

# Living Greyhawk™

*Journal*

*Storm & Spinecastle!*

*Secrets of Veralos Revealed!*

*New Prestige Class:*

*Slaves of Agharadian*

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# Places of Mystery

## Spinecastle and Veralos

by Gary Holian • illustrated by Kalman Andrasofszky

The Flanaess bears no shortage of exotic locales in which adventurers can risk their lives chasing the barest rumors of treasure. Great dungeons such as those found in the Wormerawl Fissure, the Belching Vortex of Leuk-B, or White Rump Mountain predominate the tavern talk of would-be heroes, but not all adventure locales are "gilded holes" waiting to be plundered. A few of the most notable sites in the Flanaess, from the point of view of men and women seeking dangerous thrills and rich rewards, are citadels and keeps. Foremost among such structures is the legendary Castle Greyhawk, but two other strongholds, Spinecastle and Veralos, deserve further attention.

## The Ruins of Spinecastle

Once a name that represented honor and glory in victory to the Aerdi people, Spinecastle is now a place steeped in infamy. Centuries ago, the land upon which this great castle was built was the site of the largest battle in the history of the Great Kingdom, the bloody Battle of the Shamblefield (108 CY), in which thousands of northern Suel barbarians clashed with legions of imperial troops. The Aerdi eventually won the day, and the heroics of Lord Caldni Vir (later elevated to Marquis of the Bone March) are well recounted. But to protect the northern provinces of the Great Kingdom from invasion through the strategic Kalmar Pass, construction of the most vast castle the Flanaess has ever known continued unabated. The clash left thousands of Aerdi and Frost Barbarian corpses among the works of the newly built fortress. So many were these dead that their bodies were left unsanctified and often unburied—farmers plowing nearby land regularly turned up bleached bones centuries after the battle. Some even whispered that these remains found their way into the original mortar of the castle's labyrinthine walls. The blood of the Aerdi fallen hallowed the ground in the eyes of the stout marquises who would rule from Spinecastle for the next 450 years, but the Fruztii pronounced a curse upon the place. A curse which went largely ignored by the lords of the Bone March, some say to their peril.

Many misfortunes have befallen the rulers of Spinecastle over the years, including mysterious illnesses and death, but none greater than the fall of its last known lord, the Marquis Clement. The fortress was sacked by surprise in 563 CY by marauding tribes of orcs and gnolls who first emerged from the Rakers *en masse* in 561 CY. These humanoid invaders swept across the march over the next two years and put most of its leaders to the sword. Presumably, this included Clement and his family, who sheltered at the impregnable Spinecastle until the final assault by the orcs. The marquis, along with many of the surviving nobles and richest merchants of the land, held out hope for succor from Ratik or the North Province, but it never came. The city of Spinecastle fell suddenly and surprisingly to the invaders after a prolonged siege. Most rumors at the time indicated that the castle's defenses were pierced from within, that dark and hidden ways unknown even to the residents of the castle were suddenly laid open from the depths. Whispers spoke of a dark betrayal, and this tragedy only served to confirm for some the notion that Spinecastle was cursed. The invading orcs and gnolls



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made quick work of the inhabitants who sheltered in the castle during the siege.

The savage humanoids, led by their vile shamans and bloodthirsty warchiefs, searched in vain for the hidden treasures of Spinecastle. Great wealth and magic from all over the march were certainly hidden in the vast castle by the besieged defenders, but the plunder and spoils expected by the invaders never materialized. The Euroz (orc) tribes searching the castle were soon struck by a series of horrors that drove them from the vast complex in unremitting fear. Members of missing patrols were sometimes found splayed and hung from the walls of the castle in a gory pastiche. Lone individuals were discovered hacked to pieces in solitary rooms of the castle, their heads and hands missing. Blood ran from the ceilings of chambers during the middle of war councils. Some claimed that walls and whole rooms even appeared and disappeared. Monsters, fierce enough to unnerve even the heartiest of Rakers inhabitants, were found rampaging the halls, attacking and killing whole patrols. The orcs quickly abandoned the castle, retreating instead to the confines of the surrounding city, which they still hold to this day, twenty-five years later. Their shamans would no longer approach the place, which they now deemed haunted, or allow others to do so. Bloody Spinecastle seemed determined to hold fast to its secrets.

