claim lands in the North of Ashnoor as his own and to impose his oppressive rule on all those within. He was brutal, bloody thirsty and without mercy. Whereas both the Kingdom and Empire at least observed some level of mercy towards each other, *The Erayax Horde* offer no quarter. All those that shared his malevolent vision joined his caused, regardless of race. Those that opposed were pushed south – or simply killed.

Over the next close to 700 years, hostilities between the 2 southern factions have been small and isolated as both sides rebuilt. But now as both *The Kingdom of Geldheim* and *The Hadovean Empire* have rebuilt to a position of strength, old hostilities have become more large scale. The threat to the north still remains, but for now at least and their initial appearance they seem content to remain where they are, although few have ventured north and return to tell the tale for the southern populous to know any differently.

The division caused by this ongoing struggle seemingly means that the actual old lands remain, effectively in the possession of *The Erayax Horde*. Of those who have ventured north, very few have ever returned. Those who have share horror stories of their survival. It is known that the ONLY way Old Ashnoor will ever be in the hands of southern factions would be to unite, that just may be a bridge too far...

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Land Zones of Ashnoor

Ashnoor is divided up into 5 land zones:

The Kingdom of Geldheim

Once ruled over all of Ashnoor, since the end of the Succession War and the rising of *The Erayax Horde* from the north, the Kingdom retreated South. Its Capital is **Bannockthorpe**.

Feudal in government. Run by nobility that is by birthright. There subjects are well cared for on average, the nobles knowing there people personally and catering for their needs and in return the people support their direct Noble in charge. That being the ones who own land the serfs live and work. Generally speaking, the title of noble cannot be achieved by the common classes. Marriage is a strong focus regarding alliances. Some but small skirmishes over internal infighting, usually over matters of honour or land.

Commoners enjoy days of celebration via the graces of their nobles, from small days of local importance, like a new noble birth or wedding, to grand games hosted by many nobles. Usually in the form of competitions, boasting and war games.

The Kingdom of Geldheim is currently rules by **King Allard**. He and his wife, **Isolda** (an old and popular name among Kingdom nobility have 3 children. **Princess Arianna** (next in line for the throne barring any unfortunate events.), **Prince Kelto** (another favoured old name) and **Princess Ostel**.

King Allard has reigned for approximately 26 years.

The HADOVEAN EMPIRE

Born within the fires of the Succession War. It retreated South West due to as a result of the war and the subsequent rising of *The Erayax Horde* from the north. It's capital is **Mirthstone**.

The empire has a figure head, an Empress. She holds minimal power over a generally voted in Senate (commonly referred to as the **Council of 12**).

The Senate comprises of mayor land owners, business tycoons and military elite.

Only other senators may vote in another member of the Senate, potentially leading to sly political manoeuvring although it is not unheard of for new senators to be voted in on merit.

The general population, not having the sufficient wealth to give themselves a name, have little chance to become senators. The empires citizens are generally well taken care of with good rights, health care, and civil infrastructure. Citizens enjoy planned celebrations to commemorate historical events, Empress' birthday and other faction wide significance.

The Hadovean Empire's Empress is **Empress Yal soi Darquin**. She is married to **General Piter Callingber** (A direct descendant of the second emperor who is known throughout the Empire to this day as the hero of Ashnoor - recorded in the "faithful" record of glorious leaders of the Empire). They are yet to sire any children.

THE CONTESTED ZONE

The outlands as it's commonly known are the lands outside the borders of either faction but not so far north that they don't receive the influence of either. There is no permanent alliance between and of the locations within the outlands and as such they must on many occasions fend for themselves. It's also called a great many names depending on who is saying, they can also be considered provinces, reserves, colonies etc but to the faction elite it is considered a contested zone. As both factions have simultaneously have control and no control, a variety of faction beliefs exist inside each township (as a general rule). Some believe that their township would be far better off under the protection of one of the factions, whereas others resist faction rule. Some even openly discriminate, even harm people who disagree with faction beliefs. Over all the outlands are somewhat considered to be the 'wild west' of Ashnoor, filled with opportunities and danger.

