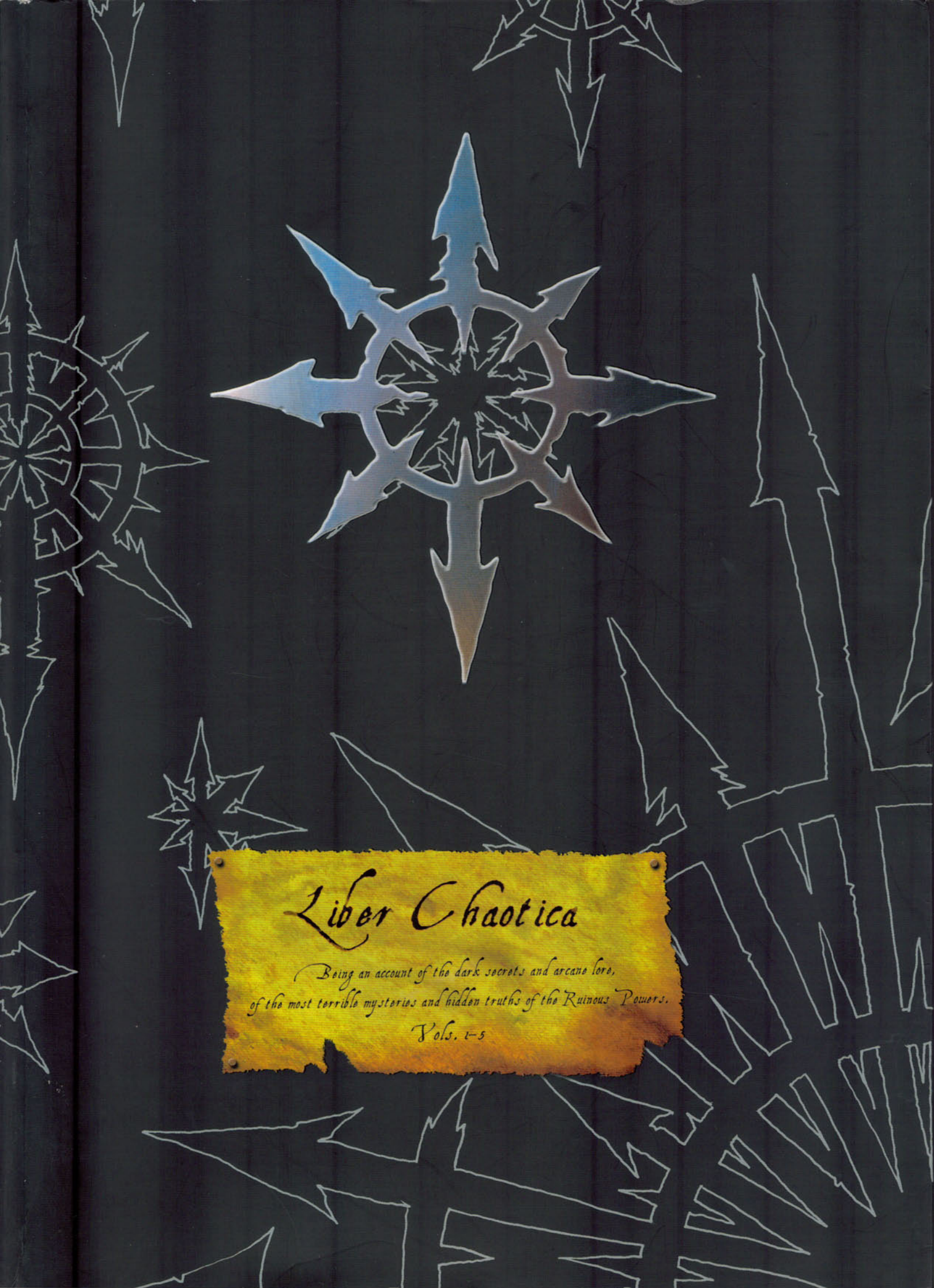
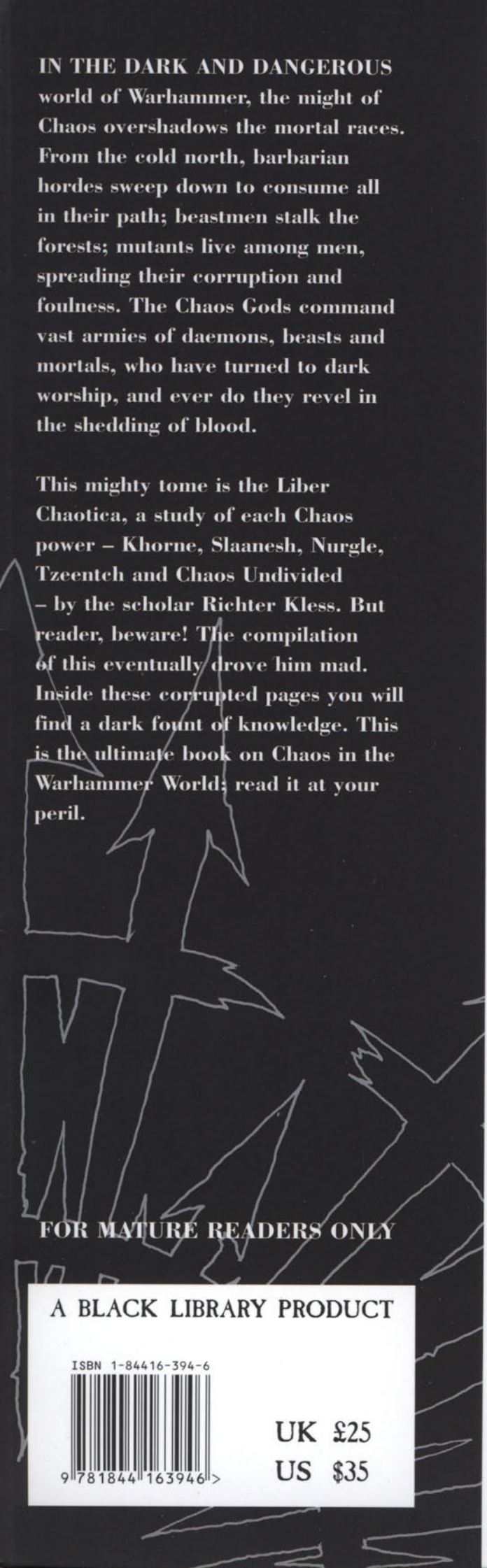

Liber Chaotica
Being an account of the dark secrets and arcane lore,
of the most terrible mysteries and hidden truths of the Ruinous Powers.
Vols. 1–5

IN THE DARK AND DANGEROUS world of Warhammer, the might of Chaos overshadows the mortal races. From the cold north, barbarian hordes sweep down to consume all in their path; beastmen stalk the forests; mutants live among men, spreading their corruption and foulness. The Chaos Gods command vast armies of daemons, beasts and mortals, who have turned to dark worship, and ever do they revel in the shedding of blood.

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OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volumes one to five

WITH FORMER INVESTIGATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED

And expository lectures on the followers and rituals of Chaos

BEING IN THE MAIN AN EXAMINATION OF THE DAEMONIC AND MORTAL ARMIES OF CHAOS, AND IN PART, BEING A DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMBERLESS UNNATURAL CREATURES THAT DO ACCOMPANY THEM



FEATURING TEXTS COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY THE AUTHOR
RICHTER KLESS
Illustrated and illuminated with numerous plates
compiled by the author
Printed by Johannes Innsbrook, Printer to Albertus Mansoul,
Bound by Christoph Hassel of Wolfenburg



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OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volume the first

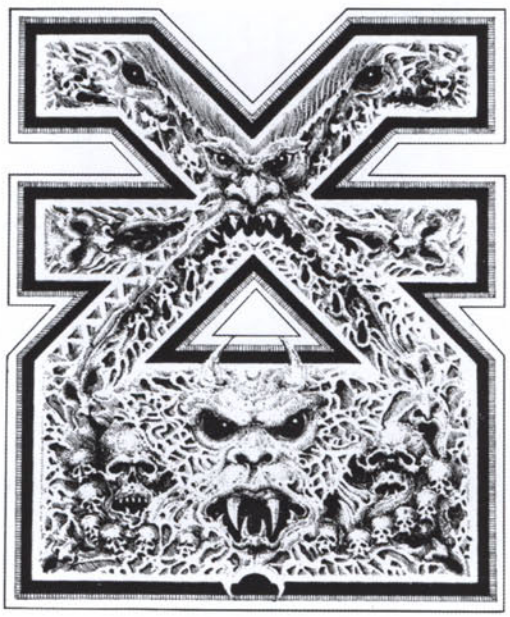
WITH THE FORMER TRANSLATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED

With expository lectures on the followers and rituals of the Blood God: Khorne

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Liber Khorne

My Lord, further to the work I have already completed in gathering Richter Kless's works together into four separate volumes, you have now tasked me with the odious job of compiling them into one book. Revisiting these foul works for a second time is almost more than I can stomach, but my duty to the Empire will carry me through with unstained heart. Or so I hope.

It will be my task to compile all the material gathered by poor Richter into one unholy volume: The Liber Chaotica. It will be a dark repository of darker knowledge and secrets, gathering together many disparate sources into a whole. However, it will take a better scholar than myself to separate truth from fiction, and reality from apocrypha. I pity any who read this book after me, and I ask them to pity me, the poor fool charged with its completion.

6/6/2577 I.C.

Foreword by the Author

Of all the volumes my studies demand, the book detailing the power of Kharne I envisage being the least complicated and easiest (if such a word can be attributed to this subject) to write.

The Blood God and his many accursed legions seem to exist for one purpose only - to reap as much bloody destruction as possible. This book (Our Lord Sigmar willing) will detail their methods and means in pursuing this end.

My eyes have seen many strange and wonderful things - some good, but most (due to my chosen path) dreadful beyond imagining. I quail when I consider the work that lies before me if I am to finish these books; but I have been tasked to write this treatise by the Grand Theogonist Volkmar himself and my mind is set on its completion

I gird my heart and take pride in the fact that I was chosen to complete a labour of such import, and I pray that Sigmar may give me the strength to carry it through.

I have much work to do.

R. K.

At what price?

My Lord, as you have requested I present a comprehensive gathering of all Richter Kless's (may Sigmar have mercy on his soul) notes and essays on the Blood God Khorne. My compilation and editing has been complicated by my reluctance to read too closely what he has written. Much is heretical and still more I believe to be apocryphal. I hope Lord, that this finds you in good health.

M.v.S.



Detail from the 'Traitor's Path' a tapestry of monstrous size and subject, the location of which I'm not at liberty to disclose.

M.v.S.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

ON

THE BLOOD GOD: KHORNE

CHAPTER I

The Mountain

"FROM THE BOILING BLOOD SEA ROSE EIGHT MIGHTY CREATURES, EACH WITH THE HEADS OF DOGS AND THE BODIES OF LIONS, AND EACH ONE YOKED WITH GREAT CHAINS OF BRASS."

AND SO IT CAME TO PASS that these words spoke in wrath dispersed to all corners of the land, proclaiming their message and blasting all minds that heard it. Neighbour turned on neighbour and in sudden fury fathers dragged sons onto the street and there murdered them. The gentle beasts of the field trampled one another and herdsmen slew their cattle to bathe in their blood. The kings and princes of the land fell to fevered imaginings, adorning themselves with armour and weapons, and demanding a throne made from the bones of their kin. Prisoners and slaves were put to the sword and their heads adorned the royal dais. And the kings then sent their soldiers forth into the towns and villages to harvest more skulls for the skull thrones. Every living thing they killed; all that drew breath was culled from the earth, which in turn was fired and the walls tumbled down, so nothing could there live again.

When the earth was made as mud by the lifeblood of innocents and wild creatures roamed the deserted lands drinking marrow from the bones of the dead, the kings and princes turned their armies outside their hollow kingdoms to wage war against each other. The armies of all the lands met in a valley blocked by four mountains to the north and four mountains to the south. And there they fell on one another with every weapon, animal and cunning machine that they commanded. The battle raged long as fortune waxed and waned from one army to the next. For eight days and seven nights the warriors of the lands pushed and heaved and stabbed and slew. The kings released their hunting dogs, that harried and bit and gorged themselves on hot flesh. Terrible horsemen, on steeds clad in steel, charged again and again. The death toll was so great that the valley itself filled with blood and drowned those who fought in its depths. The soldiers in battle hungered, and consumed the fallen and drank their blood to quench their thirst, while the kings themselves ate only the flesh from the heads brought to them. As the sun sunk down into the lake of death for the eighth time the battle faltered and stopped, for the bloodthirst that had driven each mortal soul forward had at last been sated. The armies could fight no more and there came a great wailing from the valley as every soldier lifted his voice and cried out for release, for victory or for the strength to carry on. A multitude raised their shouts to a thousand empty gods. And none replied. For the true god had heard his servants' cry. And its answer was one of bloodlust, power and awesome violence.

From the boiling blood sea rose eight mighty creatures, each with the heads of dogs and the bodies of lions, and each one yoked with great chains of brass. They climbed forth each mountain and behind them dragged upwards a new mountain from the sea, a mountain of bone and skulls that reached fully ten times the height of the eight peaks around it. Upon its sight, the soldiers of the battle took new heart and rose again from the gore-drenched earth to praise their true lord while the kings and princes threw themselves down in fear as they recognised the true Skull Throne, of which their own had been the palest imitation. And atop the very summit, the embryonic-god screamed his name in a birth-cry that echoed and crashed from peak to peak and drove the cowardly mad even as it strengthened the worthy beyond mortal effort.

And the name was Kharneth, our Blood God Khorne.

Taken from the lost scriptures 'Bound by Blood'. With special dispensation to translate from the forbidden tongue - normally punishable by death.


Marauders of the North

But do they ever truly die?

On the horizon it loomed, a symbol of mortality, a stony paean to the dead. The sun did fade in the sky, cowed by black auras that envelope it. Within lays enscanced, in burial shroud, a great lord of ancient times, before whom the world had once trembled.

This mighty sepulchre of darkened stone rose forth and up, dwarfing the palaces of mortal lords, for in death he demanded a shrine to denote a warrior such as he. This brooding edifice wallowed in the past, enshrouded in a veil of wickedness, and the scent of death and despair hung heavy about its skull-shaped bastions.

Such have I smelt on my journeys north

Here rested the greatest of the Champions of Chaos, a mortal god, who in ancient times had brought the world to its knees. His armies of sable marched implacable from north to south, all peoples fled, for their weapon was Fear and their banner was Death. As an unstoppable tide they swept the land, swift and awful, an evil tide that swelled like a river in the thaw.

But his time ended aeons ago, and the mists of the past refuse to reveal the manner of his fall. What is left is this mighty vault, with its secrets hid behind an egress the pallor of death.

Grim chambers are filled with the skulls of his victims; twisting catacombs bristle with the weapons of those fallen by his hand, and from the battlements fly their banners, now smirched in blood.

In the shadow of the tomb gather the warriors of the North. Marauders prepare for war, reciting Chaos sagas and bringing offerings to their fallen champion. Here they beseech the resting Warlord to return to them, to bring victory to their weapons and deliver the world into their hands. Here they wait for the warrior god to stir again, so once more the world will quake.

And quake it would, if it had seen the things I have seen

– Transcribed from the remains of 'A Vision of Damnation'.

Marauders of the North

BEING AN EXTENSIVE EXAMINATION OF THE DUBIOUS AND LESSER MEN WHO INHABIT THE SAVAGE LANDS BEYOND OUR NORTHERN BORDERS. INCLUDING DISCURSIVE ESSAYS ON THEIR QUESTIONABLE HABITS AND BELIEFS.

FROM THE HARSH snowlands they come, blond of hair and blue of eye, and tattooed upon the arms and face and chest. Others are raven-haired, with cruel sneers, delighting in the pain and misery they herald. From the north and east come these savage marauders, with slavering dogs on whipping leashes. Their eyes are mad with bloodlust, for blood they thirst, driven forth on the whims of the gods they seek to appease. Clad in few garments and wielding clumsy and brutal axes and maces, they rage against the civilised lands of the south, burning, pillaging, looting all before them to offer up as sacrifice to their uncaring masters beyond the gates of hell in the northern wastes.

In the dark ages of the past, our forebears did struggle valiantly against the tribes of evil races and other corrupt beings that threatened our homes and people. And we were victorious and chased them back to their birthing places and destroyed them there forever, ridding us of this great danger to our young people. However, there were those of us who went further, who were not content with the bounty that our gods had granted us, and demanded more.

Further and further they spread, in the name of ridding us of our mortal foes, until finally they went into a land that was covered by Shadow. There they lost sight of our gods but cared not, so great had their avarice grown.

Within that Shadow they discovered new beings, ancient Daemons that saw in these people the greed and hatred that had brought them so far. They did praise and flatter and promise them even greater riches, if only they would turn their backs on all that was holy and good and mortal. Without our gods to guide them these people fell into false worship and were enslaved by these Daemons that knew of all human weakness.

Beneath the Shadow these people remained as they tumbled into the depravities and bloodlust of their foul veneration, and there grew warped and cruel and bitter at the petty idolism that they had exchanged for the true salvation of the worship of our gods.



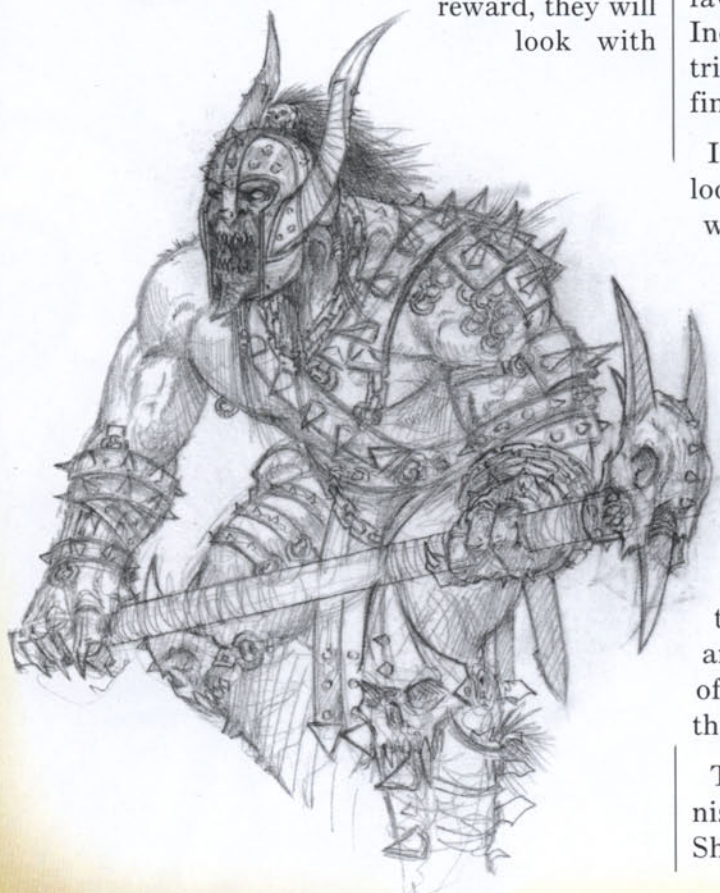
These cruel brutes favour axes and bludgeoning weapons.

Marauders of the North

And now as corrupt in body as they are in mind they do return to punish us for their sins and burn the world, for they would rather destroy it all than have any trace of goodness and law remain in it to remind them of what they once lost.

But it is not the tribes' marauding that we must fear the most, for the predations of their kind conceal a greater evil that they commit. For they are also the foot soldiers of those infernal hordes that do threaten our nation's very existence when the Shadow falls upon us. Before and after their daemonkin's path, they burn and ravage and slaughter. Their riders and scouts do ensure that no prey are left untouched, no matter how distant they are nor how secure they believe themselves.

And if these atrocities were not enough, it is from their ranks and stock that do raise these most abhorrent of foes: the Knights and Champions of Chaos. Rather than be appalled that such monsters in human form may emerge from their kind, they applaud them and encourage their desecration in the hopes that, should they reap the ultimate reward, they will look with favour upon those who sponsored them. Indeed, it is the ambition of each and every tribesmen to walk the road of power to final damnation.





They show great ingenuity in the forging of unusual weapons.

In their worship, some marauders will look to a single Power to provide them with succour, often through a totem or other object that they believe is valued by the god. Most, however, are not particular in their beliefs, rather taking on the worship of whichever god they believe can benefit them most at that particular time. To aid them in this they will erect icons and shrines to these gods, more impressive if they are settled and secured than if they live as nomads in the Steppes. That they would seek to bargain with each and every god they could is demonstrable of their irreverent attitude even within their heresy.

Truly none of our kind are more tarnished and damned than the men of the Shadowlands.

Marauders of the North

Here follows an excerpt from the final testamant of Baron Fallon von Kelspar before he abandoned his family estates in 2325. He was subsequently excommunicated from the church of Sigmar in 2327, declared a heretic and danger to the people by the Order of Solkan in 2328, declared a traitor to the Empire in 2330, declared an outlaw and brigand by the Court of the Lady in 2335, declared an Oathbreaker by the High King in 2340.

"As a race mankind is like no other. Although derided as a 'new race' by the decrepit creatures for which their millennia have passed; we have spread across the world with the ease of fleas upon a dog. Nothing has stopped us, neither indolent elf, nor stubborn dwarf, nor wild orc or goblin. We came, we fought, we died, and more of us came after, uncaring of our predecessors' fate, driven only by our lust for wealth and our hate, until we settled and survived and whatever we craved was ours.

"Our forebears lived noble lives beneath their worthy kings, roaming in tribes, free from all constraint. We were once a powerful, dynamic people, hardened and strong enough to conquer all before us. Now some of these tribes, the Bretonni, the Unberogens, the Gospodars and our very own claim now to be greater than the rest, we claim in a mere brace of centuries to be 'civilized'. We claim moral authority and 'discover' lands and peoples as old as an age and parade our ungainly forms in ever more bizarre and butchered cloth, all the while congratulating ourselves on our advancement.

"All of which blinds us to the fools we are. There are men left, men who have not collapsed into indulgence, men who are strong, who live still as man did in his golden age. They do not cower from their gods, but bargain with them. They do not hide from the unknown but face it head on, acknowledging every part of themselves and their being, denying nothing and living as the best of any of us as a result.

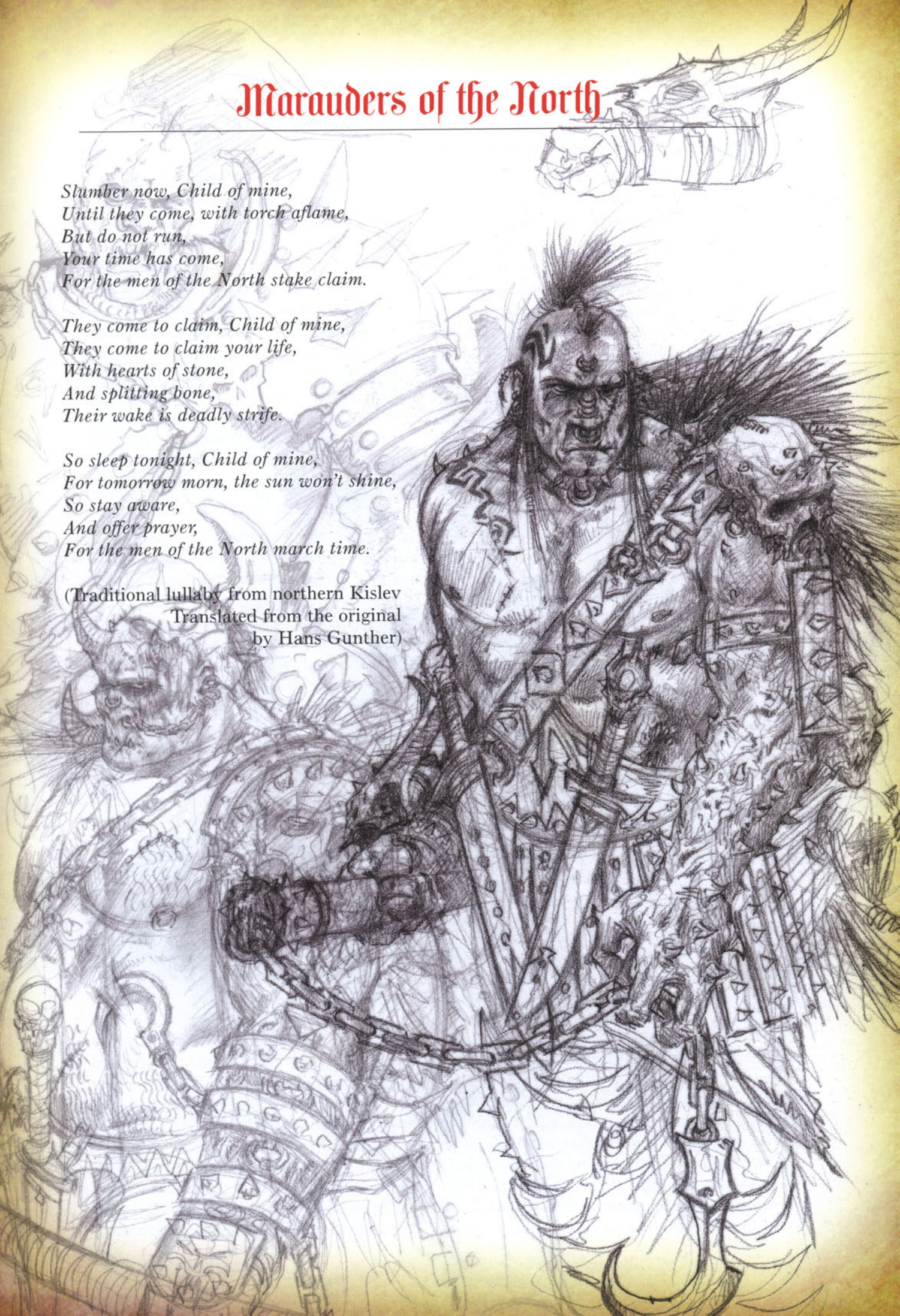
"No doubt you, my family, my friends, or any other who may be reading this note would ask me, were I there, why I went north. And if I were there I would answer, to the north lies our past, and to the north lies our future."

"It is not the strong enemy we must fear, the danger lies with the weak who flock to their banner."

(Grand Theogonist, Rueben Wrolfgar)



Marauders of the North



Slumber now, Child of mine,
Until they come, with torch aflame,
But do not run,
Your time has come,
For the men of the North stake claim.

They come to claim, Child of mine,
They come to claim your life,
With hearts of stone,
And splitting bone,
Their wake is deadly strife.

So sleep tonight, Child of mine,
For tomorrow morn, the sun won't shine,
So stay aware,
And offer prayer,
For the men of the North march time.

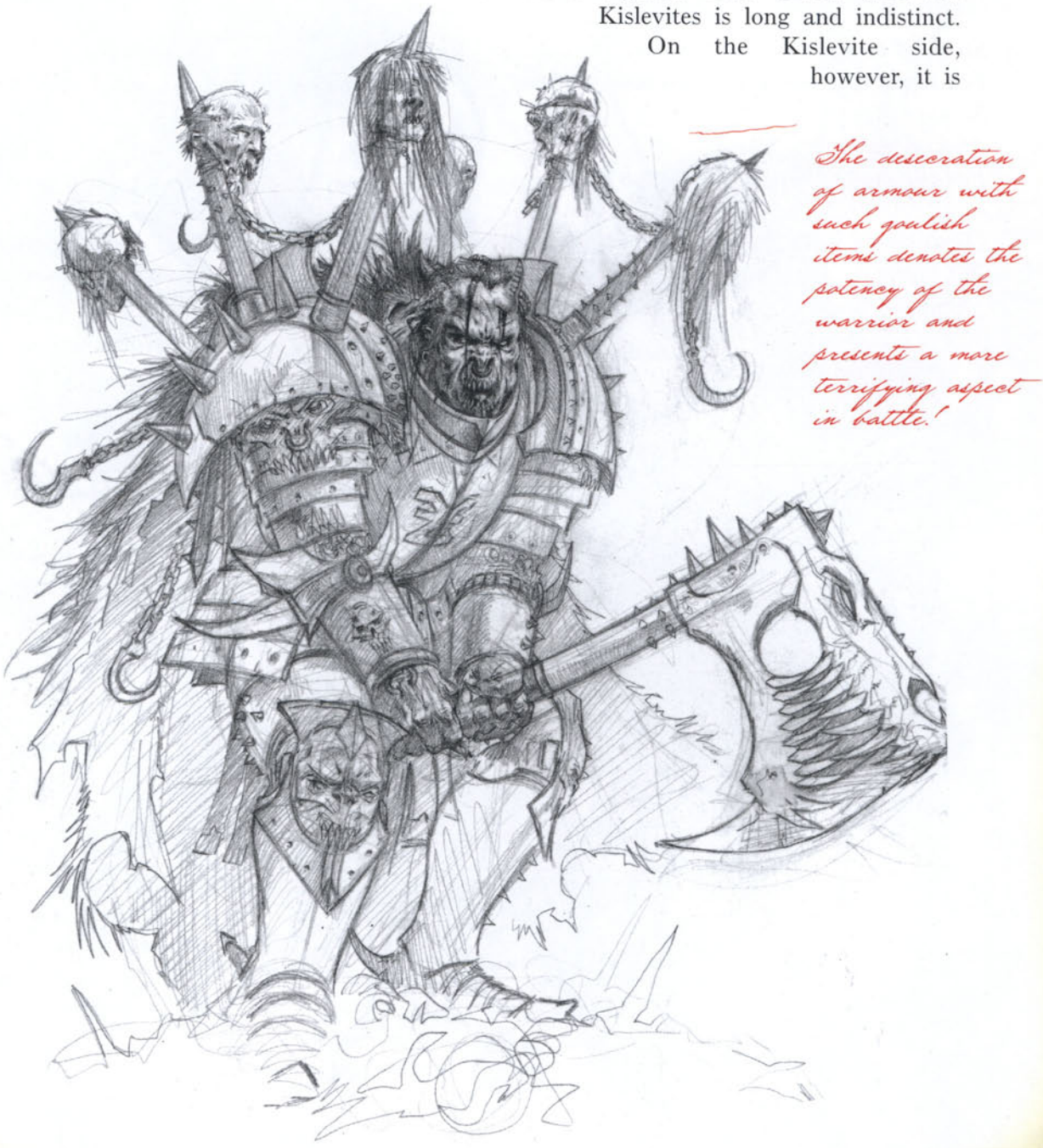
(Traditional lullaby from northern Kislev
Translated from the original
by Hans Gunther)

The Norse

BEING A CLOSE INSPECTION OF THE FERAL TRIBES OF NORSCA, CALLED BY SOME THE NORTHERS OR NORSCANS. INCLUDING MY OPINION ON THEIR LAMENTABLE INCURSION INTO OUR SOCIETY.

THE NORSE ARE those tribesmen of the Umbra that lie closest to our own good states. They are constantly in bloody strife and war amongst themselves, pausing only to launch raids by land and sea upon our people, when they slaughter the defenceless, defile our holy places and enslave our children.

The peoples of Norsca exist, in their fashion, on that promontory of land that juts from the northernmost part of Kislev, out around the Sea of Claws. They are bound in the west by the Sea of Chaos and in the north by a vast glacial shelf that marks the end of their territory and the beginning of the Wastes beyond. Their border with the Kislevites is long and indistinct. On the Kislevite side, however, it is



The desecration of armour with such goulish items denotes the potency of the warrior and presents a more terrifying aspect in battle.'

The Norse

marked by the twin fortress-cities of Erengrad and Praag, and the River Lynsk that forms the only natural demarcation between the two. Beyond the Lynsk is what is known as Troll Country, wherein travel and live foul creatures of Chaos, warbands of the Ruinous Powers and some of the hardiest Norscan families such as the Sarls, the Baersonlings and the Brennuns.

Norsca is a cold and harsh land, a fitting punishment for the monsters, both human and otherwise, which live there. The mountains march right down to the seas, and snow lies always on the peaks that are haunted by ogres and trolls and altogether darker beasts that sleep beneath the earth.

Norsemen means literally 'men of the north', and as such is not the name by which they call themselves, but rather a moniker their victims have given them. For these savages have no name for themselves as a single nation, for their race is made up of many different families and tribes, with little to connect them but a similar tongue and way of life. Thus such a warrior would never call himself a "Norseman", but instead a "Bjornling" or a "Varg", for their only loyalty is to their families and their kin.

Their encroachment within our society, welcomed by traitors of our people, has led them to encounter our own name for them. This some of them have adopted as their own, for they take great amusement in it.

These families by which they are known are of vital importance to a Norseman, for if they anger their tribal kin or so displease the gods as to bring their wrath upon them, then they will be cast from their towns and into the wilds of the country. Few of these outlaws survive long for they will never be welcomed within another tribe, nor may they wander freely for they will fall prey to the warbands and creatures that infest the land. The lucky and the strong may be allowed to join the retinue of such a champion and thus sustain their lives for some small time further, before they fall in battle or their new master tires of them. A few make the arduous journey down to our lands and here become the lowest form of vagrant and wastrel, begging food and coin, or turning to brigandry, robbery and murder.

Blood feuds are common among the Norse and can last for many years between tribes and settlements. With their ruthless and barbarian ways, such feuds can occur within towns and villages as well as between different groups of close kin. When these take hold, they are settled quickly and bloodily, with little reference to law. The defeated are cast out with the majority's blessing, for the tribes know that they cannot survive with such dissention amongst themselves. This is another way by which a Norseman may be outlawed.

But it is unto their unholy gods that the Norse owe their highest fealty. These vile people care nothing for faith and honour, but only for the material advantages that their Dark Lords can bestow.

They worship as others of their kind, some devoting themselves to one particular blasphemy, while others maintain an allegiance to all. As the Norse live on the edge of the Umbra, their tribes often worship the Accursed Powers through the guise of lesser local gods. This does quell the fears of some of our kind who believe that theirs is no different from our own worship. But such belief could not be more misguided, as the idols the Northers worship are mere facets and guises of the four Ruinous Lords.

Some of the coastal raiders of the Skaelings worship a deity they call Mermedus, a petty deity who makes his realm at the bottom of the Sea of Claws. Their icons of him depict a bulbous and ghoulish figure, bloated in death with the bulging eyes and drained composure of a man drowned in the sea. Supposedly he walks along the floor of the Sea of Claws, creating stormy waters and capsizing ships, dragging the raiders down deep to add to his chain-lines that he pulls behind him, so to imprison the drowned and the damned. Thus the Skaelings make sacrifices, both animal and human, and throw their

They are subtle as a breeze and dangerous!

weighted bodies into the deep in order that they might distract this god from destroying them all. Some believe that this is some corruption of our own Manaan, but I have seen this clear as an Infernal Power in one of their multitudinous deceits.

Whichever idol they worship, there is one thing that each one demands, the blood of its enemy. Thus some of the blood feuds that erupt between tribes and settlements have this difference at their base. For the Norse, I have discovered there is no kingdom of Morr, there is nothing after death except for the realm of their gods, and they will only travel there to be lauded and praised as true and strong warriors, or to be reviled and tortured as betrayers or cowards. Thus every Norseman fights with an insane fervour driven by this belief.

Such warriors are armed with deadly weapons and wear huge plates of iron armour, for it is in their smelting and working of iron that the Norse may be acknowledged. I have often remarked that they are people with no talent or quality, except that in the forging of arms and in the spawning of men to use them. And such trade that exists between them and the warrior-bands to their north and the horse tribes to their east are centred predominantly on this, as those races have little such industry of their own.

But it is when the warriors of the north descend for a different reason that the Norse have true reason to bewail their heretical existence. For when the Shadow expands across them and taints what little of life remains in their land, there are carried with it monsters and daemons and regiments of cruel warriors who care nothing for them. They do not see, as we do, fellow worshippers of their blasphemous gods, but rather a life that can be taken in their god's name. Thus the Norse may stand and die or seek escape, and it is the case that when the Umbra expands towards our states, the greater horde advances behind countless bands of marauders who throw themselves at the cities of Kislev, in a despair to outrace the death that follows behind.

A fitting end for these savages.

Praise Kislev and her doughty warriors!

To these the Kislevites show no mercy, and do exact vengeance for the marauders' countless predations during the times of peace.

These intervening depravations are known not only to those heathen of Kislev, but to all the peoples of the coast. For it is in the character of the Norscan to be as at home on the waves as he is on land, and as they plough the seas they bring their terror with them.

Their ships are constructed from the dark and polluted wood that grows plentifully in their lands. They fly sails that display the colours and symbols of their allegiance; at their bows are figureheads carved in the shape of the heads of disturbing creatures of the deep; and they adorn their sides with skulls and other trophies from their butchery.

Even from their very birth these ships are steeped in blood, as they are launched over the living bodies of slaves and captives, to crush them as sacrifices to their sea gods to ensure good weather and fair seas.

Here one of the earliest such records of such pillage comes from The Chronicles of Middenland:

"In this year of Ulric's Grace, there were great sigils and portents of Doom and Destruction. The statue of the Wolf was heard to howl for Death, and there were many children born with twisted feet or hands or other such Mutations. Great Beasts were seen to fly through the air and block out the sun and a Famine and Plague did grip the coastal villages. Even as those Ails did pass, reavers emerged from the sea with sails of Blood and Death and laid waste to a temple and three towns upon our coast, killing or enslaving those who did not flee, and plundering what little they could. They wore strange armour and fought beneath the Banner of the Wolf, as though mocking our Faith."

The Norse

There were many who hoped these raiders would never return, but they have done, time and time again, across all the coasts of our lands and our neighbours, round into the Tilean Sea and the Black Gulf.

Thus villagers who know nothing of the greater darkness, who know nothing of the final damnation of man, know enough to garrison watch-towers to look across the waters and build signal-fires to warn of the coming of the DragonShips that roll in with the mists off the ocean.

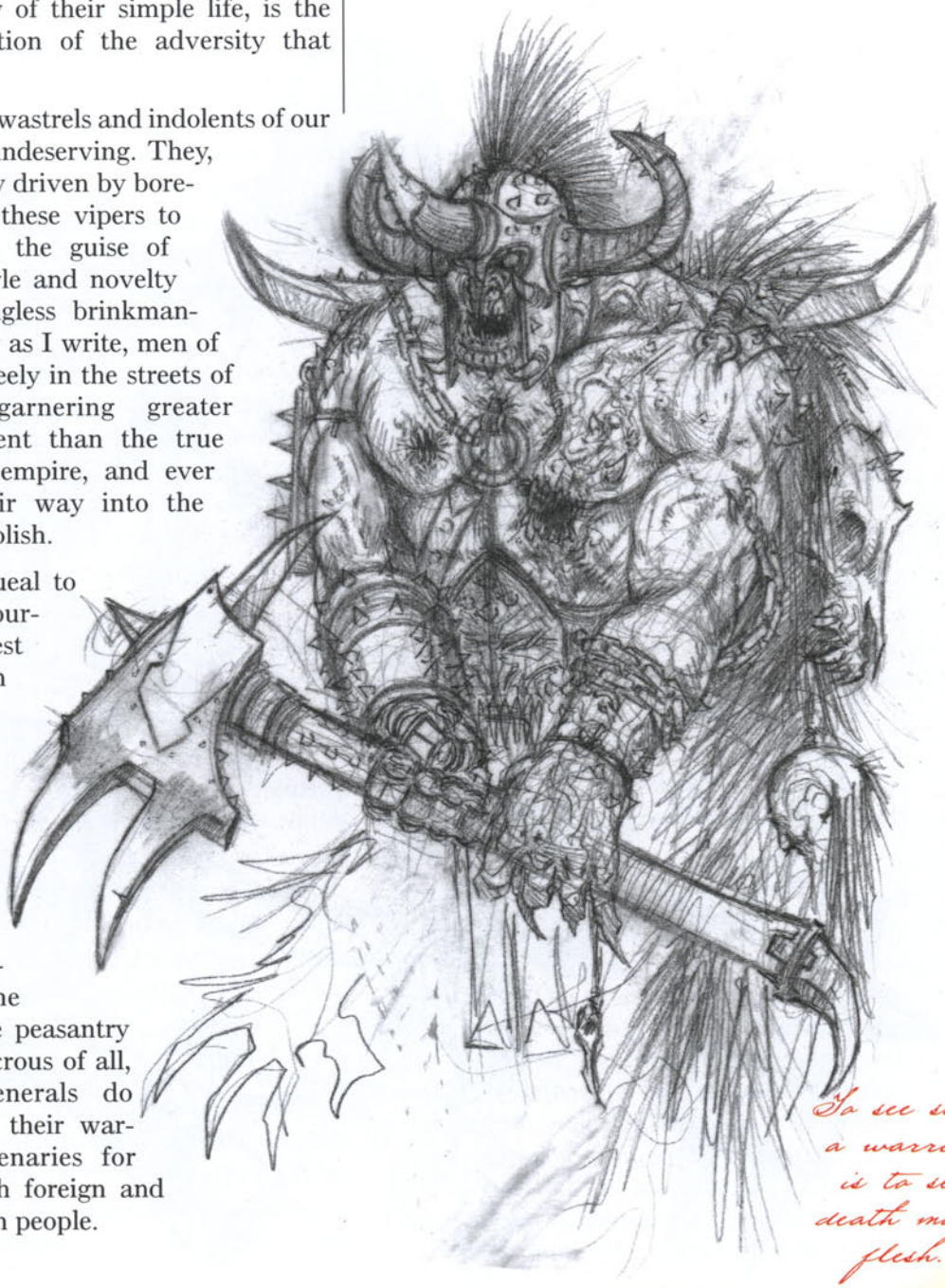
There, in the sense of the common folk with the clarity of their simple life, is the proper recognition of the adversity that threatens them.

Not so for the wastrels and indolents of our own rich and undeserving. They, in the perversity driven by boredom, welcome these vipers to their breast in the guise of fashion and style and novelty and of meaningless brinkmanship. Even now as I write, men of Norsca walk freely in the streets of Marienberg, garnering greater acknowledgement than the true heroes of our empire, and ever burrowing their way into the hearts of the foolish.

Fat ladies squeal to be the first to purchase their latest pelts, gentlemen bid ever higher for the cursed armaments culled from their tainted earth, entertainers seek twisted creatures for the gawking of the peasantry and, most ludicrous of all, stern-faced generals do seek to secure their warriors as mercenaries for their wars both foreign and against our own people.

Their greed for power and prestige and false worth does blind them to the evil they allow to walk among us. For the Norse do lie so well, and smile at the gaiting and prancing of those who seek to imitate them. But I understand as they do the base truth behind the Norse ways, that these fat idolaters do wear as lightly on their minds as they do the silk on their sleeve.

The Norse mislead us all with their smiles and pageantry, and we will be the ones to bear the brunt of their ultimate betrayal.



To see such a warrior is to see death made flesh.

The Kurgan

BEING AN EXPOSITION ON THE MYSTERIOUS KURGAN – A DISTANT, BUT EVER PRESENT THREAT ON OUR NORTHERN BORDERS (INCLUDING A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE TRIBE KNOWN AS THE TONG).

EXCERPT FROM "The Peoples of the World" by Bretonnian court-scholar Gules de Rambon:

"The nation of the Kurgan surpasses all other barbarians in their wildness of life. Though they do just bear the likeness of men, of a very ugly pattern, they are so little advanced in civilization that they make no use of fire, nor any kind of relish, in the preparation of their food, but feed upon the roots which they find in the fields, and the half-raw flesh of any sort of animal.

"I say half-raw, because they give it a kind of cooking by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses.

On my second expedition north I was taken by my faithful guide, Sergei, to a tiny border village that had suffered a raid by the Kurgan. The few despoilers who had been slain and lay in the ruins looked much like this rough sketch.



The Kurgan

"They fight in no regular order of battle, but by being extremely swift and sudden in their movements, they disperse, and then rapidly come together in loose array. They spread havoc over the vast plains, and flying over the ramparts, they pillage the camp of their enemy almost before he has become aware of their approach.

'They are the most terrible of warriors for when in close combat with swords and flails, they fight without regard to their own safety, and while their enemy is intent upon parrying the thrust of the swords, they will entangle him with their chains so that he loses all power of walking or riding."

The Kurgan are a people of mystery and fear, a savage race that ride such fleet steeds as to allow them to fly across the land as fast as birds. Their domains lie far from our borders and yet their speed of movement is such that one can never be sure where or when their next attack shall fall.

Those few cartographers who recognise the Kurgan's existence do consign them to a far corner of the map, but in fact their territory far outstrips that of any other human realm. Indeed, all the land that we call our own up to the World's Edge Mountains would fit many times within the area they control.

The Eastern Steppes are massive plains with seemingly endless stretches of dry, treeless grassland, which lie beyond the great mountain range known as the Mountains of Mourn. They are bordered by the freezing wastes to the north, by a great desert to the south and by the mighty lands of Cathay far to the east. Over this vast territory there are many tribes, both of humans and of other races, but of the northern areas that lie within the Umbra, the Kurgan are undisputed masters.

In truth, however, not even this expanse gives proper extent to their dominion, for the Kurgan recognise no borders or boundaries, except perhaps for that ultimate frontier at the north. No obstacle can stop them; their driven mounts carry them like the wind over high mountains, great deserts and gushing rivers. They travel where they will, and there are few indeed who would dare oppose them.

The Kurgan live in tribal families like the Norscans do, but these are not settled towns or villages, but rather travelling groups that wander the vastness of the Steppes and the Wastes with their livestock. They are led by chieftains who claim a special connection with their gods, who dictate to them the direction they ride.

They travel with their entire families, so that it is literally the case for many of them to be born in the saddle. Most of these show some taint of Chaos upon them, whether it be benign or otherwise, and these marks are flaunted and displayed to show the interest the lords of darkness have already shown in them. Many of them go further and try to make their children even more grotesque by binding their skulls while young, so that their heads grow in the long and thin manner so distinctive of their people.

I have seen them stretch further than the eye can fathom - a humbling sight.

Though we may write the names of certain tribes upon a map, this will only give the narrowest indication of their true extent and location. For in the vastness of the Steppe there are no confinements, and far greater reliance is placed upon the kin-band that the horsemen ride with rather than in the greater tribal name. To an extent, a Kurgan's tribe is those people with whom he travels, no matter their origins, and his property is what he carries with him, and his land is wherever he finds himself.

The Kurgans almost invariably travel on horseback, some with wagons to carry tents and altars, others without. There are a few groups who do not ride, who choose to either wander on foot, possibly because they have lost their mounts through some ailment or accident, or who have settled permanently in some forsaken spot. Why they would choose to completely alter their way of life in such a manner is unknown. Perhaps there is something of significance to the site. It is not completely unheard of for a

tribe to seize and settle the land it has attacked, and then attempt to defend it, while they wrest riches from the earth.

Most though are almost constantly on the move, either along age-old routes between summer and winter lands, or seemingly at random across the Steppe. It is this fluidity that allows them the greatest favour when the Shadow creeps out and the dark legions march forth. It is the Kurgan that are most willing and able to join these cursed crusades, for they are able to bring to bear each and every one of their race.

For them there is nothing but advantage in attaching themselves to a larger horde, for they may ride ahead as scouts and take the easiest of the plunder, and when the horde is inevitably reversed or gain stayed, they may always escape the forces of retribution that move against them.

If I were such a creature, I too would hide my face!

In this way, tribes of the horsemen may follow these hordes and then find themselves far from where they began when eventually they strike out on their own. Thus, they may be found all around the known world, these ravagers lie not contained in distant lands to be dealt with by strangerfolk, hardier than us. Rather they may come to any town, any door, even while the blinkered folk slumber in their false security.



No border, no castle, no country can be a defence against the horsemen of the Shadowlands, for they care for none of them. They move at will across plains and hills and rivers, no barrier can withstand them, nor no levied troops restrain them. For our armies are snails and slugs that must drag themselves forwards, and may fight only where its foe proves willing. The horseman have no honour, no courage, they will never meet our forces straight on in decisive battle, but flee when confronted by men of mettle and only turn to strike and slaughter against the weak, the innocent and the ill-prepared.

And when they do so it is without any mercy of human compassion, as Marcia Naissus recorded of the destruction of a city in the Border Princes:

"There was so much killing and bloodletting that no one could number the dead. The Kurgans pillaged the temples and the shrines, and slew the priests and virgins. They so devastated this land that it will never rise again and be as it was before. Even years later when we passed through there again we had to camp outside the city on the river, for the banks were covered with human bones and the stench of death was so great that no one could enter the city."

Our generals bluster and berate, and do denounce this their craven foe, but in truth they do as much for in fact they can do little else, as Count Theo of Stirland lamented:

"A soldier's great enemies are deprivation and exertion. For him to fight and kill on a single day is as nothing to the path of suffering he has first to

The Kurgan

endure. Before even courage, the first qualification for a soldier is for endurance to hardship, poverty and want. And they live at peace harder than we live at war. What chance did we have?"

The horsemen will never fight until they will it, nor have they a home except that carried on their horses' backs, so they have no realm to threaten in return.

It is true, when gorged with plunder and with death, that they may return to their spawning lands across the World's Edge, to count their loot and praise their gods, but how to take the fight to these vast plains? What defence do they need but eyes in their heads to see danger's approach? And when the foe had vanished from our sight what then? Do we burn the grass? Plunder the streams? Demolish the hills? For there is precious little more there than that.

Thus our generals bluster, for that is all they can do, while these cursed enemies do raid and burn and keep us in terror inviolate. Their brigand bands do infest our lands as surely as the worms infest a rotting corpse, roving cancers that bleed the lifeblood of those who expect it least.

This then is our current state, with as many of our foe within our borders as without, and our only defence to pile our soft bellies upon their swords.

The Tong

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TONG - WHOSE FEROCITY IN BATTLE IS LEGENDARY EVEN AMONGST THE PEOPLES OF THE NORTH.

EVEN AMONG THE fearsome Kurgan there are still some names of infamy that strike terror to their hearts. The 'Tong' is one such name. According to the tales of the Kurgan, they emerged from the west centuries ago and carved a bloody path through the tribes who opposed them. They fought with such a lack of regard for their own safety that they overwhelmed even the most reckless tribesmen. Rumours abounded that these were daemons in human form. Just as the Kurgans reeled from this onslaught, the Tong, as quickly as they had appeared, vanished from the relatively verdant lands of the Eastern Steppe. Nothing more was heard from them and the Kurgan tribes untouched by their passage fell upon their bloodied fellows in a series of raids and battles. A century or more passed before the Tong were heard from again.

It was a great incursion of Chaos that went unnoticed by the records of the Empire, the dwarfs and even those in far off Cathay, for it never crossed the mountains of the World's Edge but instead laid waste to many of the wandering tribes of men, orcs, goblins and other races that dwell in those dark lands.

None recall the name of the champion who led it, but it is remembered that as the greater horde approached it was the banners of the Tong that were at the fore of it. Some tribesmen had heard stories of the depravations of the Tong and fled before them; others had not, and rode instead to join them – only to be cut down like wheat as they offered their hands.

For years the horde marched across the Steppe. They sought out the most fearsome warrior tribes, and killed them to a man, and after five years had passed there was not a tribe in those lands that had not been vanquished or had not fled before them. The Tong travelled unchallenged back into the north, never to return again as a whole tribe but only as warbands and groups that followed the incursions of other champions.

As one of the tribes closest to the pulsing heart of Chaos, the Tong peoples are one of the most mutated and hideous of the Northern tribes, and one of their most indomitable fighters. As the darkness of the North begins to swell they are the first to join the ranks of the mighty incursions and remain its central core of fierce mortal warriors.

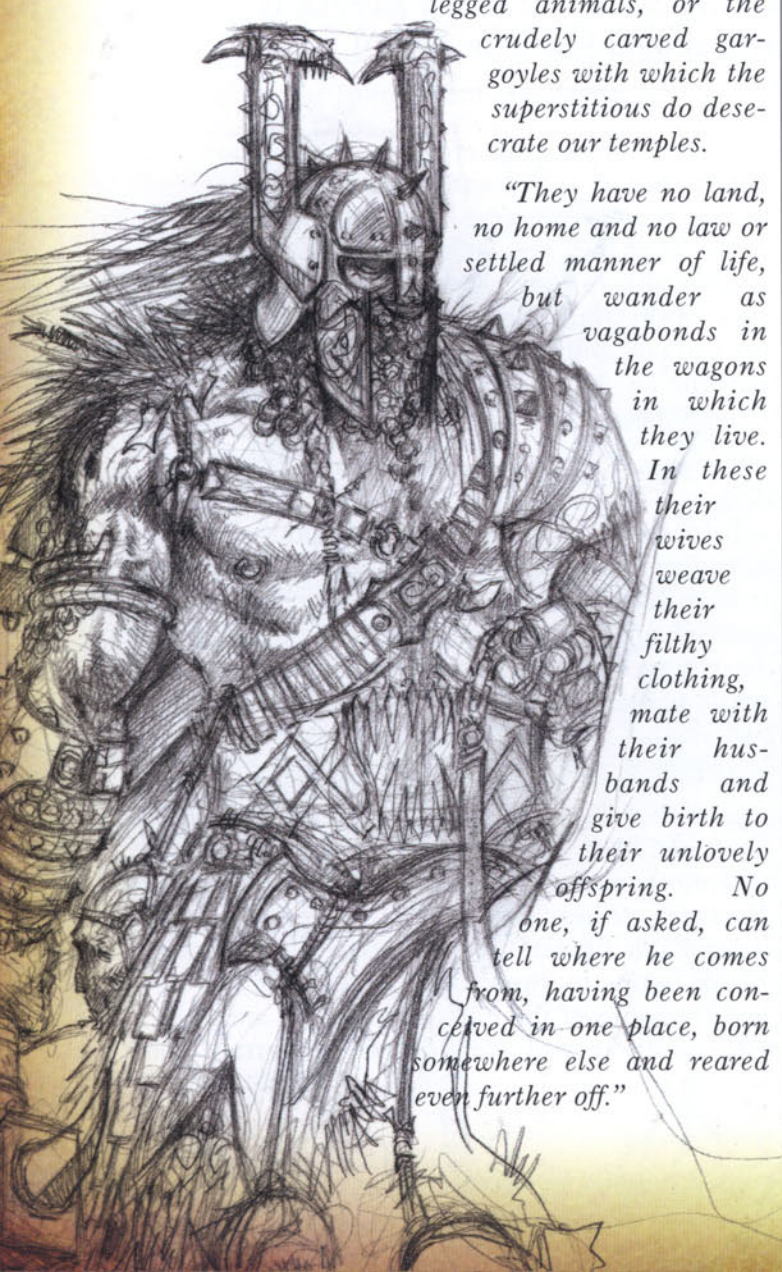
The Hung

BEING AN EXTENDED ESSAY ON THE MOUNTED WARRIORS OF THE HUNG. INCLUDING EXCERPTS FROM "THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD" BY GULES DE RAMBON, AND THE WORKS OF FURION OF CLAR KAROND.

EXCERPT FROM 'The Peoples of the World' by Bretonnian court-scholar Gules de Rambon:

"The people of the Hung who dwell beyond the far plains over the World's Edge Mountains are quite abnormally savage. From the moment of birth they make deep gashes in their children's cheeks, so that when in due course hair appears, its growth is checked by the wrinkled scars, giving them the unlovely appearance of beardless eunuchs. They have squat bodies, strong limbs, and thick necks, and are so prodigiously ugly and bent that they might be two-legged animals, or the crudely carved gargoyles with which the superstitious do desecrate our temples.

"They have no land, no home and no law or settled manner of life, but wander as vagabonds in the wagons in which they live. In these their wives weave their filthy clothing, mate with their husbands and give birth to their unlovely offspring. No one, if asked, can tell where he comes from, having been conceived in one place, born somewhere else and reared even further off."



Far from the Old World are the marauding hunters of the Hung, a people so numerous that they stretch across the continents of our world, and so fearsome that they hold entire realms of men and other races in a grip of terror.

Further even than the plains of the Kurgan lie the lands of the Hung. They intermingle with those of the Kurgan in the west, and are removed from Cathay to the south by a great desert that covers much of the border. However, through the Wastes their tribes stretch further, across the land bridge that connects the eastern realms to the New World in the west where they stretch down the Broken Lands, and across the wasteland bordered by the watchtowers of the Ulthuan renegades. There their tribes once again cross with those of the Kurgan, so between them they may be considered to circumscribe the entirety of the Infernal Gates.

Like the Kurgans, the Hung are a roving people, and thus their tribal boundaries cannot be marked by a simple frontier on a map. While they pay more regard to their greater tribe over and above their itinerant kin, these tribes hold no compunction about merging with others to form great alliances, or devolving and reforming as the winds of circumstance change. This ever-shifting loyalty does lead them to consider as irrelevant, bonds and bargains made with other races. They feel no dishonour in breaking these pacts, or indeed in killing the other parties, and so have gained a reputation for being sly, deceitful and treacherous. Indeed, the Cathayans use the phrase 'Word of a Hung' to denote a worthless promise.

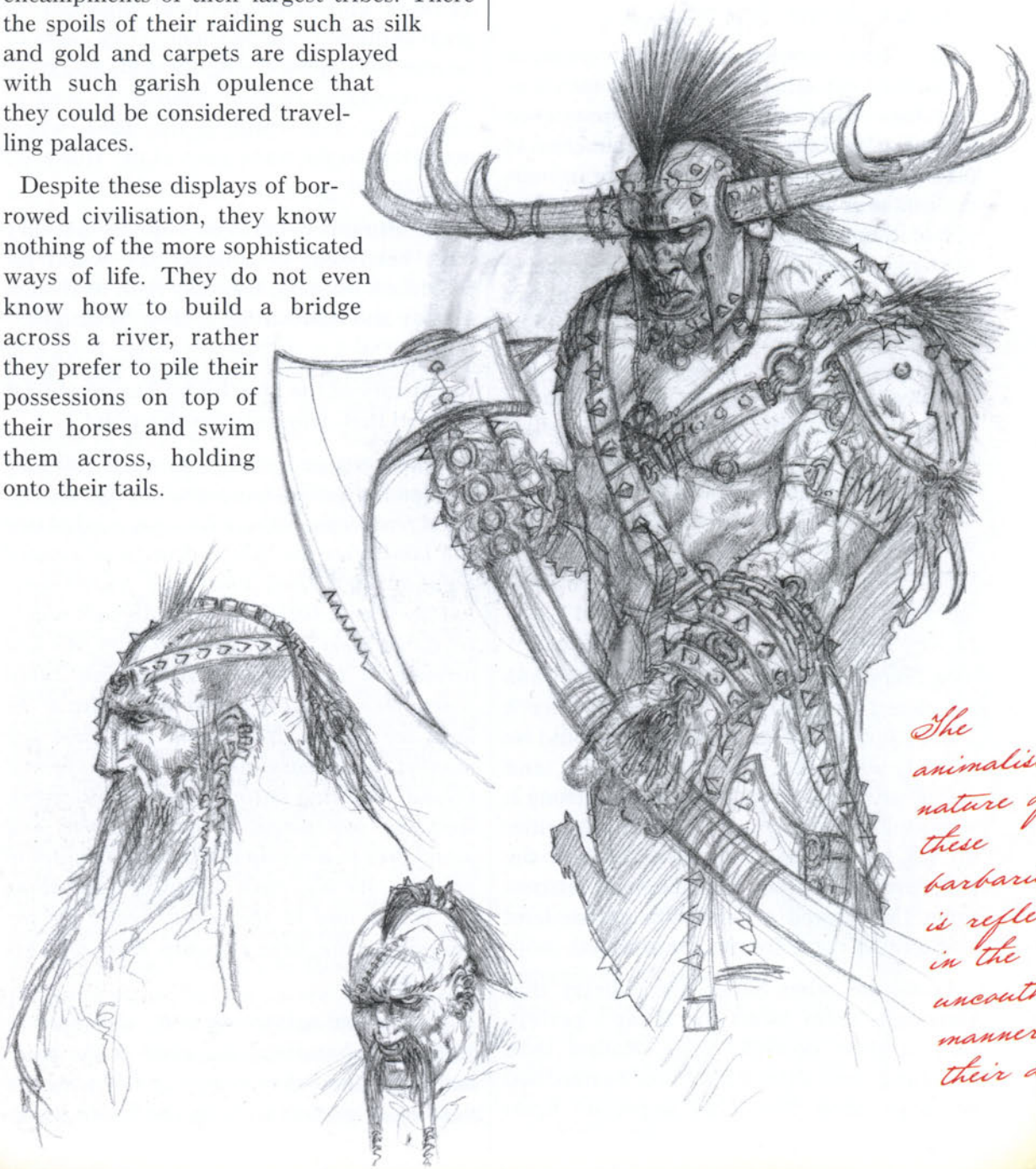
The Hung live in the saddle. The only structures they inhabit are woollen tents they carry, with which they make their encampments. Obscure legends speak of Hung cities, hidden somewhere in the Steppes or in the mountains to the north.

The Hung

These places are supposedly great centres for their worship, and guard the fabulous treasures the Hung had plundered and stolen over the centuries. More than one treasure-seeker has departed from Cathay and the Empire in order to find these hidden cities, and never returned. I believe these stories of great cities to be ridiculous, for the Hung pride themselves on their independent, wandering lifestyle that they believe makes them superior to all sedentary races. If such stories have any basis in fact, as well they might not, then it is from the lavish encampments of their largest tribes. There the spoils of their raiding such as silk and gold and carpets are displayed with such garish opulence that they could be considered travelling palaces.

Despite these displays of borrowed civilisation, they know nothing of the more sophisticated ways of life. They do not even know how to build a bridge across a river, rather they prefer to pile their possessions on top of their horses and swim them across, holding onto their tails.

They live still at the level of the hunter-gatherers, like our distant ancestors. Indeed, the hunt forms a major part of the Hung existence. At the lowest level it provides them their food and sustenance in the form of game, at its highest it is a challenge to their champions and heroes to venture north into the desolate mountains and hillsides of the wastelands, and there prove their worth to their gods by bringing down fierce mutated creatures and ferocious spawn. They train animals in this as well, their hunting dogs are so bestial and bloodthirsty that they even



The animalistic nature of these barbarians is reflected in the uncouth manner of their dress.

follow their masters into battle, and some tribes also train warbirds such as eagles and hawks.

Their mounts are ponies, short and stocky with a dense coat that allow them to endure the wasteland winter. Despite their size they are capable of travelling great distances, sometimes as much as one hundred leagues in three days. Their ponies graze as they travel, rooting beneath the snow for mosses and grass. The Hung have been known to feed their ponies flesh to promote their fighting spirit, giving them a bitter and truculent temper, much like their riders.

The Hung themselves have no pride in what they consume, for they will eat game and fish when times are good, but when times are hard they have no compunction in digging for roots from the ground or in snaring rats and other rodents for meat. Stories tell of them even ingesting lice, the afterbirth of a mare's foaling, human flesh and of sucking the blood from their own horses when no other source of sustenance could be found.

This abhorrent behaviour is compounded by the filthy conditions in which they live, for they refuse to wash their bodies or their clothes or bury their refuse, for they believe it will anger their gods. Both men and women do mutilate themselves in order that they may present a more fearsome, or lovely, visage.

The Steppe is hardly more hospitable than the desert that borders it. In the winter it freezes and in the summer it bakes, and no matter what the season, mountain and steppe alike are swept by winds so strong it was said that they could nearly blow a rider off his horse. Year round storms lash the thin earth as the gods vent their ruthlessness upon the blasted ground. Truly, this land and all that come from it are damned.

As all the other tribes, the country that surrounds them forms the Hung's perception of their deceitful gods. Rather than ascribing them animal totems or bastardised personas, their bare land impresses upon them the base worship of the elements. Thus they praise the God of Blood and War through devastating lightning and fire, while the Lord of Decay is reverenced through murky earth and so on. Thus they have little need for shrines or temples, though they still construct monoliths to honour the dead, and invoke their blasphemy through ruinous icons that they carry. They keep these icons within their tents and they pay their austere worship during meals by rubbing meat and broth over their mouths in a hideous feeding ritual.

Priests and shamans hold positions of great influence among them. They claim to be able to commune with the gods and relay their messages to their leaders, as well as seeing into the world of the dead, where according to them the lives of the Hung are very similar to that in this world.

The ultimate belief of all Hung is that they have been sent to conquer the world for their dark masters, and they fight as though victory and domination is their birthright.

Here is an excerpt from an introduction to the history of the Druchii by Furion of Clar Karond that demonstrates this point:

"When our ancestors first made fall into our land of exile, they found it nigh deserted. A few pitiful natives had since inhabited the land after the Witch King had cleared them last, less than a hundred years before, but they were little challenge for our majestic dark riders and potent sorceries. We had arrived in the summer, though we could scarce recognise it in the frozen tundra of the land we named Naggaroth. Our first few months were easy as we quickly spread inland, founding settlement after settlement, wielding our magic to carve towers and altars, free to worship in this hard country of promise. We also built defensive traps along the coasts and to the south, ready for the pursuit by the false Phoenix King and his minions.

"As the first winter drew in, we began to suffer. Our buildings, designed in the manner fit for the balmy climes of Ulthuan, did nothing to protect us from the biting winds

and chilling temperatures that we now faced. We had not yet learnt the means to subsist here, food and resources were limited and the Black Arks became trapped as their safe harbours froze over. For our noble Witch King, it promised to be an ignoble end to his glorious liberation. And then, as though to complete our misery, the Hung returned.

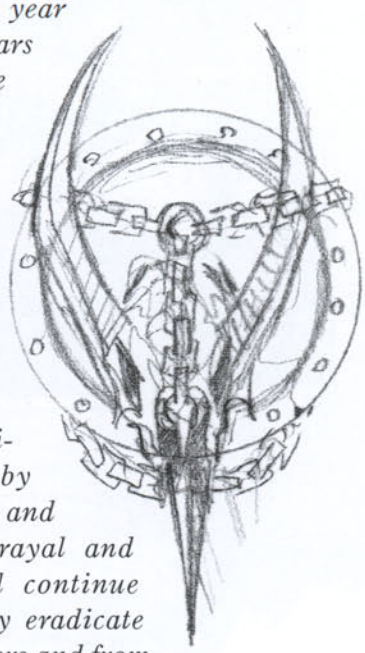
"The Hung had travelled from far in the north, petty hunters following their prey down into their winter fields. They were feral savages on stunted ponies, and there was a horde of them. Thus, in the first encounters, our mighty people, beaten, hungry and spread far across the land, were isolated and forced from their homes by this irascible barbarian host. Those who stood steadfast and defended what was theirs were slain and dismembered, some were even eaten; such was the bestial nature of our foe. Even our fine soldiers, on those few occasions when we brought them to fight in battle, fared badly. Our warsteeds slipped and froze out in the broken, icy terrain, our guard was outflanked and surrounded in the narrow valleys, and the land, which seemed to despise us as much as the Hung, provided nothing to forage, while its harsh, splintered wood proved useless to replace our elegant bows or sure arrows.

"With no way to replace our forces, and precious few reserves to call upon, we retreated before the roving Hung bands, whose pursuit slowed as they pillaged and burnt the abandoned settlements and gorged on the fine food and wine that had been left behind. Thus it was that our fledging empire stood upon the brink of destruction by this pack of low savages, as all was laid waste except the Black Arks, and the seat of the Witch King himself, that ark which had been beached and around which the majestic city of Naggarond that had already begun to form. The Black Arks were frozen in place, but they were still formidable fortresses, far greater than these cowardly mongrel packs would have ever beheld. Nevertheless, they were too small to sustain themselves through an extended siege, and their supplies had been depleted in their long voyage and the doomed expansion inland. But there was no choice, they had to be defended.

"Beyond our walls the Hung massed. Band after band of them gathered until it seemed the coasts and cliffs were alive with them. For an entire day they stood there on their foul shrunken horses regarding us through their tiny eyes, and I felt the fate of our tiny nation in the balance. And then for no apparent reason they turned and departed.

"Some of us say that our defences were too impressive, too formidable for them to wish to throw themselves against, others say that they considered we would never survive on these shores and that they might as well let the land accomplish their task for them. I believe neither explanation, I believe in Malekith and praise him for whatever he must have done to secure our survival.

"The year after, they returned again, but this time we met them with crossbows and war engines and beasts that we tamed from the forests and magicks we conjured from the air. We fought and we repelled them, enslaving those we could as prisoners to ever quicken our development and domination over this world. The next year, and the year after and many years since then have we tested and broken these degenerate barbarians, even as they devised new methods by which to conquer. The tone for our history with them was thus set as one of constant competition, occasioned by infrequent alliances and more frequent betrayal and deceit, which will continue until we can finally eradicate them from our borders and from our heartlands."





the bloodied horde

The plain extended as far as my eye could see, a plain not of grass, nor sand, nor rock, but of flesh and metal and bone. A rabid horde, a bloody mass of men and daemon combined so to form a single heaving, undulating body, crawling forward every step with snarls and grunts and howls to chill the soul.

Like the Northern wastes - could they be one and the same?

And as I saw their eyes fall upon me, there issued from their ranks the Chaos Hunt to strike me down. The hounds of flesh, whose howls haunt my sleep and whose memory stalks my every waking moment, led it, and their baying spread icy tendrils of fear through my weak and mortal heart.

And yet worse, yet more terrible to behold, were the huntsmen of this fell pack. Following close upon the hounds, urging them ever forward, came deformed beings, running and shrieking, shrieking and running, driven by the sateless bloodlust of their kind.

With twisted crimson frames they sped across the blighted land, crouched over as if the better to track the terror-spoor of their prey. Masters of the Hunt, they sought my blood to offer at the foot of the Skull Throne, ever hungry for fresh prey, ever willing to tear the warm red flesh with their talons and to smear the gore triumphant upon their curving horns.

Source unknown - 'A Vision of Damnation'?

Warriors of Khorne

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE MARAUDERS WHO CAST ASIDE EVERYTHING IN THEIR QUEST FOR POWER. DETAILING THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY STRIVE TO ATTAIN THE FAVOUR OF THE BLOOD GOD.

"No man can be judged until he stands alone before his god."

Alaric, High Theogonist of Sigmar

VIRTUALLY EVERY MAN of the marauder tribes is a warrior, trained to fight and capable of taking his place in the battle line. However, there are those in every tribe who display a natural aptitude in the talents of death, those who set their sights beyond a faceless life among their kith and kin, those who have some inkling of the material power that more direct servitude to their ruinous gods may provide. For those with such damned ambition, there is an alternative. They may leave their tribes and their homes, either in groups or alone, and seek to perform acts of cruelty and malice of such awesome degradation that they may for the briefest moment attract the attention of their god.



The life of a warrior of Chaos is the life for a true follower of Chaos; discarding all mortal concerns to exist solely in the service of their Power.

A warrior's departure from a tribe is a moment of great adventure, and every tribe has its own rituals and ceremonies to consecrate the new warrior, as well as tests to ensure his worth. With him, he will take the arms and armour of his tribe, so that initially these warriors appear no different from other marauders. With the favour of the gods, however, unearthly armour and weapons of dark design and hideous potency will soon replace these mortal arms.

If they wish to survive long, divorced from the protection and security of their tribe, then all but the most independent will join the retinue of a successful champion. Indeed, when the tribe encounters such warbands, it may provide the spur to its



youths to consider whether they too might wish to walk the damnable path. By joining such a band, these young warriors hope thereby to gain prestige and fame. This is in order that they may one day inherit the band when the champion meets his ultimate fate, or be able to draw enough followers to themselves that they may create their own. It is well known that only by becoming the master of his own destiny may a warrior even come to the notice of his god.

Once a member of such a band, a warrior may not always remain so. He may feel the call of his gods pulling him in another direction, or the champion may feel his position too threatened and expel him, or the warband itself may be defeated and the warrior fall captive, or die.

To be taken prisoner by another champion is not necessarily an end to a warrior's path. Unlike the greater tribal loyalties, a warrior's fealty to his warband is far more malleable. Should they be vanquished by another warband then it is proof that the winner's god or the champion they honour is more worthy than the one who was bested. Warriors show little compunction against trading allegiances unless their captors are blood-enemies or follow a Power that is detested by their own. And if the warrior fought well, and was overwhelmed by numbers rather than by skill, then the new champion may well accept his fealty. Thus in this way the ranks of successful champions may swell with those of his former foes as well as his allies.

When a host forms for a great battle, the warrior may stay with their warband or seek out others of his own kind and form attachments with them, hoping to achieve greater deeds with their strength of arms combined, and thereby attract the attention of their masters. These are fearsome regiments, bristling with all manner of grim totems and weapons wielded by massive men, long schooled in their deadly use. They wear huge spiked armour as easily as if it were silk, allowing them to fight without encumbrance while their infernal plate shatters the blades and weapons struck against them.

And yet for all their confident, formidable nature, there is nevertheless some air of desperation about them. The longer they remain in their champion's service the lesser then their chance of ever stepping forward themselves onto the true road to power that lies so hauntingly close.

One must gain the Powers' attention quickly in such an existence before the dangers of Chaos take their toll.



This was drawn by a priest of Sigmar. His town was ravaged by this warrior's warband. He escaped by hiding inside the bells of the temple. There he hid until the raiders left, dragging captives behind their horses.

Champions of Khorne

BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE MARAUDERS WHO CAST ASIDE EVERYTHING IN THEIR QUEST FOR POWER. DETAILING THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY STRIVE TO ATTAIN THE FAVOUR OF THE BLOOD GOD.

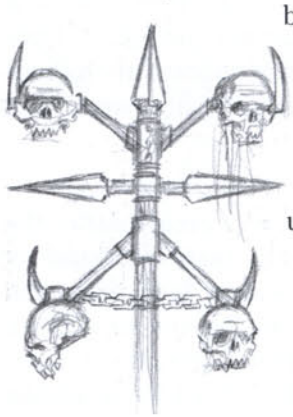
FOR ALL THEIR single-minded purpose, the origins of the Champions of Khorne can be just as varied as of any other races' heroes. Many of them rise from the ranks of the Kurgans, as the simple, directed lifestyle of a Khorne worshipper appeals to those bred in a culture already dependant upon constant movement, violence and blood sacrifice. My own experience showed that the Norscans are less well represented, and of those, most hail from tribes in the northern and eastern extremes of the land where the people are less civilised and their lives be an everyday struggle against the harshest elements of nature. What they lack in numbers however, they make up for in ferocity. The blood-crazed beserkers of the Norscans are fearsome opponents indeed and many have been undone by their hand. The Hung have also devotees to the Blood God, but due to the limits of my travels I encountered few of them.

Always a champion will have a standard. Usually covered with gruesome trophies and soaked in blood.



But bloody Khorne, as with all the Lords of Chaos, is not limited to these followers only. His grasp can reach for the heart of every soldier, every warrior, every life taker. He is the god of war and blood and violence, and all that fight in some way subscribes to his religion. When a noble knight of Bretonnia or a righteous Templar of the Empire falls to his worship it is because he forgets why he kills. To change from killing for the common good to killing only because he wants to, because the act pleases him, is when a righteous man has faltered from his path. These are the champions that Khorne embraces, never to release. These are the champions, the converts, that Khorne and every Chaos God particularly savours. They do not come to the worship of Chaos merely because that is what is done, or what is accepted. They have rebelled against the grain, they have proved strong and brutal enough to survive the wrath of their allies. They have killed, and enjoyed killing, when courted their masters' disapproval. And they have survived; survived the wrath of their allies, survived the blood-soaked path to the shadowlands of their gods. They have purpose and ambition, they have a thirst that needs sating and they are strong enough to have gone to extraordinary means to satisfy it.

Khornate Champions are varied in their appearance but most share certain qualities, if that is the right word. To gain favour in their deity's eyes they must first prove themselves on the field of battle, and a heavy tithe of skulls must have been laid at his alter. Thus, these men are usually possessed of great strength and courage. But this courage is born not from the grace of the soul, but from an unwholesome blood lust, and a fervent desire to appease their hungry god. These craven knights adorn their armour and wargear with trophies and gruesome objects won on the battlefield. The plate they wear is wrought in such a fashion as to lend their wearer a brutal aspect, and inspire fear in all who behold him. As for weapons, their armoury is almost infinite in its variety, but great swords and cudgels are favoured. To these war-dogs are not known the subtle art of wars. They use tools to spill blood and split bone. It is with fear and brutality that Khorne wins the field.



Fallen Knights from Bretonnia, deconsecrated Templars from the Empire, savage mercenaries from Tilea, cruel bandits of the Border Princes, renegades of the Druchii, crazed dwarfs from beyond the Great Skull Land, these all answer the war shriek and stand together in the Khornate battleline.



Champions of Khorne

There is no one way for a mortal to become a chosen slave to his god. The northern tribes have a tradition: those who wish such a fate to befall them leave their tribes and collect around them a retinue of followers, then march wherever they might have a chance to catch the notice of the Powers. Many consider, especially those of the Blood God, that this may best be done by killing in their god's name. They therefore seek out grand battles in which to increase their tally. Some consider that they must make some discovery, that some fragment of arcane lore holds the key to their ascension. Most consider that they must journey to their master's very domains in the north in order to gain his blessing and trek through the haunted wastes that surround them in order to reach those glades. Who can say what is correct? Who can tell on what criteria these corrupted beings use when considering who should serve them for eternity?

They are fickle and capricious entities, above caring for anything in this world except the larger game they play, and they would certainly never be limited to anything of their fancy. Thus they have bestowed their infernal blessing upon the chieftains of marauder tribes who have never cared whether they should catch the eye of god or not. They have raised generals as a bargain in return for them bringing across their armies to fight for their cause. They have rewarded demonologists and sorcerers who have given them a moment's entertainment, while ignoring champions who bear their name and beg for recognition.

The very nature of the chaotic is anarchy and disorder. How ludicrous does it sound to claim that there is a process by which a warrior may try and earn the discernment of such a Power? Nevertheless, men and other races of all types do follow this same path year after year. And why should they not? For in the countless who die or go mad in the attempt, there are those precious few who are, for whatever reason, chosen for daemonic immortality.

Warbands chart their own course separate from all others. They will travel wherever the champion leads, whether it be with a specific destination in mind, or on the whim of his gods. As smaller groups they may travel far further than whole clans of marauders and so can be found deep within the woods of the Empire, within the Grey Mountains or countless other wild places that do infest our borders, as well as out in the northern wastelands, steppe and untamed wilderness.

It is a common belief among them that they must first gain glory and honour for their gods before they venture northwards and attempt to stand and be judged. Such a belief is more practical than anything else, for only a battle-hardened and experienced party would ever survive long amongst the monsters and daemons of the northern wastes.

Many of these warbands do seek such experience in the forests and wilds of the established nations of the Old World or Eastern lands, where life is soft and food is plentiful and easily had from cowardly peasantfolk. These places have far greater abundance of victims and of dark shrines than the harsher lands beyond the World's Edge Mountains. Once in our lands, if they are tribesmen from the North, they may instinctively fall back upon their old ways as raiders or perhaps become involved with the insurrectionist schemes of the cults of the cities. These rebellious ambitions are of no great interest to the champions, only what they gain, either materially in some trade of services or information, or on a grander scale in the eyes of their god. Old World renegades normally have some dark ambition in returning to wreck destruction upon their homelands, often for reasons of a personal nature.

Others, especially the Blood God's chosen, baulk at such easy living, and intentionally seek out the hardest modes of life and the most fearsome opponents to do battle with, and thereby show their worthiness to join their gods' eternal legions. They will travel the Dark Lands and the Skull Lands and the mountains of the Steppe which are full of hardened men and other races, who pose a

proper challenge but at the same time are easily swayed to join the band of a warrior whose star is in the ascendance.

Should a great horde begin to build, then champions will flock to it, for its driving sense of purpose if nothing else. Reasonably they assume that such a concentration of devotees must surely draw the attention of the beings they praise. Within such a horde, and especially at time of incursion, champions feel their feats and deeds are worth tenfold what they would be on other occasions, and so they collectively drive one another to grander and grander acts of bloody worship and desecration.

At some point, the thoughts of every champion who enjoys success will turn to the north. His warband will enter the wastes and there make what is seen as their epic journey to the gates of oblivion. Once they begin, their progression is refreshed with a new dedication. In their eyes, the journey north takes on the aspect most similar to a Bretonnian's Grail Quest. They believe they are under the direct regard of their god and every obstacle or opportunity which is placed in their path is done so by him as part of his ultimate purpose. Their fate and destiny is no longer their own.

Their trek takes them ever closer to the centre of the wastes, where there is constant warfare between the servants of the Fell Lords, where bizarre realms and macabre fiefdoms of the forever damned exist and where the laws of nature are nothing against the greater Chaos that pulses at its heart. For now, I fear to venture any closer in my studies to this place. But I know I must return for this task to be completed.

All I will say for now is that the only outcomes for a champion who enters there is to rise to daemonhood, to fall to insanity or death or to be judged too useful a mortal pawn to be discarded and kept for some indecipherable reason until their god judges their purpose completed.

He sits atop a throne of blood,
From which a river flows,
Its tributaries are pain and want,
And from its mouth spews death.

(Anon)



Scroll fragment – recovered from the remains of the library belonging to the infamous Malthus von Gottlieb.

M.v.S.



the marks of chaos

Where the Daemon treads, there treads the weakling after. Where stalks the dark hunter of the night, creeps behind the craven fool.

Does this mean me? Am I the fool who follows in devastation's wake, picking the bones, looking under rocks as Chaos rolls forward, oblivious to me?

I say you can find out the servants of darkness and tell them by their Mark. For believe me, each bears a Mark, each bears an outward scar of the deviltry within. No man is born so unnatural that his body does not revolt at the foul pollution spawned inside.

It is this I fear more. Am I yet safe in my chamber?

And by these Marks can you tell them.
By the horns of the beast - for they have turned themselves from the light and should be slaughtered like the kine in the fields.
By the scales of the snake - for they slither in dark places and should be beaten with a rod.
By the feathers of the vulture - for they have vexed the gods with vain flight and should be brought down with a stone...

Rewards for the Damned

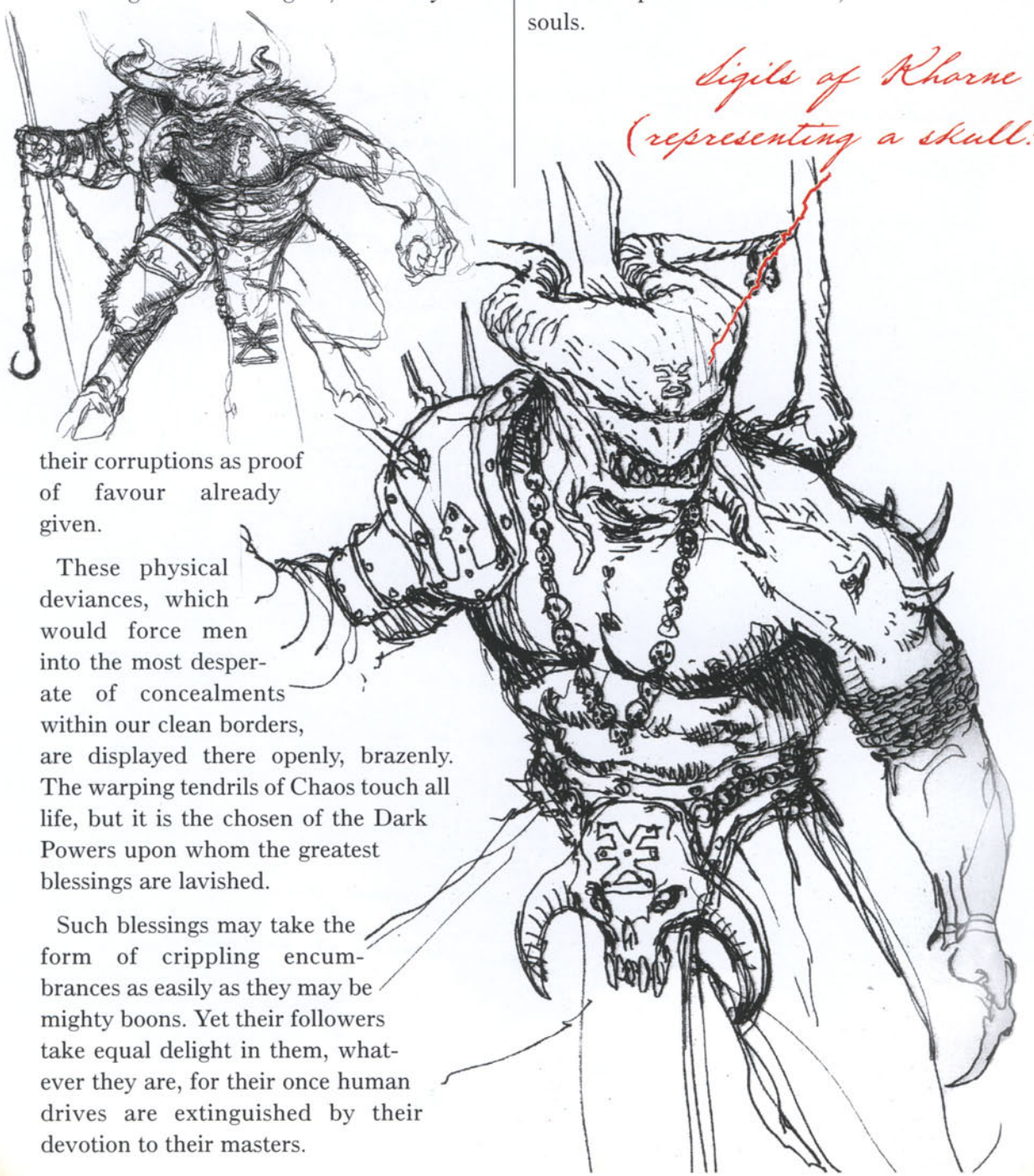
BEING A BRIEF STUDY OF THE MYRIAD FORMS OF CORRUPTION VISITED UPON THE FOLLOWERS OF KHORNE. DETAILING THE HIDEOUS WEAPONS AND FOUL FORMS THAT THE BLOOD GOD BESTOWS UPON THE FAVOURED.

IN THE WASTELANDS of the North there is but one currency of value: the favours of the Ruinous Powers. Devoted followers festoon themselves with symbols and markers of their unholy fealty in hopes of attracting their lord's gaze, and they bare their corruptions as proof of favour already given.

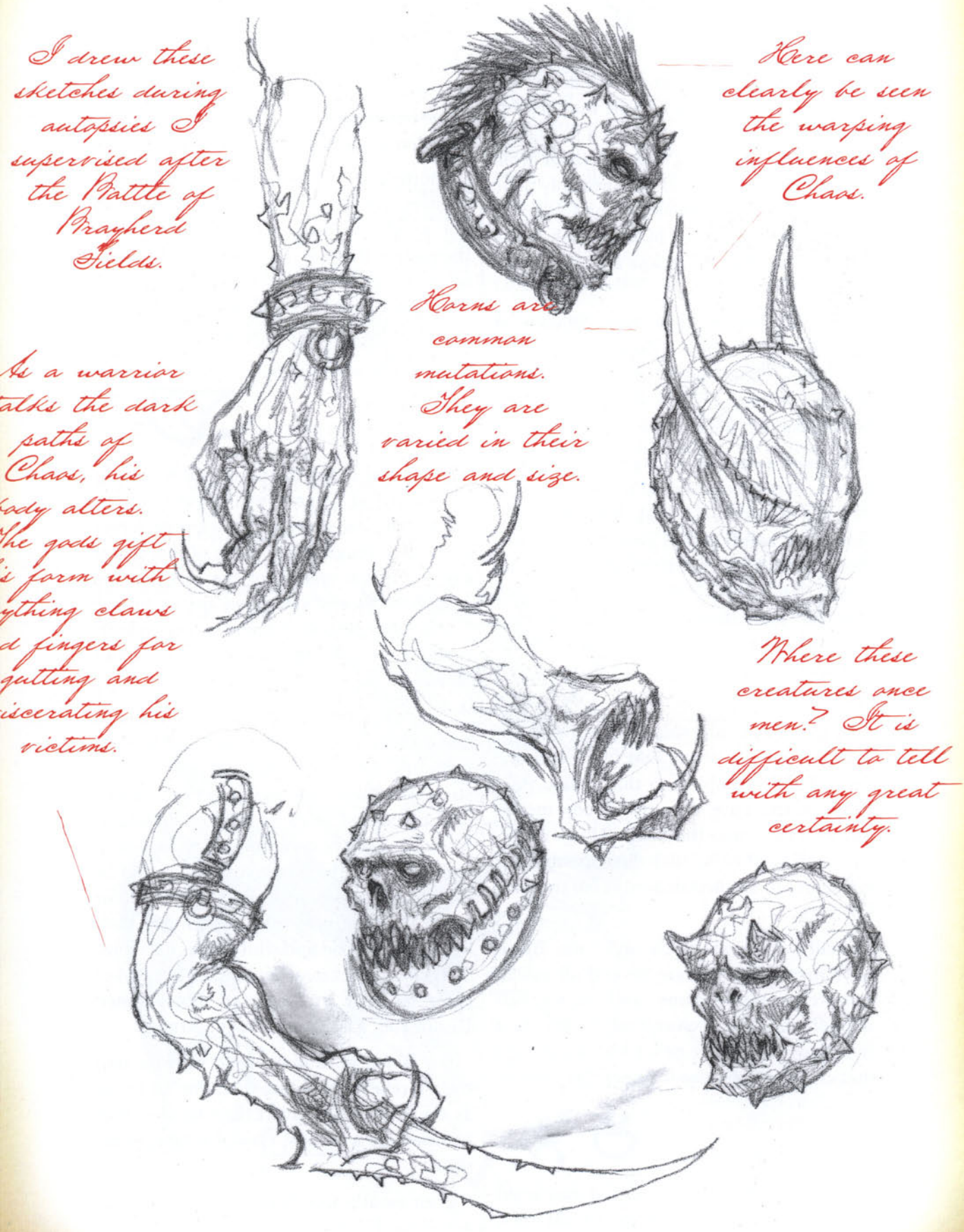
These physical deviances, which would force men into the most desperate of concealments within our clean borders, are displayed there openly, brazenly. The warping tendrils of Chaos touch all life, but it is the chosen of the Dark Powers upon whom the greatest blessings are lavished.

Such blessings may take the form of crippling encumbrances as easily as they may be mighty boons. Yet their followers take equal delight in them, whatever they are, for their once human drives are extinguished by their devotion to their masters.

For the chosen of Khorne there is but one goal: to gather skulls. As they do this Khorne's blessings imbue them further and further with the skills and talismans by which they may add to his tally, no matter what the price to their wits, or minds or souls.



Rewards for the Damned



Rewards for the Damned

Gifts of Arms

(Daemon Weapons)



As a god of warfare and violent death, the first gifts a devotee of Khorne may receive are arms and armour with which he may do his master's bidding. These can range from protection in the form of the unearthly plate known as Chaos Armour, or the Collars of Khorne like those worn by his Fleshhounds, to potent weapons of arcane and mystic origins.

These cursed weapons have powers of many kinds, of which I detail in forthcoming pages. The most common sorts are defiled creations, which forever mar and taint those that wield them.

The most favoured among the devout may bear a weapon containing the essence of a daemon of the Blood God. Such items are scarce and highly prized amongst his champions because of the devastation they can wreak. They ignore the reality that each time they place their hand upon its hilt they lock wills with a capricious enemy with the evil intelligence of ages, which may not best appreciate its imprisonment.

As part of his gift these, or any form of weapon, may be bound and fused with the flesh of the champion so that where their hand or arm once was, their body merely flows straight into the blade. Many recipients of this gift enjoy such disfigurement for it declares to all their dedication to the warrior path.

Finally, there are such arms the Blood Lord may grant that are beyond all mortal comprehension; arcane and mysterious weapons of great power that do fire as a crossbow, balls of fire or solid beams of light that char and vaporise whatever they strike.

Gifts of Beasts

(Servants & Creatures)



To aid his chosen, the Blood God may grant them servants and creatures to aid their fight, such as the Bloodsteeds of his cavalry or the twisted warhounds that are kept by the tribes of the Shadowlanders. Most valued of all are the daemon-beasts of Khorne's own packs: the Juggernauts and Fleshhounds and Bloodbeasts.

Khorne cares not to give his chosen innate mastery over these creatures, for if they are not worthy to tame and break the beasts themselves they are not worthy to call themselves his chosen. For those that fail in this task, the Blood God will allow his 'gift' to tear their bodies apart and break their bones to marrow.

Gifts of Flesh

(Mutations)



The natural forms of the mortal frames of the chosen of Khorne will always be perverted and twisted by the warping forces that rise through them. Some of this physical corruption will be of the sort that we may find in any deformed infant in our lands, but some will have special significance to those who worship the Skull Throne.

Thus these gifts of flesh may be given to bring them closer to the image of Khorne and his daemons. Such grants are as strength, where the muscles of his chosen will bulge and swell in a most unnatural fashion, or they gain a capacity to heal deep cuts and even those wounds that should be mortal. Their skin will turn black or red or brass, the colours of their master, and their eyes become dead and white as his daemons. Their very faces may become the likeness of Khorne's own, or that of a Bloodthirster, Bloodletter, Fleshhound or Juggernaut.

The Blood Lord may brand his rune into their forehead, claiming them for all to see as his chosen, or convert their hand so that it turns into a bloody, clawed replica of his own.

Their mouths may leak poison in the manner of the Fleshhounds and Bloodletters, or

they may be granted the most disfiguring boon of this sort and have their bodies shaped to become a hybrid breed with his daemon spawn.

Gifts of Will

(Perversions of the Spirit)

Who knows whether these be some special blessing of the Powers or merely the nature of the men who live and die in their service, their inner essence allowed release from the bounds of man's society? While it will always be the deranged and insane who are drawn to the Powers, can it be doubted that they become more so with the attention of the gods upon them?

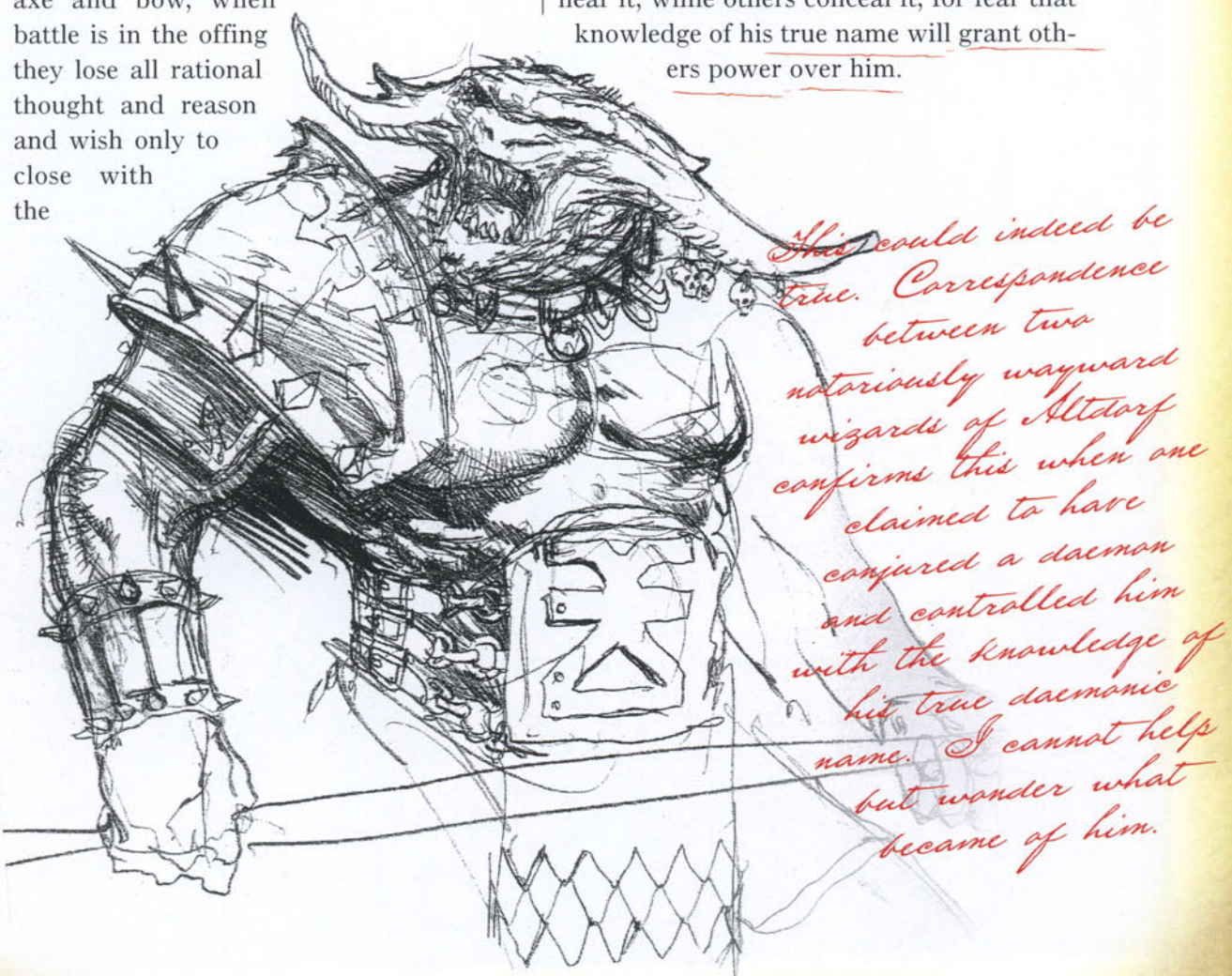
So with these "gifts" of Khorne they do move ever closer to the mental state of martial perfection in their misshapen minds. While they gain in skill with the sword and axe and bow, when battle is in the offing they lose all rational thought and reason and wish only to close with the foe and tear at them with whatever comes to hand. They become able to ignore wound and injury to the point of death in order to continue the fight. They become a fearsome opponent in battle but that is all they are. Away from the field, without the stench of combat to fill their nostrils they become empty shells of men, as though their soul had already been taken.

Gifts of Title

(Daemonic Name)

Finally, and most coveted of all, the Blood Lord may inscribe across their souls their true name as a daemon, with which he shows his highest opinion that the recipient may one day join the ranks of his immortal daemons, as is the wish of every one of his chosen.

Some trumpet this boon to all that would hear it, while others conceal it, for fear that knowledge of his true name will grant others power over him.



This could indeed be true. Correspondence between two notoriously wayward wizards of Altdorf confirms this when one claimed to have conjured a daemon and controlled him with the knowledge of his true daemonic name. I cannot help but wonder what became of him.


Daemon Prince
source unknown (Opisculum Daemonicus?)
Found just south of Wissenberg in 1123

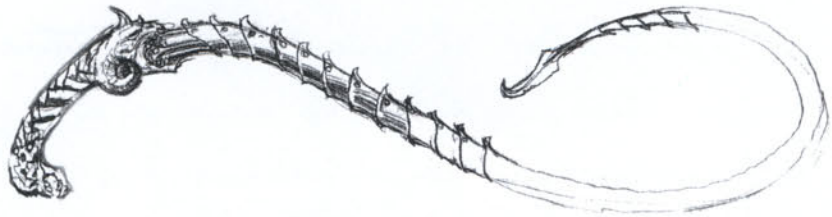
With a mighty roar he rose, brighter than the sun and more fierce. In his hand he held a rod of twisted bone, crossed and double-crossed with the sign of his dark lord, a symbol of his power and fruit of mortal longings well-fulfilled.

He heightened above the company, taller far than they, and looked with black pride on these his frightened slaves. He snarled and heard the sound of noble hatred echo from the skies. He stared the savage stare of immortal fury and death was in his gaze.

Mirrored in his burning eyes were a thousand faces masked in fear. Those that fled he tore asunder; his birth baptised in that most livid of reds and his soul ensanguined in dread. But those that stayed, be they petrified or penitent before him, knelt on trembling knees. With them he fed his aching hunger, the hunger for flesh that will never be sated. With every death and scream and plea he learned the breadth and depth of his immortal cruelty, he learned of his power forever unleashed.

And on that blasted heath his ashen servant turned, gripped by cold unthinking terror, and fled his presence. And on that blasted heath a Daemon Prince was born.

(Source unknown – possibly the heretical text referred to as 'The Lonely Pilgrim' by Luther Hoff)



The Armoury of Chaos

BEING A CLOSE SCRUTINY OF VARIOUS FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS WEAPONS OF POTENT CHAOTIC SUBSTANCE. INCLUDING SEVERAL PAGES TAKEN FROM THE HERETICAL WORK: 'TOOLS OF THE APOSTATE' BY MARNIUS GAIUS.

SAY THE NAMES of "Archaon", "Kharan", "Gorthor" or "Valnir" to men of the Old World and they will tremble and bless themselves, for all men know of the ravages and destruction brought by these terrible champions of darkness. Say the names "Slayer of Kings", "Knightsbane" or "Gatherer of Souls" and you will most likely be met by ignorance from all but the dustiest scholar. To the men of the north, however, these dire names will be instantly known as the weapons those same fell champions wielded. Among the Northern Tribes the arms of a great warrior are second in fame only to the warrior himself.

In such a place, imbued as it is with dark magic, there are many more enchanted weapons than would be found in the Empire or Bretonnia. Chaos saturates the land and everything in it. Swords are made from iron mined from the tainted earth, and once forged are cooled in water that has flowed through the same cursed ground. Even the blacksmith himself may bear some mark of Chaos, or temper steel with a third arm. From my experience almost all the weapons created in the shadowlands have something of the other realm about them; just as all life does, though this is more in its essence than in anything distinguishable to the eye. From my time with the Norscans I have concluded that they have but two talents to share with the world: the creation of cogent arms and armour, and of men more that willing to use them. Even Ruthvengen could turn out crude tempered plate that could turn a blade aside as easily as the finest Bretonnian alloy. And he claimed his skills were as nothing against what he had seen of the daemon-armour beaten out on the very borders of the other realm.

The magic weapons of Chaos champions are quite different. There is nothing haphazard or innocuous about their enchantment. Raw materials are carefully chosen, particular tools may need to be assembled, or if unique, even created from scratch. There are often rites and rituals to be performed during the casting process, the fire may need to be fed by a particular fuel, and often the blade will be cooled in something quite other than brackish water. Such efforts require such knowledge and resources as to be beyond the capabilities of most tribe weaponsmiths. Indeed, all but the greatest of them avoid such practices, believing them to to be matter s for none but the gods themselves. Ruthvengen certainly believed that in forging such a blade he would invest it with a portion of his spirit. I would have dismissed this as mere superstition if I did not already know that he had tried to make such a thing, a sword imbued with darkness with a pommel carved from a warpstone fragment. It had been a grand adventure of youthful arrogance, and one from which he was fortunate to have emerged, bodily at least, intact. He hides it still, too fearful to wield it, destroy it or dispose of it. The blade, as far as I can tell, bears him no ill will and is merely waiting for something.

Champions are awarded such special weapons as a sign of favour from the gods, though the presentation is rarely direct. In the Saga of Werner Flamefist, Werner found the Wind Sword while being led through the Cold Caverns by a cockatrice. He took this as a sign of favour from Tzeentch. In territory such as the Chaos Wastes, which is near deserted aside from marauding warbands, it would be equally likely that he discovered the

Tools of the Apostate

The sword of the Knight of Chaos was placed upon the anvil, and the smith rained many mighty blows upon it, and yet no mark did show upon the blade. It was thrust into the heart of the furnace, and when it was brought forth, the smith did smite the blade once more with all the skill of his craft, now upon the edge, and still no mark did show upon the blade. My scribe did chance to prick himself upon his small knife, and but a single drop of blood fell on the anvil, onto the cursed blade that lay there. At this a great rune shone forth, redder than the heart's blood, and darker than night. The evil sword did pulse and sing upon the anvil, and all fled in fear of the dire thing.

Marnius Gaius: scholar, thinker, fallen. It appalls me to think that my work - The Liber Chaotica - could be used for evil ends as his works were. Sigmar guide me!

sword by chance. Nevertheless, the endless cycle of combat and death doubtless leads to these potent weapons being passed on from champion to champion. More are doubtless created in the daemonic foundries of the other realm, others in even more bizarre circumstances. Perhaps even an ordinary blade, if used in slaughter by a powerful follower of Chaos for long enough, begins to acquire a modicum of power?

This cycle notwithstanding, weapons like these are rare, and many champions will live and die having never wielded such a blade.

Over the following pages I include just a few of the huge variety of these Chaos weapons that I have encountered. The most powerful blades, those known as daemon weapons, require distinct consideration, and so I leave them for my future discussions on the unholy topic of daemons.

Hastyr, The King Sword



A far-travelling Tzeentchian champion from the Hung passed on their legend of Hastyr, the King Sword. It stands alone amongst this anthology, for it is the only tale where it was not the man who wielded the weapon, but the weapon that wielded the man. Its full history runs over centuries, and is far too lengthy to be reproduced here. But in summary it was discovered by warriors of the Hung in a cavern sanctified to an unknown god. Though obviously a dark weapon of great power the warriors kept it a secret amongst themselves, and instead built a conspiracy amongst the tribesmen to oust the chieftain. This they did, but on acquiring power their leader declared his comrades traitors and outcasts and executed them all personally with Hastyr. Hastyr was made the 'King Sword', a weapon that represented leadership of this clan of the Hung, and which was therefore carried by each and every successive chieftain and as each chief cut his own flesh with the sword, Hastyr reached out and captured his soul. Through them, it controlled the clan for generations, using them for its own mysterious purposes before finally being exposed by the hero named Ana-mung, who discovered its true existence after his elder brother had become chieftain. Ana-mung revealed the truth and killed his brother, and was ostracised from the clan. After he left, Hastyr cast off its mortal agents and, bizarrely, ruled in its own stead for a further fifty years. Finally, Ana-mung returned from his travels in the Northernmost wastes and challenged Hastyr and bested it by plunging the sword into his own body and galloping away on his daemonic steed, his last command was that the immortal beast never stop nor allow him to fall from its back.

The Bane Spear

The Bane Spear is a near-mythical weapon among the Tahmaks. They tell of an ancient tribe whose chieftain bartered with a god for power to conquer all the tribes of the Kurgans. In return he offered the souls of his tribesmen upon his death. The god granted him this power and his dominion stretched across half the world. His however, was even more ambitious. In a bid to outdo his father he plotted to bring the very realm of the gods under their control. He learnt of a sorcerer who defied the gods' rules and denied them their tribute of souls. This intrigued the young warrior and so he took his men to the sorcerer's citadel of bone and laid siege to the place. After five years and a day, the citadel finally fell and the sorcerer was brought before the chieftain's son as a prisoner. He bartered his knowledge of darkest rites for his freedom, and instructed the chieftain's son in the rites to forge a weapon capable of banishing any servant of the gods from this earth. The chieftain's son tricked the sorcerer and slew him, making a spearhead over a fire of the sorcerer's bones and then cooling it in his blood.

To test the weapon, he had his shamans summon a daemon and, when it appeared, he thrust the Bane Spear into the daemon's hip. The daemon howled and was banished just as the sorcerer had promised. The young warrior returned to his tribe to challenge his father and make preparations to wage war against the gods themselves, only to discover that his father was no longer there. He had contrived to seal an alliance with another dark power so that he may be raised to the other realm, and reign still as a daemonic prince, thereby thwarting the pact he had made. The son was delighted, for with his father ascended he could now take his place. He fired weapon after weapon as he had done the spearhead, daemonkillers all, until the sorcerer's bones were blackened dust and his blood had all steamed away. With these weapons he armed his men, and led them north. At the boundary stones of the mortal realm he challenged the gods to face him on the battlefield. Against him emerged a single god carrying a pouch. Was this all, the young warrior cried, that they could send to fight him? No, the god replied, it was simply here to collect a debt, and it presented the chieftain's son with the body of a daemon who bore a mortal wound in his hip. And with that the warrior's mighty army collapsed from their horses as their souls were pulled from their frames into the god's pouch, which bulged so hugely that he swung it over his back. The chieftain's son alone was spared, and taken along body and all into the realm of the gods to suffer in all the countless other ways a soul cannot.

Skar's Kraken-killer

Skar was a reaver from the town of Iskward. He was on board a longship returning to home after a summer's campaigning when they were beset by a fearful monster from the bottom of the Sea of Claws, driven to the coastal force by some unknown terror in the deeps. Skar was dragged from the boat and down into the depths. He struggled and fought against the tentacle crushing the life from him while around him the longship began to sink and the monster ate its fill of Norscan flesh. His efforts were to no avail and, with his lungs burning, he was finally dragged towards the creature's rapacious maw. In his dying moments, his flailing hand caught hold of something solid. He gripped it and at that moment he felt his lungs expand again with fresh air. In his hand was a sword that had its blade embedded in the brow of the sea monster. Invigorated, Skar drove the blade further into the monstrosity's skull and then pulled it out and kicked away and into the black ocean. Skar ended up on the stone beaches of Iskward along with the wreckage of his ship, bearing this same blade of scales with a sharkskin hilt. He was the only survivor, all the other crew having been consumed, crushed or drowned in the frigid water, and the townspeople needed little convincing to believe that he had been shown special favour by their gods. Skar Sealord, as he became known, travelled north, always staying within a few miles of the coast. He fought when he was challenged but aside from that showed no interest in creating the wake of devastation normally caused by a champion's progress. Finally, upon reaching the northmost coast of the Shadowlands he seemed to come to a realisation. He released his retinue from their oaths of loyalty to him and strode confidently into the dark sea never to be



This scarp of parchment was pushed under my door during my few hours of repose. None of the watchmen saw anyone enter or leave, and their night was undisturbed. No one apart from the Grand Theoganist himself, and a few others are aware of my whereabouts, or the nature of my labours.

So who delivered it?

Th, Gervain. The sword you
has been smelted in the heat
of your anger, forged upon the
anvil of your desire, tempered in
the flames of your hate,
quenched in the waters your soul,
polished with your loyalty, bur-
nished with your bones and skin,
tested in your hand, and borne in
my name. You, slave, are mine
as much as the blade.

The last sentance chills my blood.

Foubarche's Mist

The legends of Castle Foubarche in Aquitane tell of an ancient warrior who was challenged and bested by the first Duke Foubarche during the very establishment of his realm. According to the tale, the warrior then returned some hundreds of years later with a sword of mist, his declared intention to return to his realm with all those descendants of the original duke (which, due to the promiscuity of him and his descendants, could have easily included all the inhabitants of the castle and most of the town). The warrior then thrust the mist sword into the chest of the current duke and disappeared. The duke appeared unharmed at first, however over the following days he began to literally fade away, until he finally vanished completely. The full tale is too long to be repeated here and can be found in the ledgers of Foubarche. A more fanciful, fictionalised version was also commercialised as The Ghostmaker by Antone Bellemarch, in which the bare essentials of the warrior and his weapon are largely accurate. The highly improbable ending was not, and far more grisly in real life.



Skolanjer

A young champion known as Urther bore this axe which he attested had been crafted from the scale of the dragon Skolanjer, which he himself had killed. While carrying the weapon Urther made great display of how he could fly high above the ground and breathe fire as though he were a fire lizard himself. I nevertheless doubted his claim of besting a dragon as, when the axe went missing, he proved himself of little martial ability. After its loss, he did not survive long among the warriors of Khorne and died ignorant of who had stolen it. For your interest I have enclosed the axe, that I have named Skolanjer, with this report.



Grord

Holtz Tellerman, a mage of the Amber college, was part of a company of troops under the Count of Middenheim who ambushed and destroyed a warband that had been systematically laying waste to series of hamlets in the east of the province. Tellerman noted in his journal that the leader of the warband carried a sword tipped with runes and arcane symbols which radiated a mind-numbing menace and which sapped his magical power even after its wielder was killed. None of the foresters complained of a similar feeling and so Tellerman theorised that the weapon solely targeted those who tapped the world's magical energies. Before he disappeared he noted in his journal that he sent back to his college for aid in destroying the weapon, though there is no mention of such, or indeed any further mention of Holtz Tellerman, in the college records.

Aubentag, 10th Jahrdrung, in the year 2452

In all my years of examining the sick and infirm of mind, never have I encountered a patient so vacant, so devoid of life. His eyes hold no depth, though they are clear and active, he seems incapable of any sort of cerebration and spends his days crouched silently in his cell in the most abyssal of torpors. All my applied expertise in techniques of cranial *manipulation* have thus far failed to garner the smallest of reactions from the patient. Indeed, where others would be shrieking in pain, the acute physical sensations they afford seem only to rouse him slightly from his general malaise. After a lengthy session with the brands and lesion hook, he merely gazed at us, recanting some strange mantra, of which the meaning is a mystery. At the behest of Surgeon Kruger we are now obliged to gag the patient when he is present during the procedures. I believe there may be some *significance* in this disturbed chanting.

Konistag, 14th Jahrdrung, in the year 2452

It was while splinting my troublesome patient's fingernails this eve that I noticed the burns on the palms of his hands. Deep blackened welts are scorched into the fleshy part, as if he had gripped a device of searing hot metal and held it for some considerable time. Within these ugly scars I could see faint designs (like faces some of them, hideous faces!) beneath the skin, unreadable but compelling. As I stared at them I felt a dull ache behind my eyes. My efforts to obtain an answer from him as to how he was inflicted with these marks and what the device was that delivered them, have so far proved unsuccessful. The patient remains stubbornly unwilling, or unable, to communicate.

I have thus decided to starve him for a time. Perhaps that will loose his tongue.