**DM's Notes:** The vast complex at Spinecastle is built on an imposing spur of angular rock jutting from the Rakers. It guards the southern terminus of Kalmar Pass, which cuts through the mountains, forming the primary passage between the Bone March and Ratik. Spinecastle overlooks a large walled town of the same name, which is now only a shadow of its former self. The city is an armed camp inhabited mostly by orcs, brigands, and enslaved humanity totaling a few thousand souls. The vaulted castle, composed of a massive central keep and many interconnected towers, has deep dungeons dug straight into the mountains. The keep and its towers have remained uninhabited for close to three decades, though the walls look to be in good condition. They were largely untouched by the orcs during the wars, as the savage humanoids possessed few siege engines capable of harming them. The high quarter closest to the castle is lightly patrolled to prevent incursions into the castle, but the orcs are highly reluctant to follow anyone into the place should they gain access. It is widely rumored that much of the magical wealth and treasures of the Bone March still lie unclaimed within its walls. Over the years,



many thieves and intrepid adventurers have pierced the armed camp of orcs surrounding the castle to brave the passages of Spinecastle. These furtive attempts to plumb the depths of the mysterious edifice have produced few successes—indeed most explorers do not return at all. On the rarest occasions, however, explorers have emerged with wondrous artifacts or sacks laden in riches. Despite the efforts of the orcs, a clandestine cottage industry has emerged, catering to the would-be treasure hunters.

The mystery surrounding the fall of Clement remains among the central issues forming the legend of the castle. The largest fortress in the Flanaess was somehow taken virtually overnight. It is almost certain that the besieged defenders of Spinecastle were betrayed from within, but how this was accomplished remains a mystery. The bodies of the marquis and his family were never found, nor was





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the *Key of Spinecastle*, a talisman of gnarled bone worn by the lords of the place for centuries. The only surviving plans to the complex, once housed within the archives of the royal architecture school at Eastfair, have disappeared. No other copies survive. Many suspect that Grenell, now the self-styled Overking of North Kingdom, betrayed his Aerdi cousins to the north by divulging the secrets of the castle's defenses to the chiefs of the Euroz in the Rakers, with whom he is now tenuously allied. The orcs are thought to have gained access to the castle from below, through the Underdark, from ways even the former lords of Spinecastle did not know. But their sway was short-lived, for something in the castle drove them away, mad with fear.

No one knows what force penetrated Spinecastle's walls and now roams the fortress. A full exploration of Spinecastle would prove exceedingly difficult, as the hundreds of labyrinthine chambers that comprise the castle includes levels that descend deep into the foothills of the Rakers. The most common rumor in town is that some dark diabolical force from deep within the earth followed on the heels of the invading orcs into the castle from the Underdark and now inhabits the castle as its own private demesne. The appearance of heinous monsters within the walls of the edifice is surely explained by the existence of these passages laid open from below. However, a less-frequently told tale suggests that the blundering orcs disturbed a slumbering spirit of the Fruztii, which is wreaking its vengeance upon all who would invade the hallowed ground of the Frost Barbarian dead.

## Veralos, Lost Citadel of the Flan

As the scholar Neziridas of Rel Deven has often noted in his highly underrated (though often controversial) histories, much of the culture and heritage of the ancient Flan was wiped out or driven to the periphery of the Flanaess by the invading Oeridian and Suel tribes during the Great Migrations. These nascent conquerors pulled down ancient settlements, built new ones atop them, and in the process of settling eastern Oerik destroyed the bulk of ancient Flannish magic, art, and writings. Surely, some of these societies (such as the infamous tyrants of the Trask) were quite evil and exceedingly bellicose, leaving the invaders no choice. But this slow cultural diaspora has left modern folk with the impression that the culture of the ancient peoples of the Flanaess was quite rudimentary. Indeed, the word Flan has become synonymous with primitive, and most of what survives to the present day is myth and legend, preserved only by a proud oral tradition still practiced among certain Flannaes conclaves such as the Tenhas and the northern nomads.

One persistent legend among the Flan is that of a wondrous citadel, said to have sat near the very heart of the Flanaess in ancient times, when kingdoms of the Ur-Flan spanned the length and breadth of the subcontinent. Known as Veralos, a word meaning "aerie" in the ancient tongue of the Flan, the structure was supposedly erected somewhere near the cracked and broken ridge of the Rift Canyon, in what is now referred to as the Bandit Kingdoms. According to the oral traditions, the stronghold

was the retreat of princely Ur-Flan scholars, artisans, and mystics in ancient times. It was a repository of great knowledge, learning, and contemplation, drawing disciples from many neighboring kingdoms. These highly-skilled Flan were said to have created extraordinary wonders (such as magical tablets, statuary, ensorcelled jewelry, and astounding weapons) often by commission for the lords of lands such as Sulm, Itar, Ahlissa, and Nuria. The gathered lords of the citadel even paid fealty to the Wizard-Priests of the Isles of Woe, until that fell dominion sank beneath the waves early in prehistory.