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OLD ASHNOOR

Once the centre of the population, this area is now overrun by *The Erayax Horde*. Considered by the factions to be the spiritual home of Ashnoor, both factions blame the other for its downfall. Not much is known about the northern side of the island. Other than it is populated by the most savage of beasts, guarding the lost treasures of before the fall.

Some risk venturing north in the hopes of finding something from the past, as relics of old are worth a king's ransom. The Erayax Horde have no *known* presence in the southern lands. So much is the fear the factions have for them anyone who even so much as expresses sympathy towards the Horde is likely to be executed for treason.

THE UNCHARTED LANDS

Little is known of this area. It is thought that maps were once held deep within the libraries of Aringale, however since *The Erayax Horde* overran the city, no such known maps are held by Either *The Kingdom of Geldheim* or *The Hadovean Empire*.

Other Areas of Note

BORDERS

The two borders start north and work down till they connect the two factions mid-south.

Mostly they are lightly guarded and policed. Minimal fortifications but as the track south they get increasingly more fortified. Where they connect it forms what is basically a no man's land between significantly powerful military forces, consisting of full time battalions, thick walls and sinister defenses. A place of death, disease and suffering. Many criminals from both factions are sent here as a means to quell civil unrest and a crime deterrent.

DOOMSAJERS KEEP

This large city is located just north of where the two borders meet. Close enough to just hear the fighting. This is the only truly neutral area in Ashnoor, supported by both factions to indicate where there borders divide. Serving as a means to guarantee either side doesn't have a strategic edge. A means to prevent circumventing a costly and wasteful border force south.

As such both factions allow major trade though the city, vast networks of trade funnels in and out of the city. Workers and caravans working their way around tight highways.

Due to neither faction taking total control, overcrowding and poor organization crime, squalor and disease is rampant. Most people don't settle, choosing to go straight through one massive border gate and crossing the other on the other side of town. Those who do, find life in the fast lane hard, almost impossible.

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Other Information of Note

GODS, RELIGION AND FAITH

The Gods are well-known to be real, each faction allowing almost complete freedom for their citizens to follow any faith. So long as it doesn't disturb the daily harmony of others.

Before the fall the gods were few, well known, and powerfully but after the Gods have expanded to the point that there is a certain level of confusion amongst the believers.

Some believe in the same god but believe they are wholly different; some believe in false gods that time has eroded any doubt.

Very seldom do gods interact with the material world although, followers, especially healers derive many of their abilities from them. It is through these abilities and blessings the general population knows that they are real. Although, few actually understand how.

CURRENCY

Although many of the common people trade their wares, the general method of exchange is very a faction backed currency.

Generally speaking, it follows a decimal system of copper, silver, gold and in factors of 100. Meaning 100 copper makes one silver, 100 silver equals a gold.

Thus:

1000 copper	=	100 silver	=	1 gold
100 copper	=	1 silver	=	0.01 gold
1 copper	=	0.01 silver	=	0.001 gold

Each faction has their own style of currency, the exchange though varying from time to time, is fairly equal.

Some towns and stores may or may not accept a form of currency for any number of reasons.

Common people have given the currency local terms for the different values.

TECHNOLOGY

Much of the technology has been lost after the fall, some relics show that Ashnoor once had a firm grasp of a budding industrious society with machines, chemistry and civil sciences rivalling that of our own 18th century.

After the fall, centuries of technologies were lost, reverting to what can be best described as a late medieval era, the pinnacle of replicable tech that being black-powder.

Seafaring is confined to coast vessels equipped to travel very short distances. Most ships are fitted for some level of combat ability as the coast is under a constant threat of either faction or even pirates.

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MAGIC

True magic is rare, difficult to master and overall is limited in what it can do.

Most militaristic magic is in the form of small balls of energy that can be thrown to cause damage, this can take up certain properties like ice and fire. The most powerful of these is the ability to extinguish one's life in an instant.

Culturally, there is a wide variety of opinions around magic and it is not uncommon for individual opinions to be influenced by personal experiences. Some view magic with awe and fascination where others wish magic was not used. Most would agree, however in its potential to be dangerous without the watchful eye of the Mage's Enclave (The Mages Guild) to keep it in check. Mages are *born* with the ability to cast magic, some requiring many years to master it. The Mage's Enclave strives to seek out new mages and aim to educate them on their abilities. There have been in the past mages who have been left unchecked or uneducated that have led to disaster, hence the importance of the Enclaves agenda.

