

The Structure of the Scarlet Brotherhood

By the hand of Morrev son of Jerrev son of Rogev son of Morrand of the Clan Ironseeker, sage and scholar formerly of Scant, in Patchwall of this, the Common Year 591.

The structure of the Scarlet Brotherhood - even after three years of occupation and four years of rebellion and war remains obscure. It has become clear that the pre-war opinion that the Scarlet Brotherhood was no more than an isolated and fanatical sect was tragically incorrect. The bitter lesson which the last seven terrible years have taught is that the Brotherhood encompasses an entire social structure of its own centred around the central belief in the superiority of the Suel race and its divine right to rule all others. The sole purpose of this highly ordered structure appears to be to turn this belief into reality in the subjugation of the free peoples of the Flanaess.

What we know of the Brotherhood comes from bitter and direct experience of their deeds. These lessons are written in the blood of those who suffered at their hands, both here and in the other lands which fell beneath their dominion.

Subterfuge

The first thing to know is that which most people in the Flanaess think of when they consider the Brotherhood of the Scarlet Sign - their use of and skill in the areas of subterfuge and deception for espionage and assassination. Reports tell that the highest positions of the Brotherhood's hierarchy appear to be filled by those specialising in subtle and secretive arts. Even though the Brotherhood's armies have conquered whole nations and its ships strangle the seas, these remain the most dangerous and effective weapons in the Brotherhood's arsenal. This the slain defenders of Scant cry out from their graves.

Brotherhood spies penetrated nearly every aspect of Onnwalish life, while even the chambers of the Szek were not impregnable to the daggers of the Brotherhood's assassins. Onnwal's ruling and military structure was undone from within by a combination of traitors and assassins. With the leadership of the country crippled and her defences bypassed or neutralised, Onnwal lay helpless before the invading hordes.

Even today, the leaders of Free Onnwal must live in hiding for fear of the long arm of the Scarlet Sign. This has not prevented a

number attempts on the lives of both Rakehell Chert and Jian Destron - all of which have thankfully been unsuccessful. It is probable that spies yet remain among the populace and even among the ranks of Army of Free Onnwal. The extent to which they have spread can only be guessed at and dreaded.

Yet even where there are no spies - the suspicion and mistrust which their possibility of their existence engenders can be nearly as crippling. The armies of the Brotherhood may be driven back to Scant, but their influence remains throughout the land - and in a far more dangerous form than serried ranks of soldiery.

For those who doubt my words, I urge them to consider my earlier work showing how the unseen hand of the Scarlet Sign moved and shaped events all across the Flanaess for years before the Greyhawk Wars - to terrible effect. Ignore my warnings at your peril!

Military

Before the Wars, few if any among the free nations guessed at the martial might which the Brotherhood had at its disposal. We in Onnwal though are eyewitnesses to that might - and it is the part of the Brotherhood's organisation about which we know most. On land and sea their forces appear to be divided in three parts - each seemingly with its own chain of command. Armies are segregated into Suel descended humans, humanoids and slaves. Slaves and humanoids (mostly Hochebi) are generally used as shock troops with the Suel being more valued. They are used for important tactical and strategic manoeuvres and for garrison duty. The navy is largely composed of Suel humans, with galleys being powered by slave rowers. During the invasion, the Brotherhood's army and navy co-ordinated well to effect landings in Scant, Longbridge and Sornhill, capturing most of Onnwal's navy intact. Land forces pushed relentlessly inland, surrounding and bypassing the scattered resistance that stood in its path and driving the remaining shreds of Onnwal's army into the Headlands. Only here did the relentless pursuit cease. Some have expressed surprise at this, for with only a small expenditure of further effort would have been sufficient to wipe out the surviving Onnwalish forces almost in their entirety. However it is no doubt some as yet obscure manifestation of the wicked web of machinations which the

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Scarlet Sign weave ever more tightly about the free peoples of the Flanaess.