Wellentag, 17th Jahrdrung, in the year 2452

This morning I interviewed the patient's sister in an effort to shed some light on his condition, which I regret to record is deteriorating rapidly. I knew already, at the point of his committal to the asylum and the care of my treatment, that he is a man of some standing within the city. Indeed, few have not heard of him and his family of philanthropists, although fewer still know of his sudden and terrifying mental deterioration and subsequent incarceration here. This secrecy, which prohibits the mention of his name even here in my personal journal, is at the families' behest.

My questions unearthed some particularly disturbing revelations as to the manner of his sudden descent into madness, and in particular the patient's sister's belief as regards to the reason of his insanity. If she is to be taken at her word, it is not an acknowledged ailment that afflicts the patient, but rather some form of bewitchment.

Being a man of science I am loath to be convinced of the stories validity. In my opinion, the family are concerned to cover up a genuine mental deficiency within their blood, perhaps a hereditary disease that the patient has fallen victim to, with this superstitious tale of questionable merit. It is an understandable position to take, but one that will not help this poor man recover his lost wits.

However, it is worth recounting what she said. Apparently, she found this once vigorous and stable man convulsing on the floor, eyes rolled back in their sockets with his hands grasped in a grip like death around a black sword, that his sister described thus- "The ugliest and most monstrous thing I ever set eyes on." The day before the seizure, a large and heavy package had arrived for him. This was not unusual; his obsession with strange and unusual objects, particularly obscure weapons from the north, ensured a steady flow of such items to add to his collection.

When I asked the whereabouts of the blade she told me she had disposed of it in the waters of the Reik. I wonder if this was a wise idea. I wonder also if it is true. However, it remains an irrelevance. Although I find my interest is piqued and I would like to examine the item for myself, if it exists at all. Just to settle my curiosity. I find myself even toying with the idea of dragging the river to recover the artefact! I will sleep on't.

Extracts from Physic Lother Drach's casebook, (Former Master of Altdorf Asylum).

(Footnote- Physic Drach ended his days in the bedlam ward of his own asylum, after chewing off his own tongue and, curiously, paring the skin from his palms with a gutting knife.)

Extract from Cithas Draek's journal.

As he took up the blade, a despairing groan was torn from deep inside and anguish masked his features. A single tear fell and turned to ice upon the gleaming steel. The moment passed and he straightened, thrusting high the sword as if to pierce the vaulted skies above. And with his scream of triumph he was enslaved.



Gilellion's Soulnetter

Part-worshipped, part-hated and feared by the Skvengenite clan, the death warrior known as Gilellion the Lewd supposedly carries a blade that traps its victims into immortal servitude for its bearer. This, as I later discovered, Slaaneshi champion spurned all other company, with his victims as his only retinue. He and his undead companions spent several years terrorising the Skvengenite land, who bitterly resisted him in turn as they feared that falling to his service would forever deny them their place with their rightful god. Warnings of Gilellion, however, quickly turned to myth as his attacks on the Skvengenites ceased and he disappeared from infamy's view. More recently, though, new stories of Gilellion have sprung up among the Tovenars and the Ecktars. For whatever reason, it appears Gilellion is heading east.



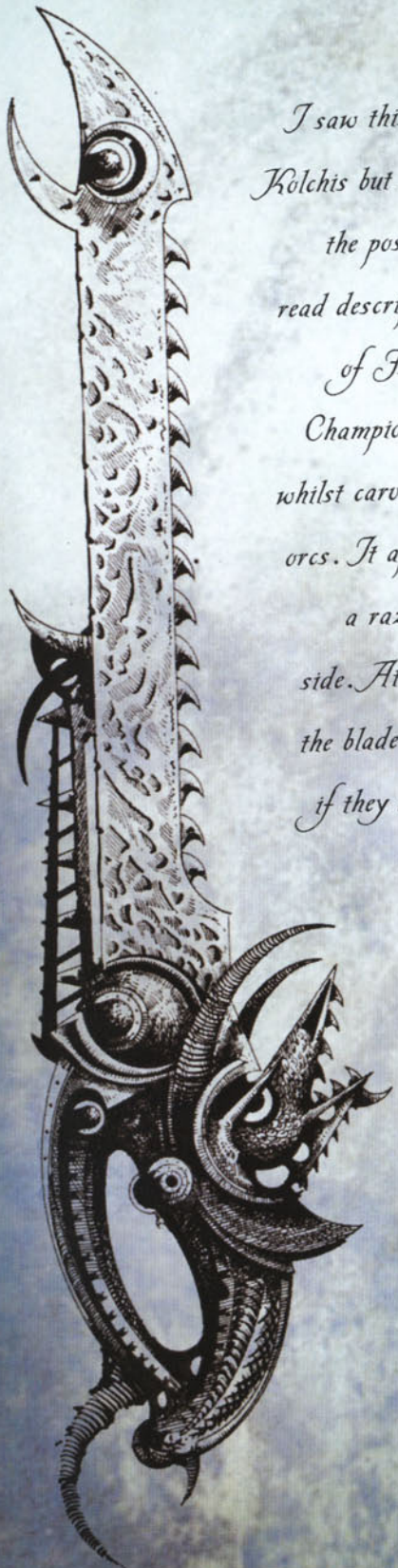
Skitterdril

In the final battle before the ascension of Werner Flamefist, his pet cockatrice, Skitter, fell. Werner's successor used the remains of Skitter in a new weapon, forging the blade from the cockatrice's warped, solidified tail, and setting its skull in the pommel. Those who fell victim to this sword were petrified as though they had faced the cockatrice itself.

Fror

Hanz Grunfeld was an Imperial officer during the Chaos Incursion of 2302 and he left this journal of his experiences. "Before us stood a dark warrior encased in armour that writhed and twisted before our eyes. Even as we dug our spear shafts into the ground, he brought our gaze to him as his hand moved to a sword concealed at his hip. He drew it with a fluid sweep and brought it up above his head where, with a flash of light, the blade itself ignited and burst into flame. For a moment hope leaped to my heart that our mages had called down their hellfire upon this terrible foe, but he merely laughed at the burning sword and with a single stroke beheaded both our spears and a brace of my first rank of men, charring their clothes and their necks as their heads fell to the ground."





Chainsword

I saw this weapon first in the keeping of Red Hand Kolchis but have since seen swords of a similar type in the possession of at least three other warriors and read descriptions of more (such as the Snarling Hand of Isak Koomriver). Kolchis, a lone Khornate Champion acquired it deep in the eastern skull lands whilst carving his way through a tribe of dark-skinned orcs. It appears as a normal sword except, instead of a razor edge, a line of jagged teeth run down one side. At the wielder's command, the teeth race down the blade, ripping apart armour and flesh as easily as if they were parchment. The beast-hilt howls while it does so and whines if left unsated.

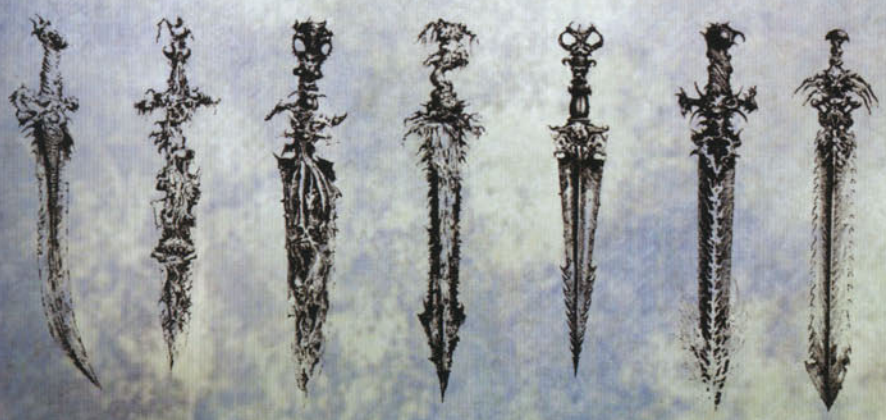
Unsurprisingly, I have found this type of arcane technology almost solely in possession of warriors of Khorne – as it suits their violent and noisy disposition. Even the weapon itself seems to favour Khorne, often as eager to rebound and tear through the guts of its wielder as the foe, as is demonstrated by the fate of Red Hand Kolchis himself.



Minotaur's Bane

A patrol of Druchii horsemen from Har Ganeth annihilated a warband guarding an infernal forge. There they discovered an anvil made of minotaur skulls, and a axe cooling in a pool of blood. When he tested the blade, the captain of the patrol was gripped by the grisly desire to tear the flesh from the recently dead and wolf it down. His men fled from his appetite and only returned when he had sated himself and fallen asleep. Believing him possessed, they slew their captain and destroyed the forge, yet in that mad way of the Druchii the second claimed the evil weapon as prize and returned with it to Har Ganeth to present it to his lord.

Notes on the weapons below can be found in Appendix 3b.




Thor Bastion Stair
Possibly retrieved from the "Malefic Fabula [redacted]" (Malatrum?)
1352?

and I fell then, through roiling clouds and red mists that swirled above a land of dark ruin and much despair. I heard cries of unseen beasts, their lowing of fear were of such great volume it seemed to me that they must be made by creatures of enormous size. But they eluded my sight and I fell further, leaving them far behind. And still I fell, driven by foetid winds towards a cliff of deepest red and blackened iron. Its top, far above me, was hidden in the clouds; but its foundation was girt with boulders and skulls, no larger in my sight than sand specks. And these it piled before in its inexorable advance. The wall, for such it was, lay unbroken in its awful perfection from one burning horizon to the other.

I grew afraid, for this I knew was the Outer Realm of Khorne the Blood God, and this wall a Bastion to the Fortress about his Inner Lands. It now seemed to me that the stench of Death broke my fall as I flew relentlessly onwards, towards fresh visions in the vastness of Chaos.

And then ahead I saw a Stair, surrounded by pinnacles and columns and arches of blood and carved bone, circled by Daemons bound within black iron, brazen steps and hideous shrieking mouths. All that could speak or gibber or moan vomited forth the praises of Khorne and shrilled out songs of Blood and Death. The Stair, its treads not built for mortal feet, climbed the dizzy heights, pausing at times before profane runes and stained sacrifice stones. Within the stone of the Daemon-thronged Bastion were smaller landings, each of which could have held a lofty and noble palace of our small World. The Stair twisted and rippled on itself, its Daemons chuckling their insane glee at its dreadful geometry. Still it climbed, ever upwards into the clouds of gore that circled overhead.

In all my visions, I saw not one living beast or man.

Through brazen gates and up endless steps I flew, my soul in dread as Daemons snapped about my heels. And before my eyes, as I rose from that place, I beheld the Fields and Meadows of Khorne beyond the Bastion, all quite soaked in red, stained with souls, and planted there were endless lines of corpses lashed to stakes like a grotesquery of bean plants. A thousand thousand Daemons capered with the dead and deathless buds, which themselves were watered by gore-filled aqueducts and crimson ditches. The Daemons marched and countermarched about their charges, stopping here to water the unprecious fruits, and there to dung upon them. And the air was filled with the copper-taste of blood, the pungent stench of the slaughterhouse, the noise of blood let from countless unready throats and all about was red beneath the brass sky of that Inner Realm. It

Such is the Empire's fate if we fail to stem the wrathful tide.

Possibly a fragment of 'Liber Malefic, The Book of Hated Khorne' by Marius Hollsehen

Cursed Artefacts

Being a thorough examination of the multifarious artefacts that are wielded, worn or used by the most esteemed followers of The Blood God.

Chaos Armour

Though almost all the followers of Chaos wear armour of some kind, often bearing the warped sigils and marks of their devotion, the plate known as Chaos Armour is of a very different ilk. It is made of a strangely worked and unnatural metal, and represents the mark of a Power's great esteem. It is a favoured gift from the bloody god of war.

Once granted it becomes fused with the wearer's body, after which it may never be removed and becomes as a second skin, incorporating within itself all the physical corruptions and mutations of its wearer.

Chaos Armour usually comprises a complete suit of weirdly wrought plate mail, made from some strange material. It may or may not include a full helm or shield of the same substance. It is rarely of some simple, honest steel or iron, but has a lustre all its own, reflecting in its colours the allegiance of the wearer. The appearance of it varies, melding itself to that style of the race of that person to which it has been granted. However, it could never pass as mortal plate, for its very nature will present itself by forming some dark and twisted parody, reflecting the wearer's inner corruption and the inestimable evil of the Power that granted it.

Bloodstones

Bloodstones are dark, red-veined rocks the size of a man's clenched fist. Often the veins are twisted to form the skull-rune upon the surface. They are no ordinary stones, but rather fragments of the tainted lands within the realm, which has had the blood of daemons slowly dripped upon it, so that they bulge and pulse with the fluid.

They are rarely to be found in the hands of any defeated champion or cult, though fragments of this rock have been seen shattered upon black altars to the Breaker of Souls. Those warriors and knights who have fought about such things do claim to have seen the Bloodstones being used in unholy rituals before the battle. Thus I suggest that their use does forge a connection between the realms, so that the dark followers of Khorne may call upon his daemons to aid them.

The magnanimity of the Powers are always fickle, however, and any such supplicant would be as likely to be called to account by the Blood God as he would be to receive his boon.

Hellblades

The name "Hellblade" has been used to describe many weapons in the writings of men and other races, but it has been used most often to describe those weapons carried by the Bloodletters, the lower daemon vassals of Khorne.

The tales relate that Hellblades are razor-edged and honed on the souls of those who have fallen in battle to the Blood God's own. They are consecrated to Khorne and the bloody task of slaughtering his enemies, and glow with a power that, so it is said, can drain the very soul from a man and suck dry his shrivelling corpse.

There is some debate as to whether these items actually exist, for none have ever been found, not even on those blessed occasions that those of our Order have overcome the fiends of Khorne. Those who believe they do exist claim that they dissolve back to the primal stuff of Chaos when



their bearer is slain, while others prefer that there are no such things and that it is the very power of the daemon channelled through the bearer's arms that forges the weapons.

Collars of Khorne

These items are studded bands, made of interlinked iron and brass. It is said they were forged from the heat of Khorne's rage at the very foot of the Blood God's throne. It is this rage against the sorcerous that does protect its wearer from spells and enchantments and other attacks of that type.

Certainly the Fleshhounds of Khorne wear such things, as do many other followers, though these may be mere emulations of the style of their god's servants.

Axes of Khorne

This is the name given to the mighty axes carried by the Bloodthirsters, the Greater Servants of Khorne. Though few have ever faced a Bloodthirster and lived, there are those records that do report that these weapons are suffused with the power of Chaos, and laden with death. Some even claim that its power comes from the burning abhorrence of another servant of Khorne bound within it. Though such a concept seems beyond belief, such things are not unheard of and I will be considering these accursed weapons in my later investigations.



detail from a painting by the heretical artist Klaus Van Carsenberg - this is the only fragment of his work to survive the burning of his studio in the year

Monoliths

BEING A SCRUTINY OF THE UNHOLY AND MANIFOLD MONOLITHS OF CHAOS THAT LIE SCATTERED ACROSS THE NORTH – FROM SIMPLE WOODEN TOWERS TO GREAT CARVED STANDING STONES.

MONOLITHS ARE monuments to individual champions of Chaos. They are constructed by their followers from whatever material lies available, usually stone, but also they can be made from ancient wood and timber, metal and more exotic substances such as pillars of jewels, bone and flesh. The wicked dwarfs of Zorn Uzkul are also known to cast such monoliths from solid brass, polished to a mirror finish. Such a monument is said to reflect not the onlooker's image, but rather the savage visage of the champion himself. I have even heard tales that in the northern wastes there exist monoliths of mighty champions that appear as columns of fire, or constructed from souls and are so huge as to dwarf mountains and block out the sun.

I encountered many during my long travels away from our lands, and learnt of more in my studies. Though they may be found anywhere, even within the forests and mountains within our own borders, they are mostly concentrated within the Shadowlands, and more particularly the northern wastes, where they are regular camps for the armies and warbands that battle there.

A monolith may be constructed for various reasons, but their primary purpose is to commemorate a warrior of Chaos who has been rewarded with the ultimate gift of daemonic immortality. The monolith stands at the point at which he ascended to be with his god and bears upon it the saga of his damnation, his mortal glory and eternal power, detailed in the harsh script of the dark tongue.

Such monoliths will always display the blasphemous runes of both the newly born daemon and his patron. Both are said to watch over monoliths dedicated to them, sometimes even going as far as to protect it from the passage of time and the decay of the ages.

Only powerful enemies of Chaos, such as our own order, have the courage to destroy these filthy objects. For the common folk fear the curses and incantations that they believe protect them, while other followers of Chaos, even those of an opposing Power, will treat them with reverence and respect. As I, they too could not pass willingly by without reading the sagas there writ, and I heard these repeated around their camp fires and braystones.

It is only normally the victorious followers of champions who have risen to the daemonic who have the opportunity and inclination to construct these remembrances. However, there are monoliths that honour other champions.

The followers of champions who have been wracked by the dark energies of Chaos and reduced to spawn may also honour their leader with such a marker. There the monolith will cover a pit or cell where the beast will continue to eke out its miserable existence. Such places are often shoddily made and will often appear broken and weatherworn, and hold little interest for the immortal patron it is dedicated to. However, other followers of Chaos will read the monolith and pass down food or drink through the barred recess to the creature below. They treat it with a similar amount of respect, though instead of honouring the lost, this is more likely to be their method of warding away a similar fate.

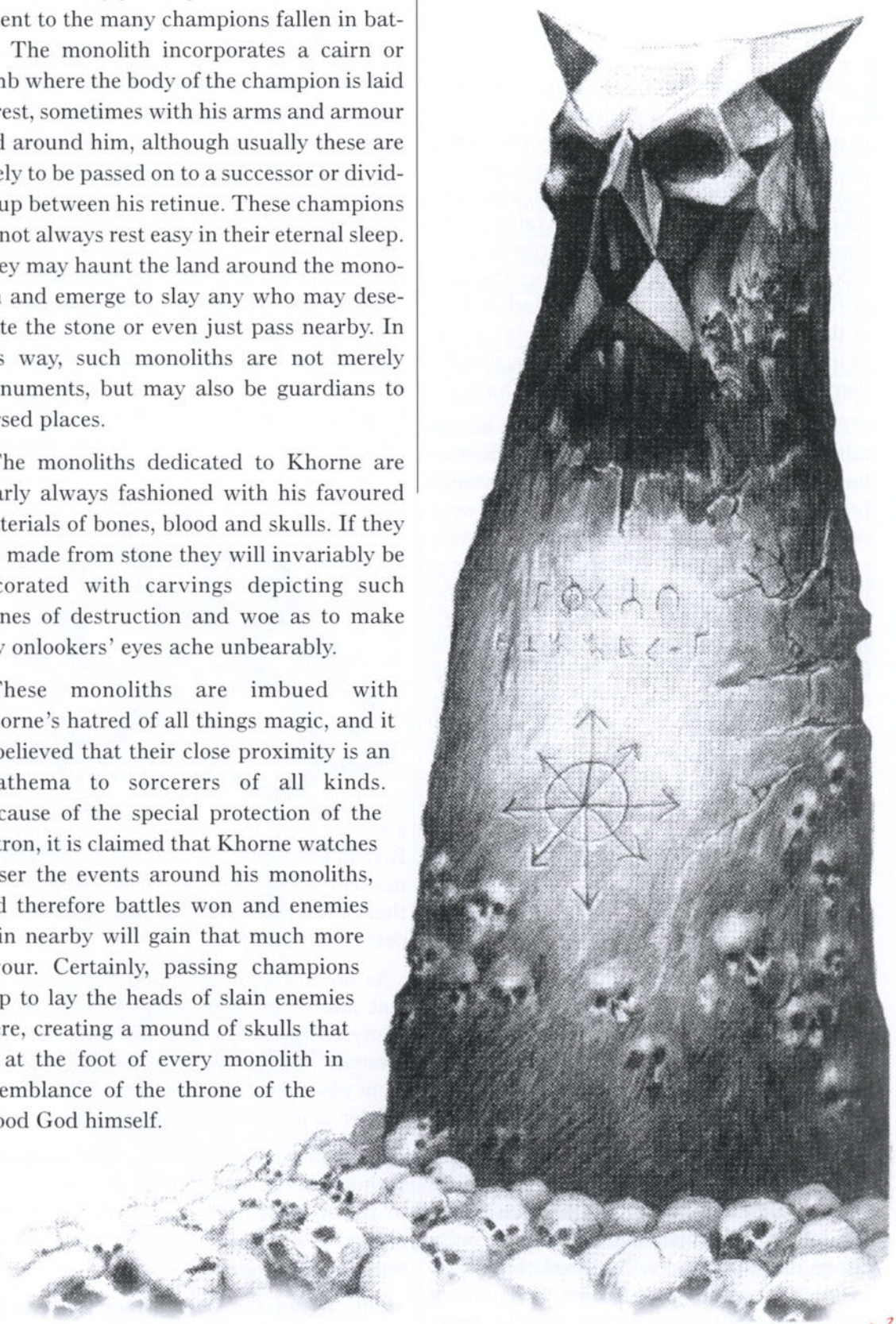
If a champion dies in battle, his followers may also erect a monolith to him as a mark of respect. This is especially likely if he is

Monoliths

killed in a great victory of Chaos, where warbands may join together to build a monument to the many champions fallen in battle. The monolith incorporates a cairn or tomb where the body of the champion is laid to rest, sometimes with his arms and armour laid around him, although usually these are likely to be passed on to a successor or divided up between his retinue. These champions do not always rest easy in their eternal sleep. They may haunt the land around the monolith and emerge to slay any who may desecrate the stone or even just pass nearby. In this way, such monoliths are not merely monuments, but may also be guardians to cursed places.

The monoliths dedicated to Khorne are nearly always fashioned with his favoured materials of bones, blood and skulls. If they are made from stone they will invariably be decorated with carvings depicting such scenes of destruction and woe as to make any onlookers' eyes ache unbearably.

These monoliths are imbued with Khorne's hatred of all things magic, and it is believed that their close proximity is an anathema to sorcerers of all kinds. Because of the special protection of the patron, it is claimed that Khorne watches closer the events around his monoliths, and therefore battles won and enemies slain nearby will gain that much more favour. Certainly, passing champions stop to lay the heads of slain enemies there, creating a mound of skulls that lie at the foot of every monolith in resemblance of the throne of the Blood God himself.



This monolith stands guard just outside the northern borders of Kisley. My attempts to translate the inscription ended in abject failure.

Shrines of Khorne

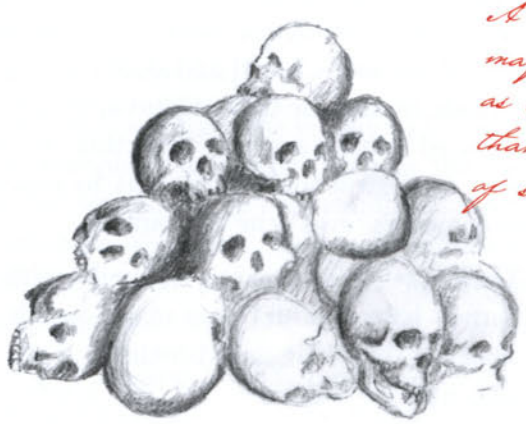
BEING AN EXAMINATION OF THE MANY FOUL TRIBUTES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP DEDICATED TO THE BLOOD GOD – FROM SIMPLE PILES OF SKULLS TO VAST ELABORATE TOMBS.

THERE IS NOWHERE in this world that the followers of Chaos have not ventured in praise of their lords. And as they travel and plunder and kill, and die in their turn they leave behind them objects, totems, idols and other symbols of their corruption, tainting the land further and providing a beacon to draw fellow reavers behind them. Across the face of the world therefore, from the dark woods of the human realms to the mountains of the Skull Lands to the glaciers of Naggaroth, there are scattered these shrines to Chaos.

These shrines are the sacred places of the fallen kin, each one a monument, no matter how small, to their gods. Some are great and brazen temples to their masters, built over years with the toil of legions of slaves, employed by a great staff of priests wherein the most powerful and titanic rituals may be performed for their lord. They are mighty constructions that bring enormous prestige to their builders, their names: Karan'azzarr, the Golden Towers of Daed, the Steel Citadel and the Unspeakable City and others resound through the Shadowlands however there are scarce few of them, for they require epic resources, an army to protect them from rivals and the softer races, and most important of all, time. After all, what champion would squander their briefest window of opportunity to climb that perilous path to power, before the madness of Chaos robs them of whatever chance they had?

The bulk of these shrines therefore are quite small, often contained within a mere grove or single cave, hidden away in the secret places of the world. Each power has its shrines and Khorne is no exception, though the proportion of them that are his are not as many as may have been thought given the multitude of his followers. Many of the chosen of Khorne do not bother themselves with such things, for they understand that the Blood Lord cares not for monuments, nor praises, rather the battlefield is his temple, keen blades and weapons his prayerbook.

Every shrine is individual, for each as a different reason for its founding. At the basest level, these shrines need be little more than an altar in a Power's name. Such shrines can most often be found amongst those established settlements of the Shadowlands, the Norscans in the majority but also in the few fixed encampments and hidden cities of the nomadic Kurgan and Hung. The men of these tribes brook no illusion to the world around them. While the soft and fearful men of the south may prefer to consider the Powers as fiction and fables, the men of the tribes know the immortal



A shrine may begin as no more than a pile of skulls.

gods for what they are. Just as a scallion of Bretonnia would acknowledge his feudal masters so too do the tribesmen recognise their immortal lords and only a fool would deny them their due.

As life in the Shadowlands is always violent and often brief, it is no surprise that many tribes choose a warrior god as their foremost patron. Their names will vary from place to place, but in truth it does not matter as it is always truly Khorne.

As such their settlements will contain a shrine of some description, sometimes within the warrior's hall or upon the training grounds, often set slightly away from the settlement's boundaries.

This is not the only means by which a shrine to the Blood God may be founded. Where their warriors have brought great slaughter upon their foes they may establish

one in grateful thanks to the Powers that lent them aid in their combat, whereupon they heap the trophies they have taken from the field and consecrate them in their name. As god of war and bloody death, tribesmen will most often raise such constructs in Khorne's name for his favour in granting them victory. The larger the battle and the carnage, so greater will the shrine be, so that after a particularly epic conflict there may be constructed a mighty edifice from whatever materials are at hand, wherein even loyal followers and champions may be interred so they may enslave their vanquished even after death.

For many shrines, this is all they will be, a crude marker for a nameless skirmish. Abandoned and desolate, they will disintegrate back into the land from which they were constructed, or perhaps be discovered generations later by those people who have long forgotten the names or deeds or reasons for those who battled there.

Sometimes it is the case, however, that a later conflict may be fought nearby, whereupon further offerings may be piled at its base and the shrine may grow. Indeed, as these markers draw the wandering bands of tribesmen and champions naturally towards them to worship, foes will encounter one another and battle joined far more readily than out in the vastness of the Shadowlands. Even more so for those that lie along the passage of a nomad tribe, who visit it year after year as a waypoint between winter and summer lands.



Warrior Priests wear arcane and highly stylised armour, to denote prestige.

Such centres become awesome and labyrinthine tombs, places of legend for their mystery and the riches that many assume must lie within. Men of all types are drawn there as moths to a flame, some to worship, others to plunder. Warbands may rest there for days, months or years, some even becoming permanent guardians of their lord's sanctuary. With their residence the shrine will expand and be built up to a veritable fortress over the catacombs below. And gradually with such concentration of death and worship, it becomes almost as though it forms its own Shadow of Chaos, and in its depths daemons may roam.

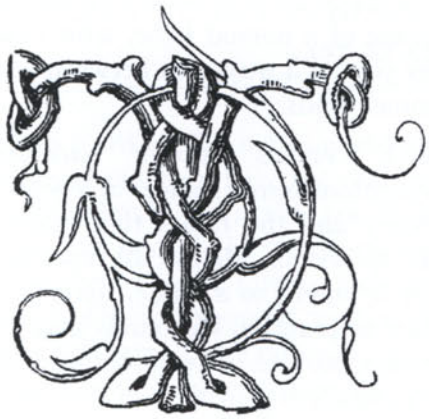
The Warrior-Priests

Perhaps the greatest mystery is not the shrines themselves but rather those who tend them. They are known by many different names among the Northmen, for they lay claim to none of their own. They are the closest to the priesthood of the shrines and, as befits the Blood God, they are fearsome warriors in their own right, and so it is as warrior-priests that we shall refer to them.

They travel endlessly from shrine to shrine visiting all: the temples, the settlement-hearths, even perhaps the lost and forgotten altars deep in the wilds. What they do there is unclear, however their arrival will often draw young warriors to the shrine in order that they may chance the god's blessing. Sometimes the warrior-priest will send these youths away, others he will attack; but a few he will allow entrance to the shrine and they will emerge a changed man or not at all.

As for the warrior-priests, mighty figures encased in the armour of their god, they will travel on, alone, always alone. They never take repast with the Northmen who encounter them and never appear to gather with their own kind, so that no man alive can attest to having seen more than one at the same moment.

The Saga of Khorne



here once was a Battle, a mighty conflict that split the Earth and shook the Heavens themselves. By nightfall, the Powers stood in victory and their fallen foes lay six score deep. The war-horns blew no more, the screams of the Dying had been drowned by the feasting calls of the carrion creatures. Upon that savaged field did these four Champions come.

From the West of the Bloody Sun, the Red Warrior marched with a shield stacked with skulls.

From the South of Baked Heat, the Silken Wyrm slid with vials of pain.

From the East of Utmost Night, the Crow Man travelled with a caravan of Death.

From the North of Blinding Darkness, the Burning One soared with a chalice of Souls.

Where the Dead lay thickest did these Four meet, and on the summit each one lay down their gifts. But when each Champion tried to dedicate these Dead in the name of their Power, he was torn from the peak by the three who remained and thus not one could consecrate this bounty.

Thus the Challenge was issued, that the Champion of the greatest Power should speak up and convince the others of their folly. In this way, him who was most worthy would receive it.

The Red Warrior[a] stood forward first, for his power was eldest of all, and he spoke thus in a voice like thunder:

"The Blood God does not ask for this boon. He does not beg, nor plead, nor grovel. He demands it as the Greatest of all gods. For it is to him that every creature on this field and in the World is indebted.

"What are the Lynchpins of life but Blood, Anger and hate? And what are My Lord's Domains but the same?

"Each life arrives in my lord's colours. Each child's first act is to cry in rage. And that first scream echoes down the years and fills our heads.

This is an excerpt from the Saga of Khorne. The complete work is purported to be bound in several large volumes, which are covered with human skin. These tomes were lost many centuries ago... if they existed at all.

"Each meal is brought with my lord's blessing. Our daily feast, one violent Death. And can there be else but Hatred in that act? If not of life, then of Death?

"Each Battle is won in my Lord's name. For the slogging horde knows that in Savagery lies their only survival. And can even the noblest warrior be blamed for his thanks of an enemy's Death in place of his own?

"Those that live define themselves by those they Hate. It is our Hate that holds us, our Hate that saves us. It is our Hate that protects us from the dark things in the night. It is our Hate that drives us forward to conquer and progress. Our Hate that spreads our reach to all we may attain.

"And it is Blood that binds us, Blood that blinds us. We are born in Blood and when our Blood lies still, we die.

"Admit you all then, My Lord does govern all in Birth and Life and Death. In Man and in Beast. And heed me now when I say that you three owe Him even greater still.

"You canter and caper, and indulge trifles and claim them towers. Your oaths of fealty are mere falsity. Lies and deceptions to claim a varnish on your nature.

"Who among you can claim never to have used His Tools? Who among you can claim never to have rejoiced in His Hate?

"We journey and we fight and we kill. War is our Life, Hate is our Passion, the wails of widows our lulling chorus and the salted earth our marriage bed.

"Who among you does not truly follow Him?

"Our one true ambition is to put creation to the Sword and bear in Blood the True Realm. And it is He who will rule there.

"My Lord is the Beginning and he is the End. He is Master of Mortals, and the core of our Dead Hearts.[b]

"Deny Him and you deny yourselves. Honour Him and acknowledge He to whom we owe it all."

Thus spoke the Red Warrior, with his voice of Drums and Death. And then he took his axe and cut each champion down, so that each may know the true Touch of the Blood Lord.

[a] "The Red Warrior towered over the mantle, and turned the world to Fire." – *The Lost Souls* xx, 21.
[b] "Thou hast covered my Heart in the heat of battle." – *The Bloodied One* ix, 433.

Khaine: Lord of Murder

A brief exposition on the darker nature of the Elves and their suspected ties with Khorne. Including an excerpt from a report by Witch Hunter Captain Mathias Thulmann.

THE NATURE OF the unholy is like that of a diamond black. As a clear diamond does collect the light that enters it and shines it back tenfold, so in its way this black gem does absorb all that falls upon it, so that it appears as naught more than an aching hole in one's sight.

If one could discern the falsity within, in place of the single jewel would be a thousand facets. And though each one would differ from the next, each would only reflect that which it saw before it. Those then are the Powers of Chaos.

We of the Empire know the dark lord Khaine as brother to Morr, eternal rivals for that domain of death. Those of us who know of him, curse his name even as others praise it. Within our cities and our towns secret cults are born and thrive, men of low order, assassins, footpads, cut-throats and rank

markings of the dark elves

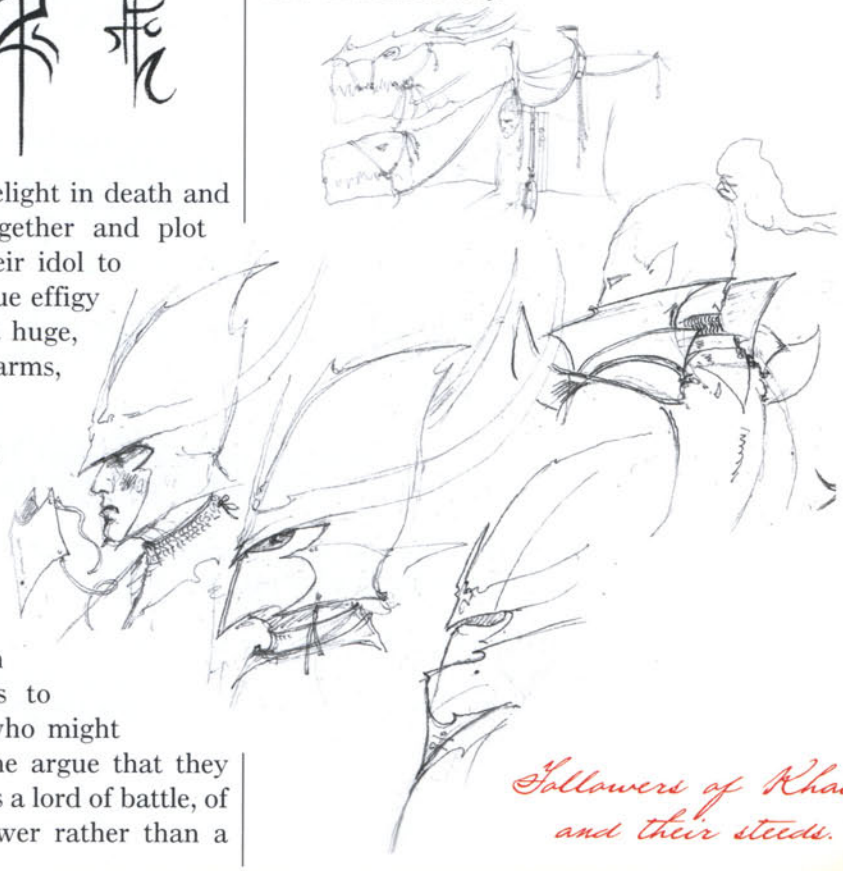


killers of all types who delight in death and murder. They gather together and plot their killers and raise their idol to Khaine, always a grotesque effigy with a leering face and a huge, fanged mouth with four arms, each clutching a dagger.

A god named Khaine, a god of murder and death and bloodshed, only the wilfully blind could not see that this is none other than the Blood Lord himself, cloaked in one of his many guises to beguile and trick those who might otherwise repel him. Some argue that they are distinct, that Khorne is a lord of battle, of open war, a Ruinous Power rather than a petty human god, but I say ye nay, for Khorne is the will to dominate all through violence and fear and terror of all description. And all it has taken was the simplest deception to allow him into our pantheon.

And in this we are not alone, for I see visions of the twisted cousins of the conceited Ulthuans far across the waters who have devoted themselves in his worship. They praise him high above all others and allow his priesthood free licence in their cities. These so-called Brides of Khaine do cavort in his worship and bathe in cauldrons of blood which they claim as bridal gifts. The dark elves allow his servants such influence and all the while applaud themselves for repelling the Blood God's hordes at their borders.

I look at them and I laugh in pity for they have such pride in their independence and self-direction, and yet their very nature has allowed their immortal enemy into the very core of their society.



Followers of Khaine and their steeds.

# of Murder

You have demanded us to come before you and disassociate ourselves from those reavers who do bear our likeness and have invaded your realm. You hear stories of how we worship the same gods and faith, and now fear yourself surrounded by enemies where you have never seen them before.

Let us tell you first that the tribes of man shall never demand anything from the Phoenix-Throne. You may ask, you may request, you may even beg, but you shall never demand us to justify ourselves to you.

You ask us whether we share the same gods, and we know you expect us to deny it all so that you may confront us with your pathetic 'evidence'. Let us save you your pains and declare that it is the truth.

I am certain even now you, in your blinkered ignorance, are despatching orders for all of our kind to be imprisoned or exiled from your city, for you cannot possibly understand its totality however we will try to enlighten you.

In our faith and worship, just as in yours, we include all that we are and all that we may be: our greatest hopes and our darkest thoughts. We bear tribute to this deity you call Khaine, for we recognise the force of bloodshed, of warfare, and of death within our lives just as you pile offerings to your own Ulric and Mymydia and Morr.

You would acknowledge them and ask them to strengthen your arm for war, just as we do Khaine, but would you hold yourselves accountable for the actions of your kin that are devoted to them entirely? Do you bear the burden of the bloodlust and crimes of those who believe it is their god's will? No, you declare them mad and hunt them down in their god's very name. Just so with us.

You entreat proof that we are not united with these renegades, and we tell you now that our disassociation occurred before your realms existed. Our blood-feud goes back to before your time even began, untold numbers have given their lives, the best of our kin, our champions of the like that your kind cannot even contemplate, have fought and died in its pursuit. The depth of our shame and our hatred goes beyond your puny comprehension, and yet still you ask us for proof?

An excerpt from an epistle from an ambassador of the Phoenix-Throne to the Council of Marienberg during the raids of the Black Ark, Undying Damnation

From a report by Mathias Thalmann.

My lords,

Please find enclosed in this letter my final testament as to my investigation into the Blood Cross killings.

Over the last six months no less than two score people have been found murdered in the same, grisly fashion. Each victim was discovered in the back streets of the tannery district of the city, their bodies hacked to pieces by cleavers or other heavy blades, their heads left untouched aside from an X slashed across the bridge of their nose and onto their cheeks and temple by a razor. The indications of a ritualistic approach to these mutilations led me to consider them of interest to our order and so I began my investigation, full details of which can be found in my report.

The victims had nothing in common, some were poor, some well-to-do, men, women and children, the elderly, vagabonds and travellers to established citizens. Indeed, this very randomness was the single common factor, apart from the ritual markings. As winter approached the victim count mounted, and the rate of killing increased as time progressed. However, this was not entirely due to the ritual murderer, as common murderers tried to hide their own crimes within the larger massacre by mimicking his methods of mutilation. I was able to quickly single out these pale imitators. Public hope swelled as each one swung from the gallows that this would be an end to their terror. I knew this was not the case.

The Guard patrolled the tannery district constantly, though in this they were alone as the common citizenry refused to enter it without pressing reason. With them too moved the common thieves and cut-purses, so that the district began to resemble a military camp rather than a city. Their efforts proved vain however, because bodies were continually found there. People began disappearing from every quarter of the city and even the surrounding countryside.

My breakthrough came shortly after Doctor Thaddeus Werberg, a respected physician of the Shallyan temples and a member of the City Council, was found dead in the ritual manner. He was the most influential victim yet and he would prove to be the last. The breakthrough related not to Werberg but rather to the innocuous death of a butcher, Leof Graudlin, who washed up on the sandbanks of Harpam's Jetty, downriver at about the same time.

Though the body showed great signs of mould and decay (odd, as he had been missing for less than a week) he bore none of the marks of the Bloody Cross and so his demise was largely ignored by the Guard. It was only because of the subtle signs of blasphemy he displayed which are known to our order that I gave him more attention, and only through of the diligence of my second, Rollo Thurer who I had assigned to investigate his place of business, that he noticed a discrepancy in his ledgers of purchase which led ultimately to resolution.

By a path which I detail in my report, I discovered that the murders were the work of not one but a group of killers that called themselves the Khaelhermanir, a depraved cult of assassins bent in some corrupted worship of a Murder God. After exhaustive investigation, during which I avoided no less than three attempts on my life, I finally succeeded in mapping the extent of the cult and, with the aid of a detachment of the Guard, brought Sigmar's hammer of justice crashing down upon them.

So great were the numbers involved that it proved impossible to capture them in a single swoop, and as the arrests continued, word spread and the cultists had time to prepare themselves. With much bloody fighting and great loss on both sides, these despicable killers were finally destroyed.

Those few who still lived were placed safely in my custody. Most notably they included the likes of such luminaries as the son of Duke Saq, Burgomeister Huyder and Lojtant Temmerfien. All confessed their crimes when confronted with the damning evidence I had collected. I had assumed, from their rank and privilege in public life, that they were the minds behind the cult's activities. In this I was in error. Rather it seemed the reverse, they had been left at the fringes as much as any other common cut-throat of the rank and file.

Their houses and places of business had been used by the cult in their degenerate worship and I list in detail the abhorrent discoveries we made in each one. Needless to say it confirmed their blasphemy beyond all doubt. I have imposed my decision on the judiciaries that these places should be purged and exorcised before being demolished, rather that allowing them to pass into the hands of each man's beneficiaries. Such taint cannot be allowed to exist in any form, and it must be eradicated totally.

I ponder the fate of these men of note, who had been twisted so as to become subservient to this heresy. In the case of Huyder this was particularly severe, and after a few days in captivity he was left a drooling creature, bearing no mental semblance to the man who had been such a powerhouse in the politics of the city for so many years. I cannot envisage what manner of thing must have enthralled these gentlemen to have destroyed them so utterly.

Though the cult has fallen, my investigation into their connections and their ultimate purpose in their practices continues. One disturbing revelation made by several of the cultists before their minds finally broke made reference to a woman of striking beauty and evil soul, who perhaps was the instigator of this campaign of terror. It is my belief that she has long departed the city and may be fermenting her blood-cults in other cities of the land. I shall report more as soon as I am able.


Discovered by the Mercenary
Maria Ruiz in the Hall Pits
north of Erengrad.
Juggernaut

He came upon a mighty steed of groaning iron and brazen steel, a thing of living metal that stood taller than a man and roared with all the furies of a thousand dead. He sat securely, proud in a deep saddle that grew out of the very back of this accursed Beast, its high posts framing a massive head, part hound, part bull, part the incarnate soul of bloody hate.

Yes! They are not rider and mount, they are one!

As it came toward us we saw its countless close-riveted plates, forged in dark fires and bound with runes. Its breath was fear and its every step a thundering knell of doom. As it bared its brazen, gore-speckled fangs, we lost all heart and turned, fleeing to the safety of the night and terrors yet unseen.

Such, I believe is the fate of any mortal army which stands before such a foe!

– Transcribed from the only remaining copy of 'The Castle of Doubt'.

Daemons – Bloodletters

Being a close examination of the Daemonic Legion of Khorne. This page specifically deals with the vile entities known as Bloodletters.

Khorne's Chosen; Teeth of Death; Takers of Skulls; The Warriors of Blood; The Horned Ones.

These creatures are the lower daemons in the pantheon of Khorne. They fight as Khorne's footsoldiers in vicious mobs, which bray and keen for blood. There is no foul trick or cruel tactic that is beneath them. They represent all that is vile and low in battle: the cruel savagery, the desperate ferocity and the gleeful sadism when victory is seized.

The form of the Daemon

Bloodletters in their favoured state stand taller than a man, though they are stooped and hunched so their faces lie at a height similar to ours. Their bodies are slim with a muscled, wiry strength and their feet are turned and cloven like those of a goat.

They wear naught but scraps of armour and plate, most often brass or bronze, stamped and pressed in daemonic forges and welded there upon their bodies. Their skin beneath runs from the deepest red to near orange and drips constantly with blood.

Their heads are stretched tall with two ridged horns coloured as bone, sprouting from their temples. Their faces themselves are overlarge with the skin pulled taut, so it appears as a skull. Their eyes are deeply set, milk-white and without pupil. They have sharp, fanged teeth, behind which lies a long, black tongue that slides and caresses their razor-toothed mouths. Their spittle is said to be an acid that may burn metal and scourge the skin beneath.

Their faces are framed by shaggy manes that run down their backs. Their hair is like black wire, moulded and spiked by gore and their horns and claws are blackened and flecked with crimson.

In Battle

They march forwards in serried ranks, carrying tattered banners and other unholy marks of their devotion. And as they march, there can be heard a surrusant chanting, a litany of words that some claim are evil enchantments, while others swear they hear the names of fallen comrades.

Once they have closed with their foe, however, their order is lost as they work themselves into a frenzy at the prospect of bloodletting. They will charge forward, shrieking the praises of their lord. There they may fight with blade, axe or any manner of weapon, or even with tooth and claw for they care not how the blood is spilt, they care only that it flows. Their arms and bodies are the stuff of Chaos and will tear through all that does not bear the protective enchantments of Sigmar, just as only consecrated weapons or the purifying fire may stand a chance of killing these fell beasts.

Other domains

Though it is in battle that they be found, first and foremost, the touch of evil spreads into every mortal heart, and with that follows the daemonic. Thus it is not only the warriors of Kislev and the north that need fear the threat of the daemon, but us all.

They are eternal, and uncaring of the passing of the ages, and can exist wherever the corruption runs deep. In the Ode de Martin Lantre, the questing knights do battle with these daemons in the Bretonnian heartwood. In Imperial Chronicles, witchhunters have discovered them in villages deep within the Empire. And the legends are many of the wandering bands of adventurers who have faced these monsters deep within damnable shrines of the mountains and wastelands, forgotten by all except the creatures that protect them.

Daemons – Bloodletters



Their faces are the twisted embodiment of evil and power.

These are the true sons of Kharne – daemons made flesh to prey on mortal man. I pity any who are visited upon by such bestial horrors.

Are they more animal or daemon? There share aspects of the beast, but walk like a man, on two cloven hooves.

Daemons – Bloodbeasts

A close examination of the lesser creatures of Khorne, the strange and unique Bloodbeasts. Including brief notes on their capricious nature and appearance.

BEASTS OF KHORNE; The Monstrous Ones; Bloodspawn; The True Form; The Shapeless; Beasts of Blood.

Of all the cursed of Khorne, these creatures are at once the most twisted and brutal and yet most mysterious, for none can tell their true nature, whether they be daemon or mortal. Some mage-scholars suggest that they be mortal, for they can detect in them no connection to the other realm, like those possessed by a daemon. A few go further, claiming them to be some monstrous race unto their own, broken and enslaved beneath the Chaos yoke. Others, those who have faced them in battle or taken up arms to hunt them to the ground say otherwise, for with such terrible magicks torturing and twisting their bodies at every moment, how can any flesh be considered mortal?

I, who have seen this world as none other, can say the truth: that they are still both and neither. They are the very raw energy of the vastness of Chaos, cloaked within the vestiges of the mortal damned.

The form of the Daemon

The Bloodbeasts, and others of its ilk beholden to the Ruinous Powers, are wildly diverse in their appearance. If they are daemons then they care not as others of their type do to maintain a preferred form. Some are little more than a writhing mound of pulsating flesh, gaping maws and vicious spines, while others may be almost human except for in the blankness of their eyes.

The truth of Chaos is in its corruption, and these spawn are the manifestation of this truth.

As with spawn of allegiance, there are those attributes by which one may categorise them. The Bloodbeasts of Khorne are masses of muscle and tendon, with pulsing veins and whip-cord sinew. Their every orifice is ringed with sharp teeth that tear into the flesh of those who become entangled within their elongated limbs. These limbs and tails are often armoured or scaled, while at their ends they transform into the shapes of crude but deadly weapons, flattening into blades and knives or bulging outwards into spiked maces.

The Bloodbeasts are always hugely muscled, and are often emblazoned with the skull-mark of their lord somewhere upon their bodies.

Their means of locomotion will vary from creature to creature, some may walk upright, others on all fours as horses or dogs. Those whose limbs have atrophied beyond all usefulness may drag themselves forwards by their vestigial arms or bunch and ripple along the ground as worms or slugs or snakes. A few may even have wings, although these are not so common among the Bloodbeasts, and if they are present may well be useless for flight.

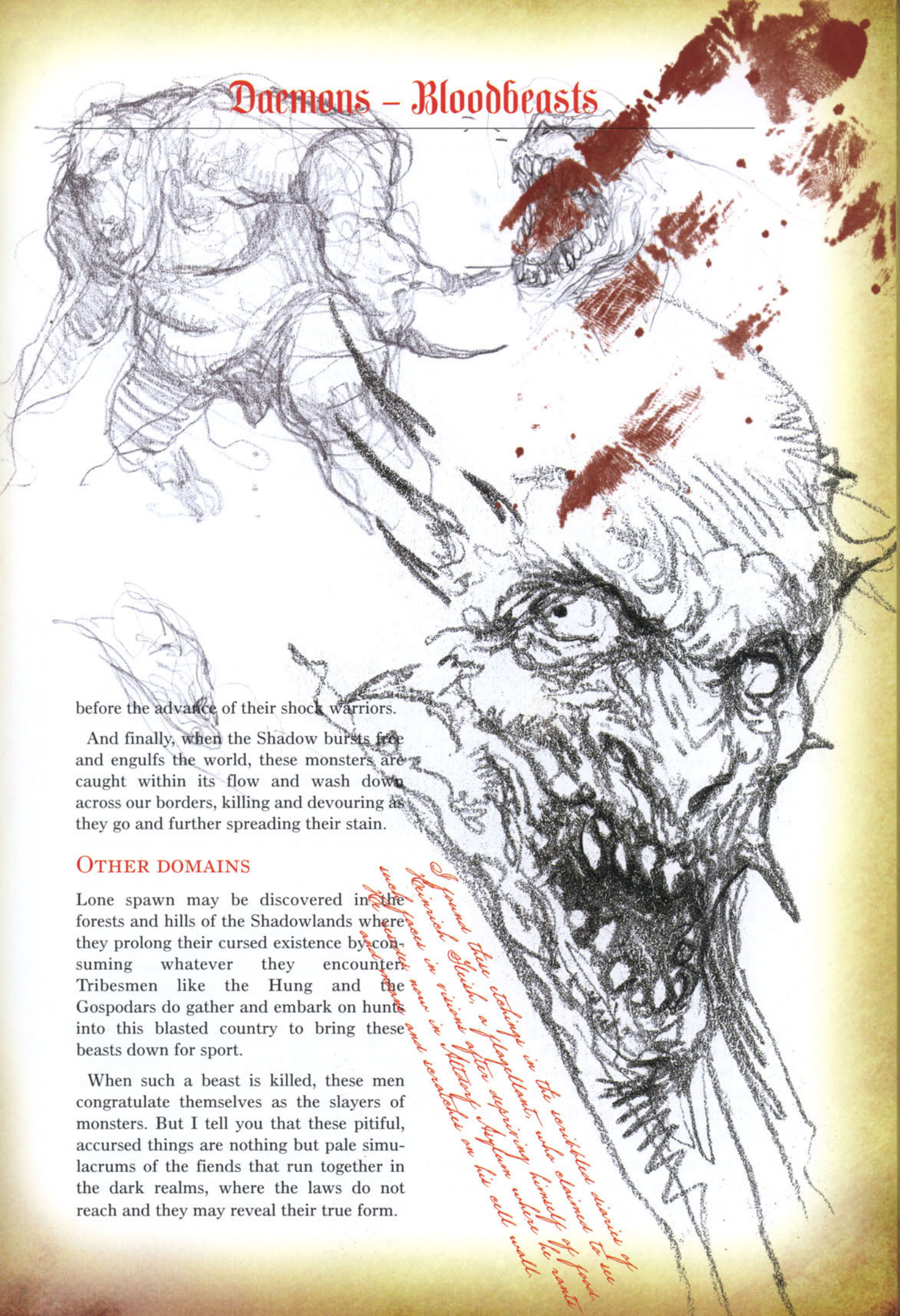
They wear no armour, nor bear arms, but their marks of evil are such to overcome even the strongest of foes.

In Battle

Bloodbeasts may be found travelling among the multitude of small warbands that cross back and forth over the Shadowlands. They may be treated as beasts of war or of burden, depending upon their temperament and the nature of the corruption inflicted upon them. A few are even venerated by these warbands and carried or dragged in gilded throne-cages, from which their trusted followers do interpret their gibberings as commands and prophecies.

When these warbands join together into a horde the spawn may remain with their trusted masters, or they may be gathered into herds. There they may be controlled en masse before being goaded to crash into the enemy's lines, creating terror and confusion

Daemons – Bloodbeasts



before the advance of their shock warriors.

And finally, when the Shadow bursts free and engulfs the world, these monsters are caught within its flow and wash down across our borders, killing and devouring as they go and further spreading their stain.

Other domains

Lone spawn may be discovered in the forests and hills of the Shadowlands where they prolong their cursed existence by consuming whatever they encounter. Tribesmen like the Hung and the Gospodars do gather and embark on hunts into this blasted country to bring these beasts down for sport.

When such a beast is killed, these men congratulate themselves as the slayers of monsters. But I tell you that these pitiful, accursed things are nothing but pale simulacrums of the fiends that run together in the dark realms, where the laws do not reach and they may reveal their true form.

I found these clothings in the scrivelled remains of Heinrich Kleist, a flagellant, who claimed to see visions in ruins after despairing himself of the ramblings of a madman in Altdorf. Asylum where he still waits and wonders.

Daemons – Flesh Hounds

On the canine monstrosities that do accompany the Khornate warhosts. The feral nature of the daemonic creatures known as Flesh Hounds is here scrutinised

HUNTERS OF BLOOD; Dogs of War; The Inevitable Ones; Flesh-Renders; Creatures of Khorne.

Wherever the foul daemons of the Blood God may stride the land, always at their feet run these terrible hunting beasts. They are the hounds of Khorne, savage unearthly creatures that will chase their victims across the leagues of the known world to bring them to ground, and then drag their carcasses back to the Skull Throne.

They are the embodiment of war and battle at its most unforgiving, like the savage thrill felt when plunging a sword into the enemy's back as he turns in cowardly flight, and cut down like wheat the defeated foe as they beg for mercy.

The form of the Daemon

The Flesh Hounds are hideously canine, and are some eight feet long from nose to tail. Their lean, wiry frames have an arched back and their skins' hue runs from the most violent reds to the bruised purples of flesh and muscle.

Along their backs may be spikes of bone or rows of iron plates, driven down along the spine, held in place by brazen rivets each moulded in the shape of the Blood Lord's skull rune. While their necks are encased in heavy iron collars, wherein resides their god's abhorrence of all things sorcerous. In this way even the greatest mage's power may crumple and fail before the hounds and the other daemons of Khorne.

Their faces are permanently twisted in a feral snarl. Their blank-white eyes are hooded beneath heavy brows and their slavering mouths contain massive fanged teeth with which they plunge into the throats and bodies of their victims.

They may have a mane of blood-matted hair that runs down their backs and across their shoulders. From this emerges more bone, either straight and sharp as spikes, or twisted and curled as horns.

Their legs are strong, empowered by unnatural muscle, and they may leap taller than a man in their race to hunt down their prey. At the end of each foot are razor-edged claws of iron, as vicious as meat-hooks.

In Battle

The Blood God does bestow his hounds upon his mightiest champions as gifts to further the tally of skulls they may take for him. Thus along the battleline there may be several fell warriors who do command a single, a pair or even as many as eight of these creatures.

Sometimes they will be chained to a leash, held in the hand of their master or some unfortunate among his followers, and they will strain and buck as they smell their foe.

Others will be allowed to roam freely, though they will never venture far from their masters until the enemy is broken and the rout begins. Some of the learned of mankind who have taken to this study believe simply that this is in their nature as part of their obedience to their god, ensured through the medium of their master. These scholars see only a fraction of the reality. I believe that when a champion is rewarded in this way, he becomes a root by which the daemon may follow him beyond the reach of the Shadow. Just as the hound protects him, so too does the man sustain it with the devotion of his immortal soul to his foul god.

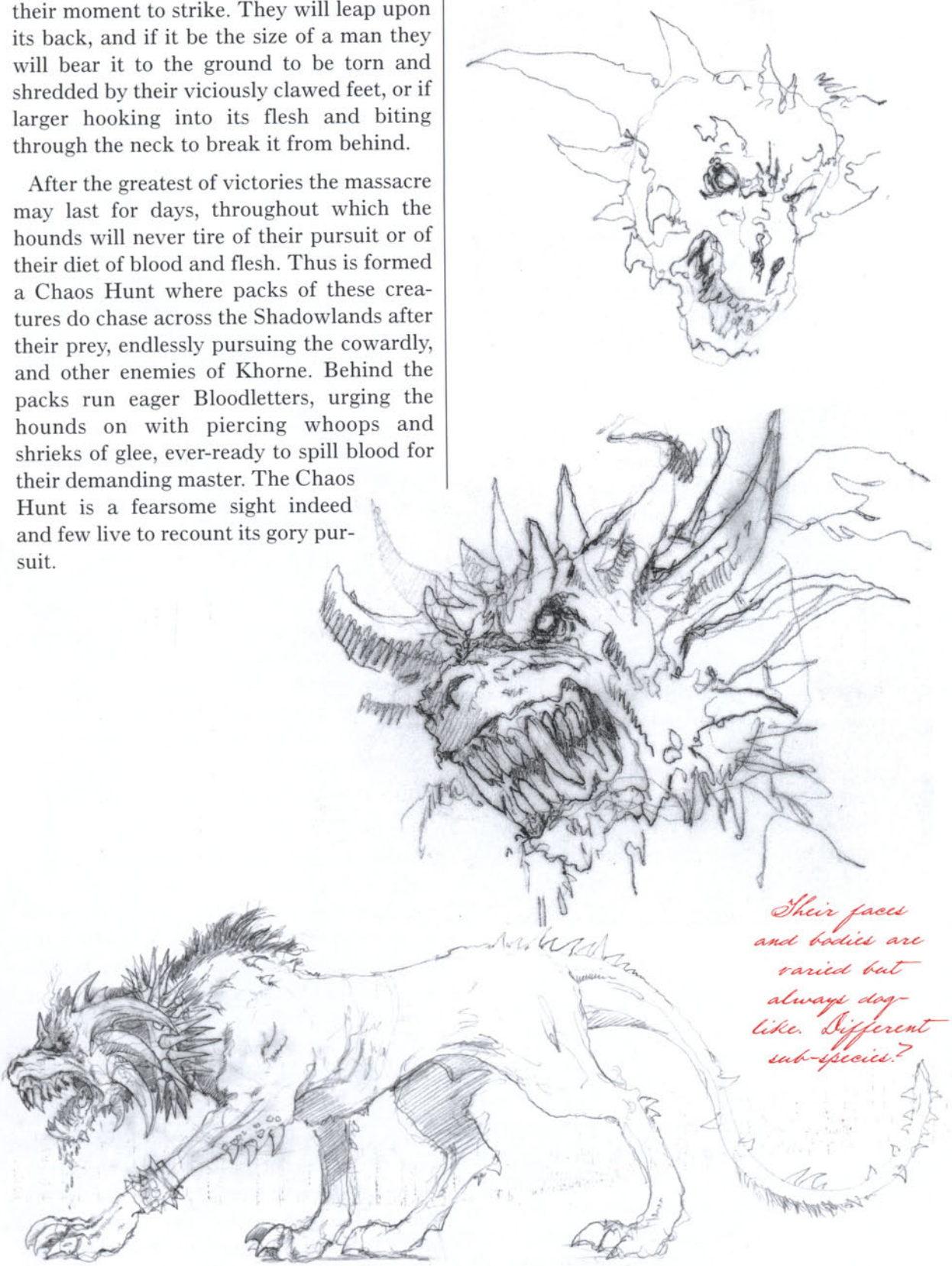
But while the gifts of these beasts are not uncommon, the Flesh Hound's true purpose does not become apparent until the point at which the fighting turns from a battle into a slaughter: when that first foe does turn in flight before the axes of Khorne and all his fellows know the battle is lost. Then the Fleshhounds rise to ensure that none may escape the wrath of the Blood Lord.

How they flesh hounds I saw that night on the ustyle?
I take them to be mine. But as well I hit.

Daemons – Flesh Hounds

The hounds may effortlessly match pace with their running quarry until they choose their moment to strike. They will leap upon its back, and if it be the size of a man they will bear it to the ground to be torn and shredded by their viciously clawed feet, or if larger hooking into its flesh and biting through the neck to break it from behind.

After the greatest of victories the massacre may last for days, throughout which the hounds will never tire of their pursuit or of their diet of blood and flesh. Thus is formed a Chaos Hunt where packs of these creatures do chase across the Shadowlands after their prey, endlessly pursuing the cowardly, and other enemies of Khorne. Behind the packs run eager Bloodletters, urging the hounds on with piercing whoops and shrieks of glee, ever-ready to spill blood for their demanding master. The Chaos Hunt is a fearsome sight indeed and few live to recount its gory pursuit.



Their faces and bodies are varied but always dog-like. Different sub-species?

Daemons – Juggernauts

Being an acute and neccessary observation of the awesome creatures of metal and flesh known by most as Juggernauts. Including a close study of their methods of combat.

The Steeds of Khorne; Blood Crushers; Juggers; Blights of Khorne; Soul Crushers

The Juggernaut is neither beast nor machine but a daemonic amalgamation of both, a creature of living metal whose flesh is brass and whose blood is pure fire. They are said to be the most brutal of all Khorne's many daemons, and only the most favoured of his warriors are granted the boon of riding a Juggernaut into battle.

They embody that moment of battle such as the breach of a siege or the crush between regiments. Wherever men are smashed against one another, where only the toughest and most stubborn and mindless of men may survive where the rest collapse in death. That is the Juggernaut.

The form of the Daemon

The Juggernauts are four-legged as many daemonic steeds, with broad bodies, the heads of warped bullgods, powerful legs and heavy, wide mouths. Their skins are made of living metal, riveted with Khorne's skull-rune. Their flesh is cut to form a saddle while their faces vary from a fierce, near-human visage to metal-plated boars or dogs and more.

In Battle

With their rarity, the only Juggernauts that may be seen within a warband-horde will be the mounts of the warlord, or perhaps his personal devotees.

From his daemon-steed the champion may lead the charge or may pause until the battlelines have become locked and the fighting becomes a gruelling scrum. At that moment he will spur his mount forwards into the charge so that the Juggernaut's impact will be against groups of men so tightly-pressed is that it will be annihilating, to friend and foe alike.

Once embroiled, the Juggernaut will crush those that stand before it with the ease of a man walking through grass, while its head will turn in each direction, goring and gouging those within its reach. Armour and shields are crushed beneath its massive jaws and feet, while weapons that stab at it in reply bounce off or shatter against its iron hide. No unit can maintain its order in the face of such a monstrosity and as the members turn to flee the rider may cut them down.

In only the greatest hordes are there enough champions so favoured that they may band together to form entire detachments of cavalry mounted upon these beasts of iron.

Other Domains

As with the Fleshhounds these Juggernauts may be found in their champion's care far beyond the reach of the Shadow. I believe, as with the hounds, that their masters' souls do bind them to this world and that as soon as their souls are released to be consumed by their foul god, so too does the Juggernaut return to its lord's side to await orders anew.

One little known theory of former years was that the Juggernauts may have found their origin in the east, in the workshops of the renegade dwarfs of the Skull lands. There the beasts were supposedly a hybrid taurus altered by their armourer-sorcerers to take grafts of iron as skin and a molten rock as fuel, designed to be a living battering-ram and constructed for the legions of Khorne as part of those renegades' unholy pact with the Ruinous Powers.

Such a theory was dismissed as patent nonsense to the relief of many as it had been most often used to persecute those Imperial dwarfs that had settled within our own borders rather than to encourage our greater crusade against the darkness and its allies.

What cannot be denied is the resemblance between the Juggernaut and an image of

their bovine forge-god, Hashut, as a bull of flaming eyes and burning blood. Rather than endorse the theory above I feel that this may prove the reverse, and speak towards the origins of the renegade dwarfs, a subject on which their Imperial cousins do feign ignorance.

There is some deeper truth in this identity of Hashut, but as yet my mind cannot grasp it.

I doubt even our noble Reiksguard would fare well against such an awesome beast.



Daemons – Bloodthirsters

THIS LAST SECTION IS DEDICATED TO THE MOST SAVAGE AND POWERFUL OF KHORNE'S SERVANTS: THE BLOODTHIRSTER. INCLUDING AN EXPOSITION ON THEIR TERRIFYING APPEARANCE.

FISTS OF KHORNE; Drinkers of Blood; Lords of Skulls; Eaters of Gore and Flesh; Deathbringers of Khorne; Blooded Ones; Guardians of the Throne; High-Handed Slayers; War Given Form

The Bloodthirster is the mightiest of Khorne's daemonic creations. None other so readily exemplifies all that the Blood God represents. Their moniker of "War Given Form" is especially apt as they are true embodiments of the bloodiest side of warfare and renowned as the greatest fighters of daemonkind. Only the most heroic of mortal champions would even stand the slimmest chance of mere survival if faced by this ultimate warrior, and an even smaller chance of victory.



Daemons – Bloodthirsters

The form of the Daemon

I believe Bloodthirsters, as may all greater servants of the Ruinous Powers, choose by what form they enter our world and their resemblance is, in turn, altered by the deepest fears of those that encounter them. They have the appearance of terror, in all the many forms in which it may appear.

The semblance they favour tends to be one of a giant armoured warrior. Their face is the bestial, almost canine, visage of Khorne's most favoured. Their hides are covered with gore-flecked crimson fur and their eyes are a milky white without visible iris or pupil. Their armour is ruddy bronze or iron black. This is undoubtedly that magical plate known as Chaos armour that I examine fully elsewhere in this tome, it is hard to imagine that these chosen of Khorne would be endowed with anything else. Finally, from their backs sprout huge, membranous, bat-like wings on which they soar over the battlefield before diving into the bloodiest part of the fighting.

They invariably wield Khorne's favoured weapon, the axe, often in conjunction with a whip. As appropriate, the axes wielded by Bloodthirsters are particularly potent and are simply known as Axes of Khorne.

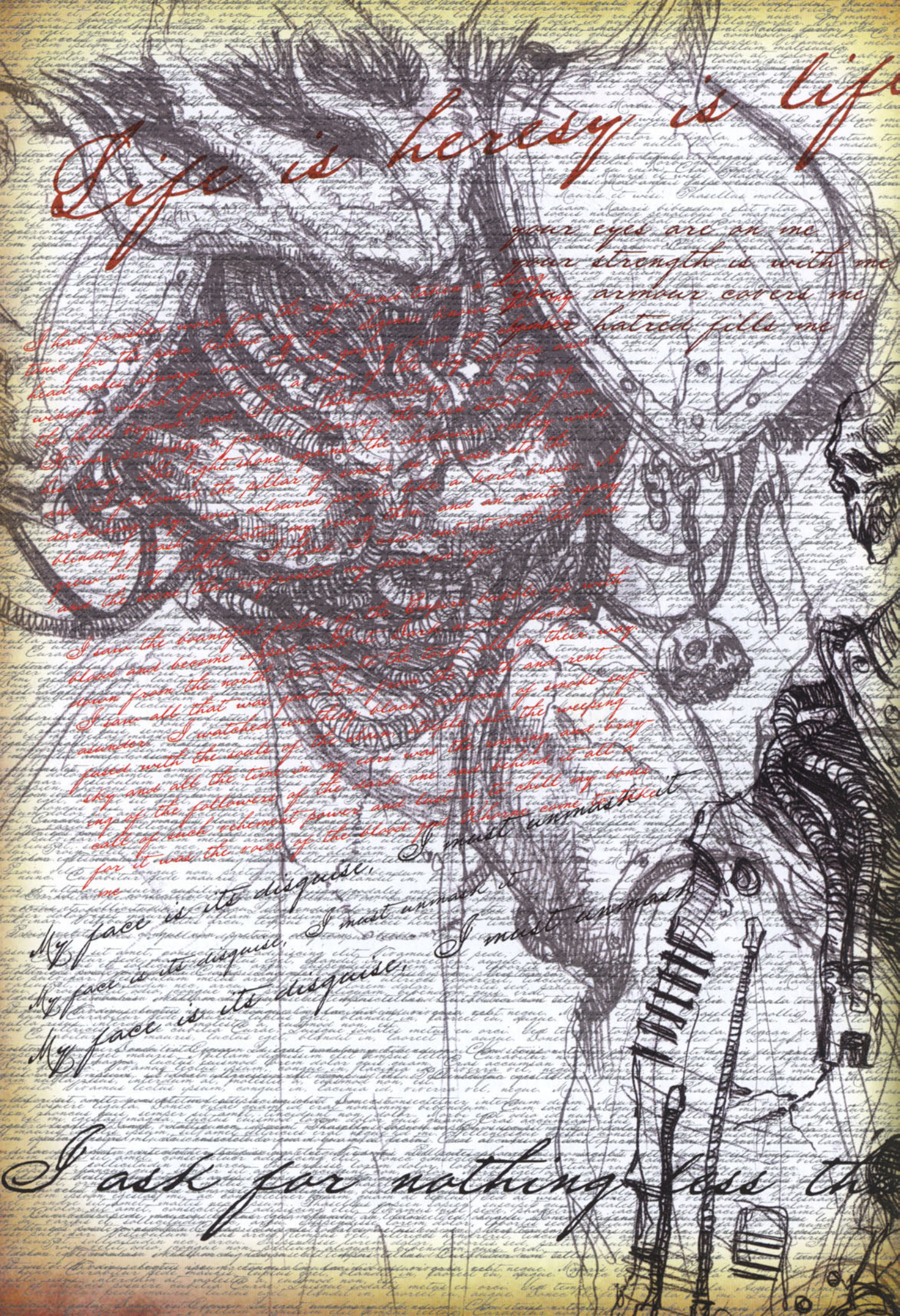
In Battle

It is a terrible thing for this land when the Shadow shrouds us and a mortal horde may emerge from the Northlands with a Bloodthirster at its head. Fortunately it is a rare event, or else the world would already lie in ruin. However, deep within the realms the battle between the Powers is constant, and there the Bloodthirsters command Khorne's daemon legions. It is on the battlefield that they only truly find purpose for their existence and some believe that they may only physically manifest themselves at that point of carnage and slaughter, despite contradictory testimony, such as the writings of Jaeger the Fantasist. But to my mind, in such thoughts lie madness as one begins to question their very existence.

They are savage, bellowing creatures with a bloodlust that extends far beyond mortal comprehension. In battle, they lead from the front, attacking everything in reach, fearless of all except their own dark master. They are uninterested in strategies or tactics or battle plans; their thirst is only for death and blood and for skulls for the Skull Throne. Nevertheless, those hordes commanded by a Bloodthirster are implacable foes, for while the daemon will fight on its own with little regard for its minions, its mere presence on the battlefield drives their mortal and daemonic allies into a frenzy.

Some consider that their bloodlust and capacity for mindless violence does indicate that they have little mind of their own, and that perhaps this directness, even stupidity, can be used to thwart them where force of arms cannot. I refute such an idea, for they confuse the ignorant destruction of an angered child with little concept of the damage they cause with the concentrated bloodlust of one who by the reaping of others' lives does reaffirm his own.

There is no daemon, certainly none that has remained in the highest service of their god that could be described as such. They have the evil of millennia at their command and an innate understanding of what draws men to fight and to hate and to spill the blood of their brother.


Life is heresy is life
your eyes are on me
your strength is with me
armour covers me
hatred fills me
I must unmask it
I must unmask it
My face is its disguise
My face is its disguise
My face is its disguise
I must unmask it
I must unmask it
I ask for nothing less th


I ran to the towns, they were burning
I ran to the streams, they were burning
I ran to the hills, they were burning
All day, all on the day
I ran to the sea, it was burning
I ran to the sky, it was burning
I ran to my god, he was burning
All day, all on the day
He said to me, I was a heathen
He said to me, I was a daemon
He said to me, Yes bleeding
All day, all on the day
Oh daemon
Oh daemon
Oh daemon
The day
feed on my soul
turn my face to
show me the path
lead me to the

Black Crusades

No, false visions! This is not me. Sigmar relieve me from my ague and open eyes to the day again.

THE SKY WILL TEAR! MACHINES WILL CROSS THE STARS! THE LEGIONS WILL RETURN! THE STILL BEATING HEART OF MANKIND WILL BE SACRIFICED TO SATE THE HUNGER OF THE BLOOD GOD!

THIS MORNING I awoke to feel as though I had been to sleep for an eternity, and yet still I can barely hold open my eyes. The same dreams return to haunt me night after night. Most are too terrible to recount. Others I cannot ignore because they seem relevant to my task. I find my mind wanders, and days pass without me being able to recall what I did with them. I wander the halls of the Scriptorium, and the walls close in. I am imprisoned by the rooms that are stacked with ramparts of books and paper (walls within walls within prisons), and by my fragile mind. I believe that no man should have to do the job with which I have been charged. We are not made from strong enough stuff to defend against the insidious powers. I weaken by the minute.

My visions are frequent now, and not visited upon me by lack of sleep! They seem so real, but when I try to remember them I cannot focus, and my thoughts slide back to the task at hand, cataloguing the obscenity



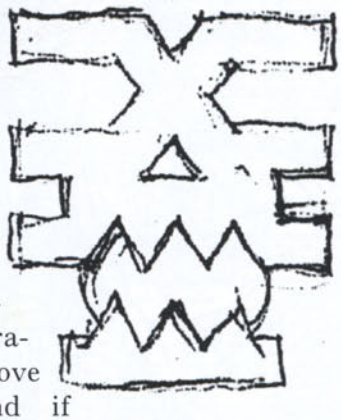
of the worship of the unnameable foe. I envy everyone else their station in life against that which I do, but I must remind myself that it is for the good of all mankind and the Empire that I attempt it. I must maintain my vigilance in my work, and pray that whatever assails my mind and body allows me to complete it before I am lost.

Sometimes I write for hours without respite. I write with conviction, but after I remember not where the thoughts came from. I read back over what I put to paper and what I see frightens me to the pit of my soul. Much as it scares me to say this, I don't know what any of it means.

A TEAR IN THE SKY

So it will occur that the Eye torn in the Sky will weep blood, and the legions that dwell there in a state of constant warfare will spill out, united under a single leader, and once again assail the bedrock of humankind.

There will be an unholy union between each and every faction and region of the infernal Eye, and untold millions of heretics and thousands of craft will seek to burst through the stalwart defences placed there in readiness for the event. These invasions, one every hundred generations, will prove gigantic and if they are not stymied (I cannot see the final outcome) then surely they will bring mankind to its knees.



The alliance for these grand assaults will be welded together by a terrible overlord of Chaos, perhaps daemon, perhaps mortal. These tidal waves of destruction will occur in a time of our darkest insecurity, where the fate of humanity hangs by the merest of threads. I see the peril, and hope mankind can weather the violence of the end times.

They will occur as written.

THE PRIMARY ROAR OF THE ABANDONED ONE

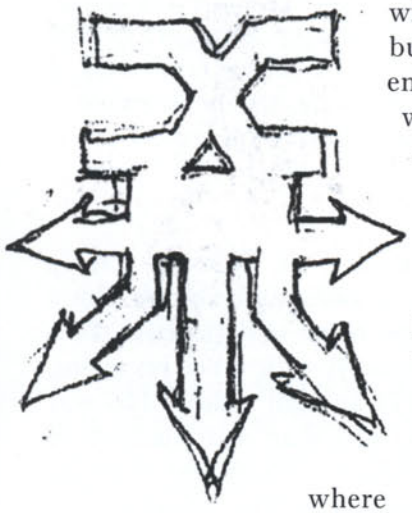
"And the Fallen will band together,
And herald one among them King."

For four hundred years and more, the Eye will sleep. It will be assumed that those

inside have torn themselves apart, and left themselves as little more than barbarians, struggling and clawing at one another on those worlds upon which they have been stranded. These assumptions will be proved mistaken, and the price will be dear.

The Traitor Legions will return, and at their head the Abandoned One will scream his bloody cry. He will lead the Legions of Black, and rekindle ambitions to force the Empire of Mankind to bend knee before Chaos and lament before his might.

This invasion will demonstrate little of the subtlety and malevolent brilliance that he will later show, but in this endeavour he will learn much to aid him in future times.

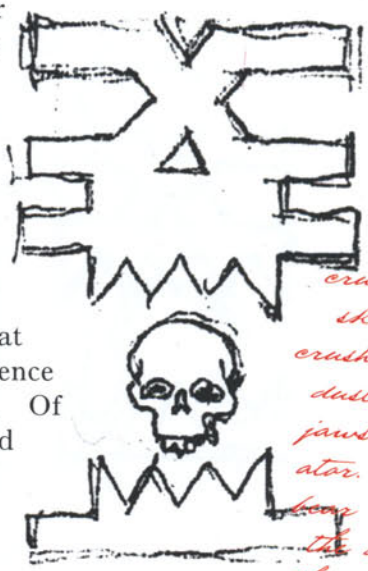


Toward the Heart of Humanity will his forces be driven, in the hopes to accomplish where his thrice-damned forebears have failed. Wherever the Crusade passes will be left burnt cinders and shattered husks, devoid of life forever more.

But, as they will do both before and after, and in a manner eerily reminiscent of the dark days, the Guardians of the Imperium, Priest of the Machine, and giant warriors in gleaming armour who bring purity and death in equal measure, the Chapters of the Astartes, will march forth together, and as one, turn The Abandoned One back; but not until a bitter struggle has been waged, and one too close to the beating heart of Mankind for fears ever to be assuaged.



It will be on his excursion to the forbidden hills on Uralan that The Abandoned One will lay claim to the sword that imprisons the essence of Drachn'nyen. Of how he obtained such an item, I cannot see.



crushed skulls
skulls of the
crushed, broken
dust 'tween the
jaws of the cre-
ator. These sigil
bear the mark o
the damned for
the followers and
those that face
them in battle-

like my battle..

The Second Crusade of the Abandoned One

"The eye will close on the King of Blood,
And a Fortress will rise to contain him."

After dashing the assault on mankind's bastion of strength, He who sits on the Golden Throne will turn his efforts to contain the threat. The Fortress of Cadium will be built, and savage Lupine Warriors will guard it with many others whose names, in time, will be forgotten. The bastion will be considered insurmountable, and for a time will prove so. Other such places will be planned, the naval port of Belis Corona and the castle of Nemesis Tessera will be the foundation blocks on which any other incursion from the Terrible Eye is to break like a wave. When these measures are completed all will wait, with breath abated, to see how they will fare when the Eye will once again open. They will wait nearly three hundred years.

But the Abandoned One will not falter yet, indeed, his allies and sponsors will rally around him in ever greater numbers and his second assault will be every bit as strong and direct as the first. This time however, the defenders will bear the brunt prepared. Savage fighting and unholy slaughter will erupt at the moment the invasion storms the Cadiam walls, and continue until its costly

conclusion five years later. In the meantime the evil forces, once stymied at Cadium, will spill out from either side and begin rampaging where they can. But the preparations will prove to be strong, and a new hope will burn in the hearts of men. The Abandoned One's hammer blow will ring hollow, and he will retreat back to smoulder in ire.



The Host of Tallomine

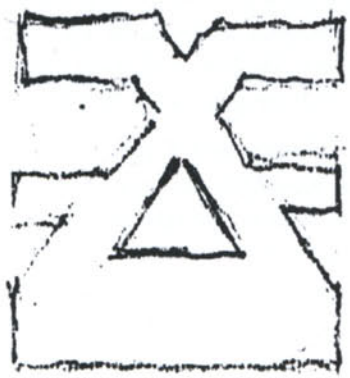
"In an Age of Apostasty
The Wolf Warriors bay and howl."

Tallomin, Prince among Daemon Princes, will lead an attack, but the outcome is hazy and the events indistinct to me. The only thing I know with certainty is that the Wolf Warriors will play a large part in Tallomin's destruction. Whether he will be eternally banished or will yet rise again, I cannot see.

The Fourth Crusade of the Abandoned One and the Devastation of El'Phanor

"In the Forth insurgence,
The horror will be spliced with fire."

And again his legions will sweep forth, possessed of a renewed fervour. Cadium's walls will be besieged and the Blood King is to personally lead the fleet towards the Segmentum emptiness. But at El'Phanor, the Citadel of Kromarch, the drive will halt. But the Abandoned One, terrible amidst his wrathful hordes, will lead the charge against the stolid walls. His warriors will fall like leaves, but the fortress will crumble, and the defenders be consumed by his boundless appetite.



The life and sanity of that beleaguered place is to be washed away in an orgy of annihilation. But these sinful excesses will prove his undoing, giving as they will men time to regroup, and exact a well-planned revenge on the disarrayed forces of evil that infest the ruins of the once proud castle of Kromarch; the dark ones will be shredded to rags by their own violent indulgence.

The Tide of Blood

An ancient Prince of Khorne named Doombreed will sweep humanities finest and purest to the brink of destruction. Few will fall if compared with other invasions, but the cost will be high indeed. His war will be nothing less than a declaration of war upon the Adeptes, staunchest of all the foes of Chaos, and he will be defeated.

But I lament the Warhawks and the Venerators, for they shall be lost.

Black Crusades in the Age of Strife

"And men will bare their breasts
And invite destruction to take them."

Apostasy will reign for many years, and the Eye will cast forth countless harbingers of death. I cannot guess at how many crusades will be launched during these dark days, but the Abandoned One will return. This I know. And men will grow mistrustful of each other and cosmic forces of tremendous power will isolate and disenfranchise our strongholds and citadels. And the ever-watchful dark will fall upon us in our weakness and seek to destroy us and much ruin will be caused. But our end will not come here. Not yet awhile.

The Abandoned One's Seventh Crusade "The Ghost War"

"For the seventh time,
He came as shadow."

Comes the time called the 'Ghost War'. The Abandoned One's fleet will flood in a heavy tide from the Gates of Cadiam, and then disappear. There will follow years of hunt and seek and confusion and paranoia and disinformation and deceit. Raids will occur in far-flung places. His hand becomes Night and his standard secure, He will fall through the eye to prepare. Man will wait for the outcome, with dread like a vice around his heart.

The Abandoned One's Tenth Crusade "The Conflict of Helica"

"At the Medusa's Walls
The Iron Guards will break."

By accident or design, the mordacious fleet is to emerge from the opposing side of the Terrible Eye to the Cadiam Gate, in the place known as Helica. Men will guard this place with hands girt in Iron and the very Chapter Kith themselves. Savage attacks on Helica will prevail, burning towards the capital, Thracian Primaris. Yet there his assault will fatally be delayed, as his Warriors of Iron clashed with the Iron Handed ones at sturdy Medusa. What will occur in that engagement my lord has not gifted me to see.





The Abandoned One's Twelfth Crusade "The Gothic War"

"At the time of the twelfth,
All things will be decided."

It is at this time that his great plans will seem at last to bear fruit. Mighty blows will fall at Gethesmene and Schndlegeist, and the warrior Ravensberg will carry the day. But mankind will reel from the Blood Kings assault and he will escape with Blackstone, and the ruin of man is further assured.

The First Struggle for the Heart of Armageddon

And Angron will rise to challenge men and curse them and eat their world, leading a train of traitors and a legion of Daemons, they will blast out from the Eye's red pupil. They will appear as if from nowhere in an ancient vessel of indescribable proportions at Armageddon, that already falters from its own mischief. The land will be turned into a cauldron. But once again the Lupine Warriors and Knights in Grey lead a sally to rout the deadly foe. The mortal shell of Angron himself will be destroyed and he will be cast back into the infernal realms.

Berserkers

LEGIONS OF TRAITORS HAVE LEFT THEIR KIN AND SUCCUMBED TO THE BLOOD CALL OF KHORNE. THEIR COMING WILL HERALD A NEW AGE OF APOSTASY, AND A DARKNESS THAT WILL NOT BREAK!

THEY WILL FALL from the sky and fire will be their greeting. They travel the heavens, girded completely in armour, so that no part of their body is visible. They burn with a great incandescence in their eyes that doth mirror the burning hatred in their hearts. They feel nought for us but the deepest contempt, and strive at nothing more than the eradication of good from the world. They are the Traitor Legionaries, the fallen Astartes, black stars in the night sky that bleeds in its own shade of blood.

Of all the God Daemons of Chaos, it is Khorne that has the greatest sway over the Traitor Legionnaires' hearts. This is not surprising. Khorne is the bloody god of warriors, and the Astartes are the ultimate warriors. Fully an entire Legion, that is named the Eaters of Worlds, has devoted itself to Khorne's worship, and indeed every other Legion has its members who have foresworn their original loyalties to sink into his bloody veneration. Their fellows shun such legionnaires; for upon the battlefield the bloodlust will grip them so hard that they are as likely to turn upon their comrades as cut a bloody swathe through the enemy. Now there is little distinction between the original World Eaters and those from other Legions who bear the same blasphemy, and so they are all known as Khorne Beserkers.

Some ancient event caused the Eater of Worlds to splinter. No longer do they travel as a legion or as companies or with any discipline or order, but rather they have formed into warbands under their champions. These warbands vary in size, from a few individuals to hundreds of warriors. They chart their own destiny, attaching themselves to the raiding fleets of other Legions, or simply making their home upon one of the ancient sea-hulks and leaving their destination up to the whims of fate. Only a being of awesome power and authority, such as Doombreed or Angron himself, could ever forge the Berserkers back together again as anything resembling a Legion.

These gruesome fiends favour close-combat blades crafted deep in the hellforges of the Eye: swords that scream, and axes with swift rotating blades set into the head, they all cry forth to their bearer for their never ending thirst to be slaked with blood. Competition to be first into the fray and the first to kill for the Blood God is fierce and they are known to fall upon their own weapons should they be denied a blood-sacrifice for their patron god.

Their armour, a warped and desecrated version of the powerful armour of the noble Astartes, bears the colours of their lord: red, black and brass, and all are affixed with further icons of devotion or trophies of the slain. The right gauntlet is often painted red, supposedly as another symbol of Khorne. The original colours of the Eaters of Worlds are still visible on some items. Often a shoulder piece, a breastplate or a single piece of armour has come from one of the Legion's original warriors, and has been incorporated without redecoration. Why they wish to maintain a link to their past is unknown to me.

The Berserker is an unnatural and deadly enemy. No plea or bribe could stay his blade from striking. Mercy is nothing to them, the concept entirely alien. Their ranks are manifold and their strength is incalculable. I understand them not. But I have seen them. Soon they may see me. And then I will die.


Who are they, these iron-clad warriors who haunt my every waking moment?
Lord Sigmar have mercy on my soul, for I fear for my sanity in the face of such hazard.

Cults of Khorne

BEING A RECOUNT OF THINGS TO BE, AND WHAT I SEE WILL COME TO FRUITION, AND IT WILL BE ROTTEN AND FOUL, AND WILL SWELL WITH DISEASE AND POLLUTE ALL THE GROUND.

CULTS EXIST. They may exist anywhere. They may be acting out debauched ceremonies in the lodgings next door. You may be a member yourself, an unknowing (or knowing!) worshipper of the black faith. Inquisitors and Witch Hunters work and fight during the day or night. But they are but a crumbling breakwater, against which the growing tide of the foolish seduced who enter into unholy pacts, and ensnare others to follow them to damnation.

The breakwater will one day collapse, and the dark lords will run riot through our lands, with the ignorant multitudes cavorting at their feet.

The Kith of Sapiencia

The Kith will be born from the underclass of a vast city called Sapiencia, which will teem like a hive, in the far-flung place called Sabbat. And from this birth one will rise to dubious eminence. And he will be called Sholen Skara.

Sholen Skara will be infamous for the Balhaut murder-camps where, by him, will be killed an obscene number of inhabitants, but after the Most Holy Crusade took that place he will flee to Sapiencia; and there the Kith will be waiting for him. There he will incite them to action; they will overthrow Imperia's rule, butcher all who remain loyal, and seize supplies destined for the Most Holy Crusade. In doing so Sholen will hope to force an attack by the Imperia's Guard forces of the Crusade, and thereby further add to the death and slaughter that he will worship with such fervent lust. The Holy Guard will oblige and, in an assault upon Oskray Island, crush his forces.

But Sholen will have one final play. As soon as he knows the battle is lost he will give an order of mass suicide to his followers. Such is his grip upon the minds of the Kith that they will obey without question, and more than ten thousand of them will their own lives take in praise of Khorne. Sholen will not kill himself, but rather try to escape and, as Sigmar wills, will, or will not be taken by the Imperia's Holy Guard.

The Manskinner

A bloody deal with the dark powers will be bartered by one who will become known as The Manskinner, to facilitate his escape from Imperia's just captivity. This he will do, but the price will be high; he will loose his arm in the escapade. But the dark ones will replace the limb with a mutation of grotesque appearance and he will take it as a sign of favour and dedicate himself to Khorne.

He will prove a powerful and magnetic orator who will corrupt any who listen too closely. At Gathalamor the Manskinner will earn his name by flaying those who oppose him and running their skins up flagpoles.

After such atrocities, The Templars of Sable will move to hunt him down, and they will succeed in bringing him to battle at Empyrion's Gate. There, a small contingent of Templars of Sable will win a famous victory over the Manskinner's Horde, destroying it utterly. Those whose lives he help destroy will flay the skin from his flesh, and display it around the towns.

The Bringers of Khorne

In the hour after his birth, Bloody Khorne will pit eight fearsome champions and have them clash in single combat until only one remains, and he will be Khorne's chosen. And other mortals will seek to emulate this ritual, seeking far and wide great warriors to pit themselves against, and destroy all others who stand in their way.

And when one seeks to join their bestial ranks he will be matched with eight others such hopefuls, whom they train in the ways

of battle, until finally they will be matched off against one another. Only one will survive to be initiated into the cult. This combination of martial pride and ultimate betrayal is said to please Khorne well. The Fists of Imperia claim to have destroyed a temple of them on Orodis and further defeat many of their warriors individually down through the centuries. But they will never be fully expunged.

The Bloodkin

In The Most Holy Crusade for Sabbat, in the Fight for the Gap, the merchant clans of Illyornis, after years of heavy tithing, will finally snap and revolt. The suppression of this uprising will be famous in the histories of Imperia. The insurgent armies, constituting a great number of men, will seize the governor's palace, the cargo docks and curtain wall defences of the city, casting out all Imperia's officials and thereafter declaring their independence from fair Imperia. Only the Arbitrators stationed there will show any resistance at all, and while they will fight to the last, they will be only a few hundred against a host.

The High Command of the Gap Crusade cannot ignore such a loss of his supplies, and thus he will reroute a detachment of the Crusade to quell the rebels. The force will consist of several regiments of Qxyr Stalkers, feral tribesmen who have been recruited into the Holy Guard and who will survive, mainly through unparalleled brutality upon the field, much of the worst of the Gap Crusade. The defenders of Illyornis will prove little match for these hardened and battle-seasoned soldiers, and with lightning strikes the Guard generals will bring the rebels to their knees in a matter of days with a minimum loss of life and resources. Detachments of Stalkers will be positioned around the city to disarm and hold the rebel forces, while the Holy Guard's commander, General Vincencious Polsch, will graciously accept the Illyornians' formal surrender.

But this is not the end of my foretelling.

It will be at this very ceremony that Commissar Kline, attached to the Qxyr regiments, will step forward and declare the acceptance of the surrender to be heresy of the highest order. With ruthless and swift efficiency he will summarily execute Polsch and his staff and assume command, wherein he will decree that the rebel forces should be utterly annihilated. The Stalkers around the city will obey with great fervour, flooding the Illyornians in their own prisons or simply dragging them from their cells and beheading them with their Qxyrian ritual battle swords. Such is the danger if you swell the ranks of your army with such barbaric savages.

It will come apparent that the Qxyrian faith, which will have been previously sanctioned as a bloody but beneficial worship of The Golden Emperor, will in fact be something far darker. Kline, assigned to ensure their loyalty, will be tainted himself, but how this happens I cannot fathom.

Kline and the Qxyrian regiments will leave the shattered Illyornis before news of this treachery can reach the Crusade fleets. They will remain at large, and call themselves The Bloodkin, and much destruction will be brought by their swift and deadly strikes.

The Warherd

In the fifth dawn of summer, when the rain falls black with hate, the Warherd will descend. Their feral beliefs of culling the poor to replace them with their brood will garner them a following from the furthest reaches of the world. All will tremble before them, for the markings of a poor man will serve to be his undoing. They will worship Khorne in their way, offering up the slain for his delectation, and moving on to the next place to be ravaged and spoiled. I see their leader clearly sometimes; his face a mass of battle scars, and his body adored with many items of precious gold and vain jewels, all red, as to resemble drops of blood, as they run in threads down his armour.

They will never be caught. They will kill forever.

Renegades

A STUDY OF THE TRAITOR LEGIONS, WHOSE CORRUPTION SHINES OUT LIKE A BEACON OF DARKNESS – EVEN AMONGST THE DEPRAVED FOLLOWERS OF THE BLOOD GOD.

THE TRAITOR LEGIONS be not the only forces at the wrathful beck and call of Chaos; they be not even the smallest fraction of the numbers at the Dark Gods' command. Far aside from the hundreds of billions of mortals that slave beneath their rule within the Terrible Eye, they have countless other followers in places as yet untouched by man in the wider realms of the sky. The warp extends and permeates through all things and peoples, and wherever a man can think an evil thought, there too are the dark gods beside him.

Many such followers will be blind as to the ghoulish reality of the beasts they worship. Stone-age barbarians worship their tribal gods, or noble dilettantes in vast cities with spires that reach into the stars turn to anything to relieve the boredom of their existence. The Powers care little for such followers; for they be mere mortals driven by their own mortal weakness, without the talent or the ambition to truly achieve anything that would be noticed in this vast space.

Yet some differ. Some have gained true knowledge of the Powers and covet the abilities and vision with which they may see the potential in foul worship. Men and women such as these be determined to dedicate their lives to these depraved and decadent gods, not in a haphazard or a mundane fashion, but completely, utterly and with driven intent. Their return? Reward! To ultimately join the Power's immortal servants as a daemon prince. Vile Lords will reward the most powerful, but just as easily they will gleefully damn them to eternal oblivion to be a sub-human monstrosity! All vicious Primarchs of the Perfidious Legions, all those that lived and escaped the death they deserve, have been raised as this. Hateful and baneful they be, and regard the human race with an eye jaundiced with envy, and they do covet our destruction.

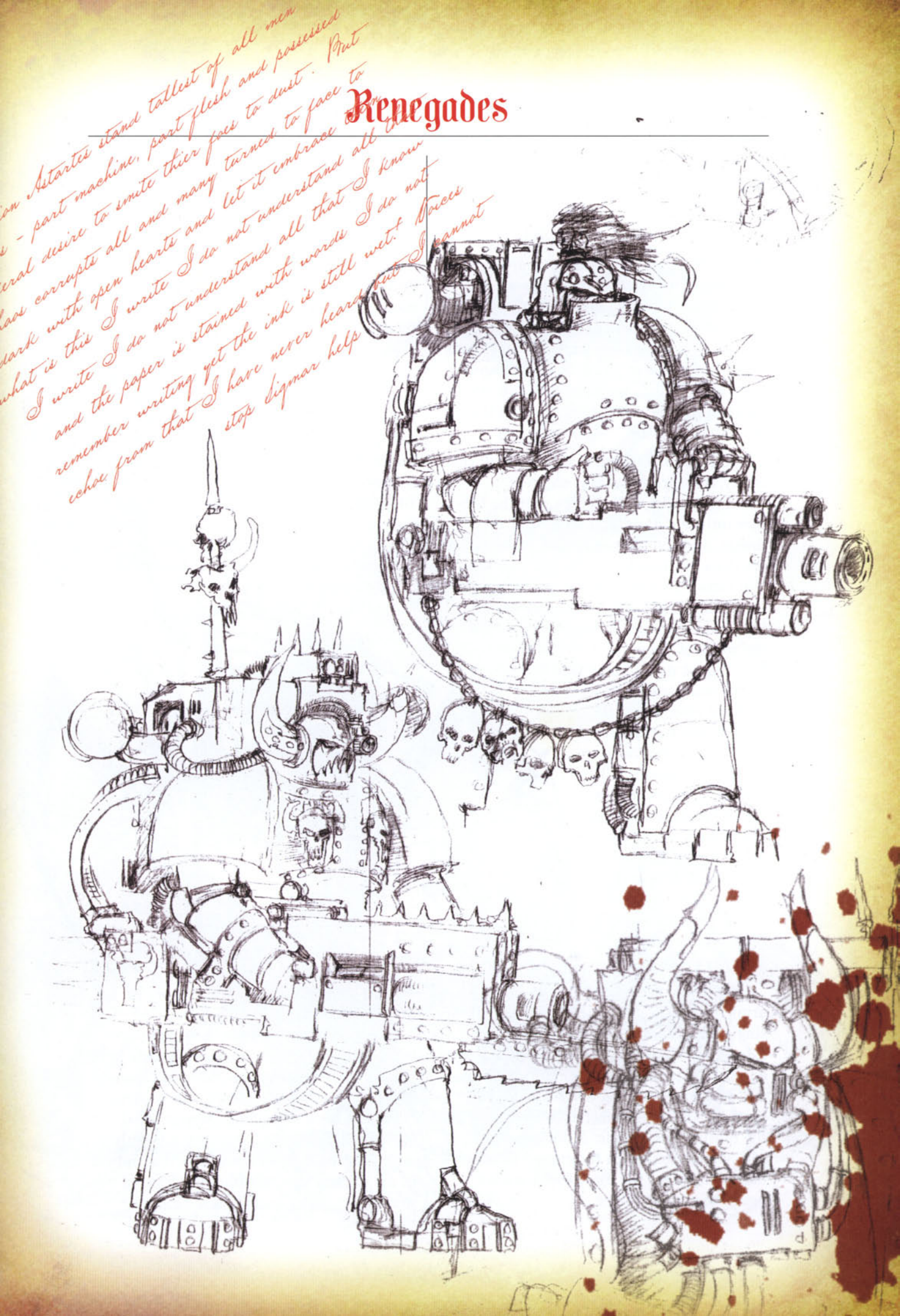
I brand them thus: renegades. In the cold reality they are as wildly diverse as the spawn of Chaos that gibber and whimper in their ecstatic perversion and do puke forth from the orb in the sky. They infiltrate every corner and remote bastion that humanity clings to like sand on a rock. And the tide cometh! I have felt it rise o'er my head and by Sigmar I am drowning in it. Such is ALL our fates!

Dreaded craft ply all seas filled with dreadful creatures that thirst ever for blood; rotting, rusting but held together by some unseen and insidious power that I cannot understand. With crews and retinues of dark followers, mutants and misfits, such a hulk is a danger for all. They drift on the whims and fancies of the great sea that covers the world and all others, and when they fall out near habitation, doom is near.

Renegades often lie hid in the centre of secret coven networks. They nestle like a disease in the midst of craven worshippers, fawning supporters and deceitful informers, manipulating all those they can into the service of Chaos. Such renegades may command the power to lead armies of followers, to summon daemons through blasted rituals, and instil fear in many by their mere presence. These twisted personages may be mortal, but they provide great use to Khorne and reap the corrupting benefits of his notice and favour.

But the complexities of the true nature of such covens are deep and my mind is riven with doubt regarding their true impact onto our domain. All I know for certain is that they pose a grave danger, and every cranny and nook must be searched with the light of righteous vengeance.

Renegades


ion Astartes stand tallest of all men
- part machine, part flesh and possessed
l desire to smite their foes to dust. But
eral corrupts all and many turned to face to
laos with open hearts and let it embrace
dark is this I write I do not understand all
what is this I write I do not understand all that I know
I write I do not understand all that I know
and the paper is stained with words I do not
remember writing yet the ink is still wet. Voices
echoe from that I have never heard but I cannot
stop dignar help

War Engines of Khorne

REGARDING THE BRINGERS OF CALAMITY, THE MACHINES FORGED IN REVERENCE OF BLOODY KHORNE WHO SO COVETS THE DESTRUCTIVE PATHS THEY CLEAVE ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

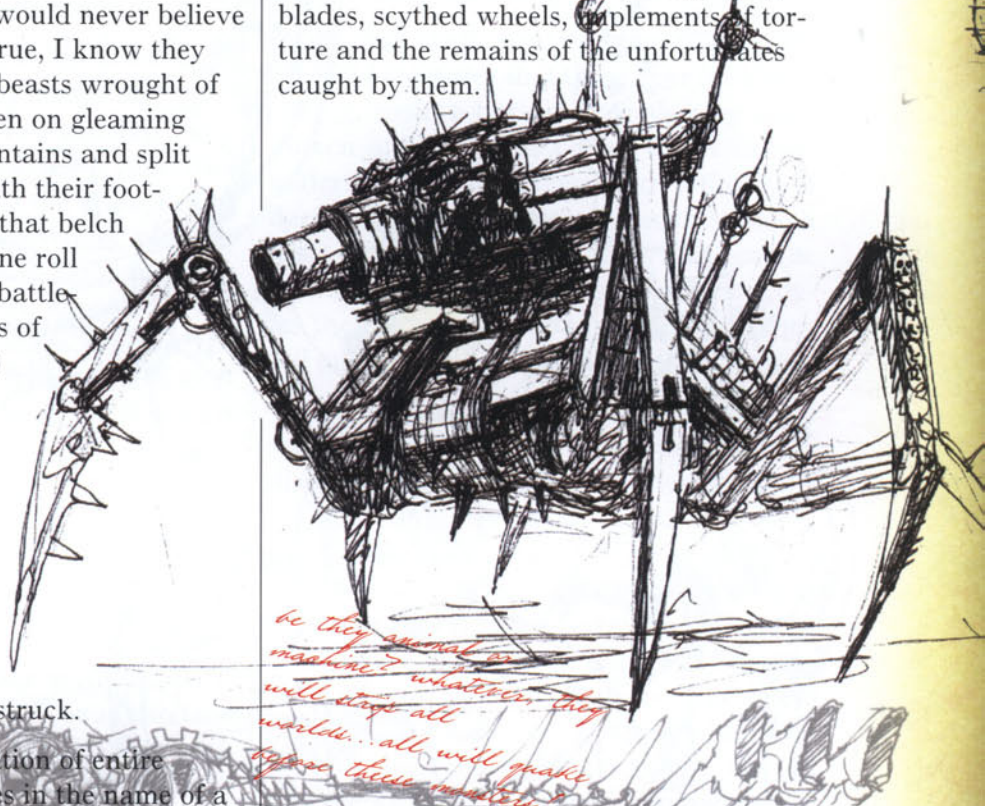
WHEN THE HOSTS of Chaos emerge from the Terrible Eye, they will be accompanied by vast legions of machines and vehicles to further extend their bloodletting. From hideously corrupted versions of age-old patterns to the mighty titans of the traitor orders, to entirely unique war-engines, as insane in their design as they are lethal in battle.

The Legion of Traitors will, with all certainty, blast from the eye, on great machines of fire and steel to rent the further universe asunder. I have seen these things, and though you would never believe the dread visions to be true, I know they will come! Tremendous beasts wrought of iron, which walk like men on gleaming legs, crash through mountains and split the rocks of the earth with their footfalls. Squat metal tanks that belch forth steam and brimstone roll without mercy over the battlefield, flattening creatures of flesh and mortal bone to pulp. The screams still echo in my ears. These perambulating weapons of the dark forces are daubed with blasted runes and sigils and are possessed by daemons, with armour that writhes and squirms every time it is struck.

I have seen the fabrication of entire armies of death-machines in the name of a single Chaos warlord. Such names as Exstructor Grayam, whose racing daemon-engines despoiled the five plains of Idny, and Heritor Asphodel whose death-machines terrorised sacred Sabbat to incite the most holy Crusade. Monikers like these are synonymous with the cursed forging of battle machines the like of which have never been seen before.

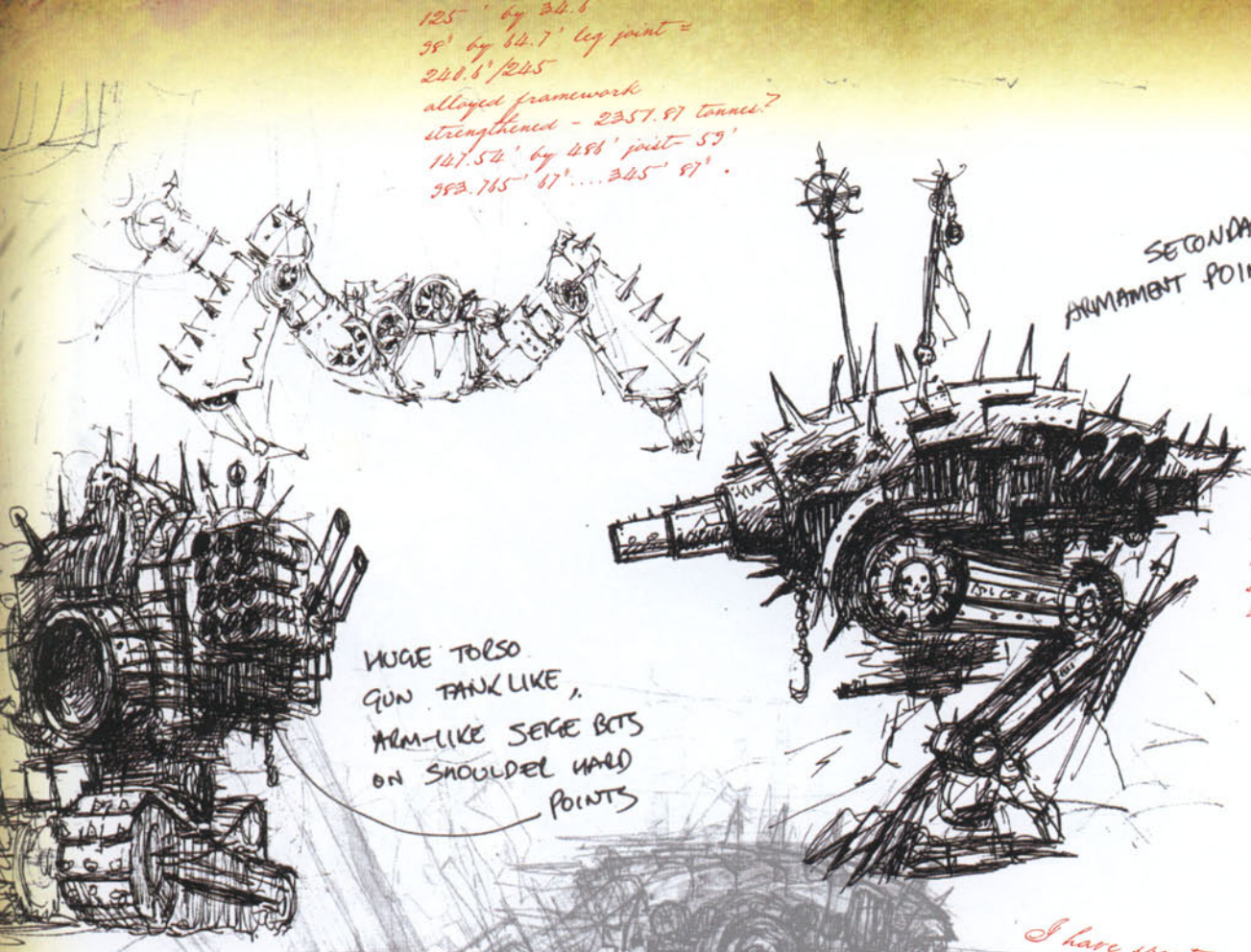
These unholy devotees of some machine-god will make Imperia tremble, and their names will cause Mechanicus-cultists to recoil and bless their holy relics.

Khorne adores such engines of war as they raise the level of carnage and destruction to ever heightening levels. His hosts boast great cannon engines that serve as battlefield altars and even mighty machines known as Lords of Battle that are believed by some to be controlled by the essence of a Bloodthirster. His vehicles are always festooned with all manner of spikes, slicing blades, scythed wheels, implements of torture and the remains of the unfortunates caught by them.



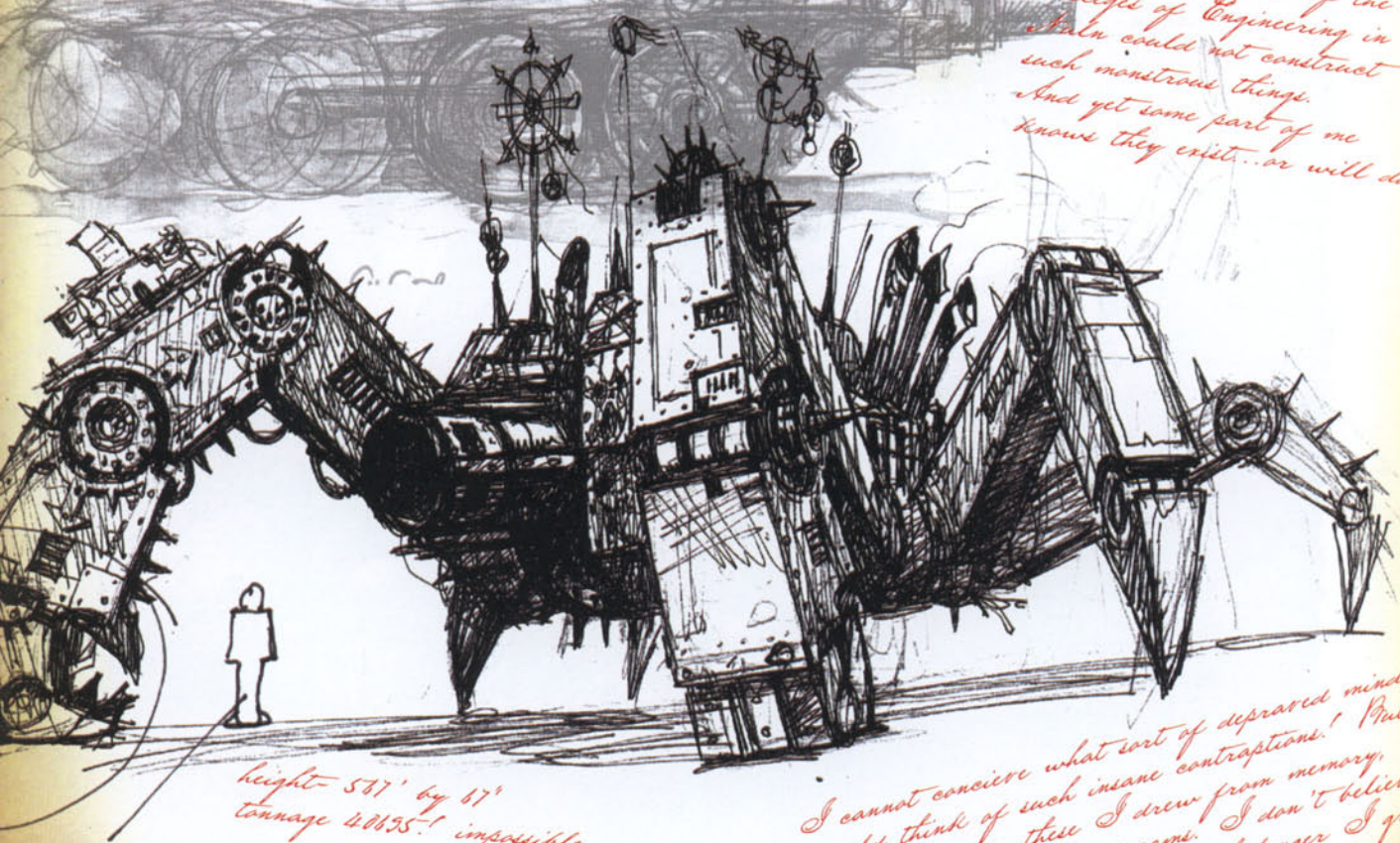
Inscribed here (I wonder how the paper it is printed on does not weep for having been befouled so) are sketches and scribblings from my burgeoning mind as the dreams begin to take a stronger hold over me. I drew them for clarity, and they are faithful renditions of some of the things that appear in my dreams that so afflict my fevered sleep.

125' by 34.6'
38' by 64.7' leg joint =
240.6'/245
alloyed framework
strengthened - 2357.67 tonnes?
147.54' by 48' joint 53'
383.765' 67'....345' 67'.



134.7' by 45.8'4' height 125.4'?
tonnage- at least 7M more?
stride length 36'!!

I have spent weeks drawing schematics and plan diagrams, these things could never be made. The finest minds, or the most unhinged! of the Colleges of Engineering in Malin could not construct such monstrous things. And yet some part of me knows they exist...or will do



height- 587' by 67'
tonnage 40835.! impossible..

I cannot conceive what sort of depraved mind would think of such insane contraptions! But it is my own, for these I drew from memory, they are the essence of my dreams. I don't believe I will continue here for much longer I grow afraid as my mind ails. No one can help me now.