During the Golden Age, magic and science mostly came in hand to hand, with mages and scientists working together to create alerts of wonderful discoveries. But after the cessation of *The Succession Wars*, the two ideologies couldn't be further apart. Over generations of the average population have come to believe that the marring of the two ideologies was taken too far and played a role in the downfall of a once powerful culture.

RACES

A large variety of races co-exist inside the island of Ashnoor including; Humans, Dwarfs, Gnomes, Halflings, ½ Elfs, Bugbears, Lizardmen, Goblins, Orcs, Tritons, Half Orcs and Goliaths.

Note: No full blooded Elfs exist within living memory. Due to the dominance of elven features, any offspring of a ½ Elf are themselves considered ½ Elfs, regardless of actual percentage of elf heritage.

GUILDS

Many Guilds exist in the Lands of Ashnoor. Be it an association of tradesmen (such as the Blacksmiths Guild), Merchants (Such as the Spice Merchants Guild) or Character Class (Such as the Warriors Guild). Guilds perform a variety of functions based on their charter. A Guide to Ashnoor Guilds is currently in development which will detail many, but not all of the Guilds of Ashnoor.

HOUSES

Crucial to the stability of both *The Hadovean Empire* and *The Kingdom of Geldheim* is the fealty of a number of Houses within their lands. The term "House" is a generalized term granted by a faction to represent warband, clans, war parties, families of importance and the like.

Houses exist in a variety of forms inside both factions. From large, powerful Houses, with great influence over a number of generations to smaller Houses perhaps just starting out or fallen out of favour in some way.

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Ashnoor Factions

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE FACTIONS

Although the 2 factions are bitterly and generationally opposed to each other, it should be remembered that essentially, they came from the same stock and as such share a number of similarities including:

- Physically, the people of each faction look similar. There are no features that would separate the people from one from one faction to another.
- Both are multi race societies.
- Both speak the same common tongue, however different regions can sometimes be identified through their accents
- Both factions treat their subjects reasonably well. Both factions realise that this war is as much for the hearts and minds than a battle of force. Neither side would want rebellion. Land deeper into faction lands often have a stronger loyalty
- Both factions view the other as the “bad guys”. Children are raised on tales painting their opposing faction as cruel and heartless, while their own faction is a champion of the people and good virtue
- Both build their forts out of the strongest available materials.
- Both have a reasonable respect for nature, however should the need arise to chop down some trees to build fortifications, they will do so without hesitation.
- Both factions have strong control over their lands and demand loyalty from their subjects.
- Both factions are capable of raising armies.
- Both factions wear reasonably similar clothing
- The climate in both factions is similar
- The presence of the guild in Doomsayers Keep have had the effect of keeping the level of technology on both side fairly even

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WHERE THEY DIFFER - *THE KINGDOM OF GELDHEIM*

- **Currency** – Gold Crown, Silver Fleur, Copper Throne



- **Most Valued Skills** - Inventors / Tradesman / Intellectuals
- **Most Valued Mental Trait** – Intellect
- **Most Valued Physical Trait** – Strength / Constitution
- **System of Government** - Hereditary (King/Queen)
- **Preferred Precious Element** - Gold
- **Preferred Building Material for Buildings of Cultural Significance** - Sandstone
- **Respect for History and Tradition** - Strong sense of history. Although flexible in their traditions will stick to the old ways unless it can be proven the new way is better. Believes that lesson can be learned from the past

WHERE THEY DIFFER - *THE HADOVEAN EMPIRE*

- **Currency** – Gold Stag, Silver Horn, Copper Hoof



- **Most Valued Skills** Artists / Poets / Philosophers
- **Most Valued Mental Trait** – Creativity
- **Most Valued Physical Trait** – Dexterity
- **System of Government** – Emperor/Empress determined by an elite group of individuals that make up the Senate
- **Preferred Precious Element** - Mithril
- **Preferred Building Material for Buildings of Cultural Significance** - Marble
- **Respect for History and Tradition** - Reasonable sense of history but tend to look more towards the future. Will remove a tradition if it no longer suits their purpose