Veralos was supposedly thrown down just prior to the arrival of the migrants following the Twin Cataclysms. The legends say the inhabitants of Veralos fell victim to a curse brought on by the residents themselves, when the society was consumed by a panic caused by the oncoming and inexorable eastward march of the Aerdi tribes, who were first reported on the western shores of the Nyr Dyv in 1785 FT. Rarer legends, common only in the Bright Desert, tell of the arrival of a prophet to the ancient citadel. Using their fear against them, he persuaded the residents of Veralos to turn to an enigmatic sinister force for succor. Dabbling in dark rites came naturally to the Ur-Flan, and some say that by rousing a sleeping power from the depths of the canyon they were ultimately destroyed, leaving their citadel and treasures unguarded.

Centuries later, as the Great Kingdom expanded to the west, the Aerdi took little interest in the badlands north of the Rift Canyon, favoring the fertile lands to the south where they settled the Shield Lands, connecting their vast east-west provinces of Nyron and Ferrond. No real effort was made to locate the ruins of Veralos, as many Flannish legends had proved to be spurious or highly exaggerated. Even so, the territory surrounding the Rift Canyon stretches over 400 miles around the rim and encompasses thousands of square miles. It is characterized by a harsh badlands, which has served to protect the supposed location of the lost citadel from curious eyes for centuries. According to the legends, Veralos is not a large complex, comprising no more than one hundred buildings arranged tightly together and surrounded by a wall made from the same stone that lines the canyon. With few buildings rising more than two stories and much of the stronghold built into the canyon wall itself, there are no spires to give away its location. Little else distinguishes it from the surrounding bluffs and so, if it ever existed, it has remained hidden for centuries.

The city would have probably remained lost to the mists of prehistory were it not for the efforts of a young lord from a burgeoning city south of the Nyr Dyv called Greyhawk. In 318 CY, the eccentric Zagig Yragerne led a quixotic expedition of his companions on a quest to locate the lost Flan citadel of Veralos. He was accompanied by such young personages as Murlynd and Keoghtom, who among others formed the auspicious Company of Seven. After a much-ballyhooed sendoff, they did not return to the city until almost a year after their departure. They surprisingly claimed to have not only found Veralos, but to have plundered it, producing a wagon laden with unusual treasures as proof of their success. Most of the wondrous material ended up in the private collections of the Seven,





but some of it was sold off to sorcerous societies and the rest lost in future campaigns. Their expedition single-handedly revived the legend of the lost citadel of the Flan, and while many followed in their wake to seek out the place, few succeeded. Those few who did either returned with little to show for their efforts or didn't return at all.

**DM's Notes:** Veralos does exist, and it is located along the northern edge of the Rift Canyon, but the land immediately surrounding the ruin is reportedly cracked and perilously dotted with sinkholes, making it difficult to approach. Mordenkainen himself has reluctantly confirmed as much on a few occasions, especially to the mage Nystul (of Flannish heritage) who took a particular interest in the place.

However, Veralos is not an uninhabited ruin waiting to be despoiled, even if its significant geographical impediments can be overcome. While Zagig reported that his expedition had been a great success, the truth of the matter was revealed by Keoghtom over a century later in a letter to the famed bard Heward. The group of explorers, who spent months tracking down the exact location of the place, only blundered upon it after taking shelter from the rapacious servants of the great dracolich Dragotha, whose lair they disturbed while seeking out the citadel. The Company of Seven were lucky to escape with their lives, for no more than half a day into their exploration of the mysterious stronghold they were attacked by pillars of dark smoke that began to form everywhere they went. These dark spirits were of a shadowy semi-corporeal form previously uncatalogued in the Flanaess. But the wily Zagig would not be driven off before risking life and limb to recover as many artifacts as he could carry. He discovered a prototype for his infamous binding cages and was able to load the partial contents of a library in which he discovered the infamous *Tome of the Black Heart*. The group sped out of Veralos, racing the sunrise for their lives with death nipping at their heels.

Keoghtom had nearly forgotten his fear of that day until a century later when a dark form materialized in his forest fastness in the Celadon and confronted him in his private sanctum. The shadow attacked him by surprise, trying seemingly to tear an amulet from his chest. The powerful alchemist soon dispatched the creature, suffering only minor harm. However, his comfort was shaken and he sat down to write a letter to his confidant, Heward. Only later did he learn that the attacker was one of shadows from the old Flan citadel he had explored so long ago.

Veralos Shadows are the evil transmogrified former inhabitants of Veralos. They are highly intelligent, powerful



shadows (8 HD) with the ability to *teleport* within darkness twice per day at any range. Once roused, the spirits pursue their quarry until they've been driven out of the citadel or are dead. They are not purposefully malicious, desiring only the recovery of lost lore stolen from their citadel. On rare occasions, they are willing to go far afield to track down their pilfered treasures. ✨

Gary Holian co-wrote the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer* and maintains *Canonfire*, a *WORLD OF GREYHAWK* fansite ([www.canonfire.com](http://www.canonfire.com)).