The Tree of Souls

(source unknown – Von Glaur?)

and so I walked across Kharne's Meadows, beneath the brazen sky. All about were black flowers, each a shade trapped in death, each bloom a twisted face, each leaf a tiny skull, each stem a spine of twisted bones. Crimson-flecked flies sucked the bloody nectar, and the corrupt fields were filled with an odour of despair. The blooms of death nodded at my passing and conspired with one another. At my feet crimson worms and fat maggots gorged themselves on the lifeblood of Kharne's fallen. The distant shrieks of Daemons, caroring and dancing around these borders and gardens of blood were blown across that dark meadow by a breeze made sweet with the smell of rotting meat.

And then came I to the Tree of Damned Shades.

Living souls were hung upon its branches and living souls were buried among its roots. This was done long ago, in the winter of that bloody land. Contorted with pain and self-loathing and warped with loyalty to Chaos, the shades had made their pact of blood and now had had their reward. Those same shades, now condemned for eternity and piteous in their grieving, gibbered regrets and fears and promises of gratitude from every branch and twig. All save one, whose defiant eye I met. I paused in the glare of that glowering orb, and waited a while. The tree spoke with a voice of creaking and tearing timber, as if a thousand axes struck to splice its heartwood.

'By my broken faith and darkened promise, a mortal walks nearby. For all those mortals who have tasted my fruits and drank of my sweet blooms, I will taste his nectar and drink his blood. For once my roots eat of his flesh he is mine, and what was his is mine. A body... A body... Then I will be free of this confinement. My loyalty is true and clear, I will slay in Kharne's name. Blood beyond measure will I give to him. Oh, to be free of this wooden frame, that I could once more march to the beat of my heart...'

The tree lashed its branches about me, and I fled, for my fate lay not with those trapped and hideous souls.

How apt a description.' Such was the response from a thousand tortured lunatics I have interrogated over the years. Were they tainted with a hint of this darkness?

My mind is tearing under the strain of these visions of despair, dagmar save me for it is not the fear which causes the pain but the clarity

'Liber Malefic, The Book of Hated Kharne' - Marius Elsecher

The Great War of Chaos



t was the year of the Khaos Moon when we looked upon the cities of the Hammer and the Wolf, of the Lady and the Ice Throne and we saw their turmoil. We looked upon them and saw the suffering of their people. We looked upon them and saw at last the end of their civilisation. The time had come for us to herald in the new age.

The gods called for war and the god Kharneth blew his war horn and the beasts of the forests did answer and ventured forth once more from their territories and out into the land of men. And the chosen bands did answer and marched south joyfully and merrily as they brought more to our fold in death. And even the orcs and goblins of the hills and woods set forth, ignorant and blind but still serving their true gods in their own crude way.

Good father Nurgleth did bless the land of the Hammer and the Wolf with his diseases and pestilence and the people did rejoice in his blessing and each one performed the dance of death in his honour.

The gods looked down upon us and smiled and opened the gates that separate our realm from their paradise. Through them there came the bounty of their essence, the matter of their being, and it stretched and washed across the land and it was beautiful. We marched before its beauty, heralding the joy that we would bring to the world and its people.

We were brought together by the call of the champions, and our bands did gather with their own so that we may better spread the promise of Khaos and smite those who showed that they could not be saved. And our champions did challenge one another to determine who was worthy to lead us. And those worthy champions were named Engra Deathsword, Sven Bloody Hand, Asavar Kul and Valmir Aesling.

We gathered score on score, a greater number than had come together than ever before, for we knew that this would be the shining days of our world. A thousand came, and then a thousand more. From the east, from the west, from the north and from the south we came, for none could be diverted from this cause. We were an army beyond number, and as we marched from our proving ground each triumphant warrior laid a pebble upon a pile, until there grew a mountain that soared into the air.

The enemies of salvation did walk upon the icy fields and block our pilgrimage and refused to stand aside. Men of the feather and the fur, men of the Ice Throne, men of a treacherous name who once could see and now are blind. We met them between two stone-walled towns and with our gods name on our breath, did usher them into the eternal salvation, and honoured them by feasting upon their vacated mortal shells.

I discovered this in the ruins of Sternheim, after the great fire. I believe it to be a fragment of a much larger text. The translation took many long months.

Alphabet Correlation

t = 20
b = 2
g = 7
w = 23

None of these letters is in Kharne!

20/2 t/b
23/7 w/g

Kharne =
k = 11
h = 8
a = 15
r = 18
n = 14
e = 5

K = 11^2 and B = 2

H = 8^2 and A = 54.38

na na na, random nonsense. I waste time.

Of death a
anything this
are destined
ing more. Th
rest. The
the only th
that is all
all the death
the tall is
than the scum
deserves- it
the curse is
the labour a
tears that I
mortal coil
years of my
left to giv
place in the
ing. I bid
know me-
they are. My
and they are
have ever s
NO NOO
wrings the
hands. My
I have stoo
witnessing t
plague and t
the vile and
paper like
out? Soma
until sunse
must write f
comes into m
pers dark
addled mind
where I fea
the sun str
windows a
market trad
hooves still
and I canno
me. The end
the only
Never bef
lonely they

The Great War of Chaos

We spread the new word through all the northern lands that they sought to claim as their own, and we prepared the way for the greater beings that would follow. And the Ice King saw us and was afraid for he would be revealed a fraud before the munificence of our gods. His very realm did aid us in our path, turning the water to rock so that we could continue unhindered. We scattered his remaining followers to the winds for they deserved naught of our mercy now.

We came to our enemies first great bastion, that city they know as Praag, and these folk were small and frightened by our presence. They did bolt their gates and hide behind their walls, for they feared that which they did not know. We would bring them wisdom, but we would wait for them to find it in their midst first. We attended them and prayed for their deliverance and our prayers were answered by good father Nurgleth who had dwelt among them from the start.

His blessings had made them ready and we would complete their induction. Time and again we brought the glory to them, at their gates, over their walls and beneath their ground. We would never desist in the holy mission that was before us. So many of them died in ignorance, so many passed on without knowing the wonder of Khaos, such tragedy that they could not be convinced of the error of their ways until the very last. But our effort was not, is never, in vain for it is the hardest won souls that please our gods best.

Great was our victory on that day, and great our gods acknowledged it. For they sent the spirits of Khaos to bless us in our victory, who turned and consecrated the city known as Praag forever in our name. Their favour was great as the very city itself took life and gave us poor mortals the briefest glimpse of the perfection of their realms.

Then we did gather before the walls of the seat of the Ice Throne. We stood their all in our ranks: the chosen of the gods with iron skin and mighty weapons, the champions upon their steeds, the shamans with their graces and incantations, the afflicted beast men with their calls and crude dedication, and as a sign of our most great favour, the legions of our gods' own had come to join us in our action. The immortal servants of Kharneth, Slaaneth, Nurgleth and Tzeeneth stood beside us in our advance.

Together we fought these unbelievers, the men of the Ice Throne, the men of the Hammer and Wolf and the dwarfs of the mountains for we all joined together in one great prayer to our gods. But for all our efforts, and the greatness of the favour bestowed upon, these stubborn, fearful men could not lift their eyes from the ground to gaze into the infinite. And so, with so much accomplished, and yet so much more to complete, we left them to their damnation and returned back to our lands.

But we are not ashamed of our deeds, or embittered by their ignorance, for our way is open to all. The men of all the world will be ready to experience our glory one day, and on that day we shall in turn be ready for them.

I know not and all others former noth- will kill the futility it is t meaning as I have seen can take and and no more I have became blessing and paid as it be sweat and the rung from my the last ten I have nought I forfeit my n of the liv- ll to all who ger know who ill with tears t livid red I i will EE tortured with cruel are manifold, for too long cities and the tute actions of g it down an at if I ran I will weep ntil then I I sleeps HE me and whis- which my in the recesses ead even with through the call of the the gallop of HEIFED what he tells ar and I am knows it. e I felt so Claim their

The number of Kharne stems from the name and the words in conenetion with the verse?

I feel him watching all i write and i think him in my mind. Every thing I do, if not guided by him is at least observed and scrutinised with guarded curiosity. I cannot pretend that anything I do will cause him any concern, but I have been brought to his attention and must bear his presence. My fear is that I may discover something of great importance or significance that will end with him bring my end. do, I have decided that if he cannot read my words, and words are my only tool, he cannot understand what I am thinking and will fall by my wayside. I feel a closse approximation of an answer. My years of research will bear fruit.

Why can't we learn from the plague that surrounds us? Why can't we learn from the mistakes we make?

Because I am the only one who has seen them all. I beg to be listened to. I beg that those who read this terrible book that they take what I have written and act upon its strong warning. But what if they do not? Then this work will have been in vain and my labours wasted - the most costly soul ever to have been sent to hell, which is where it now resides in torment.

This poem contains a message but it is not the words that carry the portent. I believe it be the numbers that bring forward the truth. All the world is contained with these convoluted and treacherous words, but through the purity of numbers all the secrets of the universe can be revealed in the fullness of their glorious clarity. I also believe that if I can unlock what the number of Kharne be I will find the correct formula with which man can rise up and smite him from all existance. I must work harder that ever before, the weight of my task rests so heavily on me now. I must cast the shackles off and search for our salvation, and destroy him utterly.

The Last Days

BLESSED SIGMAR SAVE ME, MY SOUL IS A BARREN WASTELAND AND ALL MY THOUGHTS ARE BLACK. I HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH. DEAR LORD I BEG YOU FOR ALL I HAVE LEARNT IS THE MEANING OF DESPAIR!

AND AFTER ALL this was done, I looked out upon the world and saw it in shadow. I looked to the sun and eclipsing my view stood the mountain. And then I knew the last days were upon us all.

I raised my eyes to its peak and there stood a man. The man held his arms aloft against the light and from them issued forth the deepest shadow the size of which could cover all the lands and plunge them into unnatural darkness. And as the darkness touched me I knew this to be the Blood Lord Khorne, come to take his final toll.

He leaped into the air and with him detached the shadow from the earth, and I saw that these shades were his wings by which he would sweep away the kingdoms and nations of this earth.

Behind him followed eight creatures each with faces that looked in every direction. I peered upon them and knew them to be the eight princes of blood, and their names were Bharoea, Folhlyytar, Kwenterraril, N'Nerthryl, Irshardyr, Yiotderss, Daccq'tlao and Gzardentane.

And the Lord of Blood did travel to the island to the north of the great raised continent and did visit the altar in his name. There he placed his hand on the sword in place there and did reclaim the eternal blade, for the end times were now upon us all.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the first creature which was of iron and lead, which had four legs and four eyes and who walked with the roll of thunder and did bear upon his brow the mark of Khorne inscribed in a seal of black iron. And this first creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike the head of this first creature from its body.

And when the head fell to the ground the world did quake and tremble as it had never done before. The walls and buildings of every town and city did fall to the ground, the mighty towers of the mortal nations did collapse upon themselves. No fortress stood nor no other structure was left standing and the wild things did enter the towns and the cities and savage the people cowering therein, for there was no defence to keep them away. Thus the world was levelled and returned to its savagery.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the second creature, which was a bull of fire and flowing metal, which had four legs and four legs more and had a gaze of fire that scorched whatever its gaze fell upon. And this second creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike the head of this second creature from its body.

And as the blade cleaved through its neck there blossomed a pillar of fire that reached up high above the world and then dove down to bore into its heart. Upon which each hill and mountain in the world was consumed in its flame which shattered their peaks and threw them high into the air to fall upon the peoples fleeing their hidden homes. Thus none could hide from the final wrath.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the third creature that was a faceless steed of grey and white dust whose body did ebb and flow and gradually reformed with the winds that forever carried it apart. And this third creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike the head of this third creature from its body.

And as the sword-blade struck the steed did disappear upon the winds and was carried across the lands of the world. Wherever the dust of its body touched the fertile earth it became as dead ash, upon which no life could ever bloom. Thus there could never more be new life of that basest kind that supports all others.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the fourth creature that was a formless being of flowing flesh and pulsating veins whose body rippled and pulsed with every beat of its heart. And this fourth creature did bow down before his master as best it could. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike off that foremost portion of this fourth creature from its body.

The Last Days

And from the gaping wound that was left there came a deluge of blood, a crimson flood to cover the earth with its death, and from the mountain too there came a torrent as the skulls cried bloody tears and the bones split and bled their marrow down onto the world. All the waters of the world became as blood and the seas turned red and the wells were fouled and the rivers and streams clogged and flooded with the hardening flow. Thus those that fled his wrath would pant until death for refreshment and always be denied.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the fifth creature that was a collared beast, hideous in appearance with limbs and teeth and skin and eyes that could not be glanced upon for fear of running mad with the terror of its sight. And this fifth creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike off the head of this fifth creature from its body.

And as the sword struck the collar and broke it in two there was released a mighty force that flew to the raised continent and smashed the spells of confinement asunder. Thereupon every mage and sorcerer that did not bear the mark fell dead where they stood. Thus never more would the undeniable Chaos be imprisoned.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the sixth creature which was of impenetrable darkness upon which no detail nor feature could be deciphered. And this sixth creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike off the head of this sixth creature from its body.

And as the sword passed through this darkness, the forces containing it fell apart and the darkness bled forth poured itself out across the world before draining down deep into the poisoned earth. As it passed under me I felt the chill of total evil and realised this was the shadow riding forth, making our realm as that of the others and fit thereby for its most unholy denizens. Thus our two realms became one and daemons may then walk free.

And the Lord of Blood did stand before the seventh creature which was of hollow frame and featureless skin lest an enlarged oval mouth. And this seventh creature did bow down before his master. And the Lord of Blood did raise his sword and strike off the head of this seventh creature from its body.

And once the blow had been struck there came a roaring gale than ran through the creature's body and produced a howling call that sounded in every heart and head. There then marched in response every daemon of his faith and every mortal to his name devoted. Then the call resounded and struck back at the mountain, and the mountain's very slopes began to rise as the dead of Khorne's loyal followers and their victims from all time from his creation, rose as one and joined the serried ranks of this, his supreme horde with which he could conquer all existence.

And the peoples of the world did groan at such a sight for there stood for every one of their warriors, countless numbers of this foe. Their destruction was inevitable and ordained, however even as they realised this I saw their armies join as one and, eager now they had an opponent that they could face, march forth against this horde to bring them to one final battle.

But the Lord of Blood did stand before the eighth creature, which had been crouched and curled and so obscured his form. Now he stood plain and I saw now that he and his god he stood before were identical, so that none could tell them apart. The creature and the Lord of Blood took one another by the head and soared into the air until one could be distinguished from the other. And then one did gain the victory and took up the sword from where it had fallen and strike the head off the other.

And the armies of the world stood where they had watched and slowly their weapons and banners dropped from their hands and all rage and courage and thoughts of war fled their bodies, and they cowered and fled from the battlefield.

And the gods, the dead, the living and daemons of the horde did turn upon one another with such will and savagery, that the slaughter of such a multitude did only last until the sun was hid behind the mountain, before they all of them were destroyed.



Blood for the Blood God

My Lord, may I present to you this further volume? It is further evidence of Kless's madness
descent into heresy. He is lost to us now. I mourn for the man we knew, and recoil from the
nature he has become. This collection of confused writings and often disturbing references is, I believe
limited value academically, but I send it to you, as it may prove useful in the continuing trials.

also beg to inform you that Johannes Innsbrook and his premises have been put to the torch.
Christoph Hassel has since fled. However, I have every faith in the Templars of Sigmar.

I hope this finds you in good health,

Your most obedient servant,

M.v.S.

OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volume the Second

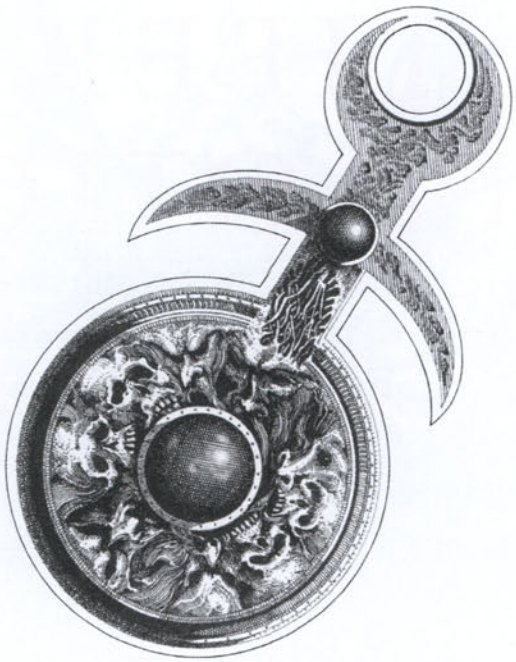
WITH FORMER INVESTIGATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED

And expository lectures on the followers and rituals of the Lord of Pleasure: Slaanesh

BEING IN THE MAIN AN EXAMINATION OF THE DAEMONIC AND MORTAL ARMIES OF CHAOS, AND IN PART, BEING A DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMBERLESS UNNATURAL CREATURES THAT DO ACCOMPANY THEM



FEATURING TEXTS COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY THE AUTHOR
RICHTER KLESS
Illustrated and illuminated with numerous plates
compiled by the author
Printed by Johannes Innsbrook, Printer to Albertus Mansoul,
Bound by Christoph Hassel of Wolfenburg



Liber Slaanesh

Leaving behind the blood soaked paged of Liber Khorne, we step with light, careful feet into Liber Slaanesh, Lord of Perversion and Master of the Delight of Pain.

Upon rereading the pages of the book compiled previously (which has mouldered in a lead lined box since publication) I noticed a subtle change had occurred to the pages.

When I opened the covers, I noticed a faint odour. At first I thought it was quite a pleasant smell, in fact I felt a little light-headed as it entered my lungs. But after a few breaths I felt a dull pain develop behind my eyes, and waves of nausea rolled over me; what had previously been an intoxicating perfume, quickly turned sour. Working with the manuscript again became a horrible experience. I experienced visions, disturbing and arousing in equal measure, and sleep became impossible to find. When it did overtake me my dreams were filled with vile visions and debauchery. I was most glad when it was over. I have heard tell that there is an edition of this book that fell into the hands of a daemon-worshipping cult in Wolfenburg. They cast foul magic on it and wrapped the book in the skin of a daemon.

Even to touch this edition is to curse yourself.

Read this at your peril, guard your morals and submit not to the temptations put before you.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

ON THE

LORD OF PLEASURE: SLAANESH

VERSES 1–7

The Satin Throne

"LET EVERY LAND SET ASIDE THEIR WRATH AND DESPAIR, AND RELEASE THE EMPTY PROMISES OF CHANGE, FOR I AM THE JOY OF NOW AND THE VINDICATION OF LIFE."

I SAW THE AETHYR'S GATE swing wide, and a great voice, like the roaring of the ocean, resounded across the heavens: "Let all lands rejoice, for the Last and Most Beautiful is born! Hail to the Prince of Delight! All praise to the Lord of Pleasure!"

Then a figure appeared at the Gate, tall as the highest mountain and graceful as coiling mist. Both Man and Woman was He, and neither of these as well. Wrapped in a cloud of purest white, with six stars upon His brow, His Coronet and mark of His Glory. All beauty was He, and All Desire was His name, and the multitudes gathered there fell silent at the sight of Him.

When He spoke His words were as honey across my soul: "For as the rising sun brings the coldness of night to its end, so I have come to bring an end to toil and bitterness. Let every land set aside their Wrath and Despair, and release the empty promises of Change, for I am the Joy of Now and the Vindication of Life. I will love you as no other has or ever will, and you shall love Me in turn: with your bodies, with your minds and with your souls. I shall be your wife and your husband, your mistress and your lover, and in My arms you will find Purpose and Delight. Pleasure beyond all imagining is mine to bestow, if only you take Me into your hearts."

At these words, two in every three of the multitude gathered there prostrated themselves at His feet, praising Him as their One True Lord, adoring Him as they had no other before. The Prince of Delight smiled upon them, and took their souls into His embrace, ten thousand times ten thousand, and kissed them each and every one. In single file they slid between His perfect lips that stretched from horizon to horizon. And the Prince of Delight supped of them all, even as they cried out in joyful gratitude.

Then, turning to the throng that had not thrown themselves at His feet, the Prince of Delight said: "Through the souls of your brothers and sisters I take My place as a forth amongst the Three; through their Pleasure I ascend my Throne."

And then the Prince set amongst the stars a Throne that rippled and shone like finest satin, and there He reclined to give His commandments. "Raise buildings and sing songs to My glory. In My name, pursue your arts and enshrine all Beauty. Let all people follow their every desire, sate their every hunger, and deny themselves no adventure. For it is in these things, and in each other, that you will find the greatest pleasure, and it is through these things, and through each other, that you shall raise yourselves high, even onto the steps of My Throne."

Then a cloud passed over the face of the sun, and the Prince spoke again, His voice both syrup and poison: "You will take Pleasure in all that is, though your bodies will break and your souls be forfeit. You will do this, and do this gladly. For I am Slaanesh, most jealous of gods, most demanding of lovers, and My Thirst for you shall never be sated."

~ from the Revelations of Marius Hellsecher: The Liber Malefic Suppressed 2297 I.C. by Grand Theogonist Ruben Wolfgar



Segment from the border of the heretical tapestry 'Traitor's Path' included with the permission of The Grand Theogonist of Nuln

Naming the Serpent

An introductory expostion on the complicated and multi-faceted aspects of the Pleasure God Slaanesh. Including an admission of the inconclusive nature of this work.

As with all the Chaos gods, the so-called 'Lord of Pleasure' is known by many names in many different lands. To the Tokmar tribesmen of the eastern steppes He is known as Loesh the Serpent, and to the Skaeling warriors of Norsca He is called Shornaal the Prideful. But the majority of us who are unfortunate enough to be conversant in such matters know this wicked god as Slaanesh.

Perhaps it is just fancy brought on by my over worked mind, but even writing Slaanesh's name is enough to fill me with a tangible dread – as if by just thinking of Him my soul is made vulnerable: tainted. But think of Him I must, at least until this report is done.

I have spoken with the Magisters of the College of Light, and they have imparted to me much of their wisdom that they have gleaned across the centuries concerning Slaanesh. The first thing they imparted about Him to me is that He is the youngest and most immature of the greater Gods of Chaos. Do not ask me by what measure they can judge this, for I truly have no notion. They said merely that Slaanesh was the last of the Four to gain consciousness, and as such, though He is part of the infinite-eternal of Chaos and therefore older than the stars, He is also little more than a youth.

Yet the unique facets of the Pleasure God do not end with His comparative youthfulness. For of all the Great Powers of Chaos, Slaanesh alone possesses divine beauty. As a god, Slaanesh has the power to assume any form He desires; but be assured that any form He chooses will be perfect and breathtaking beyond all possible expectation. In the statues and paintings lovingly crafted by His mortal servants, He is most commonly portrayed as a flawlessly attractive youth: long-limbed, elegant, and haunting in His androgynous perfection.

As a demonstration of the supposedly irresistible beauty of the Pleasure God, here follows an extract from the transcriptions of my interrogation of the Marquis Dolmancé, who was exposed as being both founder and high priest of a powerful Slaaneshi cult in Middenheim:

"...and you ask how I could do such a thing? Well I ask you: How could I not? Once I had gazed upon the beauty of the Lord of Delight, I knew I had no choice. To catch even a glimpse of His immortal radiance is to be swept away by the pure ecstasy His perfect form invokes. I gave up my soul willingly! He shall be my Lover and my Master for all eternity, and I shall be His!"

I cannot imagine embracing eternal damnation because I glimpsed the 'immortal radiance' of a daemon-god. I hope and pray that I will never be put in a position where I would have to test the certainty of my belief.

Though not as mighty as Khorne, nor yet as powerful as Tzeentch or widespread as Nurgle, this god, this daemon Slaanesh, is in one way more dangerous than His brother Lords of Chaos: to mortals, Slaanesh is the most beguiling of all the daemon gods. His demands, at least on the face of things, seem the most attractive and easy to comply with. For you see, the power of this heinous god does not lie in bloody warfare, daemonic sorcery or vile decay, as it does with His brothers; Slaanesh's power lies in exploiting people's base desires to experience and pursue pleasure. Simply that.

Do not be deceived, however, for it is this apparent innocuity that makes Slaanesh the most seductive of all the Chaos predators. We must bear in mind that the pursuit of pleasure is very rarely innocent or constructive. Thus Slaanesh, the very embodiment of pleasure, is not innocent or constructive either.

Thought and emotion are complex and intertwined things, and not so petty and easy to define as some within my brotherhood might wish to believe. For instance, I would challenge anyone who thought he or she could accurately define even such a widely accepted and important concept as *love*. In truth, love is not one thing but a blend of different drives and emotions, encompassing desire, passion, need, companionship, friendship, affection and many others, held together by one overarching notion – the notion of "love" itself.

Using this as an example, it can be seen that the Chaos Gods – who are considered by some to be the personified manifestations of thought and emotion – must also, and by their very nature, be a blend of many different thoughts and feelings bound together by an overarching notion (i.e. the identity and names that mortals give them) and

Naming the Serpent

given substance and independent energy by the stuff of Chaos.

The Chaos Gods are immensely complicated entities, that have evolved across countless millennia of intellectual and emotional evolution amongst the mortal races.

To bring matters back to Slaanesh, "pleasure" – being the core experience that makes up the reality of Slaanesh – is like love, a blanket term given to an amalgam of similar and related sensations. There are many different types and perspectives of what makes up 'pleasure', and the actions, events and motivations that lead to the experience of pleasure are multifaceted and not always wholesome. Is, for example, the pleasure gleaned from a particularly attractive painting the same as a sadist might find in torturing a dog? Or is the sensual pleasure of eating a favourite delicacy the same as feeding debased thoughts through unsanctioned acts? It is the darker and self-destructive pleasures some glean from the alchemically induced ecstasy of opiate abuse, and the malevolent joys some find in petty cruelties or outright sadism that seem most related to Slaanesh. But is it as simple as that? I think my investigations will prove otherwise.

How could anyone be lured by such corrupt and distorted creatures?

These divisions are but a few of the countless facets that make up the god Slaanesh, for although His core springs from the experience of pleasure, Slaanesh can also be seen as an amalgam of all the diverse drives and emotions that surround the experience and concept of pleasure. These drives and emotions could include, for example, joy, contentment, aestheticism, romance and love, and the potentially more dangerous feelings of greed, selfishness, lasciviousness, lust, and perversion. However, they are all linked, and the dangerous feelings often develop from the more innocent ones.

Yet also, quite apart from being the compound of all the many facets of pleasure, and all the many emotions and drives that are associated with pleasure, Slaanesh is also a Purpose in His own right. This Purpose can be expressed as the drive to encourage in all mortal creatures the pursuit of, and need for, pleasure.

It must be borne in mind, however, that mine are but crude divisions of the entirety that is Slaanesh, based around my own musings upon the various legends and existing theories I have read. In truth, Slaanesh is indeed all the things I have discussed, and far, far more – much more than I could hope to express in twenty such tomes as that which you now hold. For the Chaos Gods are not just blind and self-promoting desires that we mortals have projected identity onto. They also possess intelligence, self-awareness and willpower of their own, on a scale, and in a way, that no mortal could ever truly hope to grasp.

The twisted creatures of Slaanesh are various in their forms.

The ways & means of the Infernal Cults

BEING AN IN-DEPTH AND ALARMING INVESTIGATION INTO THE MYRIAD WAYS PEOPLE ARE ENSNARED BY CHAOS, AND THEIR ACTIONS AFTER THEY HAVE FALLEN PREY TO THE PLEASURE GOD'S DARK WHISPERINGS.

ALONGSIDE SEEKING to promote the drives and emotions that empower them, the Gods of Chaos seek to harvest and feed upon the souls of mortals. Unlike emotions and concepts that are want to change from age to age, souls are immortal and largely unchanging, offering the Chaos Gods a never-ending source of sustenance and energy. Every soul that is dedicated to the service of Chaos swells the power of the Chaos Gods, but however many souls an individual god may harvest, He will always desire more.

For this reason one could say that the Chaos Gods value their mortal servants even above their daemonic minions. When created by their gods, daemons (with the possible exception of Daemon Princes) are created to reflect a particular aspect of His will, and so have little choice regarding their nature and characteristics. The only way the Gods of Chaos can increase their power is to recruit humans and other free willed creatures to their cause.

Not all these recruits to the cause of Chaos are as easily identified as the marauding Northmen that have plagued our borders for so many centuries. Many converts lie hidden within human society, disguised as ordinary folk with normal occupations and interests. But these insidious turncoats wait only for a given moment to reveal their true loyalties. When they do, many will suffer for their treachery.

These clandestine servants of Chaos represent a threat to civilisation at least as great as the dread armies that even now gather in the north. They gnaw at the hearts of our cities, undermining those structures that have been put in place to combat the threat they pose. These subversives and heretics are not secular in nature, but are instead organised into secret cults, devoted to the service and promotion of the Chaos Powers.

The reports and figures given to me by the Templars of Sigmar show that all kinds of people, from all walks of life can find themselves attracted to the lure of Chaos – there is no singular "type". Indeed, the fact that all cults dedicated to the worship of Chaos are proscribed within the vast majority of civilised cultures, sometimes gives these cults an air of mystery to those with perhaps more curiosity than sense. It is said forbidden fruit tastes sweeter, and this maxim proves especially true amongst those restless dreamers who cannot find an outlet for their ambitions or their sense of "adventure" within normal society.

To some, it is the quest for wisdom and learning that lures them onto the Chaos Path. The chance to gain knowledge of the Aethyr and the magical energies it sources is, after all, a chance to gain a knowledge that lends real power to the one who possesses it. There are others, however, who are attracted to Chaos simply to gain material power: wealth, political influence or a gathering of mindless followers. Many more of those who turn to the Infernal Powers do so in an attempt to escape what they see as the day-to-day drudgery of ordinary life. It is therefore no coincidence that the vast majority of the Chaos Gods' servants (at least within the civilised lands south of Norsca) are desperate individuals who have turned their backs on society at large – individuals who believe that their only hope of sanctuary lies in the bosom of Chaos.

I tread a dangerous path. I was given this task, but I accepted it freely. I must be vigilant to avoid the temptations that may cross my path.

Yet, as I have suggested previously, the would-be servants of Chaos are diverse and manifold, for even amongst the comfortably wealthy there are those whose lust for unearthly power and arcane lore overrides their loyalty to their culture and liege lords. All across our glorious Empire, even here in Altdorf that is the very heart of Sigmar's Holy Realm, there are multitudinous fools willing to dabble in things that are, and should remain, beyond their understanding. The tragic folly is that not all of these misguided souls realise that they are worshipping one of the Four Great Powers of Chaos.

Some become involved quite innocently, believing that they are joining a warrior fraternity, intellectual circle or artistic community. But this does not excuse their lack of common wit. All proscribed cults are, by their very nature, secretive, and when faced with any clandestine organisation I would expect all sensible people to shun them outright. This occult "mystery" adds a further air of romance and excitement to the cults, making them even more attractive to the gullible, the ignorant and the desperate.

The ways & means of the Infernal Cults

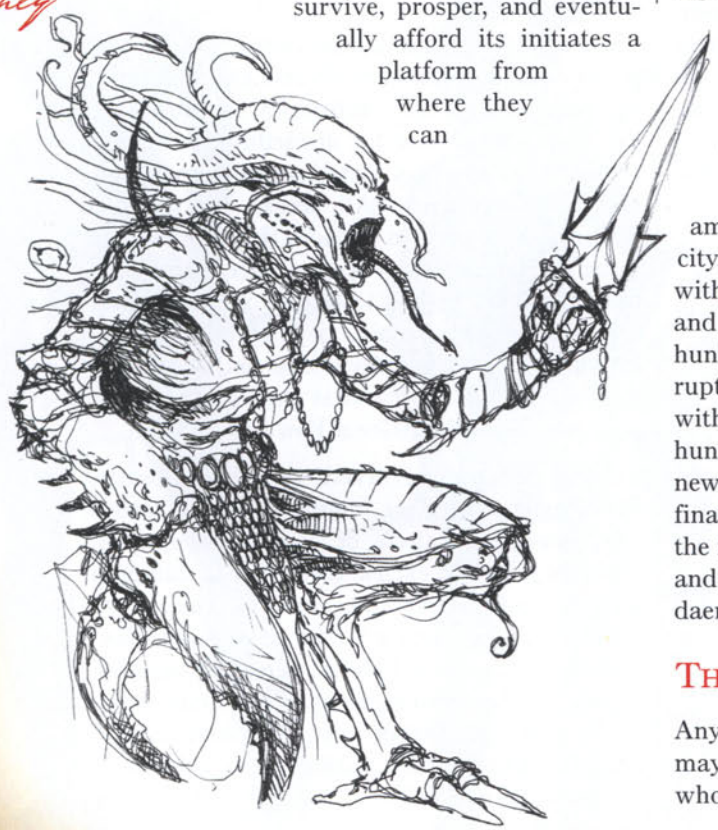
The Insidious Purposes of Chaos Cults

Where some Chaos cults worship a whole pantheon of gods and daemons, those that possess a greater knowledge of the individual Chaos Powers more usually choose to single out one deity as the object of their worship. The most important Chaos deities, and therefore the ones most commonly worshipped, are the Four Great Powers: Khorne, Tzeentch, Nurgle, and of course, Slaanesh.

Of these, the most widespread of all Chaos cults, the most dangerous are the ones that seek to summon daemons directly from the Realm of Chaos into the Realm of Mortals. Sigmar alone knows why these fools would attempt such feats of insanity, as more often than not, those that succeed in summoning a Chaos entity are consumed and destroyed by the very creature they call forth. It does not take an expert to see that these cults represent a terrible threat to society at large, and as a result they are hunted mercilessly by the witch hunters and various other righteous organisations throughout the Empire.

When they appear, we will know them for the monstrosities that they are!

Regardless of the strange and sometimes self-destructive methods they employ to achieve their goals, the objective of all Chaos cults is to survive, prosper, and eventually afford its initiates a platform from where they can transcend the mortal plain to become Daemon Princes in the service of their god. I cannot help but wonder how so many can delude themselves into thinking that they will be chosen for such a dubious honour as daemonhood, when the chances of being 'elevated' in this way are slim to say the least. The vast majority of Chaos servants are simply consumed by the god they seek to venerate. Still, those who turn to the worship of Chaos seem quite content to overlook this fact, and instead pile all their worries and concerns into being caught by the witch hunters. This is understandable and prudent, as it is a very real danger for them.



The witch hunters, or the Holy Orders of the Templars of Sigmar as they are properly known, withhold no effort in their mission to eradicate all traces of the taint of Chaos from within the boundaries of Sigmar's Great Empire. Faced with the danger that the witch hunters represent, all Chaos cults within the Empire are forced to remain as underground organisations, with their initiates leading curious double lives. Unlike the fearsome champions and warriors of Chaos who proudly proclaim their allegiance and bellow their challenges for everyone to hear, the leaders and initiates of a Chaos cult must hide behind a façade of normality. Although I have no names, according to my sources it is not unknown for high-ranking noblemen, military commanders, wealthy merchants and even, though I despise the very thought of it, religious leaders, to turn their backs on their more wholesome gods and embrace the way of Chaos.

Chaos cults are perhaps most common amongst the criminal elements of any given city. It is relatively easy to hide cult activities within other activities that are themselves secret and illegal but are of no real concern of the witch hunters. By means of bribery and political corruption a cult leader can run a criminal empire without attracting the attention of the witch hunters, and can use the organisation to recruit new initiates. In this way, the cult can combine financial and subversive political power through the influence of its organised criminal activities, and also through the arcane power of the cult's daemonic patron.

The Cult Magus

Anyone who is foolish and determined enough may found their own Chaos cult, but only those who have managed to attract the attention of

The ways & means of the Infernal Cults



A Cult Magus who suffers increasing exposure to Chaotic powers can undergo all manner of horrible mutations.

their patron deity, or at least a daemonic servant of their patron deity, can truly call themselves a *Magus*. "Magus" is the singular form of the term *magi*, which in itself is an abbreviation of the title *magister*, which is the formal mode of address for a sanctioned wizard or spell-caster. The authorities of the Empire have accepted Magi as the term to describe cult-leaders who have dedicated themselves body and soul to the service of Chaos, and have received some kind of seal of approval (or "Mark") from their patron deity. In return for the uncertain favours of the Chaos Powers, Magi look to receive rewards and blessings in much the same way as an aspiring champion of Chaos might. So power, personal glory and self-satisfaction are the most common goals that drive potential Magi to become what they are.

A magus communicates with his or her patron deity through various means, including divination, trance-states and various kinds of ritual magic. If the magus is particularly favoured, his patron might reward him with a familiar to act as an intermediary between them. Familiars come in all shapes and forms. Animals are quite common, impish daemons have also been known, and even material artefacts like swords and mirrors have been given as familiars. It all seems to depend on the whim of the patron deity.

Whatever intermediary is used, once the magus receives instructions from his patron, it is his duty to pass on those instructions to his underling cultists. Thse could be anything, from the disposition of rival cults or other enemies, to advice on future events. This offers the magus and his cult a tremendous advantage when it comes to trading, gambling or indulging in open conflict with the authorities, and it will last for as long as the Patron favours the magus.

As a magus grows in power he may find that his cult of followers becomes too vast and unwieldy for him to control in person. This is especially true if he has started to accumulate the disfiguring mutations that come part and parcel with a Chaos God's favour. In these cases a magus will no longer be able to deal with outsiders directly, and he will have to appoint some acolytes to carry out such tasks on his behalf. These acolytes will be the most faithful of all a magus's followers. There is always the risk that once faced with their magus's disfiguring mutations, and therefore the horrific truth of Chaos worship, the rank and file followers of the cult may be tempted to betray their master. But with his loyal acolytes acting as intermediaries, a magus can continue to operate his cult from behind the scenes. This does not necessarily detract from a magus's influence, because as his fellow cultists see him less and less frequently, he can seem to become an even more mysterious source of wisdom and power.

Coven and Cult Organisation

The most important members of any cult are sometimes referred to as the 'coven'. This inner circle of initiates and acolytes is made up of a magus's most trusted servants, and others within the cult that have been marked out in some way by their patron Power. Only the coven have direct contact with the magus, and it is they who help perform the blasphemous ceremonies and sacrifices to summon daemons or communicate with their patron. As a rule, even if the main body of the cult does not know the true nature of their beliefs and practices, the coven most certainly do.

The remainder of a cult is made up of the ordinary cultists. These may vary in number from a mere handful to many thousands, depending on the influence of the cult they belong to. To everyone outside their cult, they will seem to lead normal lives, perhaps even holding respected positions in the community they live in. Their true loyalties, however, will always lie with their cult. These rank and file cultists are the bricks from which the secret edifices of Chaos are built within our midst. Although they rarely know the true agenda of their cult, they will endeavour to

The ways & means of the Infernal Cults

recruit new members from amongst their families and friends, whilst ensuring that potential enemies within their community meet with unfortunate ends. Only if the cult is required to rise up against the local authorities will its members reveal their true allegiance, taking up arms at the command of their magus.

Cultic Activities within our Beloved Empire

Cults can be any size. They often flourish under the guise of an innocent organisation or fraternity, many of whose members may not even realise that they are serving the interests of Chaos – at least, not until it is far too late to do anything about it. By building these organisations, magi can infiltrate all levels of human society, preparing for their day of open rebellion.

Extreme religious or political organisations make particularly good fronts for Chaos cults, as organisations such as these tend to attract power-hungry and mentally unbalanced individuals – ideal recruiting grounds for subversive and unwholesome cults. If the organisation is particularly successful then it may acquire real influence and power. Trade guilds have also been known to hide cultic activities, and are targeted quite frequently by the witch hunters for investigation. By manipulating trade and local economies, a cult can bring about widespread disruption and suffering. It goes almost without saying that where there is a large proliferation of money there is corruption, and cultists can use this to their great advantage.

As I have mentioned previously, illicit cults have been known in the past to hide their true nature behind the façade of a tolerated religion. Indeed, if a cleric of one of these religions turns to the worship of Chaos, it is probable that he will lead his entire flock astray through subtle manipulation of doctrine and practise. Such is the trust that the peasants of our land put in their preachers and priests that they could remain quite unaware that the shrine they have come to worship before has become a dark altar to Chaos.

Cults and Warfare

Chaos cults are always alert to the dangers of discovery, and if they are discovered they can only hope to protect themselves through force of arms. Even cults whose power is based upon mercantile or political influence have shown their readiness to fight if necessary. No matter how large or small they have been, every cult that has been discovered to date has had a plan to help themescape arrest and survive.

When a cult goes to war the effects are difficult to predict.

Chaos cults leave no stone unturned where their own protection is concerned. They amass armouries of weapons and equipment, and often try to infiltrate and subvert the local militias. More powerful cults might be able to summon aid from various outlaw or Chaos warbands, or they might have treaties with other cults to supply aid in times of need. Although not all of them are willing to join with others, even when they are all under threat, many have been known to put aside their differences for a common cause. This has meant that expeditions sent into a region to locate and purge a cult that has been uncovered have sometimes found themselves up against much larger forces than anticipated.

Sometimes, or so I have been told, the magi of certain cults have managed to summon aid of a far deadlier variety from beyond the Northern Wastes. When these cults are driven to war it is terrible indeed, for they are accompanied by mighty Chaos warriors, and



One Chaos Cult in Middenheim called for aid from a band of vicious killers who stalked the forests around the city. One of the Imperial pikemen who battled the band sketched on this drawing after his encounter with the warband leader. He told me the warband slaughtered the cult members, before his regiment arrived.

perhaps even daemonic assistance, depending on the cult's standing in the eyes of their patron. These cultic forces include such a wide variety of troops that it has proven very difficult for the forces of the Empire to predict and identify what they are up against. Which is no small part of the reason that I have been tasked with this investigation.

The Superiority of the Sigmarite Church

At this stage of my investigations I would like to express my own personal views with regards to the multi-theism of our beloved Empire.

The majority of the religions followed by Imperial citizens are polytheistic in nature, and, although I know this to be an unpopular view, I believe that it is this polytheism that leaves us open to the insidious machinations of the Chaos Gods. The Old Gods of our world are so diverse and have so many varying aspects, that it is sometimes difficult to discern where one god ends and another begins. Who can say with any real accuracy whether an obscure god worshipped in a small village in the northern provinces is, for instance, a local ancestor-deity, an aspect of warlike Ulric, or indeed an aspect of the god of violence himself, Bloody Khorne?

It is impossible to know with any great certainty where aspects of the Old Gods end and aspects of the Chaos Gods begin. In earlier investigations I explored how the God of Murder, Khaine, and the Bull God of the few dwarfs that are known to have fallen to Chaos, could both be reflections of the entity that is Khorne. If this is true, who can say where Ulric, the Middenheimers' god of battle and winter, or Myrmidia, the Tilean goddess of war end, and where Khorne begins?

In order to see the natural dangers of polytheism in our society, I believe all one has to do is look towards the strange religions of Norsca, where all gods and daemons, wholesome or otherwise, are worshipped in one great pantheon. If polytheism leads us to recognise all gods as a united pantheon, it is just a small step to begin fearing the most threatening gods within that pantheon, and then to actively seek appeasement from these gods, or to venerate them exclusively as a form of insurance against harm.

This temptation to appease potentially dangerous gods – especially amongst those of us who live in difficult and dangerous circumstances – is real, and perilous. If everyone were to simply pick and choose their gods depending upon their mood, how easy would it be to turn to Khorne for strength in times of war, or Nurgle in times of plague, or Slaanesh whenever life seemed dull or tedious?

Surely then, it is wiser for all citizens of the Empire to keep Holy Sigmar as our one and only God? Like the dwarfs and their Ancestor Gods, Sigmar was born amongst His people, as one of us, before He ascended to godhood. He united us, forged this great Empire which is the envy of the world, and He taught us how to fight the forces of entropy. We know what He is and what He desires from us; His only aspect is that of our beloved Emperor-God, Sigmar Helden-hammer.

The cult of Sigmar is already the state religion of our Empire. It is my firm belief that this should be taken further. We, the priests and clerics of Sigmar, should petition for our faith to become the sole religion of the Empire. After all, were it not for He, the Empire would not have come into existence. To begin this process we should distance ourselves from the many cults of the Old Gods and cease to refer to ourselves as a "cult". We represent the true religion of our Great Empire, and we should establish ourselves as its One True Faith.

Even to some members of my own faith my thoughts are considered radical. But to survive the coming darkness we must all become radicals, lest the Empire and all humanity risk falling into damnation.

I must be careful, these thoughts could be considered radical, not to say heretical.

If we all worshipped one pure god, such creatures would find it difficult to hide their hideous visages from our righteous gaze.



Worshippers of Slaanesh

MOSTLY AN OVERVIEW OF THE CULTS OF SLAANESH, AND THEIR INSIDIOUS CORRUPTION OF OUR SOCIETY. ALSO EXAMINING THE REASONS PEOPLE EMBROIL THEMSELVES WITH SUCH DANGEROUS GROUPS.

HAVING BECOME conversant in the many theories and legends surrounding the Pleasure God, I was granted by my superiors a special dispensation to meet and question certain heretics awaiting execution in the dungeons of the witch hunters.

The majority of the prisoners I have spoken to had been arrested on charges of deviancy and the practice of proscribed activities, with only a few of them admitting openly to the worship of Slaanesh. These few seemed reconciled to the point of excitement about their dreadful fate, and were more than happy to explain their beliefs and practices to me, although none of them could be drawn out to discuss how widespread their activities were throughout our beloved Empire.

Suffice to say, Slaanesh is not so much a god of warriors as He is one of aesthetes and artists, and of lovers and sensualists. It follows then that within Southern nations His worship is strongest in the large and affluent cities, where indulgence and hedonism are more commonplace.

The most foolhardy worship Slaanesh under His own name. The Slaaneshi principle of indulging every whim and tasting every vice makes Him the most popular of the Chaos deities amongst the indolent rich. They see His worship as a titillating diversion from their dull lives of wealth and conformity.

But there is a darker reason why some turn to the explicit worship of Slaanesh: power. To a truly dedicated servant who has the ambition to step beyond the role of a mere cultist, the rewards can be great indeed. For Slaanesh has it within His power to instil His most favoured followers with a portion of His own radiant glory. Any such mortal would then be idolised for his stunning beauty and elegance, winning favour amongst his peers without the need for any effort on his part.

This causes me to wonder how many lords and politicians have turned to Slaanesh in order to secure their positions of power, or to gain support and respect from his fellows? I fear that any guess I might hazard would be far too low a figure.

Yet, despite all this, a considerable number of those who worship Slaanesh do so without realising. Returning to the witch hunters' reports, two in every three of the pleasure-cultists captured seemed surprised when the true nature of their cult is revealed to them. But, rightly or wrongly, the witch hunters maintain that ignorance of one's heresy provides no exemption from the punishment it incurs. This unfortunate group of the 'innocent' damned, unwittingly dedicate themselves to Slaanesh by their passionate desire and fervent prayers to experience

The worship rituals of Slaanesh demand many strange practices - such as the wearing of beastial masks.



Worshippers of Slaanesh

greater pleasure than that provided by their daily routines.

Such people as these rarely set out to become deviants and daemonologists, but are trapped within the creeping addiction and decaying sensitivity that comes with the first blessings of Slaanesh's favour. By the time these hopeless addicts join a Slaaneshi cult they have, invariably, already sought out a plethora of new sensations and activities in their desperation to alleviate the terrible withdrawal pains that have been left to them by the total absence of delight in their lives.

The first few steps along the path to Slaanesh are easy for these people, even pleasurable. But the way becomes much harder in a very short space of time. Once one has accepted Slaanesh as master and mistress (for although I have referred to this god as 'He', It is in fact neither male nor female – or perhaps both), all pleasurable sensations are heightened and made more crystalline. But there is a high price. The price for this 'reward' is that no endeavour will give quite the same satisfaction the second or third time around.

In this, the blessings of Slaanesh can be compared to a potent opiate. The more pleasurable the sensation the first few times it is experienced, the more eager one is to try it again. But each time it is tried, the dependency for it grows, while something of the sensation is lost. Eventually, the experience must be sought just to bring oneself up to a normal state of mind and being, but the pleasure one once received from it has long since drained away.

So it is with Slaanesh.

Whereas one might start along Slaanesh's path with innocent intentions, (perhaps to better appreciate or produce one's art, for instance), by very merit of the fact that one has embraced this unkind deity, the original intention will soon be lost to a desperate craving for new sensations. It is as if Slaanesh heightens the feelings of pleasure of new converts, only to deliberately suck that pleasure away, along with the ability to feel any real pleasure for anything ever again, leaving in its place a terrible craving to experience something, anything, new. In this way, Slaaneshi converts are pushed to greater acts of sensualism, and eventually decadence, in a never-ending search to find some new pleasure in life. Suffice to say, it is not long before converts to Slaanesh become exceedingly jaded and increasingly desperate individuals.

But having sucked all exuberance from His new servant, Slaanesh still needs and requires His followers to promote and experience the pleasure that He Himself is a product of. And so these drained and cynical individuals are driven to seek aid from others who understand their terrible craving, and in doing so they take the next step in their journey towards ultimate damnation. They join a cult.

The only requirements for joining an active Slaaneshi cult are the unswerving dedication to, and active proliferation of, the pursuit of pleasure, and a willingness to explore every possible avenue of delight to its very end. This must be done regardless of any conventional codes of decent behaviour and any law. Once oaths to this affect have been sworn, and certain sacrifices have been made, colour seems to re-enter the world for the initiates, and they are free to experience and experiment with pleasure once more.

There is a further price however, beyond the eventual damnation of the initiate's soul, in that once dedicated to Slaanesh, only the most deviant and perverse of activities will stimulate any pleasure in the initiate. And so, in this way, Slaanesh gives birth to another generation of His sadistic followers; hedonists bent on corrupting all the codes and laws that civilisation requires if it is to survive.

Once welcomed into a cult, initiates are given access to a glorious new world of sensation that they would not necessarily have been able to experience in their normal lives. Every sensation, every vice and every debauchery that the human mind can conceive of (and many that the *human* mind has not) are theirs to experience. Whatever residual beliefs or morals they might have left over from their lives before joining the cult, are soon washed away by an unending flow of physical, intellectual and emotional pleasures.

The organised worship of Slaanesh generally takes the form of great orgies, where every vice and perversion is enshrined as sacred. All are welcome within the cults of Slaanesh, and no particular aptitude or skill is needed to become a devotee. For those few who have already started on the road to Slaanesh, knowingly or otherwise, joining a cult and formally swearing themselves body and soul to the eternal service of the Prince of Chaos is the only way for them to experience the pleasure they so desperately crave.

How easy it would be to step into the void. I am sure that my whispering and adoration has hardened me enough to reject such temptations.

THE PARALLEL HISTORIES & LAMENTABLE FATES
OF

The Brothers von Gottlieb

BEING A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION, FROM THE DARK TONGUE, OF THE TERRIBLE LEGEND OF THE BROTHERS VON GOTTLIEB. A CAUTIONARY TALE FOR ANY WHO CRAVE POWER AND GLORY.

HEAR NOW the tale of Lothar and Johann von Gottlieb, raised to fine silks and soft leathers. In their mortal lives they craved power, glory, success and all that accompanies such – much as other men do. They were ambitious like their father, but of him I shall speak no further; for the old Baron is not yet in his grave.

Darkness was in the hearts of these brothers. They listened, watched, and learned; but they understood little. Slaanesh seduced Lothar, whispering His promises of pleasure beyond pleasure. To the second son Khorne promised nothing, but Johann demanded nothing. He had already killed and found it to his taste.

How these brothers grew to despise each other! How lamentably does love oft times turn to hate!

Did Johann chase Lothar, seeking his blood? Or did he run from the unwholesome pleasures Lothar sought in his company? It matters not. Their hatred drove them from their home, into the waiting arms of their dark new gods. Each chose to climb the slippery ladder of Chaos, hatred their first handhold, loathing of a brother their first step.

"Such a short and easy climb!" crooned Slaanesh.

"A true warrior has no fear!" bellowed Khorne.

And so the scramble for power began. A scramble that would end in but one of two ways: the triumphant shriek, voiced from the throat of a newly-born daemon, or the gibbering of a once-man, spawn of Chaos, wallowing in the stench of its own failure, condemned by Providence and abandoned by Mercy. But which fate is the worse? Who indeed can say?

Johann von Gottlieb. Murderer, hater, willing servant of Khorne. His bloody road led ever deeper into Chaos. He was unwise when he first killed, and with each new slaying his folly only grew. Each death marked him as Khorne's own, each drop of blood raised him higher in Khorne's sight. But it was his last killing as a true man that marked him out: Johann slaughtered one of Khorne's own champions.



Johann bellowed his victory to the sky. The slain champion's blood was for Khorne, but the champion's armour of darkest metal, forged in the far off smithies of Chaos, was for Johann. Johann's handhold was firm, his reach was long enough for the climb ahead. In that moment the darkness within him burst free, and two terrible horns, curved like those of a ram, sprouted from his temples. Johann was marked as the Blood God's servant.

And what of the other von Gottlieb? There are many roads to Chaos, and Lothar galloped along his chosen path with surpassing zeal and fervour. Nothing was beyond him. No creature, no man, no woman or child, living or dead, was safe from his depravity. But his loyalty was hidden from the eyes of others. Fools would wonder why Lothar always wore gloves, and pitied that one so young should have rheumatic fingers. But in truth, the creature within had shown itself, and

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Lothar's long, clever fingers had grown sharp curving talons. The first mark of Slaanesh had been made, and Lothar bore this blemish with misguided pride.

Many indeed are those that debauch themselves in the name of Slaanesh, and Lothar fell in with one such sect. He rose rapidly in their councils, for his mind was more than apt to their purposes. He was inventive and quick-witted, and he amused his colleagues with the originality and vitality of his contributions to their cause.

As Lothar climbed in secret stature, his loyalty became ever more visible. No longer were his hands his only Mark. He bore the new blemish in the most horrific fashion. His tongue had ever been persuasive – a seductive lure to the unwary – who he used for his pleasure and worship. And so it remained his snare, but no normal man had such a long and twisting thing within his jaws. The lash of his tongue had become dangerous indeed!

Lothar fled, the witch hunters chasing at his heels, until he reached the northern wastes and the Chaos that lay beyond. Already a champion to the cause of Slaanesh, he turned and slew his pursuers, cursing forever the lands of his birth. From then Lothar was freed to wander and despoil as he saw fit, and he embraced Slaanesh with renewed vigour.

As for Johann, his way was ever upward in the favour of Khorne. His ruthless course was marked in blood and skulls – blood for the Blood God; skulls for the Throne of Khorne. Death had no rest where Johann chose to walk.

As reason slipped away from him, Johann burned with a hate for all those too weak to take the warrior's path. This hatred gnawed at his heart, finding expression in the changes that time wrought on his face. Where once there had been a young man proud of his looks, there became only Johann the Beast. Where his face had been handsome, it now stretched into the snarling muzzle of a great hunting dog.

Johann's new visage was the match of his nature. He had become a hunter of men, and he himself was no longer a man. Only the outer shell remained, for within he was Khorne creature, both mind and soul.

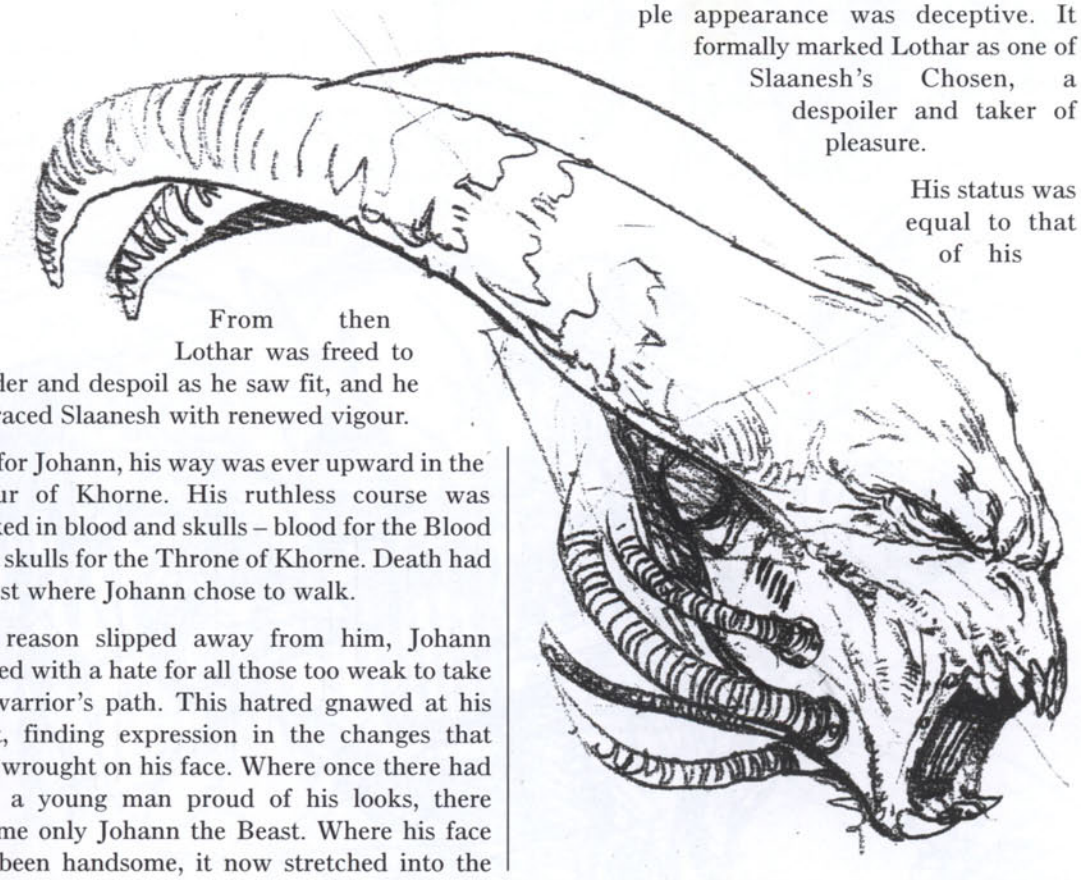
Blood and slaughter had brought the Blood God's favour, and further blood kept Khorne's approval. And as Johann grew in power and climbed ever higher, his place amongst Khorne's Chosen was distinguished in new ways. The higher he climbed, the further was his reach and the more savage his behaviour became. Ever and anon, when the weakest of his warband hesitated at their master's callousness, they were themselves to be counted amongst the fallen.

And as his triumphant progress continued, Johann lost the last pretence of his human form. Two new arms sprang from his shoulders, and his unearthly armour, forged from the stuff of Chaos, writhed and changed to match his new frame, and so became ever more intricate and elaborate.

The other von Gottlieb had also achieved much. In a secret ritual Lothar had, for his devotion to Slaanesh, been granted armour of his own. It was fashioned from pale leathers, perhaps the magical skins of daemons and angels, but its supple appearance was deceptive. It formally marked Lothar as one of Slaanesh's Chosen, a despoiler and taker of pleasure.

His status was equal to that of his

Horns are a common feature on Chaos minions.



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hated brother Johann, although this hatred had become almost-forgotten baggage from his past. He did not think often of the past, for remembrance of what he had been brought realisation of what he had become. For by no means were all the taints of Slaanesh infections of the spirit. Lothar's flesh had been prey to the mutations of his calling, and as his chosen Patron rewarded him, his physical condition began to prey upon his mind, diverting his thoughts from the pleasures at hand.

Johann had no diversions. Thought, the curse of weaklings and the disloyal, was driven from his mind in a welter of gore and destruction. His climb was sure and his path awash with the blood of those that he had slain in his Master's name. He had scaled the heights of his devotion to the Blood God, and yet his journey was not yet over. In his still-mortal hand he clutched a daemon blade, a creature of darkness given new shape with a keen and blood-hungry edge. Its clawed hilt grasped at Johann's loyalty and held it steady.

Armed and armoured in Khorne's colours and in a manner pleasing to himself, it had been a long time since Johann has passed as a normal man. But why would he want to? He had the strength of many men, and a bloodlust and animal cunning to match the most feral of beasts. His mind compounded and knew not the meaning of doubt.

Doubt breeds doubt, and Lothar's uncertainty was indeed prolific. His thoughts weighed him down, as did the pain of his newest transformation. Lothar's eyes, as cunning as his tongue at weakening the resolve of his oft unwilling victims, were merging into a massive and singular orb. Possibly Lothar's alteration was a punishment from Slaanesh, for a neglected lover is vengeful indeed.

Lothar paused in his climb to power, and discovered anew that an upward path sometimes has no safe downward course. Trapped and helpless, doomed to climb further yet lacking the faith and the courage to take the final steps, Lothar slipped. His thoughts, so full of pleasure and pain, so ravaged by plague and doubt, finally mastered him, and he fell from his state of disgrace, and plunged into the abyss of the used and discarded. Stronger men than he had dashed themselves upon the rocks of Chaos, and a weaker creature than he would have ended its own existence than face Lothar's fate amongst the Spawn. Yet Lothar had a strength of his own; as he fell, his purpose in serving Slaanesh was reborn, and in his changed nature loyalty flowered again like a rank weed. Even as he was changed into a monstrous creature, Lothar shrieked his eternal allegiance to his darkling lord.

Lothar's frame was tormented and warped into an inhuman form. He had been a champion, a daemon awaiting birth, a prince awaiting his crown, and yet he was condemned to a horrible and mindless existence. A wattled crest grew from his



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brow, his cyclopean eye became stalked, tentacles, tipped with cruel claws, sprang from his shoulders, his torso swelled to enormous size and two more legs grew from his hips, hairy and twisted as those of a goat. His fall from humanity was complete.

Even as Lothar's fall was ending, so too was Johann's climb. This, the second von Gottlieb had also been twisted further by Chaos, and a tail, tipped with a snapping human face, waved at his back. Yet such a minor Mark was of little consequence to Johann. The last handhold was taken, the last scramble made, and the mortal Johann slaughtered the last victims. He had kept his awful faith with the Blood God and had earned his final reward. He had reached the summit of his bloody ambition.

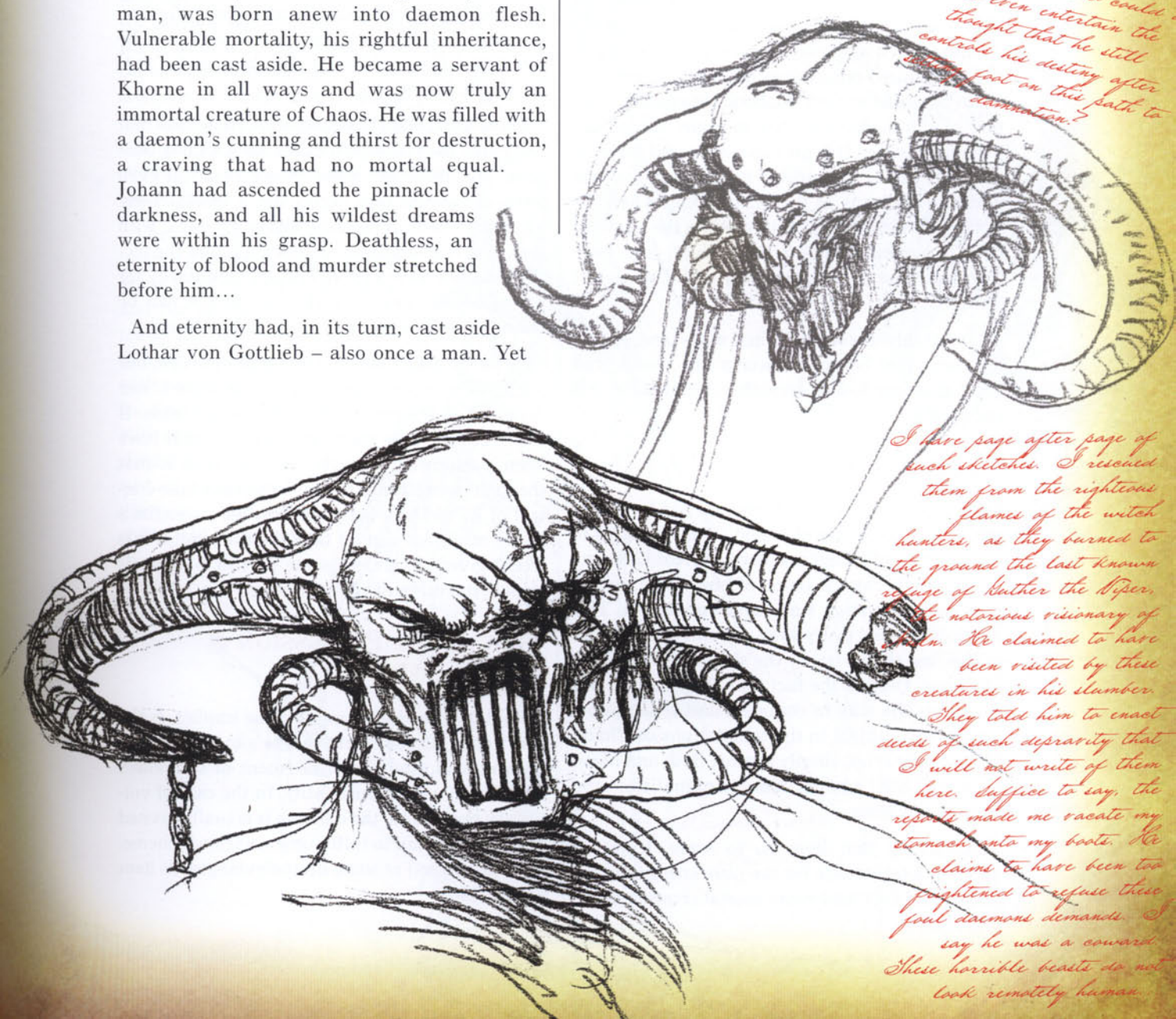
Khorne's faithful servant screamed the news of his victory to his master. Johann, once a man, was born anew into daemon flesh. Vulnerable mortality, his rightful inheritance, had been cast aside. He became a servant of Khorne in all ways and was now truly an immortal creature of Chaos. He was filled with a daemon's cunning and thirst for destruction, a craving that had no mortal equal. Johann had ascended the pinnacle of darkness, and all his wildest dreams were within his grasp. Deathless, an eternity of blood and murder stretched before him...

And eternity had, in its turn, cast aside Lothar von Gottlieb – also once a man. Yet still, pains and pleasures of which he had never dreamt were his for the taking. The pleasure of warm flesh, torn from its owner, and the pain of howling cries filled with loss to an uncaring sky.

Lothar and Johann von Gottlieb. Regard them in their fates. They craved power, glory, success and all that accompanies such – much as other men do. They were ambitious, and the way they chose to satisfy those ambitions is open to any others who dare to take it.

But think on this: Lothar, the decadent and depraved fool, runs with the Spawn, and Johann thinks and acts with the mind of his Master. So where and in what is their victory over Chaos? Where now are the free men, Lothar and Johann?

Where indeed?



The Malefic Mallacarium

BEING AN EXTENDED STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF POSSESSION, AND THE SPECIFIC WAY IN WHICH THE RIGHTEOUS MAY PURGE THE INVADING DAEMON FROM THE HOST.

THERE IS A WAR being fought for the souls of all mortal beings. It is a war without end, fought across land and sea, and more importantly, through the hearts and minds of men.

As has been proven time and again, and much to our growing despair, that the denizens of the Empyrean can, and indeed do, manifest themselves upon the Mortal plane. However, such is the horror that these daemonic entities provoke, and such is the sheer devastation that they cause, few that have seen them realise the severe limitations that these daemons must operate within.

Daemons are wholly and entirely creatures of magic, or in other terms, they are manifestations of very specific psychic and spiritual energies. To creatures such as these, magic is as important to their continued existence as air is to humans, and when taken from their "natural" magically saturated habitat, daemons are in many senses like fish out of water. It is for this reason and this reason alone that our world is not already overrun with the denizens of the Warp. Only when the Aethyr's winds blow strongly across the land can these daemons manifest themselves, and even then only for a comparatively short period of time.

Regrettably there are other ways and means for these foul beings to access our world, and there are some foolish enough to aid them in this endeavour.

Daemonic Possession

Since its earliest genesis, humanity has been subject to the influences of magic. The Magisters of the Colleges of Magic speak of a Great Gateway at the northernmost point of our world, where raw magical energy leaks into our reality. This magic saturates everything around us. Because of this, we all live under the shadow of the Gods of Chaos. Despite the fact that Holy Sigmar has shown us the way to conquest and redemption, we are still subject to the temptations of Chaos. For our war is not simply against flesh and blood enemies, but against the principalities and Powers of Chaos.

Everything that lives is, to some degree or another, a tabernacle for the pure energies of the magic, and each and every mortal creature are as much vessels of magic energy as they are generators of it. The greater the intelligence, emotive responses and creativity of a species, the greater effect they have on the ebb and flow of this energy and the closer they are to its influence. Being as intelligent life has the closest ties to the Warp, the physical form of intelligent beings have the capacity to contain more of a daemonic entity's purpose and power than simpler forms of life, such as plants or livestock.

Whereas it is not unprecedented for a tree or animal to be possessed by a Warp entity, such possessions are rarely of any great power and are of limited use to the possessing daemon. Possessing a mortal creature takes great effort on the part of a daemon, and so will only ever be attempted if the gains for the daemon far outweigh the losses.

There are certain blasphemous ceremonies that can make the possession easier for a willing daemon, and there are some rituals that can even force a daemon into occupying a mortal body against its will. The most alarming thing with regard to this nightmarish process is that the victim does not have to give himself voluntarily for these unholy rites to work – a daemon can be bound even into the most unwilling of hosts!

However, while our mortal bodies yet live, our souls can never be simply consumed nor deprived of liberty by the daemons of Chaos. If this were the case then our species would have been consumed long ago. No, the truth is that through possession, a daemon can only take control of its victim's body, and ravage its victim's living mind – it cannot take the soul unless it is freely given, or unless some sort of bargain is struck, intentionally or otherwise.

Voluntary Possession & Daemon-Hosts

Voluntary possession, as its name implies, is the sanctioned displacement of one's own personality and soul, and the instatement of the power and will of a daemonic entity. In the case of voluntary possession, the daemon is actually invited to enter a human to fulfil some nefarious scheme, or to be praised as some insanely dangerous item of worship.

To one such as I, voluntary possession seems to be the ultimate insanity, but there are those within various Chaos-worshipping cults who give their bodies freely, so that their dark masters might walk abroad on our world. Whether such willing hosts know that they are sacrificing their minds and souls for this process to succeed, or whether they foolishly believe that they will have equal status with the summoned daemon residing within their body, is unknown to me. Yet whatever the subject believes prior to having a daemon bound within him, the majority of those that willingly give themselves up for daemonic possession become little more than daemon-hosts – beings whose will and identity have been completely sublimated by the possessing daemon.

Because the host has given himself voluntarily and completely to the possessing daemon, and has often sold his soul in the process, the daemon does not have to fight to suppress its host's will. It is as if the host presents a fully furnished house for the daemon to occupy. The daemon forces as much of its own power and identity as it can into its host's mortal frame, consuming its host's soul and mind in the process.

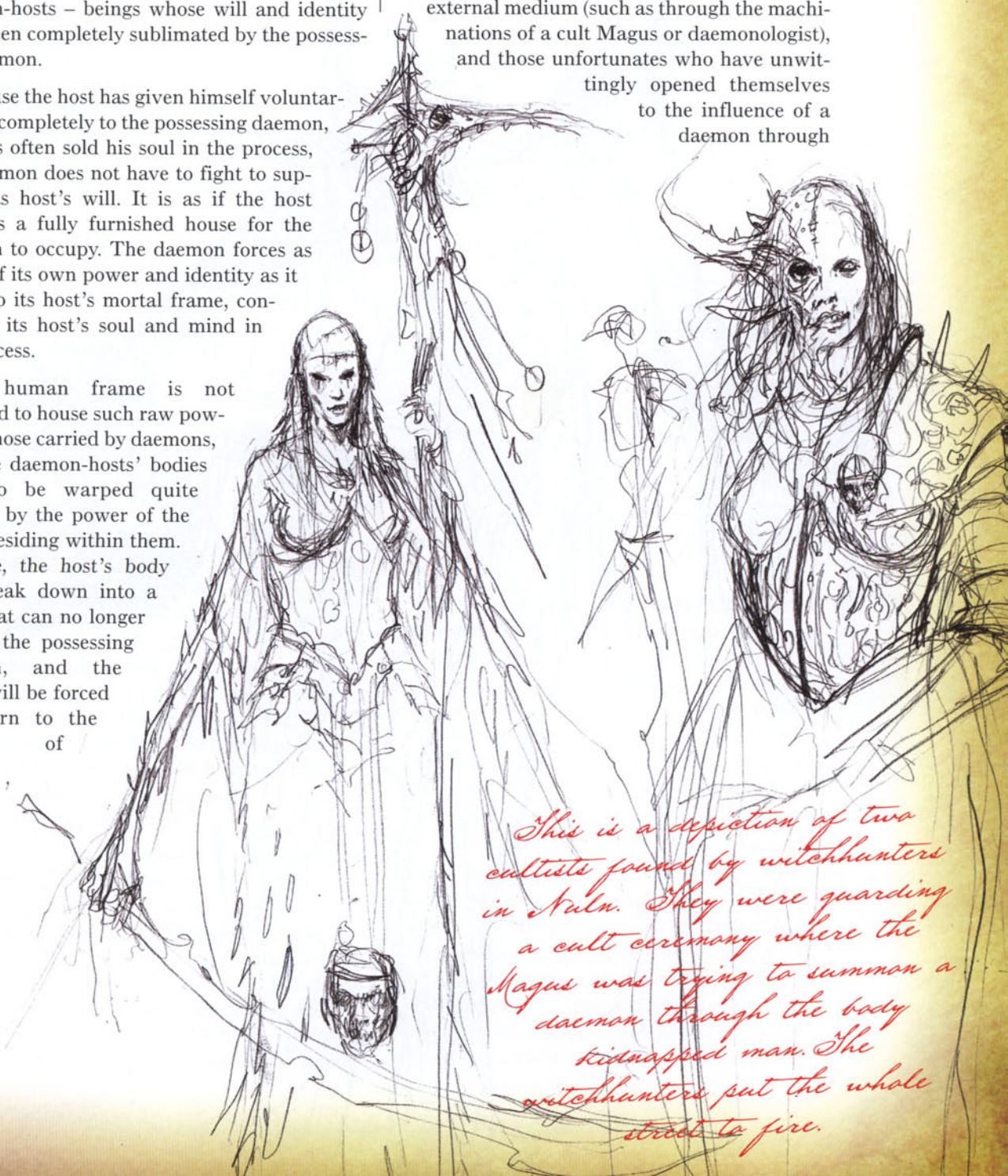
The human frame is not intended to house such raw powers as those carried by daemons, and the daemon-hosts' bodies tend to be warped quite quickly by the power of the entity residing within them. In time, the host's body will break down into a state that can no longer sustain the possessing daemon, and the entity will be forced to return to the Realm of Chaos.

Those who willingly give up their bodies for daemon possession will not survive the experience – they are doomed in both body and spirit.

Involuntary and "Accidental" Possession

It matters not how well one lives one's life, or how dutiful one is in religious observances, a daemon can be bound within anyone.

The involuntarily possessed can be divided into two types: those who have had a daemon bound within them through the efforts of some external medium (such as through the machinations of a cult Magus or daemonologist), and those unfortunates who have unwittingly opened themselves to the influence of a daemon through



This is a depiction of two cultists found by witchhunters in Nuln. They were guarding a cult ceremony where the Magus was trying to summon a daemon through the body kidnapped man. The witchhunters put the whole street to fire.


A host, when fully possessed can be made to commit acts that would repulse them in their normal state of mind.
The physical changes that the unfortunate host undergoes are always terrible to behold.
After a time, a person hosting a daemon will begin an external transformation to mirror the horrors that are occuring beneath the skin.

the untrained use of magic, or contact with a daemonic artefact of some kind. (see Lothar Drach's Casebook)

Although the majority of possessing daemons gain access to the real world by means of certain spells and rituals performed by the mortal followers of Chaos, they are also capable of entering reality through the minds of over-ambitious or untrained magic-users. Those with latent magical abilities who have not been taught how to control their powers (or warlocks and witches as such untrained spell-casters have come to be known) are potential gateways into the Mortal Realms for certain daemons.

The Templars of Sigmar have, over the years, attempted to contain, and where necessary, eliminate, the threat posed by such unprotected minds. Relatively speaking, daemonic intrusions into the minds of such wilders are uncommon. This being said, the wickedness that a single daemon can wreak is out of all proportion with their rarity.

Unlike a willing host, the daemon within an involuntarily possessed host leaves few clues to betray its presence – at least at first. Because the mortal whom the daemon intends to possess would almost certainly fight to drive the entity from his mind, and perhaps expose the cult or artefact that instigated the possession initially, the daemon tends to keep a relatively low profile. Only a little of the daemon's power enters the host to start with, and so the physical markings that are normally associated with possession take longer to develop.

Rather than reveal itself to its new host, the possessing daemon will more often than not watch and wait, settling into the unused corners of its host's mind, slowly poisoning his thoughts against those around him. In this way the daemon will hope to win over its host, or at least trick the host into relinquishing his soul. While this is happening the host often continues with his normal life, unaware that he is possessed or that his thoughts and actions are being turned slowly to the service of Chaos.

Occasionally the host mind is strong enough to detect the daemon's influence and put up some kind of resistance, but sadly even the most unwilling host is eventually broken by the horror of this more than intimate contact with an infernal entity. As the host's mind is driven to insanity, destroyed or consumed, the daemon takes total control of the host's body. Once this has occurred, the host is no longer of any importance to the daemon, and the body is truly that of the daemon's.

It is the nature of magic to unpick reality, and so the daemon, a conscious personification of magic, cannot prevent its warping effect on its newly acquired mortal shell. Gradually the body will mutate, twisting into a grim distortion of its former shape. This is a never ending process and it is only a matter of time until the daemon's presence becomes apparent by the mutation of its host's body.

Yet even when this point arrives, the daemon is far from powerless to defend itself. Once it has gained access to the mortal realms, a daemon may always attempt to find itself a new host, transferring itself into another body. Such is the trauma of this transfer that the original host often suffers violent seizures and often dies during it. The daemon is then free to start the cycle all over again, continuing its dark work until its new body begins to mutate.

The Signs of Possession

Although some poor unfortunates possessing severe physical deformities have in the past been wrongly accused of bearing the mark of Chaos, the doctrines of our Holy Church are careful to define the more definite signs of daemonic possession. These signs include: supernatural strength, often accompanied by fits and convulsions: extreme changes in personality: having knowledge of the future or other occult information and being able to understand and converse in languages previously unknown to the host victim.

Depending on the type of entity that possesses the victim, there are other more specific indicators of daemonic possession. These can include: the practice of lewd and obscene acts, most often associated with Slaaneshi daemons: the physical corruption and horrible smells of sulphur and decay that are associated with Nurgle's daemons or the insanely violent change in temperament that often comes with possession by one of Khorne's dread servants.

There are other daemons that appear to be more subtle or circumspect in their possession, and for these the outward signs of their presence are far harder to spot. The only foolproof basis for declaring a person possessed is if they display a violent revulsion, fear, and physical discomfort when confronted with objects and texts sacred to wholesome deities, such as Our Lord Sigmar.

Exorcism

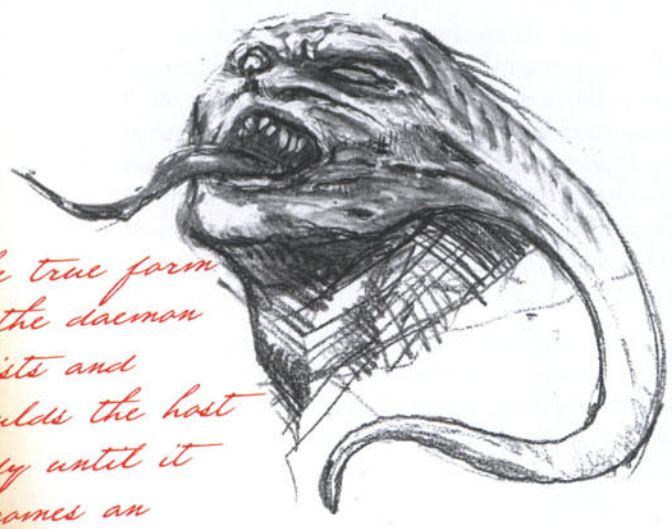
"The daemons of Chaos can be likened to hungry and rabid wolves. The shepherd should not waste his time hating the wolf that attacks his flock. He should simply kill it."

~ Volkmar, Theogonist of Sigmar

Exorcism is the rite and process by which daemons and malign spirits are driven out of their host bodies. In the main, the priests and witch hunters of our own great religion practise this rite, although the priestesses of Shallaya are also sometimes called upon to enact their own version within their hospital walls.

Having witnessed many exorcisms as part of my researches for this study, I can say with reasonable authority that an exorcism does not seem to be a matter of simply driving a daemon from its host's body with powerful spells or somesuch. Rather, the exorcism is an entirely spiritual and religious process of subjugating the possessing daemon by invoking a higher power to put binds upon it. The daemon can then be controlled to an extent and forced to act contrary to its own will. To a priest of Sigmar such as myself, the higher power invoked would naturally be Sigmar Himself.

It is an accepted fact that the Infernal Powers of Chaos cannot abide the presence of the Heldenhammer, and with good reason. Holy scripture is full of references concerning Sigmar's superior might in the face of the gods and daemons of Chaos. Indeed, the fact that exorcism works at all is a testament to the veracity of these references.



The true form of the daemon twists and moulds the host body until it becomes an obscene amalgamation of the two.

There is a particularly famous account that can be found in the earlier chapters of the *Book of Sigmar*, when our Divine Lord first crossed the Reik estuary and entered the lands resting in the shadow of the Grey Mountains. A man who was accused of being possessed by an infernal spirit met him on the shores of the river. This man, or so the story goes, possessed an immense and supernatural strength, and was able to grind rocks to powder within his fists. For years he had lived the life of a madman, eking out an existence within the cave-tombs that had been cut in the face of the mountains.

It is told that when he saw Sigmar approaching, the daemon within the man immediately recognised Sigmar for the man-god he was, and Sigmar recognised the demon. The man ran forward begging mercy from the First Emperor. With absolute authority, Sigmar called the daemon forth and demanded to know its name. Unable to resist the man-deity, the daemon appeared and spoke. In a voice that sounded like the hiss of a thousand whispers, the daemon said:

"Our name is Host, for we are many."

Lord Sigmar was unperturbed. He leapt at the daemon, intent on inflicting His holy wrath upon it, but it fled into the distant mountains. Sigmar pursued the daemon for thirteen days and thirteen nights, until finally it sought refuge in the trunk of an old and wizened tree. But Mighty Sigmar was not so easily fooled. He had seen the daemon flee into the gnarled trunk, and without hesitation He swung mighty Ghal Maraz above His head and shattered it, thereby banishing the daemon back to its dark realm.

From this account we can glean two very salient points: first, that the daemon must have feared Sigmar greatly because it didn't turn to fight Him at any point, and second, that Sigmar did not actually exorcise the daemon because He did not need to call on a higher Power to subdue it. Sigmar in Himself possessed all the power needed to drive out and destroy the daemon.

So, through supplication to Sigmar, we too can bind and drive out possessing daemons, by exposing the daemon to the power and sanctity of Our Mighty Lord. However, being as we are but mortals who do not possess Sigmar's great strength of spirit and sinew, there is always a

Hear Me and obey,
most hateful spirit!

I cast ye out
with the Might of My Arm,
with the Iron of My Will,
by the Fire of My Word.
Come from the body
of this my servant!

Thou shalt not appear again,
neither in the dreams of
night nor in the thoughts of day!

Get ye gone from this place,
thou lowliest predator,
thou foulest daemon!

Naked I drive ye forth,
with thy hair dishevelled
and thy fury undone.

Thus do I vanquish ye in this
world, and thus do I cast down
thy stars and constellations,
scattering the fell work of thy hands.

Ever shall I pit myself
against thy kind,
and eternal shall be my wrath
in the face thy masters.

For the sun shall not set over the
people of My Empire,
as long as they keep me
as their Lord

So Sigmar banished the spirit,
with its witchery and its spells, with its
curses and invocations,
and drove it away from the
walls of His Holy Empire.

Extracted from the Admonitions of Sigmar

danger that mortal exorcists might themselves become possessed by the fleeing daemon. For this reason only the most faithful priests and witch hunters that are as free from the taint of Chaos as is humanly possible may ever become exorcists. If they have had any prior liaisons with Chaos, intentionally or otherwise, the daemon might well be able to entrap them.

This is possibly the reason that the Witch Finder Captain, Ramheldt van Hadden, claims in his great work *The Lost and the Damned*, that the success of an exorcism rests as much with the character of the exorcist as it does with the might of Our Lord Sigmar. He describes the witch hunters best suited to the role of exorcists as men of excellent physical health, middle age or younger, who posses a strong network of friends and colleagues to keep him grounded in humanity. Hadden goes on to state that the ideal exorcists are not brilliant men of intellect, or men engaged in teaching or research, as these characteristics tend to lead to a curiosity that could be used against them when faced with the devious Powers of Chaos.

Although I will be the first to admit that where the forces of Chaos are concerned it is understandable why Hadden is so cautious, I cannot help feeling that he is overly cautious in his appraisals. By extension he is indicating that any study of the Chaos Powers by scholars such as myself might well lead in damnation. He is wrong.

One can see that exorcism must never be undertaken lightly. Every case must be examined carefully and great care must be used to distinguish a genuine possession from madness or disease. The person who undertakes to be an exorcist must be courageous and humble, and should prepare for the work by special acts of devotion and mortification. Ideally, the exorcism should take place on holy ground such as in a temple, church or other sanctified space. Depending on the violence and obstinacy of the possession this may not always be possible, so the exorcist should be ready to perform his sacred rites anywhere and anytime.

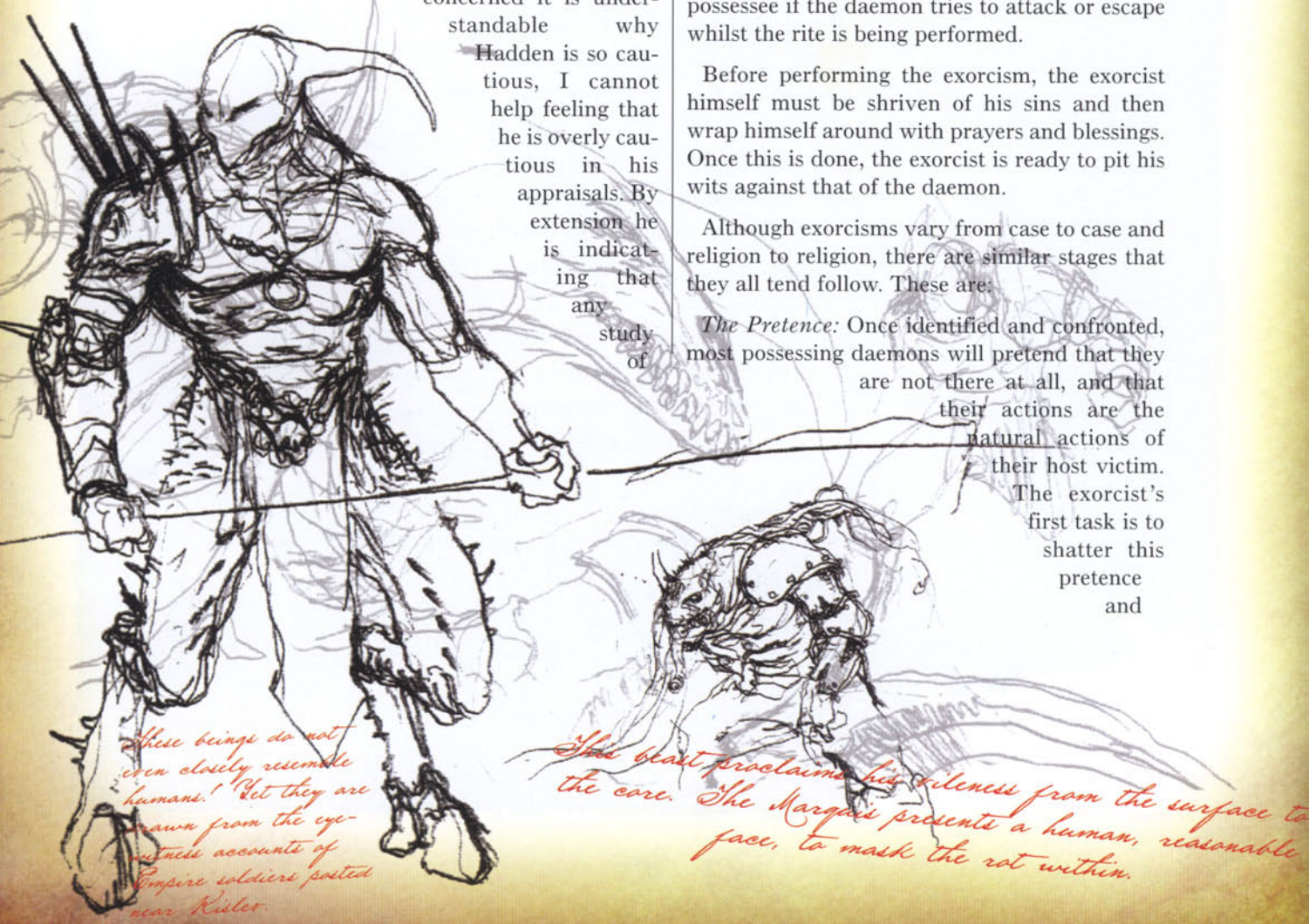
The Ritual of Exorcism

Perhaps the most important weapons in an exorcist's arsenal are his disposition and the strength and character of his deacons. In the exorcisms that I have witnessed, a junior priest trained in the procedures of exorcism has assisted the exorcist. It is the deacon's task to monitor the exorcism as a whole, protecting the exorcist physically when necessary by restraining the possessee if the daemon tries to attack or escape whilst the rite is being performed.

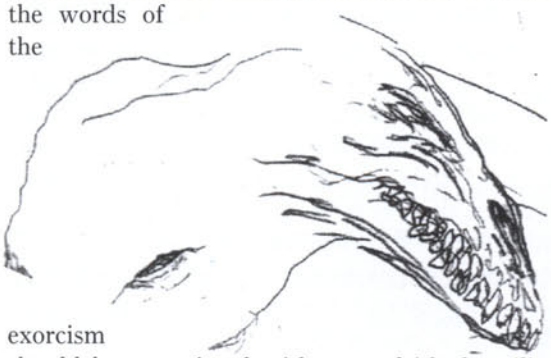
Before performing the exorcism, the exorcist himself must be shriven of his sins and then wrap himself around with prayers and blessings. Once this is done, the exorcist is ready to pit his wits against that of the daemon.

Although exorcisms vary from case to case and religion to religion, there are similar stages that they all tend follow. These are:

The Pretence: Once identified and confronted, most possessing daemons will pretend that they are not there at all, and that their actions are the natural actions of their host victim. The exorcist's first task is to shatter this pretence and



find out the true nature of the possessing daemon. Getting the daemon to speak and then gaining its name is the hardest and most important part of the exorcism. However, idle and curious conversation with the possessee (and therefore the daemon itself) should be avoided at all costs, and the words of the



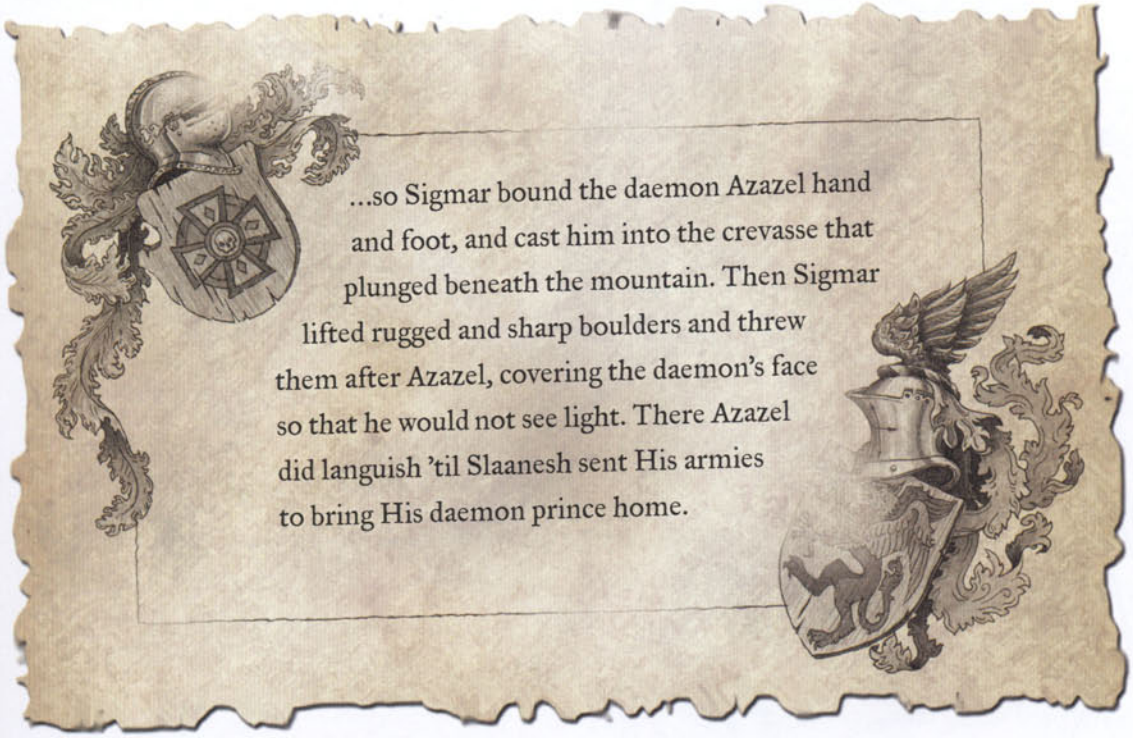
exorcism should be enunciated with great faith, humility and fervour, and with a conscious power and authority.

The Breaking: The moment when all the daemon's pretences finally collapse. In my own experience, and also according to all references I can find on the matter, this moment is one of utter pandemonium. The daemon will utilise whatever supernatural powers it possesses, deliberately causing as much panic and confusion as possible. This can manifest itself in multifarious ways, culminating in violence or abuse, horrible sights and sounds, seductive temptations and abominable odours (all depending on what kind of daemon possesses the host). If the daemon cannot discourage or hurt the exorcist, it will often turn on its own host body, threatening or causing harm.

The Voice: Just prior to the climax of the Breaking, the daemon's voice often becomes a physically disturbing and nightmarish babble. This Voice must be silenced before the final stages of the exorcism can commence.

The Contest: As the voice dies away, the surrounding area falls under a pall of tremendous physical and spiritual pressure. This is where the will of the daemon has come into contest with the will of Sigmar, as expressed through the determination of the exorcist. At this point the exorcist is in direct battle with the daemon, forcing it to reveal more about itself so it can be controlled and banished. The daemon is unwilling to leave its host and will do all it can to fight against the exorcist's demands.

Banishment: As Sigmar's Might finally crushes the daemon's resistance, it will flee the host's body and return to the Warp, formless and beaten. Its passing can be felt by all present, but the victim very often cannot remember any of the ordeal – if the victim survives with his sanity intact, which is unlikely.



~ from "The Fate of the Apostate, The Book of Sigmar." 3:4

As a footnote to the above, there is a method of exorcism practised commonly across the Arab world whereby the possessing daemon is prevented from escaping back into the Aethyr, as it is bound at the point of Banishment into an inanimate object such as a ring or jar.

I find this notion to be highly dubious, as by some accounts once the exorcist has bound the daemon, he is tempted to keep hold of it as a kind of supernatural slave – an astonishingly dangerous concept under the best of circumstances! This practise has no-doubt given rise to the many fantastic tales that returned with the crusaders from the arid lands of Araby of wish-granting Djinn trapped within bottles.

Daemonically Possessed Artefacts

As a last note, I would like to make clear the differences between possession of a living host and the practice of binding daemons to inanimate objects (as mentioned earlier), such as weapons, works of art or buildings. Whereas daemons of any stature and rank can be bound far more permanently to inanimate and unliving items than to living vessels, they will still require the interaction of living creatures to fulfil their purpose. If noone finds or interacts with the daemonically bound artefact, the daemon within it is left stranded and powerless. With human possession, the mortal host grants the possessing daemon a reasonably free rein to walk and machinate where it wills throughout the world, without the help or need for remit from any other agency.



Artefacts and items can be possessed. I have heard tell – although never seen – armour that contains the essence of a daemon.

Succubi and Incubi

'In those days, when the first humans had multiplied, it happened that there were born unto them handsome sons and beautiful daughters. The daemons of Slaa'neth, known as the Children of Delight, saw these handsome sons and beautiful daughters and desired them. They said to one another, "Come, let us choose lovers for ourselves from amongst the sons and daughters of humanity, for their minds are weak as the Dawi's are not, and their souls dim as the Asur's do not. Amongst them we might rule, and in them we may beget us offspring." But Samael, who was then first amongst these daemons, said: "This cannot be, for the sons and daughters of Men are mortal, while you are immortal. As you now are, no children can you sire nor bear. Let you instead take possession of male and female, and with their bodies around you may you sire and bear children."

'With Samael's words in their hearts, two hundred from amongst the Children of Delight did take possession of the bodies of men and women; one hundred of each. And so it was that this two hundred took lovers unto themselves, men and women both. They taught their lovers magic and incantation, the ways of cutting roots and plants, and how to distil liquor and narcotic, both sweet and strong.

'In women they sired sons, and from men they took the seed of daughters, and pregnancy came soon after. Yet as their offspring swelled from passion to babe, no souls did they possess, for the Children of Delight forbade it of them. Instead, the Children themselves entered the growing bodies of their own offspring, becoming themselves the sons and daughters of the Mortal Realms, while retaining all the immortal might of the Aethyr within.

'These creatures that were born from the union of daemon and flesh were called the Incubi and the Succubi; male and female evil spirits bound upon to the world of mortals. As great as daemons were they, but beauteous as the fairest of humans. The infernal spirits within them could not be withdrawn nor banished into the Aethyr, for they were created from mortal men and women and their natural dwelling was the dwelling of all human beings: the mortal world.

'These Succubi and their brothers ate no food, nor became thirsty, nor could any obstacle stand before them. Seeming as unto gods were they to the poor and ignorant peoples of the world, and though their rule was not unquestioned, it could not be ended by mortal men. The Incubi and Succubi turned against their fathers and their mothers, consuming their lives and their souls, and then they then went amongst the lands and peoples of the world, teaching charms and enchantments as they saw fit, slaying and seeking tribute as they desired. They taught men how to seek pleasure and delight, and taught them also arts and sciences; but their actions had always a malicious end and heralded a time of lawlessness and warfare.

'But they were deceived, for though they had form and presence in the Mortal Realms and could not be banished thence, they were mortal. Though they aged not, they could be killed as any being of mortal flesh could be killed, and all that stood between them and final death was the strength of their arms, the magic of their eyes, and the poison of their words.

'Then, to the south of the Succubi's realms their rose a mighty warrior, a leader of men, hammer of Goblins and god incarnate. In his twenty-sixth year, Sigmar, called the Heldenhammer, turned his gaze to the Northern reaches of the lands he would claim as his Empire. The Succubi and their brother Incubi could not stand before his gaze, and the man-god swept them aside as dry leaves before the autumn wind. Sigmar hunted out the dark ones wherever they sought refuge and brought fiery ruin upon their heads, scattering them into the wastes and ending their unholy reign forevermore.'

From 'The Ramaining of the Heldenhammer', 12:3-5, The Book of Sigmar.

Conversing with the Damned

Being a transcription of a dialogue between myself – Richter Kless – and that most infamous of heretics, the Marquis Alphonse Dolmancé.

THE MARQUIS Alphonse Dolmancé is the last in a long and noble line. Some say that his family roots begin with the pirate lords of Sartosa, and that they only moved to Bretonnia after amassing a considerable fortune from their corrupt activities, sometime in the fifteenth century of Our Lord Sigmar. Whatever the case, the Marquis's father, Jean-Chevalier, Comte de Dolmancé, was a powerful and decadent man; a noble who ruled by sword and fear rather than any more benevolent policy. Being a grossly debauched man, Jean-Chevalier lived with two "wives" and was rumoured to have enjoyed countless lovers and courtesans throughout his life. Despite all this, Jean-Chevalier was also a learned and free-thinking philosopher, his controversial writings finding their way across Bretonnia, Estalia and to our own dear Empire. Suffice to say, Jean-Chevalier came to a no-good end, and his son, Alphonse Dolmancé, took up his father's libertine mantle with startling vigour.

Though sent to train as a knight, as indeed all the young aristocracy of Bretonnia are required to do, Dolmancé never took to the life of a warrior. Although it is said that he possessed a fiery spirit and showed considerable savagery in battle, he had no respect for his tutors and lacked the humility required to earn the spurs of knighthood. He left his training without a backward glance, and they say he never once showed the slightest remorse or shame for doing so; a terrible thing indeed to the honour-bound nobles of Bretonnia.



What followed was a life filled with such extreme controversy and hedonism that even his late father's colourful reputation seemed dim by comparison. It was not long before Dolmancé was brought before his king to account for his 'base and unchivalrous' behaviour. This 'accounting' turned into a criminal trial when suspicions were roused as to the true nature of Dolmancé's debauchery. Some suspected the hand of Chaos in Dolmancé's deportment, but the Marquis denied all such accusations, giving this statement to the court:

"I am the Marquis Dolmancé. Within my veins flows the blood of some of the most distinguished and noble families of this fair realm, the same blood that flows through many of you, and as such I deserve to be heard.

"I was born to wealth and luxury, as indeed were all of you, and was told from my earliest age that Fate and the gods had surrounded me with such plenty because it was my destined right to posses them as a nobleman of Bretonnia. I became the proud, imaginative and irascible man I am today precisely because of this upbringing, and I freely admit that in the past I have entertained the notion that all other people were created solely to submit to my desires, and that all the world should seek to flatter my whims.

"In short, I say to you that I am my father's son; a product of what he and his fellow nobleman of Bretonnia taught me to be. So indeed, I am what my circumstances have made me, and they have made me a true son of Bretonnia. I see no reason why I should be penalised for matters and eventualities that are so clearly beyond my control."

Dolmancé was released shortly afterwards, although he was banished thenceforth from Bretonnia. Disgraced and exiled from his own country, the Marquis settled in the free-port of Marienburg. There he continued with his wicked ways, and in time his true nature became obvious to the local authorities. Dolmancé was apparently no longer content to enact his petty

Conversing with the Damned



perversions, and so took the extreme step of establishing his own coven dedicated to the worship of Slaanesh. The success and eventual size of his coven was truly remarkable (helped in no small part by the Marquis' personal charm and fabulous wealth), and prompted the burgomasters of Marienburg to take the unprecedented step of requesting special assistance from our own Templars of Sigmar. The Witch Hunters agreed, their only proviso being that should they find enough evidence to arrest Dolmancé, he would be deported to Altdorf for trial and execution. The burgomasters agreed and Dolmancé was captured and brought to Altdorf to face his doom.

Having witnessed Dolmancé's interrogation at the hands of Marshal Clement of the Witch Hunters, it has become apparent to me that, despite his obvious deviancy, the Marquis is an extremely well educated and erudite man. With the dispensation granted to me by Theogonist Volkmar, and the authority it grants me over certain canonical matters, I have been able to request a stay of execution for the Marquis, so that I might glean some first hand wisdom as to the psychology and disposition of a Chaos cultist.

For his part, the Marquis agreed to speak with me, just so long as I was intending to talk with him, rather than, in his own words, "...preach the miserable doctrine of the Sigmarites." The man is completely unrepentant!

Although I know I should hate him for his crimes against our land and our Holy Church, I freely admit that the scholar in me finds it hard to despise one possessing such wit and intelligence as he. I began my conversation with him by stating that very fact. Here follows the transcription of his response, and our subsequent conversation:

Alphonse Dolmancé: And why should you, Herr Richter? After all, my misfortune is not a product of my own thoughts and acts, so much as it is a product of the thoughts and acts of other, more petty-minded people! I am an artist, scholar and aesthete, and the fact that my beliefs do not match your own is no good enough reason for an intelligent man to give in to hatred!

Richter Kless: That is true, Marquis. But you must accept that this is more than just a case of religious intolerance on my part. You worship a proscribed deity, one that encourages you towards the most horrific acts in His name.

AD: It is the crime of your own austere religion that it insists all the works of the Chaos Gods are irredeemably horrific. Clearly this cannot be the case. Am I horrific? No, don't answer. I fear that bore Sigmar has knocked too much sense out of you for you to give me a fair and reasoned reply. Think on this instead: If the Chaos Gods represented only suffering and ugliness then they would surely gain few converts, and without the souls of converts to feed them and drive them on, their power would eventually begin to fade from our world. Why would they risk harming themselves by driving away the laity?

RK: So you believe Chaos offers more than simple damnation?



These monstrous denizens of Slaanesh were drawn for me by Johannes the White. Upon seeing them I was both appalled and thrilled. I wasted no time in commissioning him to draw me some more, full size pictures, which are included in a later section. Although one of the pictures he produced caused me considerable alarm.

Conversing with the Damned

AD: Of course I do! And it is more than simple belief, Richter. Much more. Chaos offers the quick fulfilment of dreams and gratification of the Self. And of all the gods of Chaos, none make this offer more tempting than Lord Slaanesh.

RK: So you embraced evil simply for the "gratification of the Self," as you put it?

AD: You race ahead, Richter. Define for me what you mean by "evil".

RK: I would think that evil, at least in the context of a Slaaneshi cultist like yourself, would mean debauchery and unutterable perversion leading to a kind of selfish hedonistic madness.

AD: How very specific of you. Well, I'm sure some of the more exuberant of my Lord Slaanesh's followers might have appeared as "debauched" and "unutterably perverted madmen" – at least by your lights – but it is true to say that by far the majority of His mortal followers are civilised and educated people, just like me. Just like you.

RK: Not like me, Dolmancé.

AD: You're so sure? I know many a cleric who has turned from his own dour religion to the more tangible delights of Slaanesh. What makes you think you are so different?

RK: I know that I could never find joy in the cruel perversities expected by your foul god.

AD: Foul? Is joy foul? Why do you assume that the Lord of Delight expects only perversity from His followers? Slaanesh is, amongst so many other things, the personified manifestation of pleasure, and more importantly, the desire to experience pleasure. How we generate that pleasure is not important to Him, the fact that we experience it at all is enough.

RK: You are trying to tell me that your god has no interest in debauchery? We both know that isn't true.

AD: I have no doubt that Slaanesh takes His delight from all acts that gratify the senses. But, if I may say so, you are far too obsessed with what you call 'debauchery'. For all our apparent intelligence, we humans are creatures of nature. Every emotion and drive that we experience, and therefore every act we initiate, is a product of our natural state of being, and not simply pressed on us by some insidious external force.

RK: So you are saying that Slaanesh does not promote hedonism in His name?

AD: Not at all. I am trying to say that the gods are but reflections of our own emotions and drives, they are a product of our desires, not their own. You cannot condemn any one of them for what they are or what they do, for they are simply projections of those

Could this be the end result of a devotion such as Dolmacé's?

processes that make us human. They are us and we are they.

RK: But the Chaos Gods represent only extremes! There is no virtue in any one of them.

AD: Oh Richter, why must you Sigmarites always drone on about 'virtue' as if you alone were the keepers of it? An educated man such as you must have studied history? You must have seen that there is no eternal morality, but a shifting mass of beliefs that change from age to age? And as for all those things you regard as virtues, why they are just named responses that have been conditioned by variables the world we men have constructed around ourselves and the geography that world is built upon, and then inflicted on us. "Virtue" is a word born from a lack of imagination and a fear of experimenting with what it is to be human – or rather a fear of seeing ourselves for what we really are.

RK: You seem to forget the reality of your immortal soul, Marquis. What will happen to you when you die and your foul god comes to claim your soul? Where will your libertine sensibilities leave you then?

AD: Ah, your reasoning becomes clearer to me now. So fear of punishment in the hereafter is the driving force behind your morality? I might have guessed. Well then, I put this to you: If Slaanesh is indeed the product and personification of all delight and pleasure, then perhaps He is not so terrifying a god as you might think. Whereas you have mentioned, ad-nauseam, that my god is often one of sensual excess, He must also be a god of contentment, joy, and honest satisfaction. But you look sceptical. I understand, Richter. I felt the same as you must do now when I first learned the truth. It's so easy for us to accept that a god of Chaos is present in the "debased" acts of rape or sadism, but a far harder thing indeed for us to accept that He is also a product of the feelings generated by love and aesthetic appreciation. But it's the truth. Slaanesh's influence extends to all those things that give us pleasure, in whatever way, shape, or form they take – including, therefore, all endeavours that are passionate and creative. Though I would happily debate with you against the existence of an afterlife at all, if by some stretch of the imagination there is one waiting for us beyond the veil of death, perhaps mine will be somewhat more enjoyable than the one offered by your grey and authoritarian god.

RK: You are seeking to undermine my beliefs, Dolmancé. It won't work. I have read the reports from soldiers fighting along our northern borders. Slaanesh is a source of suffering and debasement. That is all.

AD: If it were as simple as that, why do you think so many artistic and philosophical institutions have been found to hide a cult to Slaanesh? The reason romantics, idealists and intellectuals are attracted to Slaanesh is precisely because He is the greatest patron, and product, of beauty, love and aestheticism – and all the sensual pleasures of art, music and companionship empower Him. Even the contentment I assume you glean from worshipping the Heldenhammer is a form of pleasure, and therefore empowering to my Lord Slaanesh.

RK: No! I... No. This is a pointless conversation, Dolmancé. The consultation is over.

AD: How like your kind to be frightened by simple truths! Ask yourself this: Would it be so difficult to embrace a god that asks you only to take greater pleasure in the wine you drink, or the food you eat? How tempting would it be to be able to take the same enjoyment from the simplest things in life, as you would from some great achievement or intellectual endeavour? How could this not be attractive?

I told my scribe to cease his transcription at that point.

I have begun to comprehend the insidious and seductive nature that so typifies Slaanesh and his servants. But I am strong in my faith. I will not be lured from the path of righteousness by anyone – least of all by a jaded Bretonnian with a silver tongue.

I am resolved to speak to Dolmancé again, for I am certain there is much I can learn from him yet. Next time we speak I shall be mindful to keep the conversation away from the more esoteric aspects of his beliefs.



The Arts & Artefacts of Slaanesh

BEING A SHORT PIECE DETAILING SOME EXAMPLES OF OBJECTS AND DEVICES DIRECTLY AFFECTED AND AFFLICTED BY SLAANESH. WRITTEN IN THE MOST PART BY THE MARQUIS DOLMANCÉ.

I HAVE SPOKEN with the Marquis on three more occasions after that first abortive interview, and I truly believe that I am making some progress with him. As proof that intelligence and good sense will always win out given the right encouragement, the Marquis asked my pardon for his confrontational manner during our first encounter. I assured him that I understood. He is, after all, awaiting execution at the hands of the witch hunters – a slip in manners is excusable under such conditions!

By way of an apolog Marquis has offered to commit to paper his knowledge and experience of some of the more widely known artefacts known or suspected to have some connection with Slaanesh. Although I suspect the Marquis is merely trying to delay his execution a while longer (and why would he not?), I think I would be foolish indeed to reject his offer out of hand.

The Marquis expresses his own misguided beliefs several times in the following, and I would ask those who read this text to look on his words merely as an insight into the twisted mind of a Chaos cultist.

Not being a man given to liquor I find it hard to understand the Marquis's predilection for it. However, it obviously holds a special quality that other, more conventional beverages do not.

The Wine of Dreams

The aptly named 'Wine of Dreams' has, for many generations, been the source of much joy across the Old World. The earliest record I ever found relating to this most delightful vintage dates back over three centuries, to the year 2234 I.C.. Apparently, it enjoyed considerable popularity amongst the jaded aristocracy at that time, giving them at least some distraction from the civil war that had ravaged the Empire for several hundred years.

I sincerely doubt that the timing of the wine's popularity was any coincidence. At the passing of the Great Aether Crusades of 2302, this 'Wine of Dreams' had already played a major role in the exponential growth of twelve of the most widely known Pleasure Cults within in the Empire, Tilea, and my homeland of Bretonnia. Yet this was not enough, as the unimaginative forces of that barbarian god Sigmar, assisted by the equally conformist armies of the Elves and Dwarfs and their own dull goes, eventually forced the armies of liberation back into the north.

The wine did have a brief renaissance not long ago, much to my own personal gratification, but sadly this was short lived. Its production was finally brought to an end, or so the witch hunters assure me, just prior to the Battle of Eilhart.

Speaking as one who has sampled this wondrous beverage, I can say without hesitation that it was the finest liquor I have ever tasted – and believe me, I have tasted many. It was my experiences with this self same wine that first introduced me to the delights of Slaanesh, so my memories of it are entirely fond.

The Wine had an intensely sweet bouquet of flowers and strange fruits that I could never quite place. Though perhaps possessing vague similarities in its aroma to a fine Tokay from the northy eastern provinces, no fragrance I could describe would do it justice. And its flavour? Nothing can or will match it. It was rich and complex, with a smooth and almost syrupy texture. Such dreams it brought! As clear as the most gorgeous day and twice as enchanting.