During the occupation, Brotherhood military forces occupied garrison roles - only occasionally making forays into the hills to hunt down guerrillas. The Navy maintained, as it still does, its stranglehold of the Straits of Gearnat and harried Onnwalish ships making the crossing between Nyronnd and Irongate and later Kildeer. One point worth noting is the difference between the performance of the Brotherhood's armies during the invasion and during the Brewfest rebellion. In contrast to the precision and organisation which were so devastatingly evident in 584 CY, the Brotherhood's land forces in 587 CY seemed confused and lacking in discipline, co-ordination and aggression. It is unclear what changes might have occurred, but their effects were certainly significant and in my view worrying. The land armies of the Brotherhood are now confined largely to the western half of the lowlands around Scant, its hinterland and parts of the Storm and Azure Coasts. Fighting is again reported around Sornhill from which the Brotherhood was driven only a few months ago. The Brotherhood navy continues to threaten the tenuous link between Free Onnwal and Nyronnd.

Governance

After the soldiers came the rulers. The accursed name of Exhaulted Sister Kuranyie - so called Shepherd of Onnwal is one with which all the people of Onnwal are painfully familiar. Under her rule and the rule of her Kesh, the laws of the Brotherhood were enforced in the place of those we inherited from Schandor Lawgiver in the Golden Age of the Great Kingdom. Though many try to forget them, the three tenets of the Suel law are imprinted on the memory of all who lived under the yolk of the Brotherhood:

The Destiny of the Suel: Do not take actions that slow the Suel people on the path to their true destiny

The Bonds of the Brotherhood: The Brotherhood has a shared birthright. Behold their superiority above the slave races.

The Words of the Fathers: Acknowledge the authority of your superiors and obey their commands.

Or in short: Order, Purity, Obedience.

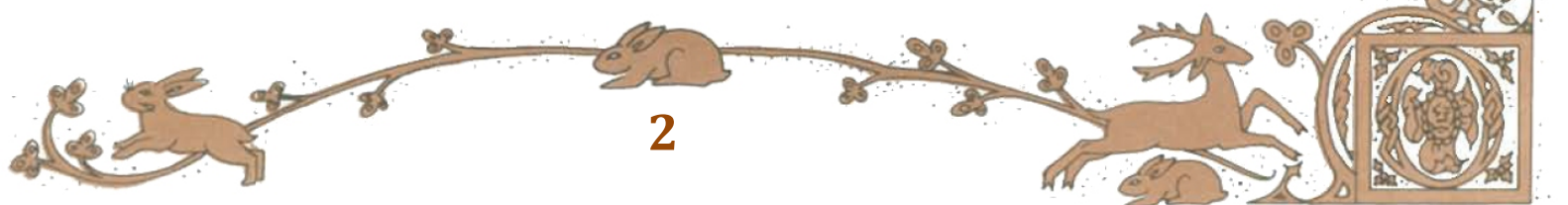
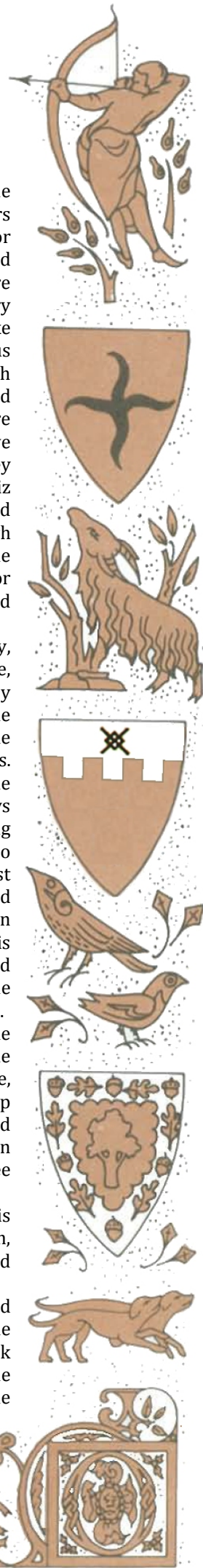
Order and obedience were maintained by the army - but purity was maintained by others among the rulers. Who can forget the terror they felt when the red robed ones marched into their villages and gathered the entire populace together at sword point? Every person was recorded and examined like animals at a fair. Then they divided us according to their ideals of purity. Those with Suel blood were called subcitizens and allowed to keep their lands. Others being of the pure Suel strain were taken away - and these have never been seen again. Those who they deemed impure - humans, Dwur and Noniz alike - were enslaved. Some disappeared and their fate remains a mystery. Most though were made into beasts of burden, building the temples to the gods of the Brotherhood or toiling in the great plantations they created from the confiscated lands.