This month's interior cover depicts Mordenkainen the Archmage as seen through the eyes of artist Greg Staples.

## Campaign News Will Return!

As this issue of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Journal* went to press, the RPGA staff was hard at work preparing for *WINTER FANTASY™*, the Network's premiere convention and one of the cornerstones of organized roleplaying in the United States. There's plenty to tell you about upcoming *LIVING GREYHAWK™* events and activities, so tune in next issue for a full report!





# A Splintered Sun

## Onnwal and the Glaives of Azharadian

By Stuart Kerrigan (with assistance from the Onnwal Design Team)

Illustration by Todd Lockwood

The Greyhawk Wars brought ruin to dozens of nations in the Flanaess, but few suffered as greatly as the Free State of Onnwal. Overpowered by the villainous Scarlet Brotherhood during that great struggle, only recently has the country regained a sense of normalcy, as its inhabitants arose to cast away the strictures of Suloise tyranny. Foremost in the battle against the occupiers was the Order of the Golden Sun, Onnwal's only chivalric order. The order's elite knights, the Glaives of Azharadian, take their name and credo from Azharadian, a great general of Aerdian antiquity said to be a Child of Johydee, a man so gifted that he never lost a single battle during his long lifetime. The knighthood forms a cult of personality within Onnwal, serving citizens of the Free State in their battles against the remnants of the Scarlet Sign.

All is not well within the order, however. A plan to integrate commoners into the ranks of what was once a purely noble institution has brought cries of concern from many corners, and claims of dark betrayals on the eve of the Brotherhood's occupation continue to haunt the organization. Whatever the future holds for the people of Onnwal, it seems clear that the Knights of Azharadian will play an important role.

To understand the present status of the Order of the Golden Sun, it is necessary to delve into the history of the man for whom the order is named—Azharadian the Great.

### *The Time of Azharadian*

Even in an age in which his homeland has fallen to darkness and despair, the noble Azharadian is hailed as one of the finest generals in the history of the Great Kingdom. There is no greater testament to his skill than the fact that in his 40 years of campaigning he never lost a major battle. To many, Azharadian represents the greatness of the Aerdian during their halcyon days. As a man, his integrity and honor were beyond reproach. An ardent reverer of Heironeous, the general recorded his thoughts and lessons from his campaigns late in life in *The Strictures of Azharadian*, a work which forms the creed of the Order of the Golden Sun.

Azharadian's war captains had the utmost respect for him. Their accounts often mention his idiosyncrasies. At times he could seem aloof and distracted, while other times he spoke resoundingly and empathized with his men. Time and time again he was able to rally the common man to take up arms and fight for the Golden Sun of Aerdia, even when they seemed close to faltering. Azharadian was also a

magnificent general, able to second-guess his opponent's moves before they themselves had made them.

Azharadian's life ended on the soil of Onnwal, far removed from his home and family in Rel Astra. Historians claim it was a disease of the lungs that claimed him, but the folktale "The General and the Reaper" is a more

### THE STRICTURES OF AZHARADIAN

*The Strictures of Azharadian* contains both the general's personal writings on warfare, strategy, and the philosophy of war and the commentaries of his captains and distinguished glaives of the past. The *Strictures* are considered the template for the perfect glaive, and the volume is studied extensively by all members of the order. It is worth noting that while the *Strictures* themselves are succinct, several of the more scholarly knights over the years have written lengthy commentaries spanning several tomes.

A chapter dealing with "The Virtues of the Ideal Warrior" is held up as a code of conduct to which all the glaives of the order must adhere.

*Compassion—In battle and in peace, never stand idle when the innocent cry out for aid. It is your duty and your honor as one of superior lineage to protect the weak and champion that which is right.*

*Honor the Brethren—Treat your fellow knights as if they shared your family's blood. We are all brothers in battle. If one of the brethren requests sanctuary, provide it.*

*Valor—Valor is the hand that gathers the flame of selfish courage and cools it with the beliefs that we share. To demand valor of oneself is to lead the way for others to find it in their hearts.*

*Humility—Ever at our heels is one of the greatest foes of all—hubris. Though our deeds may be great and our history worthy, one must be wary of the begetter of pride and discontent. To find humility you must bear witness to the pride in your spirit. Only after such an examination can you call fourth the winds of humility.*

*Justice—Justice is an elusive quality that does not shine in the fog of war. One must always judge with a level eye and with conviction in the pursuit of truth.*

*Atonement—For those who have truly strayed too far from the path of these strictures, the only way your soul shall find salvation is through the blade of your own axe.*



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romantic account of Azharadian's fight against death itself to win his final campaign in Onnwal. Upon his death, The general's body was returned to Rel Astra, where his tomb remains to this day. His war banner and axe, however, remained in Onnwal. The renowned axe *Bardinar* ("Glaive of Victory" in Old Oeridian) is said to be interred inside a large pillar raised on the site of Azharadian's death in tribute to the general, while the banner remained in the keeping of his captains.