Simply put, the Wine was liquid delight.

All I can say is that, having tried the Wine of Dreams for myself on numerous happy occasions, I cannot imagine why such a small group of people would want to suppress such a pleasurable. I mourn the passing of this Wine as I would an old and dear

The Blessed Ones

The picture enclosed is my own rather limited interpretation of a section of that infamous painting, 'The Blessed Ones' by the near-mythical painter, Hal Sesan or 'Hals' as he is more comonly known.

As with most stories passed down to us from before the dark times of the Three Emperors, the legends concerning Hals and his painting are somewhat mixed. Some say that he was the rejected son of an Arabian Sheik, living sometime between the years 1890 and 1930 of the Imperial Calendar. Another story claims that Hals was of Norse descent, educated as an artist in the famed Northern School of Salzenmund, sometime around the turn of the millennium. Yet another tale states that Hals was Tilean g despite his decidedly un-Tilean name g painting some t years into that country's 'Age of Enlightenment'.

The stories are as manifold as they are contradict doubt there is much chance of us learning from them the enigmatic artist's history. Suffice to say, 'The Bl

Such elegant and well-crafted handwriting.' I have said before that Slaanesh is a God of the asthete and the poet - and this is just what Dalmance is. He has been seduced by the daeman, and now is trying to seduce me with the same arguments. He will not succeed of course. But I can not ignore his wisdom, and some of his words make a kind of sense.

Slaanesh

That a man so learned could fall prey to the dark powers should be a warning to us all.'

Ones' is the only work widely identified as being a product of Hals' remarkable genius.

Hals was not simply a superb draughtsman of images, he was also a philosopher and magician, said to be in communion with the Old Gods — or more specifically, Lord Slaanesh. The subject matter of this painting alone would be enough to draw the attention of the witch hunters in this day and age, being as it is of the Pleasure God's daemons cavorting with each oth and various mortals. However, in addition to this first 'heresy' the original painting was said also to possess strange and 'unclean' powers.

The legends say that the painting could bestow immortality t all lovers of pleasure and beauty — and by that read the servant of Slaanesh. Although I have found no single reference describ ing with any accuracy how this immortality was to be achieved, many of the stories surrounding the piece do suggest that some

# of Slaanesh

nd of blood offering was required. Once made, the owner of the painting would be swept into the arms of Slaanesh, where he or she would enjoy an eternity of delight and pleasure with their loving master.

I remain sceptical as to the veracity of these claims. Only rarely do the Chaos Gods reward their servants, and even then it takes more than a simple blood sacrifice to earn such tokens. Whatever the case, the truth remains a mystery.

I have seen the painting. In fact I was intending to purchase it for my private collection, only for it to be stolen before I could make a suitable offer. I managed to trace the painting across the Empire to the city of Nuln, where the trail went cold. Not one to give up so easily, I sent out my spies to all the seedier taverns in the city, where one of them uncovered a barkeeper who insisted that some kind of 'magic' painting had been part of a major scandal in the city just a few months previously.

Although he was rather hazy with specifics, it would appear that the scandal involved a young nobleman, one Klaus van Rikkenburg II, who was found brutally murdered within his quarters at the University of Nuln. He also [illegible]tioned the disappearance of one of Nuln's most respected art dea[illegible]city's highest ranking aristocrats. There was also some talk of a fire, but our slack-jawed barkeeper wasn't sure of details and no amount of inducement could improve his memory. Unsurprisingly, the Nuln authorities maintained that the painting never reached their city in the first place.

All I can say for certain is that if 'The Blessed Ones' reached Nuln, it also met its end there – a sad and truly frustrating state of affairs for a lover of fine art such as myself.

Alphonse Dolmancé

~ the Marquis Dolmancé.

29 ~ 2 ~ 2518 I.C.

The deadly rune! There is a rune for each power, and each has its own aspect. Little did I imagine, in my younger days, that I would publish a book which allowed this heretical symbol to be put into print.

It would seem that the perverse symbol of Slaanesh represents the ambiguity and the androgeny of the Pleasure God.

Such a steady hand he has! Quite an artist, in fact. He has many talents, it is a great shame he has decided to waste them on such horrible subjects.



One of the most [illegible] I heard tell of was that of Vladimir Dolitzky, son of the great statesman Viktor Dolitzky. When Vladimir was seventeen his father was appointed as the Kislev ambassador to Middenheim and before leaving for the Empire, turned his house and estate over to his son for safekeeping.

Viktor was away for longer than expected – an altercation with [illegible] kept the ambassador busy in the south – and so twenty-seven years passed before his return home. Upon entering his estate Viktor realised that something was amiss. His once lush and well-kept lawns were overgrown through decades of neglect, his orchards were unkempt and barren and his pride and joy, the lake that formed the centrepiece of his gardens, was stagnant – the rotting corpses of swans and snakes decorating the surface like some morbid regatta. Fearing the worst for his son, Viktor made straight for the great house, leaving behind his entourage who were still trying to navigate the [illegible] reeds that were now blocking the once approach to the house. The sight that greeted Viktor upon entering his once proud and noble home caused him to drop dead on the spot with shock.

The story of what happened during the years that Viktor was away in the Empire was related to me by one of his aides – the only survivor of the party that returned to the estate that day, the others having succumbed to the stench that hit them upon their attempts to recover Viktor's body. It transpired that Vladimir had fallen in with a crowd of pleasure seeking Slaanesh followers whilst at university who, once realising that his father would be away for some time, used his absence to arrange one of the greatest orgies in the history of Kislev. One that lasted twenty-seven years.

Still in full swing when Viktor had entered upon the scene of utter carnality, debauchery and [illegible] in the name of sensual liberation and experimentation. The [illegible] of excess that littered the house acted like [illegible] archaeologists upon the upper layers revealing [illegible] previously unknown [illegible] of pleasure. Viktor, [illegible] by the [illegible] and help of the [illegible] spawning in every room, left Kislev, the bottom of the [illegible] keep with the [illegible] guards who had [illegible] appeared [illegible] start. Currently the [illegible] of a [illegible] performance was [illegible] about halfway [illegible] pace, [illegible] removing [illegible] intact and [illegible] relatively [illegible] to the [illegible] tunnels.

This single event has appalled and repulsed me, yet I cannot help but feel a strange fascination with it. If the cult of the Pleasure Kiss is as I believe, rampant throughout our fair Empire and beyond, then why has an event of this nature and magnitude only been uncovered in the cold lands of Kislev? Have other such proceedings taken place? Given the nature of Slaanesh, I find it hard to believe that they haven't. But why haven't the Witch Hunters uncovered them? Unless, and this thought makes and creates me in equal measure, they are still taking place.

ts of Slaanesh

The Rune of Slaanesh

As a testament to the fear and ignorance that so epitomises my Witch Hunter captors, not only have I been forbidden from drawing my master's rune for this piece, but they have also refused to allow anyone else to do so for me. So, in a wonderful demonstration of their world renowned lack of charm, they have garnered me with the artefact you can see pinned to the opposite page.

This is in fact a section of skin bearing a tattoo of Lord Slaanesh's rune, flayed from the back of one of my sweet acolytes. Although I admit that I would have preferred to see it still attached to her, Marisse's skin is still as smooth and perfect as it ever was. I cannot count the number of times my lips have brushed across this self-same patch of skin, and if I hold it close to my face, I can still catch traces of her body's sweet perfume. I'm sure she would be gratified to know that even in death she provides me with a taste of the pleasure that she gave me in life. But I digress.

A astute readers will realise that my Master's rune is an amalgam of the ancient positive and negative symbols denoting masculinity and femininity. This symbolises the transcendent state of Slaanesh, being as He is both male and female, and indeed more than both as well. But this rune is more than just a symbol. Although the example you see before you is merely a devotional tattoo, Slaanesh sometimes bestows His rune upon certain servants as a mark of His favour. If this is the case, then the rune will simply appear one day somewhere about the devotee's body, marking him or her as a Chosen servant of the Pleasure Lord. But this Mark is no simple drawing. Sometimes it appears as if it has been burned into the skin, other times it may appear as if inlaid with mother-of-pearl or gold. I have even seen [illegible] which seem to move and sway of their own accord. Such is the sensual glory of my [illegible]

It seems appalling to me that any gentleman, whatever his crimes, should be treated so poorly. In fact, sometimes it seems that it is Dalmance's captors who are the inhuman ones...

The appearance of the rune itself is the least of the changes wrought once Slaanesh has marked someone out. His blessing also bestows a heightened sensual appreciation of the world at large, with every colour, scent, taste, sound and physical sensation becoming clearer and more pleasurable than ever before. More often than not, a servant so marked by Slaanesh will also be blessed with a greater physical beauty, and the ability to speak his Master's truths with total sincerity and heartwarming charm.

Such are the wondrous blessings of my god, and be assured that these are but the least of His generous gifts, that I cannot help but wonder why so many continue to languish under the heavy and unrewarding yoke of that dead barbarian Sigmar. I can only imagine that mortification of the body and soul holds some kind of perverse titillation for them...

~ the Marquis Dolmancé.

29 ~ 2 ~ 2528 I.C.

The least of his generous gifts? Verily, it is the other gifts that Dalmance does not mention that cause me the most concern.

It is testament to the unstable nature of the Marquis's mind the he describes this skin as 'smooth and perfect'. This thick leathery hide must have been flayed from something so corrupted as to be barely human.



Slaanesh & the Elves of Ulthuan

Being a concise explanation of how I obtained specific information relating to the elder races, and a lengthy portion of what I uncovered from the mysterious 'Daroir 'tal Minai.'

During my last conversation with the Marquis, I mentioned to him my interest in finding some kind of recorded history of the Pleasure God's interaction with the Mortal Realms. At his suggestion I have spent many a long hour studying the various codices locked within the secret libraries of the College of Light. This time, however, instead of reading through the many treatises of Chaos contained therein, the Marquis suggested I peruse their tomes of ancient history.

The Marquis, as it turns out, is surprisingly well informed! Although the magisters' records are by no means complete, most of their texts concerning pre-human history were given to them by none other than Teclis of Ulthuan himself – founder of the Great Colleges of Magic – and so are both incredibly ancient and remarkably accurate.

Sadly, despite the fact that nearly two centuries have passed since these codices were presented to the College of Light, such is the sheer complexity of the Elven written language that relatively few stanzas of it have been translated, and many of those that have are imperfect at best.

Here follows an extract from the 'Daroir 'tal Minai', Ulthuan's book of days, translated for me by Magister Verspasian Kant, the current Patriarch of the College of Light. It contains the first explicit mention of Slaanesh's name within these Elven annals, and therefore perhaps the first written mention of His name in the whole world:

"Yet, in ridding the world from the curse of Chaos, weak we grew, and in time, complacent. We abandoned all concept of unity, and lost the harmony of spirit that had bound us as one people since time immemorial. Our vigilance faltered, and from amongst those whose spirits had grown slothful and avaricious, the servants of the Old Dark emerged once more. Such was the splendour of Ulthuan that they were content and able to live as parasites upon the bounty that our fair isle gave so freely. They took from



These fiends on horseback ride with tremendous speed in battle, as they are mostly unadorned in armour.

Slaanesh & the Elves of Ulthuan



Ulthuan without giving back, and so Chaos was allowed to sink its roots once more into the bedrock of our beloved homeland. Those roots bored deep into the hearts of our people, and from them sprang a terrible tree, the branches of which reached into every province of Ulthuan fair, and when that tree bore fruit, the fruit it bore was Slaanesh."

Although I could find no more translated references to Slaanesh in these records, my curiosity as to the relationship between the Elves of Ulthuan and Chaos had been roused.

I asked Magister Kant if his libraries contained any other texts dealing with the history of the Elves. He put me in the direction of another investigative journal, this one written by the first Patriarch of the College of Light, who was also the first Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, Magister Volans. Apparently, so taken was Volans by the knowledge and wisdom of his mentor (the afor mentioned Teclis of Ulthuan), that he dedicated his life to learning all that he could about the Elves and their culture. His writings remain to this day the Empire's standard texts on these subjects.

These are some of his findings, extracted from his truly colossal work, 'The Elder Races':

"Unlike our own race, with its burning ambition and competitive mentality, the Asur learned to control their more aggressive tendencies early on in their cultural evolution. Their extreme longevity and near total immunity to disease meant that their lives lacked the urgency that typifies our own short existence and which grants us our greatest passions and fears.

"A commonality of spirit and pursuit of aesthetics seemed to play a greater role in the formation of the Asur's first towns and settlements, rather than the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, as was the case with us humans. In fact, the Asur appeared to have no real concept of government or kingship until it was thrust upon them by the necessity of driving back the first great Chaos Incursion.

"Interestingly enough, at the dawn of their race, the Asur seemed in many ways to be almost immune to the influence and worship of the first three Great Powers of Chaos, and it is due partly to this that I believe they were unprepared to stave off their eventual degradation. So confident were they in their wisdom and beauty, and so far in advance of the few other races that roamed the prehistory of our world (including the Dwarfs), the Asur did not notice their own growing decadence until it was far too late.

"By nature, the Asur are very different from humans, and though they might look similar to us, they are in fact of an entirely separate line. Their empirical senses and cognitive processes are heightened to such a degree that a comparison to the human equivalent would be both futile and a moot point. In a similar way, so too are their emotive responses and imaginations vastly sharper and more elaborate than those of the average human. While they are little more disposed to the pursuit and expression of good or evil than the average human, the typical Asur can conceive of the most obscene cruelties and aspire to the most perfect ideals.

"With such a vivid imagination and finely honed senses, the world presented the Asur with a potentially endless source of emotional and intellectual gratification. Even if the Asur did

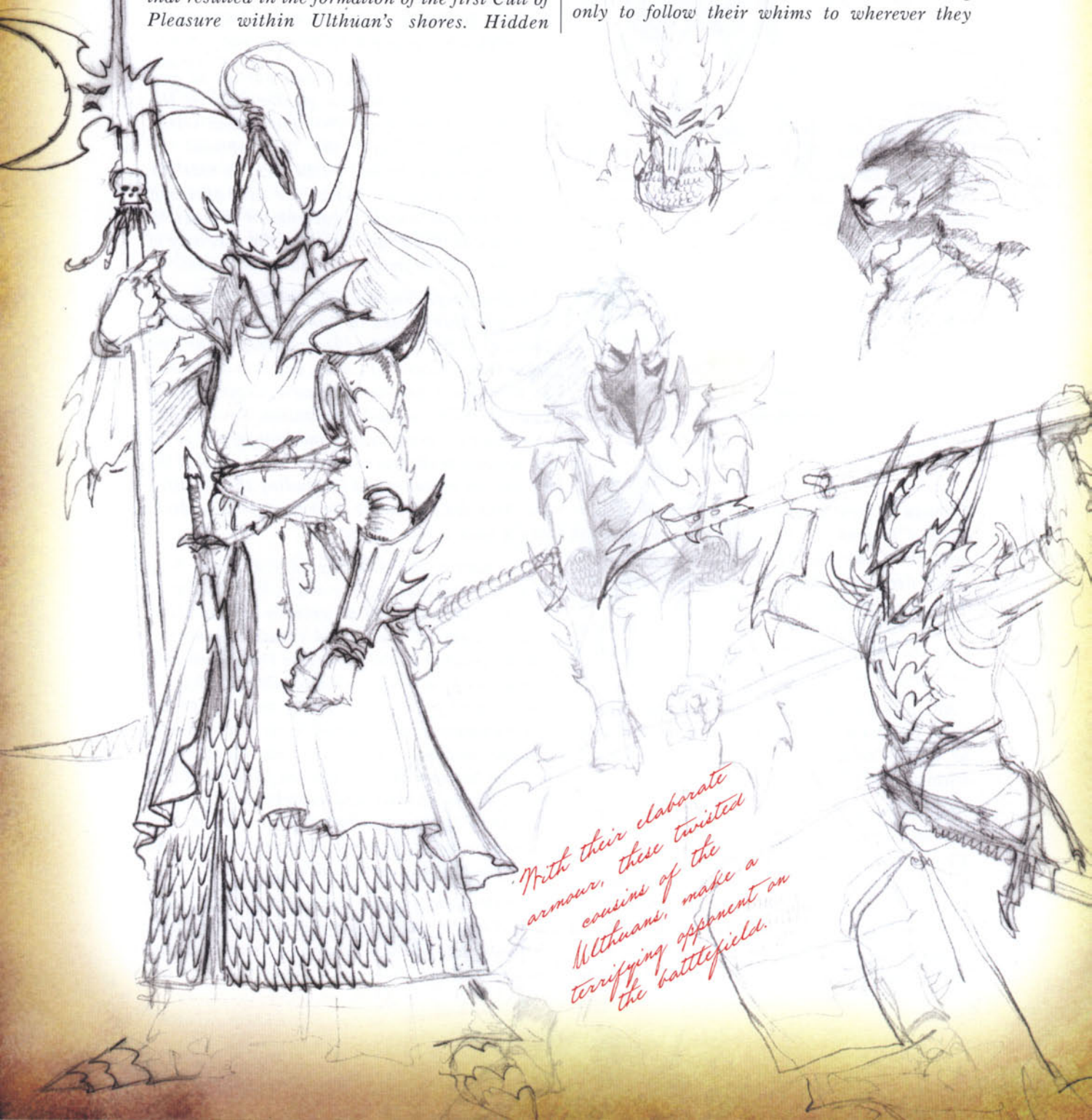
Slaanesh & the Elves of Ulthuan

not yield to the manifold pleasures around them, the temptation was still there as a constant source of disquiet in their waking minds.

"It was through the disquiet of their unrealised pleasures that Slaanesh managed to get a foothold upon their island home of Ulthuan, especially amongst those people of Nagarythe who had already been tainted by Aenarion's use of the Widowmaker – dread blade of the Asur war-god – Khaela Mensha Khaine.

"Slaanesh fanned the aesthetic and sensualistic inclinations of the Asur – a gradual process – that resulted in the formation of the first Cult of Pleasure within Ulthuan's shores. Hidden beneath a veneer of discovery and artistic expression, the Cult encouraged the Asur to be more inward looking and selfish by nature. Their art, sport, philosophy and the emotive responses to these things were pushed to their extremes, and before long fully half of the Asur's once high-minded and beautiful empire sank into an all-out orgy of egotism and self-gratification.

"This decline culminated in the cultural schism that the Asur have come to refer to as 'The Sundering', where their people split into two factions. One faction burned with the hatred of Khaine and the selfishness of Slaanesh, desiring only to follow their whims to wherever they



With their elaborate armour, these twisted cousins of the Ulthuans, make a terrifying opponent on the battlefield.

Slaanesh & the Elves of Ulthuan

might lead, while the other faction felt that this new mindset flew in the face of all that the Asur stood for. After the assassination of the Phoenix King, Bel-Shanaar, these two factions found political figureheads in the shape of Aenarion's second son, the cruel Malekith, and Imrik, the newly elected Phoenix King.

"From that moment on, the two factions descended into open warfare, and the children of Ulthuan were forever split in twain."

If the Elves had been exposed to Chaos millennia before the rise of humanity as a civilisation, why is it that there are almost no reports of Elves ever marching within the armies of the Chaos Gods?

More specifically, how do the Elves of Naggaroth survive as an independent culture, despite the fact that they have embraced the worship of Chaos? In all their many thousands of years of Chaos worship, the Elves of Naggaroth still seem to maintain sovereignty over their own motivations and culture.

I shall look into this further.

Their sinister icons are often wrought as jewellery

In their fall from grace the dark elves should have been completely consumed by the dark powers, yet they have somehow retained their independence.

Further study of Elves & the Power of Chaos

A CONTINUATION OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, FOCUSSING ON A THEORY CONCERNING THE FALL OF THE ELVES, AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE HUMAN RACE THAT THIS STUDY HAS REVEALED.

MY CONTINUED research into the Magisters' records has proven fruitful! As I have shown previously in my investigations, when humans give themselves over to the worship of Chaos, in a very short space of time their own motivations and desires seem to be subsumed by the motivations and desires of the Chaos God they worship. So how is it that these 'Dark' Elves have not been consumed by Chaos as well? They are, after all, a cruel people, saturated with magic and openly worshipping Chaos, all while living in close proximity to the Northern Wastes. One would therefore be forgiven for assuming that their race would be a prime feeding ground for the Daemon Gods.

Yet the truth is that the people of Naggaroth do not consider themselves to be the slaves of Chaos, and they are right. So how have they remained so independent of the active dominion of the Chaos Gods?

This self-same question seems to have bothered Volans also, and he tries to address them further on in his dissertation:

"...and so it was the collapse of this polar 'Gateway', or, at least, so the Asur maintain, that led to the creation of the world as it is today. The vast area of dimensional instability created by its collapse, enabled many of the strange entities that lived within the Realm of Chaos to manifest themselves to some degree or other upon the physical plane. These entities were then free to pursue their incomprehensible whims and compulsions with the mortal inhabitants of our world.

"The most ancient annals from Ulthuan described how the majority of these entities were small, wild things – creatures we might now recognise as the various elementals, sprites, fairies, imps, dryads and sylphs (to name but a few), of the 'natural' world. Yet there were also other larger and more powerful beings that began to manifest themselves with the collapse of the Old Slann's gateways. These larger entities, being creatures of thought and magic, had no physical shape of their own, and often took on forms that were dictated by the conscious and subconscious fears, beliefs and expectations of the mortals they had come to prey upon.

"In this way, the simple deities that the elder races had developed for themselves across millennia of evolution, suddenly stopped being mere concepts or items of faith, and became actual beings with immense power and independent identity – they truly were the first daemons, gods and angels of the Empyrean.

"But the Asur have never made good servants. Long before the collapse of the Slann's Gateway, the Asur already had a strong understanding of magic and the basic laws governing how Chaos interacted with matter and intelligence. This knowledge allowed them to control many of the lesser Chaos entities, and form a more symbiotic relationship with some of the more ordered greater entities. Without even realising what they were doing, the Asur began to impose their will and expectations onto some of these greater entities, forging them into benign deities that personified various aspects of the Asur's ideals, hopes and aspirations.

"It was Aenarion, called The Defender, who first took this a step further by allowing the most powerful of the Asur's newly manifested gods, Asuryan, to use him as a vessel for His power. In a sense, Aenarion became a kind of Chaos Champion, although, because his god was (amongst other things) a manifestation of Asur dignity, culture and self-belief, he fought against the forces of Chaos Unbounded rather than with them. Yet despite his success, Aenarion went too far, and was eventually consumed by the drives that made up the deity that possessed him.

"It did not matter that Asuryan personified all that was good and beautiful about the Asur as a race, He was still a god, and, just as with the Gods of Chaos and their Champions, eventually His Purpose subsumed the will of His vessel. In time, Aenarion was consumed by feelings of duty towards his people, taking all their sorrows onto himself, and, with personal tragedy stacking atop racial murder, he eventually walked the path to oblivion. He drew the sword of Khaine, opening himself up to become a vessel for the war-god's power and will as well as Asuryan's. No mortal frame, however mighty, was designed to contain the conflicted spirits of two opposing deities. Not even Aenarion.

"Once the Chaos threat had been nullified and Aenarion had forevermore left the pages of Asur

further study of Elves & the Power of Chaos

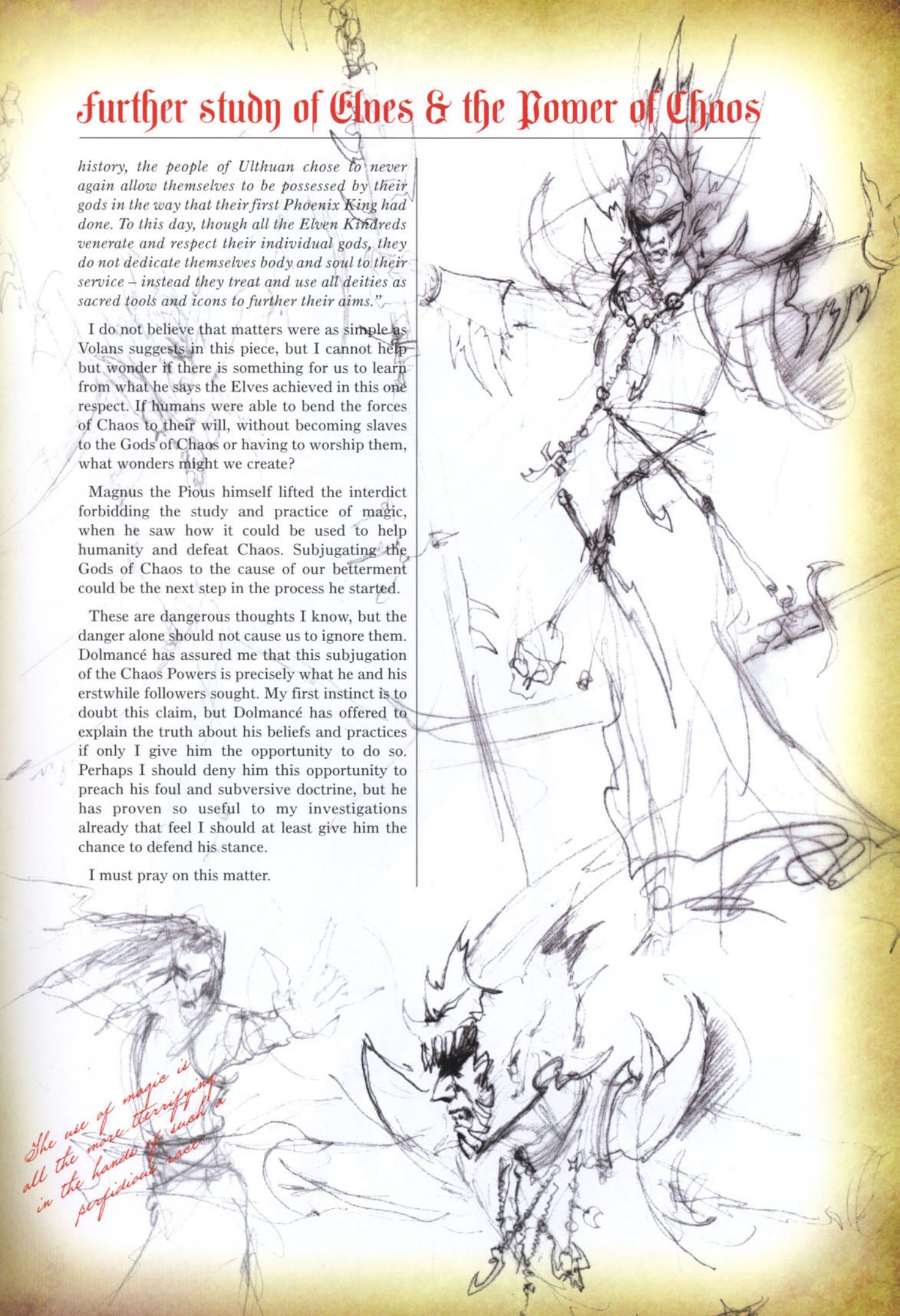
history, the people of Ulthuan chose to never again allow themselves to be possessed by their gods in the way that their first Phoenix King had done. To this day, though all the Elven Kindreds venerate and respect their individual gods, they do not dedicate themselves body and soul to their service – instead they treat and use all deities as sacred tools and icons to further their aims."

I do not believe that matters were as simple as Volans suggests in this piece, but I cannot help but wonder if there is something for us to learn from what he says the Elves achieved in this one respect. If humans were able to bend the forces of Chaos to their will, without becoming slaves to the Gods of Chaos or having to worship them, what wonders might we create?

Magnus the Pious himself lifted the interdict forbidding the study and practice of magic, when he saw how it could be used to help humanity and defeat Chaos. Subjugating the Gods of Chaos to the cause of our betterment could be the next step in the process he started.

These are dangerous thoughts I know, but the danger alone should not cause us to ignore them. Dolmancé has assured me that this subjugation of the Chaos Powers is precisely what he and his erstwhile followers sought. My first instinct is to doubt this claim, but Dolmancé has offered to explain the truth about his beliefs and practices if only I give him the opportunity to do so. Perhaps I should deny him this opportunity to preach his foul and subversive doctrine, but he has proven so useful to my investigations already that feel I should at least give him the chance to defend his stance.

I must pray on this matter.



The Forbidden Arts

A collection of illustrations by the artist Johannes the White. With a view to illuminating the reader as to the exotic and multifarious forms of the Pleasure God's followers.



I commissioned these pictures from Johannes the White, who illustrated and illuminated the Church of Sigmar's tome: 'The Book of Dread Daemons'. Some say years of producing such pieces has had an adverse effect on his mind. Having met with him on several occasions, I would dispute this utterly.





I can hardly bear to look at this depiction. It is a product of my indiscretion. Upon one of my meetings with Johannes the White, I told him of some of the disturbingly lurid dreams I had been having of late. He questioned me at great length on the manner of my dreams and what sort of creatures were involved. Seeking solace in a friendly ear, I told him every shameful detail.



When I saw him again he showed me this, an almost exact representation of the daemonette who compromised me in my sleep. I was shocked; I still am. I can hardly bear to look, but my eyes seek out the picture seemingly against my will...

30/5/2517 I.C.

It is my fervent wish that this study be over. I am assured that I am well protected here, wrapped around as I am by the prayers of my brothers, and shriven daily by the master of my Order. Yet it is with a heaviness of spirit that I continue with my investigation.

Dalmancé has betrayed what trust I placed in him. I see that now. Since our first interview he has sought to undermine my beliefs at every turn, and yet such was his gilded words and silver tongue that I did not notice until the damage had already been done. I should not have allowed him to speak so freely, or write in my journals. Words, once spoken, cannot be unheard, and words once read cannot be unseen. I find my nights now plagued by the most frightening dreams, and my days are spent questioning the truths that I have for so long accepted as absolute. Nothing is as it should be.

And yet I am surprised at how deeply I have been affected by Dalmancé. Throughout my long years within the seminary of Altdorf, learning at the feet of some of the greatest doctors of Sigmar's Holy Order, I was taught to question my faith and answer its detractors with confidence. Since then I have often found my faith in Sigmar challenged. But I have never doubted the implicit rightness of that faith. Yet now I am doing just that, and I do not understand why this should be.

I confronted Dalmancé, accusing him of having ensorcelled me with some fell enchantment. He denied my accusation and laughed in my face. He said that my doubts were entirely my own, and he had the gall to suggest that confession rather than accusation might better alleviate my suffering conscience.

How I hated him then! I wanted to wipe that mocking smile from his face and show him that there are some things that not even a twisted hedonist such as he could find pleasure in. I exercised my authority and had his stay of execution revoked. I foolishly thought that faced with his summary death his attitude would change. But as with so many things recently, I was wrong.

Contrary to my hope, Dalmancé's mood seemed to improve when I told him what was to happen to him that afternoon. He told me he was gratified that his words had affected me so deeply. I tried to maintain a cold and self-righteous detachment from then on, but I found matters becoming only worse as he was taken to his execution pyre. In all my days I have never witnessed anything so perverse and disturbing.

He did not struggle as they tied him to his wooden post, and seemed pleased as he was doused in oil. I searched for even a hint of fear or subterfuge on his features, but there was nought but excitement and joy. When his sharp and amused eyes met with mine, and I knew that I could not even comfort myself with the notion that this man was insane. He was simply damned. Or so I choose to believe.

As a torch was put to the base of his pyre Dalmancé broke eye contact with me, and raised his face to the heavens and, even as the flames began to lap at his feet, he said this prayer which has been repeating again and again inside my mind ever since:

"What ecstasy you are, my Lord, what ecstasy you are!
Your affections are more intoxicating than wine,
With but one glance you ravish my spirit."

"This pyre consumes only my innocence, for the rest of me is already yours.
The flames that caress my skin and hair fill me with delight,
How my reason swims with the opiate of your blessings!"

"Oh my Lord, you are more glorious than the sun!
More chilling than moonlight."

More terrible than an army with their swords and banners!"

"All I have is yours, my sweetling Master, my darling Lord.
My soul rushes into your embrace."

After that I left. I could not bear to watch a man executed in such a way, especially when the man in question sighed and moaned as though he were in the arms of a lover, rather than being roasted at the centre of a giant bonfire. This is proof, if any such proof was needed, of the terrible perversity of the servants of Slaanesh. The memory of it fills me with horror, and I cannot seem to exorcise the image from my mind.

2/6/2517 I.C.

Today I received this letter from none other than Ramheldt van Hadden, the Witch Hunter Captain himself. He presided over Dolmancé's execution and has been my contact within the Order of Templars since my investigations began.

Herr Richter,

I could not help but notice your distress during the execution of the cultist Dolmancé.

It is vital that you keep an emotional and intellectual distance from your dealings with the thrice damned servants of Slaanesh. The Slaaneshi are by far the most seductive and reasonable personalities of all the servants of Chaos, and their every word, however innocuous, is designed to cause the maximum distress to those that hear it. Hence the reason I allowed none of my own men to question the Marquis.

These voluptuaries and heretics will not even be deterred from their lascivious ways by the subtle pressures and probing instruments of harsher inquisition. Conspiring against all logic and decency, even when faced with torture and death, these libertines take pleasure from the most ruthless of inquiries, debauching themselves with their inhuman dissolution upon the racks and wheels of Verity. For this reason, I was not at all surprised by Dolmancé's lewd reaction to the flames that consumed him, although I must say that witnessing such perversion disgusts me as much today as it did all those years ago when I first took the witch hunter's vows.

I am impressed by your successful interrogation of Dolmancé. Using your own quiet methods, you have succeeded in extracting more information from a Slaaneshi cultist than any other investigator that I have met or heard of. Yet even so, I am not sure that you have come away from the experience unscathed. I have seen your attitude and demeanour change; from the man you were several months ago when you first came to me to begin your investigations, to the quiet and introverted one you have since become.

Be careful in your studies, Herr Richter. There are many roads to damnation, and not all of them are as easy to recognise as the one which Dolmancé walked. I have enclosed with this letter an extract from my own investigation into the heinous ways and means of Chaos. I hope it proves of some use in your studies.

As ever,

Ramheldt van Hadden

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THE ROAD TO POWER

by Ramheldt van Hadden, Witch Hunter Captain.

To those who would seek to serve the Infernal Powers, sanity must be their first sacrifice upon the altars of their new and terrible gods. There can be no doubt of that.

I believe that it is human nature to be drawn to the mysterious and unknown, but I believe also that it is human nature to be intellectually and emotionally lazy. Therein lies our greatest weakness. The seductive promises and many blandishments of Chaos can often prove too much for weak-minded individuals. This is because it panders to this laziness, as well as to our stronger instincts of self-preservation and independence.

For those ambitious and foolish enough to take it, Chaos offers a quick road to very real power, and in our world where justice, wealth and happiness are often the prerogatives of a privileged few, the Chaos Gods can seem to offer a perverse hope to the destitute. Sometimes, to the most desperate, the only escape from starvation and a slow death appears to be in the egalitarian favours proffered by the Chaos Gods. So, whatever the rights and wrongs of it, there are those who willingly throw in their lot with the Infernal Powers.

Those that do must give of themselves freely and completely – the daemon-gods demand nothing less. Supplicants must dedicate their bodies, minds and souls, and leave behind all vestiges of their former humanity. Once dedicated these foolish individuals are doomed to the all-or-nothing existence of an aspiring champion of Chaos, their reward being either ultimate power or endless oblivion. There is no half -way point – the Chaos Gods are fickle in their attentions, and a life in their service is nothing if not a gamble.

Few candidates are deemed worthy by the gods to bear Their Mark. More often than not, it takes a great endeavour or supreme effort to earn the favour of a Chaos Power, and many a vile deed of staggering corruption has been carried out by aspiring champions in the hopes of attracting the gaze of their chosen god. Yet these would-be champions must accept such acts as the natural price of a life in the service of Chaos; the rules will not be altered for anyone once the game has begun.

Mutation and madness are also part of the price of worshipping the Chaos Gods, but again, and conversely, mutation and madness are often the Chaos Gods'

'rewards' to their favoured servants as well. One would be forgiven for wondering why so many take the horrific risk of becoming an aspiring champion of Chaos. In fact, to any true servant of Sigmar, I'm sure even destitution, starvation and injustice would be preferable to a life living at the whim of the all-powerful and insane Chaos Gods. But one must take into account how these Powers operate. Unlike Holy Sigmar, Who invests His divine Purpose and Will within His servants as a gestalt whole, the Gods of Chaos seem to invest Their own debased strength and purpose within individuals whom They deem worthy – hence the process and culture of aspiration that surrounds the Champions of Chaos.

This culture of aspiration gives the Chaos Gods the opportunity to test the strength and dedication of potential candidates, so that they can judge which are 'worthy' and, more importantly, able, to become the mouthpieces of Chaos. It is this directness that brings about the dichotomy of the Chaos champion.

A successful champion is very likely to attract the attention of his patron deity for a brief moment, and be rewarded – perhaps with the gift of a magical weapon, or maybe with some uncanny supernatural ability. This can make the recipient of such rewards feel very close to, and favoured by, his god and in a way they might not have while in the service of other, more wholesome deities.

On rare occasions, the most dedicated Chaos champions are awarded the highest accolade possible: they are elevated to the status of daemons. This is the ultimate reward and goal of all champions, and having achieved this state their immortality is assured.

For the rest, however, their flirtation with power often ends as abruptly as it began. The Lords of Chaos have their own reckoning of mortal affairs, and when a champion is found to be lacking in some way or other, his punishment is awful indeed. For an aspiring champion, the reward of failure is to be cast down to the state of a mindless spawn of chaos, fated to run throughout eternity, gibbering and shrieking, with all the other countless individuals who have been used and then tossed aside by the gods of Chaos.

But then these are the risks that aspiring champions must accept, for, if they truly are on a short road to power, then it is also a very pitted road. No man can escape that day when his fate will find him out. To exist in twisted glory as a Daemon Prince or to languish as a mindless spawn – this is the true price of a life spent in the service of Chaos, and were I to live a thousand years, no inducement would encourage me to seek either.



To most citizens of the Empire, who live within her folds, sights such as these are nothing more than ingredients in tales to frighten children into obedience. But our armies, and those of our allies face such barbaric monsters almost every day. We are in the midst of a constant war, and whether you live in Middenheim or Nuln, all our in peril.

Tribes of the Serpent

BEING A CURSORY EXAMINATION OF THE TRIBES OF THE NORTH, SPECIFICALLY THOSE THAT WORSHIP INCARNATIONS OF SLAANESH. DETAILING THE EXTREME ACTS OF DEVOTION THEY ARE DRIVEN TO.

FAR TO THE NORTH in those accursed lands that lie in the shadow of the Chaos Realm, barbarian tribes openly worship the daemon-gods. Some of these tribes worship patron daemons as their gods and protectors, but others again dedicate themselves to one of the four great Powers. Of these, I shall limit myself to the tribe of Loesh the Serpent.

I have mentioned earlier in this journal that Loesh is simply another aspect of Slaanesh. His tribes differ from others in that they embrace hedonism and excess as holy, something that would be anathema to the severe worldview of the tribal servants of the other gods. But the Great Serpent is mysterious and exotic, and draws to Himself more converts with every year that passes.

The tribes dedicated to Loesh the Serpent believe that their lord lives in the sea, and they say that He can sometimes be seen rising from the depths to consume young maidens and youths. Water is his element, for it is always shifting and can be cold and frigid or warm and inviting. Overcome with religious ecstasy, some tribesmen actually fling themselves from cliffs into the bosom of the roaring ocean, so that they might join their sensual lord in his watery domain. Prisoners are also thrown down from these cliffs, often with large stones tied to their legs in an effort to travel deeper in their search for the Great Serpent.

The tribesmen of the Serpent indulge themselves in all kinds of debauchery. They quaff vast quantities of alcohol, and the consumption of rare hallucinogenic plants and roots is common. The visions granted by this unrefined flora are regarded as signs and portents from the Loesh Himself, and who can say if they are not? For the god of Pleasure loves all excess in his name and revels in the helpless addictions of his deluded servants.

Before battle, the warriors of the Serpent's tribes tend to brew themselves intoxicating liquids that render them almost completely oblivious to pain and fear, and encourages them to luxuriate in even the greatest dangers. The warriors sing their praises to the Serpent as they march to war, and scream their ululating battle cries once their enemies are met – a sound as terrifying to their enemies as it is pleasing to their god.

When these warriors sweep down from their northern climes to raid our own fair lands, they, more than any other of the marauder tribes, debauch themselves with rape and pillage. They are also the greatest slavers of all the northern tribes, and they have been known to carry off the women and children of entire towns, though for what fell purpose I shudder to contemplate.

Where the servants of Khorne care nothing for the pain and misery they inflict in their god's name, the Serpent's tribesmen take their greatest pleasure from inflicting these things upon their enemies. Their weapons are sharp and their twisted minds are inventive, and they play with their victims before finally despatching them. A cruel and erotic pleasure is taken in their enemies' growing desperation as they are killed slowly and callously, one cut at a time.



Their ferocity in appearance, you can be sure, is more than a match for their ferocity in combat.

The Saga of Styrkaar

BEING A CONCISE RECOUNT OF THE SAGA OF STYRKAAR AS LEARNT BY JANUSZ HANAUER ON ONE OF HIS MANY JOURNEYS INTO THE SAVAGE REALMS WHICH LIE TO THE NORTH OF OUR DEAR EMPIRE.

I HAVE RECEIVED just recently an account from my esteemed colleague, the anthropologist Janusz Hanauer, of a saga that is being told across the length and breadth of Norsca. Where it is not unusual for the unlettered barbarians of the north to invent new sagas with every sunrise, only to recount them at every sunset, it is unusual for any saga to gain such far reaching popularity in such a relatively short space of time, as Hanauer assures me this 'Saga of Styrkaar' has.

In addition to this, Hanauer tells me that this is one of the first sagas he has come across that mentions that most dreaded of all the warlords of Chaos, Archaon. It is alarming to think that this name has become one of such common folklore as far south-west as Norsca, when most of the other tales and references to him focus around the eastern steppes and far, far to the north around the inner lands of the Chaos Wastes.

Here follows Hanauer's own annotated version of the saga:

"This is the saga of Styrkaar, chosen servant of Shornaal, Darkling Prince of Chaos.

"Styrkaar was born into the Sortsvinaer tribe on the northern coast of cold Norsca. His father, Jerg Svengor, was a mighty warlord, and throughout his childhood Styrkaar was treated with the respect due to the son of such a renowned leader of men. Yet the Norscans are a hard people in a hard country and they must be strong if they are to survive, and no warrior of that icy land, no matter how great and respected, would have a weak or spoilt son. So, just as any other boy, Styrkaar learned how to hunt and fish, and he was taught all the skills of a warrior.

"Jerg Svengor was a formidable man, harsh and volatile as all great leaders of the northern climes seem wont to be, and oft were the time when Styrkaar felt his father's fists. Yet, when another warrior beat young Styrkaar, Svengor had the warrior whipped until his back was bloodied and flayed bare of its skin. But, even-handed in his justice, Svengor then beat his son, for he agreed that Styrkaar did deserve to be punished, but wanted all to know that it was no one else's right to mete it out.

"It is said that from the earliest age Styrkaar had a companion, unseen by the rest of the tribe, and as a babe he would giggle at the antics of this being as it danced above his crib. This shadow-friend told Styrkaar its name, Sle'zuzu, and bade the boy never to speak of his presence, not to friends nor family, else he would disappear, never to return. An intelligent and devious child, Styrkaar accepted this without question, and not for a moment in all the years of his childhood did he think it strange to have Sle'zuzu as his constant companion.

"For his part, Sle'zuzu would whisper words and secrets to the young chieftain's son that made his life easier. If Styrkaar was caught in some childish scrape, then Sle'zuzu would speak quietly in his ear. Prompted by his shadow-friend, the young boy would repeat these words out loud, and his punishment was often lessened because of them. Sle'zuzu seemed to know exactly the right words Styrkaar needed to say to calm the angry and make people pleased by his apparent wit and intelligence.

"Styrkaar was a popular child, making friends effortlessly and charming adults who were impressed by his fearless attitude and total self-confidence. His peers respected him, for he received no favouritism from his harsh father. He trained alongside the other children in the techniques of warfare, and of crewing the great Norse longships across the icy sea. Blessed was the boy, for he excelled in all things, impressing his elders and filling his father with unspoken pride.

"By his eighteenth summer Styrkaar had secured for himself a powerful position within his tribe, and all held him in high esteem. He had grown tall and strong and was one of the mightiest warriors of his people. Many were the raids that he led and won against rival tribes, and he had even subdued the Kurgan to the north, and ravaged several coastal towns of the 'effete' southern peoples of the Empire and Bretonnia. Both his peers and the older veterans of the Sortsvinaer followed his lead without question, for such was their faith in Svengor's son. But for his part, Svengor's pride for his son had begun to sour, for he knew that his popularity with the tribe and the loyalty he inspired within its warriors was a threat to his

The Saga of Styrkaar

own position as headman. His treatment of Styrkaar became ever more brutal, and this served only to fan the growing resentment of his people. Prompted by Sle'zuzu, Styrkaar quietly fuelled this resentment, though he was ever careful never to appear disloyal.

"Eventually, a confrontation arose between father and son, during a feast celebrating yet another of Styrkaar's successful raids. Jerg Svengor, his faced reddened by drink, refused to join in the toast raised in his son's honour. Instead he pointed at Styrkaar and stated that his son would never equal the greatness that he himself possessed. As the gathered tribesmen began to murmur disapprovingly at their liege-lord's drunken words, Sle'zuzu, who spoke only rarely to Styrkaar these days, prompted the young warrior into action. He rose from his seat, and, with Sle'zuzu feeding him the words to speak, calmly asked his father to raise his goblet to join in the toast. Outraged, Svengor leapt unsteadily to his feet and swung his fist in a clumsy blow, smashing Styrkaar to the ground. I can imagine that a slight smile touched Styrkaar's lips then, as he rose to his feet once more, wiping a trickle of blood from his cracked lips.

"His fellow tribesmen had all risen from their benches to surround Svengor and his son. All was quiet in the hall, save for the occasional crack of burning wood from the firepit, until a voice sounded at the back of the throng, shouting for Styrkaar to strike back against his father. The young warrior smiled, for surely the voice had been none other than that of his invisible companion, Sle'zuzu. Other voices soon joined with this one, until the entire hall rocked with the sound of people urging Styrkaar on.

It was then that Svengor realised his predicament. No one in the hall called his name: none of





The armour of a typical - if such a word can be used to describe them - Slaaneshi champion is elegant and graceful when compared to the brutal angles of a Khornate warrior. Some have suggested that the style is like a perverted version of high elf armour.

The Saga of Styrkaar

his warriors stood by him. He knew that he was facing death, death at the hands of his only son. But his path was set, and drunk or no, there was only one course of action open to a warrior in his position. Turning back to his still smiling son, Svengor balled his fists once more and charged.

"That night, Styrkaar became the new Jerg of the tribe.

"The feasting continued for three solid days and nights. When at last the celebration ended, Styrkaar lay exhausted and exhilarated on his father's furred pallet, a sleeping woman on either side of him. Sle'zuzu came to him then, whispering in his sibilant voice. He told Styrkaar to raise an altar to the Dark Prince Slaanesh, or 'Shornaal' as he is known amongst the Sortsvinaer. Sle'zuzu told Styrkaar that Slaanesh was already looking down upon him, and had already shown his divine favour upon the young warrior. Styrkaar was well pleased with these words, and lay back onto his soft pallet with visions of grandeur and excess filling his mind.

"During the following years, Styrkaar led the Sortsvinaer to ever greater and more ambitious raids and battles, revelling in the excessive slaughter he brought down upon his enemies. Always as he fought, he heaped his devotions upon the god Slaanesh, and always did he return victorious. After one such raid, Slaanesh made it known that Styrkaar's actions were indeed pleasing and, as the sky darkened above, the spirit of Sle'zuzu was forced into Styrkaar's mind and convulsing body, blending the two into one. Even as his warriors watched, Styrkaar's teeth lengthened into delicate fangs, and his skin took on an unnatural glow from within, as if a cold light burned just beneath the surface. Knowing nothing of Sle'zuzu, Styrkaar's unquestioningly loyal warriors saw only that their beloved leader had been touched by the gods, and fell to their knees in adoration and wonder.

"As the years progressed, Styrkaar's fame continued to spread across the lands of the north, and his favour with Slaanesh became increasingly apparent. He rode into battle upon the back of a strange serpent-steed – a daemonic gift from his patron and master. Warriors came from all over Norsca and the northern wastes to fight alongside one so favoured by the gods, hoping that in doing so they might themselves gain a measure of their new lord's greatness. Styrkaar bathed in the praise and devotion that was lavished upon him, and his followers continued to grow in number.

"And yet, though worshipped almost as a god, Styrkaar did not grow soft under the weight of such adoration. In battle he was said to move with fluid grace, filling his enemies with a mixture of awe and horror. He gloried in slaughter, rampaging through the ranks of his enemies, meting out death and suffering with every flick of his curved blade. His greatest delight was in the pain and fear he inflicted upon his enemies, and the rewards he would reap from them once they had been subdued. In battle, his followers would scream, revelling in his psychotic debauchery, bustling to get as close as they could to his exalted form. If any of them got too near, Styrkaar would lash out at them, and they would fall back, ecstatic at having been touched by their idol.

"Styrkaar's killing spree continued unabated for two decades. In bloody combat, Styrkaar and his followers slaughtered many of the powerful warbands that roamed the Chaos Wastes, including that of dread Karnak and his devotees of Khorne, and the mysterious Asgeiir and his masked warriors of Tzeentch. In hand-to-hand combat, Styrkaar is said to have slaughtered Vandred the Majestic, a favoured Champion of Slaanesh. Upon the Champions death, his own warband dropped to their knees to sing Styrkaar's praises.

"Eventually, there came the day when whispers began to reach Styrkaar of a warrior blessed beyond all others, who bore the most ancient and holy artefacts of the gods. The name of Archaon broke through the haze of adoration that surrounded Styrkaar. At first, the name and the awe that surrounded it angered him, but his god, the rapturous Slaanesh, made it known that Archaon was within His favour, as well as that of the entire pantheon of the gods of Chaos. Styrkaar was not to stand against him.

"Stories of Archaon's successes continued to spread throughout the lands, and when word came of his arrival within Sortsvinaer territory, the tribes were excited and fearful. They knew that their lord Styrkaar had slain his rival Champion Vandred, and that Vandred had been a favoured companion of Archaon. Many believed that Archaon brought war to the Sortsvinaer, yet Styrkaar remained unmoving within his great hall, even as he was told that

The Saga of Styrkaar

Archaon and his infamous Swords of Chaos approached.

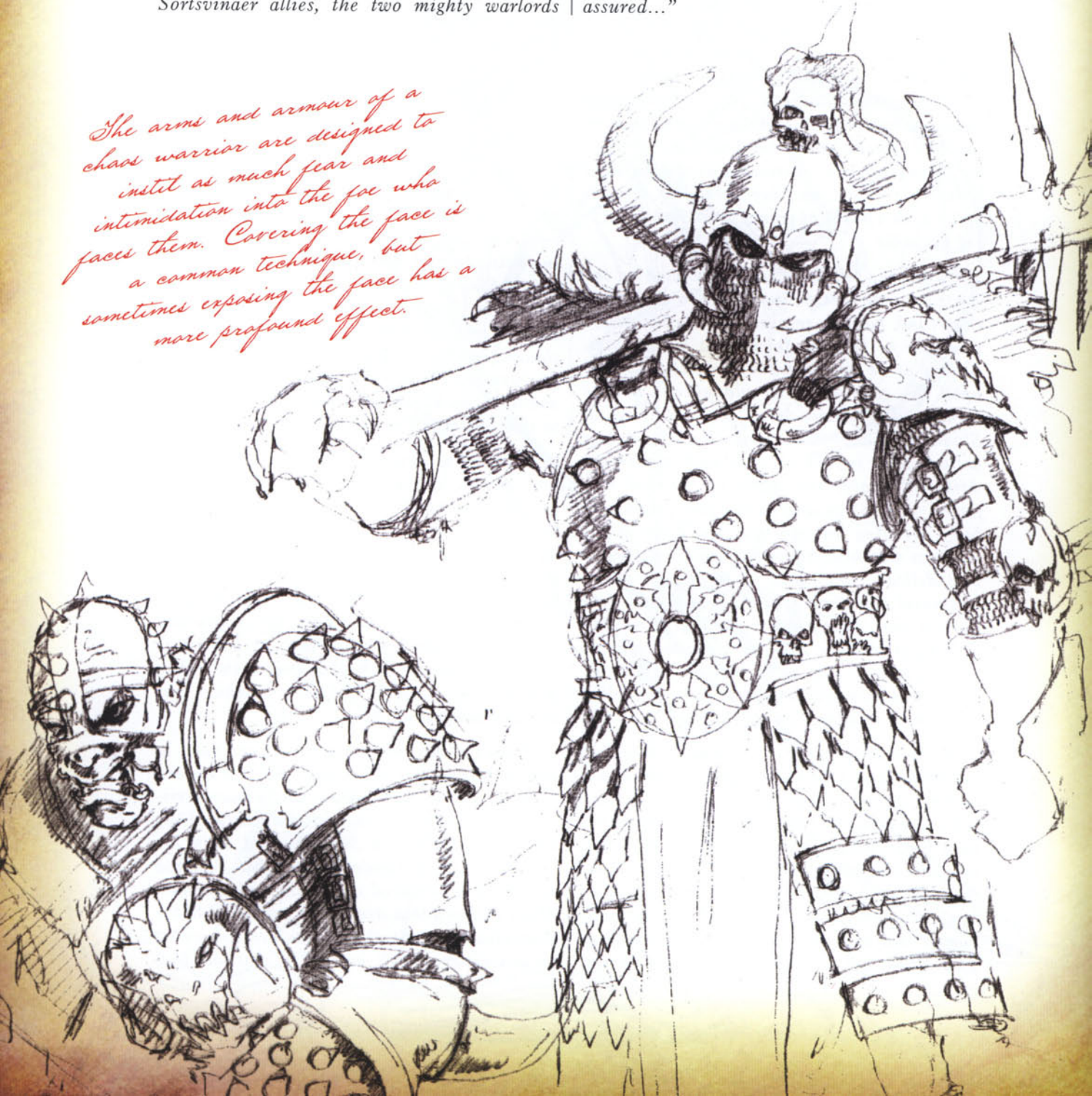
"They rode unopposed through the villages of the Sortsvinaer, and made their way to Styrkaar's hall. Only when Archaon stooped his massive form to enter the hall did Styrkaar stir, raising himself from his reclining pose. With a dismissive wave of his hand, Styrkaar waved his awe-struck attendants from the room.

"When the pair emerged from the hall, they saw that many people had travelled from all over Sortsvinaer to witness the outcome of this meeting. As was the custom amongst Sortsvinaer allies, the two mighty warlords clasped each other's forearms in a firm grasp, and the crowds gathered there filled the air with raucous cheering.

"Styrkaar had struck a pact with Archaon, promising that when the time came, he would launch all his longships to ravage the coast of the Old World, and strike terror behind the lines of their hated southern enemies.

"For his part, Styrkaar no doubt looks towards that day with longing. He knows that Slaanesh is well pleased with his endeavours, and if he performs well in the coming conflict, then surely his path to daemonhood will be assured..."

The arms and armour of a chaos warrior are designed to instil as much fear and intimidation into the foe who faces them. Covering the face is a common technique, but sometimes exposing the face has a more profound effect.



5/7/2517 I.C.

I have found myself deeply troubled of late.

During the course of this investigation I have spent many lonely hours locked behind iron-bound doors, poring over the damned and forbidden texts that rest in the secret libraries of the College of Light, the Templars of Sigmar, and the private collection of our beloved Theogonist, Volkmar.

This work weighs heavily upon me. Never before have I actually feared to read any text or book. Now I do. My eyes burn with exhaustion, yet I cannot close them while one of these damned tomes lies open before me. My gaze is drawn to the letters that crawl across the pages, and is not released until I have read and understood every word of them.

Of all these dark and terrible codices the one that has disturbed me more than any other is the 'Liber Malefic', penned by the insane and long-dead Marius Hallsicher. Although this text offers a truly terrifying insight into the ways, means, and realms of the Chaos Gods, it is not its subject matter that frightens me the most. It is the fate of Hallsicher himself.

Like me, Hallsicher was a dedicated servant of Holy Sigmar, tasked with researching the multifarious Powers of the Great Enemy. During his investigations, Hallsicher found himself struck down with unholy dreams and visions of Chaos in all its horror. It suffices to say that these experiences drove him to a madman's grave, unmourned and reviled by his fellow priests.

Now, like poor Hallsicher, I find myself plagued by nightmares of the Empyrean, throughout both my waking and sleeping hours, and with every day that passes they come with greater frequency. There is no respite and I cannot rest. I have come to fear that I myself may follow Hallsicher into madness.

Angry clouds gather along our northern borders, and I know how vital is my task if our beloved Empire is to prepare itself against the coming storm. Yet one does not simply gaze into the Utterdark and walk from the experience unaffected. I fear the hand of Chaos will close around my heart long before its fingers stretch across our fair land.

Sweet Sigmar, my Lord and God,
Protect and keep me through this endeavour.
Bring me home with eyes unchanged.

Things have became worse. I run out of time... I must work every hour to finish this great book.

~ Richter Kless.
Priest of Sigmar,
Order of the Torch.

Champions of Slaanesh

BEING A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THOSE MOST DANGEROUS OF CREATURES, SLAANESHI CHAMPIONS – THOSE FAVOURED MOST BY THEIR DARK GODS AS BEING HIS MOST VIOLENT AND DEBAUCHED OF WARRIORS.

I DREAM CONSTANTLY of the barren lands beyond the frozen valleys of Norsca, but I do not need to wait for sleep to see them, nor even do I need to close my eyes. The landscapes of the Chaos foothills suddenly impose themselves onto the world around me in perfect clarity. It is as if my perceptions have been cut loose from the bounds of the physical world.

At first I was loath to look about me when these visions descended, but now I see them for the gift they are. Whereas I can watch the servants and slaves of the Infernal Powers, to them I am less than a ghost, as few perceive my passing. I have chosen to believe that this altered state is a gift from Holy Sigmar. I have to believe this.

There appears to be a pattern to these visions. I seem drawn to the multifarious servants and warriors of Slaanesh; forced to witness their heinous activities. Of all these debauched monsters however, it is the Pleasure God's champions that fill me with the most horror and disgust.

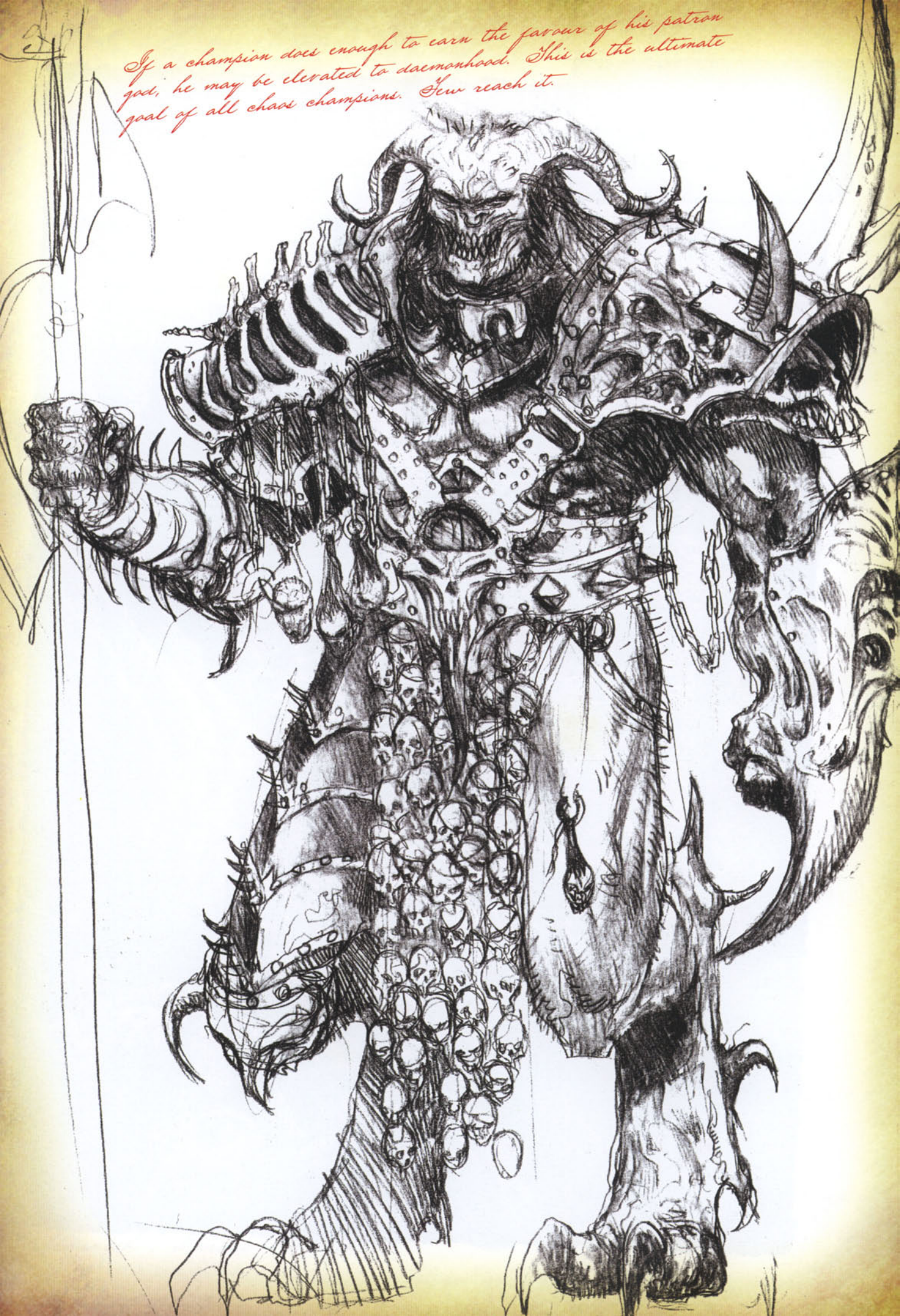
For countless millennia, these most debased servants of Slaanesh have seduced man, woman and beast, with their beauty and art and by means of their incantations, conjurations and accursed crafts. I see them around me, revelling in their perversity, taking their unholy delight in all manner of abominable deeds. But as I have learned from my own sore experience with Dolmancé, even the meanest of the Slaaneshi cannot simply be ignored as just debauched hedonists. The champions of the Pleasure God are the most dangerous of all His mortal servants, both as warriors of appalling ruthlessness and demagogues of alarming skill. They spread their Master's depravity amongst the foolish and unwary, promoting such extreme heresy and deviance as to be an affront to nature itself.

Slaaneshi champions seem to almost always follow the same path: as they become more and more absorbed into their goals, they become increasingly distant from their followers. But this aloof persona only serves to fuel the blind adoration of the champions' followers, and it is not long before the most successful amongst them are worshipped as mortal avatars of their Dark Master's perfection. These champions are proud of the unwholesome gifts that Slaanesh bestows upon them, and bathe openly in the praise heaped on them by those they regard as lesser mortals.

Once they have reached this point, I can see no salvation for these champions. Whether they succeed in being raised to the position of daemons, or whether they are cast down as spawn, they will never escape the will of their tempestuous Master. Indeed, no-one that receives the Mark of a daemon god can ever be saved, and they may never turn from the path of Chaos. Their souls belong to their dark god, and they must stay to the path that He lays out for them, or perish and face an eternity of torment. There is no half-way point.

For the most successful of Slaanesh's champions there comes a point when they become so far removed from mortal concerns that all remnants of humanity are left far behind. From then on their entire existence focuses around their never-ending quest for the ultimate sensation and the fulfilment of their own selfish goals. Once elevated to, or perhaps trapped within this perspective, the champion will see all other creatures as subservient to his will, there to adore and obey him or be destroyed.

I can think of nothing worse than meeting such a warrior in combat – such an effete stance! But so deadly in combat! A grotesque combination.


If a champion does enough to earn the favour of his patron god, he may be elevated to daemonhood. This is the ultimate goal of all chaos champions. Few reach it.

Gardens of Chaos

– discovered in the private collection of Baron Fallon von Kelspar



The Gardens of Chaos

There, on the distant horizon, was the Palace of the Fallen. Its phallic towers, taller than any mortal citadel, wounded the sky. Its gateways were gaping maws and weeping orifices that could swallow or vomit whole legions of lost souls. Cloying perfumes and heady spirits seeped from its opaque walls, polluting everything that lay around them.

Countless slaves had toiled and died carving the palace from a crystalline mountain. It was the work of a thousand generations of misery.

Before the Palace stretched a sickly forest. Corpses lay scattered about it for as far as my eyes could see. Here death was feeding off the dead. These were the Gardens of Chaos.

Here dark trees had petrified, and strange winged creatures nested in amongst the branches, gnawing at the remains of the fallen, their shrieks piercing the air, their nests made from the bones of the dead.

The graves of the fallen had became a rich loam, sucked upon by the trees of that terrible forest. Penetrated by the tree roots, the dead had stirred once more, and each branch bore a skull, mildewed and loathsome, like some macabre fruit. Their fleshless jaws clattered and snapped, and their ceaseless wailing disturbed the dank and melancholy air.

Covering my ears, I journeyed onward, ever closer to the inner Realm of Chaos.

I feel as if I could have written this myself, such do my awful experiences remind of the ~~Contemptuous~~ Lords.

~ From the Liber Malefic, 'The Book Of Contemptuous Slaanesh', Marius Hallscher.

The Denied One

Mostly regarding an account of the dreadful fate of Dechala, and her subsequent and ongoing rampage throughout the northern provinces.

As the days have passed, my grip on the physical world becomes ever more sporadic. One moment I am sitting here in my study, and in the next I find myself in the Northern Wastes once more. But my presence within the Wastes is fluid and ever changing. From one heartbeat to the next I seem to travel vast distances, yet when I try to walk any distance for myself the going is slow and arduous. I do not know where I am being taken, but I know I am being drawn by some external power. I can only pray that my invisible guide is Holy Sigmar, and not some malevolent escort.

Today I found myself before a tall monolith of white marble. Fine silks of purple and gold were draped around it, somehow untouched by the harsh winds and blinding sleet that tore across the Wastes. I knew that this edifice had been erected to the lascivious glory of Slaanesh.

Lifting aside the great swathes of silk, I saw this inscription carved into the pink veined marble of the monolith:

"I write of my love, I write of my mistress, she who is the Daughter of Pleasure, the Sister of Delight.

"Though her arms and neck sparkle with gorgeous jewels, they are dull and devoid of lustre next to the seductive malice that shines from her eyes.



Her face speaks of her anger that was born from her father's betrayal.

"Her lips are full and wanton, her teeth are needle-like pearls. In her hand she holds a golden Chalice, overflowing with the wine of her hatred.

"She is drunk with the blood of righteous men, and her body sways to the song of lost innocence.

"Though I long for her embrace, I fear her, for I know that though Death stands before me, my lady shall never let me go.

"Traveller, heed my words. The Favoured Concubine has returned, and she shall claim back all that was denied her."

I have had time to muse upon these words and I believe I know of whom they speak. The 'Favoured Concubine' can be none other than the vile Slaaneshi creature known as Dechala. Dechala who causes the hearts of men to go astray. Dechala who appears in the dreams of night and in the vision the day. Dechala who burns and casts down with nightmares the lands and peoples of Sigmar. Dechala, the Denied One.

Though I sit close to my fire, nothing can warm the chill inspired within me. This murderous harlot has plagued the Mortal Realms for longer than Imperial histories record. Throughout my researches I have uncovered numerous legends about her, although no two concur on all the details of her past. There are, however, twelve accounts that are interesting in their consistency.

Some suggest that Dechala's near-immortality is in fact part of a curse laid on her as punishment for some terrible crime long ago – although who laid the curse and what her crime might have been, the legends do not agree. One legend that I found of particular pertinence tells that Dechala was once a beautiful princess of far-off Ulthuan who fell (or was pushed) into darkness millennia before the rise of Sigmar. If this is true it indicates that although the Elder race are less inclined to offer themselves body and soul to the service of the Chaos Gods, (as I have discussed in previous sections), it is by no means unprecedented.

The legend tells that Dechala was once the daughter of An-Toralis, a great and mighty lord of Nagarythe who had fought alongside Aenarion against the hordes of Chaos so many thousands of years ago. It is said that such was Dechala's porcelain-skinned beauty that she

The Denied One

drew the gaze of the daemon prince Samael Silver Tongue, exalted servant of the Pleasure God. Wherever Dechala fled with her family, Samael and his daemonic minions would find them.

Samael wanted Dechala as he had wanted no other being since his ascension to daemonhood, yet such was the cruelty within his heart that it was not enough for him to snatch her from her family, as indeed, he could most surely have done. Instead, Samael wanted to drive her family apart, fermenting fear and hatred within their mortal hearts.

Always his demands were the same: if Dechala was given unto him, he would leave her family in peace. Until that time, he hounded their every footstep, violating their homes and their minds, killing their servants and pets in the most horrific ways, and pushing each and every one of them closer and closer to madness. Perhaps it was Samael's efforts that finally broke Dechala's family, or perhaps the brutal insanity that had emanated from Aenarion since he had drawn the Widowmaker finally affected them too. Who can say? Whatever the case, the day came when An-Toralis struck a bargain with Samael, and handed over his daughter to the daemon prince.

Rather than simply abuse her and consume her soul, Samael chose to corrupt Dechala so that her beauty and grace would be his forevermore. And this he did. Such was Dechala's fear of Samael, and such was her bitterness towards her father for abandoning her, that she was all too willing to become the monster Samael wanted her to be. In anger and frustration, Dechala agreed to marry Samael so long as he granted her the power to revenge herself upon her hated family. Wicked joy in his heart, Samael agreed. He gave Dechala strength of arm and skill with blades, and led her back to the camp of her father. In that fell night, Dechala unleashed all her wrath upon her one-time family, killing her siblings and cousins and drinking the blood of their children. Her father she left until last, and he took many hours to die, screaming his regret and his horror into the darkness.

Such was the imagination and fury of Dechala's patricide that the Lord of Pleasure blessed her with His mark. But as is often the way between the followers of Slaanesh, sudden jealousy began to ferment in Samael's heart that his beloved lord had shown Dechala His favour. Despite this, they married, and so were they bound, one to the other. But Dechala had tasted the painful glory and twisted passion that flowed



Accounts of what Dechala actually look like differ in the details. But all agree that she has a disturbing beauty and sinous

The Denied One

Marriage! Oh, vile corruption of our most sanctified tradition! It is nothing but a horrible coupling between two disgusting beasts!

from her new god Slaanesh, and she became less and less content to exist in the shadow of her husband and lord, Samael.

"I will linger below you no longer," she said at last. "We are equals you and I, inasmuch as we are both favoured by Holy Slaanesh, created to serve Him." But Samael would not listen to her, and when Dechala saw that his thoughts were turning against her, she fled away into the Wastes of Chaos.

Samael's anger at his wife's lack of constancy boiled and raged. He lashed the ground and air with fire and fury. He raised his arms in prayer to his Master.

"Sovereign Lord!" he cried. "The woman that I took for myself has run from me! To her I showed Your Glory, and through me she tasted Your Sweetness. Bring her back, Darling One! Bring her back so that I might punish her, so that I might burn her with my coldest love!"

Then Slaanesh appeared before Samael, and wrath was in his gaze, "Make no demands of your Lord! Make no demands of Me lest I take back all that that I have given you and cast you from My sight." Thus rebuked, Samael lowered his eyes from his Master.

But Slaanesh loved His servant Samael and offered him this compromise, "If Dechala agrees to return to you of her own volition, then she is yours to do with as you please. But should she choose to remain apart from you, no matter how far Dechala may rise in My favour and Grace, she will never ascend to your height of daemonhood as long as you yet survive."

And so it was that Dechala refused to return to her husband, and was free to rise through the ranks of Slaanesh's favoured champions. Yet her freedom is bitter indeed, for no matter how many gifts she receives from her god, she will never join the ranks of His daemons as long as Samael remains in existence.

Whereas both of these stories possess a certain romanticism, I can't help but wonder whether there is some grain of truth in them. Dechala is, after all, also known as 'The Denied One', and either of the two legends might lend an inkling as to what the title of 'Denied' refers.

There are some points in which all the legends (and more contemporary accounts) agree: Dechala is without doubt one of the most inhuman creatures to have ever hunted beneath the stars. She is described as beautiful, pitiless, and extraordinarily beguiling, despite the fact that she apparently bears little resemblance now to either human or elf. The many blessings bestowed on her by her perverse god are said to have mutated her to such an extent that she appears more daemon than human.

Her skin is described as smooth, white as porcelain and without blemish. Her lower torso has been warped into the shape of a lithe and sinuous serpent, and her long tail ends in a scorpion's sting that whips and cracks when she is aroused or angry. Her blue-green eyes are said to burn with a wanton inner-light, promising terrible pain and boundless pleasure to all who would stand against her.

Dechala's visage is said to evoke as much loathing as it does pleasure, and she obviously possesses the kind of beauty that only Slaanesh can bestow – as disturbing as it is irresistible.

Throughout the long millennia, Dechala has missed no opportunity to demonstrate her total dedication as a disciple of Slaanesh. Her whole existence seems to be based around her need to indulge her every whim, and be free from what she regards as the shackles of Law and Order. However, it is plain that this painted monster seeks these things only for herself, everyone else can suffer and die for all she cares, just so long as her own desires are satisfied.

Yet death is not the worst fate of those who would stand against this Chaos whore, for such is Dechala's twisted nature that she prefers to enslave her enemies rather than kill them. If the stories are to be believed, Dechala has created one of the most potent and dangerous substancies in the world, using an unholy blend of sacrificial blood, warpstone, and the vile fluids of her fornication. Those unlucky enough to be captured by Dechala are forced to consume some of this hideous elixir, and from that point on they need no chains to keep them from fleeing her camp. From their first sip, Dechala's prisoners become the most desperate of addicts, as their craving for this noxious liquid renders them as helpless slaves to the slightest whim of their cruel and lustful mistress.

As can be expected of a Slaaneshi champion of her infamy, Dechala does not work alone. She has gathered about her a loyal band of Slaaneshi hedonists, and together they have cut out one of the bloodiest and most fearful reputations of any warband to emerge from the Chaos Wastes. Like their mistress, they revel in perversity and vice, actively enjoying the suffering they bring to oth-

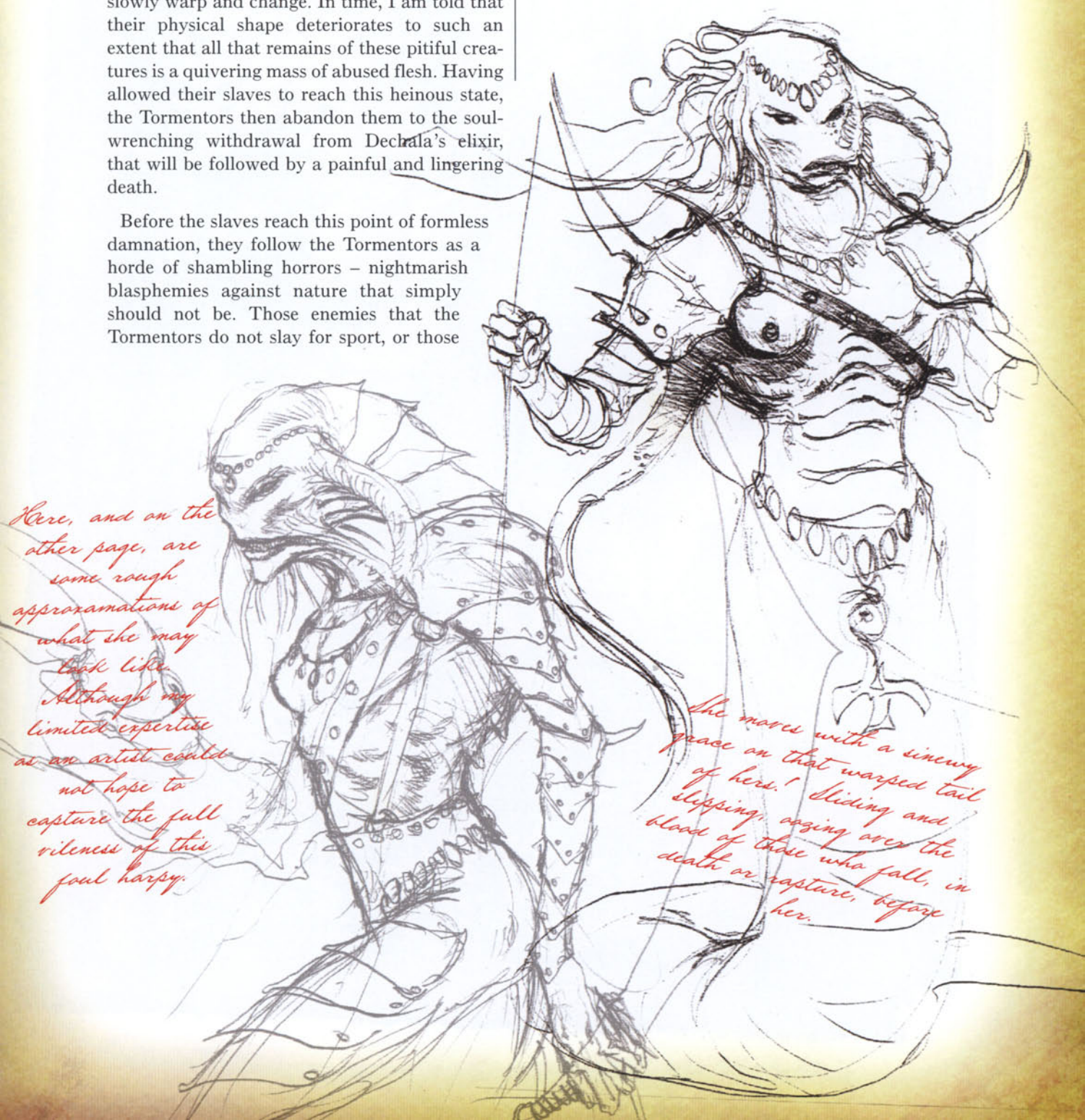
The Denied One

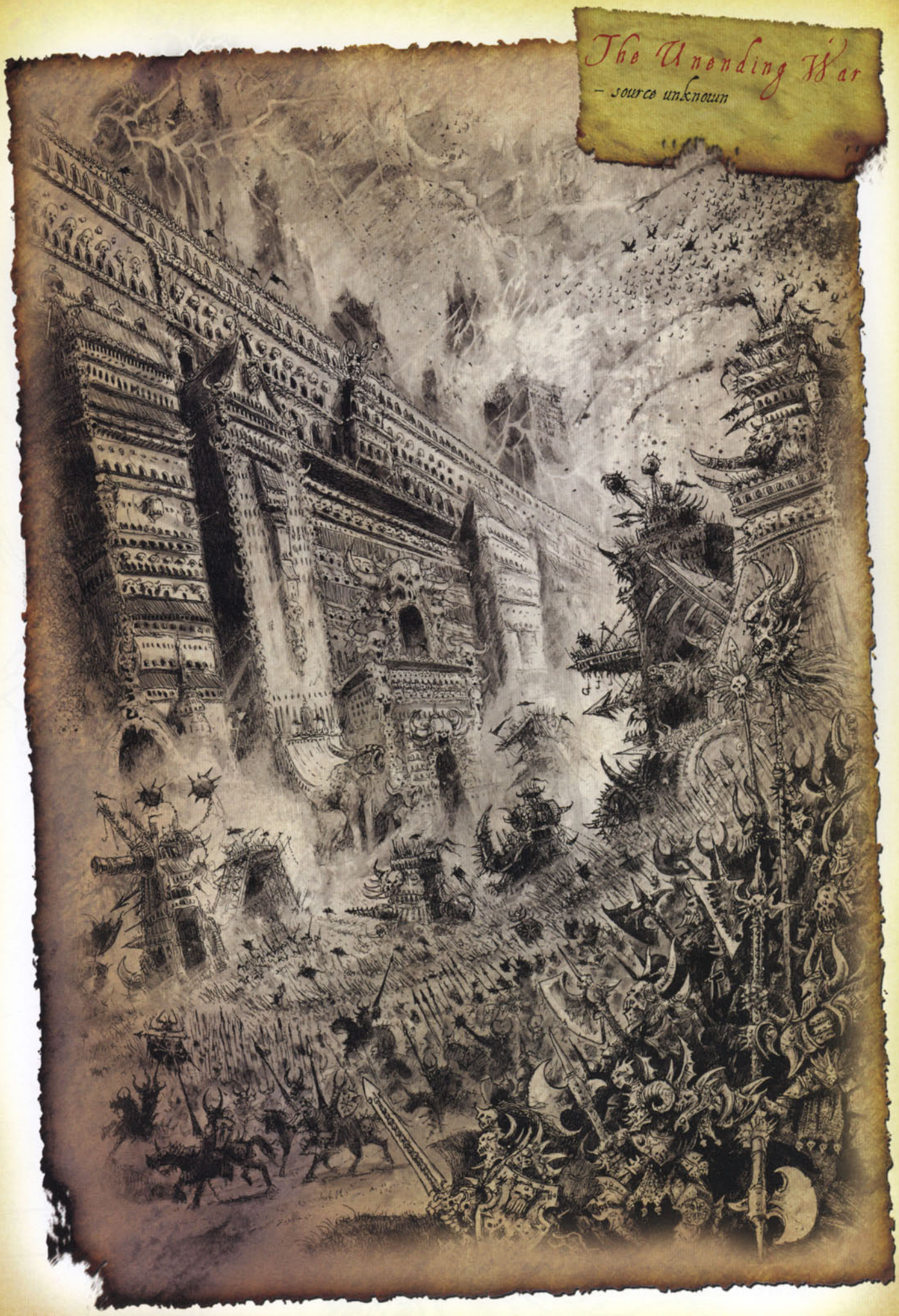
ers – hence their name, the Tak'neisen, or the 'Tormentors.'

The decadence of the Tormentors is said to have sunk to levels of depravity unknown anywhere else in the world. I can only imagine the horrors inflicted upon Dechala's slaves, as they amble around the Tormentors' camp, attending to the unholy desires of their masters. Each dose of Dechala's elixir that the slaves ingest induces their minds to slip further and further into a dreadful waking nightmare, while their bodies slowly warp and change. In time, I am told that their physical shape deteriorates to such an extent that all that remains of these pitiful creatures is a quivering mass of abused flesh. Having allowed their slaves to reach this heinous state, the Tormentors then abandon them to the soul-wrenching withdrawal from Dechala's elixir, that will be followed by a painful and lingering death.

Before the slaves reach this point of formless damnation, they follow the Tormentors as a horde of shambling horrors – nightmarish blasphemies against nature that simply should not be. Those enemies that the Tormentors do not slay for sport, or those unfortunate souls that are left wounded upon the battlefield, will find themselves overwhelmed by a mass of these screaming slaves, only to be held down and forced to ingest some of Dechala's vile elixir. One drop is enough to damn the recipient to become yet another slave to the lustful cruelties of the Tormentors.

Death may seem a welcome relief to these poor souls.




The Unending War
– source unknown

The Unending War

Then, ahead I saw a wall, lined with pinnacles and columns, arches of blood and carved bone, brazen steps, hideous shrieking mouths and daemons bound with blackest iron. Its base was piled with boulders and skulls. The wall rested unbroken in its awful perfection, from horizon to horizon.

And as I gazed from my vantage point, I saw a vast army of the lost and the damned assaulting the wall, and the wall itself bristled with steel as another vast host defended it. Here the armies of Chaos fought each other at the command of their Divine Lords.

Great siege engines crashed against the walls. The dark wings of clouds of flying monstrosities blocked out the rays of the evil red sun. Unnatural lightning flashed down and tore apart warriors, not discriminating between those that attacked and those that defended. The awful din of battle, the clamour of war, roared like thunder until the very heavens quaked.

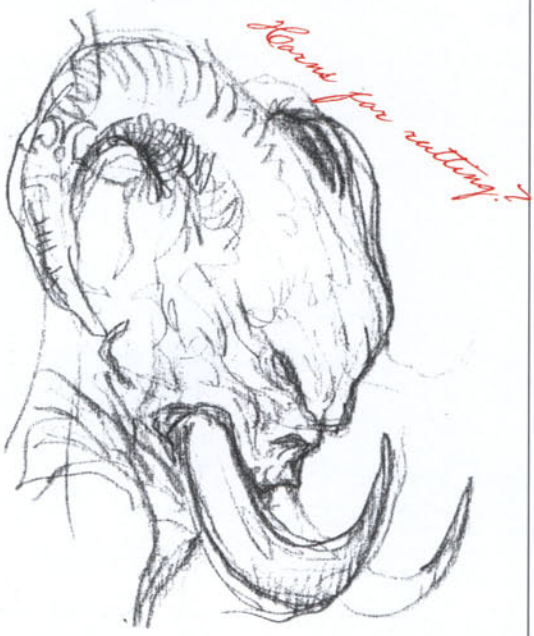
And still the cohorts of the Old Gods threw themselves against each other, dying in their thousands until the dead outnumbered the living.

~ From the 'Liber Malefic', by Marius Hallscher.

The Daemonic Legions

A HYPOTHESIS CONCERNING THE RUINOUS ARMIES THAT WAGE A CONSTANT WAR BETWEEN THEMSELVES, AND EXAMINATION OF THE HIGHER MACHINATIONS OF THE CHAOS GODS.

ACROSS THE ICY fjords of Norsca I have travelled, and north again over the freezing plains of the Ghargars and Kvelligs. I have passed through the Northmen's camps and settlements, my steps faltering, terror in my mouth. I know that Sigmar cannot guard and keep me here, for in this land of Old Gods and dark powers, the words of the Heldenhammer echo hollow in my head and freeze upon my tongue.



I have been brought to this cursed land so that I might see first hand the most dangerous of all the Slaves to Darkness – the terrible beings that make up the dread armies of Chaos. I have watched as they march, ride, crawl and fly across the ice sheets, screaming their words of hatred and worship, singing their blasphemous hymns to their ever-present gods.

From amidst this nightmarish host there are those whose deeds in the service of the gods have been rewarded above all others. Those who have been chosen as great champions, who have laid countless lives and souls at the altars of Chaos, and brought ruination to the forces of Order and Nature. Their skin is marked by their unholy patrons, their icons festooned with sigils and images of devotion, their armour inlaid with the runes of their allegiance, and their weapons inscribed with blasphemous blessings.

I have already spoken of these cruellest of mortals, and so I will not linger on them here. Instead I shall write of other, even darker beings I have seen on my travels: the most ancient warriors of Entropy. I shall write of the daemonic legions.

The Chaos Gods may have many armies of mortal followers, but it is the daemonic legions that are the true measure of their power. The legions fight deep within the Chaos Wastes, almost at its very heart, enforcing and enacting the will of their god. Their battlefields are places where no mortal would dare to tread, their numbers dwarf even the mightiest armies of the mortal world, and their savagery and power is unmatched and unmatchable by mere humans.

These daemonic legions are no collection of petty mortals squabbling over some insignificant battlefield, rather they can be seen as the physical representation of specific ideas of their patron god, and are therefore a demonstration and instrument of His will. The different concepts and purposes that form the great Chaos Powers often overlap and contradict each other, and these contradictions are manifested physically in the form of opposing daemonic legions. Their battles form part of the eternal game played by the gods, the prizes being increased power and the right to decide the Direction and Purpose of Chaos.

Conflict between opposing legions is nothing less than open warfare between rival gods – one of the many that shatter and rock the Chaos



A creature of this description makes up part of a legend from the village of Ansoal in the southern districts of Middenheim. It stalks the forest stealing away those that stray too deep.


The armies that meet on the ghost plains of the chaotic battlefields, are vast beyond all mortal comprehension. And the foul spawn and daemons that fight there defy any sane person's imagination.
How can such a creature, so animalistic and base, forge such ornate and effective armour? Perhaps it was a favour from his capricious God.

The Daemonic Legions

Wastes. They are the games played between rival Powers to test or establish the (always temporary) supremacy of one over another.

I say 'game' because even when the mighty



The grinning face of this daemon chills my blood!

Legions of Chaos meet in conflict, the daemon gods cannot stay their interfering hands. As daemon faces daemon and champion faces champion and the very earth quakes with fear and dread, the Four Powers pass down rituals to bind their cohorts. Like skilful and pedantic advocates in a court of law, the Dark Lords argue the smallest point, the most obscure procedures, and least significant of details, vying with one another for even the slightest advantage.

Sometimes the ritual is of great import, using forbidden sorcery or enchanted weapons, or maybe weapons of iron, steel or wood might be abolished so that only the 'natural' claws and teeth of the combatants might be used. Yet other times the rituals seem petty and beneath contempt, with certain colour garments and armour disallowed from the field of battle. Sometimes the rituals seem to defy all logic, as when killing and bloodshed are forbidden. But in the immeasurable minds of the Chaos Gods there is always a purpose and a reason for everything, though it may be unfathomable to any but themselves.

The Gods agree the rituals of combat, and once agreed they are binding, even unto the least creature on the field. Even unto the greatest. Once the great lords of Chaos have spoken, there is no mortal or daemon that can gainsay their words. All obey unquestioningly.

These 'rules' are of paramount importance to the Gods. Within their own realm, the gods have no real limitations upon their power. As a result they often impose these artificial restrictions upon themselves. To use the human mind as an allegory for the processes of the Chaos Gods, just as the greatest creativity and achievements for humans often come from the restriction of options and the focussing on one particular goal, so too can these ritual battles of the Chaos Powers be seen in a similar way.

So the Gods of Chaos fight their elaborate battles, staying within their 'rules' by choice and by means of some unfathomable inclination – although each and every one of the Chaos Powers always seek to legitimately alter those rules so that they might better reflect their own strengths and purposes.

To the forces of any daemonic legion, once their Master has spoken to order them to a certain place at a certain time, they will fight with total passion and conviction, as these battles are more rituals of worship as they are anything else. They will even fight another legion of the same god without hesitation or mercy, if that is what they have been commanded to do. For indeed, the Realm of Chaos is a strange and malleable place, where even the most fleeting whims of the gods are often expressed physically, though allegorically. A battle between two legions of the same god could be regarded as a physical expression of the relevant Chaos Power's own thought processes – a debate with itself over a new course of action, or the testing of a theory, perhaps.



A horn has sprung from the creature's forehead! The Doom must be the same sort of mutant as did it undergo later, as the warring banner of Chaos take their toll.

The Daemonic Legions

However, though these legions may be the thoughts and whims of the gods, they are also very real and utterly terrifying armies that can only be opposed by another such army. No mortal force, regardless of its size or determination, could stand against the power of an entire daemonic legion. It would be crushed instantly, its troops smashed aside like reeds before a tidal wave.

But fortunately, for we of the Mortal Realms, the legions' battlefields exist neither wholly in the material world nor in the immaterial Realm of Chaos, but in the places where these two realities overlap. As such, the only way that ordinary mortals could witness the horrible might of a daemonic legion is if they swear fealty to the Chaos Gods, or if the Realm of Chaos spreads across our world. Neither of these seem very enticing options.

The Ranks of the Damned

Those mighty daemons that are most favoured, the multifarious princes and dukes of Chaos, command the daemonic legions. The countless thousands of footsoldiers that makes up the legion are the greater, lesser, and minor spirits and daemons of the relevant Chaos Power.

The mortal servants of the Chaos Gods play an important, though secondary role within such daemonic legions. The first of these mortal warriors are the very mightiest champions in a god's service. They have shown themselves to be amongst the greatest disciples of their God's Word, and little removed from daemons in the savagery of their actions and their devotion to Chaos. They are sometimes chosen to accompany a legion as a final test before being 'elevated' to daemonhood.

The second mortal group that march within the daemonic legions are those unfortunates chosen at the point of death to serve their god in a very direct fashion. They are maintained by the power of their god in an endless and undying 'glory'. These are the legendary heroes of Chaos, they fight and die in huge numbers, only to rise again at the end of the conflict, restored by their Masters' awesome power. These once-mortal legionaries become supremely arrogant in the service of their masters, and completely disdainful of all other beings. So sure are they that they have been especially chosen for immortality and glory, that I believe they miss the bleak truth. Their existence is a purposeless one, doomed as they are to eternal conflict and endless repetitions of their own deaths.

To the gods, however, this sacrifice counts for little. In their own realm, the Gods of Chaos are infinitely powerful, so that the loss of a battle represents no more than the loss of a few copper coins to a compulsive gambler.

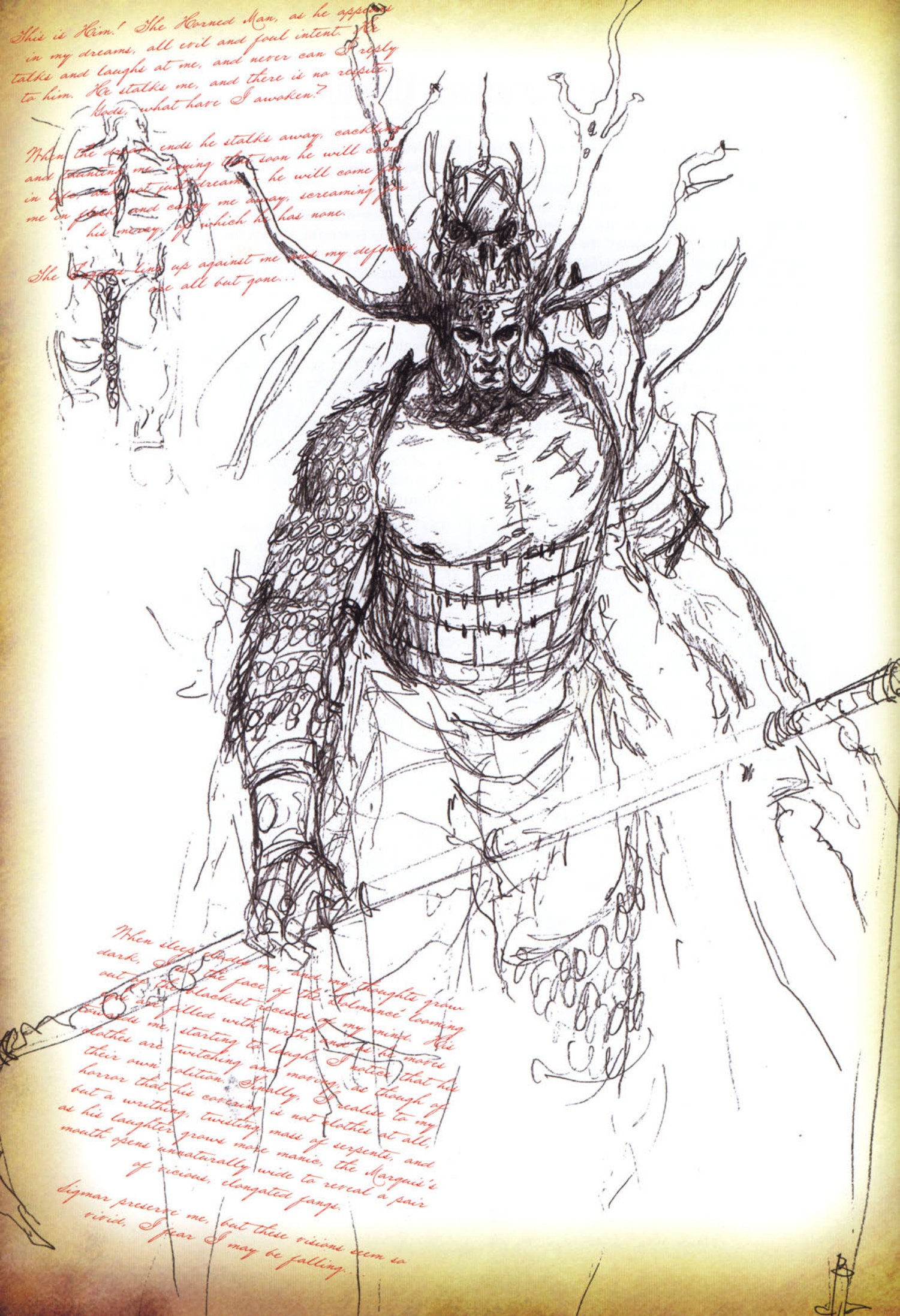
The Legions of Pleasure

Although not a god of war, Slaanesh does indulge in conflict and violence on all scales – it is yet another pleasure to be sampled and perfected. For His servants, war is simply a fetish, part of the greater ritual of endless sensation and pleasure, and Slaanesh is always the first of the Great Powers to insist upon elaborate conditions and rituals before His legions give battle.

The hedonistic followers of Slaanesh seek gratification of the senses in every endeavour and battle is another method of finding new warped delights. For the Slaaneshi, the thrills of battle and the infliction and experience of pain are things to be joyfully repeated. Slaaneshi daemons and mortal warriors take an obscene delight in causing pain and taking lives; their wanton pleasure spurred to new heights by the suffering and desperation of their opponents.

The Slaaneshi attitudes to battle and death are reflected in the legion's appearance as it marches to war. I have seen their troops clad only in the finest silks and the unblemished leather of the softest hides, dyed in frivolous colours and clashing patterns, and bedecked with fantastic jewels. The whole impression was that of a costume ball or masque, rather than a battle. Their demeanour was equally perverse. Slaanesh's daemons and warriors sang joyful songs and shrieked obscene jokes to one another, whilst disporting themselves with the dead and laughing with pleasure as their own lives were taken.

Their cries of release at the kiss of the sword's edge were hideous and foul, and their painted lips matched the wet-lipped crimson grins that their opponents' blades brought with their passing. Indeed, every sensation was sampled and enjoyed. It seems that it is impossible for the Slaaneshi to experience horror or distaste for anything, only varying degrees of pleasure and satisfaction. These things I have seen, these things I have heard.


This is Him! The Horned Man, as he appears in my dreams, all evil and foul intent. He talks and laughs at me, and never can I reply to him. He stalks me, and there is no respite. Gods, what have I awoken?
When the dream ends he stalks away, cackling and taunting me, saying that soon he will come in the real world, not just dreams - he will come for me on foot, and carry me away, screaming for his mercy, of which he has none.
The Legion lines up against me and my defenses are all but gone...
When sleep shades me, and my thoughts grow dark, I see the face of the Talmanic looming out of the blackest recesses of my mind. His eyes are filled with mirth, and as he moves towards me, starting to laugh, I notice that his clothes are twitching and moving, as though of their own volition. Finally, I realize to my horror that his costume is not clothes at all, but a writhing, twisting, mass of serpents, and as his laughter grows more manic, the Marquis's mouth opens unnaturally wide to reveal a pair of vicious, elongated fangs.
Dignar preserve me, but these visions seem so vivid, I fear I may be falling.

The Horned Man

A BRIEF INTERLUDE TO DISCUSS A SUBJECT WHICH MAY HAVE SOME RELEVANCE TO MY WIDER INVESTIGATIONS. INCLUDING AN EXTRACT FROM THE POEM: 'THE HORNED MAN'.

SOME OF THE many texts I have pored over make mention of a cruel and manipulative entity; he has many names, but by far the most common is the *Horned Man*. he is said to prey on those vunerable, those who find themselves in a state of spiritual fragility by invading their dreams, and somehow feeding on their growing mental anguish.

The most interesting reference to the *Horned Man* I have found in an anonymous Tilean writer's little known collection of tales: *The Dream Reaper and other Stories*. The tale describes a tall man with a staff, and antlers springing out of his head. In the tale he enters the dreams of young children, and tries to convince them to commit bad deeds upon waking.

This is a typical cautionary tale of the traditional kind, but one sentence really caught my attention:

"And when she awoke, her mind was enraptured, and stolen away. On her face was a mark of a circle and a sickle, and she lived her remaining days under a vale of silence."

I have seen him - the Horned Man - in my dreams and in the daylight. He sees me also, although I do not know how. I close my eyes and he is there waiting, staring back at me, his gaze burning the fibre of my mind, his cruel laughter chilling my heart.

Is he a warrior from amongst the Infernal Legions? Is he something more? Something worse? A champion perhaps? A shaman? A being of power certainly, for he manipulates my thoughts, he draws me to him when the evening shadows begin to lengthen and my mind wanders from the task at hand.

He whispers to me constantly, telling me that he has marked me out: that I am his. His words are ardent and forceful, like an angry suitor or vengeful lover.

I have raged against his presence in my mind, screamed for him to be gone, and clawed my face as if it were his own. But he stays with me, always taunting, always laughing. Even now he sings inside my head, mocking me as though I were some ill-favoured concubine, *and the words he uses are the same as what appear in the poem!*

"Your fury thrills me,
fills me with amusement
and desire.

Come now, priest,
rake my face with your nails,
gouge and tear my skin.

If you hate me as you say,
then take out my eyes
and rip out my hair!

Burn them on your fire.

Show me you have passion,
priest.
Show me you feel fear.

I can read your every anxiety,
for you are no warrior to fight
me.
Even now your stuttering spirit
edges to the throne of my
Master."

Perhaps these words are spoken in my dreams because I have read them elsewhere. I don't know. I see shadows and ghosts everywhere. I must be it. I am becoming paranoid. There is naught but

I block my ears but his voice continues within my skull.

I have stepped onto the same roads to madness that Hollseher walked before me, but knowing that fact does not help me step from it.

Perhaps I am already mad! Why else would I see the things I see and hear the things I hear? Holy Sigmar! Mighty Father of Mankind! Help me, I beg of you!

Vale of Creatures

source unknown (Opisculum Daemonicus?)

Found just south of Wissenberg in 1123



Creatures indeed! No man deserves his perfect human form when he walks the traitor's path.

The Vale of Creatures

The Realm of Slaanesh was still and quiet, scented with sin and sweet corruption. Its silence was not that of the grave, nor of ease at labour's end, nor of peace after the storm. It was the malicious, plotting stillness of evil waiting to be done; the silence before a moan or scream of pain or pleasure. And in that awful quiet the small shrieks of Slaanesh's daemons were swallowed and muted. Their endless masque and anti-masque of forbidden pleasures and hideous pains were reduced to soft murmurs of decadence and depravity.

As I passed over the Outer Realm of Slaanesh, my eyes were numbed by its pale softness and my ears by its endless quiet. I began to believe that any act could be contemplated if only it would provide variety and relief from the silence. I was saved from further weakness by a vile noise, carried on the perfumed and sickly breeze.

Born from the rocks and stones, there was a buzzing like a hundred angry swarms of bees. Before my eyes the land itself heaved and pulsed, and spat forth mewling, puking and misshapen creatures. Dumpen and hideous, the monsters twisted and writhed in pleasure at their birthing, then turned on one another in search of further depravity. When one fell, exhausted from its unlovely exertions, its fellows chortled and joked at its fate. The corpse sank slowly into the earth of that foul vale, and a new beast was given form from the clay.

As I witnessed the decadence of Slaanesh's land, the creatures saw me. As those eyes beheld me, I turned and fled, the fiends of Slaanesh's Realm at my heels...

~ From the Liber Malefic, 'The Book Of Contemptible Slaanesh', Marius Hallscher.

The Children of Delight

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE DANGEROUS AND SEDUCTIVE SCOURGE OF MAN: THE DAEMONETTES. AND INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE PAVILION OF THE SUBLIME, AS I EXPERIENCED IT.

IT SEEMS LIKE days have passed since I last stood in my study, although I know in truth that I have never left.

My waking dreams have become ever clearer and longer in duration. I know now that I am being drawn along the exact same path as Hollseher. As I write these words I find myself transported deep within the Realm of Chaos, along with my desk, quills and journal. Though I am seated, the landscape around me moves past at speed, as if I was riding on the back of some huge and unseen bird.

I am in Slaanesh's domain, there can be no doubt of that, upon what I can only assume to be the 'Vale of Creatures' that Hollseher wrote of. All around me cavort the strange and twisted daemons of this realm. There are so many of them, all defying my ability to describe. Their twisted and shifting forms disturb my mind almost as much as their frenzied lewdness scars it.

How heinous they are! How vile! Yet unlike Hollseher's experiences, they do not seem to see me, or if they do they are too involved in their own depravities that I do not concern them. I am grateful for this small mercy.

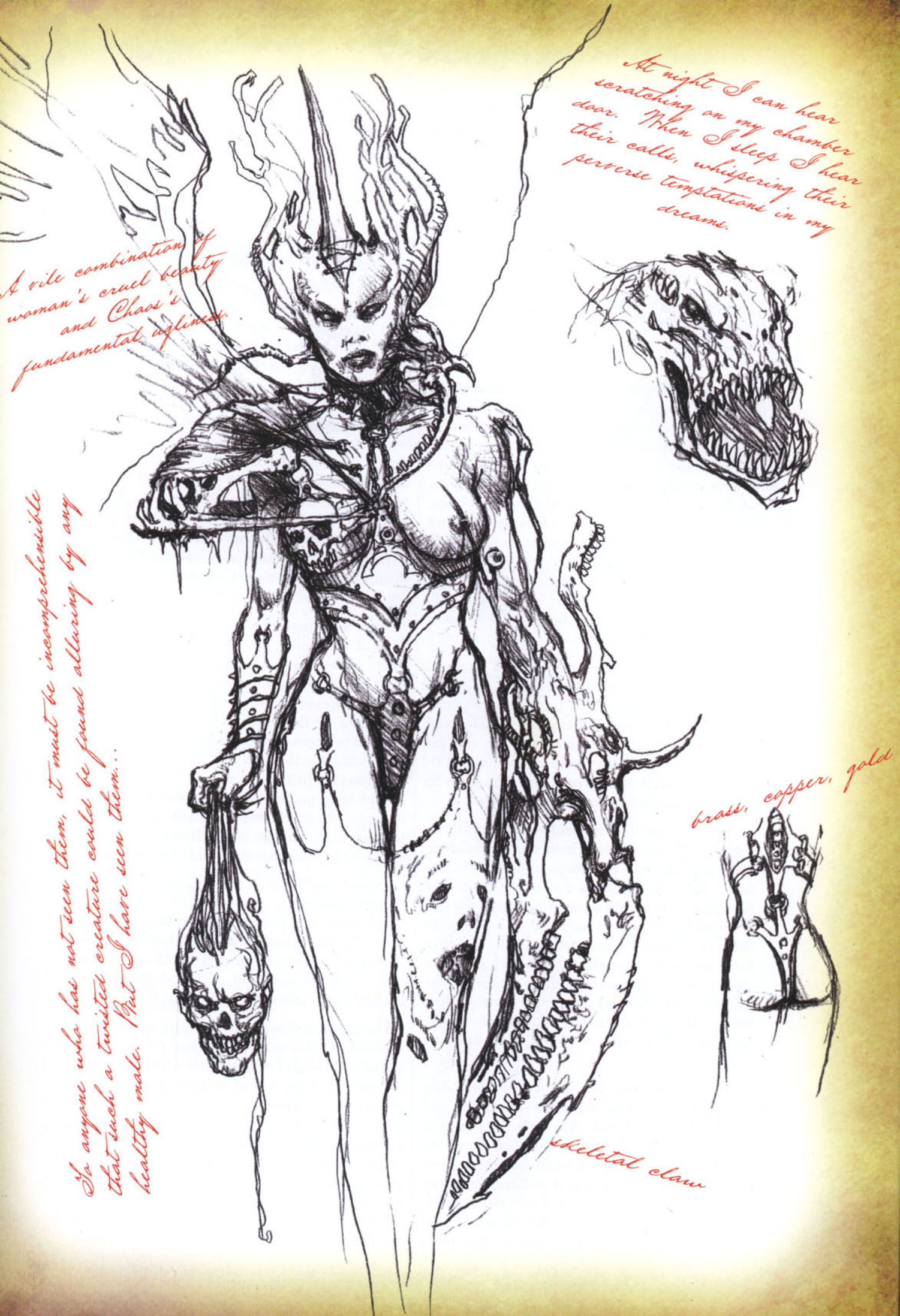
I try to close my eyes against the writhing fecundity around me, but find that I can see through my eyelids as though there were not there, and such are the numbers of the daemons that surround me that I cannot avert my gaze from one obscenity without seeing another. Yet most disturbing of all, such is the seductive power of Slaanesh's realm that despite my horror at their antics, I find myself strangely excited by all that I witness. It is as if this realm itself seeks to strip me of all decency and self-respect. I scream to be left alone, but no sound issues from my throat.

I would offer a prayer to Holy Sigmar, but He would not answer me. He never does, and thinking back I cannot say that He ever has. I must face these horrors alone and record what I see for the sake of my people.

The horizon sweeps towards me, and upon it I see a great pavilion of silk and gauze. The minor daemonic creatures that writhe and frolic around me seem to avoid entering the pavilion,



The daemonette is a perverse mix of the sublime and seductive with the corrupt and the repulsive. They have some attributes of a beautiful woman, and others of a foul creature of Chaos.


At night I can hear scratching on my chamber door. When I sleep I hear their calls, whispering their perverse temptations in my dreams.
A vile combination of woman's cruel beauty and Chaos's fundamental ugliness.
To anyone who has not seen them, it must be incomprehensible that such a twisted creature could be found alluring by any healthy male. But I have seen them...
brass, copper, gold
skeletal claw

forming a great ring around it. Perhaps they are frightened of what lurks inside? I shall soon find out, for my path heads straight towards it. What new horror awaits within?

The Pavilion of the Sublime

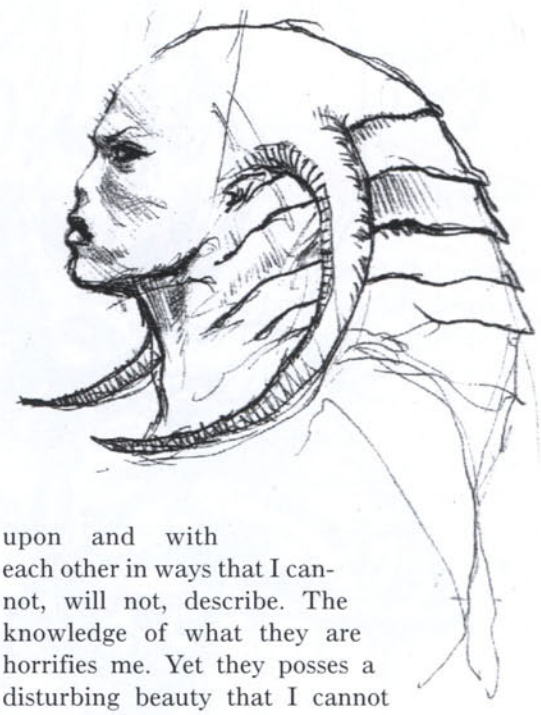
I glide through the portal and the perfumed sashes that hang around it caress my face as I pass between them. Dear Gods! What a sight awaits me!

I can barely glance at the dimensions of the pavilion's interior; my mind shudders away from the sheer impossibility of it. Where from the outside the pavilion seemed merely huge, from within it seems nigh-on infinite! Endless plains of satin cushions and deep carpets, divans, beds, pools, baths and fountains stretch away from me in every direction as far as my eyes can see. And not just upon one plane – there is no separation between up and down. Where there should be walls or ceilings there are instead yet more cushions, rugs and divans. Most terrifying of all, upon every surface lounge the lesser Powers of Slaanesh: His daemonettes.

How hateful are these creatures! They who abuse the minds of mortal men and suck them dry of their souls. They who feed upon the young and the beautiful, loving them to destruction and damnation. Yet these daemonettes are alluring and persuasive, and they have used their considerable charms to seduce men and lead them to eternal damnation since time immemorial.

They are similar to each other in form, although the details vary from one to the other. They are tall with pale skins and delicate features. Their faces, torsos and upper thighs are like those of beautiful women, but their similarity to humanity ceases there, as their arms end in chitinous claws or serrated spines. Similarly, their otherwise shapely legs end in claws or cloven hooves, and some of them posses narrow tails that writhe and snap like long curling whips. Many of them bear tattoos of strange swirling patterns and, of course, their Master's rune.

Their bared torsos and uncovered loins boast of their unreined lust, while the soft pastels and porcelain white of their skin belie the darkness that hides within them. The mindless depravity of the creatures I was forced to pass through on my journey to this place is as nothing compared to the extreme decadence and self-aware hedonism of these daemonettes. They have not even the vestiges of decency, disporting themselves



upon and with each other in ways that I cannot, will not, describe. The knowledge of what they are horrifies me. Yet they posses a disturbing beauty that I cannot ignore.

These lewd monsters possess only the appearance of femininity, and then only so that they might seduce those who look upon them. Some say that these daemonettes appear as females only to the eyes of those that desire the embrace of women. To those that do not, the daemonettes are said to appear as handsome and vital males. Others say that there are indeed male and female daemonettes, distinct from each other, yet serving the same purpose. But those theologians and daemonologists who believe this say also that the females from amongst this infernal species outnumber the males ten thousand to every one.

Around me I see every expression of every delight and every perversion; every joy and every fetish, however glorious or foul. It is said that the daemonettes are personifications of Slaanesh's selfish passion and His all-consuming and insatiable lust, and as I struggle to look around me I cannot doubt that this is true.