Slaves were not allowed to own property, being chattels themselves. The goods of noble, merchant and peasant alike was confiscated by the Brotherhood. Some was given into the hands of collaborators and subcitizens, some was taken by the red robed ones themselves. Even as the people toiled and died in the streets and in the fields, they did so always with the doctrine of the Brotherhood being recited into their ears. For some it was too much and their spirit and their will to resist were broken. They became like the living dead - empty shells of people - more puppets than men. Full many a strong thewed man had his mind broken thus and where once he had snarled defiance there now came only the death-rattle chant: "Order, Purity, Obedience".

The slave drivers and those who in league with them reaped at just harvest in the Brewfest Rebellion. When the liberation came, the tables were turned. The slaves rose up against their tormentors and many suffered brutal deaths - hung, or burnt or even scourged to death with their own whips. Three years of torment were repaid in full.

The people of Scant still dwell beneath this terrible yolk. May the day soon come when, they like us, may throw off their shackles and stand free and proud once more.

Furthermore the fate of the Disappeared remains unresolved. Not only were some taken away over the seas, but Kuranyie took one hostage from each household - a terrible living tax to ensure the obedience of the



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people. What has become of these since the Brewfest Rebellion is a topic of much debate and anguish.

Religion

Not content to undo the works of men, the Brotherhood also threw down the works of the Gods. Those faiths deemed impure were outlawed, their temples levelled and their clergy martyred or driven into hiding. Some of the Suel faiths, such as Xerbo, welcomed the invaders with open arms, others had their clergy imprisoned and subjected to what the Scarlet Ones called "re-education". The effects of this re-education is fearful to behold - the victims are broken in will and in mind - parroting the false faith of the Brotherhood incessantly. Some are so enthralled that they call curse upon the heads of those they once named friends and will even resort to violence in the name of the Scarlet Sign.

In the place of the old gods, the Brotherhood brought new ones. Bralm - the Toiling Lady and mistress of thralls, who's priests urged slaves to work hard in the name of the Brotherhood as they dropped like corn stalks at the reaping; Llerg - to whom the warriors of the Brotherhood called as they shed the blood of innocents; dread Pyremius - the Blazing Killer - who's followers spread death and terror before them; Syrul, Mother of Lies and Wee Jas - the Stern Lady, who's priests helped enforce the unjust laws of the Brotherhood upon the people. These were not all - Lydia's priests, who taught the children to spy upon their parents and to sing gaily of the enslavement of other races; the collaborators of Xerbo's and Norebo's churches who grow fat while their countrymen suffer; and the captives of Osprem's faith - many now broken beneath the foot of the conquerors.

Yet amidst all this zealous preaching where was mention of the Dark God, whom as it is well known since the years before the Wars, the followers of the Scarlet Sign have the highest devotion for? There was none. Not one

sermon, not one shrine or temple was raised in plain sight to the Slumbering One. Why have the priests of the Scarlet Sign taken such pain to implant their Suel faiths in the populace, but been seemingly oblivious to one of their main religions. It is clear that the Brotherhood is concealing the most terrible aspects of their society - even perhaps from some of its own people. It is sobering to consider that if the Brotherhood are not ashamed to burn farmers and priests publically - what acts are so terrible that even they are moved to conceal them?

The preaching of the Suel faiths is but a distraction, a mask hiding the true face of the Brotherhood's devotion. While the people sing the catachisms of Bralm and Pyremius, the masters bow down before the idols of the Dark One. This in turn reveals to us that the ultimate goal of the Brotherhood is not merely the domination of the Flanaess, but the liberation of He Who Must Forever Slumber from his imprisonment and his return to the Oerth.

Magic

It has become clear that like the ancient Suel to whom they aspire to equal, the Brotherhood has access to great magics. They have perverted the laws of Nature and the Oerth to create terrible monsters which have plagued many parts of the country especially since the Brewfest Rebellion. Furthermore they can command the terrible creatures of the sea to rise up and smite their enemies.

Fearsome stories and rumours abound about the strange goings on at the dreaded prison spire of Obelstone Keep. It is said that many dark magics are worked there and that the prisoners held there are the grist for this ghoulish mill of sorcery. It has been rumoured indeed that Obelstone might be the site of the hidden temples to the Great Destroyer. May the Gods preserve us if half of what is spoken of there is true.