## A Rising Sun

Upon their return to Rel Astra with their general's body, Azharadian's four war captains were each given generous land grants in Onnwal; their families and retainers became the Great Houses of Onnwal. The families and comrades of the ennobled captains were to form the core not only of Onnwal's Great Noble Houses, but also of the Order of the Golden Sun, a chivalrous order dedicated to preserving the principles by which Azharadian had lived. Founded in the year 600 OR on the site of Azharadian's death at the edge of the Headlands, the order takes its name from the Golden Sun of Aerdy that formed the centerpiece of Azharadian's heraldry.

The order was never popular outside Onnwal, with the more established Knight Protectors of the Great Kingdom viewing them as a little more a fringe cult blindly devoted to a dead (albeit extremely impressive) military genius. Nevertheless, the captains of Azharadian and their descendants kept alive the traditions of their deceased paragon. From its inception, the ranks of the Glaives were restricted to those of noble blood. A second group, the Glaives Cohort, was founded to cater initially for the noble's retainers, though later it also accepted priests of Heironeous. The Cohort became the sole focus of the Invincible One's faith in Onnwal, though its doctrine of chivalry and honorable battle found little purchase among the Onnwalon peasantry.

In 447 CY, the Glaives were key players in the rebellion against the Szek, Trevellyn of Hexpools, a crony of the oppressive Naelax Herzog of South Province. It was they who marched upon the Szek's palace in Scant and seized it from Trevellyn's bodyguards, signaling the end of Aerdi rule in Onnwal. When Parmus Destron, the first ruler of a free and independent Onnwal, ascended to the throne, he did not forget the role of the Order of the Golden Sun. In return for the prestige and honors he lavished upon them, the knights swore oaths that bound their fates to that of the Szeks of Onnwal forevermore.

## A Splintered Sun

During the Greyhawk Wars, the order fought with distinction on the plains of Idee. Just prior to the fall of Onnwal in 584 CY, the Glaives were summoned to a conclave in the chapterhouse of the Order in Scant's Bastion of the Golden Sun. On the eve of the meeting, however, Scarlet Brotherhood assassins struck at Onnwal's leaders, including Glaive Superior Jian Relaster, master of the order. Those knights gathered at the Bastion of the Golden Sun found themselves assailed by advance parties of Brotherhood

forces bent on disabling the city's seaward defences. By dawn the surviving members of the Glaives and the Cohort had been trapped in the temple of Heironeous inside the Bastion. They could only look in despair as the red-sailed ships of the Scarlet Sign passed unaccosted beneath Scant's defences and began to land troops in the Inner Harbor. They fought grimly to the last man. The fate of Azharadian's Banner, upon which all new glaives swore their oaths, is unknown, but it is feared that it was destroyed by the Brotherhood.

By the time of the Brewfest Rebellion in 586 CY, only six glaives remained alive, all having been outside Scant during its fall for various reasons. The Cohort suffered similar losses, with fewer than a dozen surviving. The Golden Sun entered a dark period, splintered by suspicion and mistrust. The most senior surviving glaive, Gellen Cadwale, Duke-apparent of the Azure Coast, should be the undisputed head of the order. However, Cadwale was the one who bore the writ recalling the glaives to their doom in Scant. Cadwale is deeply concerned that the order is on the verge of extinction, and he has proposed that the conditions for membership be extended to accept commoners in an effort to bolster their numbers.

Halrend Lorendrenn, Baron of Dunheern and a decorated hero of the Greyhawk Wars, openly denounces Cadwale as a traitor to the order and the Free State. The surviving members of the order have become polarized between the two leaders, with Glaive Virtuuous Tiren Farness and Glaive Valorous Baernen Keldas backing the duke and the younger Glaive Martials Milos Faskel and Dorlan Maldrenn backing Baron Halrend. Each knight has questioned the other's reason for being outside the city at the time, and there is a conviction that one among the two front-runners must be a traitor. This corrosive mistrust has split the surviving knights into two camps and has prevented the election of a new Glaive Superior.

## The Glaive Cohort

The Glaive Cohort consists of priests of the Invincible One, men-at-arms from the households of the noble glaives and those aspiring to the ranks of the glaives. Most members of the Cohort have earned their places through their deeds. Cohorts act to support the knighthood, in battle as well as in spiritual and moral matters. Most possess riding skill and keep a strong horse. Armor serves as an important point of pride to members of the Cohort, who often bedeck themselves in elaborate chain or full plate. The Cohort greatly values members with martial skill, particularly those with affinity for the battleaxe and lance.