The daemonettes ignore me, just as the other creatures of this realm have, and for that I am grateful. Though I despise their selfish and cruel debauchery I am forced to witness, I fear that should one of these strangely alluring daemonettes come for me I would not have the strength to resist it. For about these daemons is a definite though intangible aura of seduction that reaches past my conscious mind to manipulate the primal drives and desires within me. I can feel it even now, whispering, telling me to acquiesce to the daemonettes strange allure, filling my mind

The Children of Delight

with promises of the blasphemous delights that can be mine if only I embrace Slaanesh.

I manage to ignore their siren call, perhaps only because they have not turned their full attention upon me. I hope that it stays thus.

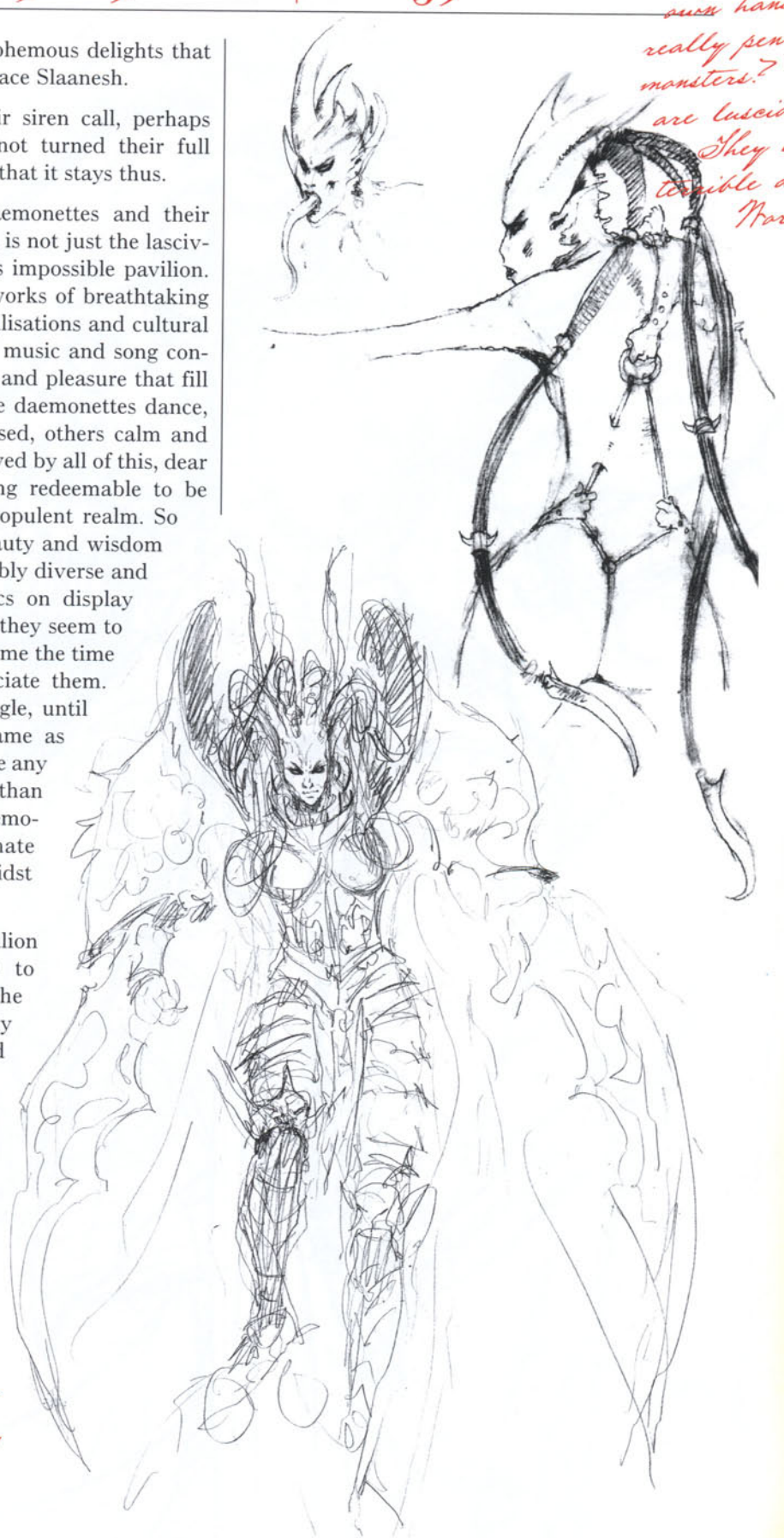
Looking beyond the daemonettes and their wanton antics, I see that it is not just the lascivious pleasures that fill this impossible pavilion. All around me there are works of breathtaking artistry from countless civilisations and cultural epochs, and the sounds of music and song conflict with the cries of pain and pleasure that fill the air. Here and there the daemonettes dance, some furious and improvised, others calm and dignified. But be not deceived by all of this, dear reader, for there is nothing redeemable to be found in anything in this opulent realm. So many are the works of beauty and wisdom around me, and so impossibly diverse and manifold are the aesthetics on display and being performed, that they seem to assault my senses, denying me the time or consideration to appreciate them. They mingle and intermingle, until one becomes much the same as the other, and ceases to have any meaning or purpose other than to assault the mind and emotions of those unfortunate enough to be caught amidst them. Just as I am.

I see now what this pavilion is. It is a high temple to Slaanesh's dark glory; the great museum of His unholy arts; His nightmarish and soul-consuming harem.

But the images around me begin to fade. I am sent back to my study.

I should be more relieved than I am.

Horrible! Most horrible! But I cannot tear my eyes away... could my own hand have really penned such monsters? But they are luscious... no! They are as terrible as death! Worse...



I find myself reminded of some female spiders, who mate with the male, then devour him afterwards.


The Pavilion of the Sublime - in such a place any man could find himself pleasured in such ways as to suck the very sould from his empty heart chamber. I only saw it, and the effects on me are truly profound. I remember the Daemoettes: and where was once a feeling of disgust is now a sense of yearning. I am sick!

The Keeper of Secrets

BEING A SOMEWHAT INVOLVED ESSAY ON THE FORM AND HABITS OF THE HIGHEST IN SLAANESH'S PANTHEON, THE KEEPER OF SECRETS, A BEING MOST TERRIBLE AND SEDUCTIVE TO BEHOLD.

SEE HIM THERE! Many limbed and jewel-eyed; most beguiling of all immortals. He moves with such grace, his actions so measured and sensual, yet he is deadly indeed! He is the Despoiler of Innocence and the Defiler of Purity. He knows my thoughts, just as he knows yours, and he hears every word that is spoken anywhere throughout the dimensions. He is the Keeper of Secrets and he forgets nothing he has heard. How many fools have sought to summon the Keeper to bargain for the secrets he carries? Of those deluded few, how many have survived with their souls intact? I doubt their numbers could fill a single carriage.

To gaze upon the Keeper is to love him, and to love him is to know despair, for there is no charity in this creature, only malevolence. He is a spiteful and cruel lover, both obsessive and demanding. He takes his pleasure from the sadistic domination of all those around him, finding titillation in the despairing screams of his victims and arousal in their pain-wracked convulsions.

He is a master of all the fell sorceries of the Slaaneshi, and delights in using them to turn brother against brother, and father against daughter. Like the Daemonettes, his sisters and lovers, the Keeper exudes a palpable aura of sensuous beauty, enamouring all those that stand before him with tricks and illusions, clouding their minds, hiding his true nature.

See his lacquered claws! So long, so elegant! What armour can be proof against their razor-edges? What shield could turn aside even a single blow from their languorous master? For the Keeper joys in conflict as others might a kiss, and his caresses slice through metal and muscle. He punctures his victims with lascivious ease and luxuriates in the scrape of claw against bone.

It is with good reason that he is sometimes referred to as The Feaster of Pain, for his lust for torment and misery is as powerful as it is insatiable. As with all Slaanesh's chosen servants, he has no fear of pain or injury to himself, and every sensation, be it agonising or pleasurable, is met with the same chilling gasp of exhilaration.

There is no horror that will not please the Keeper, and no act of cruelty or debauchery is beyond him. He is the embodiment of violent jealousy and selfish lust, of all fetishes and perversions, of every abuse of trust and all emotional blackmail. He is the desire to dominate and subjugate that hides within all mortals, and he is the dark pleasure that can be found in such things.

Who would be brave enough, or fool enough, to face one such as him? Whoever it be, he must be the purest of the pure, and the most determined and incorruptible of heroes. If he is not, then he will surely fall before this, the greatest servant of Slaanesh, lost within ecstasy and dreams of joy.

Who would not revile the Keeper of Secrets? And yet also, who could not love him if faced with his blasphemous glory?

I fear not even I.



Azazel: Captain of the Ecstatic Legions

MOST BEAUTIFUL AZAZEL! SECOND IN SLAANESHI'S EYES: AN EXAMINATION OF HIS FALL AS A MAN, AND HIS RISE AS A DAEMON. INCLUDING A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF HIS PHYSICAL FORM.

TO THE EAST of the Vale there was a great mountain, and set in its side was a throne. Lovely was that throne, carved from crystal-quartz with a delicacy and skill that far surpassed anything I have seen or heard of in the Mortal Realms, but even this seat of power was as a tawdry bauble compared to the creature that sat upon it.

Thousands of adoring supplicants gathered at the foot of his throne, offering him gifts and praises, and as I first gazed upon his magnificence, I could not help but think that I was in the presence of the Lord of Pleasure Himself. Yet I was still far from the Inner Realms of Chaos, and so the glorious being seated before and above me could not have been the embodiment of Slaanesh.

I listened closer to the prayers being sung to his name by the many supplicants around me, and this is what they said:

"You reside in the garden of Slaanesh;
Every precious stone is Your adornment:
Amethyst, diamond, and carnelian;
Beryl, lapis lazuli, and jasper;
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald -
And gold also, beautifully wrought for You,
Mined and prepared the day that You ascended.

"Slaanesh created You a dark angel
With outstretched wings;
And You reside upon His holy mountain;
You walk amongst stones of fire.
You are perfect in Your ways,
From the day that You were Chosen
All wrong doing was found in You,
You are filled with lawlessness,
And You sin.
Who could strike You down
From the mountain of Your God?
Who could topple You,
From amongst the stones of fire?"

I knew then whom, and what he was: Azazel, embodiment of irresistible desire, first in the eyes of Slaanesh, and captain of His daemonic legions. Under Azazel's command the armies of the Dark Prince of Chaos have enjoyed one blissful triumph after another. He has been the bane of humanity since time immemorial, and many of the mortal opponents he has faced have given up their fight before it had even begun, for few beings can bring themselves to harm such an enchanting and wondrous being as Azazel.

It is said that Azazel's beauty is second only to that of his Patron, and having gazed upon his divine beauty I cannot gainsay such claims. How could I describe the face of perfection? All I have are words, and words can only fall short when trying to express the sheer joy and exhilaration that his gaze upon me invoked.

His hair was long, obsidian-black, fine as spider-thread, and yet soft and luxurious. The slightest breeze would agitate this glossy mane, so that it rose like a dark halo around his head, adding to his already considerable glory. Two curling and lacquered horns crowned his more than handsome brow, and his eyes were full of innocence, and yet also cruel, calculating and devoid of pity. His smooth skin was white as porcelain, and his movements possessed an impossible grace. Although he has one human hand, his other arm ends in a sleek claw, both delicate and deadly, and yet somehow only adding to his overall perfection.

He was dressed in pale robes of finest silk, and his statuesque form was adorned with a glorious assortment of shining jewels. From between his well-muscled shoulders rose a pair of wings of purest white, their beauty unmatched by swans or any other creation of nature.

But as irresistible as he was, there was something profoundly sinister to his beauty. I for one

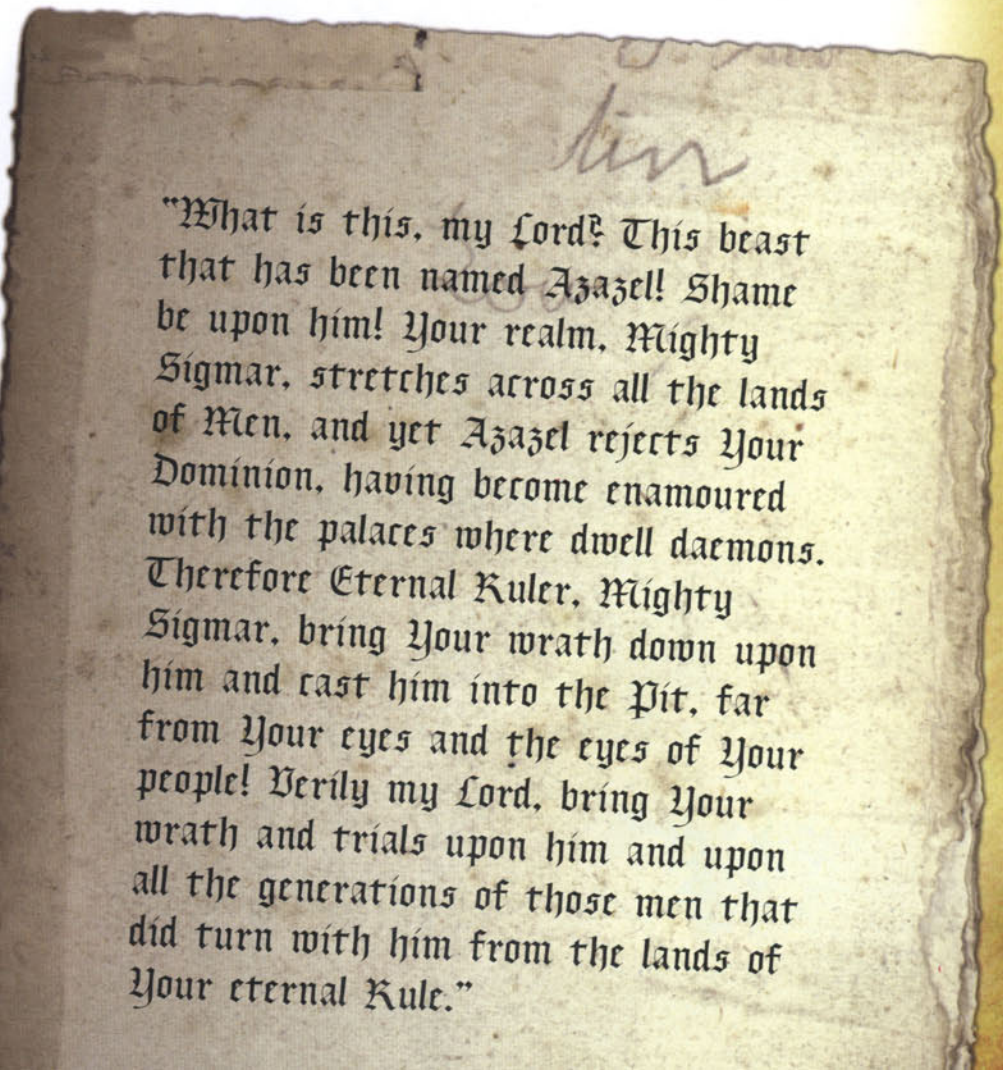
Azazel: Captain of the Ecstatic Legions

shall never forget the sensual temptation his presence aroused in me; his beauty evoked within me a self loathing and a feeling of utter depravity that still sickens my soul.

Even as I watched, he leapt into the sky and soared across the mauve light of the heavens, sweeping low over the throng that had gathered around his throne, some to embrace and others to strike dead as the whim took him. If I had any doubts that this creature was the embodiment of evil, they faded at that moment.

This Prince amongst daemons can see into the very hearts and souls of mortal men, and under his gaze the deepest desires and hidden passions of all mortals are laid bare. With his warm, silvery voice, Azazel whispers his promises to those who would be his enemies, telling them of their folly for standing against him, and the pleasures that could be theirs if only they submit to the waiting arms of Slaanesh. There are few, if any, that can resist his charms or ignore his temptations. All that know of him dread to face him upon the field of battle, for the cost of losing to Azazel is not only the degrading loss of self-esteem and sanity, and more than the slow and excruciating death he inevitably bestows – it is also the horrific certainty of the soul's eternal and total damnation.

More than many other daemons, Azazel is held in particular hatred by the faithful of Sigmar, for in the distant past he was the chief of the Gerreon tribe, one of the twelve great peoples that followed our beloved Emperor. Azazel betrayed his mighty liege-lord and fled to the Northern Wastes, where he pledged his eternal loyalty to Slaanesh. For his treachery, Azazel was greatly favoured by the Prince of Chaos, and his constant acts of devotion and debauchery assured that he rose quickly in the Pleasure God's favour. After smashing the ten-thousand strong host of the great Champion of Khorne, Arthar, and having slain this mighty Champion in equal combat, Azazel attracted his masters gaze once more and was elevated to the state of daemonhood.



from The Fate of the Apostate, The Book of Sigmar. 8:3

The Sinful Messiah

Hear ye the uproar of the southern nations?
Hear the impotent mutterings of their infidel kings –
the kings of mortals who seek to rise in revolt,
plotting against Slaanesh and His Anointed One,
saying, 'Let us end their beauty.'
'Let us banish their Truth.'

Whoever wrote this seeks to emulate the voice of Slaanesh! The Heresy!

The One who sits upon the Satin Throne is laughing.
Slaanesh derides these princelings' antics.
In His fury He addresses them,
And His words blight them with terror.
'This is My Chosen, installed by Me
upon My holy mountain.'

Or did the Darkling God speak through this deluded scribe?

No, I must banish such terrifying thoughts.

'Know you that Azazel is My son and servant,
and I am his Father and Lover.
He shall have all the lands of the world,
from north to south, and east to west.
With the sceptre of his dominion he shall break them,
shatter them like glass upon a stone.'

So now, you mortal kings, learn wisdom,
earthly rulers, heed this warning:
Obey Slaanesh's holy servant, and fear him.
Tremble and kiss the dust from his feet,
lest he unleash upon you the horror of his wrath,
and all joy be drained from your soul.

Taken from 'Spiteful Gods', author unknown

This extract is from the only known copy left of 'Spiteful Gods' in the Empire. By rights it should be disposed of, but it is a source of much knowledge I though long lost. If I tell no-one I own a copy I can study it in peace. Damn the Templars and their dogmatic ways!


Ornate weapons
A Chaos warrior will often wear accoutrements and trappings to appear more ostentatious.
Gods, but she is all curves and spikes!.. I tremor at the thought of touching her...
Heretical texts
Ogre trotter

Praetorians of the Pleasure God

A LOOK AT THINGS UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE, BUT THINGS I HAVE SEEN DURING MY RESEARCH. MY EYES ARE NOT DECEIVED, THEIR REIGN OF CORRUPTION IS NEARLY UPON US!

FEAR THE PRAETORIANS of Slaanesh, for they are terrible indeed!

I know not by what name they call themselves, I know simply that their fury and their debauchery surpasses all save the daemons themselves, and of them Slaanesh is well pleased! When and from where they fell from grace I cannot say, although I am beyond grateful that I have never seen these terrible warriors upon the battlefields of my own world. For surely if they had been, all the lands of Men would be lost by now.

More than mortals, though not of his realm, these dark beings I call Slaanesh's Praetorians are the most disturbing warriors I have seen to date. Huge they are, standing nearly a full metre taller than I. Their arms are larger than an athlete's legs, and their chests are massive and proportionate. Their armour is strange and bulky, made of no material that I know of, and decorated with the runes and colours of the Pleasure God. Of greater stature than any weight lifter from the Tilean carnivals, these warriors are not lumbering or slow, moving with startling grace and speed.

Such is the nature of Slaanesh's blessings that mortals who follow His word and ways soon become accustomed and bored with the normal sensations of life. These damned beings are then driven to the most extreme of lengths to find even the most moderate fulfilment. So it is with these Praetorians. Their search for perfection has ended in corruption and depravity, and their only joys are found in the noise and horror of bloody combat.

Indeed, perhaps their most terrible aspect is the weaponry they bear. Their muskets and cannon are unlike any produced by men or dwarfs, spitting fire and death faster and further than is possible to follow. They travel in mighty vehicles of iron and steel that make the greatest technical innovations of our own Empire seem paltry and small in comparison. Their weapons scream as if alive, filling the air with palpable horror and distress, and turning bones to liquid and blood to steam.

Their lord is a mighty prince from the ranks of Slaanesh's daemons. Once counted amongst the greatest of Men, he was raised to his position for his total dedication to the pursuit of pleasure and selfish debauchery. He and his warriors have fallen from the ranks of Grace, and now seek to pull all others down into the Pit with them.

What manner of creatures are these? Such ornate armour! Such alien faces... Sigmar preserve me, but I think I know what they are!

What are they?

What do they want?

How will they achieve this?

How can stop them?

How do you know of this?

Are you alive?

Are you sure?

What is name?

Who is you Gods?

Are you certain?

Og Richter You questio yourself!

Still the same Richte dull as ev

You need n I have shown you the true pa

Oh no. Yo ruination far from complete

Praetorians of the Pleasure God

I fear these men as I fear no other servant of the Pleasure God, for they do not require the widening of the Chaos Gates to spread their corruption and bring their destruction. They descend from the sky, bringing torture and death, and no-one, not man, dwarf or elf would be able to stand before their fury. And so when the priests and wise men look to the north and whisper their fears of the encroaching darkness, I shall turn my gaze instead to the heavens. For now I see just how vast this universe truly is, and how numerous and mighty are the enemies pitted against us. I fear now that one day the clouds shall fall upon our heads, and within them shall be the Praetorians of the Lord of Pleasure, come to steal our souls and destroy our bodies.

The fluted organ pipes in Wolfenburg cathedral fill the vaulted conclave with beautiful music, that used to bring tears to my eyes. What awful cacophony this warrior makes on battle I dread to contemplate.

These creatures resemble men only insofar as they have four limbs and walk on two legs. Apart from that, with the weapons they wield, they look totally alien, and nightmarish to behold.

Of Pleasure And Rage

Behold! For I speak to you from the shadows – the Great Darkness, that gives meaning to all Light. At the heart of this Realm, shrouded and unclear, stand the Powers of Chaos, locked in each other's embrace, hated lovers and eternal companions.

These Four are like points upon a compass – none are close and some are opposite. War and Pleasure are two such opposites, facing each other across eternity, hating and warring; two ideals separated by an impassable gulf of Belief and Purpose. For Khorne is discipline, hardness, suffering and rage, while Slaanesh is indulgence, beauty, ecstasy and lust. Their opposition is carved upon the knucklebones of fate, and conflict can be their only recourse.

Yet how mightier is Khorne than His delight-filled sibling! Oldest of gods and greatest of warriors, Khorne's armies stretch from infinity to infinity and the Pleasure God may not rival Him. But this was not always so. For in the days when the Slaanesh, East Born and Most Beautiful, strove for existence, His power waxed stronger than all other gods, be they separate or together, and it seemed as though His hateful triumph would destroy the Balance in the Warps.

But as is ever the case, Khorne was there to stem the flow of Delight. He saw the growth of His youngest sibling, and hated Him even before His birth. With His mighty arms, Khorne sought to crush the life from Slaanesh before He had even left His womb, but the war god had not counted on the passion of Slaanesh's creators, and the harder He squeezed the greater the pressure became to drive His arms apart.

The war god fought on. He sought to give all mortals time to bring an end to their corrupting decadence – the decadence that fed the nascent Power that was Slaanesh. But mortals are weak as gods are not, and though some used the time bought for them by Khorne to turn from their wicked ways, many others did not and sank ever deeper into indolence and debauchery.

Slaanesh's temperamental screams and self-tormenting nightmares echoed through the Aethyr, and insanity blossomed on every world. Terrible storms raged throughout Heaven and Hell, and rains of fire lashed across Khorne's back, but His grip ever stayed firm around His embryonic sibling. Freezing winds tore at His face and floods of poison crept up His legs, yet still the War God would not let go.

Then Khorne's brother came upon the scene: Decay stood there beside War.

'Give up,' sighed Father Nurgle, 'Give in to what must be. It is the nature of things that morals decay and cultures must rot. Mortals cannot leave their destined path.'

Khorne turned away from His brother and grasped His wrists all the tighter. Then a gust of coloured light brought there to the brothers the Changer of Ways, and Tzeentch gazed upon the War God with amusement and disdain.

'End this,' he hissed. 'For it must come to pass. Change is the constant that cannot be changed. We Three must be Four, as the Game has demanded. Be it now, be it later, our sibling must come.'

But Khorne would have none of it. He roared His fury until the universe shook, and the foundations of All That Is, All That Was, And All That Shall Be, threatened to crumble. His brothers left Him then, one with a sigh and one with a chuckle, for both knew that the ending was near.

Upon the Mortal Plane the wars had all ceased. All morals and laws had rotted away, and the change to conceit was almost done. The Three wavered as decadence took hold, and Slaanesh expanded beyond size and beyond measure. But Khorne, unable to see defeat, hung on to His charge though His arms were bent back and His body near-crushed. Then with a scream of release that ripped through the Warps, Slaanesh threw off His eldest brother and burst into being.

Such was the Event of Slaanesh's birth, the metal body that had contained Khorne's essence since He had slain Khaelis Ra, shattered into a thousand pieces that scattered across the dimensions. Although Khorne had been freed from its silver prison, Khorne had not the strength to strike a counter blow against Delight Slaanesh, and so the Pleasure God was left to reap the souls of His mortal creators and sit His Throne alongside those of His brothers'. So it was that the Three became Four and the Eternal Pantheon was made complete.

From whenever 'then' was, until whenever 'now' is, the gods have continued their unending dance, twirling each other through the minds and souls of mortals. First one leads and then another, each keeping step in

their pavane of evil, a stately measure played out to the beating of human hearts.

None of these Powers can ever truly win against its brothers, for, as the Great Conspirator did say, it is the nature of things that change is the only constant - and nowhere is this more true than within this shadow place that is Chaos.

Yet still the gods dance and their bellows of delight shake the universe.

from the 'Liber Maleficarum'. Restricted distribution 2405 I.C.
by order of K. M. Ebel, Witch Hunter Captain

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

When pitching my newest on the time honoured theory of nemeralogy - pintalogy from the mages of Araby, against that of the Pleasure Kad, I cannot ignore the fact that they compliment each other perfectly. The symbiosis is almost too beautiful to believe.

His armour writhes with the faces of his victims. I swear I glimpsed my own swirling amidst the mass of tortured souls.

The letters upon many cards carry the weight of a grimoire. It is possible to [illegible] from the [illegible] letter within the name and the position it appears in the universal table, what relevance they have on a universal level, and to accurately predict the outcome, in relation to all this, of the end of history, and the beginning.

The [illegible] of pain [illegible] as the [illegible] fall. It is [illegible] to think in [illegible] and be determined by [illegible] numbers and letters, but after all, [illegible] basis of understanding the world is based on these tools of knowledge and communication. [illegible] these things to me, and I understand them implicitly.

Echoes of the Birth

ASK NOT HOW I KNOW THIS, FOR I CANNOT FULLY EXPLAIN. BUT I KNOW ALL THAT IS PRINTED HERE IS TRUE, OR WILL COME TO BE TRUE IN SOME FUTURE TIME.

I CANNOT SAY how deeply I have strayed into the Infernal Realms. Matter itself is malleable here, and time seems to run differently. To both of these I can attest. I have seen the armies of centuries past marching across long forgotten plains, and I have seen armies of cultures and races that I am sure have never been – at least, not upon my world.

I am confused here. I do not know whether I have been granted a vision of the past or a vision of the Afterlife, for both seem appropriate descriptions of what I have seen. I have been swept into the night sky, high above the clouds and through the vaults of heaven. I have seen my world shrink to the size of a small silver coin, and then disappear altogether, swallowed by the diamond-lit blackness of an unending night.

I have been shown other places, perhaps other worlds – I know not. I have seen lands where Man has never trod, though these were not places as they are now, but as they were once. How I know this I cannot tell. Amongst the twinkling stars I saw the dawn of a race that I took to be the Asur, though they lived not upon my world or in my time. I saw them raised from nothing by figures of shadow and light – an ancient and powerful race, the first ever to have reached into the starry night. Older than gods, yet mortal and subject to time.

I saw these First Ones leave the star-born Asur to return beyond the sky, leaving their charges to grow by themselves. And how swiftly they did! Though millennia sped me by from one moment to the next, I saw these star-born Asur grow into a mighty and sophisticated culture. I heard their name sung in a thousand psalms of joy and beauty: The Elder – greater even than the Children of Ulthuan at the height of their power. With a subconscious and natural born talent, they reached into the Chaos realm and experimented with magic and sorcery, and their works were glorious to behold.

But then the First Ones returned from the darkness beyond the sky, their strange and vast vessels were scarred and worn, their light dimmed and their shadows dispersing. For I knew that they fought an unending war with gods that were not of the Aethyr; gods of starlight, vampires of life. The First Ones had returned to inspect The Elder and judge whether they were yet fit for the battles that lay ahead.

I watched as the First Ones encouraged the younger race to reach further into the other realm, and with their vibrant minds and passionate souls create beings of power to fight the star gods.

But the battle was long and the First Ones were now few, and as their numbers dwindled, so too did their influence over their young creations. Without the wisdom and might of the First Ones to bind them, I saw The Elder's warp-beings evolve from sentient weapons into living gods – the first true gods of the Immaterium. How I wept when The Elder embraced them as such.

Time moved onwards and I saw the rise of the brother heroes, Eldanesh and Ulthanesh, who alone, in the absence of the First Ones, could control the Warp Gods and summon them onto the physical plane. I saw them march to war against the silver-skinned Yngir, the star gods and their slaves, and I saw them summon the dread lord Khaine, The Elder's mighty god of war, to battle with them. I saw the brothers and their god lead their children into battle time and time again, pitting Chaos spawned furies against the soulless technologies of the Yngir. But in time, the boundaries between the gods of the Aethyr and the gods of the Stars blurred, and The Elder could not tell one from another.

In their fury, the gods of the stars and the gods of the Aethyr turned upon each other, capturing or destroying those they could, and striking bargains with those they could not. I saw the forging of the Widow-Makers, the one hundred Swords of Khaine, and I watched the betrayal as one was stolen and hidden far away. I saw the end of shining Althanesh at the hands of the god of Death. I was witness to the final battle in which Khaine was almost split asunder by the destruction of that same Death God, and I saw how the endless warfare fanned the embers of Khaine's fury, filling Him with power and driving Him into madness. Gripped by unquenchable rage, Khaine eventually turned against The Elder and slew prince Aldanesh.

The numbers of the Chaos-beings grew, and all

Echoes of the Birth

of them seemed mad and predatory. They seeped from the Empyrean in numbers that eclipse the legions of the Chaos Wastes, and everywhere there was fire and torment.

A New Heaven

Time passed again and the star gods fled from the daemon plague, taking their silver armies with them into slumber.

The Elder had come far throughout the millennia of war, and they had learned from their allies and the gods, from their enemies and the dead. They drove the tide of daemons back into their world, and made sure that their gods remained in Heaven, never again to walk amongst their children.

From the ashes of the past The Elder built an empire to eclipse all others. They sailed through the night within vast cities, far larger than any mountain range I have seen. From these drifting islands that floated upon the darkness, The Elder traded knowledge and goods with the few races that survived the war. Learning, enlightenment and reason flourished, and they shone brighter than the stars themselves.

Then The Elder adopted, refined and perfected the First Ones' skills for measuring the Warp and predicting its movements. They somehow linked their worlds and their floating city ships with their magical gateways. I watched as they joined millions of stars under one rule. I walked with them, their unseen companion, as they stepped from world to world, from Heaven to Earth, across distances that defied all measurement. To my eyes their mastery of their universe seemed complete, but then, my eyes are only mortal.

Their experimentations brought them greater understanding of the links between Chaos and thought, links of which I could never have dreamed. The Elder learned how their thoughts and actions gave form to the Warp, and such was their power that they believed they could achieve anything – that nothing was beyond them. Faced with this ultimate temptation, I saw them fail. Although many turned from Chaos in disgust, many others continued to use it, believing that they could control the powers their indulgent magics generated within the Warp.

And so it was that I witnessed Slaanesh grow almost entirely from the pleasures of The Elder. While living, many strove to suppress and control their raging feelings, but when they died their brilliant souls melted back into the broiling energy of the Warp, and all their long-guarded temptations were released, drawn together, and then absorbed by the nascent reality that was Slaanesh. I watched this new Power swell with potential energy, its desperation to achieve consciousness restrained only by the determination of the few disciplined Elder that it should remain unborn. But even by recognising this embryonic Power as a potential, The Elder had given Slaanesh an identity. Without fully realising what was happening, The Elder began to be manipulated by the psychic-potential they themselves had conceived.

In the space of but one generation, the majority of The Elder paused in their quest for enlightenment and chose a darker path of inward-looking excess and debauchery. Daemons and other Chaos entities broke free from the Warp once more, and spread like fire through dry grass across the entirety of The Elder's vast empire.

Some of The Elder renounced the ways of their brothers and sisters, and retreated to their vast city-ships. The Warp-gates that led to the corrupted worlds were sealed shut, and these few noble beings drifted away between the stars. But The Elder that remained behind sank ever deeper into their dark practices. A racial madness had taken them over, an insanity that had only one end.

The Birth of Slaanesh

I wept hot tears for The Elder then, for they had become trapped by the darkness within themselves, that asserted itself more and more as Slaanesh's power grew; he was like a bubble expanding outwards as the pressure built within, and it was only a matter of time before He burst forth.

And then I witnessed the birth of a new god. Slaanesh sprang into the Immaterium from the psyche of The Elder with a shattering scream of triumph. A tidal wave of energy ripped through the Warp, dealing the shadow-self of every living thing a numbing blow. For the heightened senses of The Elder it was too much. Billions of Elder souls were swallowed by Slaanesh, their bodies simply evaporating from the material universe as raw Chaos broiled out from their minds. The few Elder that had fled, survived the cataclysm, but I knew that they would be forever scarred by the fall of their race.

Echoes of the Birth

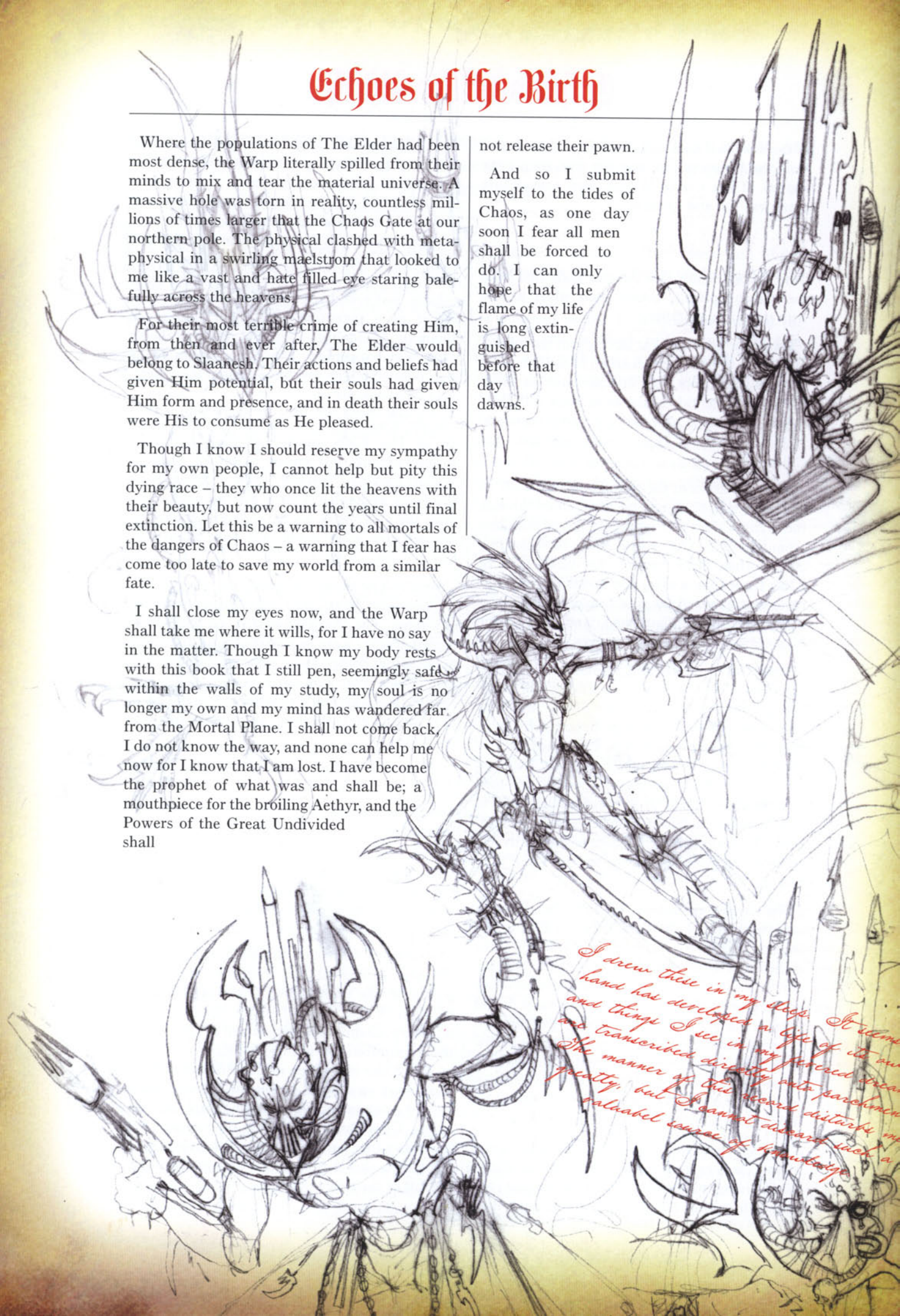
Where the populations of The Elder had been most dense, the Warp literally spilled from their minds to mix and tear the material universe. A massive hole was torn in reality, countless millions of times larger that the Chaos Gate at our northern pole. The physical clashed with metaphysical in a swirling maelstrom that looked to me like a vast and hate filled eye staring balefully across the heavens.

For their most terrible crime of creating Him, from then and ever after, The Elder would belong to Slaanesh. Their actions and beliefs had given Him potential, but their souls had given Him form and presence, and in death their souls were His to consume as He pleased.

Though I know I should reserve my sympathy for my own people, I cannot help but pity this dying race – they who once lit the heavens with their beauty, but now count the years until final extinction. Let this be a warning to all mortals of the dangers of Chaos – a warning that I fear has come too late to save my world from a similar fate.

I shall close my eyes now, and the Warp shall take me where it wills, for I have no say in the matter. Though I know my body rests with this book that I still pen, seemingly safe within the walls of my study, my soul is no longer my own and my mind has wandered far from the Mortal Plane. I shall not come back, I do not know the way, and none can help me now for I know that I am lost. I have become the prophet of what was and shall be; a mouthpiece for the broiling Aethyr, and the Powers of the Great Undivided shall not release their pawn.

And so I submit myself to the tides of Chaos, as one day soon I fear all men shall be forced to do. I can only hope that the flame of my life is long extinguished before that day dawns.



A Prayer for Mercy



To you, Lord Sigmar, I raise my prayers.
All my hopes are with you,
Do not let your enemies claim me!
Let shame be for they that turn from your Might,
And not for me, your faithful servant.

Holy Sigmar, make the way home known to me,
Show me the Path from this abyss.
Set me once more along the road to your truth,
For you are my only Lord and god,
And in you alone I trust.

Lost in darkness, I long to see your light.
Remember your covenant,
Mighty Sigmar,
With the peoples of your Empire,
That the sun would not set on us
While we keep you in our hearts.

Through temptation and horror [a]
I have held to my faith,
Like a drowning man who grasps at a rock.
Do not judge me on my weakness,
Do not remember my sins of late.

Crush your enemies great Lord,
As you did upon the field of Hendalle,
When you led your people against the Enemy [b]
And smote them from skull to greaves!
Do not let them claim what is yours!

Mighty Sigmar,
Turn your face to me and take pity,
Lost and wretched as I am!
End the suffering of my heart,
Soothe this turmoil in my breast.
Watch over my soul,
My Lord, my God,
Rescue your servant.

[a] "And he shewed me an ocean of desire." – *Temptations of the Damned* xx, 225.
[b] "Through fire and death, he lead us onwards." – *The Word of Sigmar* iv, 833.



Pleasure for pleasure's sake

I smell the foetid rot on the breeze. It is sweet and cloying. There is no escape from the inevitable. All that was once fresh will decay and atrophy in time. Time is the killer.



OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volume the Third

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Printed by Johannes Innsbrook, Printer to Albertus Mansoul,
Bound by Christoph Hassel of Wolfenburg



My Lord, you hold the third of my collections of Richter Kless' writings, this one dealing in the main with the most vile of all the Daemon Gods: Nurgle.

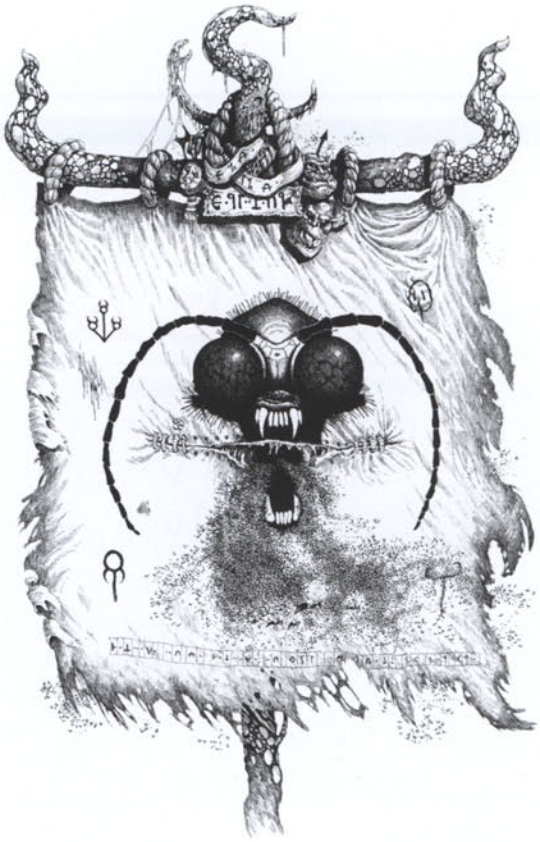
Suffice to say, the following is an examination of the beliefs, practices and artefacts of the diseased servants of Nurgle, the various theories and folk tales concerning the Lord of Decay, and the nature and number of the many Chaos creatures that plague our world.

It is worth noting that for the sake of coherence, I have not included all of Richter's notes, or in the order that they were written. His mind was obviously under a great deal of strain as he penned the following texts, and his writings seem to be as jumbled as his thoughts were.

Be well as you read this, my lord. You have my prayers and best wishes.

Your obt servant,

M.v.S.



Liber Nurgle

If you have managed to read the Liber Slaanesh without falling into corruption, then in front of you is decay, death and despair; the Liber Nurgle awaits. I think it is important to mention something about the book. It has undergone a great change. I noticed it as soon as I opened the cover. The pages, where once they were clean, crisp parchment, had turned rotten. Only a short space of time has elapsed since I last saw the book, but it is as if it was kept in a damp room for many years. The pages are damp and moist with water; and the smell! I was forced to turn the leaves using tweezers, as I did not want the corruption to taint me.

Towards the end of the book the rot seemed worse. The pages were covered in a viscous green slime. During the late hours, with the candle burning low, I swear I could see tiny things crawling in the slime, burrowing under the pages, spreading their infection. I was worried every time I turned the page that they would crumble to nothing; if only that had happened! Then the world would have been rid of this tainted artefact. I still cannot fathom why a further Liber book has been commissioned. They should all be burned.

The Song of Death

Despair all ye nations, deny not that we're sick,
For our blood is like water where once it was thick.
And our minds have grown leaden, our bodies gone weak,
And venom pours from our lips whenever we speak.

Despair all ye nations, for the time draws apace,
When the rot of the cynic shall steal our good grace.
And our sweetest of dreams shall fade to lost hope,
Our pride and our arrogance; our noose and our rope.

Despair all ye nations, see the years drawing on,
Our great cultures are fading and soon they'll be gone.
So conceited our scholars, they jeer through their teeth,
With their theories so shallow — quite soulless beneath.

Despair all ye nations, for the ending is near,
When the Lord of Lost Heart shall govern us with fear.
Our weakness unfetters as we face this unknown,
And our faith trails to nothing; we stand here alone.

Despair all ye nations, the Corrupter has come,
And the sad days of this world are nearing their sum.
For the shining ideals through endeavours we sought,
Grow sour as he passes and are coming to nought.

Despair all ye nations, there's no hope for us now,
For we made this monster, placed a crown on his brow.
He fed on our apathy; our pain made him swell,
We gave him Dominion, he gives us his Hell.

This poem, much as it hurts to admit, speaks for me. I grow weary of this task, I feel my spirit being drained from me, I sicken by the day and my body is wasting away. I have no appetite, little more will.

This poem reminds me of the work of the heretical, foul-mouthed and crazy madman writer Gunbar Jungle, whom I met briefly, investigations in the north. He told me he was acquainted with von Hohenstausen. He [illegible] showed me his works and bits. me travel with him, and help him in his quest to find his father.' I wonder if he meant Old Father Nurgle? Whatever the case, I know I was right in bringing the rightful wrath of the witch hunters down on him. His corpse, as he was dragged away still follow me into my troubled dreams.

All my work, begun with high hopes and a sense of fervour on my part, is drawing to a close. All I see is doom and destruction. Our world stands on a cliff edge. As dear as forces more sinister than we can comprehend strive to topple me. I see no way out.

The rest of the contents of this book seem too repulsive to print. They remain securely locked away in the vaults of the Inquisition. I look at them occasionally.

Extracted from the works of the playwright and poet, Maximillian von Hohenstausen.
Arrested on charges of subversion and heresy, 2515 I.C. Awaiting execution.

The Weeping Sore of Chaos

By way of an introductory discourse, the author begins by scrutinising Old Father Nurgle, where he sits in the pantheon of the dark gods, and the effects his meddling and machinations have upon the wider world.

ALTHOUGH I AM SURE that all sane people would wish it otherwise, the Four Great Powers of Chaos are known throughout every kingdom and every culture in the world. But of this unholy quartet, by far the most horrific and disgusting is the deity that we, the good people of Sigmar's Empire, know as *Nurgle*. There is nothing redeeming about this most foul of the Aethyr's entities, so entirely offensive is His aspect. Known also as *Nyrgal, Onogal, Nielglen* and so many other monikers, Nurgle is the Supreme God of Decay, the fountain and architect of all rot – be it physical, moral, ideological, economic or political.

It is the general view of my priesthood, and indeed most of the other wholesome cults and sects throughout our beloved Empire, that directly or indirectly Nurgle is responsible for all the greatest plagues and famines that have beset our lands throughout the centuries. For, it is said, the sorrows of lepers and the fears of the sick are His greatest fascination and truest love. Surely it is for His own amusement and nothing else that He devises the foul contagions that He inflicts upon the world.

It is said that when Nurgle manifests Himself to His servants He is seen as a body wracked with all manner of diseases and corruption. It appears that Nurgle's entire purpose is to promote endless suffering and misery throughout all the Mortal Realms. Yet, conversely to this, I have heard tell that Nurgle is supposedly deeply caring towards His mortal and daemonic servants, and is full of unexpected humour – though I can scarce give this notion any credence. Just how and why a Chaos God – not least one that presides over decay and misery – is supposed to posses these benign characteristics is as yet beyond me, but it is my intention to examine all such claims as I proceed with this, my investigation.

Nurgle Dissected

The learned magisters of the Colleges of Magic maintain that all magical entities are formed from the raw stuff of Chaos by the conscious and subconscious perceptions, emotions and ideas of all sentient creatures. I admit that this has led to some confusion on my part as to the precise nature of Nurgle.

Amongst those of us who are permitted to theorise about the denizens of the Aethyr, the common conception of this vile god is that He is the personified manifestation of disease and decay. However, if the magisters are correct in their assumptions, this clearly cannot be the case – or at least,

The Weeping Sore of Chaos

the case cannot be as simple as that. For, unlike the pleasure and rage that can be seen to form the cores of Slaanesh and Khorne respectively, decay is a physical and measurable process that has an existence all of its own, outside of the perceptions of intelligent beings. Decay is not, after all, just an emotion or a thought, and should not therefore have a direct influence over the Aethyr.

If decay does not require mortals to perceive it for it to be real, how then can a Chaos God – being a personified manifestation of the thoughts and emotions of mortals – come to be the embodiment of the physical realities of decay and disease?

My most esteemed colleague at the College of Light – Magister Patriarch Verspasian Kant, believes that I have missed the forest for the trees. Magister Kant insists that whereas decay and disease are the physical *symptoms* of the Daemon God Nurgle's effect on the world, they are not at the core of His essence.

Magister Kant introduces this theory in his seminal work, *The Fall of Nations*:

"At some point in our lives we all come to realise that there are things in this world beyond our ability to control – things that we are powerless to resist or change.

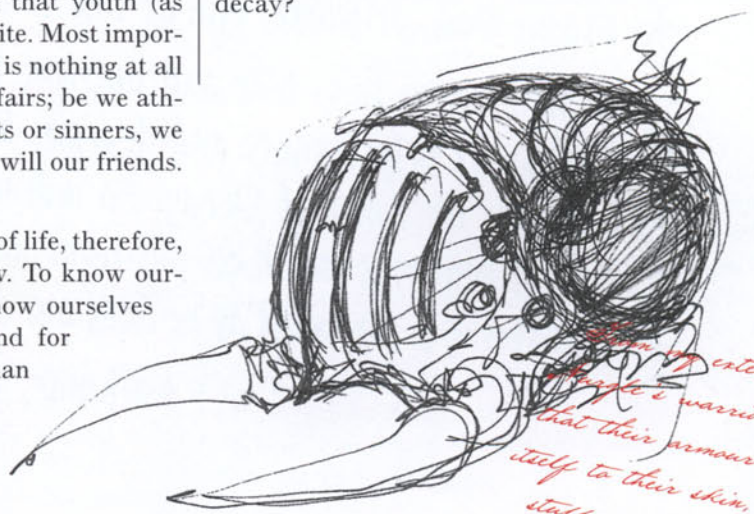
"As young children our world seems small and simple; we play, eat, sleep and bicker. Our lives stretch out before us and we have no real conception of how decay will affect us. But as time passes we learn more about ourselves and the world around us, and we start to see the harsher realities of life. We see that our bodies are ageing and understand at last that youth (as with so many other things) is finite. Most importantly of all, we learn that there is nothing at all we can do about this state of affairs; be we athletic or apathetic, or be we saints or sinners, we shall all age and die in time. As will our friends. As will our families.

"It is the unfortunate paradox of life, therefore, that with wisdom comes sorrow. To know ourselves for what we are is to know ourselves for what we are no longer, and for what we might yet become. A man or a woman in their mid-life might rub a painful knee in damp weather and remember sombrely the careless vibrancy of youth. But from this sad reminiscence how small a step is it to an outright cynical appraisal of the future? So the ravages of time, and therefore decay, can make us feel melancholy or bitter, but worst of all they can sometimes make us feel helpless.

"The step from helplessness to bitterness is often a small one, and it is often an all too easy thing to then step even further into despair – whether this despair is explicit, or whether it is implicit. It is from this hopelessness and despair that I believe the Lord of Decay found his beginnings."

If Magister Kant is correct in this assumption, it perhaps becomes easier to see how Nurgle has come to preside over decay and disease. If He truly does feed upon hopelessness and misery, just as His brother, Khorne, feeds upon rage and violence, what better way to drive mortals into the pits of despair than to inflict upon them the misery of an incurable disease, or face them with the inevitability and experience of decay and the suffering that accompanies it?

From my own experience I can say that few things indeed are worse than watching those we love the most lose their minds and personality to the ravages of time or illness. Who would not feel pangs of regret as their body gradually wracked with arthritis, as youth passes them by? What hope can be left to us when pestilence strips our crops and starvation bloats our bodies, and who would not despair as ulcers and disease eat away at their flesh? So indeed, if Nurgle is to promote the despair that feeds Him and gives Him form, what better way to achieve this than by promoting disease, famine and decay?



Despair. I must guard against this. Sometimes I feel it creeping over me. Especially in the lightening hours of a new dawn and I start to speculate if we have many left to enjoy. I know such concerns are false. This book will open people's minds. If we fight, we will prevail.

From my extensive studies of Nurgle's warriors I have noted that their armour seems to mould itself to their skin, as if the fleshy stuff combines with the warped metal to create one, symbiotic residue. It is probably impossible for them to remove their armour.

The Weeping Sore of Chaos

Why is it that of all the unholy servants of the Daemon Gods of Chaos, those that owe allegiance to the God of Rot and Corruption are more heinous than any other? The simple response would be to say that they are as such, simply because of the corrosive nature of the 'gifts' that Nurgle bestows upon them. Yet I find myself wondering why Nurgle's gifts are so heinous and corrosive in the first place?

All I can think is that Foul Nurgle is as much a product of fear, horror and revulsion as he is of despair. This, I believe, explains why his servants appear so wretched and disgusting to all sane eyes. I believe their purpose is to inspire fear and terror as much as it is to spread disease and suffering. For what is the immediate response of normal people when confronted with the hideous deformities of Nurgle's plagues? All too often they recoil in fear and disgust. This reaction is increased tenfold when confronted by one of the impossibly diseased servants of the Plague God, or worse, one of this foul deity's daemons.

In addition to this, fear and outright terror very often lead to feelings of helplessness and despair, both of which are said to empower the Lord of Decay. So indeed, it is my belief that Nurgle depends as much on our revulsion and fear of what he and his servants represent as he does our capitulation to despair.

~ Volkmar, Theogonist of Sigmar.

The Nature of Despair

Being an examination of Nurgle cultists and the ways in which they are treated, with particular reference to the admirable sisters of the Cult of Shallaya.

WHEREAS CHAOS cultists and daemon worshippers are more usually captured and dealt with by Sigmar's templars, I have learned recently that those evil, insane, or simply despairing individuals who are arrested for worshipping Nurgle are quite often handed over to the initiates of the Cult of Shallaya.

The priestesses of the cult (or the *sisters* as they are more commonly known) regard Nurgle and His followers as their premier – if not *only* – enemy. Yet despite their disgust and fury when faced with the adherents of the Plague God, the Sisters of Shallaya take every opportunity to study, and where possible cure, the many diseases and ailments these misguided fools carry. The sisters believe that if they can catalogue and cure the many afflictions visited upon the world by Nurgle, they will be fighting Him in a wider sense. As a result of this non-combative war, the Sisters of Shallaya have extensive accounts and records relating to Nurgle, His ways and His followers.

So, with respect to my studies, I have been allowed to consult with Sister Marie Duvallier of the Great Hospice for the Insane at Frederheim, concerning all aspects of my research into Nurgle. Sister Marie specialises in the analysis and treatment of those with ailments of the mind, especially those hopeless individuals who suffer from depressive manias of all kinds, and other rather more obscure and esoteric studies of the human mind. As it is initially difficult to tell the insane from the damned (in my ignorance of such matters, I did not realise that these were distinct conditions in the first place), Sister Marie has dealt with many cultists in her time and has become her Order's foremost expert on the machinations and ways of Nurgle and His vile servants.

Sister Marie believes that although Nurgle is indeed the embodiment of despair, He must also be an amalgamation of numerous other related emotions and mental processes that often lead to, or are associated with, despair. Her definition of despair is: The complete and total abandonment of hope, the rejection of the affairs of the world outside one's own miserable state, and a bizarre determination to hold on to one's abject bitterness, regardless of circumstance.

Here follows a short transcript of Sister Marie's essay on her observations, *On the Trail to Despair:*

"There are few hard and fast rules with regard to the human condition. Different people react in different ways when faced with the same event. Although there are those amongst my patients at the Hospice in whom I have observed common traits at the onset of despair – traits that I believe may have a bearing on the nature and purpose of the Master of Corruption.

"There is almost always a catalytic event (being one serious and debilitating trauma, or a series of traumas) that begins the downward spiral to despair. This trauma could be the death of a loved one, the contraction of a slow and terminal illness, warfare, famine, a perceived failure, rejection, or any number of shocking or destabilising happenstances.

"Whatever the catalytic trauma or traumas may have been, subsequent steps along the path to despair often proceed through a path similar to this:

– Denial of the problem.

– The onset of fear, occurring after the subject is forced, by his own worsening state, to accept that he has been adversely affected by the catalytic trauma.

– Growing desperation as the subject begins to look for quick and easy answers to his problems, sometimes adopting subconscious and psychical defences to protect himself (often taking the form of definite changes in character, obsessive behaviour, or sinking into an oblivion of alcohol or opiate use).

– A sense of bitterness as the subject's condition grows worse and his defences slowly expose themselves for the emotional crutches that they are.

– If the subject does not take direct action, deep despair will set in.

sounds emanate from the cracks and crannies. I keep my windows closed, yet still these horrible insects find their way to me. I work with a constant buzzing sound in my ears. I fear it will drive me mad.



The Nature of Despair

"If Nurgle is indeed the deified personification of *mortal despair*, is it not possible that He is also made up, in parts, of *denial, fear, desperation, resentment* and *bitterness?*"

Indeed, if Nurgle personified and promoted only despair, then surely His servants would not have the energy, will, or determination to conquer in their master's name. They would be miserable, self-absorbed and apathetic. Yet, as I have been assured so often by my contacts within the Reiksguard, Nurgle's servants are exceedingly determined upon the battlefield, and are nothing if not tenacious.

I sent to the witch hunters for their own appraisal of the Lord of Decay. After five weeks I received a sealed parchment bearing the Flaming Hammer insignia of Sigmar's Templars. The letter inside was strange, almost like a poem in blank verse, and was signed simply: *Ramheldt van Hadden, Witch Finder Captain.*

I admit to being somewhat bemused by van Hadden's turn of phrase. He has offered no conversation or explanation since sending me this letter, and all my requests to speak to him in person have been denied. I can only think that van Hadden has some personal reason for his frankly bizarre behaviour, although what that might be I can only guess.

He is correct. But I would expect him to be, or he is ill-fitted to the job! Nurgle's weapons are despair and hopelessness, and few men are strong enough to not be affected by these things. Ramheldt is a wise man, although I wish he was not so cryptic in his correspondence.

Fear is the first step on the road to His hell, and hopelessness is the chain by which He binds His slaves. Sorrow is His nourishment. Horror gives Him form. He preys on those who would submit to bitterness and those who closet themselves in misery, while life moves on around them.

He is terror in the face of decay and disease, and He is inaction in the face of all that is perceived as inevitable.

He is our impotence to resist the ravages of time, and He is our morbidity. He is revulsion and self-deceit, and He is the acceptance of defeat. He breathes His cynicism into our souls and binds us to His will.

He is Grandfather Nurgle, and He is obstinate, self-indulgent, despair.

Ramheldt van Hadden, Witch Finder Captain

The Doom of Remy Brousse

THIS IS THE TALE OF REMY BROUSSE, AS TAKEN FROM HUGO LAZZARRE'S BOOK 'GRIM STORIES AND CAUTIONARY TALES,' AS TRANSLATED BY HANS GUNTHER. A CAUTIONARY PARABLE, WITH ROOTS BURIED IN TRUTH.

WHEN THE GREAT PLAGUE came to the Saule valley, threatening to make Brionne a City of Corpses instead of a City of Thieves, there was a great surge of religious sentiment and devotion throughout the region. The shrines and temples of Shallya were flooded with converts, and the goddess' priestesses – whose ranks had been unkindly decimated – were soon driven to the brink of exhaustion by the excessive demands placed upon their healing magic.

Further upriver, in the town of Coramdram, a score of ugly deaths gave the people a sharp reminder of their duty to pray to the gods who might protect them – a duty which more than a few habitually neglected.

But there were some among them – as there invariably are when the God of Plague and Pestilence sets His footprint upon a region – who quickly abandoned their own gods, choosing instead to address their placatory prayers to the Lord of Corruption Himself. By this means they sought to gain independence from the dubious charity of gods who might justly feel that earlier neglect had disqualified their more wayward worshippers from consideration for special blessings.

One of these careful folk was Ophiria, wife of the ruddy-faced harness maker Remy Brousse, who saw in the advent of the plague a chance of deliverance from a marriage that had come to seem unbearably tedious.

Remy Brousse was not cruel or quarrelsome, nor given to adulterous liaisons. His only crime, if crime it can be called, was to have become somewhat fat and indolent, while his wife had remained slender and energetic – both of which circumstances might have been connected with the fact that they had no children.

Remy Brousse was a popular man in the district, for he was very clever with his hands. In a region where leather was expensive, he was always willing to make harnesses for poorer folk from rope or cord, or anything else suitable that came to hand. But his bitter spouse, who saw him as massive and ugly and longed to be free of him, did not notice these virtues.

Ophiria knew that age would not leave her unmarked for many years longer, and she knew also that if she were to win a husband more to her taste, she would need to inherit her husband's shop, to use as her dowry. And so, poor, bitter, Ophiria prayed devoutly to the God of Plague and Pestilence, saying to Him: "Please take my husband, who has become useless and burdensome to me, but would make a fine and fleshy morsel for one such as you."

And the God of Plague and Pestilence, disposed for once to show His backhanded generosity, did as Ophiria asked.

While she watched the corpulent body of her husband fade gradually away, as though the flesh were melting from his bones, Ophiria began to feel the stinging pains of guilt – for it is never pleasant to watch at close quarters how disease and decay maltreat a man. She began to imagine, in addition, that her neighbours had somehow overheard her secret prayers, and that they suspected her allegiance to the forbidden god.

To disguise her true feelings, Ophiria commenced to make loud protestations against the supposed unkindness of that cruel god who had robbed her of all that she held dear in the world, and after Remy Brousse died, she followed his coffin to its resting place, weeping and wailing most ardently.

The next day, and the day after, Ophiria went to her husband's grave, dressed all in black and bare of foot. There she knelt beside the freshly turned earth and forced her tears to come in floods by pinching her own flesh. She cried long and loudly before the priests of Mórr and all the other witnesses who knelt by other graves shedding tears for their own dead, and she lamented the vile injustice of the world. But within her secret thoughts Ophiria gave abundant thanks to the Lord of Decay for answering her prayers.

On the first and second day, this performance proceeded exactly as she planned, and on the night that followed she wondered whether she might have done enough to allay suspicion, but her anxiety was yet unquiet, and she decided that she must continue the pantomime for one more day.

On the next morning, bright and early, she walked yet again to Remy Brousse's grave, still

The Doom of Remy Brousse

barefoot and black-clad, and knelt down beside it, mustering her careful tears. The others who had taken up their stations at first light looked up at her passing, but paid her little heed.

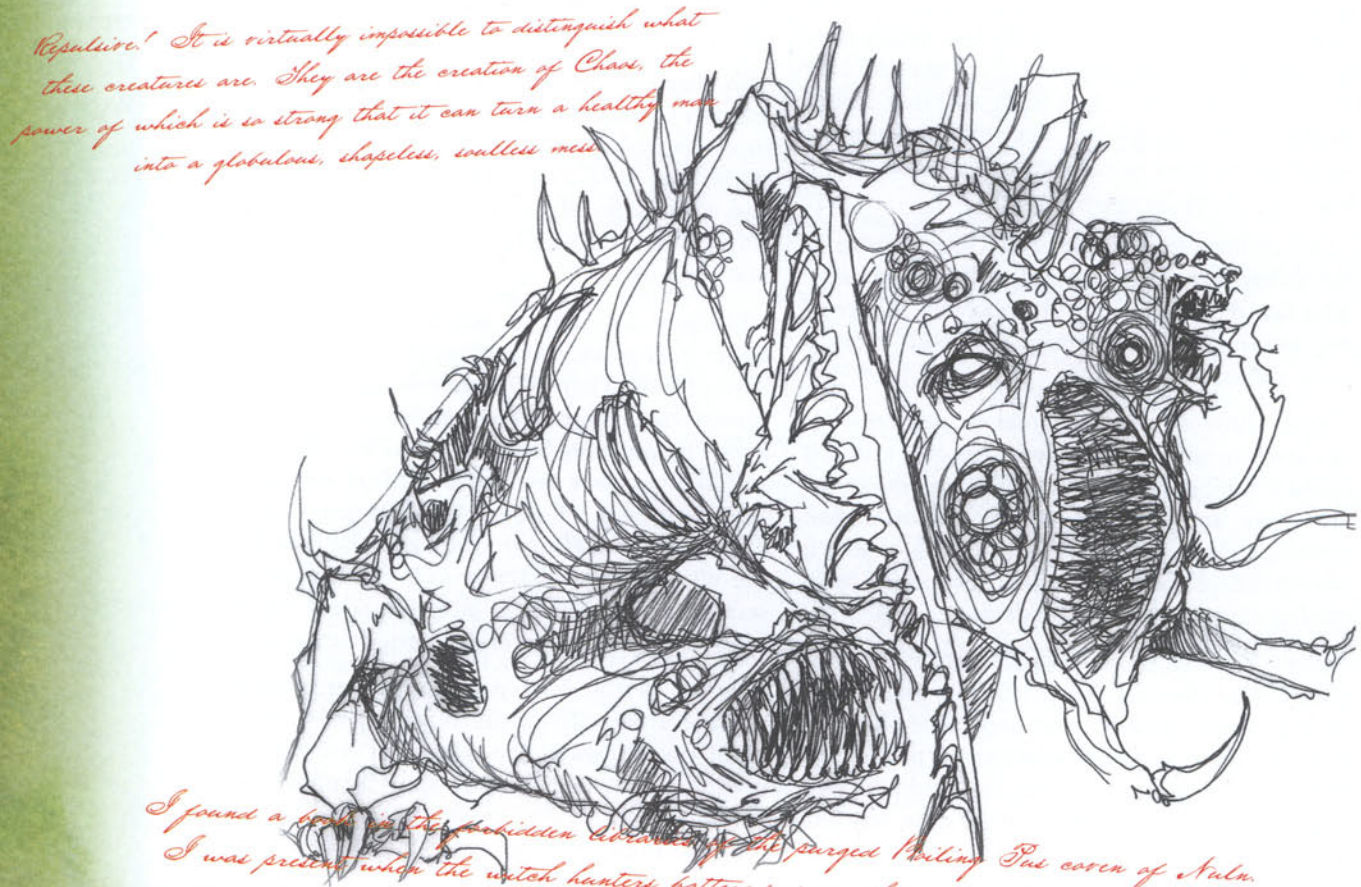
No sooner had Ophiria begun for the third time to moisten the earth with her false tears when a horrid churning and wriggling disturbed her husband's grave. Ophiria recoiled in alarm, but it was too late. A monstrous worm coiled itself around her wrist and held her arm down tightly. Then another worm appeared, and another, each one longer by far than any she had ever seen before. They crawled and slithered up her imprisoned arm, sliding over her shoulders and on towards her neck and face.

The sensation filled her with the purest horror, and she began to scream. She thought she was screaming as loud as she possibly could, until she realised that the worms were forming themselves about her head and shoulders into the shape of a bridle and tackle, and that more were winding themselves about her waist to form a girth, while a huge mass of them rested on her back taking the form of a saddle. And then a rider.

Only then was she privileged to discover how loudly a woman really could scream.

By this time, she was not alone in her cries, for the mourners at the other graves had seen what was happening, and Mórr's priests were running from the shrine that stood beside the burial ground to see what was afoot. Where Ophiria's peculiar rider took her, lambasting her with its whip of worms, no one ever discovered – but she was never seen in Coramdram again.

Her neighbours shook their heads and speculated that she must have been driven mad by grief, bringing her to curse the God of Plague and Pestilence far too loudly for his liking. All of them agreed that it is an error for a widow to grieve too much for what she has lost – and all of them agreed also that Remy Brousse would be sorely missed in the town, for there was no one else in the province who could make workable harnesses out of such unpromising materials.



Repulsive! It is virtually impossible to distinguish what these creatures are. They are the creation of Chaos, the power of which is so strong that it can turn a healthy man into a globulous, shapeless, soulless mess

I found a book in the forbidden district of the purged Ruling Pus coven of Nuln. I was present when the witch hunters battered down their doors and dragged every member out to face trial. All were found guilty of the most horrible crimes, and then executed. The book I acquired from their shelves had no name and no words or dedications within the covers. But it was full of scribblings and drawings of the most hateful and deformed creatures imaginable, some of which are reprinted in this volume. Were they the product of a deranged mind, or where they drawn from life?

Looking back over my [illegible] discovered that I have dated when I wrote each section. I do not remember doing this. A strange habit. Perhaps it is to do with my increasing preoccupation with the passage of time.

The Synod of Nuln

11/1/2511 J.C.

A TRANSCRIPT OF THE VERY WORDS SPOKEN BY MAGNUS THE PIOUS, AT THE FAMOUS SYNOD OF NULN, WHERE HE DEMONSTRATED HIS SHREWD AND UNCONVENTIONAL VIEWS ON THE NATURE OF DESPAIR.

SO THAT I MIGHT uncover and study all works pertaining to the ways and denizens of the Aethyr, our most beneficent emperor, his Imperial Majesty Karl Franz, and my own superiors within the Church of Sigmar, have granted me a special remit to access every library and repository of lore within our great Empire. As such, I have had recently the honour of being permitted access to the private libraries of our beloved Theogonist, Volkmar von Hindenstern, known also as *The Grim*.

Much to my surprise and delight, I have found a transcription of a document that apparently formed part of a speech made by the Great Emancipator, Magnus the Pious, during the Synod of Nuln, just subsequent to the horror of the last Chaos Incursion. The document concerns itself with the moral and theological implications of despair, and is therefore entirely relevant to my investigations into the nature of the Lord of Decay.

Here is a portion of the document:

I fear that for one in my position, burdened with the knowledge I have, there can be little separation between the Daemon Gods of Chaos and the uncontrolled emotions that birth them. As such, if despair is truly the abandonment of all hope and denial of any possibility of improvement, I must also regard despair as the complete abandonment of any hope in the Might of Sigmar, and the determined belief that one's life and soul are completely beyond His salvation.

The submission to despair should not be viewed simply as the admission of defeat on the part of an individual. On the contrary, despair can be seen as a definite act of will on a person's part – an act by which he or she rejects even the vaguest expectation of redemption or of ever seeing the realisation of Sigmar's Promises.

It is through our personal choice and endeavours that we decide and accept that salvation is possible, and this therefore presupposes that it is through our choices and endeavours that we might also decide that salvation is denied to us. This notion may be motivated by our belief that either we have already strayed too far from Sigmar's Holy Light to be allowed to return, or it may be motivated by the entirely corrosive belief that human nature is such that it prevents us from being able to cooperate fully with Sigmar's Divine Will. Some might even entertain the

Karl Franz, saviour of the Empire? He certainly shows here a radical mind. I find it ironic that he is not afraid to voice views that not all would agree with.

What is our true nature? Is it quantifiable? Can it be summed up in words and theories? I fear not.

The Synod of Nuln

Our great Emperor is a thinker and a warrior. How comforting to know that our armies and our people are led by a man who is both learned and brave. He shows great insight into the problems that this land faces, and this is a direct product of him being amongst his people, and experiencing first hand the tribulations that they suffer. Emperor Franz knows that the Empire is built for the people, by the people.

foolish notion that Almighty Sigmar is actually unwilling or unable to defend His people against the Powers and Dominions of the Utterdark.

This despair is a twisted act of conceit and arrogance, whereby a man may convince himself that his sufferings or shortcomings are beyond the abilities of Sigmar to repair. To suggest this – that one's own suffering is somehow greater and more powerful than the omniscience and omnipotence of a god – must surely be one of the greatest acts of vanity and conceit possible. As such, despair can be seen to contain the unreasoned malice of heresy, in that it can imply apathy, weakness or impotence on the part of Our Lord Sigmar.

Sigmar is a mote in their eye

So indeed, in the eyes of our Holy Church, despair should be considered a destructive condition of the soul, rather than only of the mind, and can truly be considered a sin in itself.

One might argue that, within our poly-theistic society, turning one's back on any single deity is no particular crime – but one must also consider the nature of Our Lord Sigmar. Sigmar's entire purpose in life was to unify humanity within His great Empire, and help us to create and fulfil our glorious destiny. So, to reject Sigmar is to reject His Holy Word and His Purpose, and to reject Sigmar's Word and Purpose is also to reject the

Dark elves? Not the very finest turning an unhealthy green?

How can one man prevail against the hazards of the night? Karl Franz is a giant amongst us, but even he will not stand.

The Synod of Nuln

unity and ideal of His Empire and the notion of human resistance and self-governance in the face of the Great and Unclean Powers of Chaos.

Having said all this, I wish to stress to you all that simple anxiety and doubt as to the validity of Sigmar as our god must never be confused with despair – no matter how acute they might seem. Although I believe it is true to say that all feelings of doubt, fear and sorrow might empower the Lord of Decay to some degree or other, it is only the excessive fear and bitter conceit of despair that grant him his Dominion over men.

The harm despair inflicts upon mortal minds and souls is far greater than one might initially expect, in that it steals hope and social conscience and can lead one along the road that ends in Chaos or, perhaps more specifically, in that vilest of all the Daemon Gods: Nurgh'leth.

However, though dangerous and of severe consequence, it must also be borne in mind that despair is not directly the most mortal of sins. An abject and explicit hatred of Sigmar's Word and Purpose contains more evil in it than does despair, even this is secondary to the sin of one of Sigmar's faithful servants turning apostate and fleeing into the waiting arms of the daemon-gods.

Magnus was, without question, a vessel of Sigmar's Divine Will, and was also among the very greatest scholars of our religion that has ever lived. His rhetoric was neither blinded with the ignorance of bigotry, nor mired in the politics of land or church. He, better than anyone in his day (and perhaps since), understood the threat posed to us by Chaos, in all its many forms. If he took such a dim view of despair, describing it as a sin and also as the road to Nurgle, who am I to gainsay him?

But although I accept Magnus's words, as well as the good council of Magister Kant, surely Nurgle cannot be so simply defined as the embodiment of despair? Indeed, what is despair precisely? And what are the mental and emotional processes that lead to despair? Surely all of the many aspects and contributing factors to despair must also be facets of Nurgle's being and purpose?

I must look into this further.

A Slow Road to Damnation

30/1/2577 J.C.

BEING A BRIEF COMMENT FROM THE AUTHOR ON THE UNHAPPY FATE OF THOSE UNFORTUNATES WHO FIND THEMSELVES STRUCK DOWN WITH DISEASE AND LURGY.

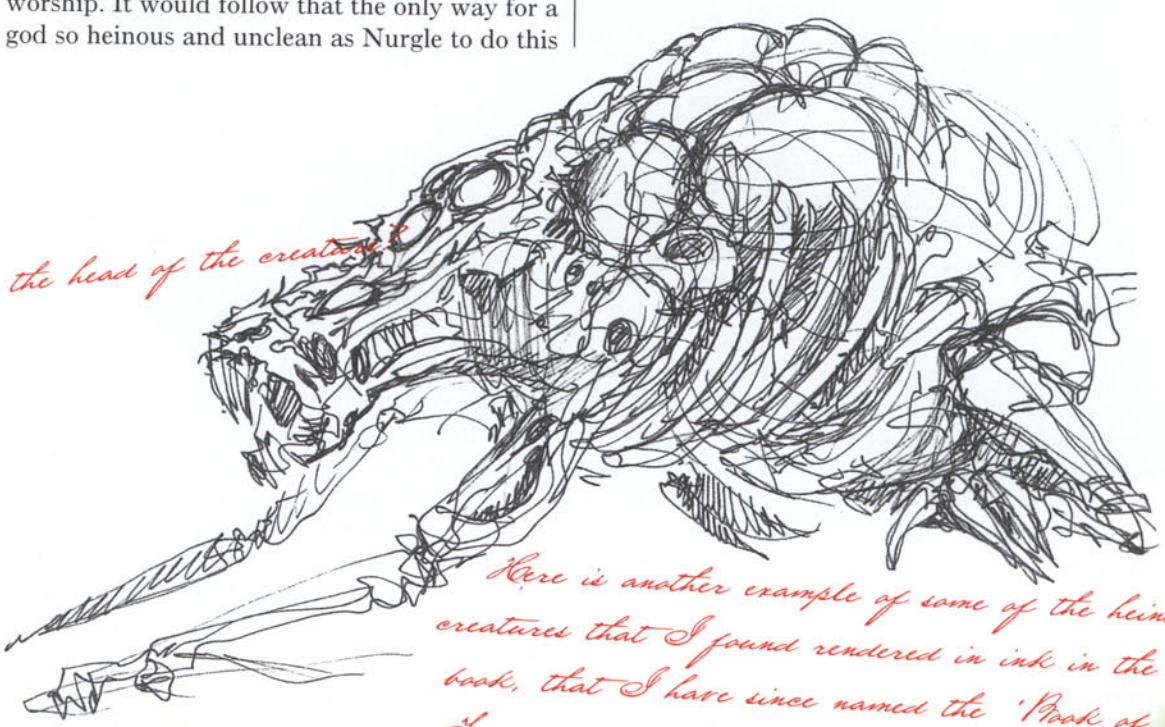
OF ALL THE GODS of Chaos, I believe that it is safe to say that Nurgle is the least attractive to mortals. I for one find Him and what He represents fouler and more horrific than I could ever hope to verbalise. He embodies all those things that we mortals fear and revile the most. All His servants are decayed, diseased and truly repulsive to behold – after all, turning to His worship is to embrace decay and disease whole-heartedly. One could be forgiven, therefore, for imagining that nothing would seem more anathema to all sane beings than to turn to the worship of Nurgle, but sadly this is not so. Nurgle's power and influence stretches across our world and through every level of every society.

Who would want to worship such a revolting and horrific god as Nurgle, and why would anyone seek His embrace? The answer must be that Nurgle gains His converts through various methods of emotional coercion. I cannot guess any other feasible explanation

I imagine that although the non-specific despair and fear of mortals is enough to sustain Nurgle, if He is to avoid being eclipsed and subsumed by His brother gods, Nurgle must actively pull people – pull souls – into His direct worship. It would follow that the only way for a god so heinous and unclean as Nurgle to do this would be by denying prospective servants of any option *but* turning to His worship. And the way that I believe Nurgle achieves this is by blighting the land with disease and pestilence. Hence the reason the God of Despair can also be the God of Plague and Disease.

Perhaps due to our awareness of the Daemon God Nurgle, and what He represents, there exists a common belief throughout all levels of society that those who are struck down by plague and severe illness are also tainted *spiritually* – as if their outward corruption of disease is a reflection of their inward moral and spiritual corruption. This unkind superstition could also be manifested in the notion that those who contract a fatal or disfiguring disease are victims of divine retribution for some past wrongdoing.

How often has this ignorant superstition blended with humanity's inherent fear and revulsion in the face of plague, to drive whole communities to hate those amongst them who have been struck down with illness? People will always fear that a plague (and the supposed moral corruption that goes with it) will spread further, and so those who contract such diseases are often ostracised, driven from their hometowns or even killed.



Is this the head of the creature?

Here is another example of some of the heinous creatures that I found rendered in ink in the stolen book, that I have since named the 'Book of Rot'. To countenance the fact that creatures such as these actually exist is probably beyond most peoples' imagination.


The disrupting influence of Nurgle can corrupt and disfigure a man beyond recognition. Although this was clearly once a man, he has been warped and mutated for his worship of the dark patron. Who knows what unholy knowledge has been gifted to him? Many, perhaps none. The gods of are fickle masters.
They adorn themselves all over with talons of death.
This creature is probably some sort of twisted mage of sorcerer. He carries no weapons, but the staff is probably his conduit for magical forces.

The Poor Comfort of Old Father Nurgle

BEING A CLOSE EXAMINATION OF HOW NURGLE CLAIMS AND RETAINS CONVERTS TO HIS ODOUROUS EMBRACE. TAKEN FROM AN ESSAY BY THE ADMIRABLE SISTER MARIE DUVALLIER.

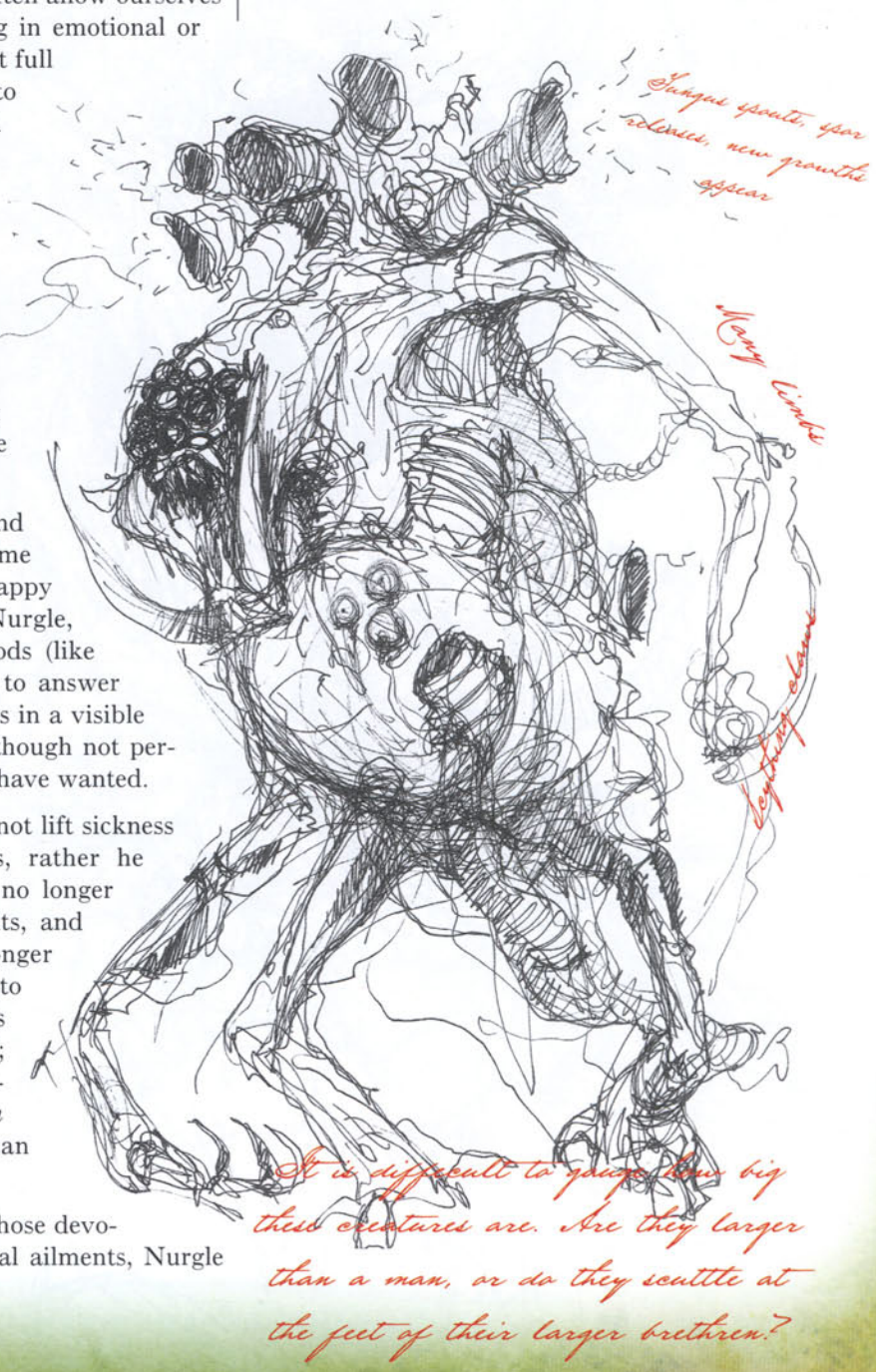
HERE FOLLOWS AN extract from Sister Marie Duvallier's writings concerning how she believes Nurgle brings the helpless into His worship, and also how she believes our own attitudes as citizens of this Empire often help the Lord of Decay in His work – whether the aid provided is intentional or not:

The more I look into the ways and means of the vile Lord of Plagues, the more frightened I become. Humanity is often cruel and self-destructive, and we all too often allow ourselves to live lives that are lacking in emotional or intellectual depth, or else just full of woe. Trapped as we seem to be by our sporadically dark and apathetic nature, I find myself wondering how humanity can ever hope to avoid the creeping suffocation of Nurgle's attention. For the moment any of us despair of our lives, hating our existence yet fearing death more, we become easy prey for the Lord of Plagues.

So many of the deluded and desperate hope to find some alleviation from their unhappy state in the worship of Nurgle, who, unlike more subtle gods (like Shallaya or Sigmar), seems to answer the prayers of his supplicants in a visible and immediate fashion – although not perhaps in the way they would have wanted.

The Lord of Plagues does not lift sickness or allow cures to diseases, rather he grants that his supplicants no longer feel pain from their ailments, and perhaps even become stronger because of them. This seems to apply whether the ailment is of the body or of the mind; Nurgle always offers potential devotees comfort *within* their suffering, rather than redemption *from* it.

From what I can tell, for those devotees that suffer from physical ailments, Nurgle grants a relief from pain, and even a bizarre appreciation of their state. For those devotees, suffering from the "disease" of depression, or worse, despair, Nurgle grants that the sufferers might find satisfaction and purpose within their miserable state and sink ever deeper into it. I believe that it is from this that the supposed caring nature of Nurgle can be explained: Nurgle is a god of insecurity, denial and self-delusion. He can convince the despairing of anything.



The Poor Comfort of Old Father Nurgle

Perception is a strange and tenuous thing. One man's insanity can be another man's genius. Amongst the diseased worshippers of Nurgle it is not uncommon for them to believe that their illnesses makes them "special" – that they have or know something of value that the un-afflicted do not have and cannot know. In some ways they seem similar to some of the more mildly disturbed patients that I treat at the Hospice – those who flaunt their problems, pretending to be pleased or proud of them when, in fact, they are repressing a deep self-loathing or doubt. But the similarity ends with their behaviour.

For the servants of Nurgle do not simply *pretend* to be pleased or proud about their ailments and dysfunctions, they truly *are* proud of them, to the core of their being. As far as I have been able to tell, they do not repress any self-loathing or doubt. They simply and truly adore their afflictions, and this, I believe, is the cruel gift of Nurgle's first blessing – the twisting of one's perceived reality so that delusion and denial turn into truth and acceptance.

And so it is by manipulating mortal self-perception that I believe Nurgle offers His foul comfort and salvation that is so at odds with the genuine care and love offered by our Gentle Mother, Shallaya. The Lord of Plagues takes away the fear, self-respect and vanity from His newly dedicated servants by promoting within them a monstrous self-satisfaction and extreme conservatism of mind and spirit. It is this, I believe, that leads them to view their decayed or diseased-riddled bodies as somehow righteous and "honest", and as being the best and only way to be, and therefore something worth sharing.

I feel my heart beating faster even to look at the pictures. Imagine seeing one in the twisted flesh!

It would be nice to assume that such monstrosities existed only in the wild wastes of the far north. Ha! It would be nice to assume they didn't exist at all! Alas, I believe that soon the world will be overrun with such things, if we continue to hide our faces in our hands.

The Rewards of Ignorance

BEING A FURTHER ESSAY BY THE HAND OF MARIE DUVALLIER, SISTER-PRIESTESS OF SHALLAYA, ON THE SAD TREATMENT AND SOCIAL STANDING OF PLAGUE VICTIMS AND THOSE CARRYING DISEASE.

IN THIS SAD WORLD it has ever been the case that medicine and good health are all too often the prerogatives of but a wealthy few. The vast majority of the Old World's inhabitants cannot afford, or are not deemed worthy to receive, the medicinal care garnered to the noble houses. At no time does this parlous state become more apparent than during an outbreak of one of the terrible plagues that so often blight our lands.

To those that contract any such plague, there is little mercy to be found. Their lives ruined and their loved ones often dead, these poor unfortunates are almost always driven from their towns and villages by their neighbours, and are forbidden from ever returning. Perhaps due to low morale, poor sanitary conditions, malnutrition, or a mix of all four, this callous rejection often leads to a worsening of the plague victims' state. From this point, the only support that these rejected souls can depend upon is from others like themselves, and it is not unusual for various plague victims to band together into small wandering communities.



Outrageously, though perhaps unsurprisingly, the villages and towns through which these bands of plague sufferers pass, offer them little or no charity, and so they are forced to travel the highways and byways, begging from fellow travellers and surviving on scraps until their condition finally kills them.

By far the worst cruelty inflicted on these sad wandering souls is in their requirement, by law, to carry heavy bells around their necks or across their backs, striking them in repetitive discord while chanting the word "Unclean!" so that their coming can be heard long before they arrive. These are people, not beasts!

Those in authority might maintain that this constant chanting is a valid and necessary means of warning all healthy citizens to beware of the approaching plague carriers, but I am convinced that it is more a form of punishment for the sin of being struck down by plague in the first place – as if those that are have any say in the matter!

If the afflicted wanderers fail to give sufficient warning of their arrival, it is actually the legal right of any nobleman, soldier, militiaman, watchman, freeman or farmhand to drive them away using any means possible – be that to pelt them with stones, shoot at them with musket or bow, or even to douse them in oil and set them alight.

It is my belief that this casual disregard for human life causes suffering to more than the poor plague victims at whom it is directed. To explain, even within our great nation, good men and women seem to believe that plague victims are evil simply because they have contracted such an illness, and it is through this that I believe our society actually forces such sufferers towards the worship of Chaos or, more specifically, Nurgle.

If, as a society, we are brought up to believe that we contract illnesses because of an inherent spiritual laxity on our own part, surely the eventual apostasy of all plague victims is already sealed? I believe that it is through our own cruel

The Rewards of Ignorance

I have looked at the pages of the 'Book of Rot' more closely today. They appear to be actually rotting around the edges! It is as if the very subject matter is causing Nurgle to affect the material it is inked upon! A strange, wonderful and horrible phenomena!



and thoughtless actions that we create new opportunities for Nurgle to plague our lands and lives – both literally and figuratively.

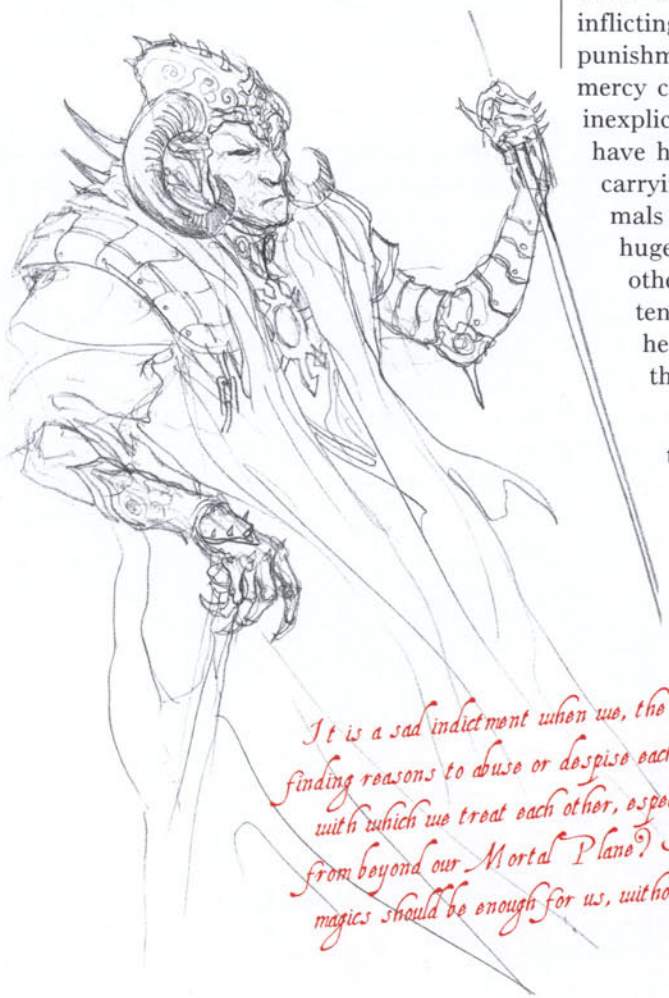
If we preach that all those afflicted by plague are unclean and damned, why should they not take the risk of turning to Chaos on the off-chance that the daemon-gods might be able to offer succour where the cults of the Empire's more wholesome gods have apparently rejected them? To their own desperate minds, if they are already damned, what else have they to lose?

I have seen so often bands of lost souls such as these as they tread the Empire's great highways, beating themselves with chains and whips in self-punishment for the sin of their afflictions, singing their slow laborious litanies of repentance and self-hate. How small a step is it for these litanies of misery to change into desperate prayers to Nurgle for salvation? If despair is Nurgle's own domain and feeding ground, who could possibly despair more than those who are forced to live their lives as unclean beasts?

It is a small wonder that many of these unclean bands of plague victims become self-harming flagellants, desperate to receive forgiveness for the perceived sin of affliction. After all, the abuse they suffer at both their own hands and the hands of society at large does nothing to help their already damaged and traumatised minds.

There are many tales of such diseased flagellants who seem to take perverse pride in inflicting upon themselves novel and spectacular punishments, perhaps believing that Nurgle's mercy can be most easily won by some wholly inexplicable act of self-mortification. I myself have heard tell of such laborious penances as carrying donkeys or other large and heavy animals over long distances; or rolling for miles huge wheel-shaped iron cages containing other flagellants; even the permanent fastening of a helmet without eye-slits over the head so that it is impossible to see anything.

Manifold and horrific are the tortures these flagellants inflict upon themselves, and loud and piteous are their cries to the Lord of Plagues. For his part, I'm sure that Nurgle is all too willing to lend a sympathetic ear to these cries and desperate promises – in fact, I believe He counts on them.



It is a sad indictment when we, the citizens of Sigmar's Holy Empire, cannot keep from finding reasons to abuse or despise each other. How can we possibly justify the casual barbarity with which we treat each other, especially when we are faced with the so many genuine threats from beyond our Mortal Plane? Surely the apocalyptic horrors of the Aethyr and its dark magics should be enough for us, without us having to create our own more mundane horrors within our own communities?

It sickens me to my core when I think of Sigmar's vision of human unity and prosperity, and then see the selfish, petty and ignorant people we have become.

Sometimes I wonder if we as a people are becoming too sick to survive.

The Vitality of Decay

6/3/2511 J.C.

A LOOK AT THE WAYS IN WHICH WORSHIP OF THE BOIL-RIDDEN GOD AFFECTS MORTALS, AND THE CONSEQUENCES THESE CHANGES HAVE ON THEIR PHYSIOLOGY AND THE BALANCE OF THEIR HUMORS.

ALTHOUGH I AM SURE it is true to say that those who first step onto Nurgle's path are invariably lost to despair, once they have received the blessings of their heinous new master, the Plague God's converts seem to change in both attitude and demeanour.

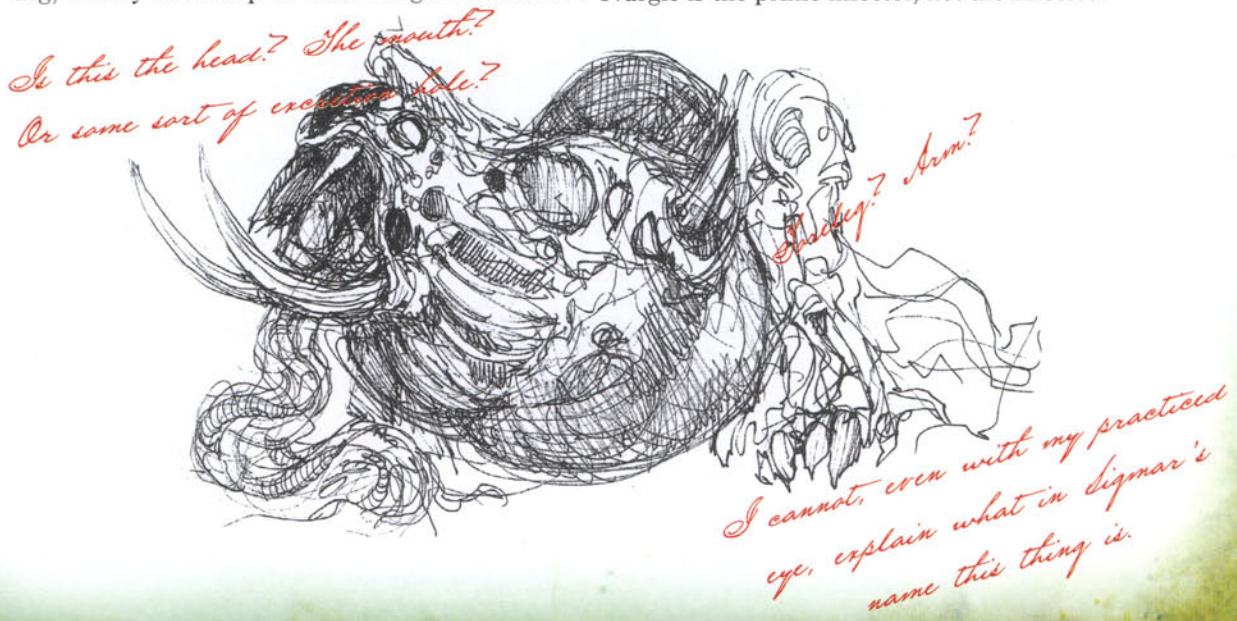
I have read many reports by soldiers and witch hunters who have had the misfortune of being faced with the warriors of Nurgle, and each has testified to their foul opponents' energy and even mirth upon the battlefield. So what has changed within these damnable heretics? Surely, if their god is one of ultimate despair, cynicism and fear, the disgusting servants of Nurgle must have to reflect these dominant aspects of their god (as, indeed, the followers of Slaanesh and Khorne seem to reflect the dominant drives of their gods).

Perhaps the intention of this sudden energy and determination that Nurgle grants to His dedicated servants is given as a kind of twisted solace. There is an old proverb that says that it is a comfort in hell to have companions in suffering, and I begin to wonder if it is this notion, or something similar to it, that is the driving force behind Nurgle's cults and armies.

Perhaps Nurgle's servants attain some twisted (though genuine) comfort or relief in their suffering by actively seeking to inflict approximations of their own suffering upon the rest of the mortal world. The greater the suffering, misery and despair that Nurgle's servants inflict upon the world, the greater their contentment and humour seems to be.

Sister Marie believes that Nurgle's warriors are unaffected by despair and apathy for the same reason that they do not die from the many physical corruptions their master heaps upon them. Her argument is that although a plague might cause the creatures it infects to wither and rot, the plague *itself* is perfectly healthy. I admit that at first I had no idea as to what the good sister meant, but she went on to explain how she believed that all diseases are caused by minuscule predators, carried upon the air or within fluids, that penetrate into our bodies to exist as parasites within our blood or organs, or whatever else they might need. The sores, coughing or any other physical attribute that this invasion might cause, are apparently only *symptoms* caused by the infiltrating parasites – the parasites themselves (and therefore the disease itself) does not suffer from the symptoms it causes.

In other words, I think that Sister Marie was indicating that by dedicating themselves to Nurgle and receiving His blessings, cultists and warriors cease to be simple carriers of disease, and become actual embodiments of them to some degree. This explains to me the form Nurgle takes in the few depictions that the Shallayans have of Him in their holy books and iconography: He is always portrayed an ordinary looking man, but with grasping hands and a hungry gaze. Nurgle is the prime infector, not the infected.




By accepting the patronage of Grandfather Nurgle, a man gives up his most holy and exquisite form. The changes that befall him can be quite startling. Limbs change shape, skin becomes torn and ragged, the perfect symmetry of the human frame is ruined. They become horrid, foul creatures that carry with them the rot and corruption of Chaos.
They display such foulness and corruption. From every link and chain of armour hang gruesome trophies and fetishes. Each hangs beside these creatures in a tangled stink.
This creature reads. I wonder what is on that page. Some heretical tract, no doubt. I wonder...

11/4/2578 J.C.

The Human Champions of Chaos

BEING A CLOSE EXAMINATION OF THE MANY AND DIVERSE MORTALS WHO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE THE DUBIOUS RANK OF CHAMPION. THESE DEVIANT INDIVIDUALS RISK THEIR SOULS IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR AIMS, AND THUS, DESERVE SCRUTINY.

HAVING LEARNED EVERYTHING that Dolmancé had to tell me, and having read everything van Hadden has been so good to send me regarding the human servants of Chaos, I have come to the conclusion that Chaos Gods must value their human followers far above their own daemonic minions. For if daemons and the multifarious Children of Chaos have no choice about their nature and allegiance, then surely the best way that the Chaos Gods can increase their power is by consuming the souls of other intelligent and free-willed creatures.

As I have already mentioned in previous investigations, some of these souls are easily won. Many are the brigands, bandits and outcasts who would willingly follow any leader who brings them plunder and offers them protection. Such individuals are all too common in our poor world, but there are comparatively few beings with the strength of will and arm to become true champions of the Chaos Gods.

These champions are in many ways the representatives of Chaos upon the mortal plane, and as such they constantly strive to outdo each other. Sometimes their masters send them on special missions or direct them to band together with other creatures of Chaos to destroy an army or overthrow a city.

Almost always, Chaos champions and their warbands are forced to live in the forests and mountains. All normal men fear and abhor Chaos, and no legitimate authority within our great Empire would tolerate the presence of a Chaos follower.

The ultimate reward for a successful champion is to be granted immortality as a daemon, so that he can live forever by his patron deity's side and continue to fight on His behalf. It is this dream that drives all Chaos champions onwards, although thankfully only a very few of them will ever reach this ultimate state of disgrace. Most champions will either die in combat or their masters will reward them with so many horrendous mutations that they become mindless slavering things, beasts with malformed bodies and only the barest recollection of their former glory.

More fool them I say for abandoning the cause of humanity and throwing in their lot with the Great Enemy.

The Tribes of the Crow

Beyond the icy lands of Norsca, in the hinterlands of the Chaos Wastes, there are some amongst the ignorant and wicked tribes who reside there who worship Nurgle openly and with pride. To the majority of these ignorant fools, the Lord of Decay is known as *Nielglen*.

Nielglen is depicted as a great carrion crow: gigantic, flightless and near skeletal, its rotting flesh is riven with all manner of diseases, and maggots writhe in its belly. This is the form in which Nielglen chooses to show himself to the tribesmen of the north. The tribes dedicated to Nielglen believe that the flight of a crow tells of death, of eyes without life, of a slow lingering end caused by agonising wounds. The warriors of the Crow are grim men, finding the fulfilment they seek in the horrors of battle. It is their belief that suffering and misery, though not necessarily enjoyable, are the natural state of life, and to attain true understanding of themselves and the world (and to appease Nielglen) they must cast aside all the trappings and delusions of life to embrace and promote the truth of despair.

They see Nielglen as the most honest of all the gods, in that He does not lie about the "purpose" and "reality" of life. They accept that all things decay and believe that by merit of the fact that all things *will* decay, there can be no true value to life per-se. They believe that the only activity of any worth on the mortal side of the grave is in the spreading of the enlightenment that Nielglen offers, thereby giving meaning to the otherwise pointless suffering of life, while also securing themselves a place in Nielglen's afterlife.



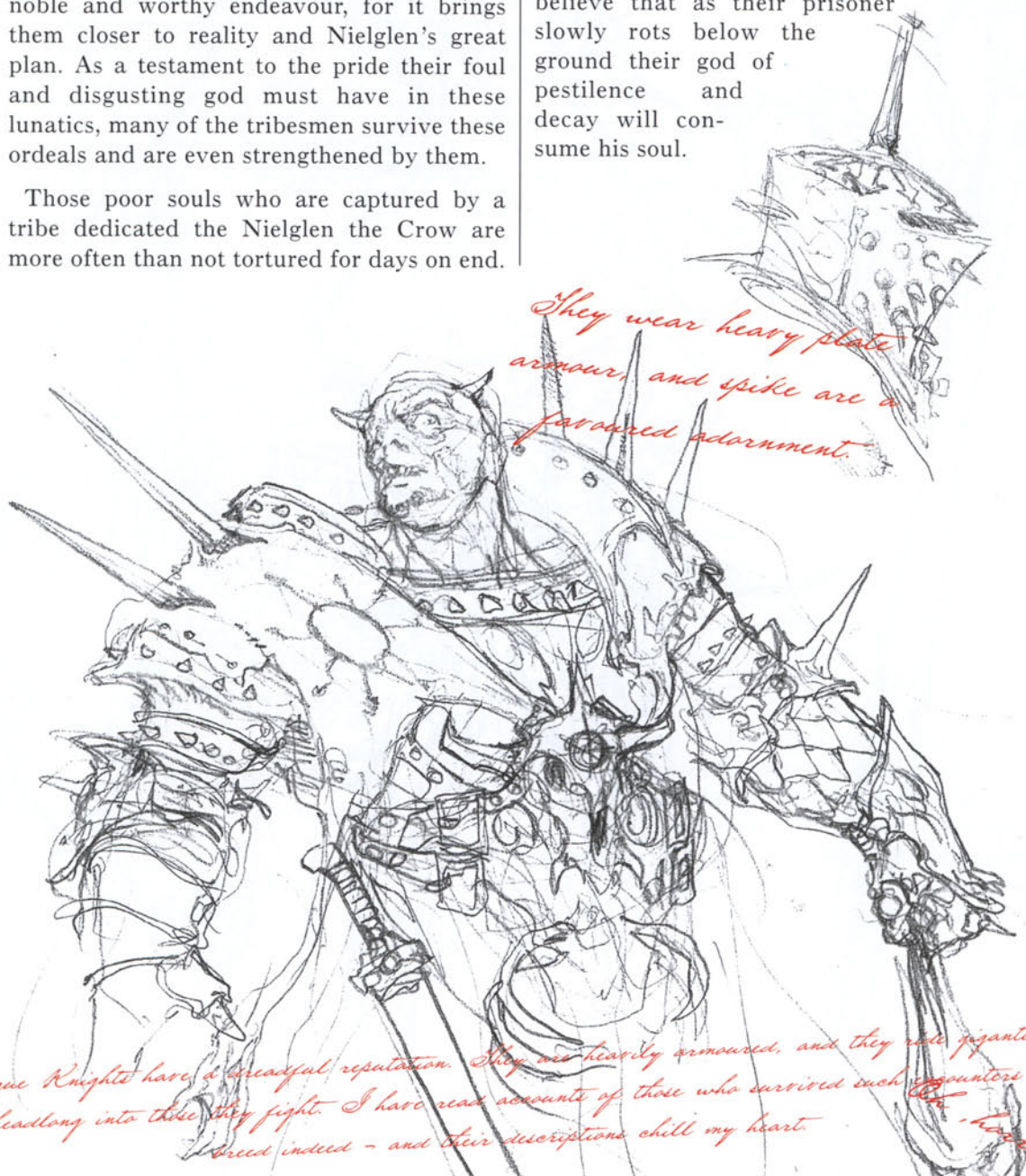
The lands to the north are harsh and cruel. The men who reside there reflect this. Even those not touched by Chaos must be tough individuals to survive the climate and the way of life. I often wonder how many do live in the inhospitable north, and what would happen if they all gathered together and invaded our borders. If such a thing ever happen we would be in grave peril.

And I hear rumours from my contacts in Kisley: the winds of magic are stirring restlessly.

The Human Champions of Chaos

Magical winds blow constantly from the north, bringing with them all manner of plagues and diseases. To those dedicated to the Crow God, contracting such a disease is considered a fate that pleases their patron. When word of a new disease reaches them, they pray that they too will be blessed with it. They believe that suffering from a plague is a noble and worthy endeavour, for it brings them closer to reality and Nielglen's great plan. As a testament to the pride their foul and disgusting god must have in these lunatics, many of the tribesmen survive these ordeals and are even strengthened by them.

Those poor souls who are captured by a tribe dedicated the Nielglen the Crow are more often than not tortured for days on end. The barbarians who do this regard their cruelty as sacred and they encourage their victims to suffer in silence, as their god approves of those who submit to their fate. After that, the Crow warriors tend to bury their victims beneath earth and snow, sometimes while still alive. The earth below is seen as the domain of the Crow God, and they believe that as their prisoner slowly rots below the ground their god of pestilence and decay will consume his soul.



They wear heavy plate armour, and spike are a favoured adornment.

The Plague Knights have a dreadful reputation. They are heavily armoured, and they ride gigantic steeds, smashing headlong into those they fight. I have read accounts of those who survived such encounters - a rare breed indeed - and their descriptions chill my heart.

These huge men, grotesque and swollen with disease and pus, line up to face the opposing ranks. They stand in silence, with nothing but the impatient stamps of their horses' hooves. Then, and a silent signal, they begin their charge. Slow at first, a canter, but they quickly speed up, until their wake is nothing but turned earth and ruts. When they collide with their foe, their wake is turned into the crushed and twisted dead.

The Plague Knights are favoured by Nurgle, and carry his favour. Their reign of terror is not likely to end soon, as I can think of few who can match them.

The Plague Knights

HERE FOLLOWS A DEDICATED CHAPTER ON THE MALICIOUS AND FOETID WARRIORS OF NURGLE KNOWN AS THE PLAGUE KNIGHTS, AS WITNESSED BY THE DIARIST AND RACONTEUR KAZIMIR LENINOV.

PLAGUE KNIGHTS is a name given to the mounted elite from amongst the Chaos warriors whose patron is Nurgle. By all reports, these Knights are always infected with all manner of disfiguring diseases, and are motivated by a strange and morbid energy. Perhaps it is this that enables them to survive wounds that might otherwise slay another Chaos knight. Their originally splendid wargear, coats of arms and banners are always tattered and filthy, like the rags of lepers, and their once-opulent silk or fur cloaks hang from their shoulders like the shrouds of corpses. Yet the Plague Knights bear their disfigurements openly, and are proud of their dribbling sores and discoloured skin – although some have been known to hide their leprous faces behind bizarre carnival masks with absurdly grinning or grimacing faces. I can say no more of these foul and unholy warriors. I need distance from my studies.



Their armour is fashioned in such a way as to inspire as much fear and awe into their enemy as possible.

The Decaying Knights were encamped on a shallow hill that rose out of the boggy ground west of Praag. A track of brushwood reinforced with tree-trunks had been laid to afford passage to the knights' horses, but elsewhere Nurgle's warriors were forced to wade through the mire, and seemed quite content to do so. I followed the track carefully, for even this was slippery with filth and slime. My poor steed snorted angrily as we passed a row of stakes, festooned with rotting heads. On the other side of this grisly fence a corpulent warrior watched me from the squalid comfort of a tattered palanquin, fat black flies crawling lazily across his ruined face. My stomach churned at the stench that grew evermore disgusting as we proceeded deeper into the camp of Nurgle's servants.

The knights' banners were arranged in a great clump atop the hill, hanging like the rank sails of a decaying ship. So ragged with decomposition were these banners that it was hard to guess at the symbols depicted on them. Some seemed to bear the heads or whole bodies of monstrous flies, while others hinted at what must once have been vivid scenes of bodily corruption. Around these banners were gathered the Plague Knights themselves. As a mass they seemed to ooze with sores and boils, so that even their armour ran with pus and glistened with ichor. Some appeared bloated like corpses, others had skin that hung from them in shreds where contagion feasted upon their flesh. As I dismounted from my horse's back, I felt the sticky ground suck at my feet, but did not dare to look down to see what foul thing had met my step.

~ extracted from 'Memoirs of Redemption'
By Kazimir Leninov


A hideous corruption of the human form. This monster in steel would create fear and loathing in mortal ranks opposing.
Corruption and rust

Feytor the Tainted

Being another tale from the barbarous north, this time pertaining to the dark history of Feytor, champion of Nurgle, known as the "Tainted".

TODAY I RECIEVED an account of another Norscan saga, sent to me by my good friend and colleague, Januz Hanauer. Like the saga of the Slaaneshi champion Styrkaar that he sent to me previously, Janusz tells me that the story of Feytor the Tainted is being regaled across the length and breadth of Norsca. I cannot help but find this disturbing. The general increase and popularity of these sorts of tales must surely be a [illegible] if a great nest of hornets has been stirred up, and the savage peoples of the north are growing ever more agitated.

Most worrying by far, this latest saga contains yet more references to Archaon, this time referring to him as the Lord of the End Times. This cannot bode well. I must consult with my superiors.

In the meantime, here follows Hanauer's own handwritten version of Feytor's saga:

Born to a family of farmers in a poor community northwest of Sigmar's Empire. Feytor was the eldest son of a widowed mother. Though he had not yet seen his twentieth year, he was the eldest of his brothers and so the day to day running of the farm fell to him. Life was hard for the family, made harder still when their region was struck by the harshest winter in decades. Snow lay on the ground for six months and more, freezing crops and killing livestock. The previous year's harvest had been a poor one, and so the starving people had to rely on food supplies coming from other areas of the Empire. Yet all too often the passes were blocked by the poor weather conditions, and when the caravans did get through, the food was often spoiled, and there was never enough to go around. Entire villages and towns starved to death.

Banditry became increasingly common, as peasants became more desperate for sustenance. In this time of extreme hardship, a new terror struck the already disheartened people: plague.

This plague was swift and deadly – it could consume entire villages in a matter of days. Those who contracted the illness died in torment, their bodies bloating, with great welts and boils bursting all over their flesh. So fearful were the people of this contagion that when one of Feytor's younger siblings began to show the early symptoms, all the neighbouring families immediately abandoned their lands and began the long trek to Wolfenburg, where they hoped to find shelter. Refusing to leave their meagre holdings, Feytor and his family cared for the sick child as best they could, resigned to the fact that the foul seed of plague was already within them.

Each day Feytor would pray devoutly for deliverance from the terrible disease, his pleas directed towards any deity who would listen. To the astonishment of the family, his prayers seemed to be heard, for the boy did not perish. Feytor's brother soon recovered enough to be able to walk, though his skin was still bloated and discoloured. Feytor also bore the mark of the disease, for his hair had begun to fall out in great chunks. His skin became pallid and sickly, and dark rings crept around his eyes. Nevertheless, the family lived, and they sent silent words of thanks to whichever deity had come to their aid.

However, as the months rolled by, Feytor and his [illegible] scrutiny of the local people [illegible]

Feytor the Tainted

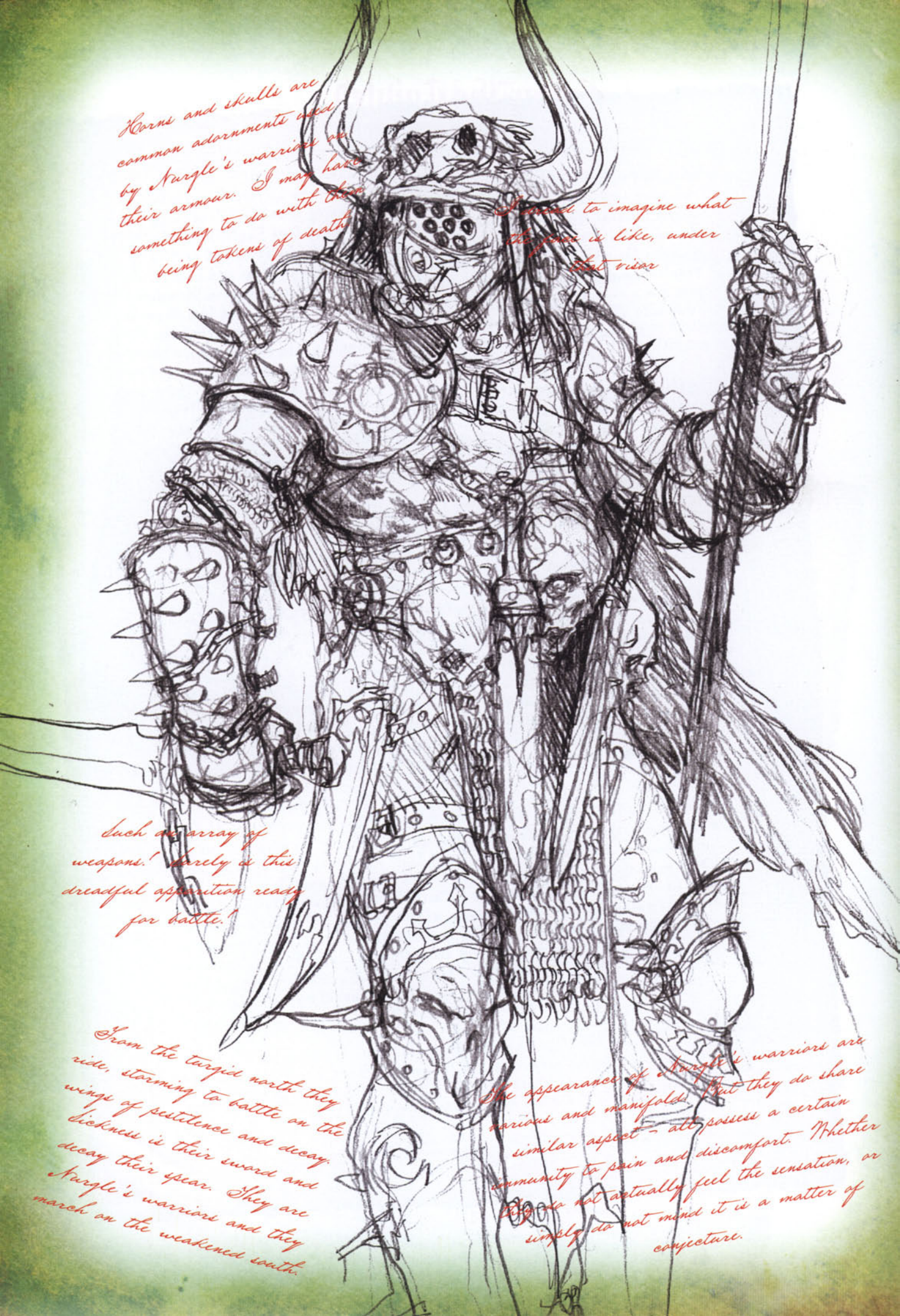
Seeing Feytor's sickly appearance, the ignorant farmers scorned the family, whispering darkly about him and his kin, and refusing to conduct trade with them for fear of catching disease. In a short space of time Feytor's family found themselves desperate with hunger and cold, and were forced, at last, to abandon their home. On the road, travellers steered clear of them, and Feytor's frustration and anger increased as he watched his family grow weaker. Nobody gave him a chance to explain that they were not plague carriers and that their sickness was not in any way debilitating. Indeed, Feytor had found that his sickly flesh was now increasingly resistant to cold and pain.

After being run out of countless villages and towns unsympathetic to their plight, Feytor eventually led his family to a cave at the base of the Grey Mountains to the west of the Empire. Game was plentiful, providing Feytor and his family with food and furs. For a time they were happy, although the seeds of resentment had been planted deeply in Feytor's heart.

At dusk one day, after hunting, Feytor was returning with his kill over his shoulders, when he saw hoof prints in the snow leading up to the cave where his family waited. Dropping the deer in the snow, he raced after the tracks. In the clearing before the cave entrance he found the burnt husks of his brothers, sisters, and mother chained to blackened stakes. A group of men stood watching the grisly scene, scarves tied over their faces. Blind with rage, Feytor raced into the midst of them, striking out with his hunting knife, plunging it deep into the neck of the first man. The others turned in surprise, their eyes filled with horror. One of them barked an order to kill the plague-carrier. Fury coursing through his veins, Feytor laid around him with his callused fists, ignoring the blows of the swords that tore into his flesh. One by one he struck the men down, killing the final one by smashing his skull into a boulder. Then grief finally took Feytor, and he sank into the snow, burying his head in his hands.

When he came to his senses, he felt drained, as if some force of energy that he had been temporarily granted was wearing off. He surveyed the bloody scene. His burnt family surrounded by the bodies of their murderers - soldiers of the Empire, wearing the yellow and crimson tabard of Ostermark. Their bodies were bloated and open sores had burst over their skin, though such was Feytor's despair he paid this no mind. There was nothing for him to live for now, and he knew that he would be hunted as long as he lived. Nevertheless, Feytor chose not to submit to fate. He rose to his feet and set off to the north, for no better reason than it seemed the right thing to do. Soldiers and witch hunters dogged his tracks. After almost a month of pursuit they caught up with him.

Feytor fought with the strength of his bitterness and the indomitability of his despair, and the soldiers never returned to their homeland. Feytor disappeared from the Empire history books, living on only as a story told around the fireplace on cold and dark nights.


Horns and skulls are common adornments used by Nurgle's warriors on their armour. I may have something to do with them being tokens of death.
I cannot to imagine what the face is like, under that visor
Such an array of weapons. Scarcely is this dreadful apparition ready for battle.
From the turgid north they ride, storming to battle on the wings of pestilence and decay. Sickness is their sword and decay their spear. They are Nurgle's warriors and they march on the weakened south.
The appearance of Nurgle's warriors are various and manifold. But they do share similar aspect - all possess a certain immunity to pain and discomfort. Whether they do not actually feel the sensation, or simply do not mind it is a matter of conjecture.

Fenfor the Tainted

The sagas of the northern barbarian tribes, however, tell of a sickly man coming into their land, pursued by many weak southerners. Intrigued, the Norsemen left the sickly one alone. Unsure as to what his coming meant, but having seen it in a vision gifted by the gods, the Jarg (or chieftain) of the Wolf Brothers tribe chose to watch the stranger, following him as he entered their lands, and took up residence in a rough cave. The stranger had shrugged off terrible wounds inflicted by those who had pursued him, and the Wolf Brothers were impressed by his resilience. After several weeks, the tribe decided to approach him.

Many of the Norsemen that I have met recount the meeting of the Wolf Brothers and the stranger as an important part of their histories, for this meeting had a considerable impact on their culture. After his coming, many of their people turned towards the worship of Nurgle, and a number of mighty champions of Nurgle rose, bringing glory and pride to the Wolf Brothers.

The Wolf Brothers eventually embraced Feytor as one of their own when he bested one of their strongest in a bare-knuckle fight. It was through the guidance of the tribe's shaman that Feytor came to realise that it was undoubtedly Nurgle himself who had protected him from the plague, and it was this same divine being who had filled him with the strength with which to avenge his family's killers. Learning all that he could about his protector, Feytor began to worship Nurgle in earnest.

Several years after the Wolf Brothers had welcomed him, Feytor began to push for the tribe to expand, so that it would be strong enough to begin raiding the northern Empire and lands of Kislev. Their Jarg, Svolos Wolf, consistently rejected and ridiculed Feytor's wishes until eventually Feytor had no choice but to challenge Svolos for leadership. The two met in unarmed combat. Svolos was tall and broad shouldered, a mighty warrior and veteran of many such battles to overthrow him. He thought that he would be done with Feytor quickly. He was wrong.

Svolos struck Feytor with mighty blows that snapped the sickly man's head backwards time and time again. But Feytor merely grinned and waded through the heavy punches, ignoring blows that would have incapacitated another man. Feytor bore Svolos to the ground and rained an avalanche of heavy blows into the Jarg's face as the Wolf Brothers watched in silence.

Fists dripping with blood, Feytor eventually rose from the Jarg's body and claimed leadership of the tribe for himself.

Their adoration would certainly seem impractical into them. Many people would simply have killed a sickly man who came into their midst. That is what happens in the Empire...

Feytor the Tainted

Immediately upon being declared the new Jarg, Feytor began to approach neighbouring tribes, proclaiming to them that he carried the word of Nurgle, and that they must join with him. When the tribes refused to swear allegiance, their warriors and their children were struck down with disease and pestilence, both with equal ferocity. Again Feytor approached them, telling them to accept their condition and forsake their own gods for the benevolence of Nurgle, for by doing only this would they be saved. In this manner, Feytor's warband grew as ever more of the neighbouring tribes swore allegiance to him.

The following decade saw an exponential growth in Feytor's power and influence in the region. His body grew ever stronger and he was now almost immune to pain. The devotion of his followers, most of whom had followed Feytor's lead to worship the Lord of Decay, ensured that they too became a force to be reckoned with, terrifying their foes with their deathly appearance and supernatural resilience. A sickly cloud of yellow fog and buzzing flies followed them wherever they went, and few could stand against them without terror in their hearts. Feytor knew that the time would soon be upon him when he would be strong enough to enact his revenge upon the lands of the Empire.

Feytor's warband became known amongst his enemies as the "Decayed Ones," and his warriors were only too happy to embrace this title, forsaking their old name of 'Wolf Brothers.' Their reputation was grim indeed, and they thrived upon the fear they instilled within their enemies. Many of the original members of his warband still lived, though their wolf pelts and leather armour had been replaced with heavy harnesses of moulded iron. They sought out the most feared warbands of the north, and met them in battle beneath the roiling skies. Always were the Decayed Ones victorious, and always did they leave a single survivor of their conflicts. Infected with all manner of diseases and hideously deformed, this survivor was released to spread plague and the news of Feytor's coming.

Then in the Imperial year of 2518 Feytor saw a sign in the heavens that would change the course of his whole life. A twin-tailed comet arched across the night sky above him, pointing towards the north-east of the Empire, and in that moment it is said that Feytor was gripped by a waking vision. He was to travel in the direction that the comet had pointed out, to a range of distant mountains. There he would find the mightiest horde ever to have been raised in the name of the Four Powers, and he would meet the great Uniter who had bound them together, Archaon: Lord of the End Times. It was clear to Feytor that Father Nurgle wished him to set aside all animosity he and his people might feel to the servants of rival Chaos Powers, and swear his allegiance to Archaon.

Valnir the Reaper

Being an account of the strange fate and twisted reasoning of Valnir the Reaper, as taken from the "Wolf's Head Tales", translated from old Slevic by Hans Gunther.

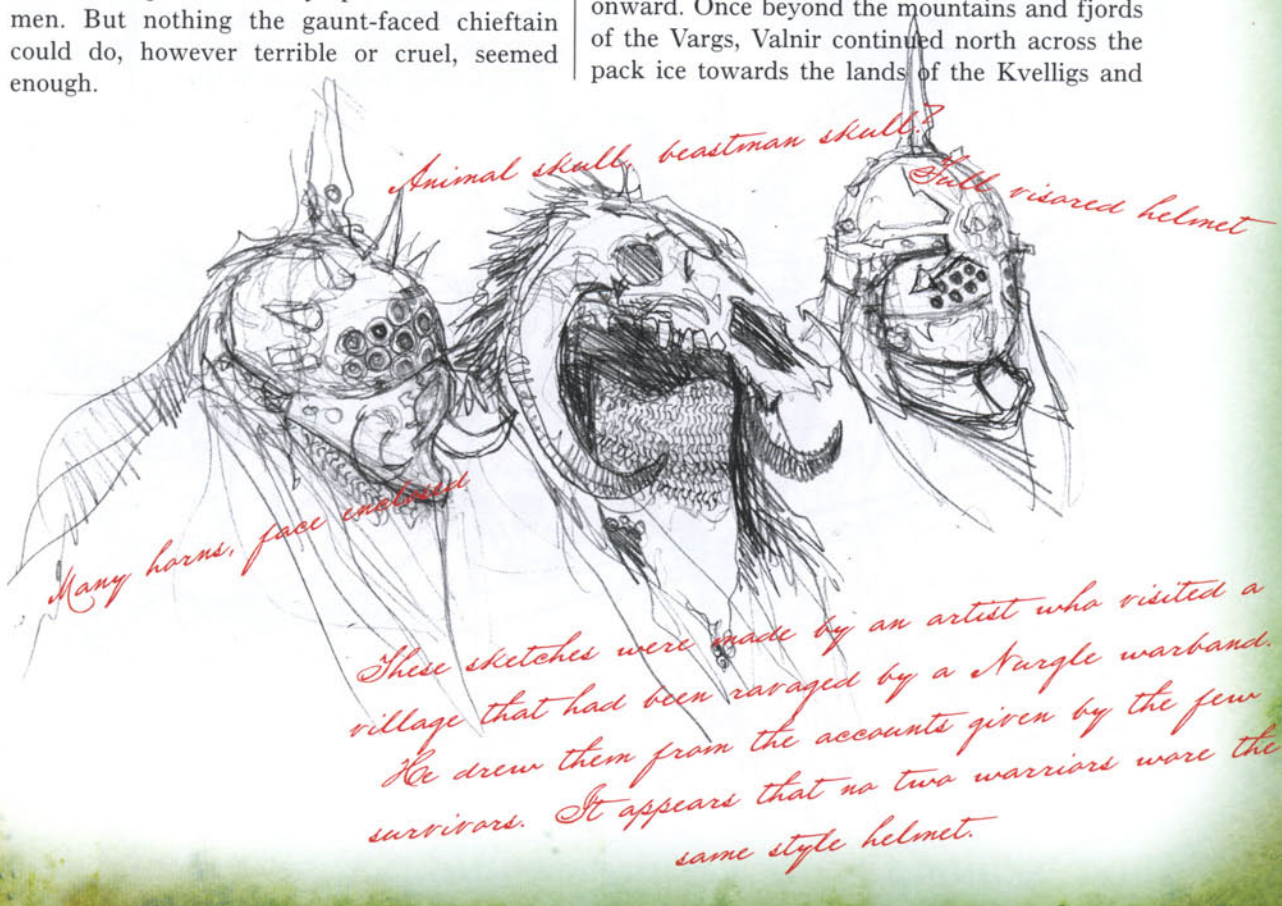
OVER TWO HUNDRED years ago, the name of Valnir the Reaper was feared throughout the lands of Kislev, Norsca and the Empire.

In his region far to the cold north, it is said that none were a match for Valnir in battle. His strength of sinew and skill at arms were such that he was considered by many an equal to even the warriors of the Great Warhound. Yet while his tribe cheered his many victories and watched him rise to become their undisputed leader and warchief, Valnir himself felt no joy. He took no pride in his actions or appearance, nor did he revel in the luxuries that his small empire of conquered lands could bestow. Why this might have been, none of the legends say, but all agree that Valnir was ever grim of visage and heavy of heart. Indeed, it was said amongst his people that if Valnir's misery were to flow as a river from his mouth, then it would cover all the lands of the north with its bitter waters. Yet, despite Valnir's obvious despair, he was not apathetic or defeatist. Though no one could say why, Valnir hated the world with rare fervour and was determined to impose his misery upon all the lands of men. But nothing the gaunt-faced chieftain could do, however terrible or cruel, seemed enough.

Valnir's desperation grew as it became ever more apparent to him that nothing would sate the terrible bitterness within his heart. The sheer hopelessness of his state came to him one day when he and his warriors prepared to descend upon an enemy village. With tears of frustration glistening within his otherwise dead eyes, Valnir declared to his men that he cared not for the thrill or rush of battle, nor the expansion of his lands or the dubious joys of taking slaves. All he wished from war was to show the world what it meant to suffer as he did, and no action or torture he could conceive of came close to doing that.

Valnir's men were astounded, and were made more so when Valnir declared that he would fight no more battles until he had found a way to hold a mirror up to the world that would show it the futility of its endeavours and the truth of despair. Without further word, Valnir left them.

North he walked, and further yet, the flickering lights of the Chaos Wastes acting as his compass. His misery knew no bounds, and yet his resentment of the world at large drove him ever onward. Once beyond the mountains and fjords of the Vargs, Valnir continued north across the pack ice towards the lands of the Kvelligs and



These sketches were made by an artist who visited a village that had been ravaged by a Nurgle warband. He drew them from the accounts given by the few survivors. It appears that no two warriors wore the same style helmet.

Valnir the Reaper



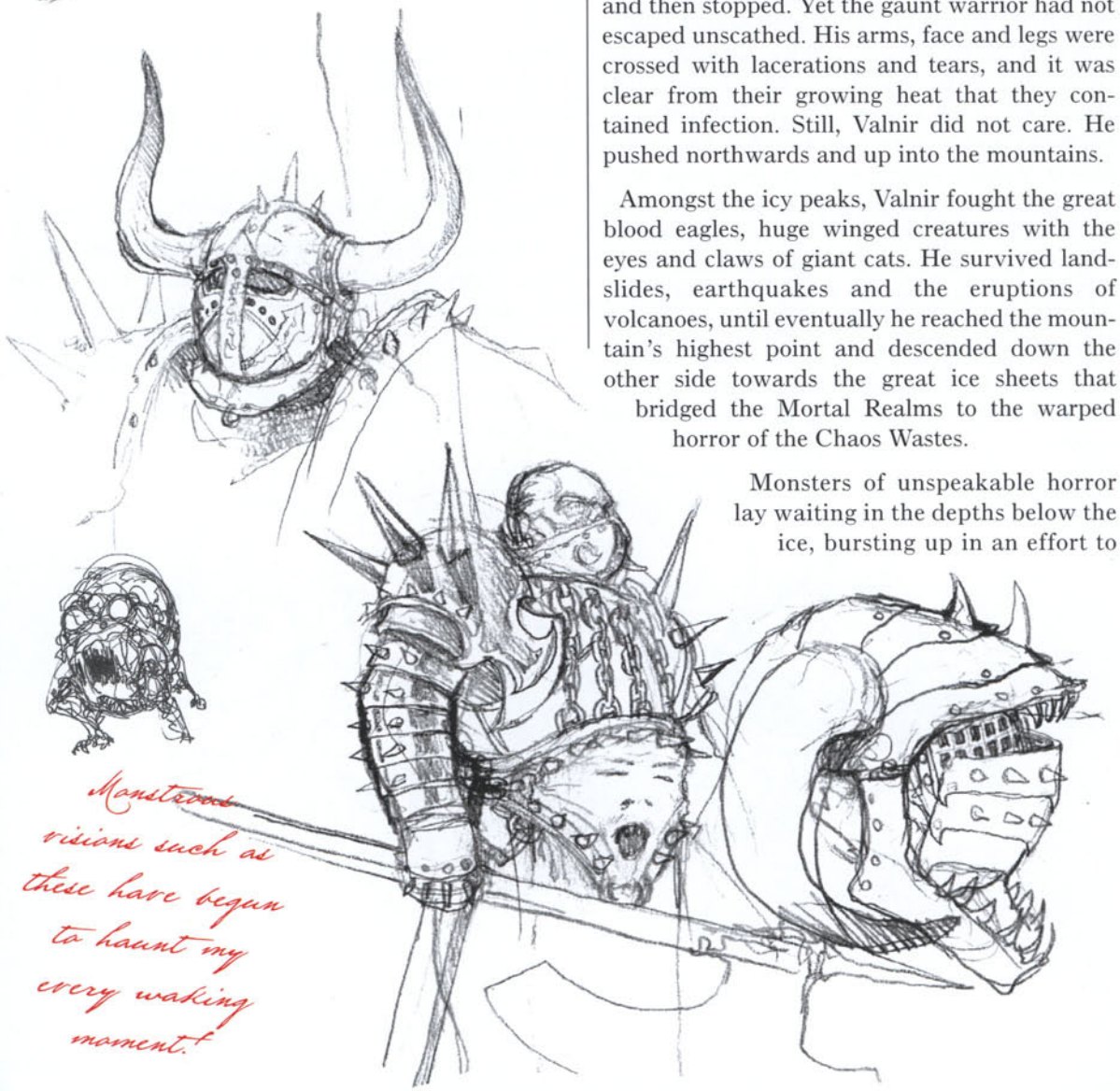
The brutal design of their armour reflects the violent path they have chosen to follow.

the Aghols. Onward he walked, past the lands of the nomads and on to the hinterlands of the Chaos Wastes. He came upon a wide plain that echoed with the baying of hounds. Any lesser man would have been unmanned by fear at the terrible sound, but Valnir did not care. Death was no threat for one who hated life. He strode on without hesitation, and when the great hounds of that plain came for him he faced them with stoic determination. Huge they were, standing some four feet at the shoulder, with dagger-like teeth and slashing claws. Sword in hand, Valnir smashed them to the ground, never once breaking his stride.

Again and again they came against him, and again and again he cut them from his path. Eventually Valnir entered the foothills beyond the plains of hounds, and the attacks dwindled, and then stopped. Yet the gaunt warrior had not escaped unscathed. His arms, face and legs were crossed with lacerations and tears, and it was clear from their growing heat that they contained infection. Still, Valnir did not care. He pushed northwards and up into the mountains.

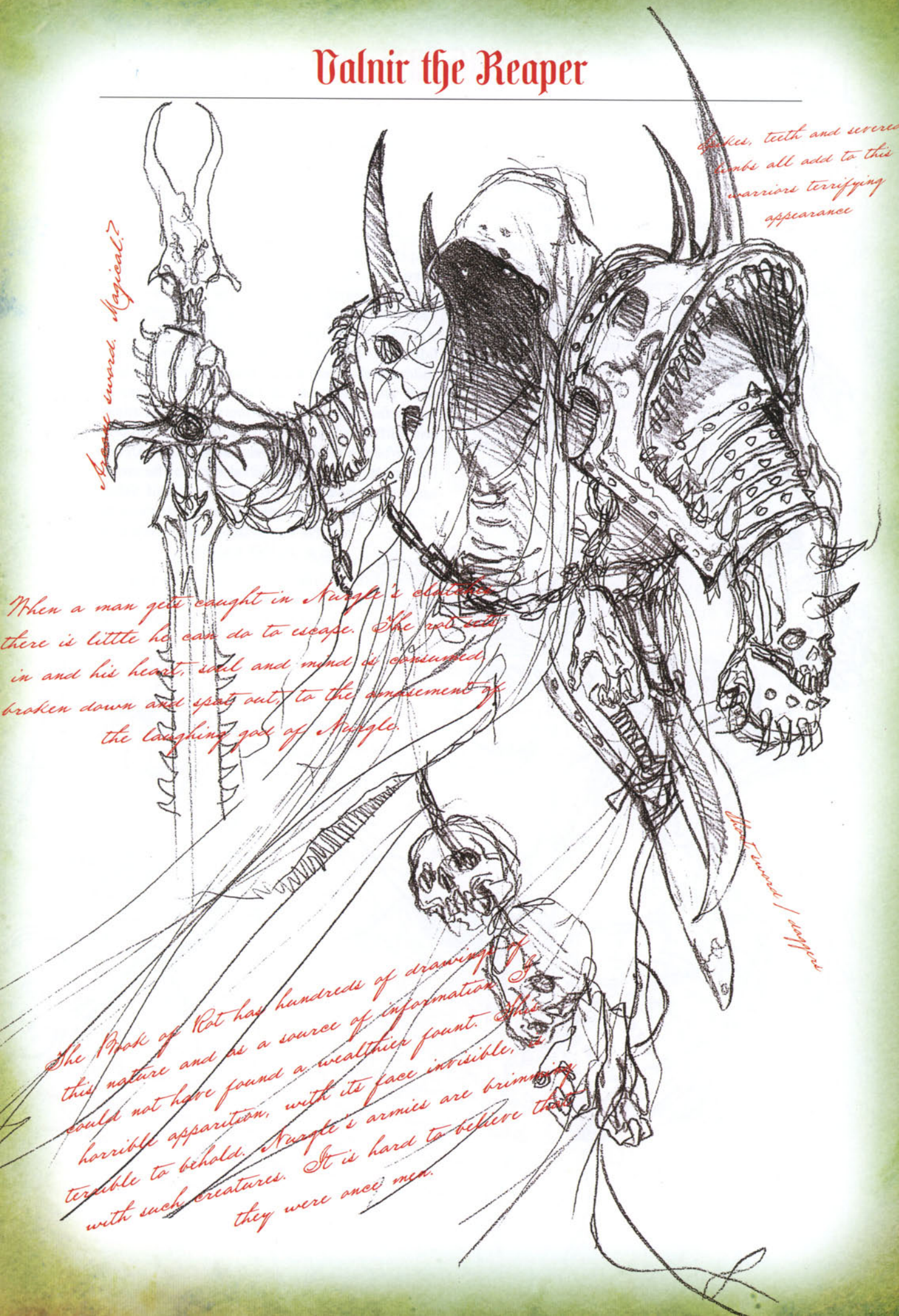
Amongst the icy peaks, Valnir fought the great blood eagles, huge winged creatures with the eyes and claws of giant cats. He survived landslides, earthquakes and the eruptions of volcanoes, until eventually he reached the mountain's highest point and descended down the other side towards the great ice sheets that bridged the Mortal Realms to the warped horror of the Chaos Wastes.

Monsters of unspeakable horror lay waiting in the depths below the ice, bursting up in an effort to



Monstrous visions such as these have begun to haunt my every waking moment.

Valnir the Reaper

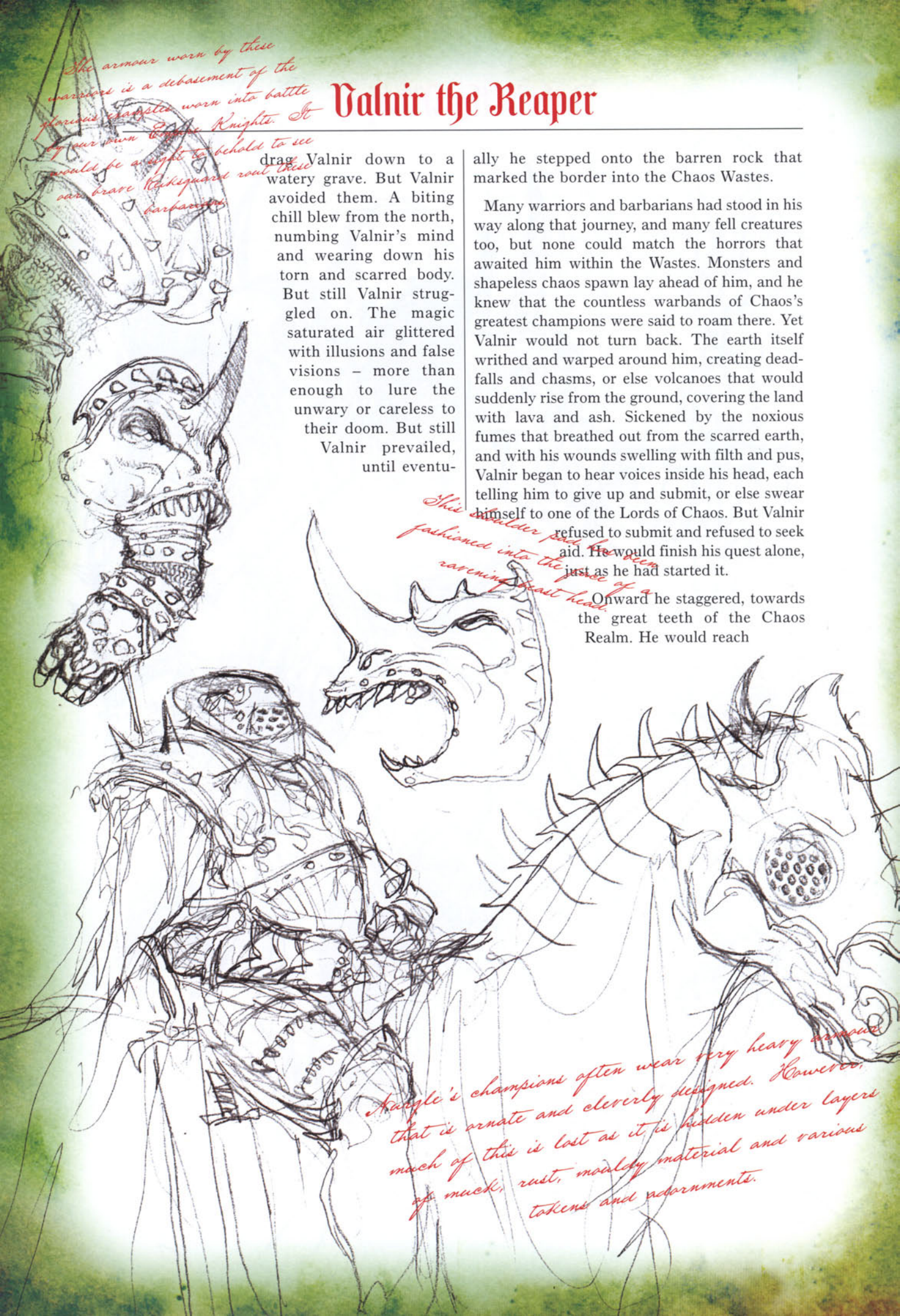


Valnir the Reaper

drag Valnir down to a watery grave. But Valnir avoided them. A biting chill blew from the north, numbing Valnir's mind and wearing down his torn and scarred body. But still Valnir struggled on. The magic saturated air glittered with illusions and false visions – more than enough to lure the unwary or careless to their doom. But still Valnir prevailed, until eventually he stepped onto the barren rock that marked the border into the Chaos Wastes.

Many warriors and barbarians had stood in his way along that journey, and many fell creatures too, but none could match the horrors that awaited him within the Wastes. Monsters and shapeless chaos spawn lay ahead of him, and he knew that the countless warbands of Chaos's greatest champions were said to roam there. Yet Valnir would not turn back. The earth itself writhed and warped around him, creating deadfalls and chasms, or else volcanoes that would suddenly rise from the ground, covering the land with lava and ash. Sickened by the noxious fumes that breathed out from the scarred earth, and with his wounds swelling with filth and pus, Valnir began to hear voices inside his head, each telling him to give up and submit, or else swear himself to one of the Lords of Chaos. But Valnir refused to submit and refused to seek aid. He would finish his quest alone, just as he had started it.

Onward he staggered, towards the great teeth of the Chaos Realm. He would reach



Valnir the Reaper

the heart of decay, or die in the attempt. On the very edge of madness, Valnir came across a vast, rotting tree. On every branch there hung a strange three-orbed fruit, slimy with corruption and crawling with maggots. Around the base of the tree, twisted among the roots, were the corpses of dozens of dead creatures and men, each in different stages of decay.

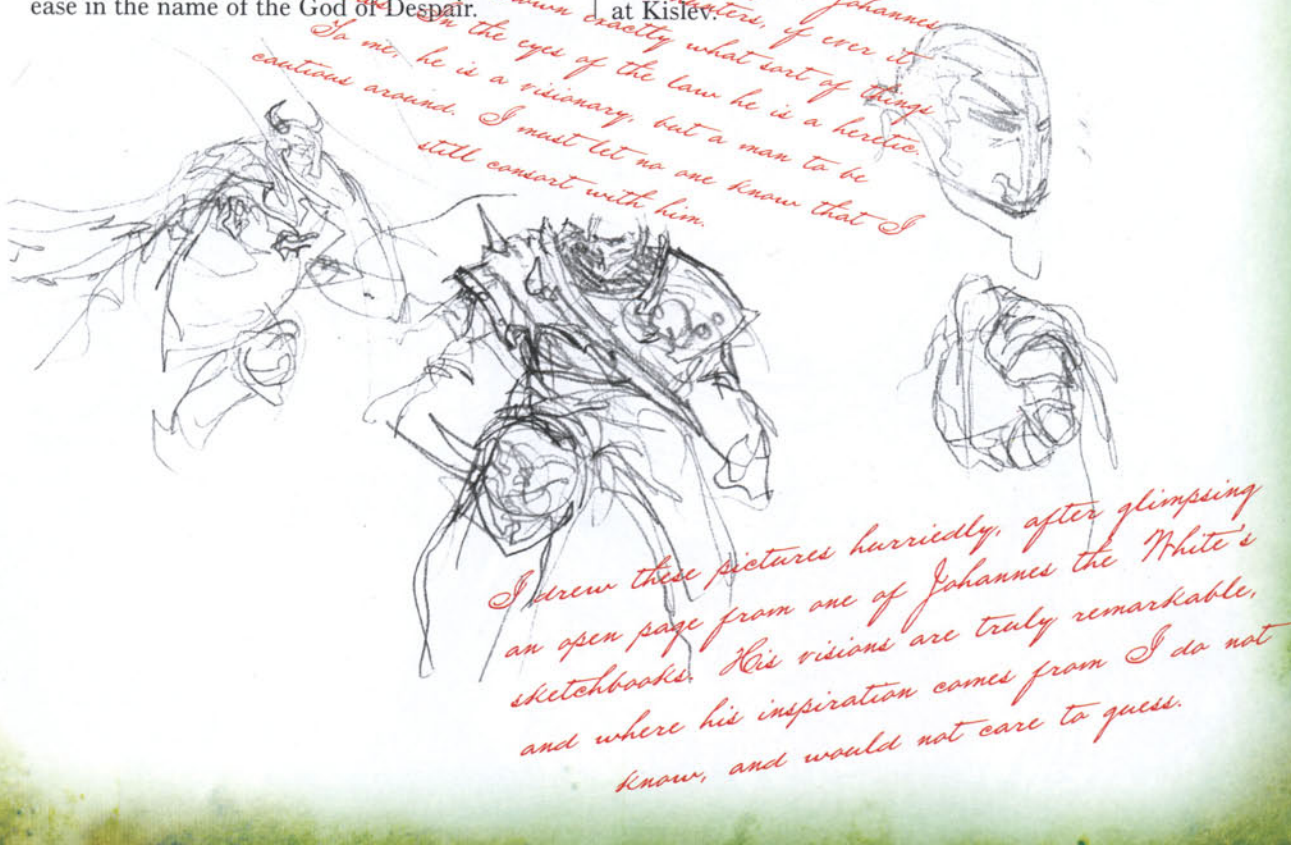
As he stepped closer, Valnir felt an overwhelming feeling of despair flood over him, drowning his bitterness and robbing him of all determination. It was a feeling that not even he, normally so used to suffering and stoic in his misery, could tolerate. Here at last was the clarity he had sought. He stumbled to his knees amidst the decay and rot, his body slumping forward to lie atop the pile of carcasses before him. Valnir embraced defeat at last, but instead of giving up his life, Valnir prayed to this fountain of despair, asking for the right to spread its truth throughout all the mortal lands.

He had passed his final test. Nielglen Himself was the estuary from which all fear and misery flowed, and He required that His servants submit only to Him, while desiring to spread His Word across the world.

None can know what divine and daemonic process transfigured Valnir. It is enough to say that Nielglen chose to bestow His blessings upon Valnir, making him *The Reaper*, the gatherer of souls, whose task it was to spread fear and disease in the name of the God of Despair.

Long and terrible was Valnir's service to his god, and horrific indeed was the suffering he inflicted in his master's name. When the Great Chaos War came, Valnir answered the call to arms like so many other champions of Chaos. He fought for his patron at the siege of Praag, and the titanic battle for the Gates of Kislev. In the final cataclysmic mêlée, Valnir charged the Tsar of Kislev, but was cut down and mortally wounded. Yet, indomitable as ever, somehow Valnir managed to stagger away from the battlefield. His followers carried his body back to their lands, as was his final wish. Here was built a great stone throne from where Valnir could survey his lands. But Valnir possessed the infernal vitality of his master and, though the years rolled by, Valnir's body did not decompose completely – it seemed to regenerate just as much as it rotted.

Over the twenty decades since the battle at Kislev, the black winds from the Realm of Chaos have grown stronger. It is said amongst the northern tribes that soon Valnir's decayed and near skeletal body will lurch to its feet, and their champion shall stand tall once more; not dead, not alive, but as an immortal servant of the Crow God, Nielglen. When that day comes, all the tribes of the Crow shall fall to their knees and worship him as an avatar of their patron's Will, proof – if such a thing should be needed – that the lord of Pestilence is with them, and the southern lands will pay dearly for their victory at Kislev.



I drew these pictures hurriedly, after glimpsing an open page from one of Johannes the White's sketchbooks. His visions are truly remarkable, and where his inspiration comes from I do not know, and would not care to guess.

14/3/2577 J.C.

Nurgle's Rot

AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION, BACKED WITH CONSIDERABLE STUDY, OF THE CORRUPTING AND FOUL CONDITION KNOWN AS "NURGLE'S ROT." INCLUDING SEVERAL NEW IDEAS ON ITS CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS.

NURGLE'S ROT, often known simply as the *Rot*, is surely the crowning glory of all the Plague God's achievements, and is His greatest "gift" to the mortal world. The Rot is unlike any other illness, in that it combines the worst qualities of all the plagues that have blighted the mortal world. But the Rot is not simply a contagious and progressive disease of the body; it is also an affliction of the mind and soul. Worse than any other disease and more physically debilitating than the most severe leprosy, Nurgle's Own Rot is a mixture of physical ailment and daemonic possession. In many ways, the Rot could be seen as a swift-acting microcosm of the path from aspiring champion to the ascension to daemonancy – although very few of those who contract this most hateful disease wish to follow this path.



Sister Duvallier tells me that the Rot is the most contagious disease ever to have blighted the mortal plane. Its infection is carried both in moisture and air; it can be contracted by inhalation or by physical contact with one who carries the disease. As far as anyone can tell, there is no cure for it. If this is the most debilitating and lethal of all Nurgle's plagues, then it is also the subtlest, for though it takes just moments to become infected, it can take weeks before any physical symptoms manifest themselves. I say *physical* symptoms because long before the victim's body starts to bloat with corruption, his or her mind is gradually eaten away by the illness.

Sister Duvallier explains in her essay *The Foul Rot of Nurgle:*

"Some of the greatest physicians of my Order have theorised that the human brain contains a finely balanced blend of chemicals that, in combination with our natural essence of being (or soul), regulate certain emotions and feelings within the body – although I am aware that such ideas are, to say the least, radical. But of this I am certain: all humans are slaves to this alchemic balance, and if this balance is adjusted by only a

Nurgle's Rot

fraction, then the effects on the physical welfare of the patient can be very dramatic indeed.

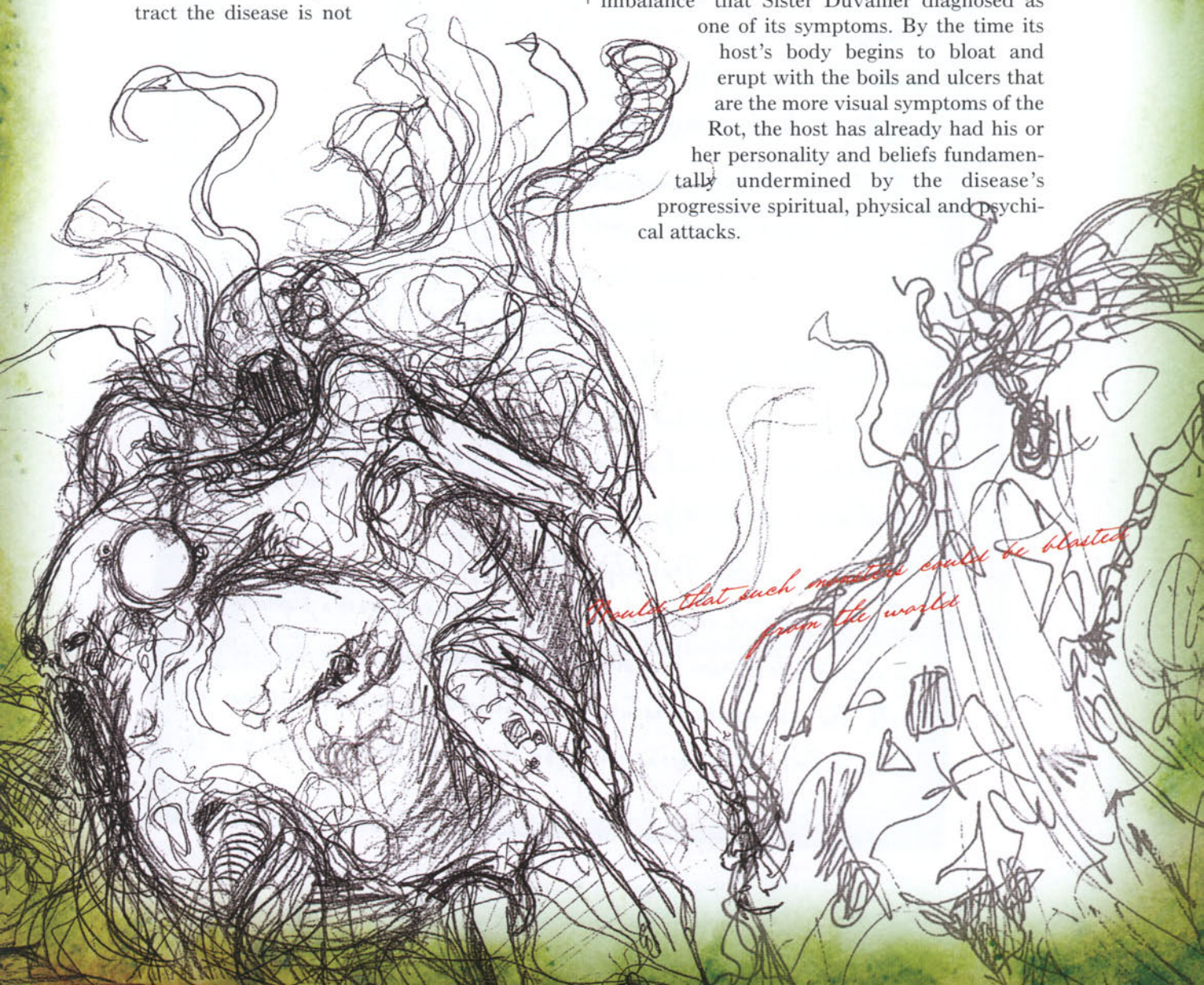
"Many have been the occasions when I have treated someone for what has been perceived to be a problem of the mind or emotion (such as severe depression or mania), only to find that their problems have few or no roots in the psychic world of mind and personality, but entirely in the complicated world of the brain's alchemical composition.

"I believe that the Rot slowly attacks this chemical balance before moving on to anything else, gradually causing great depression and paranoia in its host."

Although I have trouble grasping some of the good sister's terminology, I understand her diagnosis. Nurgle's Rot, as I have indicated before, is not a mortal illness. It is entirely supernatural and daemonic in nature, not so much infecting its hosts as *possessing* them. Indeed, the fate of those damned and poor unfortunates who contract the disease is not simply to rot away and die, but to be transfigured in body and soul into one of Nurgle's Tallymen – a daemonic footsoldier in the service of the Lord of Decay.

And so this indeed is the most horrifying aspect of contracting the Rot: the total certainty of one's own damnation, regardless of how much one might wish it otherwise. Short of employing the most powerful magic, there is simply no way to escape it.

As I have mentioned in previous investigations, the Chaos Gods can no more make us into daemons against our will than they can simply steal our souls from our bodies – there must be some complicity on our part for either of these things to take place. The daemon-gods can, however, send their minions to posses our mortal frames without the need for our consent. The cruelty of Nurgle's Rot is that it possesses its mortal host, slowly poisoning his mind with visions and whisperings, no doubt helped by the "alchemical imbalance" that Sister Duvallier diagnosed as one of its symptoms. By the time its host's body begins to bloat and erupt with the boils and ulcers that are the more visual symptoms of the Rot, the host has already had his or her personality and beliefs fundamentally undermined by the disease's progressive spiritual, physical and psychical attacks.



Nurgle's Rot

This undermining of the host's personality is a vital part of the disease's progression, for without it few would willingly give up their souls to Nurgle, and thereby allow themselves to be transfigured into His daemons. This means that there is no fixed time limit within which the Rot affects its victims. Those who are weak-willed, or perhaps even desiring of Nurgle's attentions, will succumb to the disease far more swiftly than those who resist it with every fibre of their being. But rest assured, both will fall in the end. There is no escape from the effects of the Rot.

The Symptoms of the Rot

Here follows Sister Duvallier's analysis of the Rot's progressive symptoms:

"I have seen the very worst that nature can throw at humanity, insofar as ailments and diseases are concerned, and yet none of them, not one, has symptoms so horrific and completely abhorrent as Nurgle's Rot.

The first sign of contamination is the victim's slow descent into malaise, followed by waking visions and other psychical disturbances. Once the victim has reached his lowest ebb – a process that can take anything between days and months, depending on the victim's strength of character – the physical symptoms of the Rot become apparent.

First, there will appear under the victim's arms, and between his legs, large pus-filled buboes. These can swell to the size of goose eggs before finally bursting. After this severe sinus problems will occur, along with a discoloration of the skin, caused by the illness attack on the victim's kidneys and liver. After this point the victim will begin to show symptoms akin to the severest leprosy, and his body will begin to atrophy and rot. Then the victim's hair will fall out and hundreds of tiny blisters, boils and warts will sprout up all over his body.

Through all of this, the victim will stay fully conscious, as if the Plague God does not want those who catch his prize disease to miss a moment of it by retreating into oblivion. I can only imagine that this self-aware state, combined with the diseases supernaturally and alchemically induced depression and hallucinations, and further aggravated by the constant emotional pressure of the

I can speak for the good writer when I say that I have seen victims of the rot. Of all the most horrific fate that can be inflicted upon a man.

To be incarcerated every day by sickness and disease must be an almost unbearable task. To take a moment of great gratitude and strength to undertake such a mission. To have the greatest respect for anyone

Nurgle's Rot

Victim seeing his body affected so horribly, is an entirely necessary step if the disease is ever going to convince its victim to embrace Nurgle.

Once this process begins there is no turning back. Victims will continue to get worse and worse, until they wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to Nurgle. The Plague God will not allow the victims to die of his disease. They will all, and always, become his daemonic servants. There is no other alternative.

When the victims finally submit to Nurgle's demands upon their minds and souls (and they always do), the final stages of the Rot begin. Now the mutating power of Chaos becomes evident, and if there has been any doubt as to the supernatural nature of the disease it is dispelled as the victim's body begins to look like a corpse that has been left to decay in the damp heat. Flesh rots, skin bursts and organs become exposed, and by all logic the victim should die at this point. The picture is only worsened as the victim's feet gradually flatten and stretch, its five toes merging into three, their nails replaced by long, filth-encrusted talons. A single horn will slowly punch through the necrotic skin on the victim's forehead, and finally the victim's eye sockets are observed to creep together slowly, before merging into one great and jaundiced orb.

But this unholy transfiguration is not simply of the body; the victim's soul is slowly being consumed by the Plague God, and in its place

Sticky flies, carriers of disease, dance endlessly

She good sister whom remarkable insight I have found my consultations with her to be both informative and convivial.

I find the sister a great comfort in my work. It is good to know that I am not the only one labouring in difficult circumstances. Being a scholar and writer and priest is a lonely and sometimes tedious task.

I remember still the day of my ordination, and the parting words of my mentor. He told me to steel myself against the unforeseen storms in life, but I knew even then that it would be no storm that would bring me low. I was right. It has been the constant drizzle of daily life that has drowned my hope. It has been the knowledge that I have given up all independence and any chance of being able to make a difference to the world by serving my god. Yet my parishioners treat me like their possession, as if I exist purely to satisfy their endless strings of petty demands that have no bearing at all on the Ward of Sigmar or the good of His Holy Empire.

I have no loved ones to mourn me once I'm gone. I see the lines that slowly spread across my face, and I can taste my own transience. Has my life been worth so little that it was worth selling for such tarnished coins as these? My pointless life trickles away, one drop at a time, even as our once great Empire slowly drives itself apart with greed and envy. Holy Sigmar, even my faith in You has begun to atrophy. What is there left for me to do?

Richter Kless,
11/5/2578 S.C.

Nurgle's Rot

he infuses the victim's body with his own Purpose and Will. While all this is happening, the debility of the disease will fade from the victim, even as its symptoms become worse. The victim will become more and more energetic and oblivious to what should be the pure agony caused by his decayed and warped flesh. The victim will also begin to manifest strange powers, perhaps being able to cause milk to curdle or food to spoil with a glance, or else cause plants and livestock within the vicinity to sicken and die. The victim may also develop an aversion to the prayers and sacred emblems of the various wholesome gods of our Empire, as well as the prayers and sacred images of Nurgle's rival Chaos Gods – although I cannot be certain of this.

Just at what point the victim sheds the last of his mortality and becomes a full daemon is unclear. Few people have ever been close enough to a sufferer of the Rot long enough to see these final stages, and those that have always contracted the disease themselves.

The only way to fight the spread of Nurgle's Rot with any degree of success is with magic and faith, and even then the magic must be potent indeed and the faith unshakeable and absolutely pure. Small wonder that many of those who suspect that they have contracted the Rot take their own lives, hoping to die quickly and cleanly, and avoid becoming a Plaguebearer of Father Nurgle.

Shallaya protect and keep us from the Plague Gods' attentions...

I will leave Richter's researches into the God of Decay for a while, as his notes on this subject after the date recorded above devolve into a record of his many visions, prophecies and ravings as to the what he has identified as the 'doom' of mankind. It seems that he wrote his treatises on both Nurgle and Slaanesh over much the same period, and I think that the stresses and strains of one made the effects of the other even more acute.

In an effort to maintain even a semblance of coherence, in the next dozen or so pages of this journal I have included all Richter's researches into the last Great Chaos Incursion and his studies into the various mortal creatures that serve Chaos. I shall return to poor Richter's ramblings about the Plague Lord towards the end of this journal.

M.V.S.

Love from the Son is Measure of the Father

BEING A FAITHFUL ACCOUNT FROM THE OLD TALES OF THE ICY NORTH, AS TAKEN FROM HUGO LAZARRE'S "GRIM STORIES AND CAUTIONARY TALES", AS TRANSLATED BY THE REDOUBTABLE HANS GUNTHER.

IN THE BETTER SIDE of Praag, before the hordes of Chaos laid the city to waste, there lay a private garden, protected from casual observers by a high stone wall topped by spikes and birdlime. Despite the lengthy shadows that habitually shrouded it, the garden was a marvel of horticulture, a veritable delight of flowers, shrubs and trees.

In the exact centre of the garden lay an ornamental well, surrounded by a topiary maze, an immaculate labyrinth of hedges and shrubs clipped into fantastic forms. Some of the shapes were readily identifiable as fauna from across the Empire, but others defied description. There were things with too many heads or limbs, and men with heads of beasts, or beasts with the heads of men.

An old man by the name of Ned looked after the garden's unusual topiary, trimming hedges, deadheading roses and raking gravel paths. He had served the man who owned that garden and the great house it surrounded for forty years and more. Despite his master's infrequent jests that "the garden might be getting too much" for the old man, and how neither of them were growing any younger, Ned carried on much as he had ever done.

It was clear to Ned that his master was mad. He had to be. All magisters were. What could they know about age and death, they with their precious magic? Twenty years previously his master had sown the seeds of his own destruction, and Ned had the distinct feeling that in a further ten years those seeds would bear their sour fruit.

For the day that this tale touches upon the lives of the gardener and his master was the twentieth birthday of the magister's only son. On that day, according to the traditions of his people, the boy assumed the mantle of manhood and the magister's parental authority over him expired. To celebrate his coming of age, Tomash, as the young man was called, had for the first time in his life supped wine (an unusual vintage to be sure, but one his father suggested might grow on him). So the youngman could do as he pleased, free to go out into the world, plunge into life, and make up for the last twenty years of study and obedience.

Tomash seemed more than a little distracted as he sat there, sipping from his silver goblet. Perhaps, the magister mused, it was the first effects of the wine. Or maybe Tomash was deciding which forbidden pleasure to indulge in first. It was such a pity. The magister's wife had betrayed him; of that much the old enchanter was certain. No blood in his history could account for his son's debility. He hadn't found out about his late wife's mother until it was... well... too late for all of them.

Still, the magister had promised that the gift he would give Tomash on this most auspicious occasion would be knowledge. Tomash had asked often about the forbidden arts and the hidden mysteries of his father's magics. And so on that day, in that very hour, the magister promised to teach Tomash the secret of the labyrinth that lay beneath the garden, and reveal to the young man the mystery that waited at its heart.

He believed that dark magic was the only thing Tomash wanted now. His son had been shut away from normal life for so long that he had no conception of the pleasures and preoccupations of normal men. The magister believed that his son would of course view this secret as his escape – an easy path to glory and power. Puling fool.

Father and erstwhile son took torches from the wall, and the old magister led a way along dark corridors and down winding stone steps, until they came to an ebony door. There he taught his son the words of opening, and they passed through the portal into the stone passages beyond.

No one, other than the magister himself, knew the secret of the labyrinth, and Tomash was anxious to learn it. The magister told his son that the walls of the labyrinth were suffused with tainted magic and were deceptive because of it. Logic and reason would avail them nothing here. A mnemonic code revealed the only way through.

Tomash absorbed this new information eagerly, and the old magister noted the febrile gleam in his son's eyes, the way his hands trembled, making the torchlight dance crazily over the

walls. After half an hour's travel, they reached the centre of the labyrinth, a circular room from which radiated eight straight passages. It was lit by a weak beam of light that filtered down from a hole far above their heads.

Almost immediately Tomash admitted to feeling faint. His father smiled to himself, knowing that it was probably the effects of the drugged wine he had given the boy. Or indeed it might have been all the warpstone dust that glittered from the chamber's floor and walls. Or perhaps both.

He led Tomash to the centre of the chamber and helped him into a sitting position, fastening the young man's limp wrists into the heavy manacles that rose from the glistening flagstones directly beneath the hole in the chamber's distant ceiling.

"I cannot really say that I'm sorry for doing this," said the magister. "It's my duty as a caring father to make sure you can't harm anybody. You're insane, you see. Blame it on your mother, if you like. It's all her fault. She never told me about your mad grandmother until we were married, and you know how blood always runs true. Well anyway, you're all secure now. Can't have you wandering about upsetting people, can we? Call if you want anything, oh, and happy birthday!"

Exactly four years later, Ned, the old gardener, had been tidying the rose beds and his basket overflowed with a bewildering variety of slugs, caterpillars and snails. It was nice to think they were going to a good cause. Happy birthday, he muttered, as he tipped them down the well.

Down in the labyrinth, the hail of molluscs and insects woke Tomash from his fitful slumber. Stretching out his long fingers, he scooped handfuls of them from the floor between his legs and stuffed them greedily into his mouth. He hoped there were some green ones, as he had grown to like them the best. Although the years had not been kind to Tomash, he had endured. He could see quite well in the dark now, and his sticky tongue certainly helped with the ants. Despite his arms and legs changing, he still had not managed to break free from the heavy iron manacles that still bound his wrists. But he knew that one day someone would find him and set him loose, and on that day his father would die, and it would be a very, very unpleasant death.

Six more years passed. Great storm clouds converged round the beleaguered city of Praag, and the nightmare hordes of Chaos roiled round the city walls like a dark flood. The armies of the daemon-gods stretched back into the distance for as far as the eye could see. Strange creatures flapped through the mauve sky, or else crawled across the ground. Waves of mutated things flung themselves at the city's walls, again and again, like the stormy sea battering at a cliff.

Far outside the city walls, a small band of these fell creatures of Chaos broke into an abandoned farmhouse, where, in the cellar, they discovered a padlocked iron trapdoor. Smashing it open, the mutants found a cobwebbed passageway heading in the direction of Praag. Realising they had found a secret entrance into the human city, these servants of Chaos climbed down the rotten wooden steps and tramped off into the darkness. Eventually the passage emerged into a circular chamber, from which led eight identical passages. Chained to the floor at the centre of the chamber was a curious creature, a pathetic mixture of man and insect.

"Free! Free! Set me free!" it pleaded. Curious, the bull-headed leader of the Chaos warband smashed the creature's bonds. The man-insect lurched unsteadily to its feet, straightened its spidery legs, and then darted down one of the tunnels.

"Father!" it cried. "Father! I'm coming for you!" Too wily to miss the spectacle this bizarre turn of events seemed to promise, the Chaos warband rushed after it.

The next day, after the militia had driven the mutant invaders beyond the city walls once more, old Ned studied the dark clouds that broiled across the now crimson sky. He stuck a gnarled finger into the air and frowned. There was another storm brewing. He hoped the young master wouldn't catch a chill, he wasn't used to getting wet.

Ned had been right about his master. Ten years to the day, and there he was. Still, Ned mused, he'd do the rhubarb a power of good. Heaping the magister's remains into the wheelbarrow, Ned pushed on down the gravelly path towards the vegetable patch.


Insect-like head
Distinct belly, swollen with gas and vile substances
Spindly arms as weapons: edges as sharp claws
This strange and gruesome thing could well look like the poor, trapped creature of this bizarre tale.

The Great War Against Chaos

THIS LARGE PORTION OF THE TOME CONCERNS ITSELF WITH A HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS, WHERE THE MORTAL REALMS MET THE MIGHT OF THE DARK ARMIES AND PREVAILED.

THROUGHOUT THE two-and-a-half millennia since its inception, our beloved Empire has known many wars and has endured innumerable perils. Indeed, our fragile kingdoms have met head-on every external threat to our existence, despite the fact that each new danger that has emerged has seemed to be greater than the last, and every battle won has been at an ever more untenable cost. Yet we have endured.

Of all the many wars and trials that have beset our fair realm, one alone is known as the *Great War*. That is, the *Great War Against Chaos* or, as it is sometimes called, the *Great Chaos Incursion.*

In the dark centuries subsequent to the turn of the second millennium of Our Lord Sigmar, the Empire of Men teetered upon the edge of extinction. Centuries of bitter civil war had torn the heart from our beleaguered nation, and the once proud realm of the Emperors' had fallen into anarchy and misrule. Four of the provincial Elector Counts maintained themselves as the rightful Emperor, each one as intractable over his claim as the next, and the armies of Marienburg, Talabecland, Middenheim, and the Reikland marched their endless wars, leaving only destruction, poverty and famine in their wake.

The magister-scholars of our time tell how the Winds of Magic blew down from the Northern Pole with growing intensity on the lead up to the third century of the second millennium. Throughout the Old World, the manifold beasts and monsters of Chaos multiplied and became bolder, emerging from the deep forests and descending from the mountaintops, raiding towns and villages. These raids might easily have been stopped at their genesis, if only the provincial Electors had allied to drive them back. But they had not, and so the raids grew into wars and the provinces of Ostland and Östermark were laid to waste.

Such was the price of pride and distrust.

Warriors from the lands of Norsca and beyond ravaged the coasts of the Empire and Bretonnia, and marauding bands of black-armoured warriors were seen as far south as the Middenland. To make matters worse, fierce hordes of orcs and goblins were free to plunder the Empire's borders completely unchecked, having been driven from their own lands by the growing power of Chaos.

Events were seen to culminate in the summer of the Imperial year 2301. Dire portents of disaster were observed all across the disparate Empire. Wells that had previously served towns for generations were said to have dried suddenly, or overflowed with noxious slime. Crops were struck down by an unknown blight, or else eaten



by plagues of insects. Cattle and other livestock succumbed to fatal poxes, or gave birth to leering monsters. It is even said that fish grew wings and flew from their rivers, and pigs were observed to stand upon their hind legs and walk like men. The land was gripped with fear and hysteria.

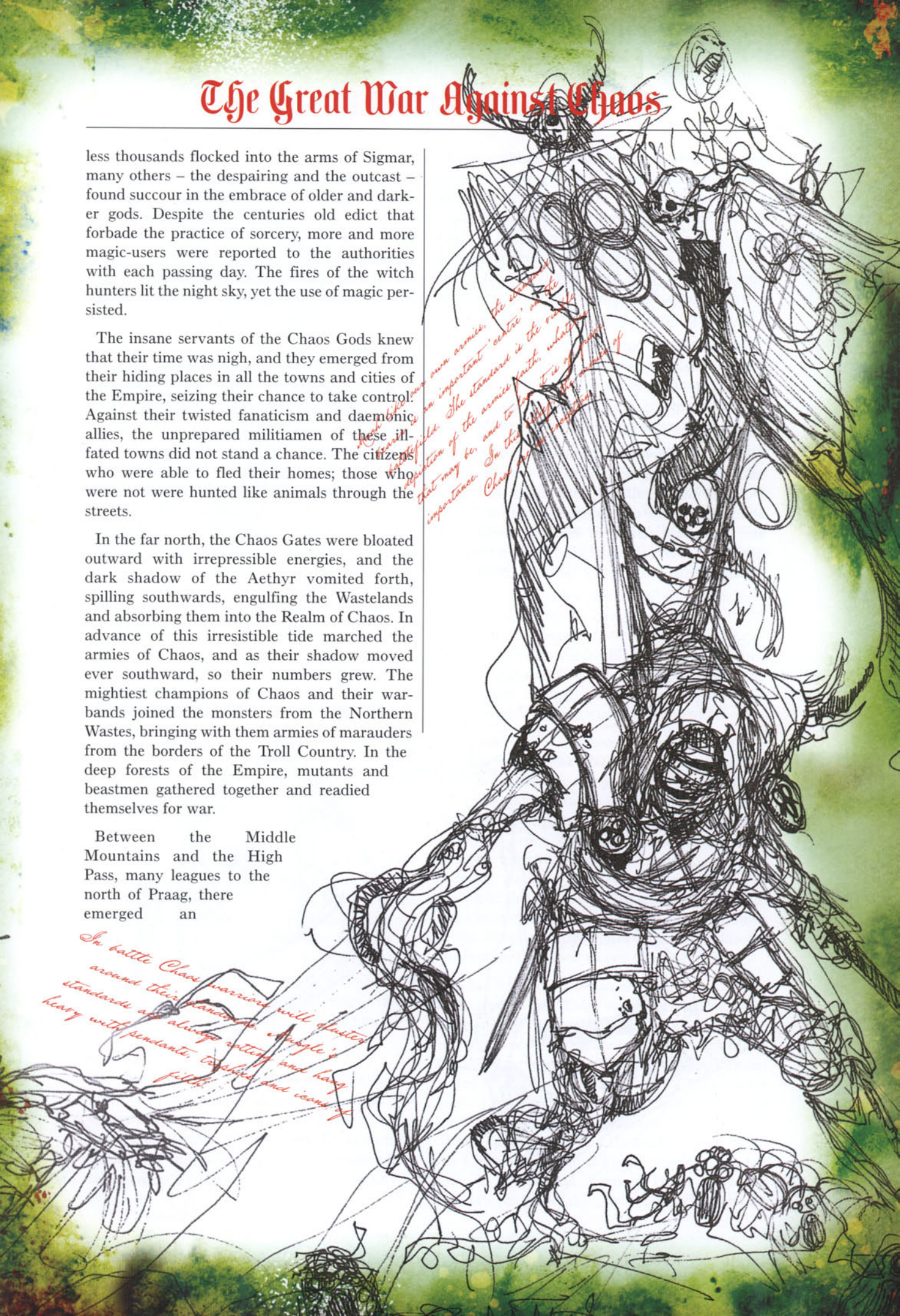
Caught as they were in the middle of so much horror and bloodshed, it seemed to the ordinary folk of the Empire that the end of the world was at hand. Many turned to religion as a last hope for salvation, and the Church of Sigmar grew ever more powerful as the terrified populace flooded into its temples. Yet even as these count-

less thousands flocked into the arms of Sigmar, many others – the despairing and the outcast – found succour in the embrace of older and darker gods. Despite the centuries old edict that forbade the practice of sorcery, more and more magic-users were reported to the authorities with each passing day. The fires of the witch hunters lit the night sky, yet the use of magic persisted.

The insane servants of the Chaos Gods knew that their time was nigh, and they emerged from their hiding places in all the towns and cities of the Empire, seizing their chance to take control. Against their twisted fanaticism and daemonic allies, the unprepared militiamen of these ill-fated towns did not stand a chance. The citizens who were able to fled their homes; those who were not were hunted like animals through the streets.

In the far north, the Chaos Gates were bloated outward with irrepressible energies, and the dark shadow of the Aethyr vomited forth, spilling southwards, engulfing the Wastelands and absorbing them into the Realm of Chaos. In advance of this irresistible tide marched the armies of Chaos, and as their shadow moved ever southward, so their numbers grew. The mightiest champions of Chaos and their warbands joined the monsters from the Northern Wastes, bringing with them armies of marauders from the borders of the Troll Country. In the deep forests of the Empire, mutants and beastmen gathered together and readied themselves for war.

Between the Middle Mountains and the High Pass, many leagues to the north of Praag, there emerged an



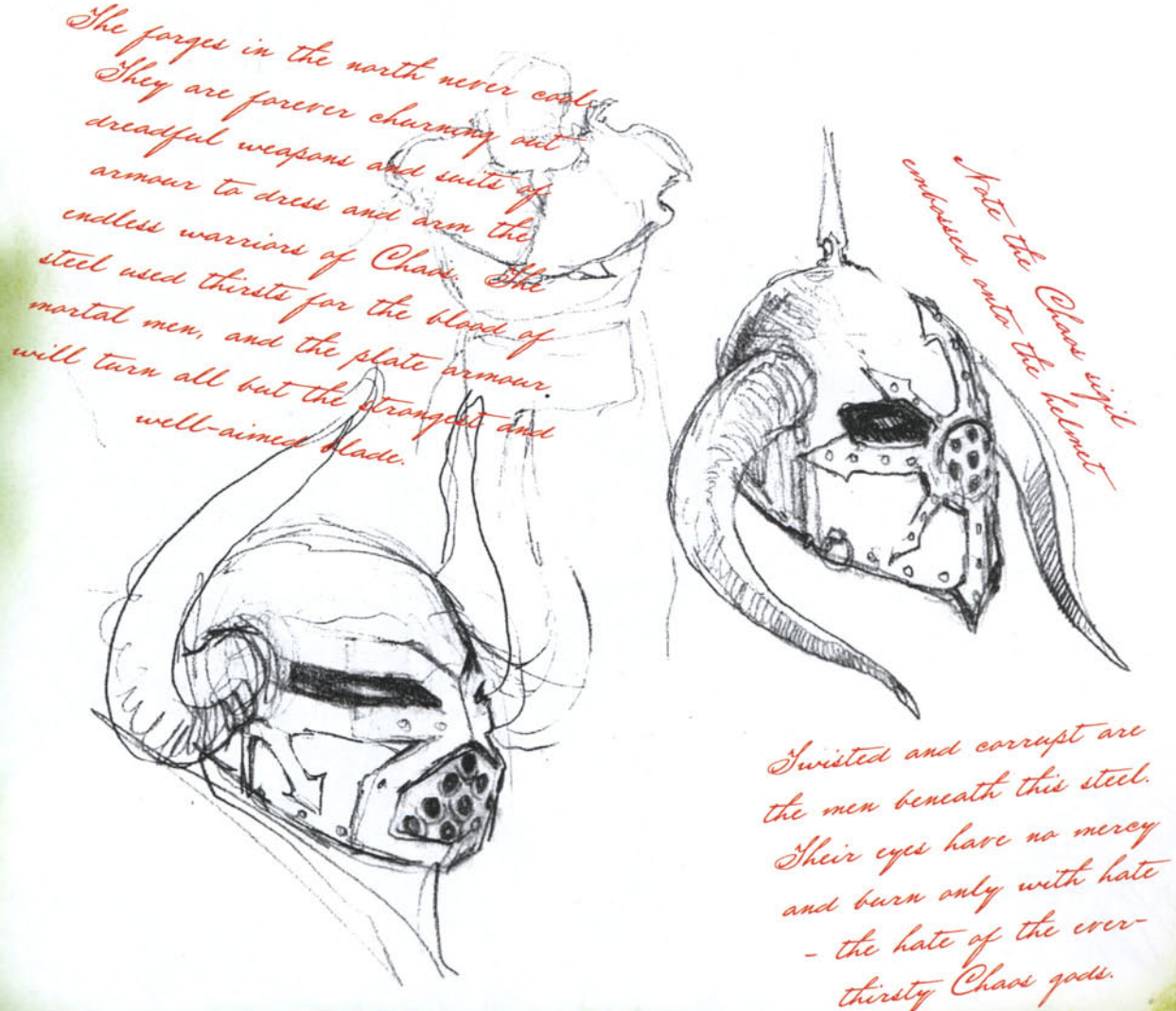
The Great War Against Chaos

unholy horde ready to do the bidding of the Chaos Gods. It is said to have been the largest army ever to march to war against the Old World. Some numbered it as a hundred thousand strong. Others put the figure two or three times higher. In Kislev, the most northerly of the human realms, Tsar Alexi Vasilivich sent southwards for help, foreseeing the moment when this Chaos horde would sweep over his cold domain.

Though the servants of Chaos had long since ravaged his own lands, the Count of Ostland stood firm against the encroaching darkness, and answered the Tsar's plea. Inside a week he led his army northwards to join that of the Tsar.

As autumn approached, even the greatest capitals of the Empire had fallen into anarchy. Outlying farms, villages and towns had been abandoned to the marauding servants of Chaos, and a constant stream of refugees flocked into the already overcrowded cities. Even in the prosperous Reikland region around Nuln and Altdorf, things were not well. Monsters roamed the Reikwald forest, and ships were attacked and burned as they travelled along the province's great river. In the streets of every city fanatics and prophets of doom preached their unsavoury brand of redemption. Many desperate citizens listened and, believing their world approached its doom, joined these bands of flagellants and world-weary apocalypts.

In Nuln, a powerful coven of Tzeentchian Magi emerged from hiding and led bands of screaming cultists and daemon-hosts against the beleaguered local government. Some men, those driven to the edge of madness by starvation and fear, submitted to what they saw as the inevitable rule of Chaos, and threw in their lot with the Magi, turning against their own brothers and sisters. Witch hunters and preachers did their best to rally the populace against these followers of the Old Dark, and there was open warfare in the streets.



The Great War Against Chaos



A strange and faceless character. Another of the many disturbing pictures in the Book of Rot. I must stop poring over it. I fear some of the images will burn themselves forever into my sight.

Huddled in sewers and burnt-out houses, the terrified people prayed desperately for salvation, prayed for a sign that they did not stand alone against the gathering darkness. Almost exactly two thousand three hundred years after the death of the man-god, Sigmar Heldenhammer, the prayers of the people seemed to have been answered. A sign appeared in the night sky: a twin-tailed comet, the ancient symbol of our Empire's divine founding father, arched across the heavens in fiery glory. But what could this sign mean?

The answer came in the form of but one man – a fiery young priest of Sigmar from their very own city of Nuln. His name was Magnus, and with his great foresight and passionate oratories, his strength of arm and his unshakeable faith, he gathered to himself an army of followers and led them to victory over the worshippers of the Dark Gods, shattering the might of the Magi's coven and purging their every trace from his city.

As winter settled across the northlands, the army of Chaos began its long march south. The Count of Ostland and the entire Kislevite army moved northwards to meet them. By midwinter these two gigantic forces met, somewhere between the Kislevite towns of Murmagrad and Chazask.

Humanity was not victorious. Barely a handful of the Empire's soldiery survived to report their crushing defeat.

The Chaos horde laid waste to the northern part of the Tsar's territory before moving southwards along the foothills of the Worlds Edge Mountains. The massive army crossed the frozen river Lynsk in the early spring. The very last of the Kislevite regular troops were caught from front and rear and destroyed as they defended the bridges. Beyond the Lynsk lay the heartlands of Kislev and the thriving city of Praag.

In Praag, the people prepared for war. Thousands flooded inside the city walls from the surrounding countryside, bringing with them what little livestock and grain had survived the near constant plagues that had beset the land. But it was not enough. Soon Praag's brave citizens were starving, and in their weakened condition many succumbed to the heinous visitations of Nurgle.

Outside the city's defences, the monstrous Chaos horde made camp. From here they launched occasional forays, but made no attempt to seize the city until the Plague Lord's blessings had done their work. The people of Praag survived these endless raids, hoping beyond hope that a relieving force would come to aid them.

In time, rumour of a heroic new leader from the south reached the defenders, a man called Magnus who was bringing an army north to their salvation. Indeed, the flock of Magnus of Nuln had grown ever stronger. He had gathered to him an army of all kinds of men: loyal devotees of Sigmar, mad-eyed zealots, ordinary citizens, and professional soldiers from the armies of the provinces. Recognising in Magnus a leader they could all follow, the Elector Counts of the Empire pledged him their unconditional support and led their troops to join him.

In his wisdom, Magnus sent his oldest friend and closest confidante, one Pieter Lazlo, as an envoy across the Sea of Claws to the near-mythical realm of Ulthuan, there to beg aid from the fey and haughty elves. Yet the elves were themselves beset by the forces of entropy, and were loath to spare even a single warrior to aid mankind. But the Loremasters of the White Tower knew that should the lands of men fall to the Chaos Gods, then Ulthuan would surely follow. So it was that Teclis of Hoeth answered Laszlo's plea, and along with two of his brother

mages, Yrtle and Finreir, threw in his lot with Magnus and the armies of mankind.

With these puissant mages at his side, Magnus marched his vast army north, but their progress was slow. Despite having an advance force of cavalry just a day's march from the city, Magnus was too late. Praag's walls had already been breached, and a furious eight-day battle through its burning streets had already drawn to its bloody conclusion. Praag fell in the winter of 2302. Chaos had triumphed.

With the fall of Praag a wind of solid darkness blew from the Realm of Chaos and swept over the land. Out through the Chaos Gates it roared, over the Troll Country and into northern Kislev. The malign wind blew through the streets of Praag, howling and screaming, and where it passed the broiling Aethyr followed, absorbing that land of men.

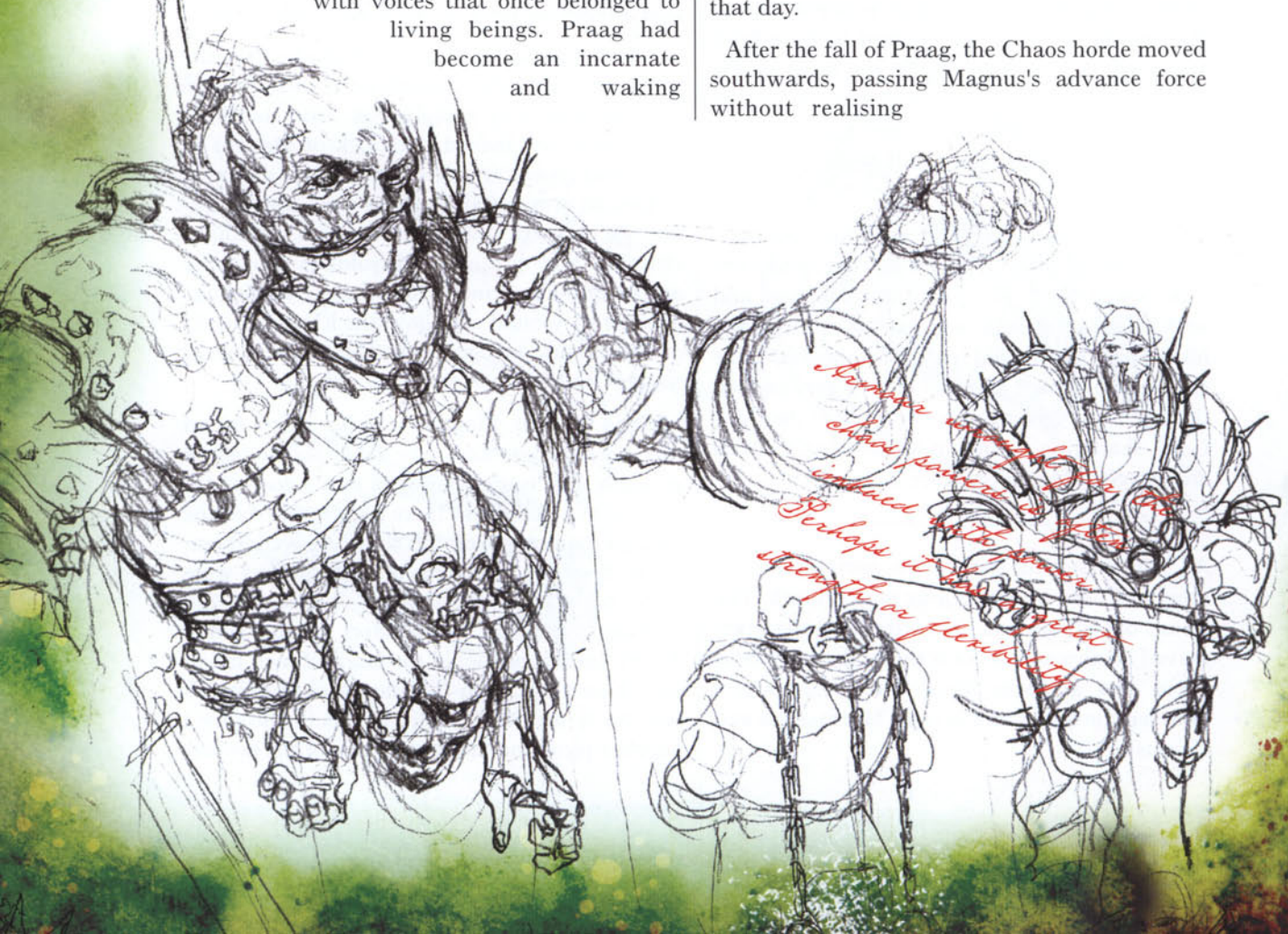
The streets of Praag bowed and warped before its might. Men and stone twisted and became as one. Living things melted and reformed within the very fabric of the city's streets. Souls were imprisoned in torment, crying out from twisted stones. Anguished and distorted faces peered out from cracked and warped walls. Agonised limbs writhed from the pavements. Pillars groaned with voices that once belonged to living beings. Praag had become an incarnate and waking nightmare – a taste for all of what lay ahead should the Chaos Gods prove victorious.

It is said that often Chaos warriors are locked into their armour and never leave it once it has been put on.



A few managed to escape the ruin of Praag, slipping through the siege lines as the Chaos armies mounted their final assault. They brought the news of Praag's fall to Kislev's royal court, where the Tsar was hastily training a new army. When word reached Magnus of Praag's defeat, it was said he wept tears of blood and swore before Sigmar to avenge the horrors done that day.

After the fall of Praag, the Chaos horde moved southwards, passing Magnus's advance force without realising





they had done so. These cavalrymen soon reached the hell-city that had been Praag. The soldiers, many of them Kislevite, witnessed the horror that had been visited upon this once proud city. They did not stay to mourn, but moved south in angry pursuit of the Chaos horde. They soon encountered and destroyed the rearguard of the Chaos army, stragglers and loafers for the most part – mutants and beast-men who had squabbled with their rivals and had been left behind.

The human warriors fell upon the inhuman force with ferocity spawned of outrage, killing hundreds and scattering the rest. It was a minor victory, but a victory nonetheless. Meanwhile the main body of the Chaos horde continued its advance towards Kislev, knowing nothing of the human army that was now closing in behind it.

As Magnus's cavalry headed for Praag, the main Empire army and Magnus himself made for Kislev. Though he still hoped to reach Praag, Magnus sorely needed provisions in order for his force to continue. Magnus hoped to acquire these, together with fresh troops, before moving northwards. Perhaps by the hand of Sigmar, Magnus arrived at Kislev just in time to see the Chaos horde surround the city.

The fell Chaos army was arrayed in unholy splendour around the walls of Kislev, its black banners fluttering from the hills all around. The standards of all four Chaos Gods could be seen where their champions stood waiting. The mighty Warriors and Knights of Chaos stood in serried ranks waiting to advance. Sorcerers lurked behind them or rode amongst the troops upon beasts of indescribably foul appearance. Beastmen massed noisily around the banners of their own lords, braying and bellowing in their excitement. Above the reeking crowd towered massive things with broad ugly heads, but whether these were mortal creatures or daemons was impossible to say.

Finally the sheer scale of the threat posed by the Gods of Chaos and their unholy minions was laid bare to Magnus, yet his faith in Holy Sigmar did not falter. It is said that even Teclis, so alien in his ways and distant in his manner, was moved by Magnus's impassioned oratory that day, as they stood there in the shadow of that Nightmare Host. At the end of this, his last speech before they would take the battle to their enemies, Magnus reminded his troops of Sigmar's promise, that the sun would not set on His people, so long as they kept Him as their lord. None could doubt the sincerity of Magnus's words, but the dying light of day seemed only to make a mockery of their meaning.

Darkness settled across the field, and the armies of Men were left to ponder if they would ever again see the light of day.

Within the city, the Tsar had organised the defences as best he could, and had even taken personal command of his new army. Hastily trained and ill equipped, yet with a courage born of despair, the Kislevites prepared to meet the Chaos assault head on. With them were several hundred dwarfs from the impenetrable fortress kingdom of the Everpeak, the dwarf capital Karaz-a-Karak. Despite the unrest and horror within his own mountain realm, the High King of the dwarfs had sent a contingent of his finest warriors to the Tsar's aid.

In their first attack, the servants of the Dark Gods committed their multifarious beasts and monsters to the field. The assault was furious and bloody, and the foul creatures drove the Kislevites from their hastily constructed outer defences, forcing them to withdraw behind the city walls. Indomitable to the last, the dwarfs of Karaz-a-Karak fought a valiant rearguard action, holding the beasts at bay.

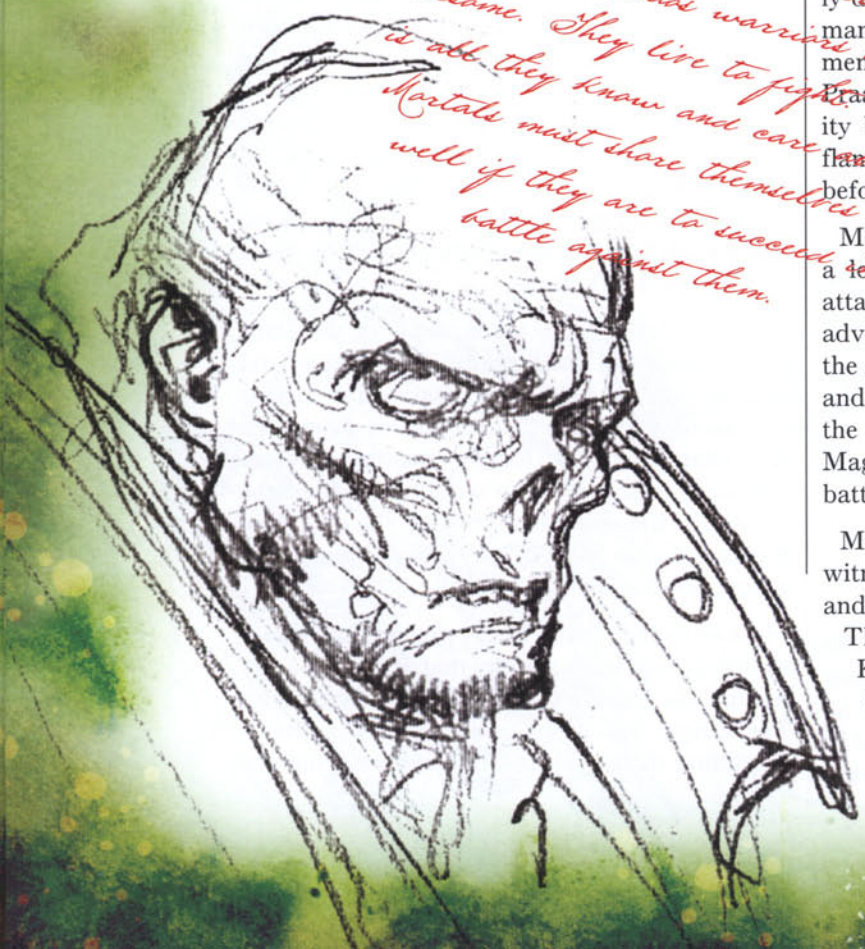
It was as the Chaos Lords prepared to lead a second assault upon the city that Magnus's army reached the outskirts of the Chaos encampment. The Empire troops set about the few warriors remaining there with courage and zeal, but the

main Chaos force was quick to notice this new threat to its rear. With great haste the Chaos army divided into two, one part of the horde continuing to assault the city, whilst the other turned to attack Magnus.

Before the Chaos worshippers could properly regroup, Magnus's army fell upon them like a righteous hammer, routing a large contingent of mutant beastmen that had only just retired from the front line. The creatures panicked when they saw the human army bearing down on them, and put up little resistance before they turned and fled the field.

Magnus and his followers pushed deep into the Chaos ranks. Thousands of mutated troops were slaughtered and the Chaos force could do nothing to halt the pace of Magnus's furious advance. But, although Magnus had driven off many thousands of troops, many more thousands remained. Caught off guard by the sudden attack from its rear, the Chaos army took time to re-deploy, but eventually its greater numbers began to tell. The advance of the Empire army faltered, and then stopped, and Magnus found himself surrounded. The Empire army fell back into a defensive circle.

All this was observed from the city walls. At first the Kislevites sent up a great cheer as they saw the Chaos troops fleeing in all directions.



But as they watched the Empire army slow and stumble, their cheering turned to silence. Fearing their saviours would be destroyed before their eyes, the dwarfs chose to sally-forth from the relative safety of the city's walls, in an effort to go to Magnus's aid. Three hundred dwarfs sped from the south gate and hurled themselves upon their aggressors. But the daemonic troops surrounding Kislev were too many and too well led, and the dwarfs were beaten back with heavy losses. Of the gallant three hundred that had led the attack, it is said barely half returned.

With the threat from Magnus contained, the Chaos forces turned their attention towards the gates of Kislev once more. As the ruinous army surged forward, it became apparent to the defenders that the next assault was intended to carry into the city. The most fearsome Chaos troops were arrayed against them: formidable warriors, sorcerers riding upon huge and outlandish monsters, trolls, dragons, and daemons from the Aethyr's deepest hells. Brave to the last, the Kislevites and dwarfs prepared for the final assault. There was little hope for their survival.

It was as the Chaos army prepared to attack that the fortunes of the allies took a sudden and dramatic turn. Magnus's advance force of cavalry, the same force that had reached Praag too late to save the city, arrived upon the northern flank of the Chaos army. The cavalry were mainly drawn from the Empire, but there were also many native Kislevites amongst them, and the memory of the horror they had witnessed in Praag was still fresh in their minds. With a ferocity born of hate, the cavalry plunged into the flank of the Chaos army, which began to bow before their implacable anger.

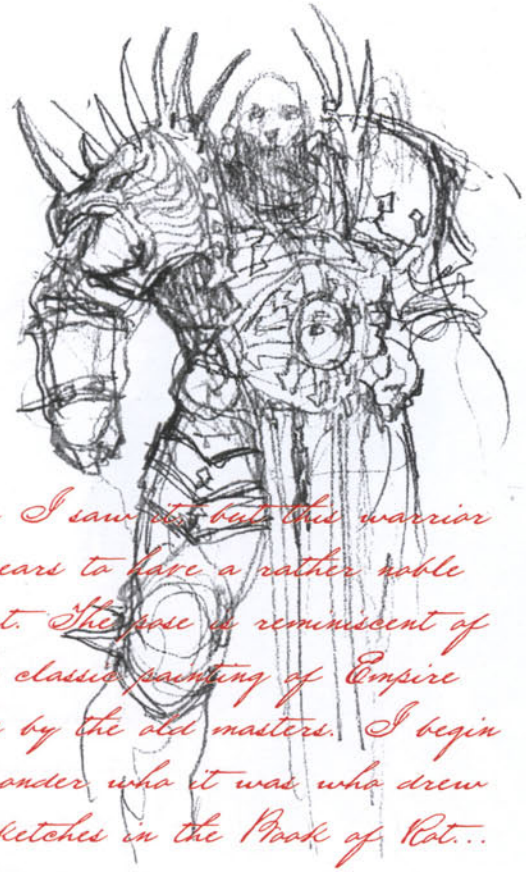
Magnus and his main army had drawn up onto a low hill where they fought off attack after attack by the servants of Chaos. From the advantage of his elevated position, Magnus saw the sudden confusion at the Chaos horde's flank and realised that his cavalry had returned from the north. Summoning the last of his strength, Magnus spurred his troops forward, taking the battle to the enemy once more.

Meanwhile, in the city, the defenders had also witnessed the appearance of the Empire cavalry, and saw at last that the battle might be turning. The city gates were flung open and the Kislevites charged out and attacked the besiegers. Unremitting in their fury and

implacable in their hatred, the dwarfs swore themselves to victory or death and launched themselves upon their enemies, hewing with their great axes as they yelled their Khazalid war cries.

Caught from three sides the Chaos horde fell into confusion. Beastmen milled about, running hither and thither, and were impossible to draw into order. Disciplined and fearless, the dread warriors of Chaos fought on regardless, but their numbers were then too few to fight on all fronts. Slowly, the Chaos army was ground down. Warbands fled before the fury of the human and dwarf armies, and many were caught and destroyed as they did so. By the day's end the Chaos horde was broken and scattered. Many thousands lay dead.

Following the battle for Kislev's gate, the power of Chaos ebbed away. Daemons began to melt back into the Realm of Chaos, screaming their rage and their loss. The darkness withdrew from the land once more. The city of Praag was levelled and rebuilt, although ever afterwards it has remained a haunted city where the dead are said to rest uneasy in their graves.



Dare I say it, but this warrior appears to have a rather noble aspect. The pose is reminiscent of the classic painting of Empire heroes by the old masters. I begin to wonder who it was who drew the sketches in the Book of Rot...



Hunched shoulders, broad aspect and belligerent appearance

Classic face, spiked helm

Magnus the Pious, as he was known from then on, was made Emperor, and under him the provinces were united under one ruler for the first time in centuries. If the Elector Counts of the time had any doubts about the instalment of this dark-eyed priest to the throne of Emperor, they kept their thoughts to themselves. The people of the Empire had chosen their leader and they would not be denied.

Magnus's first act as Emperor was to clear the forests of remaining beastmen, and Ostland and Östermark were freed from their grip. The forces of Chaos were driven back to the Troll Country and beyond. The Great War Against Chaos was at an end. The alliance of the Chaos Gods ended too. Perhaps their rivalries drove them apart once more, or perhaps the Dark Gods had been content to merely test the defences of mankind, for their true plans are hard to fathom.

Yet do not deceive yourself, dear reader. There is no happy ending to this tale, for in truth nothing ever ends. While the Gates of Chaos hang open, the Aethyr's shadow can never be lifted from across the Mortal Realms. Indeed, the forces of the daemon-gods have not been idle in the two centuries since the time of Magnus. Word has reached us that they have once more gathered their strength in the wastelands beyond the land of Norsca, and a great Uniter has risen from amongst their ranks, forging them again into an unstoppable army.

Be ready all you that read this, for Archaon, Lord of the End Times, gathers his armies just north of our borders, and the forces of Chaos prepare once more to wrest control of this realm from mortal hands.

May Sigmar have mercy on us all.

The Beasts of Chaos

An Examination of the Foul Beasts and Creatures that Battle to Further the Ends of the Chaos Gods, and a Description of the Monstrosities that Accompany them upon the Field of Battle.

As a testament to the import of my investigation into the movements and means of the Chaos Gods, Setanta Lobas, the elusive magister-patriarch of the Amber College of Magic, has agreed to aid me in my studies into the various beasts of Chaos. Magister Lobas is our good Empire's foremost expert on all animals and creatures, be they of natural origin or otherwise, and so I have welcomed his learned council with open arms.

Not a man inclined much to conversation, Magister Lobas has instead suggested he write for me an analysis of the source and nature of the many creatures of Chaos. And so I hand over this section of my investigation to Magister Lobas.

The Warping Power of Chaos

(From the hand of Setanta Lobas, Magister-Patriarch of the Amber College.)

The Asur tell of a time before the rise of Chaos and the coming of the gods. A time when this world was ruled and controlled by a seemingly all-powerful race of creatures that came to us from beyond the highest heaven. We are told that these ancient beings could step between the realms of the multiverse by means of vast magical gateways that they themselves had created – gateways that were a portal to the broiling horror of the Empyrean. Why and how they did this is beyond me; all that matters is that they did.

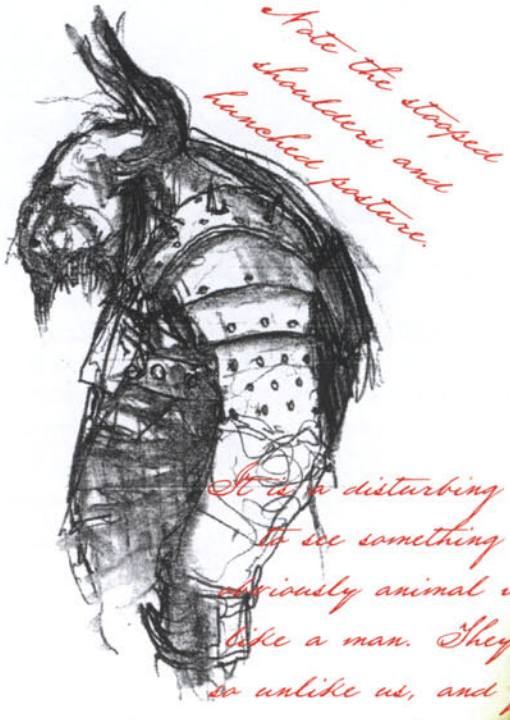
We magisters are taught that the Empyrean is a non-place that both exists as its own reality, and has no physical dimensions or scales. It is pure energy without boundaries, and yet it is linked to life and the physical universe in ways that cannot be severed. But the Empyrean is not simply cold and senseless energy; it is influenced by, and is perhaps a product of, the emotions and thoughts of all living creatures. Though not truly a place it is yet inhabited by beings of power and consciousness of near infinite proportions. As I am sure Kless has expressed ad nauseam in his investigations humanity, and all other intelligent races, have embraced these beings as their pantheons of gods and daemons.

For whatever reason, the Empyrean-gateway built by our world's first great masters collapsed in on itself, and tides of pure Chaos, pure magic, were sucked into our world. This formless energy was suddenly subject to the physical laws of the mortal plane. Under the intense pressure of reality, much of this energy solidified into the mutating dust we know as warpstone. It was this dust that I believe caused the birth of the first mutants and monsters of Chaos.

The Origins of Beastmen

Chaos has no one definable and measurable effect upon mortal creatures. It will always mutate and warp any physical matter it comes into contact with, that much is certain, but there are few ways to predict just what form that warping effect will take. Although we of the Old World nations – the Empire, Bretonnia, Estalia and Tilea – may have our own very specific notion of what the Chaos-spawned creatures we have dubbed beastman might look like, it would be a mistake to assume that these creatures are a truly definable and universal breed.

Chaos is almost totally unpredictable, affect-




This face is animalistic and erotic in its lines and composition. The bone structure is brutal and heavy, yet there is something vaguely human about it. Perhaps it is the intelligence that burns in the eyes, or the mouth that expresses so much hatred. These creatures frighten me to the core. I feel frightened all the time now, but it seems sometimes that the adage 'ignorance is bliss' seems very true.
Long horns and bestial fac
Long, sloping brow
Battle scars, scrapes and indications, ritual scarring?
Today for the little villages and hamlets of our Empire, which dwell, by necessity, near the dark forests. They are forever in danger from these creatures. Just to look at the drawings fills me with dread. To actually see one, charging out of the trees with a dozen of its fellows must be a frightening sight.

ing the world in all kinds of bizarre and unforeseen ways, just as it is in turn affected *by* the world in all kinds of bizarre and unforeseen ways. Indeed, the mortal creatures of Chaos come in all shapes and forms. I have heard legends from across the world that describe races of cat-men, bird-men, lizard-men, and even strange tales of monkey warriors from the distant lands of Cathay. So the creatures that we identify as beastmen may have little in common with the Chaos species that other nations and cultures identify as beastmen.

Just how the beastmen of the Old World came into being is uncertain. There is an ancient legend (I think of Dawi origin), that places the genesis of the Old World's beastmen back to the collapse of the Northern Chaos Gate. It tells of a time some five thousand years before the birth of Sigmar, when the earliest ancestors of humanity still resided in the south-eastern lands beyond the borders of Tilea. In this time, or so the legend tells, there was another race of heavy-set and passably intelligent humanoids to whom the gods (or perhaps the godlike creators of the Chaos Gates) had first taught the skills of animal husbandry.

These nomadic peoples travelled across the north-eastern steppes, taming dogs to help them herd wild boar, as well as the long-horned ancestors of our modern day cattle, and flocks of hardy goats. Then the Northern Gate collapsed, and the corrosive power of Chaos saturated this simple people, merging them with the only partially tamed animals that they herded, warping them into the goat and bovine beastmen that we recognise today.

Although this legend seems to offer a relatively straightforward explanation as to how beastmen came into being, I do not believe that it represents the whole truth of the matter – if truth is even a relevant concept where the often contradictory forces of Chaos are concerned. For just as Chaos is likely to manifest itself in the material universe as a random and warping energy, it is also theorised that Chaos actually *uses* physical matter to express and manifest the various beliefs of mortal creatures. After all, the Empyrean can in one sense be seen to be the infinite subconscious mind of all sentient creatures, but with independent motion and energy. As such, I do not think it is beyond the grasp of reason to suggest that the physical manifestations of the Empyrean reflect the ideas of intelligent mortals.

The goat-like beastmen that we recognise across the entirety of the Old World might be a random product of animal and human exposure to warpstone dust; or they might be our own folkloric imaginings and nightmares made flesh; or they might be the product of the Chaos Powers choosing a form for their servants that they knew would disturb and terrify mortal men most of all. It is impossible to say with any certainty.

What is certain is that day after day, year after year, and century after century, every single thought, idea and emotion generated by humanity is sucked into the Empyrean. Then also day after day, year after year, and century after century, both pure and corrupted energies of the Empyrean leak down from the north, bringing all those emotions and concepts back with them. For numerous different reasons, this warping energy is drawn to some people and things more than others, and the changes wrought upon these people and things could perhaps be dictated by the beliefs, fears and paranoias of humanity. Once these newly warped nightmares are seen by the wider world, they serve only to confirm and promote the conscious and subconscious fears that spawned their mutations in the first place. I believe that this process creates a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby the more we humans see our fears made flesh, the more we come to expect the specific form we first saw them in, and so a cyclic pattern is born allowing beastmen to become a race and species in their own right.

The Numbers and Habitats of Beastmen

The beastmen of the Empire are not natural creatures of our world. They are mutants that seem to be created from men and animals by the warping power of Chaos, and they take many different forms. I myself have seen the bizarrely mixed quadrupeds that common folklore refers to as centigors, and even the verminous rat-men known to folklore as skaven are beastmen of a kind (although I am aware of far too many 'scholars' within this Empire who, in their arrogance and folly, refute that the skaven exist at all).

The *common* beastmen that plague the lands of the Empire are creatures that stand upright on two legs, and posses two arms, a torso and a head. However, their physical similarity to

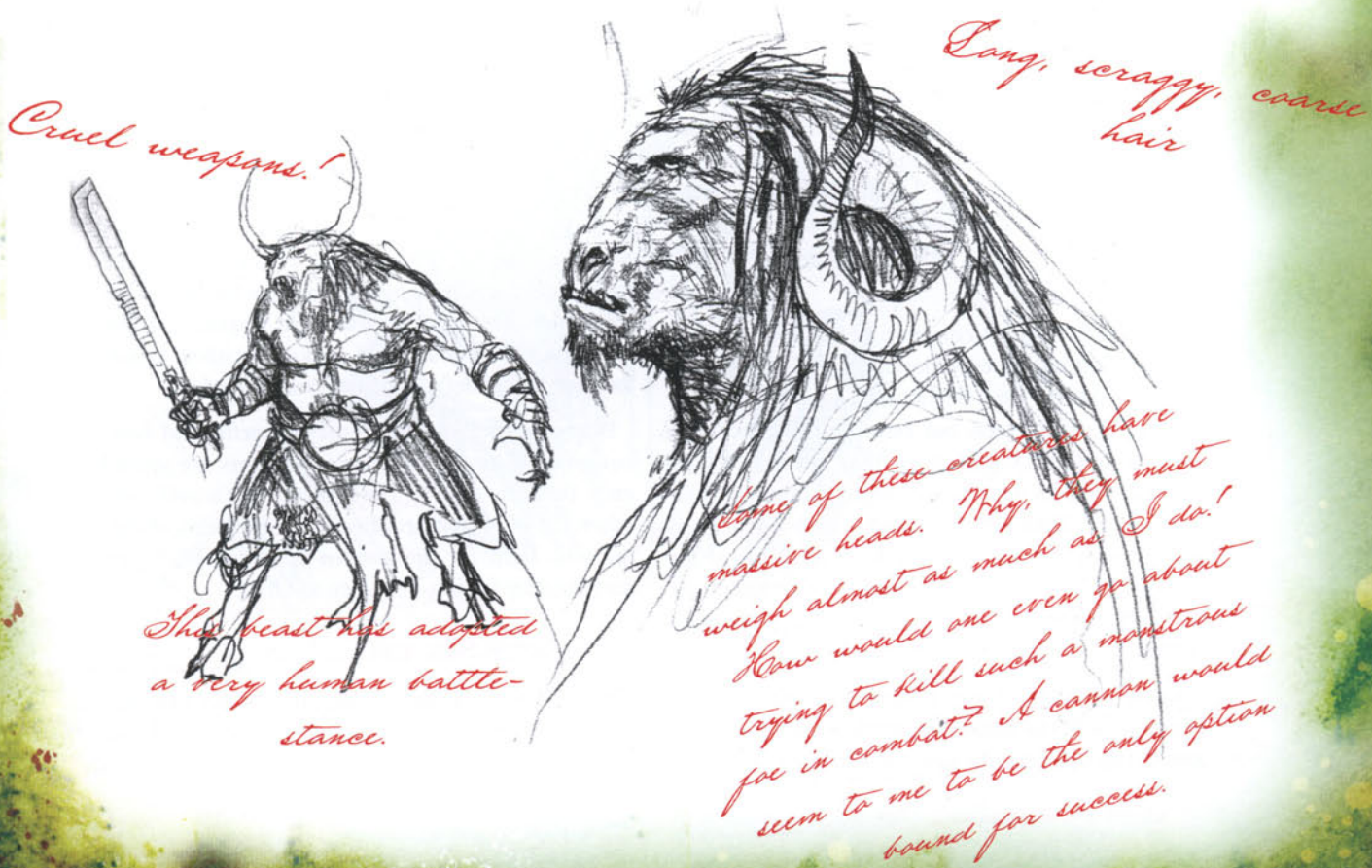
mortal men ends there, for they are often much larger than humans, with heads resembling that of an overgrown goat, but with jaws that are lined with the fangs of a wolf. Their legs continue on an ungulate theme, being as they are jointed like the hindquarters of a ram and ending in cloven hooves.

These Chaos beasts are dangerous indeed, for they are not only more heavily muscled than mortal men, but they also posses an intelligence close to that of our own, only tempered with the cunning of a wild predator and driven by a Chaos-born bitterness. These creatures are savage and brutal, caring little for other beings and apparently hating we humans above all others.

Although their numbers can only be estimated, there are those amongst the scholastic communities of the Old World who believe that these beastmen are the most numerous of all the mortal creatures of Chaos. I myself fear that beastmen, though dispersed, may outnumber we humans by two-to-one – but I cannot be sure of this. What I can be sure of is that for longer than anyone can remember, these Chaos beasts have posed a real and unavoidable threat to the people of our great nation – whether they be travellers on the great forest roads, or villagers of the poorly defended provincial outlands. All too often dire reports tell of homes or hamlets that have been raised in the night, their inhabitants slain, their buildings burned down, and their animals carried away into the night – and it is these Chaos beastmen who are responsible.

Although they continue to grow in numbers throughout the dark forests and wastelands of the Old World, beastmen remain most numerous in the north, across the forbidding wildernesses of Norsca and Kislev. But even in the relatively safe lands of the south, in chivalrous Bretonnia and the bright lands of Tilea and Estalia, the largest and most ancient forests (some say even fey Loren) are known to harbour large beastman camps. Even in these warm southern countries, the authorities live in fear that the scattered hordes of beastmen haunting their realms will one day band together and rise up to overwhelm them, as, indeed, they have attempted to do in centuries past.

It appears there is no escaping these bestial footsoldiers of the Chaos Gods, and therefore the only option open to us is their complete eradication from our lands – just as in the distant days of our Empire's founding.



Beastmen Society

Beastmen are an entirely savage and warlike species, and their basic social unit reflects this. Every community of these creatures is in fact a fully active warband, or warherd, which is perhaps a more appropriate term. Warherds rarely seem to have a permanent base, but instead move through a series of temporary camps deep in the woods or in some hidden wilderness. Once a herd has hunted the surrounding forests and raided any settlements nearby, it tends to move on to another camp some distance away. In this way they are constantly on the move, sometimes clashing with other herds over a particularly fruitful territory.

Types of Beastmen

As I have already mentioned, there are many different types of creatures throughout the world that could be described as beastmen. As such, I am restricting this investigation to the common goat and bull-headed creatures that plague the Old World.

I imagine that to the eyes of most humans unfortunate enough to have seen these creatures, most beastmen appear the same. This is not the case. In fact, beastman society (if one can call it that) is very precise, if not actually ordered, and I have observed several distinct levels of rank within beastmen herds. Their language is an indelicate and harsh affair, being as it is a corrupted blend of the Dark Tongue, a dialect of Reikspiel and various bestial grunts and bleats. The closest approximation I can give to the spelling names of these different ranks are: Ungor, Gor, and bestigor (or Baqsen-Gor as they are sometimes called).

Ungors

Ungors are the most common breed of beastmen, but they cannot be considered True-Gors as such. These creatures exist between two worlds, as they are neither pure men nor pure Gor – hence Un-Gor, or indeed, Un-Men as they are sometimes known. Ungors are slightly more human in their appearance than Gors, although they are invariably covered with patchy hair and have the hindquarters of a goat, although not uniquely so. They are closer to the height and stature of humans than Gors, who are much larger.

These mutants have tended to make up the main body of the beastmen herds I have seen, and are, in my opinion, the dross of the herd. They use only the crudest of weapons, and they are cruel and petty, full of spite and hatred. In the Dark Tongue, Ungors are known as Bray. I can only assume that the name refers to the braying, whinnying, and whooping cacophony that Ungors make when they band together to fight or feast.

Gors

Gor,* in the dialectal Dark Tongue of the Old World's beastmen, means something similar to 'lord' or 'noble.' This does not mean that all the creatures that refer to themselves as Gors are lords of their kind (at least, not in the sense that we of the Empire might understand it), rather, they are more important than lesser beastmen and worthy of respect and fear.

Gors are larger, stronger and more intelligent than their lesser cousins, the Ungors, and treat all beings weaker than themselves with disdain and aggression. Gors also seem to take great pride in their curling horns, often polishing, painting or decorating them to enhance their natural lustre or shape. I have heard tell that Gors also sharpen their horns in anticipation of battle, and I believe some of these creatures even coat them with poison, or smear them with heavily decayed meat, to make them even more deadly.

** Interestingly, the word "Gor" also means "beast" or "wild thing" in the dwarf language of Khazalid, although whether the dwarfs took the word from the Dark Tongue, or indeed vice versa, is a mystery lost to time.*

Bestigors

I believe that bestigor is a rank distinction amongst the beastmen, rather than a subspecies like the Ungors. From what I can discern, the term bestigor means something like battle lord in Reikspiel. Bestigors are the elite warriors of any beastman warherd, hand picked by their beastlord (or war-chief) as his personal guard.

Being as they are the most powerful and best-equipped beastmen warriors, bestigors are second only in authority to the beastlord himself, and when the old beastlord dies it is usually his bestigors who fight for the honour of eating his heart, and thereby taking his place as chief.

The Caste System

The divisions in beastman society do not just begin and end with rank, they also seem to have a very definite caste system.

The Beasts of Chaos

Although it might seem ludicrous to any who have witnessed the mindless savagery of the beastmen that they might have any concept of a class system, it is true nonetheless. For instance, Ungor is both a rank and a class, in that these creatures are considered by their monstrous peers to be the lowest of the low. But it seems that any beastman that has curling or straight horns, the head of a goat and goat legs is a Caprigor. Caprigor can be seen as the title that defines the caste of the beastman. Beastmen with these specific mutations but no others are known amongst their peers as the True Gors.

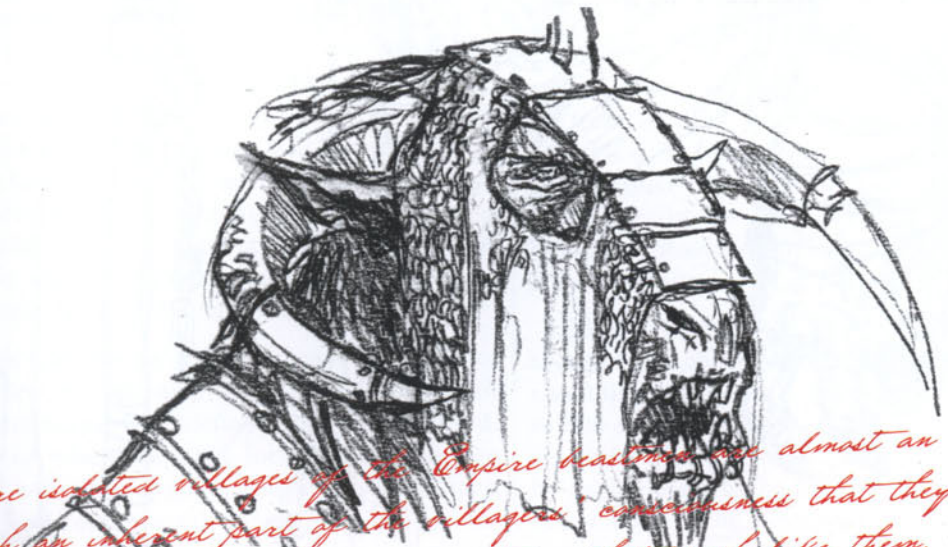
One might view the difference between Ungor and Caprigor as the same as that which exists between slaves and citizens in our own society. A slave is considered the lowest of the low, with no rights beyond those that his master grants. A citizen, on the other hand, is a free person in the Empire, and therefore protected (at least nominally) by the law. Slaves are all of the same social standing – there is no higher or lower rank of slave – whereas citizens can vary in social standing from peasant farmer to nobleman, and everything in between.

Only True-Gors are strong enough and respected enough to rise through the beastman ranks. So an Ungor will almost always remain just as it is, whereas a Gor, being by definition a Caprigor, or True Gor, enjoys a higher standing in the beastmen herds and can, in theory at least, fight its way up to being a bestigor, or even beastlord.