## Glaive Errant of the Cohort

Supplicants to the Glaives of Azharadian make up a large part of the Glaive Cohort, chosen to undertake the training and trials to officially enter the greater knighthood. Such squires are called Glaives Errant of the Cohort, and have until recently consisted only of members of the nobility. Each glaive errant typically serves one of the knights as a squire. In exchange for being bound to a full glaive by an oath of fealty, the glaive errant is taught the ways of the order by the his mentor.





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Given that this protocol was until recently primarily used for exchanging young and promising noblemen in an attempt to broaden their horizons and enrich bonds between Onnwal's noble families, service in the Glaive Errant has resulted in many life-long friendships between former squires and their sponsors, resulting in stronger ties between the nobility. Few can predict how the inclusion of commoners will affect this old tradition.

Candidates for the order are considered members of the Glaives Cohort from the time they are proposed to the time they are dubbed. They can therefore wear the symbol of the Cohort and must conform to the standards of behavior that govern the activity of all members of the order.

## Pillars of the Order

### Three Glaives of Azharadian

The following NPCs might very well shape the future of the order, and each plays an important role in the politics of modern Onnwal.

### Duke-Apparent Gellen Cadwale (Pal 6/Gla 8), Glaive Virtuous

(AL LG; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 18)  
Of medium build and standing just under six feet tall, Gellen Cadwale appears to have aged beyond his 42 years. Subtly whitening steely gray hair rests atop what seems to be a constantly furrowed brow. Always a serious man, Gellen's eyes of late seem to stare warily into the distance. To the outward observer, Gellen bears the mark of one who carries the fate of the world upon his weary shoulders.

Gellen bore the recall order that many consider the coincidental death knell of the order. Accordingly, many question his loyalty to the knighthood and to Onnwal itself, seeing secret schemes in the timing of his order. Gellen's detractors claim that the occupation of Onnwal is the best thing that ever happened to him. The view has some merit—Gellen emerged from the occupation as the senior-most surviving Glaive of Azharadian, and with the death of his brother, Duke Ansend, he gained the ducal coronet of the Azure Coast.

Gellen appears deeply concerned that the order stands on the brink of extinction, a conviction that propelled him to suggest extending membership in the order to commoners, an extremely unpopular proposal in some quarters.

Despite his controversial position and rumors of dangerous self-aggrandizement, Gellen has managed to garner the support of two other senior knights, Glaive Virtuous Tiren Farness and Glaive Valorous Baernen Keldas.

### Halrend Lorenndren (Pal 6/Gla 5), Glaive Valorous

(AL LG; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 17)  
A tall, striking man of strong build and prominent Oeridian features, Halrend Lorenndren has the bearing and posture of a professional soldier, an occupation for which House Lorenndren has a strong tradition. Indeed, the family crest bears a golden lightning bolt, symbolizing its dedication to the ideals of Heironeous and Azharadian. Halrend fought with distinction in Idee during the Greyhawk Wars. It was only because he and his banner were cut off from Irongate

while raiding into the South Province that he was not present at the slaughter in Scant.

Lorenndren is convinced that Gellen is a traitor to the order and refuses to acknowledge his claim to the position of Glaive Superior. Privately, he agrees that the order needs new blood, but he opposes Gellen's proposals to extend membership to commoners on the grounds that it is a ploy to recruit more supporters and thus gain the leadership of the order (a position which he, of course, covets for himself). The Glaives Martial Dorlan Maldrenn and Milos Faskel, as well as the majority of the surviving Glaives Cohort, support him.

### Milos Faskel (Ftr 6/Gla 1), Glaive Martial

(AL LG; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16)  
A young man of 25 years, the dashing Milos Faskel strikes a fetching pose with his curly blond hair and athletic build. The youngest among the knights who survived the slaughter in Scant, Milos makes up for any lack in battle-tactics and experience with an overabundance of enthusiasm and energy.

The son of Lord Kalderon, Baron of the High Headland, Milos is no stranger to tragedy—his family has seen plenty of it since the advent of the Greyhawk Wars. His father came to power after Milos' uncle, the former baron, was lured to Scant and slain by the Brotherhood. The family holdings at Notil were seized by the Brotherhood's savage humanoid army, forcing his entire family into hiding. During the occupation, the house joined forces with House Keldas in an attempt to thwart the plans of the Brotherhood while evading capture. Rumors circulate that the alliance may have been more than temporary—according to several within the Order of the Golden Sun, Milos is soon to wed Lady Natalia Keldas in a union that will bring the two powerful houses even closer.

## New Prestige Class

### The Glaive of Azharadian

The knights of Onnwal's Order of the Golden Sun are known as the Glaives of Azharadian, taking their name from that of one of the greatest generals in the history of the Aerdi people. The knighthood consists of three ranks, ascending in importance and influence from the general Glaives Martial to the journeymen Glaives Valorous and ultimately to the Glaives Virtuous, who comprise the most puissant warriors in the order. The foremost Glaive of Azharadian (typically a scion of one of Onnwal's four Great Noble Houses) is known as the Glaive Superior.