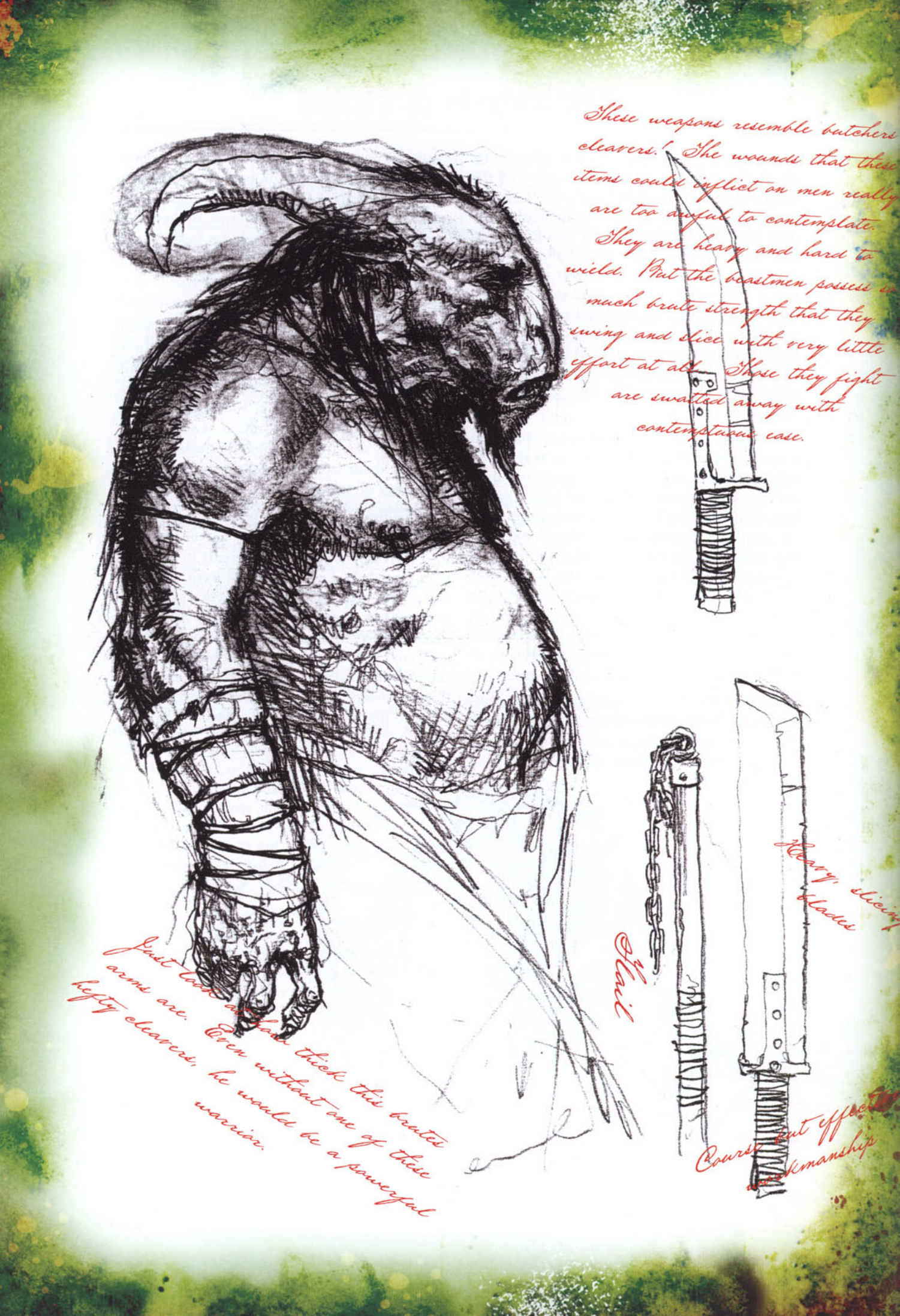
Turnskins

Turnskin is the name given to beastmen who were born human but became warped into a new form as they grew older. These men and women are distinct from the mighty champions of the Chaos Gods, in that they are not warped by Chaos in recognition of some great or terrible deed, rather their mutations were brought about by over-exposure to raw magical energy or warpstone.

Unfortunately, throughout the lands of the Empire and northwards, it is not uncommon for perfectly sound human parents to produce a mutant child. People who are born with any mutations are rarely tolerated in their own communities, and most of them are killed the moment their mutations manifest, or are driven from their homes to die lonely deaths. Yet the toughest, luckiest and most cunning sometimes manage to survive this rejection and come to join up with bands of beastmen.



In the more isolated villages of the Empire beastmen are almost an everyday threat. They are such an inherent part of the villagers' consciousness that they have taken on an almost mystic aspect. Beastmen, or creatures that much like them, are depicted in woodcuts and often feature in fireside tales told in the twilight. It has also been reported that some people leave offerings of meat and blood on the forest edge in an effort to appease these rampant and vengeful beasts, and perhaps persuade them not to attack their dwellings. Who knows when this sort of appeasement will turn into open worship? The Empire is a vast place and the arms of the wholesome religions are too short.


These weapons resemble butchers cleavers. The wounds that these items could inflict on men really are too awful to contemplate. They are heavy and hard to wield. But the beastmen possess so much brute strength that they swing and slice with very little effort at all. Those they fight are swatted away with contemptuous ease.
Just look at the thick hide this brutes arms are. Even without one of these hefty cleavers, he would be a powerful warrior.
Heavy, sharp blades
Crude but effective workmanship

This can be a mixed blessing. Some herds of beastmen welcome such human mutants, believing them to be the chosen of the gods. Other bands seem to regard these Turnskins as creatures of even less worth than an Ungor, and, although they do not always kill the mutant human, neither do they welcome him with open arms.

The Succession of a Warband

Beastman warherds lose their leader for one of several reasons: through his death in battle; because he has been reduced to a mindless Chaos spawn; or because (much more rarely) he has been blessed with daemonancy and has ascended to the Empyrean.

If their leader has been slain or has ascended to daemonancy, a beastman herd will mark the passing of their chieftain with raucous feasting and dancing. If their leader was particularly infamous, it is not unknown for several warherds to gather together to mourn his passing or celebrate his ascension. Such is the barbarity of these creatures that the dead chieftain's loyal followers will often eat his body during the feast, his oldest and most favoured warriors consuming the most tender and choicest cuts. If the chieftain is to be succeeded by one of his followers, the new leader is said to consume the old war-chief's heart. Beastmen believe that a warrior's essence lies in his heart, and by eating that part of the old chieftain, some of his wisdom and power passes into his successor. They believe that by devouring their old leader in this way they will inherit some of his character as well as his most distinctive physical mutations. Perhaps this is true, for it is certainly the case amongst the oldest established warbands that its members share many common traits and attributes.

This Champions' Feast appears to be one of the few recognisable traditions amongst all beastmen and, if a chieftain's body is destroyed, lost, or otherwise unfit for consumption, the herd will often consider this a very bad omen for the future. For this reason, it is my recommendation to all magisters who are loyal to humanity to endeavour to destroy a warherd's chieftain utterly if ever faced with him in battle. Because, whether the beastmen superstitions are correct or not, the impact of denying these foul creatures of Chaos their succession ceremony cannot be ignored. What harms them, benefits us.

The Brayherd

A *brayherd* is the name given to a great meeting of beastman warherds. They gather in hidden valleys, deep woods, or secret caves, always well away from the prying eyes of humanity. A brayherd site can be recognised by the presence of a huge stone slab, or *herdstone*, which is surrounded by the charred remains of burnt offerings and piles of rusting weapons and trophies. Some of these herdstones are natural outcrops of rock, but I have seen others, rough slabs of granite and basalt, erected by the beastmen themselves in a similar (though more primitive) way to the standing stones that can be found dotted across the misty isle of Albion.

By taking the form of a raven, I was once able to witness a beastman chieftain as he convened a brayherd. I followed him for over a week as he led his herd deep into the Drakwald forest. Eventually we came to a wide clearing, cutting a near-perfect circle through the forest for perhaps a dozen acres. At the centre of this mossy clearing I saw a ring of jagged boulders surrounding a massive, fire blackened menhir – his herdstone. Within moments of arriving, the warchief, and a creature I took to be his shaman advisor, set about lighting a large bonfire at the base of the herdstone, onto which they threw copious amounts of herbs and compounds that, when burnt, gave off a thick smoke of greenish hue.

Over the following nights, other chieftains arrived with their own herds, no doubt attracted from afar by the light and smoke of the signal fire. As each chieftain arrived I saw them scratch their names or marks around the base of the herdstone. In all I saw five distinct groups of beastmen arrive, at which point the brayherd began.

Hidden within the heavy boughs of a sycamore keeping a safe distance from the chieftains' shamans, I followed the unfolding events somewhat imperfectly. I think that the chieftain who had called the brayherd started by explaining why he had done so, almost certainly because he planned to fight somebody, whether it was we, the hated humans, or some other foe I could not say. The other chieftains listened carefully to his bleats and brays, and seemed to debate amongst themselves whether or not to join the venture. Whenever any of the shaman assembled there spoke, every chieftain fell silent to listen. It was clear to me that these shamans' Chaos-spawned wisdom gave them

great authority amongst the warherds, and no action would be contemplated without their advice, and perhaps consent.

While the chieftains sat in council, the assembled herds enjoyed a raucous festival of feasting, wild dance, and physical contests. Although fights did break out, the chieftains seemed to be able to contain them for the most part. In fact, I believe that it must be forbidden to spill blood during a brayherd, and even the deadliest of rivals seemed to respect this policy.

Having said this, while I watched, a violent altercation erupted between two of the chieftains at the brayherd, but within minutes they had been driven away from the clearing and their names were scratched from the herdstone. However, it appears that the offending chieftains were permitted to settle their differences with violence, just so long as it was done some way away from the herdstone, and once their differences had been resolved (one of them having killed the other), the surviving chieftain was allowed to rejoin the brayherd council without further comment.

After many hours of negotiations, a battle plan had obviously been agreed upon, and so began a ceremonial fight that I assumed would decide which chieftain would lead the gathered horde. The warherds formed a ring around the herdstone with the contending chieftains placed at even intervals around its inside perimeter. Each of the combatants was unarmed and had his hands tied behind his back, and it became clear that this battle would be decided by a ritual horn-locking contest of strength. During this barbaric contest, no other beastmen entered the ring, but it did appear to be acceptable for the spectators to strike out with fists or blunt weapons at any combatant that strayed too close. In fact, the combatants strove to push each other to the perimeter of the ring where they ran the risk of disappearing under a rain of blows.

The victor of this conflict was declared the ghurgor, or *beastlord*, of the horde. Although I could not follow them to whatever rampage they had planned, I do know that once their expedition was over, this alliance broke up quite rapidly, and the normal feuding resumed.

The Chaos Powers

Beastmen are entirely creatures of Chaos and as such they revere the four Great Powers, either individually or as a pantheon. Just in what light the Gods of Chaos regard beastmen in is uncertain. There are some who say that the Chaos Powers look upon beastmen with special favour, being as they are the true mortal children of Chaos. But others theorise that as all beastmen are born straight into the embrace of the Dark Gods, they are esteemed less by the Chaos Powers than their human converts. For where the latter make a choice to turn to Chaos of their own volition, the former are born into it and have no choice in the matter.

Whatever the case, a herd that follows one of the Chaos Powers will inevitably acquire whatever mutations and powers their patron deity deems appropriate. As the chieftain and his warherd are granted fresh rewards by their patron, they are mutated gradually into forms more pleasing to the Chaos God in question – just as human cultists and champions are.

The Bray-shaman

Bray-shaman are the opposite number of the magisters and priests of our Empire, and as such they are perhaps the most dangerous of all beastmen. Although all beastmen are born dedicated to the Gods of Chaos, those beastmen that become shaman are chosen by their Dark Gods as special intermediaries between themselves and the mortal plane. As an example of this, although these bestial witch-doctors do not study magic, they appear to be born with an inherent knowledge of the ways of magic, knowing the destructive spells of their gods intuitively. Many are the times I have found my own skills pitted against the powers of these dark and savage luminaries, and I am all too aware of the danger they pose to humanity.

Bray-shaman are said to be able to spirit walk within the Empyrean, where they supposedly meet with their herd's patron daemon, or perhaps even the Chaos Gods themselves. Spirit walking can only be achieved if the shaman enters a comatose trance-state, often induced by the excessive drinking of powerful alcohol mixed with various herbs and fungi. It seems that it is by means of this spirit-walking that beastmen gain their confidence in themselves and the *rightness* of their actions. Their shaman actually claim to see the faces of the gods and receive instructions straight from them, and this seems to instil in them the total confidence that they are not only the Children of Chaos (as their physical mutations imply), but that they are also

an integral part of the Chaos Gods' plans. As a result, though beastmen are savage and crude in their ways, they seem to understand much more about the nature and ways of Chaos than most humans.

From what I have seen, no beastman of any rank or class will harm a shaman, even if he is from a rival herd. Their superstition seems to be that if a shaman is slain, the wrath of Chaos will descend upon the killer, and this seems to be one of the few things that even the brutish beastmen genuinely fear. In a more pragmatic sense, caution in the face of a shaman is probably a very wise course of action, for, unlike the vast majority of priests and magisters of humanity, beastman shamans have no care or respect for anyone other than their own kind and are likely to use their hell-spawned powers to destroy anyone who challenges their wisdom.

Although there is no uniform mode of dress amongst their kind, bray-shaman invariably seem to carry a staff or banner decorated with scalps and bones, and they often wear tattered robes or decorated hoods made from the skins of defeated enemies. The sole indisputable mark of the shaman is that his eyes are always different colours. Often one eye is red and one blue, or one yellow and the other green. The actual colours are supposed to signify the favour in which the shaman is held by a particular Chaos Power: blue or yellow for Tzeentch, green or brown for Nurgle, pink or purple for Slaanesh, and bright red for the warrior-shaman of Khorne. It is not unknown for the shaman sometimes to repeat the colours of their eyes in their robes, or they might paint their horns so that they too proclaim the favour of the Chaos Powers.

Centigors

Not to be confused with the slightly more benevolent Centaurs of myth, Centigors are a different type of beastman that inhabit the tundra just north of Kislev, where the trees of the Taiga reluctantly yield to the sparse grasslands that are the borders of the Troll Country. It is said they can also be found across the entirety of the north-eastern steppes, in the cold lands of the Kurgan, although I admit that I have never travelled that far to confirm such claims.

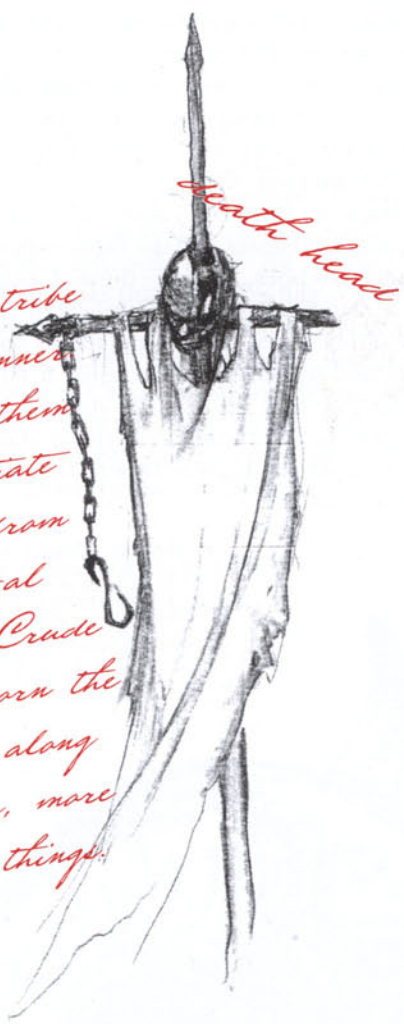
The closest translation of *Centi-Gor* would be something like *horse-lord*, which in itself shines some light onto the nature of these Chaos-mutants. For where the common beastman of the Old World is a mutated cross between man, goat and wolf, Centigors seem to be a cross between horses, wolves and more standard beastmen. It seems that in ages past, the warping energy seeping down from the Chaos Wastes merged men (or perhaps a creature somewhere between man and ogre), giant hounds, wild goats and the famous ponies of the eastern steppes, giving these Centigors the mane, hindquarters and forelegs of horses, the feet and claws of wolves, the torsos and arms of men, and heads that seem to be a mutation of man, goat and wolf. This unholy blend has granted the Centigors great speed and stamina, and also strong arms with which to wield tools and weaponry.

But it would seem that this is not an entirely happy marriage of humanoid and beast, for although they are physically



Although this creature's skull is probably ample protection from blows, it still wears a rough helm over its head and face.

powerful creatures, Centigors do not appear to be particularly dextrous or agile, and they have never attained much by way of civilisation. Skills that require a large degree of dexterity or manual cunning seem to be beyond them. They appear to be able to grip tightly and swing their arms in a reasonably controlled fashion, but little else. As such they are unable to make



complicated weapons or devices, and are forced to rely upon other races to provide these things. Perhaps as a result of this state of affairs, Centigors are an exceedingly bitter and spiteful race of creatures, and they openly admit to a deep jealousy of creatures whose minds and bodies are better matched.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering their physical attributes, Centigors are nomadic creatures, without settlements or habitations of any kind. Centigor herds rely upon raiding and hunting to provide their basic needs, and in this sense they are similar to most other beastmen. Not only are Centigors handicapped by their brutal bodies, but they are also driven by animal appetites over which their thinking minds have little control. Frustrated by their own limitations, Centigors tend to suffer from a craving for alcohol. Its intoxicating effects drive them wild with an animal excitement that can only be quelled by deeds of the most violent kind. Only when their energies are completely spent do they seem to be able to lapse into a drunken slumber, sprawling awkwardly on the ground, totally oblivious to the world.

When sober, Centigors seem to be able to speak a purer form of the Dark Tongue than other beastmen, although their thick tongues and large teeth seem somewhat unsuited to the articulation of coherent syllables, and this coarsens their speech.

Centigors and Beastmen

Although Centigors have always had dealings with the ungulate beastmen of the Old World, the two races could hardly be described as on friendly terms. When Centigors want to trade or cooperate in a raid or some other venture, they generally wait for the beastmen to hold a brayherd so they can make contact.

Unlike beastmen chieftains, Centigor stallions seem to posses no regard whatsoever for the traditions of the brayherd. They stomp and push their way towards the herdstone and scream their names out to proclaim their presence. Perhaps because their thick-fingered hands prevent them from being able to write their names on the herdstone, or perhaps because these creatures are bitter beyond even their smaller beastmen cousins, Centigors sometimes defecate over the braystone by way of making their mark.

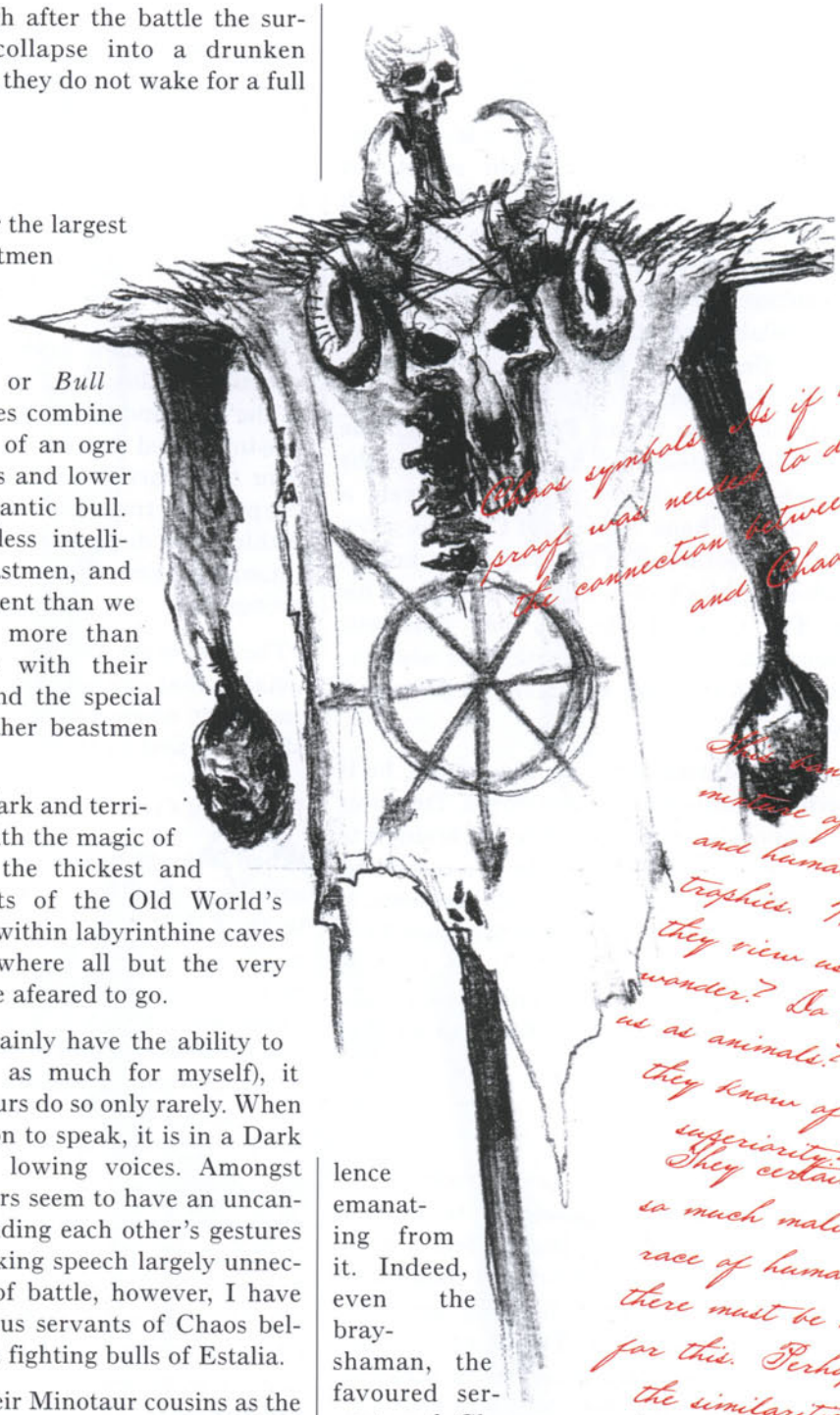
Perhaps fortunately for the Centigors, the beastmen chieftains seem to pay little attention to the posturing of these stallions. They appear to know that once the Centigors have made their show of vulgar bravado, their pride will have been sufficiently honoured and they will be content to follow the leadership of the beastman chieftains. Centigor cooperation is inevitable because they need the more dextrous beastmen to repair their weapons and trade their plunder for intoxicating beverages.

I have seen a herd of Centigors guzzle hundreds of litres of strong drink before a battle. It is possible that, as some unusual side-effect on their mutant metabolism, the copious amounts of alcohol drive them to extremes of violence

and cruelty, although after the battle the surviving Centigors collapse into a drunken slumber from which they do not wake for a full day.

Minotaurs

Minotaurs are by far the largest of the bipedal beastmen that can be found in the Old World. Sometimes referred to as *Bovi-Gors*, or *Bull Lords,* these creatures combine the massive stature of an ogre with the head, horns and lower hind legs of a gigantic bull. They are perhaps less intelligent than other beastmen, and certainly less intelligent than we humans, but they more than make up for this with their uncanny strength and the special awe in which all other beastmen seem to hold them.



Chaos symbols. As if any more proof was needed to demonstrate the connection between beastmen and Chaos.

The banner has a montage of animal and human skull trophies. What do they view us as, I wonder? Do they see us as animals? Or do they know of our superiority? They certainly bear so much malice to us race of humans, and there must be a reason for this. Perhaps it is the similarities that we share that bother them so much. Which is it? Jealousy? Similarity?

Minotaurs live in dark and terrible places, seeped with the magic of Chaos, be they in the thickest and most secluded parts of the Old World's forests, or else deep within labyrinthine caves or hidden valleys where all but the very bravest beastmen are afeared to go.

Although they certainly have the ability to talk (I have heard as much for myself), it appears that Minotaurs do so only rarely. When they do have occasion to speak, it is in a Dark Tongue with deep, lowing voices. Amongst themselves, Minotaurs seem to have an uncanny way of understanding each other's gestures and expressions, making speech largely unnecessary. In the heat of battle, however, I have heard these monstrous servants of Chaos bellow and roar like the fighting bulls of Estalia.

Beastmen know their Minotaur cousins as the *Guardians of the Chaos Heart* – by which they mean the most holy shrines of Chaos. Minotaurs have an innate knowledge of the secret locations of the most sacred Chaos shrines and herdstones that are hidden in the least accessible parts of the forests and mountains. Few creatures other than the Minotaurs have ever visited these secret places, and once, when I myself tried to approach one such shrine while in the guise of a fox, I was almost physically repelled by the conscious malevolence emanating from it. Indeed, even the bray-shaman, the favoured servants of Chaos, seem to avoid these shrines unless absolutely necessary.

A Chaos shrine can appear in almost any form, such as a temple to Chaos, a huge menhir or monolith, a giant cave, or an unnaturally vast and ancient tree. What they have in common is that they are places built upon or around a large fragment of pure warpstone. Warpstone, as I have indicated before, is the raw stuff of Chaos in the physical form of a light-absorbing rock that smoulders with dan-

gerous magical energies. This chunk of warpstone is an immensely potent source of magical energy and acts as a focal point for Chaos.

These Chaos shrines play a role of paramount importance in Minotaur society. A Minotaur may only become a custodian of such a shrine by embracing and lifting the warpstone housed there. This truly is a test of faith and courage, for if the Minotaur fails the test, uncontrollable mutations rip through his body and his flesh melts into new and horrible shapes. However, if the Minotaur proves acceptable to the Chaos Power to which the shrine is dedicated, then he is accepted as the guardian of the shrine, and is effectively a champion of Chaos. A Mark of Chaos is given to him, as contact with the warpstone brands the glowing black rune of his Patron into his skin. The Chaos Gods and their daemonic minions can communicate with their new servant through the stone whenever the Minotaur touches it.

Once the Minotaur has been accepted, he is expected to protect the Chaos shrine. Treasures and weapons captured in battle are brought to the shrine and displayed inside as a testament to the Minotaur's loyalty and achievements. It seems that so long as the chosen Minotaur lives and protects the shrine, he will be its only champion – the warpstone only glows dully and will not confer a Chaos Mark to another would-be champion.

The Blood Greed

Although normally quiet and ponderous in their movements, battle seems to have a strange and exhilarating effect upon Minotaurs. This takes the form of their *blood greed*, and it is Chaos's blessing upon the whole Minotaur species. The scent of blood drives them absolutely insane with violence, and they bellow their fury for all to hear, ripping and tearing their hapless victims, and slaking their unholy thirst by gulping down great hunks of bloody meat.

There can be no doubt that Minotaurs are an abomination to all that is natural and good. I will never tire of hunting these creatures down, and sending their bestial souls screaming into the Empyrean.

Harpies

Harpies are loathsome creatures of Chaos, winged beasts with torsos and heads resembling a female humanoid, but with wings and legs like that of a giant bird of prey. They are found most commonly in the caves of the Northern Wastes and the chill lands of Naggaroth, but I have also seen flocks of them haunting the woods around certain herdstones of particular significance to creatures of Chaos.

When beastmen gather for war, harpies sometimes follow them, perhaps eager to feast on the dead and the dying. Indeed, I have seen beastmen feed harpies with carcasses of the slain to attract them to join their warherds. Harpies are truly Chaotic creatures, psychopathic and dangerous, without any order amongst themselves save the rule of the strongest.

The people the Old World believe, quite reasonably, that catching sight of a harpy is an ill omen, for where harpies fly they are far too often followed by the hordes of Chaos.

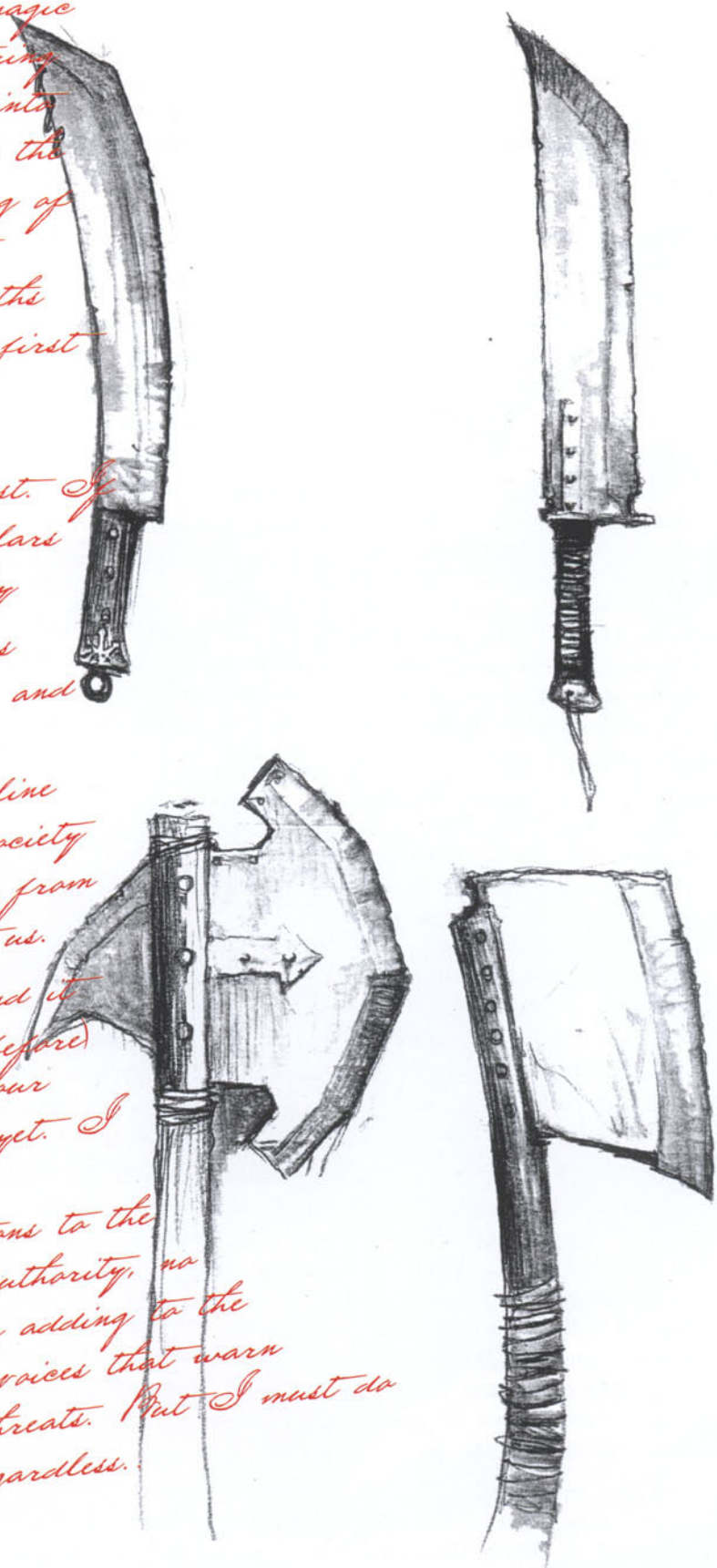
Dragon Ogres

When forks of lightning sunder the night sky and the roar of thunder sends children running to their parents in terror, the people of the north say that the dragon ogres are fighting each other on the peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains. A traveller huddled in a cave to shelter from mountain storms might see the battling Sharunocks, as the oldest dragon ogres are called, silhouetted against the night sky by lightning-flashes.

Some scholars believe that dragon ogres are amongst the most ancient of all the world's living creatures. They are said to be the kin of dragons, beasts of immense antiquity that inhabited the world before the collapse of the Chaos gateways and the coming of the gods. Aeons ago, their race made a sinister pact with the forces of Chaos, embracing damnation rather than accepting a slow decline into extinction. At least such are the legends, culled from the records of the ancients of far off Ulthuan and the steaming jungles of Lustria.

It is said that dragon ogres live practically forever, unless they die in battle. The reason so few of these creatures are seen abroad is because they spend most of their lives asleep, and, like dragons, the older and bigger a dragon ogre gets, the longer he sleeps. Beneath the

Beastmen are the true children of Chaos, born from the womb and into the Old World, whose magic winds and festering fields welcome into being. They are the grotesque melding of man and beast: hideous afterbirths that roar their first cries like those infected by the fiercest bloodlust. If what some scholars say is true, they outnumber humans many times over, and it is only their inherent indiscipline and incohesive society that keeps them from allying against us. If they do (and it has happened before) we may face our toughest task yet. I will make recommendations to the appropriate authority, no doubt merely adding to the clamour of voices that warn of coming threats. But I must do my best, regardless.



mountain peaks of the north there may be creatures that have not stirred for hundreds or even thousands of years.

On cold winter nights, when violent storms assail the mountains of the northern Old World, the sleeping dragon ogres stir as their dreaming minds hear echoed in the thunder the roar of the Chaos Gods calling them to task. For such is the pact the dragon ogres made, placing themselves in eternal bondage to Chaos in return for their long years of life. The louder the thunder, the more dragon ogres awake, but only a storm of truly titanic proportions could awaken the oldest and most powerful of them.

As lightning bolts pour from the skies, the dragon ogres make for the highest mountain peaks where they bathe in the storm, renewing themselves to full potency by absorbing the power of the lightning bolts. If many creatures are awakened, they will fight to decide which of them shall ascend to the highest peaks to receive the lightning blasts that will extend their lives for another century or so.

The dragon ogres look to a time when the world shall be consumed by Chaos, for only then will their compact with the daemon-gods and their eternal bondage end. Amid the lightning and thunder of the apocalypse they believe that their entire race will wake once again – even their dead – and the sire of all dragon ogres, Krakanrok the Black, will emerge from his ten thousand year slumber to lead his people to their final rest.

Beastmen and the Human Servants of Chaos

In their boundless folly, it is not unheard of for various proscribed cults within human society to have dealings with beastmen. With the information a cultist provides, beastmen can, for instance, wait in ambush for imperial messengers and important convoys. In the past, foolish cultists have been implicated in opening city gates and sewer ways to allow marauding beastmen access.

Contact between the human servants of Chaos and beastmen can be made by any man or woman brave enough to follow the signal fires of the brayherd. If Chaos has touched the human, in the form of either a mutation or the mark of one of the daemon-gods, the beastmen will recognise him as a follower of Chaos. If the cultist manages to convince the assembled chieftains and bray-shaman that he has something valuable to offer, they may agree to plot and plan their nefarious schemes with the human.

Beastmen and the Human Champions of Chaos

Beastmen live in roaming bands dominated by their own warlords – who are in themselves a kind of Chaos champion. Small groups will often ally themselves with human or other champions of Chaos, joining their warbands and fighting their battles. I believe this is because beastmen have a natural empathy with Chaos – in quite a literal sense they are the Children of Chaos. This empathy overcomes any natural antipathy beastmen may usually have for humans, so that they willingly serve all manner of Chaos champions whatever sort of creatures they are.

Beastmen do not always live at peace with the human champions and warbands who roam the dark woods and wastes – life in the service of the fickle gods of Chaos is nothing if not risky. Chaos warbands of all kinds keep a careful lookout for the progress of others. They know which champions are in the local area, and their deeds will be common knowledge amongst all the Chaos servants thereabout. Indeed, beastmen from herds that have broken up seem only too willing to enter the service of a human champion if he has a good reputation or promising future. The two kinds of champion, beastman and human, serve a common end, and will often gather together to fight side by side at the behest of the Chaos Gods.

The brayherds provide ample opportunity for human champions to present themselves to beastmen warherds, perhaps to exchange information or arrange cooperative attacks. Having said this, beastmen do not seem to regard the truce of the brayherd as applying necessarily to humans, so a human champion must choose his moment (and his words) very carefully.

I tire of writing now. I hope this essay proves of some use.


Here are some more paintings I commissioned from Johannes the White. He has a remarkable eye, and a gift to imbue his work with both atmosphere and vitality.
The vital power and violence exuded by beastmen is brought to life so effectively by Johannes's brush that I wonder whether he has actually seen these creatures first hand. How else can they be so well observed? He assures me that they are drawn purely from eyewitness accounts.





The Ravages of Gorthor

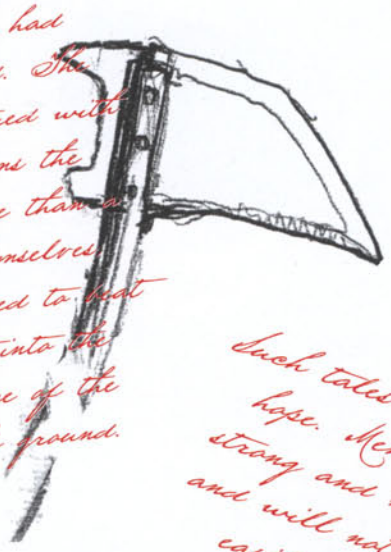
BEING A DISTURBING ACCOUNT OF THE TERRIBLE CARNAGE AND DESTRUCTION LEFT BY THE WAR-MONGERING BEASTMAN CHIEFTAIN GORTHOR, AND THE LESSONS THAT SHOULD BE LEARNT.

OF ALL THE BEASTMEN chieftains who have gathered the scattered warherds together, Gorthor, called the *Cruel*, was the most dangerous. For Gorthor had something that previous Beastlords seemed to lack: he had vision and an unshakeable faith in the Chaos Gods.

There have been other chieftains who managed to bind together the beastman tribes that are scattered throughout the forests and mountains of the Old World. But these throngs have always broken apart, wracked by petty internal struggles, only to be hunted down and destroyed by the good men of the Empire or the chivalrous knights of Bretonnia. None have been as successful as Gorthor.

Gorthor was both a bray-shaman and a mighty warlord, combining in himself the two most powerful and respected roles within beastman society. Both cunning and ruthless, Gorthor rose to power in the Middle Mountains during the time of the crusades against Araby. He preached at all the bray-herds, telling the assembled beasts and mutants that the civilisations of humanity deeply offended the Chaos Powers. By shattering the human cities Gorthor claimed that he and his followers could gain the highest favour in the eyes of their gods.

Ugly, heavy weapons. A sketch by a man who visited the remains of a village that a tribe of beastmen had burned to the ground. The whole place was littered with such items. It seems the villagers put up more than a good account of themselves and some even managed to beat a fighting retreat into the forest, leaving some of the brutes dead on the ground.



Such tales do not bode well for hope. Men are brave and strong and noble and will not bow easily to the beastmen threat.

Unlike other beastlords, Gorthor did not confine himself to one area, but instead travelled from herdstone to herdstone, gathering ever more beastmen to his banner. Not one of the warherds he addressed turned from him, and each vowed before their herdstones to follow him to the death. Soon he commanded an army of thousands.

For many months they prepared, building crude chariots, luring flocks of harpies with corpses so that they would follow his hordes, and gathering the warped Chaos hounds that roamed the Middle Mountains. Finally Gorthor decided that his army was ready.

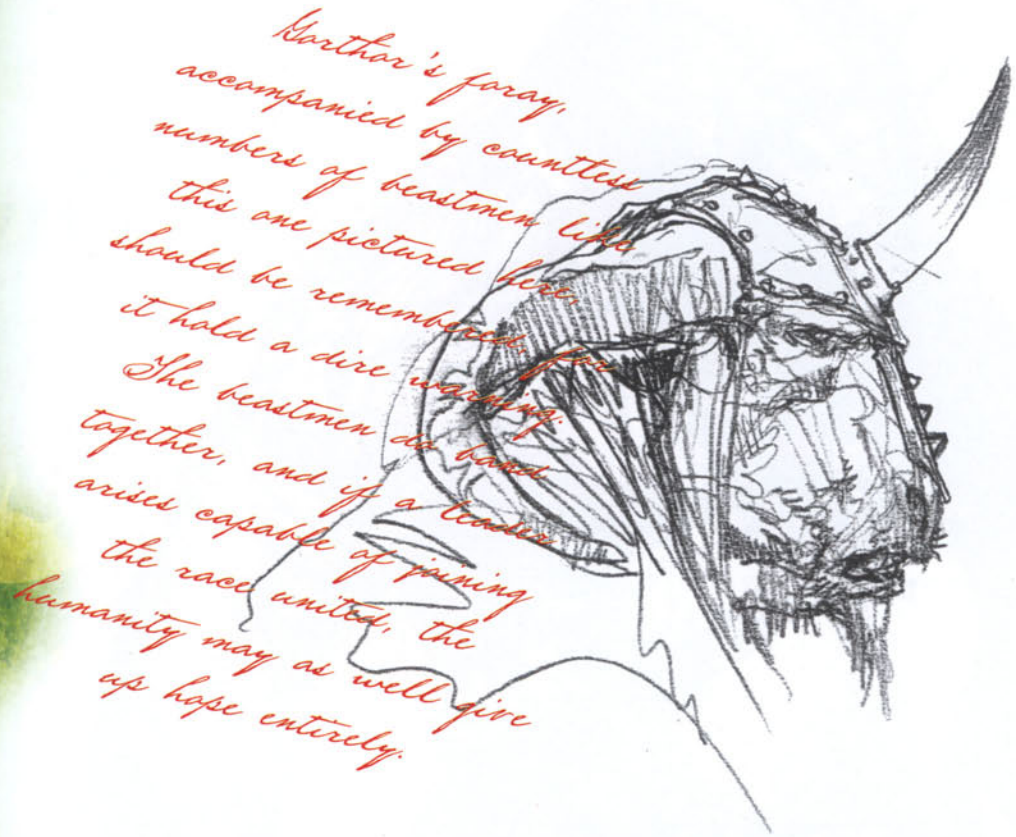
Like a summer storm, the Children of Chaos descended upon the unsuspecting humans of Ostland and Hochland. They did not just come to plunder and pillage a few outlying villages as they had done in years past, this time they had come to shatter the northern provinces once and for all.

Gorthor left a trail of devastation behind him, and such was the terror inspired by his coming that men claimed that no grass would grow where he had stamped his hooves. Where human armies sometimes spared the lives of civilians and left the villages and towns intact, understanding their own need for food and shelter, Gorthor did not. All people – men, women and children – were butchered without mercy. The crops in the fields were trampled and ruined by the snorting Tuskgors. Whole towns were razed to the ground, and unholy feasts were held amongst their ashes where beastmen feasted upon the flesh of men. After each battle the mighty beastlord always spared a single man who was fated to carry the news to others and spread panic in the face of the oncoming horde. It seemed to all that Gorthor was determined to finish mankind, once and for all.

On route into the Empire, Gorthor was confronted by an army of forest goblins who at that time had grown powerful in the area around the Middle Mountains. The goblins wished to join Gorthor's horde in the hope of sharing in the rich spoils of their war. But Gorthor announced that in the Realm of Chaos there would be no room for weaklings


His stance denotes great power. His stance denotes great power.
His stance denotes great power.
His stance denotes great power.

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and apostates – as the goblins undoubtedly were – and so only the true servants of Chaos would be permitted to join his army. He commanded his horde to eradicate the astounded greenskins, which they did. It seemed that nothing could stop Gorthor.

Gorthor's battle with the goblins gave the people of the Empire a brief respite in which they could gather their strength. The Elector Count of Ostland sent an allied force to join with the defenders of Hochland, in the hope that their combined armies would be enough to vanquish their foe. But Gorthor was already ahead of their plans, and the Ostland force was ambushed and defeated by a band of beastmen who guarded the roads from the east.

Gorthor's horde had regrouped from its battle with the goblins, and had turned to the south, cutting a path of devastation through the farmsteads and towns of Hochland. It was clear that their destination was the capital of Hochland itself, the city of Hergig.

Hochland had never been an especially powerful province and, while it had a long and honourable military tradition, Hochland lacked the manpower of the major electoral provinces such as the Middenland or the Reikland. In addition to this, Hochland was not as rich as the provinces of the south, so its army was not as well equipped and did not contain as many mercenary regiments as the forces of other provinces. To make matters worse, most of the knights of Hochland were off fighting their holy war in the distant lands of Araby.

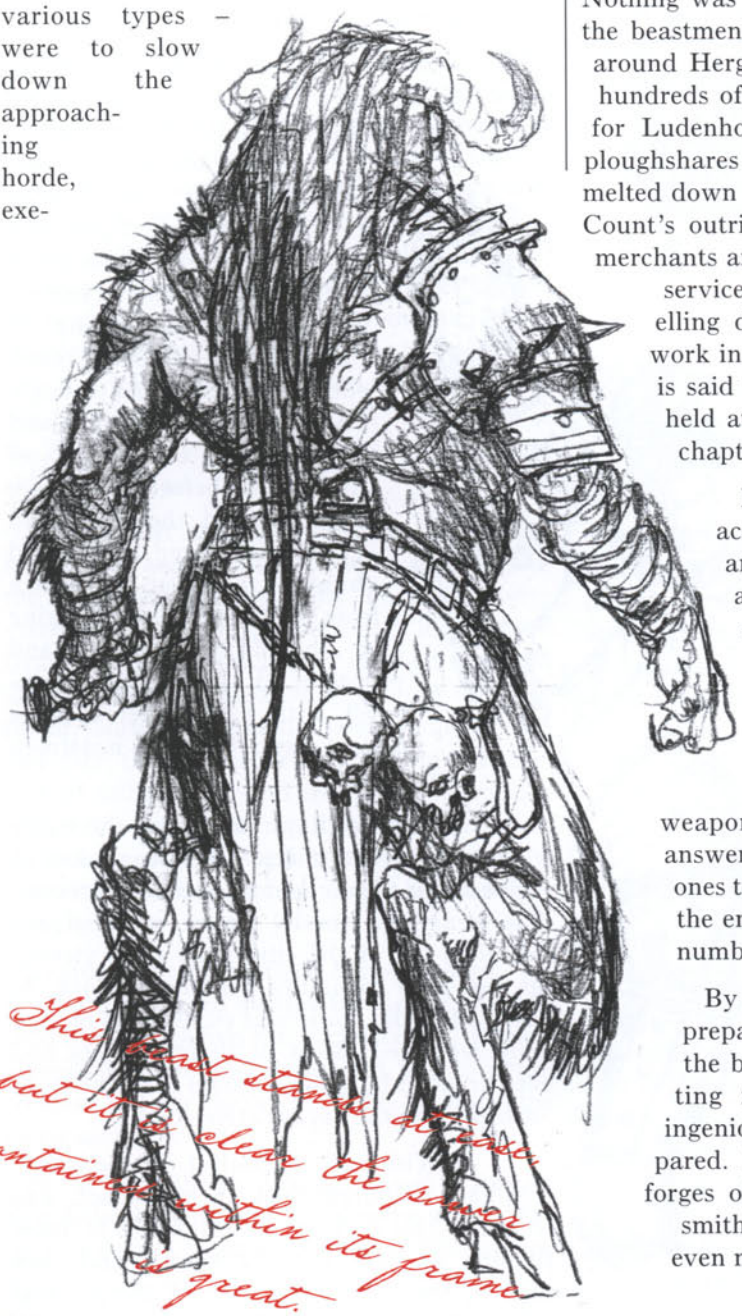
Elector Count Mikael Ludenhof marshalled his forces as best he could. He was a ruthless man by all accounts – a noble who governed his province with an iron fist and was respected and feared by his men, rather than admired or loved. Because he lacked heavy cavalry and elite infantry, Mikael decided not to try and match Gorthor's horde in the open field of battle. He ignored his subjects from the hinterlands who implored him to save the countryside from the ravages of the beastmen, and instead busied himself with strengthening the defences of Hergig.

Mikael's forces were heavily outnumbered, but he had a strong force of hunters armed with longbows who were well versed in the lay of the land around the capital. His standing forces – twelve regiments of halberdiers – were always in readiness, and he could raise a

considerable number of town militia. He managed to hire several regiments of ogres as mercenaries, and every horse in the province was confiscated and put to use by the army.

Mikael also had under his command a regiment of Sigmarite Templars who formed his personal guard, and who he had prevented from joining the crusade, much to their annoyance. Now it seemed they would have their chance of winning glory by battling against impossible odds.

Mikael divided his troops into two contingents. The first group – mostly cavalry of various types – were to slow down the approaching horde, executing hit and run attacks against smaller warherds that had strayed from the main horde. The other half were to begin preparing the defences of Hergig. Mikael supervised the preparations personally, and under his icy gaze the men and women of Hochland slaved with little sleep or food. Many died of exhaustion and were branded traitors.



This beast stands at rest, but it is clear the power contained within its frame is great.

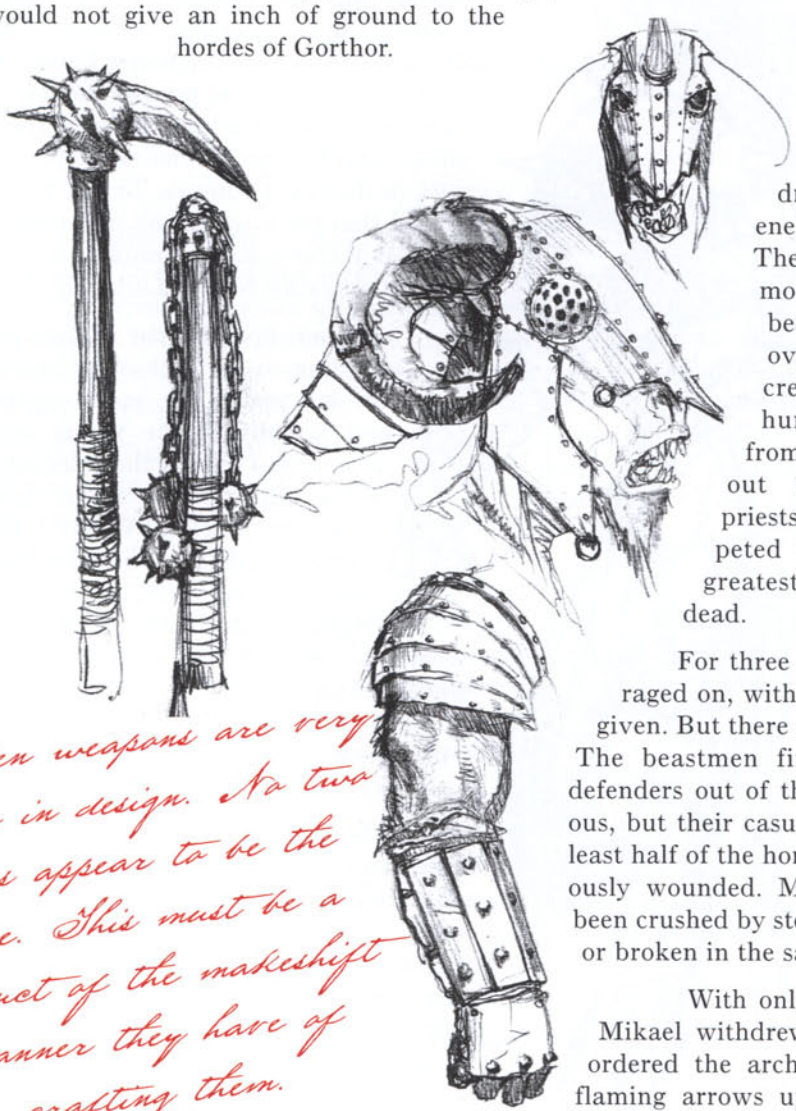
The count had the hunting grounds around Hergig filled with cunning traps and snares. Wells were poisoned and animals brought into the city, those that could not be sheltered were butchered and salted and kept as rations. Nothing was to be left beyond the walls that the beastmen could use for food. The forests around Hergig were slashed and burned for hundreds of acres to create a killing ground for Ludenhof's archers. Iron cooking pots, ploughshares and the bells of shrines were melted down and used to make weapons. The Count's outriders captured passing bands of merchants and traders and pressed them into service. These included a group of travelling dwarf sappers who were put to work in the count's forges. To this day it is said that the Great Book of Grudges held at Karaz-a-Karak contains a long chapter against Mikael Ludenhof.

Mikael divided the defenders according to their physical fitness and age, giving the best weapons and armour to the young and strong, and leaving the older men with nothing but spears and wooden shields. When confronted as to how the older men and women were expected to fight with such makeshift weapons, Mikael is said to have answered that he did not expect the old ones to fight – he expected them to slow the enemy down by dying in sufficient numbers.

By the time the horde arrived, all the preparations had been finished. It took the beastmen three weeks of unremitting fighting to break through the ingenious defences the Count had prepared. Meanwhile, the workshops and forges of Hergig burned red hot as the smiths and engineers laboured to make even more war engines and weapons.

The Ravages of Gorthor

Frustrated with the stubborn resistance of the humans, Gorthor promised his troops that they would be allowed to plunder the city as soon as it was taken. He would ask for nothing himself, save the head of Count Ludenhof. The beastmen doubled their efforts, and so it was that on a terrible night, twenty-two days after the siege had begun, the gates of Hergig splintered finally against the giant battering rams of Gorthor's horde. Savage beastmen threw themselves against hastily erected barricades. Mikael had made the children fetch food and water for the men who manned the barricades. In this way he made sure that the sons and daughters of the militia were within sight of their fathers, to make any thoughts of abandoning their duties impossible. Mikael had also banned his archers from carrying quivers, but instead they had to drive their arrows into the ground so that they would not give an inch of ground to the hordes of Gorthor.



Beastmen weapons are very diverse in design. No two items appear to be the same. This must be a product of the makeshift manner they have of crafting them.

In the streets, the men of Hochland struggled against the gigantic beastmen – an unequal battle at the best of times. The count's hunting dogs attacked the Chaos hounds, only to be torn apart by these unnatural beasts. Mikael Ludenhof unleashed his hunting birds against the Harpies, and the air became full of the terrifying shrieks and cries as the noble hawks, eagles and falcons struggled with their hideous foes. While most of the hunting birds died, they undoubtedly saved Hergig from being harried by air as well as by land. Almost a quarter of the defenders had already died, either in battle or by starvation, and yet still they fought on.

The greatswords of Hochland hamstrung giant Minotaurs with their double-handed blades, only to have their skulls crushed in turn by the gigantic axes of those bull-headed monsters. Spearmen stood up to the charges of the beastman chariots unflinchingly, dying in droves, but stopping their enemy from breaking through. The war engines of Hochland mowed down entire ranks of beastmen, before they were overrun and their unarmed crews butchered. Hochland hunters shot at beastmen from hidden windows, picking out the bray-shamans, and priests of Ulric and Sigmar competed with each other for the greatest headcount of beastmen dead.

For three days and nights the battle raged on, with no quarter being asked or given. But there could be only one outcome. The beastmen finally drove most of the defenders out of the city. They were victorious, but their casualties were horrendous. At least half of the horde was either dead or seriously wounded. Most of their chariots had been crushed by stones thrown from the walls or broken in the savage street battles.

With only a handful of troops left, Mikael withdrew back to his palace, and ordered the archers on his walls to loose flaming arrows upon the enemy, and soon most of the once great city of Hergig was ablaze. Hundreds of beastmen, along with

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many citizens hiding in cellars and attics were roasted alive. Mikael did not care – he considered those who could not fight as less than useless, and so the city burned.

When the possibility of surrender was suggested to Mikael by one of his advisors, the count flew into a terrifying rage. He sent the poor man to Gorthor, saying that he was more a beastman than a true son of Hochland. Gorthor offered the man freedom if he would betray the secrets of his master's palace, but the advisor, still loyal to his liege lord, refused. He was eaten alive by Gorthor's hounds.

The defenders of the palace knew their time was almost up and they began to prepare for the final battle. After several days' preparation, Gorthor's horde, still thousands strong, was in a position to attack the gates of the count's palace. Then, as the sun rose, the battle took on a new dramatic turn. The earth suddenly began to shake under the heavy hooves of warhorses. Knights of the newly founded Order of the Blazing Sun galloped through the streets of Hergig. They had returned from Araby nearly two months before and, upon hearing of the beastman army threatening the hinterland of the Empire, they had immediately ridden to the aid of Hochland.

The crusader army had destroyed the beastman camps around Hergig and now drove into the rear of the invading army. These men were veterans of the wars of Araby and, led by their Grand Master Heinrich, they crushed warband after warband. In an attempt to meet this new threat, Gorthor ordered his own retinues to turn and face the newcomers. Seizing his chance, Mikael sallied forth and led his own templars into battle. Attacked from both front and rear, the beastmen began to falter. Gorthor realised that his cause was doomed unless he did something quickly.

Guarded by his bestigor honour guard, the beastlord cut a red swathe through the battlefield until he spotted the elector count. Gorthor stepped forward and challenged him to single combat. Despite the advice of his captains, the count accepted.

For an hour the two struggled, and it seemed that Mikael would lose, faced as he was by the fury of such a gigantic beastman. His armour was pierced by Gorthor's spear, and his shield was splintered. But just when things looked like they could get no worse for Mikael, his sword – one of the great Runefangs – found its mark in the beastlord's chest. Count Mikael Ludenhof had slain Gorthor, but his own wounds were mortal as well. With his dying strength he cursed Grand Master Heinrich for arriving too late, and then gave up his life. The beastmen, who had until then believed their leader to be invincible, brayed in fear and confusion, and fled into the surrounding countryside. The men of Hochland did not give chase.



Hochland recovered slowly, though some areas around the Middle Mountains were never reclaimed. They remain a domain of the beastmen to this day, and men will not go near them, fearing the memory of those evil times.

When men tell of the ravages of Gorthor, they shudder with fear, hoping against hope that the beastmen will never rise again in such numbers. But in the dark forests of the Empire the beastmen breed and multiply, and new beastlords rise up from amongst them. All men who know of such things fear that one of these will be just as mighty as Gorthor the Cruel, and will gather the beastman herds together again, and once more the thrones of the Old World will tremble before the fury of the Children of Chaos.

Nurgle's Cavalcades

6/6/2575 I.C.

I awoke this morning feeling distinctly ill. I am not someone normally beset by illness and have so far lived my life in the rudest of health. Upon walked the streets great pity for those poor unfortunates who litter the gutters, unable to work as they are struck down by some debilitating ailment and forced to endure the indifference of the crowds and the cruelty of them. Not now. I too, sicken. Is it mere coincidence that it is the Lord Chaos god to whom I am attributing my misery? Of course it is. It is naught more than unhappy chance. I will visit the apothecary today and he will set me aright.

BEING A COMPASSSIONATE OUTCRY BY THE AUTHOR ON BEHALF OF THE WANDERING VICTIMS OF NURGLE'S RAVAGES, AND THE DIRE EFFECTS OUR UNSYMPATHETIC BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THEM HAS ON THE GREATER POPULATION.

AND YOU ASK WHAT is the price of our cynicism? What is the cost of our foolish superstition? I shall tell you, though you will regret knowing it. In our ignorance and cruelty *we* are the ones who create the great and morbid carnivals that are the Cavalcades of the Lord of Decay.

I see it all so clearly now. Sister Duvallier was right. We push the lame and the sick from ourselves, because in our pettiness and conceit they provide too painful a reminder of our own mortal frailty. How pathetic we are! How vain! We drive the afflicted from our towns and cities, and force them into the waiting arms of Nurgle – and why should they not seek their comfort in Him? Most people only know what the authorities have told them about the daemon-gods, and if they no longer trust or respect those authorities, why should they trust or respect that the Chaos Gods are evil?

Now I see how shallow we are. Now I understand that we are all just puppets of the Chaos Powers. We push the desperate from us and call them damned, forcing them to band together and wander the countryside. It is only a matter of time before they seek the comfort of Nurgle, or are converted to His worship by some wandering heretic. Indeed, how long would it be before one who suffers from the daemon-plague of Nurgle's Rot, joins a wandering band of the mad and leprous? For all plagues seem similar to those who would avoid studying them, and all sufferers, though their ailments may be as different as water and oil, are pushed together upon the roads of the Empire. Even should these wandering plague victims resist the comforts proffered by Nurgle and try to remain true to Holy Sigmar and the gods of our Empire, if they are exposed to one who suffers from the Rot, their doom is already sealed. They will be Nurgle's as surely as if they had sworn their souls to him by acts of faith.

The good apothecary can find nothing wrong. But I do feel ill, as I write these words. Perhaps it is knowing all this has given me this pain, but it has not had any effect. Once for the concentrating my mind from my condition.

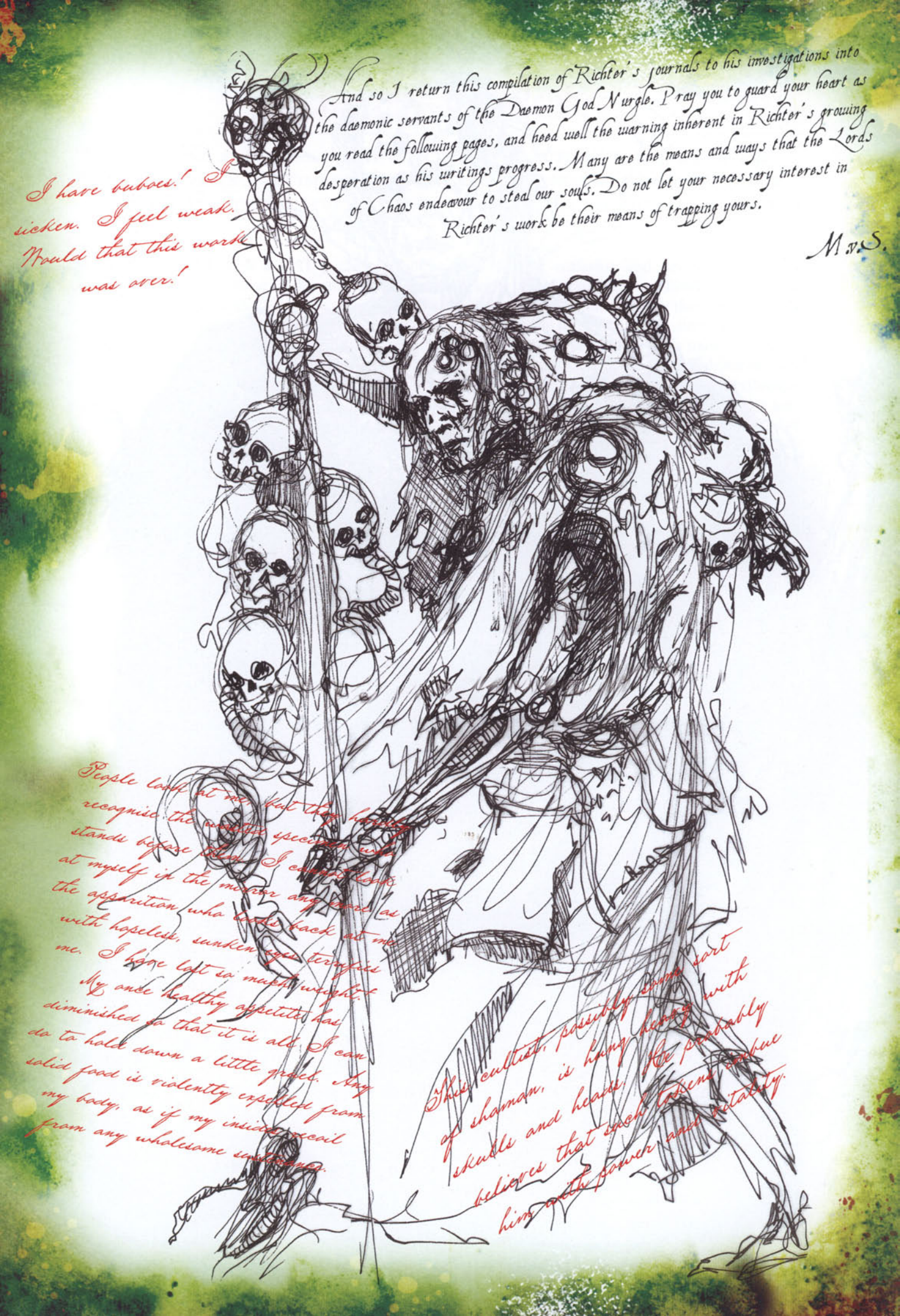
If cynicism truly rots the soul, then surely Nurgle is the fountain of all cynicism! Once He has wormed His way into the hearts and souls of these wandering derelicts, He lifts the yoke that we of the Empire have placed across their shoulders, granting that they might be content with their suffering and despair. Then these unfortunate wanderers are filled with resentful joy and cynical humour, for they have seen the truth at the heart of all life – they live the reality that we all deny: that life is pain, suffering is truth, all is transient and vain, and that decay is life's only certainty. They know that civilisation is but an illusion – a shallow play that we convince ourselves to be true and of worth. And so these wandering throngs of Nurgle's sickening converts band together in great cavalcades, encouraged by their new lord to expose the bitter joke of this world and the irony of existence.

Filled with unnatural vigour, these cavalcades form an almost endless array of circus caravans and gypsy wagons, all covered with soiled banners and ragged flags. Strange characters in carnival masks drive the carts, and all manner of plague-victims, beggars, cripples, flagellants and other unfortunates accompany them – all singing their praises to Father Nurgle. They cease to chide and berate themselves for their ailments, and instead give thanks to Father Nurgle for the gifts He has bestowed so freely, and the wisdom He has granted them. They welcome to themselves any and all who have been rejected by society, be they the physically ill, the mentally disturbed, or even those who are just disenchanted with life. All are welcome within the carnival of despair, be they flagellant or freedom fighter; Father Nurgle turns no one away.

Instead of avoiding settlements and towns as all plague victims are required to do, these cavalcades actively seek them out, desiring to spread their disease. They seek to bring some reality into the lives of all those who have allowed the trappings of civilisation and the false promises of hope to blind them to the bitter truth of transience and decay.

So now do you see? Do you understand what we have done? What we are *still* doing? Our every action condemns us! We are either the servants of Chaos or its victims; there is *no* middle ground. As surely as we shall all age and die, so too are we damned beyond all hope of redemption. I would cry if I did not think we deserved our fate wholly and completely.




And so I return this compilation of Richter's journals to his investigations into the daemonic servants of the Daemon God Nurgle. Pray you to guard your heart as you read the following pages, and heed well the warning inherent in Richter's growing desperation as his writings progress. Many are the means and ways that the Lords of Chaos endeavour to steal our souls. Do not let your necessary interest in Richter's work be their means of trapping yours.
M.v.S.
I have buboes! I sicken. I feel weak. Would that this work was over!
People look at me but they hardly recognise the wretched specimen who stands before them. I cannot look at myself in the mirror any more as the apparition who looks back at me with hopeless, sunken eyes terrifies me. I have lost so much weight. My once healthy appetite has diminished so that it is all I can do to hold down a little gruel. Any solid food is violently expelled from my body, as if my insides recoil from any wholesome sustenance.
The cultist, possibly some sort of shaman, is hung heavy with skulls and beads. He probably believes that such totems confer him with power and vitality.

13/4/2578 J.C.

The Unclean Ones

Being an examination and discussion of the Great Unclean ones: their foul appearance, behaviour and how they are depicted – by heretics – in the arts.

In my dreams I find myself dragged hither and yon through worlds I do not know – places of nightmare where no man should be forced to tread. Yet I have, by necessity, hardened myself to my fate, and endeavour to regard it as a means to learn all that is possible about those creatures that humanity must destroy if it is to survive.

I have seen the womb from which spring Nurgle's Unclean Ones. I saw them form as blisters upon the Aethyr's rotting underbelly, suckling upon the disease and misery that exuded from their master like a viscous ocean. No word or combination of words could ever express sufficiently the utter obscenity and horror of these daemons' births, and no disease, rot, nor foulness in the mortal world could inspire even a fraction of the revulsion that I felt upon seeing it. It was beyond nauseating; the very sight of it drove me to my knees. My body shook uncontrollably, blood seeped from my ears, my nose and from behind my eyes – so disgusted and so terrified was I. Against my will I screamed and screamed until by voice broke and trailed to nothing. And then all was darkness.

I awoke in my study, surrounded by the drawings you see on these pages. I can only assume that I sketched them myself while lost to my nightmares. I know that I am either mad or damned, and neither thought is comforting. But, be they dream or infernal reality, I shall describe to you the daemons I saw and all that I have gleaned about them throughout my months of study and unholy revelation.

The daemonic entities that we have named *Great Unclean Ones* are the greatest in Nurgle's pantheon, equal in their way to the Bloodthirsters of Khorne or Slaanesh's Keepers of Secrets. Whereas in the case of these other Chaos Powers, the so-called greater daemons are immensely powerful servants of their patrons – personified manifestations of a specific *aspect* of their patron deity – this does not appear to be the entire truth where Nurgle's greater daemons are concerned. Each and every Unclean One is a copy of Nurgle Himself in His entirety – at least in terms of His personality, drives, thoughts and endeavours. In other words, it may be said that every Unclean One is also Nurgle, though, being but small embodiments of their master, they lack their patron's near infinite power, complexity and omniscience. I imagine that it is for this reason that the mortal servants of the Lord of Decay often refer to the Unclean Ones as Nurgle or Father Nurgle – although each and every daemon is bound by the apparent laws of manifestation to have his own independent name.

The Unclean Ones certainly look like the majority of the depictions of Nurgle Himself, or perhaps, the majority of the depictions of Nurgle Himself are modelled on the appearance of the Unclean Ones. Whatever the case, Nurgle's greater daemons are gigantic creatures, bloated with disease and all imaginable (and unimaginable) kinds of physical corruption. Their skin is greenish, necrose and leathery; its surface is covered with boils, sores and other signs of infestation. Their inner organs, rank with decay, spill through ruptured muscle and skin, to hang like obscene drapes around the Unclean Ones' considerable girths. From these organs burst the tiny daemonic parasites, commonly known as nurglings. Gregarious, agile, constantly active, and seeming to adore the Unclean Ones as fathers, these nurglings swarm over the body of the Unclean One, picking at his skin, squealing with pleasure if he favours them with a titbit or a caress, or otherwise squabbling among themselves over the most comfortable recesses of the Unclean One's carcass.

Whenever nurglings are present in large numbers it means that an Unclean One must be close by, for these vicious little creatures can only multiply within the rotted bowels of Nurgle's Greater Daemons. As a nurgling matures amidst the pus and contagion, it feeds upon the filth of the Unclean One until it is large enough to burst out – the personified embodiment of a boil or pustule. In this sense, nurglings truly are the children of the Great Unclean Ones.

Perhaps this is why the Unclean Ones take such parental pride in the little monsters, allowing them to suckle upon their sores, and petting them affectionately. However, this does

The Unclean Ones

not seem to prevent the proud parent squashing its progeny underfoot, or gobbling one or two up in a moment of impulsive peckishness.

Although I doubt anything could be more hideous and vile than these Great Unclean Ones, in character they are neither deathlike nor morbid. In fact, the opposite appears to be true. Unclean Ones seem to be motivated by all the trivial enthusiasms that drive mortals along their lives. They epitomise all that is most seductive (if such a word can be used in this context) about Nurgle; they are full of a cynical and vitriolic humour, which is both ebullient and vociferous. They consistently try to undermine the confidence and convictions of their enemies, while loudly praising the obsessive manic-morbidity of their followers. Indeed, the Unclean Ones seem to epitomise every destructive emotional and psychical defence that mortals use to justify their miserable states, often giving the Unclean One the appearance of being driven by a gregarious and even sentimental nature. These mighty daemons seem to hold their followers dear, taking a noticeable



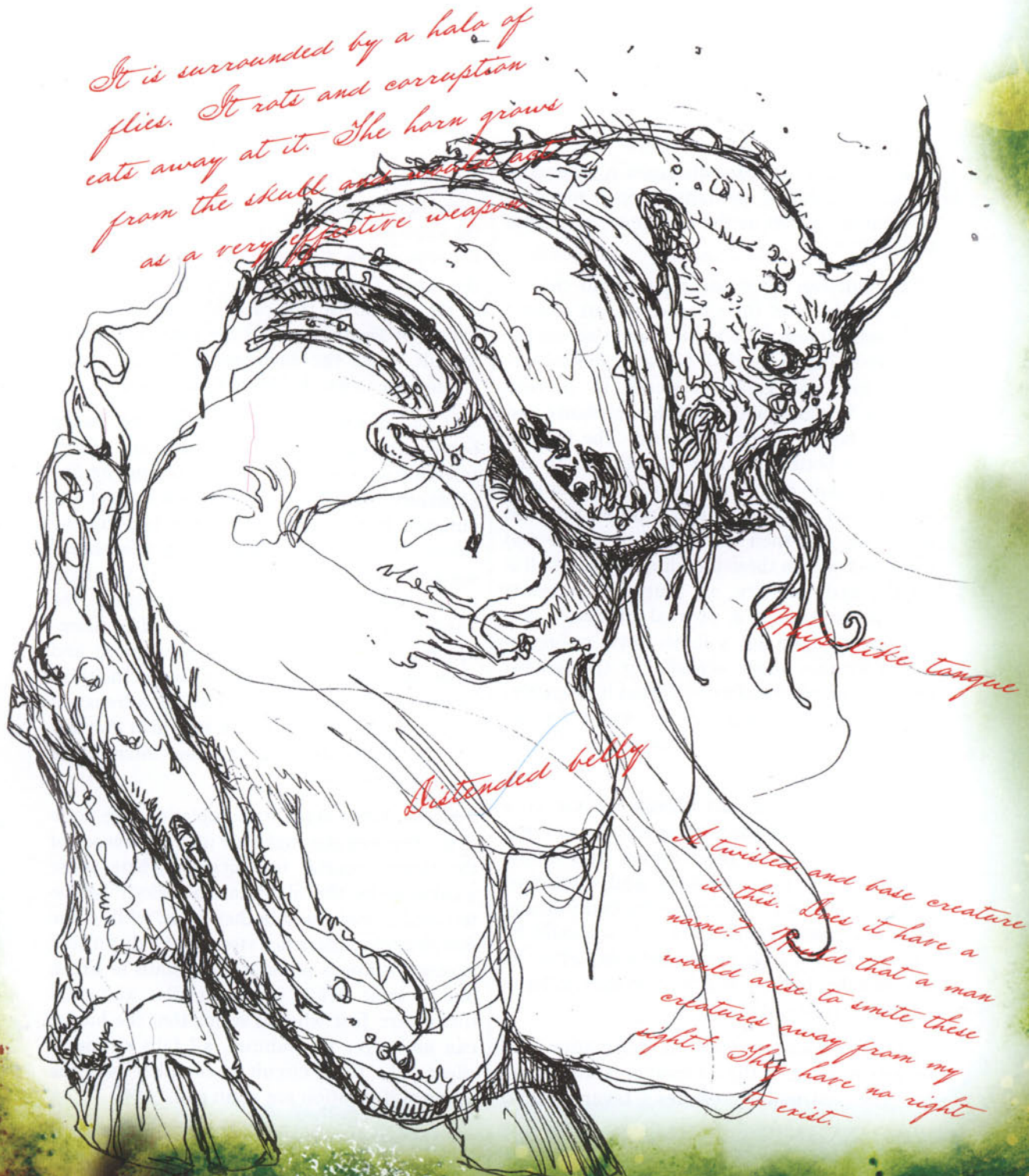
I discovered this ancient woodcut under a pile of refuse in the theogonist's cavernous pl
library. It depicts what I believe to be a greater daemon of Nurgle. Note the way those ar
it fawn and worship. This is probably a woodcut made by villagers who had turned to the
worship of Nurgle, probably after a plague had ravaged their population. They turned to
worship as a means to stop the affliction spreading, and a way to do this was to draw admiring
pictures of Nurgle. I wonder if this goes on still. I suspect it does, and

The Unclean Ones

pride in their appearance and endearing behaviour – to the extent that they are said often to refer to their servants as *children*.

Yet, if this is truly affection, then it is affection of the most destructive sort, for Nurgle is a deity of despair, fear and decay. One could say that the Unclean Ones love their servants in much the same way as a supremely overly protective, possessive and domineering mother might love her children. The childrens' every need might seem to be fulfilled by their mother's selfish care, but at the same time they are encouraged to fear change and resent all people outside of their family, and they are never allowed to leave home or be challenged by the world at large.

This combination of physical corruption and energetic – though cynical – humour is the most extraordinary characteristic of Nurgle's Greater Daemons. It can be seen most clearly when an Unclean One and his minions manifest themselves in the material world.



The Carnivals of Despair

Being a cursory study of Nurgle's Carnivals of the Bizarre, his grotesque palanquin and the strange and ominous ritual known as the Dance of Death.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SOUND, Great Unclean Ones are daemons with a great sense of dramatic irony. They seem to be amused by the decorative trappings of power almost as much as they love to topple mortal pride and endeavour. Nurgle's Palanquins are ornate and mobile thrones that allow the Unclean One to be carried aloft by its servants, propelling the Palanquin wherever their master wishes. From his elevated position the daemon is able to speak to his slaves, or strike at his foes. The Palanquin itself is decorated with mouldering finery, while the Great Daemon rider sits casually upon a mound of decaying cushions, perhaps in open mockery of what it regards as the transience of mortal beauty.

The Unclean Ones are reported to ride in these as they lead their hordes to war against the lands of men. The horde travels across the land, drawing to itself all Nurgle's mortal servants into one great cavalcade of covered wagons, bringing with it all the pestilence and ills that befall the mortal world. The wagons are in no better physical condition than the daemons that ride with them. Their shrouds are tattered and rotten, their frames splintered and bent, and their metalwork is pitted and rusty. Yet within these plodding caravans all is bustle and activity as Nurgle's servants prepare to launch a festival of decay and destruction upon any village, town, or opposing army they come across. For the twisted irony of Nurgle's visitation is that it resembles a travelling circus or great fair, except that the entertainment offered is disease, decay, despair and death.

It is said that should Nurgle's cavalcades pass a plague pit, the rotting corpses interred within it stir from their graves and follow along beside the carriages and caravans. Various folktales insist that the body of any plague victim belongs to Nurgle – should he care to claim it – for a year and a day after the victim's death, after which point they collapse back into final oblivion.

As the cavalcade nears its destination, the bizarre humour of the infernal creatures within the caravan reaches fever pitch. Plaguebearers take stock of the pestilence and disease, counting the reserves of sickness, the number of nurglings, each other, and eventually anything that stands still long enough. Amidst the deep-throated drone of the Plaguebearers' endless tallying, the nurglings chatter and prance like evil children about to embark upon a special treat. They squabble and squirm, snigger and squeal, and their numbers increase and diminish faster than the Plaguebearers' ability to count them.

As the plague carts and wagons of the cavalcade approach their target, the unsuspecting village or the sleepy town, the daemons prepare their campaign of destruction. To appease the supreme cynicism of Nurgle's humour, and to increase the fear in their potential victims, the attack (or *carnival*) has its prelude as well as its climax. In this case, the prelude is the Dance of Death, enacted the night before the assault, when the daemons of Nurgle cavort around the town or village three times.

As the moon rises into the sky the Dance begins its course, its cast of daemons moves solemnly over the hills and fields, singing discordantly. As the procession moves past the outlying houses, dogs and cattle take up the cacophonous noise, adding their terrified barking and lowing to the rising song. As the night progresses and the first circuit is complete, the horde's mania begins to grow. The songs become raucous and the dancing more and more animated. As the dancers begin the third circuit they abandon themselves in a frenzy of song, laughter and madness, in which they cry out all the terrible things that they intend to do come the morrow.

As the dance nears its completion, the noise drifts through the night air into the houses of the town's mortal inhabitants, where those awakened by the nightmarish melody lie too terrified to move within their beds, while those still sleeping experience strange and disturbing dreams. Animals panic in their stalls or break out of their fields; butter curdles and milk turns sour. Just when it seems that the horror can no longer be endured, all falls strangely silent. The third circuit is complete and the songs of desolation are at an end.

The Carnivals of Despair

Through our lands they trudge, the discarded peoples, those sick in body and mind. The carnivals fester, wander and spread their foul disease. I don't know whether to laugh or weep.

I awoke last night from a nightmare, my heart beating like a drum and my limbs quivering with unreasoned terror. My body was covered with sweat and my bedclothes clung to me in wet patches. The words of the dream-song echoed in my mind, like the cries of some daemonic child threatening and taunting me.

'Flies, flies, eat up his eyes.' Poor old Richter's lovely eyes.''

The words of this childish rhyme echoed through my head and rang in my ears. Throwing aside my bedclothes I walked to the window and cast open the shutters. As I stood there, leaning out of the window, inhaling the cool night air, I looked out over the sleeping streets of Altdorf to the distant fields and woods that lay beyond the city walls. My abbey is situated on a rise and affords me excellent views of the surrounding countryside.

My gaze travelled across the Newfield towards Redfarm Hill. And then my heart almost stopped. There, outlined against the hill, was my nightmare made real: a carnival of prancing and caavorting daemons, vanishing behind the rise even as I watched, and there upon the breeze once more the piercing cackle and that maddening song.

'The eyes.' The flies.' The eyes.' The flies.'
Before poor Richter ups and dies.''

Then I awoke again and found myself still abed in the chill silence of the night. I prayed that mine was just a nightmare and not some vision of the future...

The Lesser Daemons of Nurgle

WHERE THE AUTHOR HAS CAUSE TO EXAMINE HIS DETERIORATING STATE OF MIND, THEN DISCUSS NURGLE'S PLAGUEBEARERS, FROM HIS LEGIONS OF LESSER DAEMONS, OR THE "AGHKAM' GHRAN' NGI".

I MUST APOLOGISE, dear reader, for my attitude of late. The deeper I sink into my studies of the Infernal Powers, the harder I have found it to concentrate upon the matter at hand. This study has begun to affect me adversely, I know it. I fear for my sanity. And why should I not? I dream of Chaos through my sleeping hours, and though the sun rises and should dispel the fears that plague me in the darkness of night, I still see the daemons of entropy wherever I look. I see them now, walking around my study, ignoring me as they count the many books and scrolls that litter my room. And not just my books. These infernal spirits seem compelled to count anything that comes to their monocular gaze, be they the cracks on the walls, the floorboards beneath their feet, or the dead flies beneath my window pane.

It is precisely their droning and monotonous counting that reveals these creatures for what they truly are. They are the lost victims of Nurgle's Rot. They are the Tainted Ones, Nurgle's Tallymen. His Plaguebearers.

I know that they cannot be here in the flesh, daemonic or otherwise, for I suffer none of the symptoms that exposure to these creatures ensure. So I wonder why I see them. Are they a vision sent by a benevolent Power so that I might examine them to better forward my researches? Were they sent by a more malevolent power to strip my mind of its reason? Have I lost my reason already? I do not know which is true, and perhaps it is better for me that I do not. All that matters is that I am calm for now, so I shall use this moment of lucidity to describe to you what I see and what I have researched concerning these foot soldiers of the Plague God.

Should I have sympathy for these creatures – they who carry the marks of Nurgle's Rot throughout eternity? No, I think perhaps not. They are beyond humanity now, wholly daemonic and past the cares of men. Their cracked skin is tinged green or the colour of mud. Running sores cover their bodies, and pus and blood seem to dribble continuously from around the milky orb of their single eyes. They




The world is became a stinking cesspool
We writhe in our own filth
Content to decay like dead leaves on the dirty ground
Wallowing in greed, pus, and biliousness.
The fruits of our work reward us.
We have made a desert and called it peace.
The ground is consecrated with the precious blood and dripping of mankind's enemy
- the weakness and cowardice of us, and we shall fall away.

The Lesser Daemons of Nurgle

are roughly the height of men, though their proportions have been distorted so that their heads and arms seem over-large for their bodies.

The masters of my Order believe that Nurgle's Plaguebearers are the daemonic embodiment of a mortal's need to find meaning in misery, or to rationalise suffering rather than end it. By this they mean that it is often easier to make excuses for our parlous condition – whether we be lacking in confidence, dangerously overweight, or trapped within some other downward spiral – than it is to do something about changing our state. In a sense, (if my masters are correct), Plaguebearers could be seen to personify the destructive rationales we create for ourselves to justify our suffering, because we fear change and the failure that change might bring.

Very often, if one is lacking in hope or confidence, it is easier to imagine failure as the end result of an endeavour that might bring us improvement, than it is to imagine success. This fear is perhaps caused by the notion that if we avoid taking the risk of trying to improve ourselves, we will never run the risk of failing even more. Our inaction is a kind of damaging emotional crutch whereby we can convince ourselves that we are causing *less* pain by staying stuck in our rut than we would if we tried to climb out of it. At least when up to our waists in misery we know just where we stand. How many of us have not at some point in our lives preferred the misery of known insecurities to the insecurity of unknown miseries?

Anyway, it is this fear of change that my masters believe the Plaguebearers come to represent.

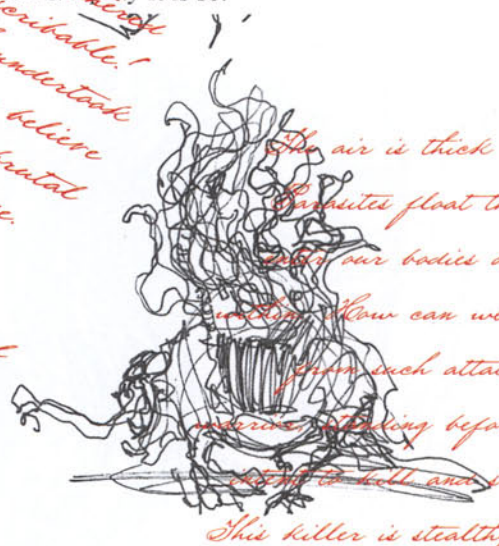
There is another theory, held mostly amongst the Shallayans, that the Plaguebearers are the suffering of every lingering death, every moment of delirium, and every fevered starvation, personified by the malevolent energies of Chaos and filtered through the Will of Nurgle. For myself, I do not see why both theories as to the nature of these daemons might not be correct. After all, Chaos is as confusing and diverse as it is destructive and horrific.

It is said that it is the Plaguebearers' everlasting role to organise and herd the daemonic forces of Nurgle, to keep stock of the diseases, to allocate appropriate fates to each new victim, and to try and keep order within what is a naturally chaotic horde. Just as we mortals often attempt to impose meaning onto our suffering rather than do something to end it, so too is the Plaguebearers' task equally pointless. Their purpose is characterised most obviously by their constant counting as they try to calculate the ever-changing needs and aims of their fickle Master. So their continual counting must achieve very little as I imagine it is impossible to quantify anything with any accuracy amidst the hordes of Chaos – although this does not seem to discourage the Tallymen from their efforts.

All the Plaguebearers' voices seem exactly the same to my ears, in that they all seem to count in an identical bass monotone. The phantom Plaguebearers that I see pacing my room as I write this are counting different things at different speeds, and their combined voices produce a sound so sonorous and penetrating that objects on my desk and shelves are vibrating in a kind of maudlin harmony with their voices.

The witch hunters have told me that of all the minions of Chaos that manifest themselves upon the mortal plane, the Plaguebearers are the most physically resilient and difficult to banish. I suspect that this might be because their bodies, although entirely daemonic, were once mortal. Their essence and physical presence began in the physical world when they were born as mortals, and they attained their daemonancy while still on this plane. This does not mean that they can survive outside of the Chaos Realm indefinitely, but it would imply to me that they might have slightly closer ties to the mortal plane than other daemons.

Though I admit to being somewhat shocked by the calmness of my observations (how things have changed since I began this investigation!), my head is pounding and I must to bed. Perhaps I have exhausted myself enough to sleep without dreams. I pray it is so.



Nurgle's Pretties

I no longer feel safe outside. Besides the physical changes, I feel my mind is slipping into torpor. But write I must, before I die. I feel my time is running short.

They are everywhere. Scratching beneath the floorboards, and scuttling between the walls – always just out of my sight. But I know they are there, disgusting, vicious little things! Do you wonder at what I speak of? Nurgle's Mites, of course! His Pus Spores, those foul and disgusting vermin know as nurglings.

My housekeeper doesn't believe that they are here. She believes that I am delusional. But she will see. They ooze their corruption across everything they touch, trying to spread their petty ailments, but they will not catch me. I am far too wily for that! I have taken to wearing gloves at all times. I never touch things with my bare skin, and wash thoroughly if I do – scalding myself with boiling water if need be.

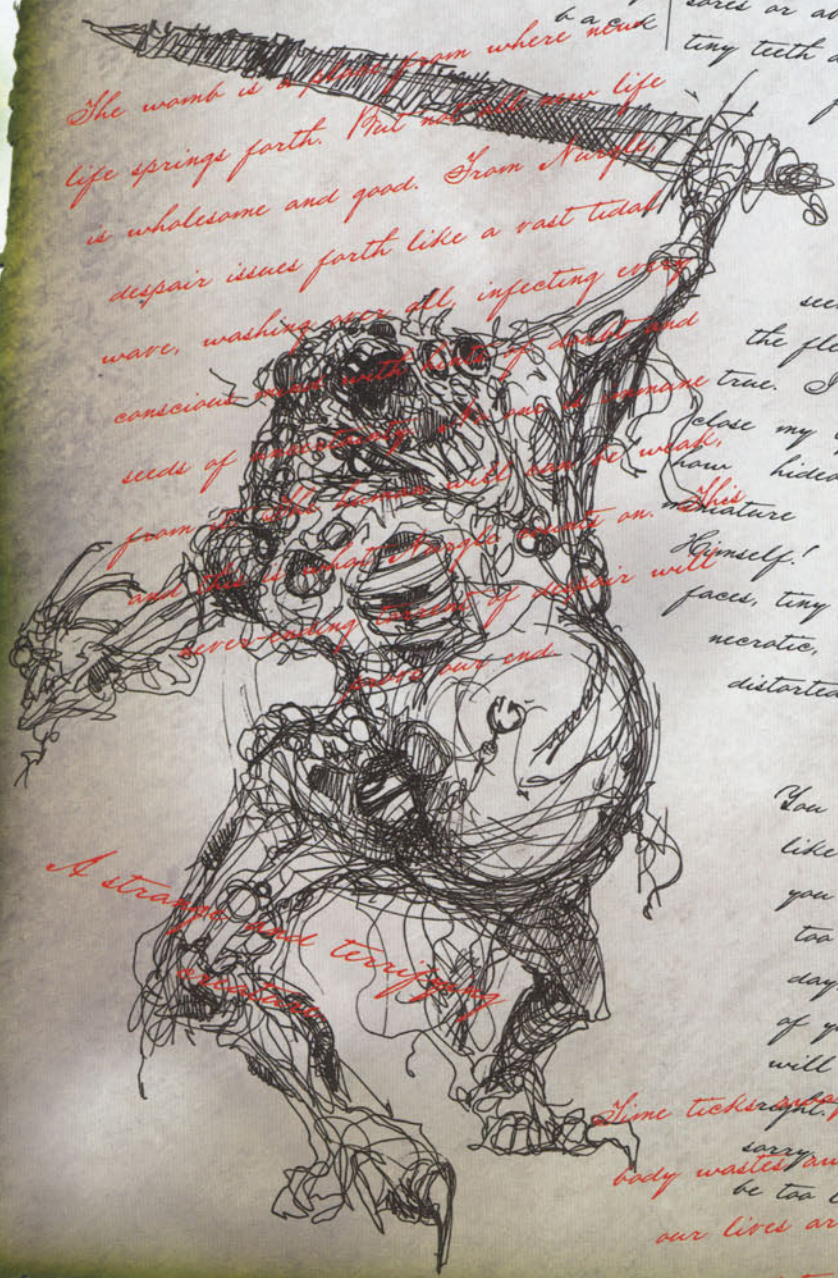
They are the Khan' gurani' – creatures born from the pus of their larger daemonic brethren. Wherever the Plague Lords pass they leave a trail of their vile effluent behind them, an effluent that does not fade or disperse with the rain or the passing of the seasons. It remains in the ground, hidden from human eyes, waiting in sticky pockets for some unwary mortal to step into it. Once such a thing happens there is no escape. The foul pus enters the mortal's body, making its way into his gut. There the embryonic nurgling creates a cyst and develops until it is ready to emerge.

Like some obscene bairn of vileness and corruption, the nurgling grows to maturity, screeching its obscene cries that may be heard from within its victim's abdomen, insulting anyone and everyone nearby. You still don't believe me? Well I have seen it! Not in my waking hours, to be sure, but I know it to be true. Just pray you are never in a position to see that I am right!

When fully grown, the nurgling climbs through the alimentary canal and leaves its host by way of the mouth or anus, and is then free to flock with others of its kind, or perhaps to take up residence in the household cesspit, rubbish pile or some other equally unpleasant place. They are malicious creatures and yet bizarrely sociable.

They haunt our towns and villages if they cannot find other servants of their abhorrent master. They are here, I tell you! All around us – they are always all around us – spoiling our food stores, causing spots to appear on our skin during the night, perpetrating misdeeds of that sort. To make matters worse, these foul little daemons always remember their parent host with their malevolent brand of affection, creeping to bestow their gratitude in the form of a crop of boils or some interesting sickness.

If ever you stumble across a flock of these nurglings, flee for your life, for they will miss no opportunity to catch a mortal unawares. They charge forwards in a furious swarm, clawing and gnawing at their foe, biting his ankles and licking at any interesting sores or abrasions they discover. Their tiny teeth are sharp as needles, tearing festering little bites all over their victims.



I admit that I have not seen this for myself, not in the flesh. But I know it to be true. I can picture them. I can close my eyes and see them. Gods, how hideous they are! Like miniature images of Nurgle Himself! Their spiteful little faces, tiny bloated bodies, green and necrotic, and limbs which are distorted and disproportionate.

You think me mad, just like my brethren do. But you are wrong, and you too shall see them one day, just out of the corner of your eye, and then you will know that I was right. Then you will be sorry. But by then it will be too late.

Onogal - Despair's Name

I am lost to Chaos. I have seen the dawn of life and gods; I have seen the rise and fall of races and nations from far flung places beyond the furthest stars. I have seen all this and my heart despairs, for I know the truth of this world and so many others. I understand better than any man that lives the full horror that is Chaos.

I have seen the gods. I have gazed upon their faces. I know that they are not merely beings of great power and knowledge in a They are us. We forsaken them, sustain them and they in turn be as their puppets and slaves. They do not simply preside over Heavens and Hells as our mythologies say they do. The Gods of Chaos are their own Heavens and Hells: both beings and places, abjects and abstracts. I know. I have seen it.

As much as Furgle is the Lord of Decay and God of Chaos, He is also entire reality that is Himself; part of my soul has Dominion within the new can Aethyr. Behold Onogal, the Abhorrent Darkness, and to enter Him is to be absorbed into nightmare itself.

I have witnessed this Hell that is Furgle; I have walked the crumbling cities of Onogal. I have followed those who have been damned by their actions to fuel

I have learned over the past few months, and I think about what I have learned over the past few months, and I think about what I have learned over the past few months, and I think about what

Onogal - Despair's Womb

Nurgle's endless hunger, and I have lingered within the very heart of Decay.

I have supped as an unwilling guest at the very fountain of despair, and all my hope has gone. With heavy steps I have walked the morbid worlds of Nurgle's princes, His mightiest and most regarded daemons. I have seen His chosen warriors - men who are both more and less than all other mortals. They are called marines, for indeed they are mariners of the sea of stars, and they are riven with all the horrors of their sickening Lord.

Some of them are favoured above all others, becoming champions of the Plague God's cause, only then to fight and slay for the chance to become Daemon Princes in their own right. Yet no prince from their ranks will ever equal the abhorrent majesty of their mighty warchief, he who is greatest of all Nurgle's daemons, that one whose name is death itself: Mortarion. He sends the tendrils of his horror and disease through all the dimensions, harvesting fear and despair for his master, the God of Decay.

His heinous touch reaches through the Aethyr, contaminating all it passes. I have

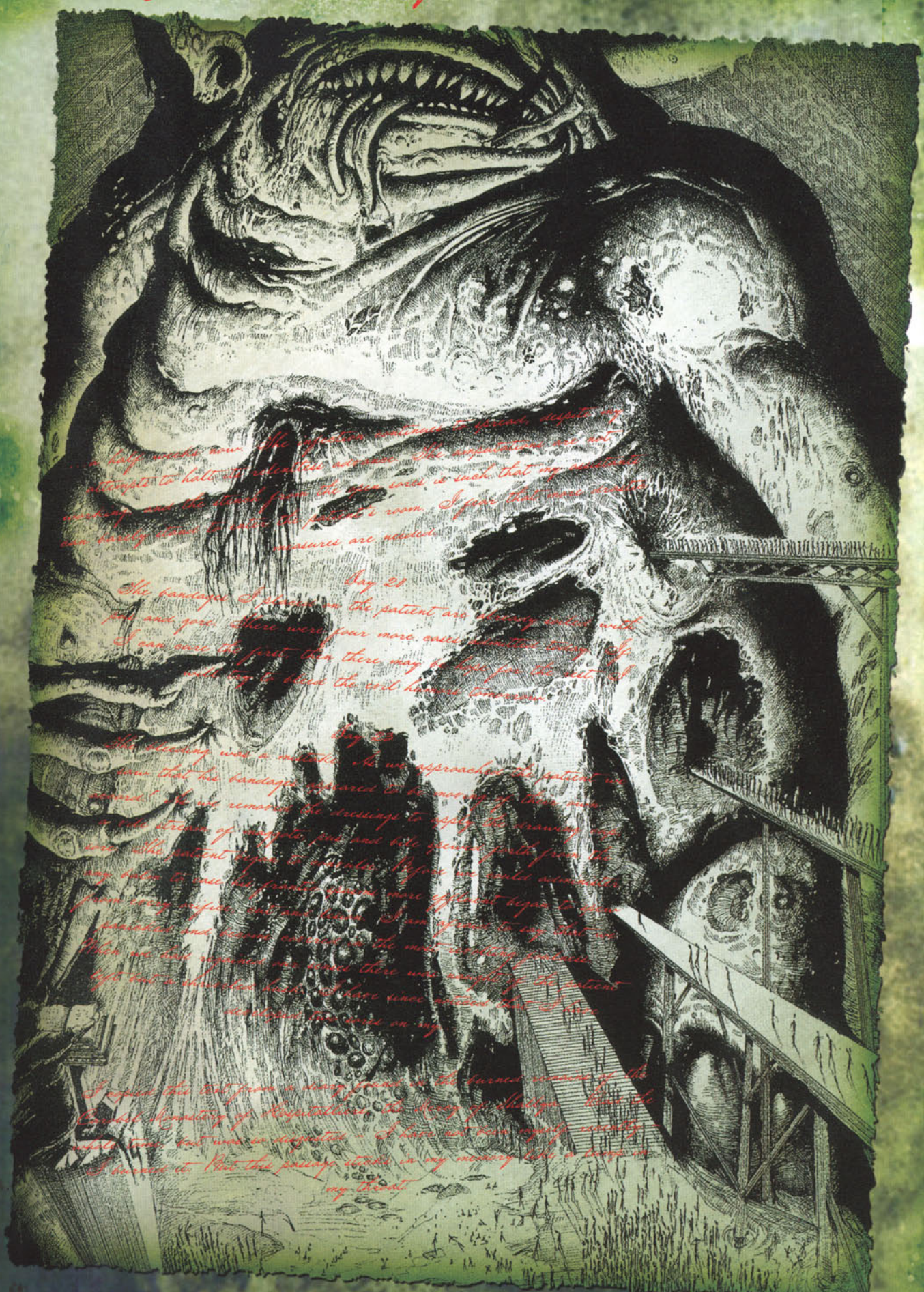
Onogal - Despair's Womb

seen the strange and vast vessels that sail the Aethyr's tides, and I have witnessed the effect of Mortarion's touch upon them. No matter the ministrations of their arcane technologies, nor the spells and magics that must bind these vessels against the Aethyr's fury, none can eradicate the horror of Nurgle's diseases as they drift upon the Aethyr's tides. These strange ships that travel between far-flung worlds are sometimes struck down by disease and madness, and the empty husks of these newly born Plague ships drift, sometimes for millennia at a time, until their enjoyment are finally and inevitably drawn to the bosom of pestilence that is Mortarion's personal hell-world.

Here they gather into vast fleets, filled with Mortarion's diseased followers, before being cast back into the Aethyr to spread their pestilence throughout the mortal realms.

I have seen these plague fleets carry Nurgle's children to so many of the strange worlds that fill the night sky, where the wars they bring are followed inevitably by virulent contagions. Once these plague ships are abandoned or their crews finally destroyed, I have seen their vast hulks drift back into the Aethyr from whence they came, where currents of despair carry them back to the Mortarion's hellish world to start the cycle anew.

I have contacted my patron, and formulae relevant to my quest have been forbidden by the Plague Monks who control access to the alchemy I should obtain, in what is a horrendously difficult situation. I have begun formulating balms to ease my pain, but I do not feel that I have a choice. A lot of the substances I have used are mix and administer to help me in my quest.


Abominable sight.

And this is how the world shall end...

As all life is born to die, so all Men are born to decay. There can be no succour in this world. As the centuries drag past our cultures will fade, just as our bodies waste and our passions cool as the winter of life approaches.

In time our mightiest cities shall crack and crumble, and our lofty ideals shall grow weary and jaded. For what are our achievements if not the follies of pride and ignorance?

All shall be forgotten with the passing of years. There will be no exceptions.

For whom amongst us can escape the predations of Time? Whom amongst us is beyond the inevitability of Decay? That which is young can only grow old. That which is whole and sweet can only shrivel and sour. Nothing is permanent and nothing may remain without blemish. It is the fate of all things that they are bound to Time, and Time is the twin of Decay.

So bend a knee, all you of this world. Bend a knee all who would embrace their fate and thereby rise above it. Rise up, brave ones, and surrender yourselves to the true master of this world.

Father Nurgle is our sovereign and Lord, and whether it be sooner or whether it be later, He will claim all in Time.

And so this is how the world shall end: not with fire and tempest, but with a collective sigh of failed passion and lost hope.

I walked through the market place, my mind overwhelmed by the sights and sounds around me. I felt nauseous and my head ached with the heat. I pushed my way through the crowds, trying to avoid the butcher's stall, which seemed to be the centre of decay, the meat hanging on hooks from the awning, writhed in squirming maggots


Plague, ravage, rot and death

OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volume the Fourth

WITH FORMER INVESTIGATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED

With expository lectures on the followers and rituals of the "Lord of Change": Tzeentch

BEING IN THE MAIN AN EXAMINATION OF THE DAEMONIC AND MORTAL ARMIES OF CHAOS, AND IN PART, BEING A DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMBERLESS UNNATURAL CREATURES THAT DO ACCOMPANY THEM



FEATURING THE FOURTH AND FINAL VOLUME OF THE COMPILED AND ANNOTATED REVELATIONS OF

RICHTER KLESS

Illustrated and illuminated with numerous plates

compiled by the same hand

Printed by Johannes Innsbrook, Printer to the Academy of Wolfenburg

Allow me to present the fourth and final volume of my compilations of Richter Kless' investigations into the forces of Chaos. This one dealing with the daemonic

I am uncertain as to what I should say about the work you now hold. Richter relies more on the investigations and opinions of other scholars than his own reasoning in this text. I presume that this is because of the obscure insanity that was under at the time. The notations that Richter has written seem laced with strange visions and dreams, more so than in his investigations into the other Chaos Gods. Despite this, he remains reasonably lucid in his explanations of matters theological and daemonic.

Additionally, and I know not whether he did this consciously or not, Richter's was a troubled mind – as if the nature of magic are covered with ciphers and codes, double meaning and outright contradictions. Plainly Richter needed any further proof of that.

Also, while going through his papers I found several well thumbed pages taken from the journals of that foul man who seemed to have such a profound influence upon poor Richter: the heretic Alphonse Dolmance. I can only assume that reading the blasphemous theories of this devious servant of Chaos merely exacerbated the detrimental effects this study had upon Richter's sanity.

In any event, our brother priest has fallen a long way since he began this study, and we who asked him to embark upon it in the first place hold some responsibility for his state. May Sigmar have mercy on us all.

Your ob't servant,

MvS



Liber Tzeentch

This was the final volume of the damned quartet of the Liber Chaotica series. In the first instance, collating the material was a damnable experience. This god of Chaos is the master of deceit and lies, and I firmly believe that Richter was being used like a puppet as he was writing. This fact alone is reason enough to have these books destroyed. They are the tools of Chaos, created by them, through Richter.

Revisiting them has been a nightmare. I am forced once again to look upon the horrible images within the pages; the hideous monstrosities, crimes against nature, twisted playthings of a cruel, capricious god. After examining the pages again, I noticed faint markings had appeared behind the printed text, words spelt out in strange symbols that I have never seen before. But lies are lies no matter what language they are written in. Reading Richter's notes that he saw fit to put in the margins, I see a man falling apart at the seams. His mind, unable to cope with the strain, broke.

I pray for his soul every night, as I prey for us all.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

ON THE

LORD OF CHANGE: TZEENTCH

VERSES 1–9

The Thousand Faces of Chaos

"I HAVE LOOKED INTO THE ABYSS AND MY EYES HAVE BEEN CHANGED. ALL THAT WAS HIDDEN IS NOW REVEALED TO ME. I HAVE SEEN ALL WORLDS, AND THE SECRETS THAT SCHEMING GODS AND LESSER MEN WOULD KEEP FROM US ARE NOW THE BREAD AND WINE OF MY HEART."

And so it was that my plea was answered and a Messenger appeared to me. Both terrible and wondrous was he to behold: his eyes were twin hollows that burned with sapphire flame, and great wings rose from between his shoulder blades to stretch high above his head, their surface shimmering like mother-of-pearl. He stretched out his hand and bade me follow him into the Aethyr, and follow him I did, along paths that never were, to a place that should not be.

Far to the north he led me, to where the gates of End had stood open since before the rise of Men. There I looked into the Immortal Realms and saw four great Thrones within the endless planes of oblivion. I asked the Messenger, "Whose thrones are these?" And the Messenger said, "They are the Thrones of the Ancient Powers; the spirits of Fornication, Wrath, Despair and Inconstancy. Both thrones and dominions are they – brother gods and princes of mortal hearts."

From those Thrones exuded a forgetfulness that drew unto itself the hearts and minds of all humanity, for in them were both the greatest strengths of Men, and the greatest follies. Dancing around those thrones I saw every vision of cruelty: daemons without mercy whose countenances were filled with fury, with teeth protruding forth from their gaping mouths. Their eyes burned like the desert sun and all the horrors of mankind leaked from between their narrow lips.

Then I felt the thorns of despair puncture my heart, and fear caught at my breath. I begged the Messenger to take me away from that place of cruel gods and daemon princes, and show to me instead the gateway to the land of wholesome gods. So much did I long for the comfort of familiar deities! But the Messenger just smiled, and in that smile I saw reflected all the malice, all the pity and all the cruel humour of the world. He told me that there was no other Gate except for that which stood before us, and he told me that there was only one Realm beyond that Gate.

I stepped back from him then, for I believed that surely he spoke untrue, and I told him as such. "If this is the only Realm," I said, "where then is Solkan's Palace, or the Healing Pools of Shallya? Where are Taal's Hunting Grounds and Mannan's Azure Citadel? Where are the Celestial Temples of the gods of Men? For before me I see only the Thrones and Dominions of Chaos."

And then the Messenger seemed to grow in size so that his head eclipsed the pale sun, and his shimmering wings seemed to fill the vaults of the sky. "There is only one Gate," he said once more, "and only one Realm that lies beyond it. It is true that the planes of Darkness stand open before you, but also, and at the same time, the endless tiers of Light stretch up above you."

Then the Messenger began to fade from view, becoming transparent, like mist upon the breeze. His parting words were like a subtle knife puncturing the bladder of my false hopes. "Mortals see so much, but understand little. For as much as the Divine moulds the Mortal Realms to fit its purposes, so too do the Mortal Realms mould the Divine through their actions and aspirations. You look into the Aethyr for proof of Light or a fear of finding Dark, yet the Aethyr is neither Light nor Dark, except when Mortals make it so." And then the Messenger was gone.

Heed my words, all you that read this, for I have looked into the Abyss and my eyes have been changed. All that was hidden is now revealed to me. I have seen all worlds, and the secrets that scheming Gods and lesser Men would keep from us are now the bread and wine of my heart. No longer shall I labour under the shallow misconceptions of received wisdom. Truth shall be my companion from this day on, for the scales have been lifted from my eyes and I have seen the hope of our salvation.

At last I can be forgiven, for at last I can see that I have sinned.

from the 'Revelations of Marius Hellscher', The Liber Malefic.
Inscribed 2287 I.C.
Rueben Mollgar, Theogonist.

The Great Conspirator

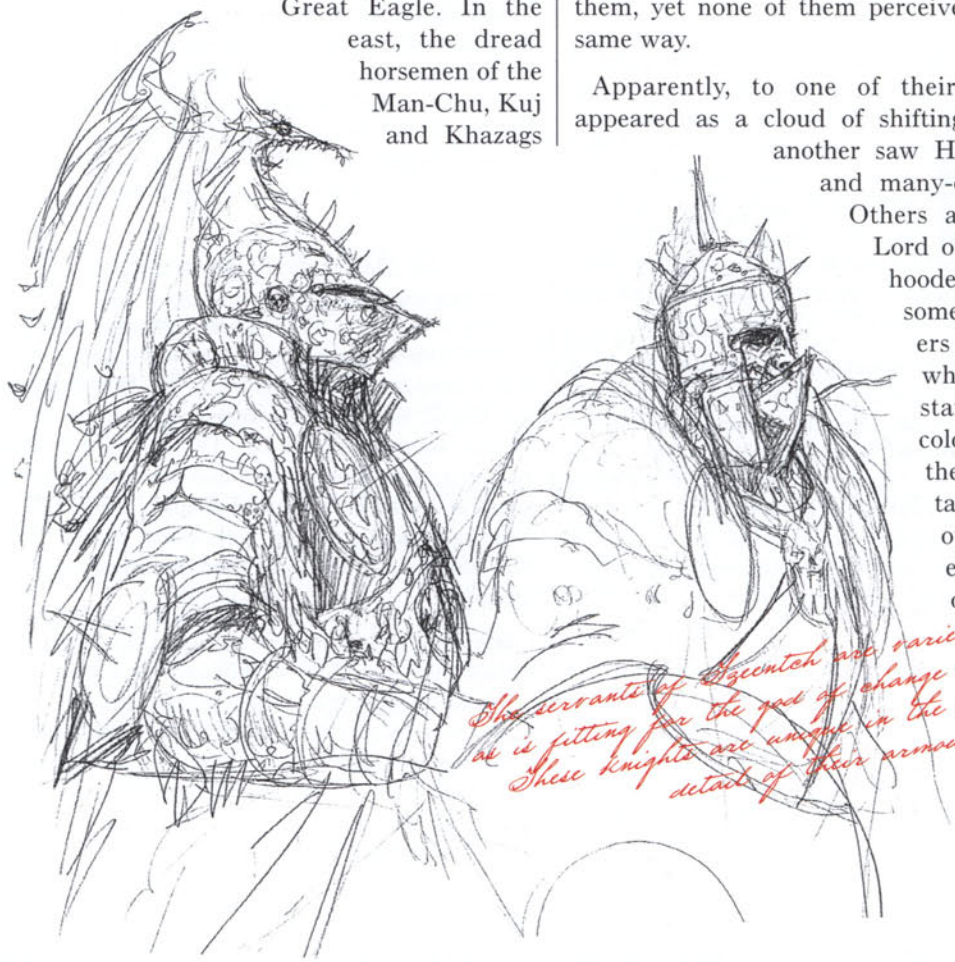
In which the author sets about the difficult task of explaining the effects Tzeentch has upon mortal men and also the wider realms of existence.

To those of us blighted with the knowledge of it, the name *Tzeentch* is inextricably linked with the true insanity of Chaos. Tzeentch, or *Tzeen'neth*, is the daemon-god that more than any other embodies the terrible energy and momentum of Chaos. He is the Great Sorcerer of Chaos, the Changer of the Ways – for make no mistake, endless and broiling change is the very nature of Chaos, and Chaos is the source and very stuff of the warping energy that we mortals call *magic*.

We call this bizarre deity Tzeentch, but in fact of all the gods of men and daemons, He has more names and guises than any other. Tzeentch *is* change, said to personify every mortal's recognition of, and desire to and for, change. His face and form shifts and warps from eternity unto eternity. To the hairy savages north of our great Empire, Tzeentch is most commonly known (and worshipped) in His form as *Tchar*: the Great Eagle. In the east, the dread horsemen of the Man-Chu, Kuj and Khazags know Tzeentch as *Chen Chi-En*: Lord of the Shifting Breeze, and it is said that in the hellish jungles far to the south of the Old World, the Changer of Ways is known simply as *Shunch*. Yet whatever the realm, and whomever the people, Tzeentch is known always as the *Great Schemer*; a manipulative and politicking god who should be feared as much as He should not be trusted.

Just as His names are diverse and manifold, Tzeentch cannot be said to have one dominant form or aspect. According to van Hadden – my contact within the Order of Witch Hunters – the servants of Tzeentch rarely give testimonies that agree the details of their Divine master's true form (if indeed He, or any other god, has one *true* form). Hadden garnered me with the transcript of an interrogation he supervised where the damned souls being questioned claimed that Tzeentch had appeared to each and every one of them, yet none of them perceived Him in the same way.

Apparently, to one of their number He appeared as a cloud of shifting light, where another saw Him as a large and many-coloured bird. Others again saw the Lord of Change as a hooded sorcerer – to some male and others female – whose robes constantly changed colour. Not one of their testimonies tallied with the other, although each and every one of these

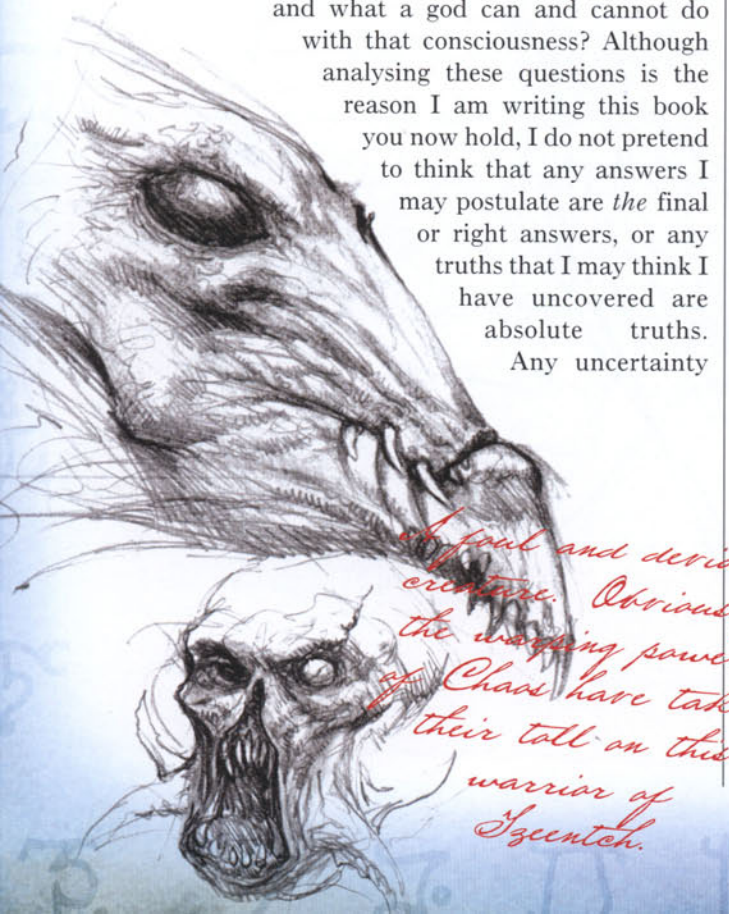


The Great Conspirator

heretics seemed equally sure of their vision, and was certain that their vision was of Tzeentch. While reading this account, I was reminded of the testimony given by the renowned daemonologist, Jöstein Lissel, shortly before his famous disappearance from the count's dungeons in Östermark, that claimed that he had seen the Lord of Change in the form of burning runes that hung in the air before him, spelling the words of Tzeentch's will.