The knighthood follows the tenets of Heironeous, so most members take up an active opposition of evil through honorable combat and good works throughout Onnwal. Ever since the nation fell under the thumb of the Scarlet Brotherhood during the Greyhawk Wars, the Glaives of Azharadian have worked to free their homeland from the clutches of tyranny.

Prospective knights must be sponsored by a glaive in good standing and seconded by any member of the Order of the Golden Sun (who need not be a knight). A candidate can be granted the title of knight only by the Glaive Superior at a conclave of no fewer than four other knights or priests of





Heironeous, preferably members of the Glaives Cohort (see above). At the ceremony, the candidate must swear an oath of allegiance to the Order of the Golden Sun, to the Free State of Onnwal, and to the nation's rightful and just ruler, Szek Jian Destron. A second oath is sworn to Heironeous to uphold honor, justice, and the ideals and traditions of the order as outlined in the Strictures of Azharadian. Before Onnwal's occupation, such ceremonies were commonly held under the Sacred Banner of the Golden Sun, once flown by Azharadian himself. Since the fall of Scant and the presumed destruction of the banner, the knighthood has taken to using a convincing replica for this purpose.

Glaives of Azharadian are expected to at least wear chainmail in the field, and since until recently all members of the knighthood were nobles, full plate predominates. Skill with a battleaxe or longsword is required, to honor the Archpaladin, and familiarity with the lance is greatly appreciated (axe-users greatly outnumber sword-wielders in the knighthood, in part because Azharadian himself used a battleaxe). All candidates to the order must know how to ride a horse. Full knights bear shields emblazoned with the arms of the Order of the Golden Sun—the flaming Aerdi sun surmounted by a silver hand gripping a lightning bolt with the slogan “Unvanquished even in death” written in Old Oeridian beneath the image.

Not surprisingly, paladins dominate the order (they may multiclass freely as a Glaive of Azharadian). Fighters, who have the greatest potential for mastering the axe, and particularly powerful clerics of the Invincible One round out the order. Members of other classes, though uncommon, occasionally become Glaives of Azharadian.

**Hit Die:** d8

## Requirements

To qualify to become a glaive of Azharadian, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Language:** Old Oeridian.

**Handle Animal:** 3 ranks.

**Knowledge (religion):** 3 ranks.

**Ride:** 6 ranks.

**Feats:** Leadership, Weapon Focus (battleaxe or longsword).

**Alignment:** Lawful neutral or lawful good.

**Other:** Must worship Heironeous. Also, would-be glaives must have done a great deed in the eyes of the Order of the Golden Sun (usually some exceptional service to the Free State of Onnwal), garnering the sponsorship of two members of the order. They also must pass the first trial of membership, known as the Trial Martial (see sidebar).

## Class Skills

The glaive of Azharadian's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Wis), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Ride (Dex), and Jump (Str).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack	Fort. Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Martial Axe
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Unvanquished Even In Death (+2 Con)
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	<i>Bolt of Glory</i>
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Presence of Azharadian
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Valorous Axe
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	Unvanquished Even In Death (+4 Con)
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Wisdom of Azharadian
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Virtuous Axe
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	Unvanquished Even In Death (+6 Con)
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Sight of Azharadian

## Class Features

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Glaives of Azharadian are proficient in the use of all simple and martial weapons and all armor, and with shields.

**Martial Axe (Ex):** Glaives of Azharadian receive a +1 morale bonus to attacks made with battleaxes or longswords, provided the glaive has the Weapon Focus feat related to that weapon.

**Unvanquished Even in Death (Su):** Through inner strength and faith in Heironeous, glaives of Azharadian can draw upon a reservoir of power in the most dire situations. Once per day, when the glaive's hit point total is brought between 0 and -9, the glaive's body becomes charged with vigor, granting him a burst of reserve energy (glaives brought to -10 or fewer hit points die instantly). At 2nd level, this manifests as a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution. At 6th level, the bonus increases to +4, and at 9th level, the bonus increases to +6. The Constitution bonus lasts a number of rounds equal to the glaive of Azharadian's class level. This ability does not function if the wound that brings the glaive between 0 and -9 hit points is self-inflicted or inflicted by an ally.

**Bolt of Glory (Sp):** By yelling an oath to the Archpaladin, a glaive wielding a battleaxe or longsword can cast the spell *searing light* as though cast by a cleric equal to the glaive's character level. A glaive can use this ability once per day.

**Presence of Azharadian (Su):** The mere presence of the glaive is enough to bolster the courage of his allies and keep their minds focused on the task at hand. Any ally within 60 feet gains a +2 morale bonus to saving throws against fear or charm effects.

**Valorous Axe (Su):** Once per day, when employing a battleaxe or longsword in combat, the glaive can treat the weapon as if it has the *keen* weapon quality. The glaive can do this for a number of rounds equal to the glaive of Azharadian's class level. If the weapon is already *keen*, this power has no effect.

**Wisdom of Azharadian (Ex):** The glaive embodies Azharadian's natural talent for the martial life and thus selects a number of glaive of Azharadian class skills equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, the glaive can take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

**Virtuous Axe (Su):** Once per day, when employing a battleaxe or longsword in combat, the glaive can treat the





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weapon as if it has the *holy* weapon quality. The glaive can do this for a number of rounds equal to the glaive of Azharadian's class level. If the weapon is already *holy*, this power has no effect.

**Sight of Azharadian (Ex):** The supreme embodiment of the virtues of Azharadian, the glaive also embodies Azharadian's intuitive knowledge of his enemies. Therefore the glaive is never surprised and thus can always take a partial action during a surprise round (unless otherwise prevented from doing so).

**Code of Conduct:** Should a glaive ever willingly betray the tenets of his order, he immediately loses all glaive of Azharadian special class abilities. To regain those abilities, the glaive must renew his oaths with the leaders of the order; they must be aware of all the circumstances of the betrayal and willing to allow the glaive to return to the fold.

## Ranks Within the Order

The Glaives of Azharadian can be divided into three specific branches, each technically subservient to those above it. When a candidate becomes a glaive, he is counted among the ranks of the Glaives Martial, which generally consists of knights of levels 1-4. More experienced knights often are elevated into the ranks of the Glaives Valorous. Around the time a knight achieves 7th level in the glaive of Azharadian prestige class, he is invited to test for the most honored rank within the knight-hood, that of the Glaives Virtuous.

Each rank enjoys its own characteristic rituals and observances, and prospective knights must apply for and successfully test into each of the branches. Such tests generally take place at knightly conclaves. At the end of such meetings, those who have successfully tested are elevated to their new rank. The specifics of each branch's test follows:

**The Trial Martial:** Over the years, the order's entrance trials have become increasingly ritualized. The Order of the Golden Sun holds a trial by combat annually at the Pavilion of the Order (near Azharadian's Pillar). There, candidates who have garnered a sponsorship from a serving glaive in good standing that is seconded by any member of the order endure a battle against an active Glaive Martial attending the conclave. While the candidate humbles himself in obeisance to Heironeous, the glaive dons ornamental black full plate and ceremonial robes, clothing his horse in onyx barding. The supplicant is not told the identity of his helmed opponent, who is meant to represent the Ebon Knight, Azharadian's final opponent and a nearly mythical figure who is said to usher the greatest Oeridian heroes into the afterlife.

The supplicant and the Ebon Knight fight a duel from horseback with axes or longswords until one or the other asks for quarter. Such combats occasionally escalate to battles on foot, and throughout the history of the order, several obstinate knights or would-be glaives have been killed rather than dishonor themselves in surrender. While the hierarchy of the order frowns upon such lethality, the spirits of those who have fallen in the Trial Martial loom large over the proceedings, and all take the combats extremely seriously.

If the supplicant proves victorious, he is said to have died and been reborn as a Glaive Martial, "unvanquished even in death." (Defeating the Ebon Knight is one of several requirements for choosing the glaive of Azharadian prestige class.) Only after he has been defeated is the identity of the mysterious Ebon Knight revealed, an event usually greeted with congratulations or commiserations from the "vanquished" foe.

**The Trial Valorous:** Few know the details of this intensely secret trial, in which a prospective journeyman knight is subjected not to a test of his martial ability, but of the mettle of his spirit and soul. Candidates fast and meditate within the shadow of Azharadian's Pillar, reportedly struggling with a vision of their own inner turmoil and the darkest aspects of their soul. Those who manage to overcome their personal weaknesses without being defeated by them are elevated to the ranks of the Glaive Valorous, but the specifics of how the contest is judged remain occluded to all who have not undergone the ordeal.

**The Trial Virtuous:** Like the trial that precedes it, the test to enter the Glaives Virtuous involves a meditative spiritual journey into the darkness of the knight's own heart. The trial begins when the knight is ushered to a secret cave beneath the Pillar of Azharadian. There, spirits from the serried ranks of Azharadian's fallen allies assail the knight in visions, testing his compassion, honor, valor, humility, and sense of justice. It is said that the final test is given by the spirit of Azharadian himself, in the company of Heironeous—Glaives who ultimately prove unworthy often quit the test in shame, their minds wholly broken by the terrible ordeal. Those who succeed, however, join the highest echelons of the Glaives of Azharadian and can claim the title Glaive Virtuous. ✨