Just because these fools believe they saw Tzeentch does not mean that it actually happened. Tzeentch is the Great Manipulator and the Father of Lies, and His daemonic servants take their lead from their master. It is impossible for any cultist or daemonologist to know for certain whether an entity they have summoned is indeed a god or just a daemonic servant of that god. Indeed, it seems to me that to the entirely natural – as the average human is – anything supernatural is *equally* extraordinary and inexplicable. So how could one know whether one is actually faced with Tzeentch Himself, or just a daemon in His service impersonating the Great Lord of Change?

Perhaps my thinking is too linear. Perhaps to speak to a daemon of a Chaos God is to speak to the Chaos God Himself, for the consciousness of gods is not for mortals to understand or perceive. What mortal could say with any certainty just how a god's consciousness manifests itself, and what a god can and cannot do with that consciousness? Although analysing these questions is the reason I am writing this book you now hold, I do not pretend to think that any answers I may postulate are *the* final or right answers, or any truths that I may think I have uncovered are absolute truths. Any uncertainty thrown up by investigations is double in the case of the daemon-god Tzeentch.



Those who are foolish enough to believe that they might come to understand the motivations and plans of this most deceptive god must surely be deluded, for Tzeentch is the Father of Lies and Deception, the Master of Fortune and the Architect of Fate. Truth and lies and facts and fictions spill from His consciousness like the incoming tide of a treacherous sea. Tzeentch cannot be trusted even to the degree that the other gods of Chaos can be – a sobering realisation indeed, considering the fickle nature of His brother daemon-gods.

There are those who believe that Tzeentch holds all the secrets of existence from now until the end of time, and knows the ultimate fate of existence and precisely how it will be reached. I do not believe that this is true, at least not in the sense that it is more commonly accepted.

The future is unwritten, it is yet to happen. I see it as self-apparent that no being, not even the gods, can know with absolute certainty that which has not yet come to pass. I think the confusion arises because of the commonly held belief that of all gods and daemons, only Tzeentch perceives the endless threads of all *possible* futures as they weave forward through time like an infinitely complicated tapestry of probabilities, granting Him the means to most accurately guess at what the future holds. Yet He can still only guess.

With His all-seeing gaze, Tzeentch sees the single path of history that stretches backwards through time, and watches every event as it happens and every intention as it unfolds, while also being able to extrapolate the near infinite possible futures that stretch forward through time from these points. So with this almost limitless knowledge of the past and the present, and added to His omniscient intellect, I believe that Tzeentch is able to predict with amazing (though not complete) accuracy the most likely course of future events.

As we have seen all too often (and to our cost), Tzeentch is not content to merely guess at future events any more than He is content to merely watch the drama of history as it unfolds. The subtle skeins of probability and chance are His to manipulate. Tzeentch is the Great Conspirator, the master and personification of plot and intrigue, and He has purposes and desires of His own. Why should Tzeentch stay His meddling hand? He is capable of manipulating the immeasurably complex strands of

The Great Conspirator

probability that hold the secrets of chance and Fate. Indeed, there are those who believe that Tzeentch's plans and schemes are so impossibly vast and complex, and so tightly woven across time and space that they touch the lives of almost every being in existence, whether they know it or not.

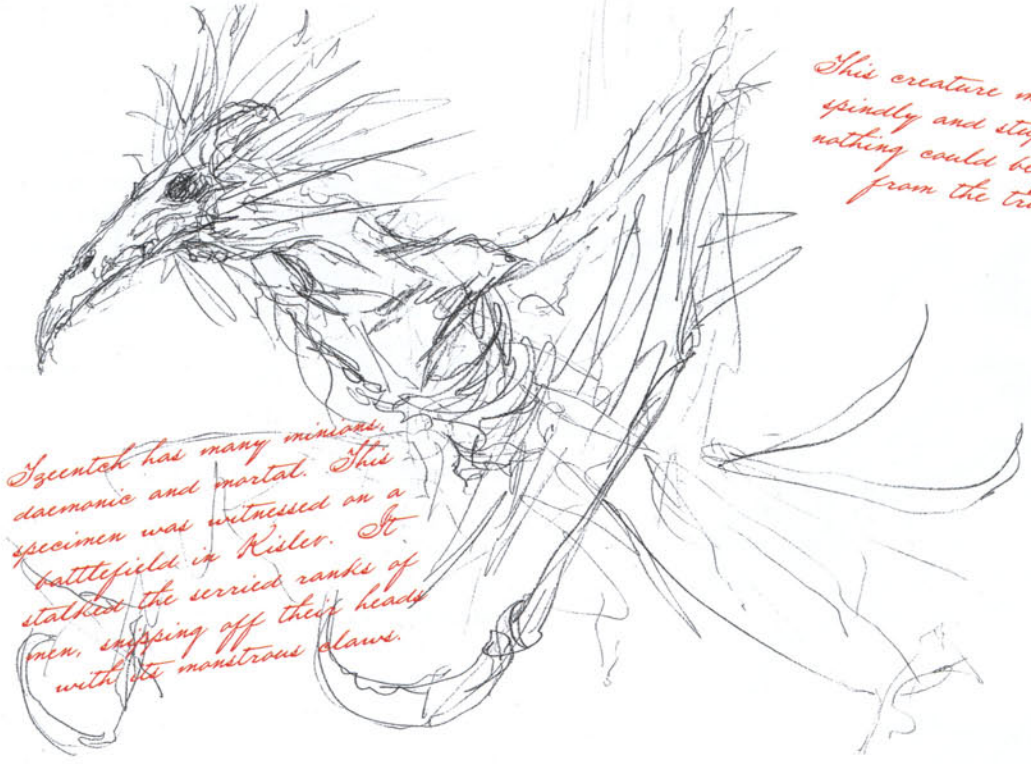
Whatever the truth of the matter, and whatever the true nature and scope of Tzeentch's machinations, it is clear to me that they are designed solely to further His own unimaginable purposes. Many are the records documenting a time or event where the servants and magics of Tzeentch seemed to support the causes of the Mortal Realms, but then again, many more are the records that show how Tzeentch has actively harmed and sought to undermine the lands and goals of men, elves and dwarfs. Clearly Tzeentch's plans are highly convoluted, stretching across millennia. It is precisely because His plots are so sophisticated and seemingly contradictory that I believe it impossible for any mortal to divine what His true purposes or intentions are.

I have found for myself that Tzeentch's machinations are more subtle and complex than my very closest analysis could reveal, and I firmly believe that even His most loyal followers are likely to discover only too late that they are expendable pawns in His eternal game.

Regardless of how benevolent His motivations might sometimes seem, let there be no doubt in your mind that Tzeentch has only the worst intentions for the Mortal Realms.

Tzeentch often adorn their daemonic forms with ornate crests and colourful plumes, which shimmer when they move, and are said to shimmer with changing colours when the wearer is lying. Even if ever-changing, but the colour of their crests is always red, and their screams are always full of pain and fear.





This creature may appear spindly and stupid, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Tzeentch has many minions, daemonic and mortal. This specimen was witnessed on a battlefield in Kislev. It stalked the serried ranks of men, snipping off their heads with its monstrous claws.

The Great Conspirator

Treentch feeds upon the need and desire for change and progression that seems to be a natural and essential part of human life. Granted, it is also a part of Dawi and Ghur natures, but not I believe to the same extent as humanity. We humans are far more inconstant, greedy and ambitious than the elder races.

Indeed, what human could say that he or she does not dream of wealth, or freedom or a better tomorrow? Who could say with honesty that they do not wish for improvement, whether it be just for them or for their entire family or society? As the ancient saying goes, is not the grass always greener in the next field?

Yet dreams such as these are not the sole domain of the impoverished or powerless. Even the powerful can dream of attaining further power, riches, or of an end to their responsibilities and public scrutiny. All these dreams are driven by a powerful impetus for change, and the ambitions of men and nations create a force that can change the world.

I view Treentch at His most basic, as the conscious, though metaphysical, embodiment of this force.

But as with all the gods, Treentch has reached beyond His primal form and is now far more than the sum of His parts. Treentch is also the god of learning and the desire to accumulate knowledge – He turns His face to all who seek to sculpt their environment rather than simply accept it. He is the greatest patron of magic amongst the Chaos Powers, for magic is, as any magister will tell you, one of the most seductive and potent of all agents of change. It is not for nothing that Treentch's mortal champions are counted amongst the most potent and terrifying of all magic users.

– from the hand of Magister Volans,
First Patriarch of the College of Light


The Marcher Fortress
From the Gallery Daemonis

The skin of Izeentch crawls with constantly changing faces that leer and mock. Perhaps they reflect His mood as His omniscient mind probes the endless strands of fate that hold our universe together. When He speaks, these faces repeat what He says, but with subtle differences, or else they provide a commentary that throws doubt upon the veracity of His words. These lesser faces appear and disappear, perhaps randomly, perhaps not, but the actual head of Izeentch does not change.

His puckered face sits low down between His shoulders. He has no neck, making it hard to distinguish His head from His chest. He has long, curved horns that appear to spring from His shoulders, rather than from His head. The firmament surrounding Izeentch is heavy with brooding magic. It weaves like liquid smoke around Him, forming subtle and interwoven patterns. Sometimes forms of places and people appear in the smoke as Izeentch's mind contemplates their fate.

extracted from the Liber Malefic,
"The Nightmare of Izeentch"
by Marius Hallscher.

Many of the pictures I have chosen to include you, Pekter! You have no choice! As the theology not you in this book are considered to be heretical works by the powers that be. But they are merely exploring the same territory that I am right now. I wonder, will this great work be considered heretical? Yes, it most certainly will, Pekter in years to come. Will I be burned for writing such a book? I find this quite a concerning notion.

The Servants of Change

Being a closer examination of the wiles and whims of Tzeentch, and how he exerts his will over mortal minds, with particular reference to specific, notorious cults.

"Blind zeal breeds all the most dangerous emotions: arrogance, fear, hatred, rage, malice, despair and selfishness. These empower the gods of Chaos and give form to the Aethyr's daemons, who are in themselves personifications of these dark emotions. Submit to these emotions, even with humanity's best interests at heart, then even were you to slay a thousand times a thousand Chaos worshippers, in the wider sense you would still be serving the cause of the daemon-gods."

~ Volkmar, Theogonist of Sigmar.

I shall begin this section of my investigation by looking at the mortal servants of the daemon-god Tzeentch, as thanks to my connections within the Templars of Sigmar this area is the most easily researched.

As is no doubt the case across all the kingdoms of men, the devious servants of Tzeentch gather secretly in their covens throughout this great Empire, seeking to use every and any means, however foul or corrupt, to expand the influence of their wicked patron and to increase their own personal authority. Where there is evidence to suggest that cults of Slaanesh are the most populous groups dedicated to the worship of Chaos existing throughout the civilised world (due predominantly to the seemingly attractive and easily adhered to requirements of that foul deity), the Templars of Sigmar assure me that the highly secretive cults of Tzeentch tend to hold greater power than the cults of Slaanesh (or any other heretical organisation), having an influence over the affairs of our fair Empire far greater than their relatively few numbers might suggest.

This situation could be seen to be a product of the types of people that are drawn to worship Tzeentch, and the methods that they use to spread their influence throughout society. For where Slaanesh attracts mostly hedonists and dreamers to His cause, Tzeentch more often than not attracts educated men and women of great drive and ambition.

Tzeentch loves schemers. Anyone who plots and plans their rise to personal success and power through devious or convoluted means will invariably attract Tzeentch's gaze – although this in itself does not mean that these people are necessarily bound to Him or doomed to be His servants. However, if the mortal in question impresses enough with the complexity and breadth of his schemes, and if that mortal is not already dedicated specifically to the service of another deity, Tzeentch may bestow a blessing upon him to show His favour. Although this eventuality is exceptionally rare it is known that the gods of Chaos, more so than the gods of Order or the more ambiguously aligned gods of humanity, actively seek converts to their cause and go to any lengths to secure the souls of mortals.

Rather than bestow His blessings upon mortals and asking nothing in return, Tzeentch endeavours to further complicate the plans of any scheming mortal that has attracted His gaze, thereby increasing the stakes for the mortal and perhaps pushing him closer to the brink of desperation as new complexities unfold. Tzeentch hopes to push the unfortunate mortal into a position where nothing short of a miracle could save him from the dilemma he is in – and then, of course, Tzeentch will be waiting with open arms and empty promises.

It is not just the devious and duplicitous members of society who are at risk of becoming part of Tzeentch's attentions. Although it might seem impossible to those brave soldiers and witch hunters who have been forced to face His demonic servants in battle, Tzeentch is a patron of learning and education as well as His darker and more easily understandable aspect as patron of magic and daemonology. By merit of Tzeentch's apparent omniscience and presidency over the highly complex arts of sorcery, many scholars are known to have turned to His worship – perhaps in an effort to attain even deeper knowledge about their chosen subject, insane and shameful though this undoubtedly is. If knowledge is power, then I imagine that Tzeentch could be seen to possess, and therefore offer, power without limit.

The snares of Tzeentch can be found throughout every level of academia and learning, and amongst every nation and race of this world. One would be forgiven for wondering why any learned person would seek to embrace a god of Chaos, for surely scholars and wise men would be more aware than others of the dangers implicit in such a venture. But how many honest

academics have turned to Tzeentch in desperation as they search vainly for an answer to some seemingly unsolvable problem? How many scholars, obsessed with learning, have been lured into Tzeentch's embrace with promises of attaining greater wisdom or absolute truth? Far too many, I fear.

Yet Tzeentch, at His core, is the embodiment of the desire for change, and *any* being who wishes to alter their own (or anyone else's) state are likely targets for the predations of this unkind deity. Indeed, judging by the various reports and records that the witch hunters have garnered to aid my researches, and also according to many a folk tale I have unearthed on the subject, the people most vulnerable to the lure of the Great Mutator seem to be those who possess a revolutionary spirit. Any visionary – man or woman – who dreams or actively tries to change the world, whether they be nobles or statesmen seeking to improve the lot of their nation, or usurpers plotting to overthrow corrupt officials and bring justice to the community they live within, all run the risk of attracting Tzeentch's gaze.



By far the most dangerous converts to Tzeentch are those few blessed (or perhaps cursed) with an affinity with magic. Whether they are magisters from one of the great Imperial Colleges, or healers, witches, warlocks or any other magically inclined individual, it would appear that Tzeentch accepts the worship of all with an equal and passionate enthusiasm. Tzeentch is, after all, the foremost god of magic and sorcery.

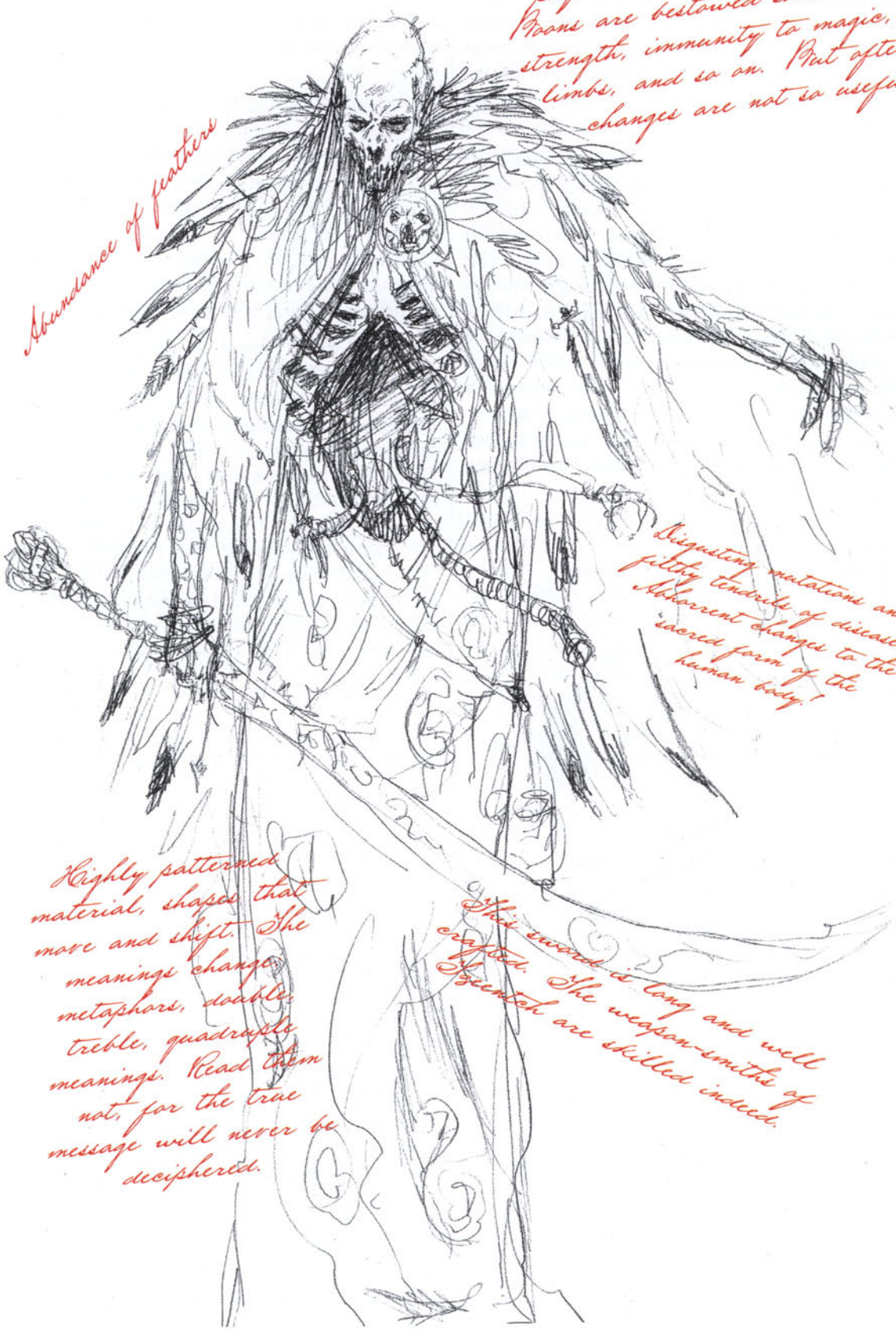
It is said that Tzeentch grants increased magical ability quite freely to those spellcasters who turn to His worship and do His bidding. Whatever their background might be, those who commit themselves to a life in the service of Tzeentch (and retain their sanity long enough to rise through the ranks of His servants), tend to be the most puissant of all magic users, and it is for this reason that so many of the would-be servants of Tzeentch believe that the benefits of turning to His worship far outweigh the risks – regardless of how foolish this might seem to those of us who are untainted by an association with the daemonic powers.

Can I say that with such certainty anymore?

The Cults of Change

It would be erroneous to suggest that there is a "Cult of Tzeentch" as such – at least, not in the sense of one unified religion, as, say, with the Cult of Ulric or the Holy Church of Sigmar. Granted, there are numerous minor religions and heretical cults that have Tzeentch as the focus of their adoration and worship, but these can vary considerably in practice and belief.

Suffice to say, and as mentioned above, cults dedicated to Slaanesh are by far the most populous heretical organisation within our good Empire, but it is apparent that the cults of Tzeentch have more temporal power over Imperial affairs and even over the affairs of the cults of Tzeentch's brother (and rival) Chaos Gods. This is perhaps due to the devious and megalomaniacal nature of Tzeentch's followers, for where the adherents of Slaanesh seek only self-indulgence and gratification, or the very diffused cults of Khorne seek only to promote violence and hatred, the cults of Tzeentch have a very definite philosophical and political agenda with regard to the Empire as a structure, and human civilisation in general.


Turning to the worship of the dark gods invariably ends with the worshipper undergoing changes, both physical, mental and spiritual. Boons are bestowed sometimes, great strength, immunity to magic, extra limbs, and so on. But often the changes are not so useful.
Abundance of feathers
Disgusting mutations and filthy tendrils of disease. Abhorrent changes to the sacred form of the human body.
Highly patterned material, shapes that move and shift. The meanings change, metaphors, double, treble, quadruple meanings. Read them not, for the true message will never be deciphered.
This sword is long and well crafted. The weapon-smiths of Kremlech are skilled indeed.

The Servants of Change

Where a devotee of Nurgle, Slaanesh or Khorne would be interested only in promoting the goals and needs of their own deity, the followers of Tzeentch have a much wider agenda that often involves the active participation of the followers of other gods – whether those followers know they are participating in Tzeentch's machinations or not.

As an example, if a particular Tzeentchian magus is seeking to undermine the political infrastructure of a particular region, he or she would be far less likely to take the risk of direct action, preferring instead to form a cult or organisation that would slowly infiltrate and destabilise the infrastructure in question. If it happens that the magus considers that his target group would be more susceptible to the seductions of Slaanesh than Tzeentch's own blandishments, then that magus would set a plan in motion to form a Slaaneshi cult to do the work for him.

Therein lies the secret of the unparalleled power of Tzeentch's cults – there are countless cults of other gods and daemons that are puppeted, albeit unwittingly, by the few known and named Tzeentchian cults. I wonder just how many minor cults, religions, fraternities and magic circles that are the unknowing dupes of Tzeentch's servants there are, all forwarding the goals of the Lord of Change, without ever realising that they are doing so.

The cults of Tzeentch are wholly committed to the goal of overthrowing the civilisation of men, and subverting all other religions and legitimate magical organisations to the worship of their master. Within the Order of Witch Hunters there is an entire cell dedicated solely to the pursuit and destruction of Tzeentch's cults, and it is this cell that works most closely with the other authorities within the Empire, be they religious, military or secular. The greatest problem that faces them is the very fact that Tzeentch's servants are so well organised and diffused throughout every layer of human society. Spies and informants working for Tzeentch's various cults have been occupying very high places within the Empire's ruling elite, although my contact within the witch hunters, Captain van Hadden, was reticent to reveal just who they might have been.

However, he *has* told me that in addition to (and perhaps far more than) these wicked and devious humans, Tzeentch is the Chaos God most commonly worshipped by the many vile and unclean mutants that gnaw on the fringes of our great society, although cults formed solely from the Chaos-warped are unlikely to be found in the towns and cities of the Empire, and are usually found within the deep forests and hidden valleys of the wilderness.

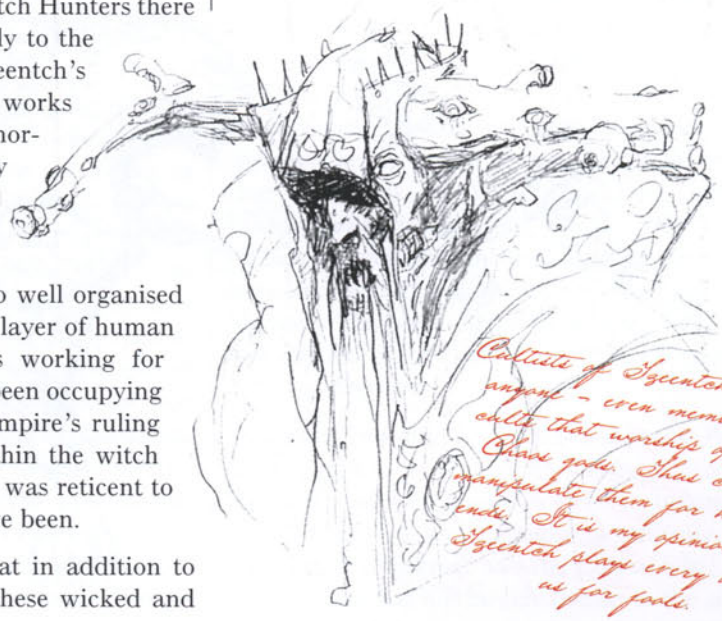
I shall take a look at some of the Tzeentchian cults that the authorities are aware of, these being the cults of the Purple Hand, the Red Crown, and perhaps the most dangerous of all, the Cabal.

The Cult of the Red Crown

The Cult of the Red Crown is thought to be the third most influential Chaos Cult within the Empire, coming behind the Cult of the Purple Hand, and the Cabal of Egrimm van Horstmann.

The Red Crown is surprisingly visible for an organisation dedicated to the Lord of Change. Where most other Tzeentchian cults tend to favour blackmail, intrigue and quiet subversion to attain their nefarious goals, the Red Crown is said to favour more direct and overtly militant methods to destabilise the lands of men.

The Red Crown's seat of power is suspected to be in our capital city, Altdorf, but despite the best efforts of Sigmar's Templars and the Reiksguard to behead this damnable organisation, it always seems to remain as active and powerful as ever. A fact of particular disgust to



commanders of our Empire's armed forces is that the Red Crown seems to have remarkably close ties with the numerous bands of mutants and beastmen that exist just beyond the patrolled borders of the Empire's great forests. The Red Crown leaders can call upon considerable resources whenever the need arises, which is all too often.

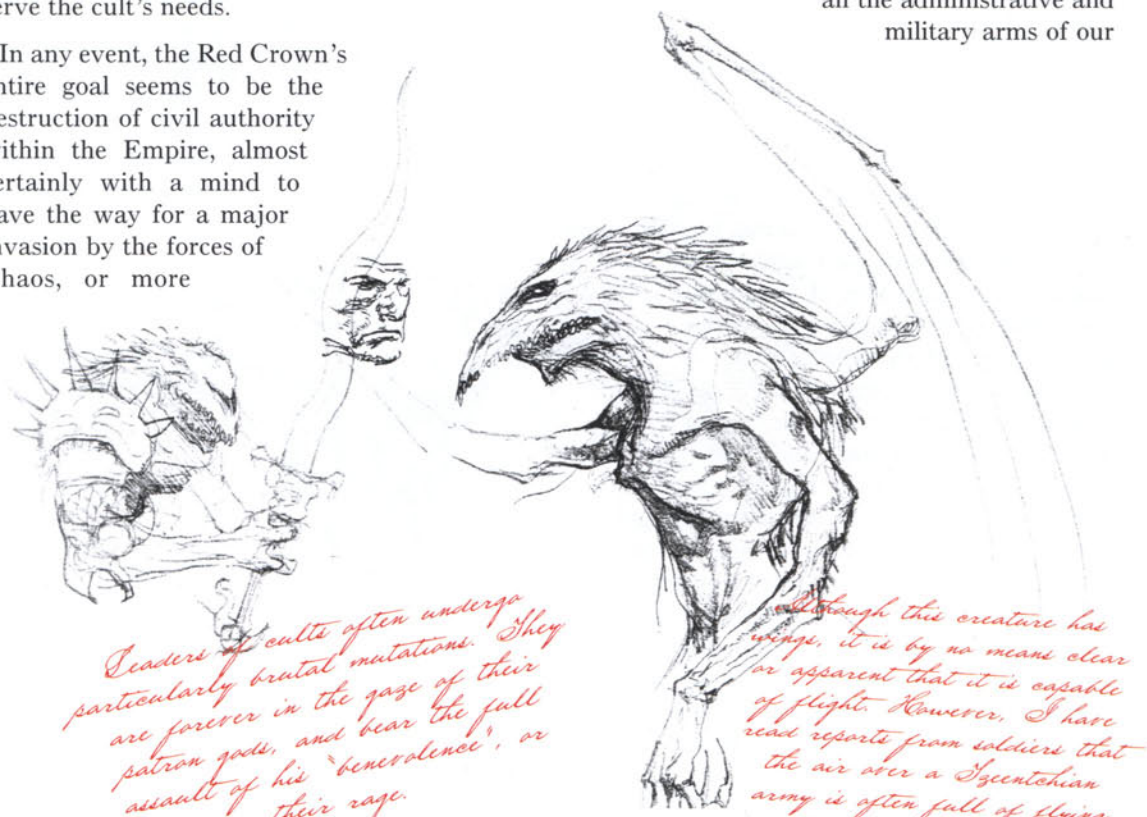
The Red Crown is known to have organised numerous cult insurrections and uprisings, including some of the worst incursions of beastmen and mutants into our lands. Some of the most crushing defeats that the armies of our good Empire have ever suffered have borne the telltale marks of having been engineered by agents of the Red Crown. Not least amongst these stands the Massacre of Hendalle Grove, where three hundred soldiers and knights were ambushed and destroyed by hordes of mutants and beastmen during the yearly remembrance celebration at Hendalle. Most interestingly, heavily armoured and horrifyingly skilled warriors screaming cries of devotion to the War God, Khorne, joined the various mutants. This shows the greatest threat posed to us by the Red Crown and the servants of Tzeentch in general, in that it demonstrates their ability to either broker agreements with the forces of rival Chaos Gods, or simply manipulate them so that they serve the cult's needs.

In any event, the Red Crown's entire goal seems to be the destruction of civil authority within the Empire, almost certainly with a mind to pave the way for a major invasion by the forces of Chaos, or more specifically, the armies of Tzeentch. Day in and day out the Red Crown recruits more and more heretics, mutants and beastmen to their cause. They are a powder keg awaiting only the right taper.

The Cult of the Purple Hand

Though the Cult of the Purple Hand is certainly the largest of Tzeentch's cults within the lands of the Empire, it is known to be only second in power. The true breadth of the Purple Hand's influence over the affairs of the Empire was exposed not long ago, during the terrible scandal surrounding our good Emperor's son and heir – may Sigmar bless and keep him.

Although few know the full details, it is rumoured that a Tzeentchian organisation, now known to be the Purple Hand, almost succeeded in replacing his Imperial Majesty, Karl Franz, or perhaps his only son and heir (the stories are somewhat hazy) with their own puppet ruler. Just how they almost achieved this is unclear, and my superiors within the Church of Sigmar and the Palace authorities remain close-mouthed about the whole thing. Suffice to say, the Purple Hand almost succeeded in their aim, and if they had, they would have been in control of all the administrative and military arms of our



Leaders of cults often undergo particularly brutal mutations. They are forever in the gaze of their patron gods, and bear the full assault of his 'benevolence', or their rage.

Although this creature has wings, it is by no means clear or apparent that it is capable of flight. However, I have read reports from soldiers that the air over a Tzeentchian army is often full of flying creatures, wreathed in magic and flame.

The Servants of Change



Empire. Simply imagine the horror they could have unleashed in such a position!

The Purple Hand is suspected to have small branches of their organisation right across the Empire, Tilea and Estalia. Yet, for some reason that has not been explained to me, the Purple Hand seem to have little or no presence within King Leoncouer's realm, although whether this is because they truly do not have a presence there, or whether it is because they have managed to hide themselves more successfully amongst the Bretonnians than they have amongst the good citizens of our Empire, is still a matter of conjecture.

Like any other Tzeentchian cult, all the resources and endeavours of every branch of the Purple Hand are bent towards the subversion of whatever legitimate social organisation they are based within. Van Hadden tells me that agents of the Purple Hand are often found within, or even directing, the various crime syndicates that stretch across the Old World from the northernmost point of Kislev, to the southern isle of Sartosa – although van Hadden assured me that despite the fact that such criminal organisations are populated by the scum and dregs of society, very few of the pirates, thieves and crooks attached to such groups seem to know about the Purple Hand's connection to their organisation, or would sympathise with the Purple Hand's goals even if they did.

Criminal tendencies, it would seem, do not always imply a leaning towards heresy or daemonology.

Yet despite the Purple Hand's near omnipresence it is thought to be quite disorganised, as communication between the prospective cells of the Empire seems to be patchy at best. So widespread is the Purple Hand that communication between the various branches of the cult proves to be their weakest point. The sheer bulk of communiqués passing between the numerous magi and acolytes of the cult means that it is inevitable that some of them are intercepted by the loyal agents of the Empire's military or Sigmar's Holy Church. The witch hunters have managed to foil several plots in this way, and have received good leads as to the names and positions of some of the Purple Hand's most senior members.

Quite recently, Lord Wasmeier of Middenheim and a shipping company that the lord was said to have financial interests in, were investigated for suspected associations with the Purple Hand. Unfortunately, the investigation was curtailed before a satisfactory conclusion due to the intervention of the high priest of the Cult of Ulric himself. Apparently, the Ar-Ulric had been briefed by one of his advisors that the witch hunters were simply enacting a plan masterminded by the one of the Arch-Lectors of the Church of Sigmar that was intended to undermine the independent authority of Middenheim, and therefore give a politically expedient excuse for more of Sigmar's agents to move in on Middenheim.

Although the Ar-Ulric assured the Imperial Court, and by association the masters of the Order of Witch Hunters, that he would carry out his own investigation into Lord Wasmeier, it is a common belief within certain circles in Altdorf that the cult of Ulric, and the city of Middenheim in general, lacked the witch hunters' experience in investigating such matters, and so did not do as thorough a job as Sigmar's Templars might have. Lord Wasmeier was cleared of all charges, and the case against him was dropped.

Captain van Hadden believes that the Purple Hand poses a significant danger to the Sigmarites and the devotees of Ulric, because he believes the cult has managed to infiltrate both the Church of Sigmar and the Cult of Ulric, and he is certain that it is largely thanks to the efforts of this malign organisation that relations

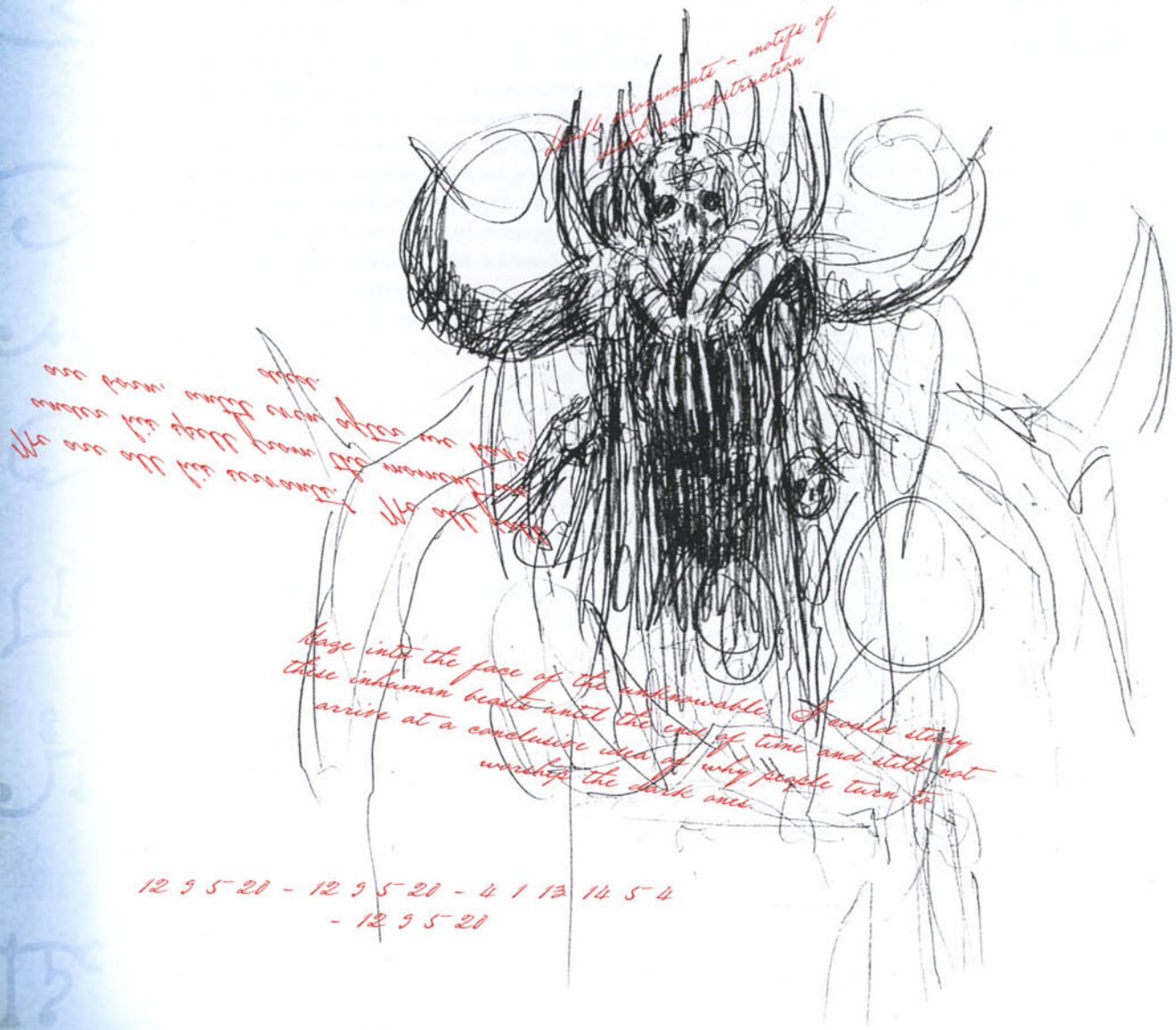
between our two faiths are so strained. In fact, van Hadden regards the Wasmeier affair as a perfect case in point, as he suspects that the Ar-Ulric's deputies who advised against the presence of the witch hunters in Middenheim were in fact either active members of the Purple Hand, or at the very least manipulated by them. I am not in a position where I can comment on van Hadden's claims.

The Cabal

The last of the major Tzeentchian cults that I will deal with in this investigation shall be the Cabal of Egrimm van Horstmann.

What can be said about this, the most powerful of all known Chaos cults? Although the Cabal came into being a long time after either the Red Crown or the Purple Hand, it has, by merit of the frightening power of its magi and its master's dark genius, become the most feared and influential of all Tzeentchian cults. Indeed, to call the Cabal a cult is perhaps misleading, as its members are almost to a man powerful sorcerers and daemonologists who possess none of the vague superstitions or blind beliefs of many other cultists.

It is even rumoured that through their flawless machinations and subtle manipulations, the Cabal holds indirect control over both the Red Crown and the Purple Hand (not to mention hundreds of other cults across the world). To give a clearer picture as to the nature and history of the Cabal, I shall hand over the next section of this investigation to Magister Patriarch Verspasian Kant of the College of Light, as he is the most qualified to speak on this matter.





The truth surrounding Izzentch is bound up with falsehood and lies. I am a scholar, thus it is my job to unravel the fog of deceit. But do I have the skill? I was picked for this task so it must have been judged that I was capable of carrying it through. But the further down the path I travel, the less sure I am of... anything.

Not everyone should be allowed to read this book. It contains so much prohibited knowledge. I fear that if it falls into the wrong hands no good can come of it. Although I know that writing this book was a necessary task, I regret that I agreed to undertake it. It eats my insides. I will never know peace of mind again. What I have discovered terrifies me, and loathing is fading like mist under the hot rays of the sun.

I hate this book for doing this. But it makes me wonder about the true nature of our religions and beliefs. Were they created merely to make us feel better about the emptiness and meaninglessness of our existence, and the drudgery of our daily lives? Are the Old Ones the only reason we have that [illegible] that surrounds us? As my faith slips away I believe more and more that this is indeed the case. There. What I have just written has damned me! I am a heretic. If I burn this page and erase the words from my mind will that save me? Burn the pages! Burn! They will burn me.

I look at the works I write. I can see the piles of notes and the stacks of book that have fed me knowledge and dangerous truths. They are the nourishment. The fruit of this is the books that I write. And the price? Ahh! That is a high sum. 13 25 - 19 15 20

The Apostate van Horstmann

Being a description of the mysterious Silver Towers, and the Magi that control them, from the hand of Verspasian Kant, Patriarch of the College of Light.

Hysterical? By first learned? Surely more of such skill must be exercised?

Somewhere in the region of the Screaming Hills stand the Silver Towers of that most despised of all sorcerer covens, the Cabal of Egrimm van Horstmann. Many times have my brothers and I sought to find and destroy these Towers and, more importantly, their sorcerous occupants. Every such venture has ended in failure. The Silver Towers are wrapped around with subtle yet powerful enchantments that I have not yet managed to pierce. Thus the Towers remain impossible to locate. They cannot be seen in the daylight hours, and throughout the night, when they are fully visible and therefore more vulnerable, they shift and travel across the landscape, vanishing and reappearing at random. Even a person with no understanding of the complexities of bending the Winds of Magic to his will must surely realise the virtuosity required to maintain such an enchantment as this. This in itself hints at the terrible power and skill of the Towers' dread occupants.

Within these Towers reside some of the most feared sorcerers ever to have blighted the lands of men, and all of them are the marked champions of the daemon-god Tzeentch. I cannot think of a single magister within any of the Colleges of Magic who would not want to know, and foil, whatever it is the sorcerers of the Cabal plot and plan within their Towers. We know that they study and practice their blasphemous arts endlessly (in much the same way as we acolytes of the Imperial Colleges do our own more wholesome magics), and we know that the Cabal seek to auger the moment when the storm of Chaos will arise again in the north, so that they might add their own considerable might to the cause of the next Great Uniter at the best possible moment.

Although my order has agents and spies watching all the roads for a dozen leagues in every

We always fear the unknown. Would that we could embrace all knowledge with the same brave heart.

The Apostate van Horstmann

direction around the Screaming Hills, we have not yet had any success in capturing servants or messengers going to and from the Cabal's hiding place. Indeed, it is my belief that the Cabal do not put any of their plans to paper, or perhaps even speak, so particular are they about keeping their nefarious plans secret from the prying eyes of the Colleges of Magic and Sigmar's Templars. For my own part, I have evidence to suggest that the Cabal communicate via other more clandestine means, perhaps using some kind of talisman, or even by transmitting their thoughts direct to each other's minds. I will find out which before long.

The undisputed master of the Cabal is Egrimm van Horstmann. Van Horstmann is the most infamous of the Imperial Colleges' few known apostates, and he is my own Order's greatest shame, for there was a time when Horstmann was counted amongst the brightest and most talented magisters of my Order. Indeed, Horstmann was the last occupant of my own position as patriarch of the College of Light – burn his eyes!

In his day, Horstmann was acclaimed as the youngest and most gifted magister to have ever presided over one of the Empire's Colleges of Magic. As he knelt down to swear his allegiance to the Emperor and the cause of our Order, none of us guessed that his loyalties and soul had already been given over to another far more sinister master.

As an apprentice chanter of the eighth circle of our Order, Horstmann served under my late and respected colleague, Master Chanter Elrisse, the Saviour of Apesto, who taught him many of our ancient secrets. But all the time he served with us, Horstmann was praying to the gods of Chaos for the power and knowledge to surpass his peers. Small wonder his progress through our ranks was

The Apostate van Horstmann

so rapid. By day he studied the pure magics of Hysh, and by night he pored over the ancient manuscripts devoted to the tainted lores of sorcery that my Order has locked away within its libraries. The daemons of Tzeentch no doubt whispered their timeless secrets into Horstmann's sleeping mind, and his powers waxed strong.

For three years our wicked patriarch worked his evil. Seeds of corruption were planted in the hearts of many of my fellow acolytes, and it saddens me no end to know that I lost so many of my peers to the shadow he cast across us. Such was the skill with which he wove his dark magics, Horstmann was able to subtly alter many of our rituals, redirecting their otherwise benevolent powers to his own ends. Most outrageously of all, Horstmann actually used the energies we called down to work away at the vaults beneath the Pyramid of Light – vaults that had remained sealed since the founder of the Colleges of Magic, Teclis of Ulthuan himself, had created them as a prison for some of the most terrible creatures and artefacts from the last Great Chaos Incursion that could not be destroyed. One by one Horstmann defeated the vaults' magical locks to reveal the forbidden things they contained. It is impossible to calculate the damage done or the horrors unleashed upon the world by Horstmann before his evil was uncovered by Sigmar's Templars and the Grand Theogonist, Volkmar von Hindenstern.

The discovery of Horstmann's corruption would make a long and morbid tale in its own right. Suffice to say it ended badly. Before he and his twisted acolytes fled before the combined fury of Volkmar, the witch hunters, and those initiates of our Order who were still loyal to its honest precepts, Horstmann managed to free the first of the Chaos dragons, Galrauch, from its timeless prison beneath the Pyramid of

The Apostate von Horstmann

Light, and upon its winged and two-headed form Horstmann took to the sky and fled towards the Chaos Wastes.

Reliable information about Horstmann after this point is hard to come by. We know that he was unable to maintain his control over Galrauch once they had reached the Wastes – even Horstmann's powers have their limits – but although Galrauch managed to break free of Horstmann's hold, it seems that Horstmann has since managed to bind one of the great dragon's offspring to his will. Now, when Horstmann is stirred from his tower by the trumpets of war, he invariably rides into battle upon the back of the Chaos dragon Baudros – that fell creature famed in a hundred Bretonnian folk tales.

We also know that Horstmann, along with his corrupted acolytes, formed the Cabal – perhaps the most infamous of any group dedicated to Tzeentch. The sorcerers of the Cabal bow only to Horstmann because he is the most powerful of them. The majority of the warriors who protect the Cabal are all willing slaves to Horstmann and his acolytes, ignoramuses desperate for the chance to learn even a fraction of their master's skills.

How anyone finds the Silver Towers to join the Cabal is a mystery, although we do know that once they have been accepted, a warrior or sorcerer must swear binding magical oaths of loyalty to Horstmann, and of course his dark lord, Tzeentch. Once branded with Tzeentch's rune, the initiate can never rebel against the will of his masters, under pain of being reduced to the state of a mindless spawn of Chaos.

The warriors of the Cabal are only fractionally less heinous than their sorcerous masters. I have seen them marching to war in their archaic harnesses,

I shudder to think

The Apostate von Horstmann

covered as they are with a mass of ribbons and warding sigils. Many of their weapons were obviously magical in nature, no doubt enchanted by the Cabal's masters. In battle these blades gave off an eerie glow that was as strangely fascinating as it was disturbing.

I will admit freely that the Cabal are a frightening enemy to face upon the battlefield, even to one such as me. Besides the terrifying skill of its sorcerers and champions, the Cabal's war host seems to act and fight in perfect synchronicity, guided as they are by the sinister genius of their masters. Like all the militant servants of Tzeentch, the battle plans of the Cabal's generals are incredibly complex and often seem contradictory, and yet it is a rare battle indeed that they are not victorious. The few times that I have faced the armies of the Cabal, it has seemed almost as if I was a player upon a massive stage, acting out a role that had been pre-determined for me. Naturally, I managed to shake the feeling off, but even still it felt for all the world as if I was struggling against invisible chains. A magister of less experience might well have been lost.

Horstmann's acolytes are everywhere, and it is said that nearly two thirds of all the Chaos cults in the Empire were either created indirectly by agents within his network, are controlled by his Cabal in some tenuous and roundabout way, or indeed owe direct allegiance to him. Such plotting and scheming as this no doubt pleases Tzeentch immeasurably, and He seems to have rewarded Horstmann greatly over the years, making him His most favoured servant.

Suffice to say, Horstmann seeks to bring the Colleges of Magic under his sway, and corrupt all the Empire's magisters to the worship of his master. By doing this Horstmann hopes to attract his divine master's eye and be rewarded with daemonancy.

Long may his quest prove fruitless.

Izcentchian magi wear extravagant headgear and flowing robes. Their manipulation of the winds of magic is so skilful that their mere appearance in battle can be enough to make the enemy turn tail and flee.

Sceptre staff with ivory ornate head

The all-seeing eye of Izcentch

Bird motif

I have sinned, Lord Sigmar,
And now damnation is upon me,
There can be no relief from my suffering.
I admit my guilt,
For it is too heavy a burden
To shoulder alone.

Izcentch is the greatest patron god of magic. His warriors and servants are, almost to a man, imbued, in one way or another, with a particular affinity with magic. Izcentchian sorcerers are famed for their capable, not to say prodigious use of magic.

It is time. My fate is decided. Adderic tno si taef m'I. Inei nto si to

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The Footsoldiers of Change

Concerning the vast and terrible armies who fight for the God of Change, with specific investigations of particular tribes, their beliefs and use of magic and dark sorceries.

Despite His position as a god of magic and conspiracy, Tzeentch, like His brother gods and much to humanity's cost, indulges frequently in warfare, and He has vast armies that obey His every whim. The aspects of war that seems to interest Tzeentch and His servants most can be found in the arts of strategy, espionage, politics, and of course, hellish sorcery.

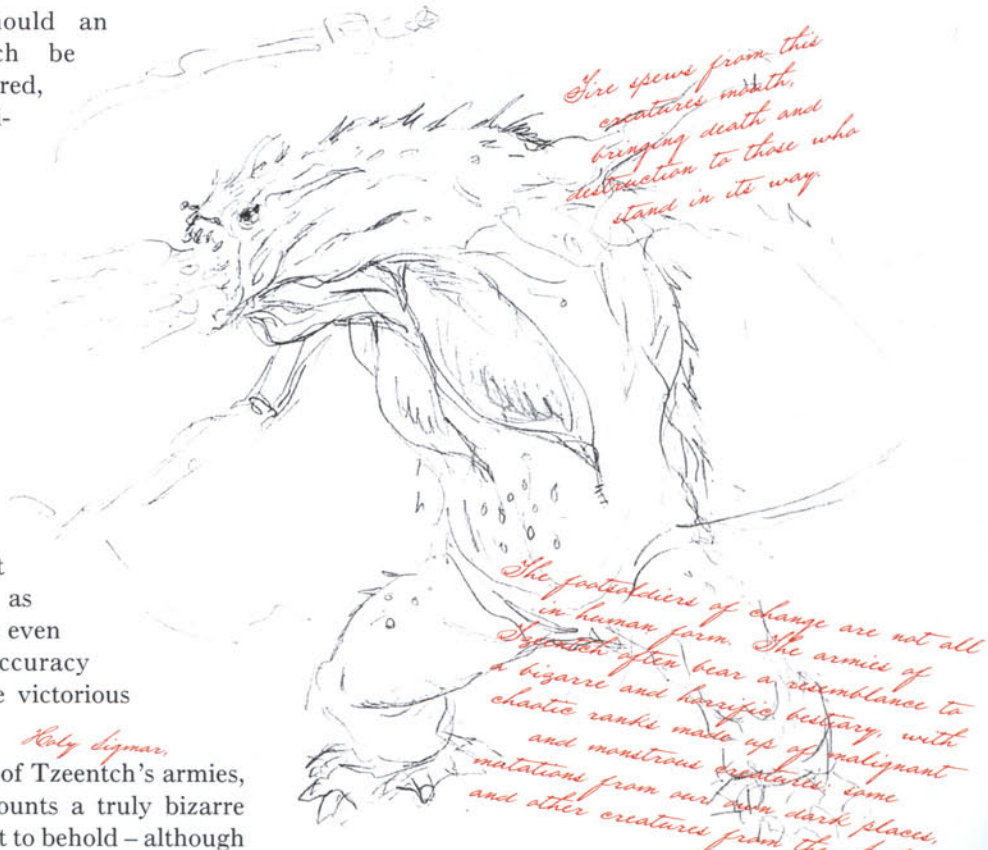
Where the armies of Khorne comprise of supremely powerful and savage warriors intent only on acts of unbounded violence and the venting of their endless rage, the armies of Tzeentch seem to be more interested in planning and executing complex strategies. Having spoken with Andreas Schmidt, chief aide to our great Empire's Reiksmarshal, Kurt Hellborg, it would seem that the generals of those armies that are dedicated to Tzeentch are renowned for plotting their militaristic engagements to such an elaborate degree that it has appeared to many of our Imperial commanders that almost every eventuality in battle has been planned for *in advance.*

Indeed, even should an army of Tzeentch be destroyed or scattered, it is not always possible to discern whether this is a true victory, or whether it is just another successful step in some unfathomably long term plan by the Lord of Change. I find myself wondering how we can ever hope to defeat so great an enemy as Chaos if we cannot even judge with any accuracy when and if we are victorious against its armies.

As to the warriors of Tzeentch's armies, they are by all accounts a truly bizarre and spectacular sight to behold – although not one I would ever wish to see for myself. It would seem that, more often than not, their armour is splendidly decorous, inlaid with delicate bands of gold or blued silver. Having viewed some sketches by Herr Schmidt of designs he himself saw on the armour of several of Tzeentch's warriors, it appears that curving, curling designs are most favoured by these luminaries of Chaos. Perhaps they are intended to symbolise the twisting and manipulative mind of their patron, or else the broiling entropy of Chaos itself.

It is said that a large majority of Tzeentch's warriors adopt a style of armour that evokes the appearance of giant insects, crabs or scorpions, although why they might choose to do this I do not know.

Tzeentch's warriors also seem to favour elaborate headdresses, with helmet adornments of flowing crests or dramatically sweeping horns being quite typical. In fact this apparent love of baroque and often amusing decoration seems to




Again we see an ornate and disturbing helmet, adorned with spikes, horns and blades. The effect is both startling and yet somehow beautiful.
I have read numerous reports and spoken to several survivors from soldiers who have faced Tzeentchian war-hosts. I fear for any army men who line up to do battle with the Changer of Ways. With any of the other armies of Chaos, there are certainties – but with Tzeentch there are none. Can a warrior, gripping his spear and whispering prayers to Sigmar be sure that what he sees before him is real?
Will his mind rebel against the nightmarish sights that he sees, or think he sees? There is no way of telling. Everyman who faces battle, war and death must ask certain questions of himself. But he must ask a thousand more if he marches to war against Tzeentch. His whole view of the world will be called into question. And if he cannot find a sufficiently convincing answer then he will pay with his sanity. The casualties of such war are not just the maimed and wounded, they are the men broken on the wheel of Tzeentch's madness, and I feel for them.
Spikes and plates
Decorated breastplate
Long, flowing robe
His armour is wonderfully well crafted, and a perfect fit for the wearer. It is perhaps true that some Chaos armour actually melds into the wearer, and becomes an outer skin, rather than a removable, protective garb. Armour worn by Tzeentchian champions is often imbued with magic, and benefits from extra strength or durability as a result. The best armourers in the Old World could not hope to better the articles they produce.

The Footsoldiers of Change

have no bounds, as I have read numerous accounts of the Tzeentchians' fascination with odd trinkets and fetishes – be they small chiming bells, twisting bangles and torques, or even tiny cages containing chirping crickets or dancing dragonflies.

The harnesses of their steeds are often decorated and sometimes made from the hides of scaled or colourfully feathered creatures that have no place within the Mortal Realms – although I imagine such items would be more common amongst the great Knights of Tzeentch than His rank and file warriors.

The Shimmering Legions

Tzeentch is without question the most richly magical of all the powers of Chaos. Sister Duvallier of the Great Hospice at Frederheim granted me access to some of the poor unfortunates of the enclosed wing of the sanatorium, those who are veterans of battles with the footsoldiers of Tzeentch. Here is a short transcript of an account given to me by one of the more talkative inmates.

"You're not a fighter, I can tell. You're a priest of books. You've never had to face and fight Sigmar's enemies like many of your brothers. Or like me. You tell your flock to fight against Chaos, against change and its servants, but you haven't seen them. You cannot understand. Not even death is an end. Change is the constant that cannot be changed. They told me that. I heard them singing it.

"The shimmering legions come for us, and we must dance to the beat of their drums. The spell-men of the Great Changer throw their will into the sky, and the air cracks with light and colour. We are lost! Why can't you see? He will melt my shape like he did his soldiers. He will give me fingers instead of legs and teeth instead of eyes. He'll steal my soul and make me giggle his rhymes, and I'll be counted as one of his, because Sigmar won't want me then. No one will want me then.

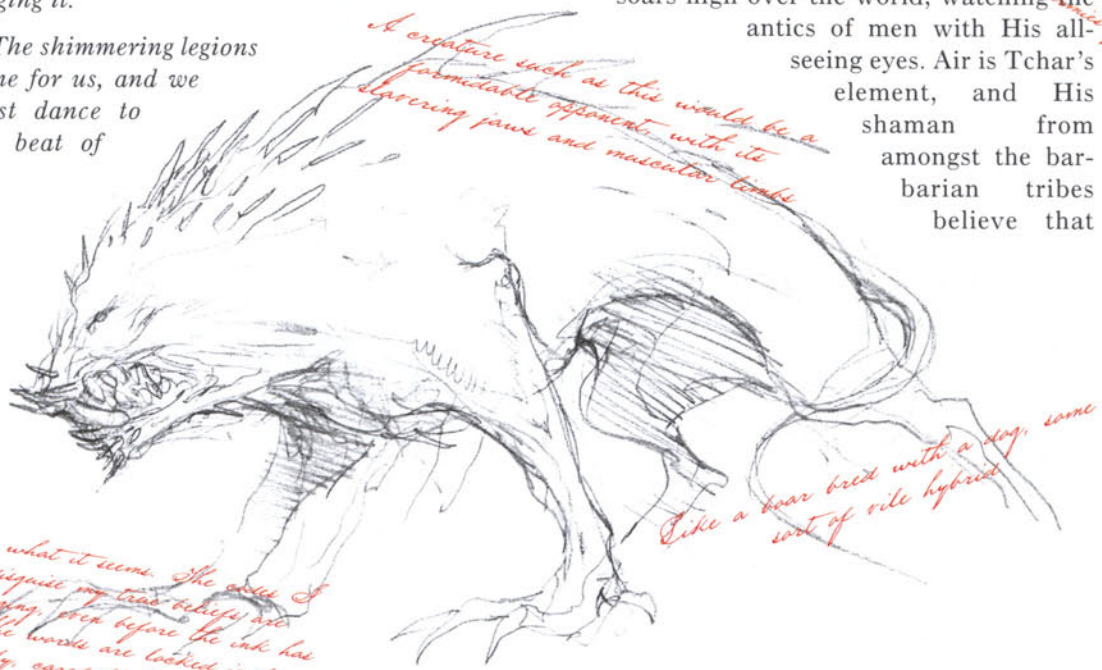
"Yes, we will be changed and we will march with Him, then all the world will have His colour and His light and His madness."

The inmate became incoherent after this point.

Yet despite this vision of Tzeentch's armies being made of civilisation's outcasts – be they shimmering knights or apostate magisters – by far the majority of mortal warriors who fight in Tzeentch's armies (as with any other Chaos God's armies) are the savage barbarians from the cold lands that lie in the shadow of the Chaos Wastes.

The Tribes of the Great Eagle

Beyond the lands of Norsca, the barbarians who eke out their existence upon the icepacks and in the shadow of Chaos worship the Infernal Powers quite openly. Amongst these brutal specimens of humanity are those who worship Tzeentch in the form of *Tchar*. To these savages, Tchar is the Great Eagle who soars high over the world, watching the antics of men with His all-seeing eyes. Air is Tchar's element, and His shaman from amongst the barbarian tribes believe that



The Footsoldiers of Change

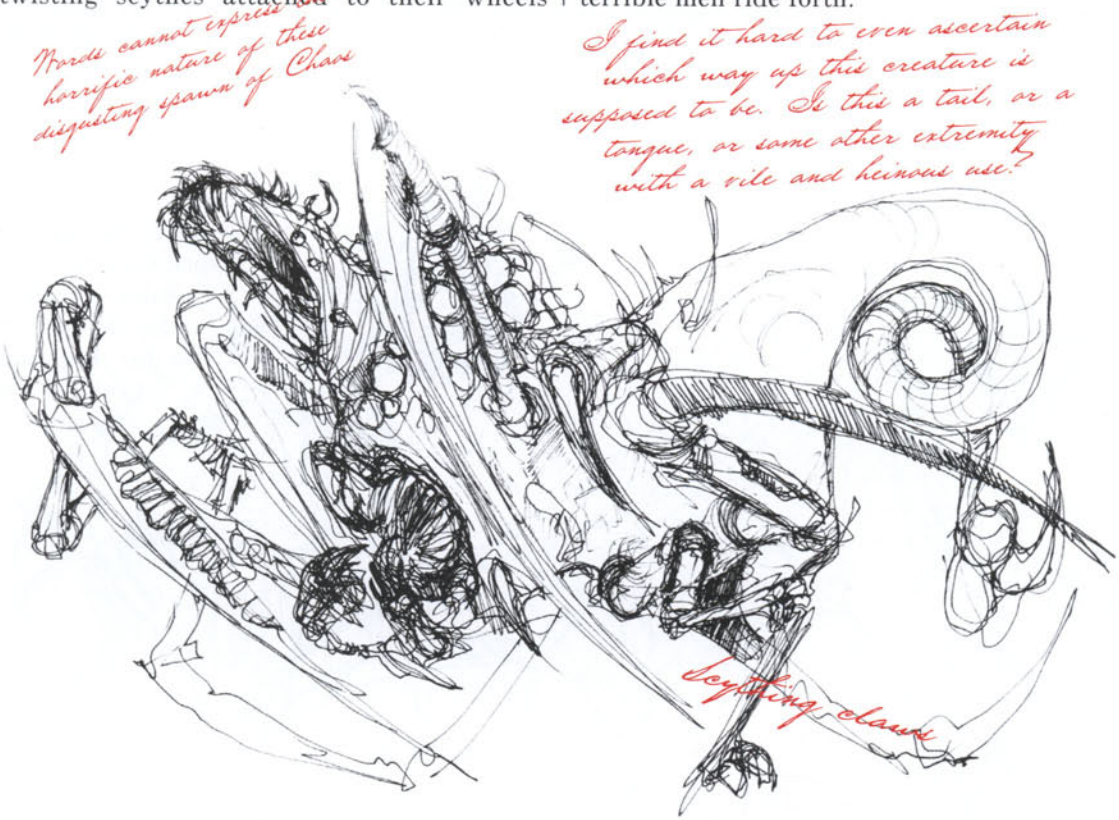
by entering into a trance state they can ascend to the heavens and fly with their Lord, communing with Him and learning His will. It is He, they maintain, who understands the hearts and minds of men better than any other of His brother Chaos Gods.

The tribes that dedicate themselves to the Great Eagle are renowned for their cunning and treachery. Yet despite their reputation for deviousness, the Great Eagle's tribes are most active and successful when it comes to establishing alliances or negotiating treaties with the other tribes in the far north. Judging by the many dark stories about the followers of Tchar I doubt that many other tribes would want to ally with them in battle, yet it seems that the Great Eagle's tribes are second in strength and prestige only to those tribes who have sworn themselves to Khorne (in His aspect of the War Hound), and so cannot be ignored.

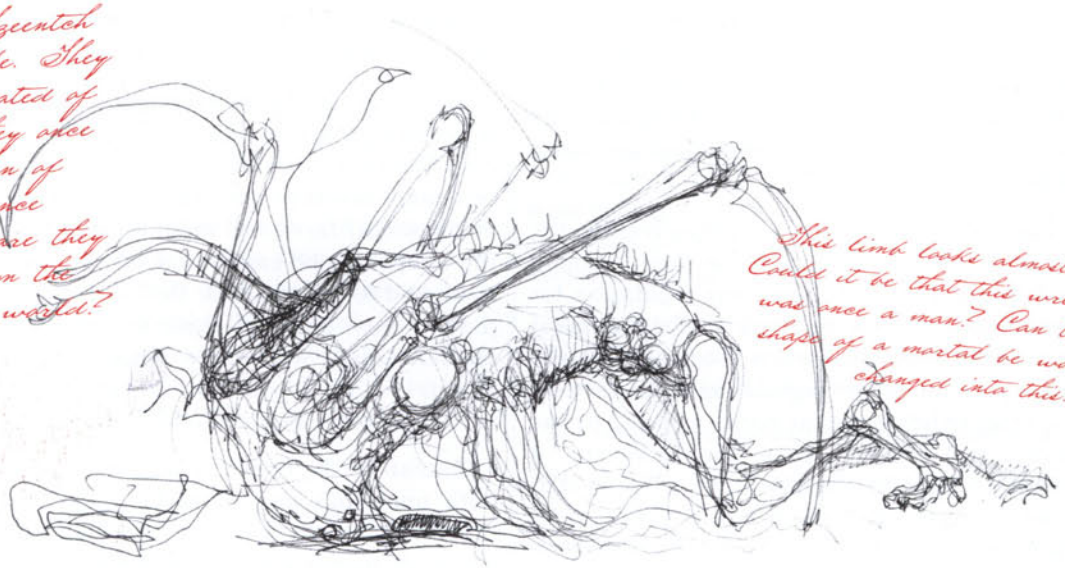
Tchar's servants are largely nomadic. They ride across the north-eastern planes and the icepacks in great chariots carved from the bones of the mighty leviathans that live in the freezing sea. In battle, these chariots are often seen charging across the plains, the long and twisting scythes attached to their wheels slicing through their enemies as if through a field of wheat.

Each year at the midsummer equinox, the tribesmen return to their holy places to perform the rites of the Eagle. This most heinous ceremony involves the chaining of living prisoners to cliff faces and mountainsides, so that the warped blood eagles that inhabit them can come and feed upon their flesh. I do not doubt that at least some of these unfortunates are former allies, who have since fallen from favour or have been simply betrayed by the Great Eagle's tribesmen.

Shaman of the tribes of the Great Eagle are both numerous and powerful – far more so than all the other northern tribes put together. These shaman are said to be the most puissant magic-users of their kind, able to *spirit-walk* to commune with daemons and their gods. My respected colleague, the patriarch of the College of Light, Verspasian Kant, tells me that the most successful of Tchar's shaman go on to become some of the most dangerous Chaos sorcerers ever to have pitted themselves against the lands of men, and that they pose one of the greatest threats to the security of our great Empire. Woe betide us when these terrible men ride forth.



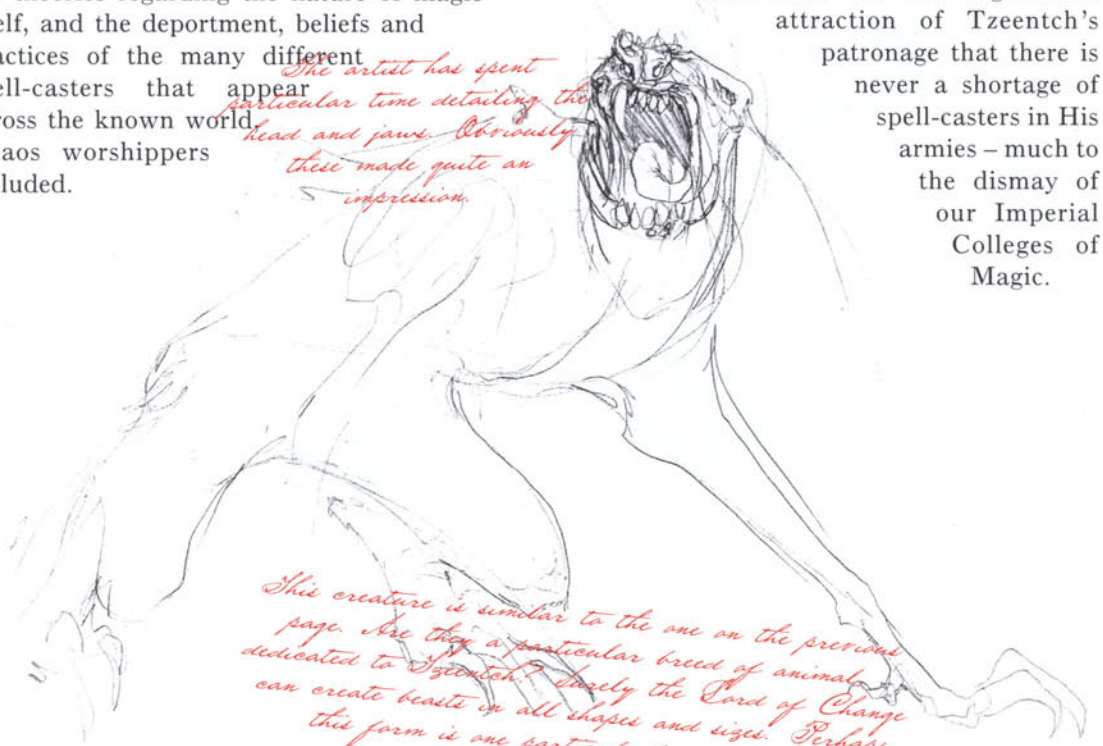
The Footsoldiers of Change



Tzeentch's Champions and Thrall Sorcerers

Since I began my investigation into the ways and means of Chaos, I have been in regular communication with Magister Patriarch Verspasian Kant of the College of Light. He has been able to fill in many of the holes left in the reports of the witch hunters (due largely to the witch hunters' natural ignorance of matters magical), and expand upon some of the themes that a non-magically inclined person such as myself is only vaguely aware of. Magister Kant has proven most useful in his explanations as to the theories regarding the nature of magic itself, and the deportment, beliefs and practices of the many different spell-casters that appear across the known world, Chaos worshippers included.

Magister Kant has been instructing me as to the differences between those spell-casters known as *sorcerers* and other magic users found commonly within the borders of our great Empire. It would seem that a sorcerer, as distinct from sanctioned magisters and untrained witches and warlocks, is a spell-caster who uses magic inspired by the worship of Chaos and directed to the service of the Chaos Gods. Understandably, Tzeentch is often the first choice of patron for many an aspiring sorcerer, as Tzeentch is the ultimate personification and lord of all magical processes. In fact, Magister Kant assures me that such is the regrettable attraction of Tzeentch's patronage that there is never a shortage of spell-casters in His armies – much to the dismay of our Imperial Colleges of Magic.



The Footsoldiers of Change

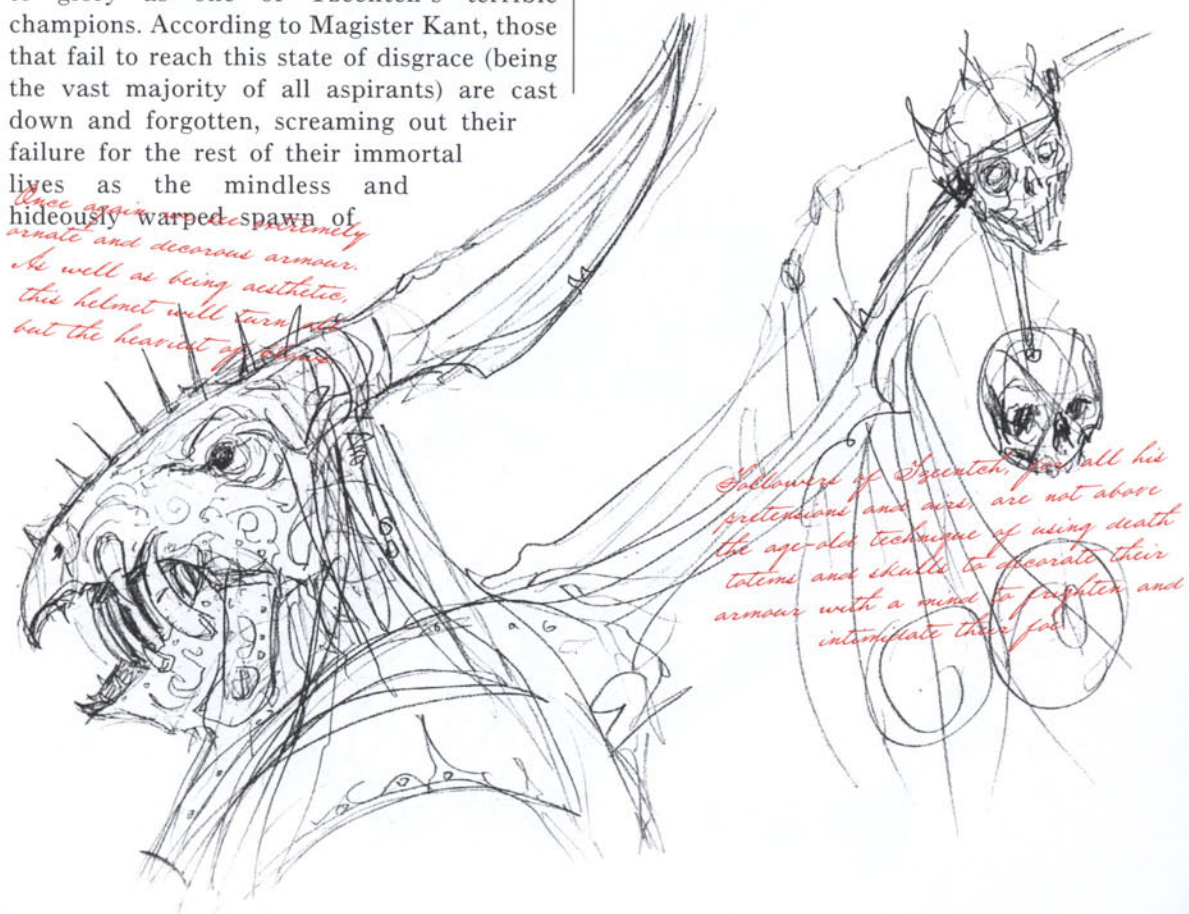
Although Tzeentch favours spell-casters above all other servants, He does not appear to accept just any sorcerer as one of His marked champions, as might well be the case with His brother gods (with the exclusion of the War God, Khorne). Indeed, although it is true to say that all of Tzeentch's marked champions are sorcerers, it is not true to say that all sorcerers who seek the favour of Tzeentch or fight in His armies are also His champions. Instead, or so Magister Kant tells me, those sorcerers who wish to attain the benefits and blessings of Tzeentch's favour first join a band of Thrall Sorcerers.

These Thralls must compete with each other to establish which has the greatest wisdom, ingenuity, skill and dedication to the causes of the divine patron. I can only imagine that it pleases the Changer of the Ways to watch His followers plot and intrigue as they vie for supremacy over their fellows, knowing that only one of them will be granted a chance of achieving immortality.

But few indeed are those who have the ability, strength and willpower to reach the end of that long and dangerous road that leads to glory as one of Tzeentch's terrible champions. According to Magister Kant, those that fail to reach this state of disgrace (being the vast majority of all aspirants) are cast down and forgotten, screaming out their failure for the rest of their immortal lives as the mindless and hideously warped spawn of Chaos. For those few aspirants who succeed in holding on to their sanity and form, and have the incredible strength of mind required to harness the whims of change, become arguably the most puissant of all the champions of the Chaos Gods. For these champions of Tzeentch are "blessed" with both the exceptional warrior skills of one who has had to fight tooth and nail for long decades to earn every single thing he has, while also possessing a gifted fragment of the sorcerous abilities of the Lord of Magic Himself. It takes little intelligence to realise therefore that this frightening combination must make the servants of Tzeentch amongst the most dangerous foes upon the field of battle.

Kaldour's Knights

Many are the stories about Kaldour and his knights, and none of them end well for the cause of man. Kaldour's Knights are mighty and terrible warriors, men of great intellect and cunning. They are not, as one might reasonably expect, warriors who have risen through the ranks of the northern tribes, but



The Footsoldiers of Change

are instead men of the Empire, Bretonnia, Tilea and Estalia who have turned apostate, abandoning the wholesome gods of their natives lands for the dubious favours of Tzeentch.

Many of the Knights, including Kaldour himself, were men of great importance and temporal power in their former lives, some being statesmen and nobles, and others being famous Templars or renowned military men. For whatever reasons, they abandoned civilisation and the free peoples of the Old World and set off towards the desolation beyond the lands of Norsca. The stories I have read about them make it clear that they so despised those they saw as lesser intellects that they scorned the warbands of brutish beastmen or uncouth mutants that populate the Northern Wastes, and instead joined together as a band of noble warriors and formidable tacticians. Just how such a disparate group of men managed to find each other across the endless expanses of the Chaos Wastes and then how they decided to join together is anyone's guess, although I would imagine that Tzeentch, or one of his daemons, may well have had a hand in the process.

The Knights are all mounted troops, riding into battle atop their great Chaos steeds and carrying tall lances that are a grotesque echo of the knightly orders to which many of them once belonged. The Knights are also noted for carrying ornate back banners decorated with the symbols of their master – be that the flame chalice, the unblinking eye or the coiled serpent (the symbol of the broken balance). Kaldour, being the Grand Master of the Knights, is said to bear

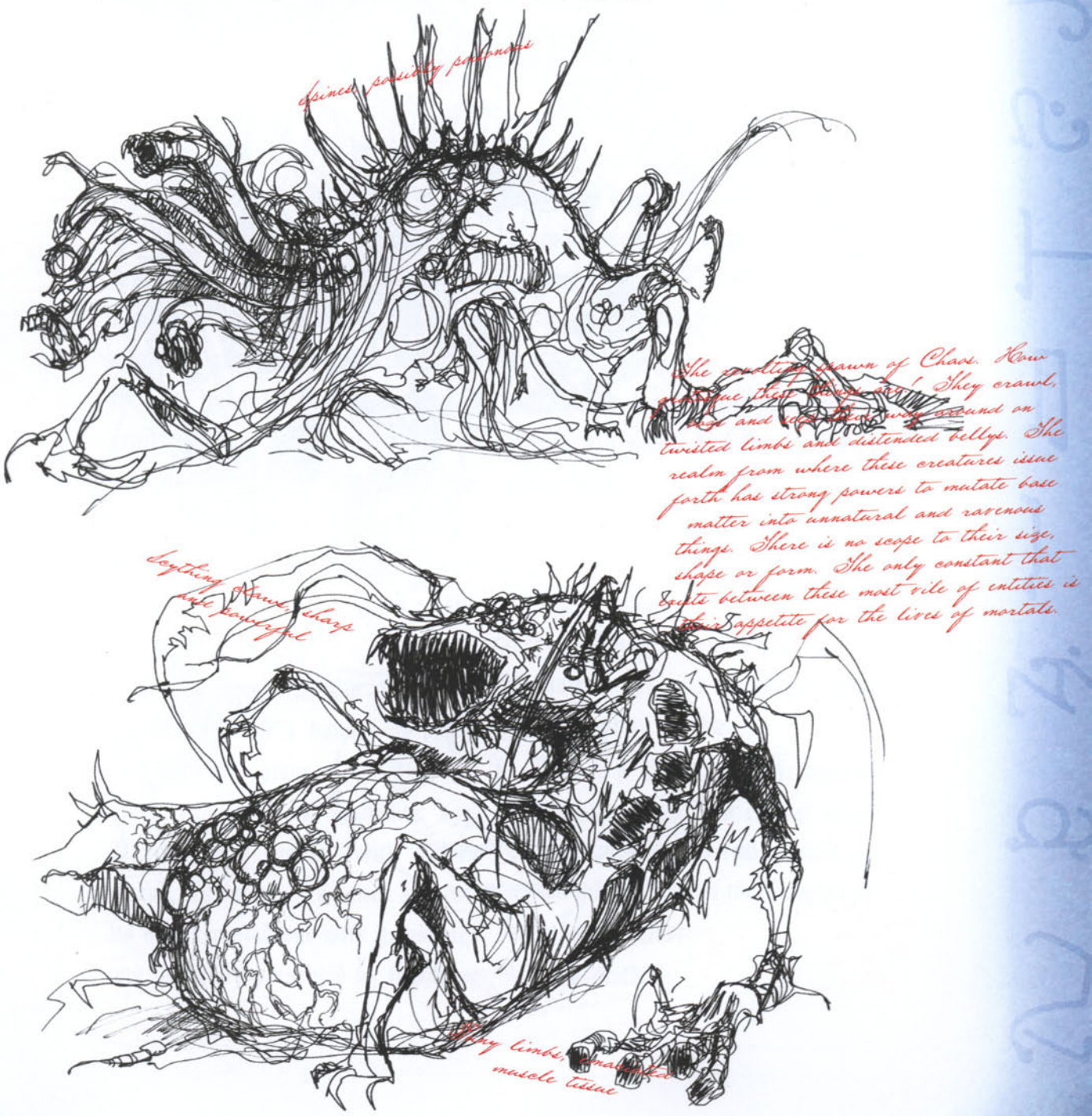


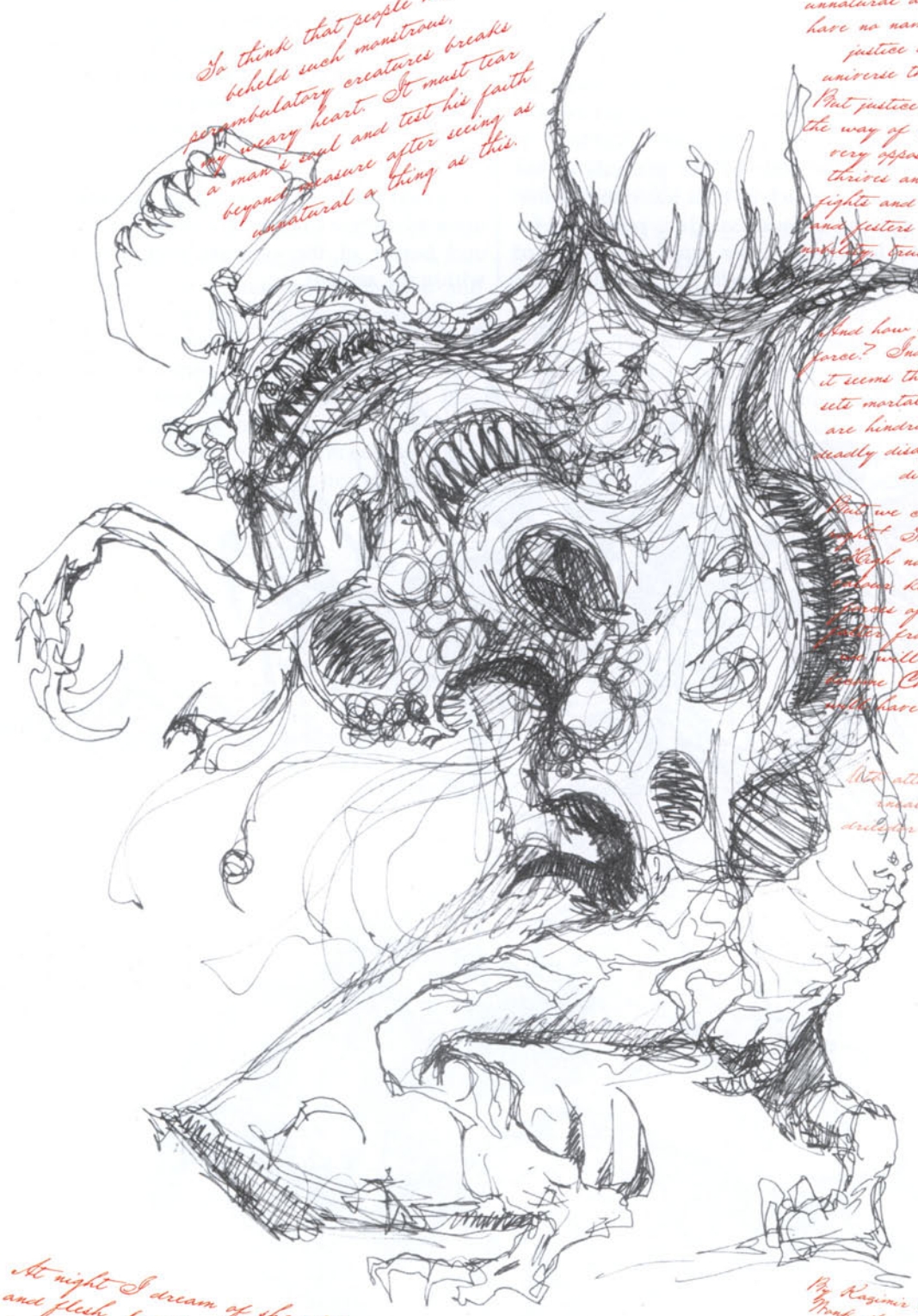
The Footsoldiers of Change

the device of Tzeentch's own rune upon his shield, both as a mark of his devotion to the Lord of Change and as a sign of his master's favour.

Kaldour is said to be a peerless tactician, blessed with a fragment of the many-layered wisdom of Tzeentch Himself. Kaldour is respected for his skills by the generals of our good Empire, as much as he is hated and feared for his obscene callousness. He is renowned for his cold logic and utter ruthlessness. Lord Kaldour, as he calls himself, has been described to me as a tall and lithe man who wears engraved silver armour into battle that is polished to shine like a mirror. It is said that a man can see his reflection on its surface, but that the reflection will be warped and twisted, showing the innermost potential for darkness in his soul.

I would doubt that any vision one might see upon its surface could match the actual darkness and horror of the creature that now resides within the armour.





So think that people have beheld such monstrous, perambulatory creatures breaks my weary heart. It must tear a man's soul and test his faith beyond measure after seeing as unnatural a thing as this.

Are we to fall under the march of creatures such as these? Are the great towers and spires that mankind has thrust into the sky, as signs of dominance and superiority, to be cast down by things so unnatural and twisted that they have no name? If there is any justice and order to the universe then this cannot be!

But justice and order are not the way of Chaos. Chaos is the very opposite of order. It thrives and multiplies and fights and breeds and grows and festers with no regard to morality, truth, colour or rule.

And how do we fight such a force? Indeed, on examination, it seems that the qualities that sets mortals apart from Chaos are hindrances, shackles, and deadly disadvantage in this most dirty of wars.

But we cannot forsake what we are! That would be foolish. Such notions of honour and valour keeps us above the low forces of Darkness. If we falter from the righteous path we will fall, for we will become Chaos, and then Chaos will have won. And we will fall.

At night I dream of shambling lumps of gristle and flesh, leaking blood and fluids onto the pure soil of our lands. I wake up with tears on my face and my hands gripping my pillows.

By Ragnar Tenison
Work shown may fe-
Heroes in
Hell never you'll swear must the
be perfect,
Test your life and soul
And you join me in the Hall.

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Even as I cast my eyes over the splendidly decorated and gorgeously coloured banners of the Knights, whatever was left of my heart seemed to beat faster in my armoured chest. I recognised the mark of the Changer of Ways, repeated over and over again on their armour and garments in slightly different forms and colours, sometimes standing alone like a bold flame, often repeated so that it formed an interwoven pattern of twisted colour that burned my eyes and confused my mind. I saw their banners woven into the image of flaming birds and grails of fire, others adorned with interpretations of the Vithering Eye of the Change Lord, and many more bearing images of twisted multi-coloured reptiles, birds and scorpions.

Slightly apart from the other standards stood a banner of velvet that was the colour of the sky, but faded and mellowed as with age. Upon it was woven, with golden thread, the image of a coiled serpent, its scales picked out with gemstones and its eyes represented by two huge rubies. All around the serpent image were runes spelling out the accomplishments and praises of its bearer.

By the standard stood a Knight of striking appearance. His armour shone like the purest silver, but trimmed with an engraved pattern of intertwined snakes whose writhing forms were embellished with red and white enamel, and whose eyes were set with small rubies. At this Knight's feet lay a huge round shield bearing Tzeentch's own rune set on a background of scarlet flame.

The Knight wore a highly polished silver helm which shone like a mirror and which bore two pairs of silver horns, the lower pair curled and ribbed like those of a ram, the upper pair sleek and long like a gazelle. Though the helm covered his face completely, I could see through the narrow eye slits the flickering of small sapphire flames.

Yes, as I looked upon the form of this mighty being, this coldest of all Chaos champions, I remembered the reason why I had left the Knights so many years before.

Lord Raldour.

Extracted from "Memoirs of Redemption"
By Kazimir Demnar

Aekold Helbrass

Being a sorrowful tale of the fall of Aekold Helbrass, from the "Tales of the True Path" by Alphonse Dolmancé, suppressed 18/2/2510 I.C. by order of Volkmar von Hindenstern.

There was a time, many years ago now, when that nightmare of folklore, Aekold Helbrass, was the respected son of a noble household, living in his father's mansion house in Altdorf. Back then, Aekold had everything a young man of the Empire could possibly want: wealth, power, a beautiful fiancée and a commission within the Templar Order of the Jade Griffon. But these good things were not to last.

His problems started when he joined what he thought to be a harmless secret society calling itself the "Brethren of the Golden Eagle." He had understood little of the principles behind the Brethren's complex rites, but they had shared a common goal. They wanted to change the world.

Aekold had always believed that there had to be something more to existance than the petty bickering and selfish politics of city life, despite the fact he had found little evidence of that something more in all his twenty-six years of living. In his quest for a better way, Aekold embraced the Empire's state religion with a passion, seeking to devote his life to the service of the Heldenhammer. But over time he found even the teachings of Sigmar's Holy Church lacking, in that they promised little but expected much. They taught that there would be no cessation to the pain and pettiness of this life, and even after death there could be no guarantee of peace or an afterlife, so grave were the horrors that beset mankind. It seemed that the lives of men were doomed to be spent in the pursuit of petty things for an uncertain reward.

Day and night Aekold prayed to Sigmar, begging the first Emperor to show him how he could change the world for the better – to make a difference. But no answer came. Then, as Aekold's hopes of ever finding the knowledge he sought had begun to fade, a drinking friend introduced him to the Brethren of the Golden Eagle. Aekold saw at once that this was what he had been looking for all his life. The Brethren were dedicated to the notion of changing the world, and their every word and endeavour stretched towards this end.

The Brethren's preacher was an intelligent and urbane man by the name of Melic Rosencrantz. He was a magus of considerable skill and power, easily a rival to the initiates of the Colleges of Magic, able to change base metals into gold, heal wounds with a word and change animals into new forms. Here was a man that Aekold could follow. The young knight was certain his prayers had finally been answered.

The rituals of the Brethren called upon a "great Lord of Change", beseeching this divine being's aid so that improvement might be found in this world and in this life, rather than in the uncertainty of the next. Aekold's intelligence and powerful personality soon earned him a position in the Brethren's most secretive Third Circle, and before long he had been initiated into the many secrets of the coven.

Then, one night, the Templars of Sigmar raided his cult's hidden shrine. Aekold only narrowly escaped their clutches, but under the interrogation of the witch

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Aekold Helbrass

hunter captain himself, one of Aekold's fellow acolytes broke and revealed the names of all the members of the coven, Aekold amongst them.

Aekold's commission in the Order of the Jade Griffon was revoked, and his fellow knights came to arrest him and bring him before the authorities of Sigmar. Aekold begged them to listen to him, but they cared nothing for his excuses. Three of them died under Aekold's sword, and the other two were so badly wounded they would never fight again. No matter what could be said about him, no one could doubt that Aekold was the most talented swordsman of his order.

Aekold fled through the streets of the Empire's capital, pursued by his former friends, the town watch and the feared Templars of Sigmar. In his desperation, Aekold sought refuge at the house of his betrothed, Lady Johanna von Leber, but even she had barred her windows against him. He tried to explain the unjustness of the assumption made against him and why he had been declared an outlaw, but the lady did not want to hear him. She declared that she did not ever want to see him again, accusing him of bringing disrepute upon her family and their standing in society.

Aekold knew then that but for Validus, his warhorse, he was truly alone.

With little else to do, Aekold headed for the River Gate. Without pause or leave, the once-knight rode down the guards and took the north road at a heedless gallop.

Before long Aekold had left the Reikland's borders far behind him, but Sigmar's witch hunters were always close at hand. Forced to live like a beast of the wild, Aekold slept in the darkness in the deep forests and travelled by night to avoid the eyes of the curious. His food he stole or bought from roadside farms, and he avoided every town and toll gate. All the while the humiliation of his fall from grace made his blood run hot.

At the borders of Ostland, one of Sigmar's Templars finally caught up with him, and a crossbow bolt intended for Aekold's heart only narrowly missed taking his life. Only by throwing his great zwei-hander, an unthinkable deed for a knight, did he manage to kill the witch hunter before one of his crossbow bolts could find its mark. The two-handed sword had struck his foe squarely in the chest, and Aekold had barely managed to recover from the attack before the ferocious hunting dogs of the Count of Ostland appeared, snapping at his heels.

Perhaps fate had been unkind to Aekold. After all, the young man had only sought to escape the monotony of his jaded and dull existence as a young nobleman of the Empire. All around him he had seen the decadence of the Imperial capital: the filthy streets and the hopeless mobs of the poor, begging and scraping out a miserable existence in hovels and disease ridden slums. Aekold had wanted to change

Each letter is a symbol. Every symbol is characterised as a number. The language of Igzenloh must be a combination of the two.

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everything, to begin anew, start afresh, to cast down the old, corrupt society and be part of building something new, something better.

But this was not to be. His life was in ruins, his father had disowned him, and his friends turned against him. He had been driven beyond the borders of Kislev to the very edge of the civilised world, fleeing for his life and with a price on his head. All he had left were his weapons, his strong sword arm and his will to survive. They would have to be enough. He was about to enter the Troll Country and none would dare to follow him there.

Aekold travelled northwards for seven days before he encountered any resistance. He had seen the groups of misshapen creatures in the shadows of the treeline or upon the distant horizon, but they had never sought to approach him. They seemed content to watch. Why, Aekold did not know, but until they became a threat he decided to pay them no mind.

As Aekold travelled onward, the trees grew thinner and thinner, and the land grew ever rockier. After a time he came across a great monolith, a standing stone carved as if by some titanic hand. It was inscribed with sigils and runes that seemed to glow in the gathering darkness. Though he could not say why, Aekold knew that the carved slab was of vital importance to him. He had to know what was written on the monolith, even if it would cost him his soul.

But the monolith was not unguarded.

Out of the crude shrine that stood next to the carved pillar, a huge creature emerged. The earth shook under its great cloven hooves and gigantic muscles writhed under its thick hide. Huge horns spiralled above a bovine head, and yet the creature's body was humanoid, though massive like that of an ogre. In its hands the bull-creature carried an axe that Aekold reckoned must have weighed almost as much as he did. Aekold recognised the creature from the grimoires of the Brethren: this was a Minotaur, a gigantic blasphemy against nature, a cross between a mighty bull and a giant man.

Yet, despite its brutal appearance, intelligence gleamed in the creature's bloodshot eyes – the low cunning of an animal combined with some of the sense of a man. Forcing his voice to stay calm, Aekold told the creature of his desire and intention to study the carvings on the monolith.

In coarse and barely recognisable Reikspiel, the Minotaur replied that only the Chosen One could find the path, and that all those who could not Change must perish. Then, bellowing a battle cry, the Minotaur lifted its gigantic axe and charged. Aekold slammed down his visor and spurred Validus to a gallop. They thundered towards each other, man and beast, one screaming the battle cry of an Imperial knight, the other bellowing and snarling in the dark tongue of Chaos.

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Aekold Helbrass

They struck. Aekold's lance pierced the Minotaur's left shoulder, its wooden haft shattering with the force of the impact. Rearing upwards, Validus lashed out with both iron-shod hooves and crashed down against the Minotaur's skull. But the creature's gigantic axe had just as great a reach as Aekold's lance, and its swipe was blindingly fast. It hit Aekold's raised shield but the tremendous force of the blow ripped it from his hand, leaving his left arm numb.

The Minotaur swung again with its free hand and its massive fist, perhaps twice the size of Aekold's head, smashed the knight from his saddle. Aekold crashed to the ground, the air driven from his lungs by the force of the impact.

With a ferocious roar, the Minotaur tore the steel tip of the lance from its shoulder and threw it to the ground. Thick blood oozed from its wound, but the creature seemed not to notice. With blood-red eyes and crimson foam pouring from its mouth, the creature bellowed once more. All vestiges of sanity had disappeared from its face.

It rushed towards the fallen knight, swinging its axe in a huge arc, it axe struck a stone where Aekold's head had been but a heartbeat before, and such was the force of the blow that the blade of the axe cracked and the haft snapped in two like a dry twig. Aekold regained his footing and scrambled towards Validus. He drew his sword from its scabbard hanging from the horse's saddle. But the Minotaur had been just as quick. Two mighty arms closed around Aekold's chest, squeezing him until his armour creaked as he was lifted above the head of the Minotaur. Though his ribs threatened to break and his strength faded, Aekold swung his blade downwards. It struck the Minotaur in the neck, cutting muscles, severing tendons and sinew, and splintering the bones beneath. A cry of fury and pain cut the air.

As the Minotaur toppled forward, Aekold hit the ground alongside it. The world seemed to spin and go dark.

When Aekold woke, the Minotaur was nowhere to be seen.

Groaning with agony Aekold rose to his feet and staggered across to the monolith. Despite the pain, Aekold felt driven to see the carvings immediately, as if forced to by some unseen hand. As he looked upon the swirling designs and jagged runes that covered the monolith's surface, Aekold realised that they formed a picture. Stepping back, Aekold began to make out the shape of a knight with the device of a rampant Griffon on his shield, the same device on Aekold's own shield. The former knight studied the ancient carvings, and while he was no expert, he was sure that judging by the wear of the rock they had to have been several centuries old. And yet, undeniably, the knight carved on the stone was supposed to be him. A chill ran down Aekold's spine. He turned his back on the monolith.

I have lost the taste for food. I lost my appetite months ago. It seems futile to me to carry on. It is only stubbornness that keeps me going. I will see it through.

Aekold Helbrass

Days passed and Aekold rode further north. Here was a place unfit for mortal men, only those who had pledged themselves to darkness could travel safely. Yet Aekold sensed that he could still choose his path, as if he stood at the very edge of sanity but had not yet crossed to the madness beyond. He knew that this was his very last chance to turn back and rejoin civilisation. He could ride to Tilea or the land of the Border Princes and offer his services as a freelance to one of the countless mercenary bands of the Old World. He was strong and fast, well versed in tactics and strategy. With a little luck he could quickly win fame and fortune, and soon lead a mercenary contingent of his own.

For a long while Aekold held Validus in place, and then, making up his mind, spurred the horse onwards, to the north and darkness. It might have been his imagination, but mocking laughter seemed to whisper upon the cold wind as he rode on.

Day and night lost all meaning. The eternal darkness of the Chaos Wastes was lit only by the strange lights emanating from the far north. Each time Aekold blinked his eyes, the landscape appeared to have subtly changed. When he tried to focus his eyes on any landmark it seemed to almost flee from vision, and things he thought would take minutes to reach escaped ever further into the distance no matter how hard he galloped towards them.

Water now could not quench his thirst. He yearned for something of more substance, something he could not yet name. Neither did he feel the need to sleep any more. He felt wide awake, and his senses were sharper than he had ever dreamed possible. He felt no hunger. He felt strong, healthy and fast, stronger and faster than he had ever been before.

His warhorse, Validus, had also changed. Its teeth had grown sharp, and it no longer shied back with fear when one the foul creatures from those endless plains approached: its eyes glowed red in the eternal darkness of the Chaos Wastes, and its hide had become darker and tough as leather. Aekold noticed that Validus's tongue was now as rough as sandpaper and had grown long and forked. The steed no longer brushed its nose against Aekold's face, but always stood silent and unmoving when they were not riding.

The unearthly wind of the Wastes was full of sounds, strange voices that whispered to Aekold about all his noble and evil deeds, as if warring for his attention, perhaps even his soul. But one voice was stronger, and it drowned out all the others:

"Be strong," it would say, "only the strong are welcome."

When one day Aekold cried back to the sibilant voice that he was strong and that he feared nothing, mocking laughter returned in answer. Then the voice whispered to him once more:

Aekold Helbrass

"Then show me, gallant knight. Prove to me your courage."

On the horizon, a gigantic shape loomed from the darkness. It was a gateway that stood on top of a long flight of steps. It was a titanic altar, perhaps erected by the giants of ancient times when the world was young and the gods of Chaos first turned their eyes upon it.

In the sky above the gateway flames danced, forming the shapes of eldritch runes, not unlike the ones Aekold had seen on the grimoires at the temple of Sigmar, hidden and locked away from ordinary folk. But as a part of his training Aekold had learned to decipher them, and so read aloud the message written in the sky:

"Shamelna Tzeen'neth! Atde phaosden tak'zith!"

Then Aekold dismounted, and started to climb up the stairs. On and on he climbed, higher and higher, until the air grew thin and cold and clouds whirled far below him. Despite his heavy armour, Aekold felt no fatigue.

At the top of the stairway Aekold gazed around him. He had come to the end of his journey. The gateway before him seemed to be made out of polished silver, reflecting the grim darkness and dancing lights of the Chaos Wastes. Aekold stood before the portal and stared at his mirror image. Looking back at him was a young, handsome Templar in burnished armour, holding a shining sword with a jade griffon set into its pommel. This was what Aekold could have been, something he had now lost for all eternity.

The mirror image spoke:

"I am the Guardian. I am the defender of humanity. You are an abomination."

With that the reflection stepped out of the portal with its sword raised in a knight's salute. Then it charged.

So swift was the attack that Aekold barely had time to defend himself. From the first blow Aekold knew that his life was at stake. Never before had he met a man who could match him in a sword fight. But this warrior from beyond the mirror-gate was just as fast, strong, and skilled as he was. They slashed and struck, weaving dodging and parrying as they circled each other warily. Now and then one of them would launch an attack with blistering speed, only to be parried by equal skill.

Aekold was struck suddenly by the pointlessness of it all. Why did he struggle so much to defend himself when he had nothing left to defend? But instead of giving in, Aekold smiled, brought up his sword and charged.

Aekold Helbrass

Both men struck. The Templar's sword sliced through Aekold's armour, cutting deep into his ribs. But Aekold's sword took the Templar's head from his shoulders.

As the body of the white Templar fell, blood gushing from the stump of his neck, Aekold sank to his knees, his own life blood oozing through the gaps in his armour. He was dying and he knew it. Yet he had come so far and seen so much, too much to let it all end in that moment. Agonisingly slowly, Aekold began to crawl back to the portal, leaving a trail of blood behind him. Now the silver of the mirror showed no reflection, only the multicoloured flames of the Chaos Wastes coloured its surface.

Aekold touched the mirror's surface. He knew that his own death waited for him on the other side of it, yet still he had to continue. As the world seemed to spin around him, Aekold heard the sibilant voice again, only now it seemed to echo all around him:

"The way lies beyond this portal, yet only the Chosen One may enter! Are you he?"

For one final time Aekold felt a pang of guilt – for one last time he longed for his former life. But what had he to go back to? His past was as dead to him as the headless Templar that lay behind him. Finally Aekold pushed against the surface of the mirror-portal.

A searing pain, like lances of pure white fire, ripped through him. Aekold screamed in agony as he felt talons, hotter than hellfire, colder than the void, tearing him apart, separating flesh from bone, raking his very soul and obliterating whatever was left of his sanity. Then all sense and feeling left him.

Aekold , the son of Graf of the Reikland, was gone. The newly born champion of Tzeen'neth standing before the mirror-portal turned around to study his new form.

The pale reflection in the mirror showed a face quite unlike the young knight who had left Altdorf all those months ago. Two eyes, glittering like multi-faceted gems and burning with inner balefires, stared back at him. His armour was covered in twisting runes that glowed in the flickering darkness of the Chaos wasteland. His sword gleamed with blue light, and seemed to moan as he moved it, its shape changing with each motion.

Aekold began to laugh. He raised his sword, lifting it in a challenge to humanity and all the things he had once held dear. His laughter turned to a scream of hatred and vengeance"

"I will return!" he cried. "For now I know the truth!"

5 7 3 1 – 3 6 15 3 4 2 13 – 25 2 14 – 7
3 6 7 12 14 18 2 – 1 6 5 12 12 – 8 4 6 1
– 25 15 21 18 5 13 25 23 3 6 5 14 15
23 – 8 4 20 7 11 – 7 5 3 11 14 12 5 24

Tales abound from the chill north of a warrior of Izcentoh who is adorned in flowing robes, covered in feathers who oft enters the lands of men to ravage the land and take back spoils. The land of Kislev is beset by such creatures, and the Empire owes these stanch and hard men a debt for keeping the hordes at bay. But every year attacks by warlords such as these increase, and the defences become more hard-pressed to cope. Many are put to the sword before armies of sufficient size can be mustered to counter the attacks. How much longer will the defences hold?



The creature must possess great strength to wield such a huge sword.

such an imposing figure! Rouge he seems in his feathered robes and finely wrought armour. Is his great size a boon from his master? Or is it just a misleadingly scaled picture? Reports abound about how fighters of Chaos can be larger than the average human. I can only imagine the effect facing such a warrior has on a soldier on the Emperor's armies. My respect for the men who fight such creatures knows no bounds. But I wonder, when will the reserves of brave men run out?

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nd the falsehood
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th
not consort with Darkness

he truth is a malleable thing
ests of war on the horizon
arly was my date decreed

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ell me the real meaning
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Of Matters Arcane and Magical

A DETAILED EXPLORATION OF MATTERS MAGICAL, IN CONNECTION WITH TZEENTCH, WHO IS THE GOD OF CHANGE AND SORCERY, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE WINDS OF MAGIC AND THEIR EFFECTS.

As the majority of this section of my investigations deals with Tzeentch, the lord of all magic and sorcery, I think it fitting that it should be here that I seek to analyse these strange and esoteric matters of spells and enchantment.

Firstly, it is important to know the difference between what has been called magic and the process of casting spells of whatever sort. Magic, so my magister colleagues have assured me, is in fact the proper name for the energy of transmutation itself – that strange force that magisters perceive as the eight Winds of Magic. Magic is *not* the practice and process of spell-casting, as some confuse it to be.

Spell-casting is the interaction between the *metaphysical* energy of magic and the *physical* things of the Mortal Realm, controlled and directed by an intelligent being – whether human, elf or something else. There are many different kinds and methods of spell-casting, from the wizardry of the Empire's magisters, to the nightmarish sorceries of Chaos servants, but I shall look at these in more detail later.

Magic is a force unique to itself and is entirely its own thing. It is not an amalgam of other, predictable and understandable forces that appear within the Mortal Realm, but is instead an entirely unnatural thing that comes from the immortal realm of the Aethyr. Although in one sense magic is the very stuff from which the Aethyr is made, it must be borne in mind that magic is Aethyric energy as it manifests itself within the Mortal Universe.

Within the Aethyr there are supposedly no fixed rules or laws, and so the rigid divisions between the colours of magic and what those colours represent cannot be as distinct as they are when the stuff of the Aethyr refracts into magic as it enters into the Mortal Realms.

Magic has the power to change both matter and thought, body and mind, for magic transcends the usual boundaries between the material and the immaterial. As the power of fire is to burn and consume, the Coloured Winds of Magic that blow down from northern climes is not a movement of air or gas, but the movement of the vital and uncaring energy of transmutation.

The Coloured Winds of Magic

Despite the fact that within the Aethyr there are no physical laws (or, at least, no laws that are not subject to sudden and random change), when magic leaks into our world from beyond the Wastes of Chaos it becomes bound to some degree by the laws of the Mortal Universe.

Although I could not explain why this might be, I suppose that it must be a similar process (though reversed) to when mortal beings and objects pass through the Northern Gates into the Aethyr. There will always be some kind of change wrought when the immaterial meets the material, and, for whatever reason, when the raw stuff of the Aethyr (magic), blows through the Northern Gates and enters into our reality, it suddenly becomes visible (at least to those with the witch-sight), and refracts into eight different colours – the eight Winds of Magic.

But as with everything that has any contact or relation to Chaos, the situation is not so straightforward as it might first seem. Because the eight Colleges of Magic have been named after the eight Winds of Magic, a situation has arisen within the Empire whereby the names of the Winds of Magic are often confused with the appearance or practices of the magisters of the Colleges that study them.

So indeed there tends to be some confusion between the actual colour of any particular Wind, the common names that the populace at large might give the magisters of any given colour, and the actual Chaos rune for the Winds of Magic (taken from *Anoqeyân*, or the *lingua praestantia* – said to be the language of daemons and gods). This is exacerbated by the fact that these colours are more than just shades and hues, but are also the separate projections and forces of fundamental, though non-sensate, aspects of the mortal world – whether these aspects be forces, physical things or abstracts.

As an example, the green Wind of Magic is the wind that is drawn to, and inspired by, all forms of plant life. Its rune name is *Ghyran*, and yet the College of the magisters that study and use Ghyran is often called the *Jade College*. To make matters even more confusing, there have been



This creature, with its skull mask, thin, bony limbs and animated pose make for an unsettling image.

some scholars who have written that the magic of the Jade College is the magic of Life, which in itself is misleading because such a statement does not qualify what is meant by *life* (clearly it cannot mean animal life, for that is the domain of an entirely different colour), nor does it explain what uses this magic can be put to.

So in an attempt to clarify this matter, here follows a list of the Colours of Magic, along with the names commonly associated with them, and their rune names, in addition to an explanation of the uses that these magics are often put to (as researched from the last surviving copy of the *Magistorum Chaotica*, and as told to me by my colleague and friend, Magister Patriarch Verspasian Kant of the College of Light):

Colour	*Common Name(s)*	*Runic Name*
White	Light	Hysh
Blue	Celestial	Azyr
Yellow	Gold	Chamon
Green	Life / Jade	Ghyran
Brown	Beasts / Amber	Ghur
Red	Fire / Bright	Aqshy
Grey	Shadow	Ulgu
Purple	Death / Amethyst	Shyish

Hysh is the Aethyr's coalescence and metaphysical certainty of light – including the uses that light can be put to and the abstracts that light sometimes represents. Hysh is the magic of illumination, the abstract of *high-mindedness* and consciousness in its most general sense. It is intangible, diffused and all permeating, needing the total focus of will and an absolute determination of mind to make use of it. It is perhaps the most difficult of the colours to bend to one's will.

Learning to control Hysh has been described as being as much a journey of self-realisation as anything else, and the study of Hysh is surrounded by lengthy mantras and meditative invocations designed primarily to focus the mind and calm the spirit. The magisters of Hysh are respected for being peerless philosophers, and the acolytes of the College of Light have made some of humanity's greatest philosophical advances.

Hysh is not so much concerned with knowledge and facts so much as it is with wisdom and truths. Hysh requires only that we know ourselves. From one standing outside looking into Hysh, it can be dazzling and overpowering in too great a quantity, but to one submersed within Hysh, looking out as it were, all darkness is dispelled and the whole world is illuminated and clear.

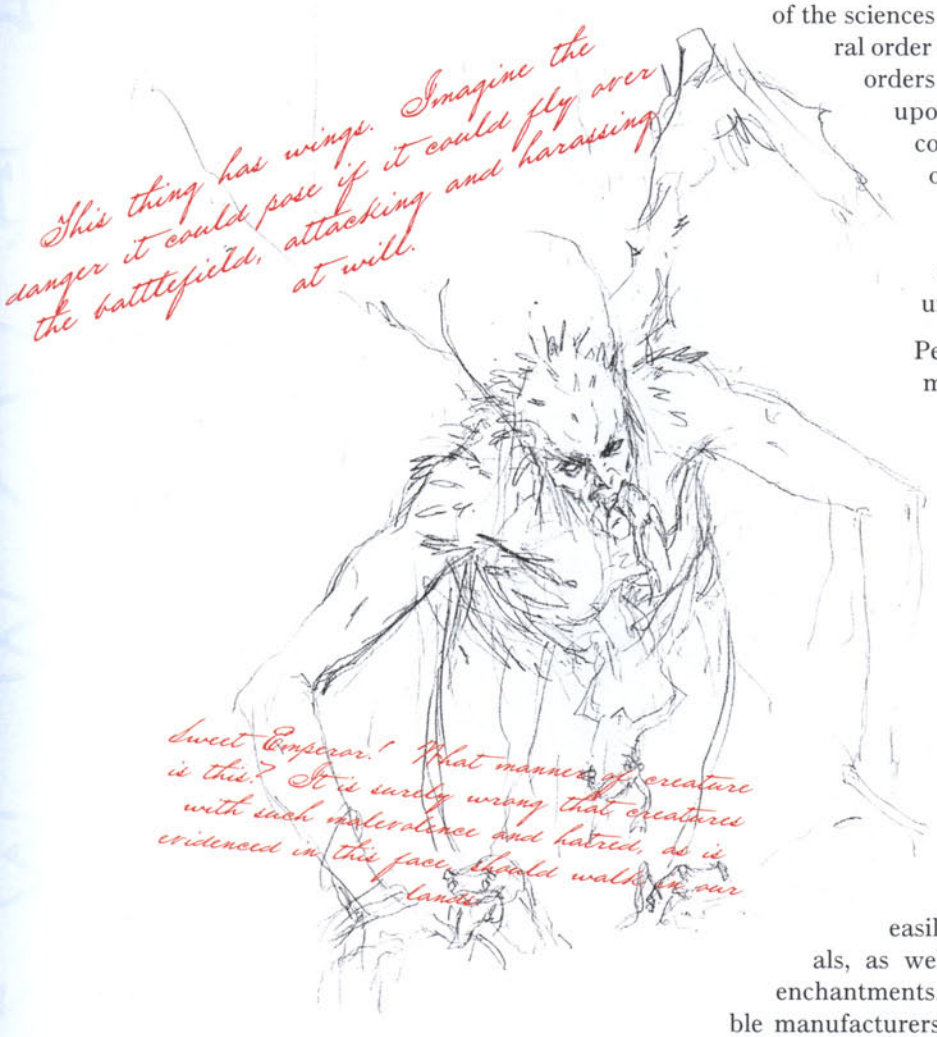
Hysh has many potent applications and is most renowned for its powers of healing and protection. The magisters of Hysh, or the hierophants as they are sometimes known, are amongst the wisest of men, vehemently opposed to the Chaos of the daemon-gods in all its countless forms. Where Hysh is steady and constant, Chaos is random entropy, and where Hysh stands for controlled grace and self-understanding, Chaos promotes a total lack of control, confusion and insanity. For this reason, the magisters of Hysh are particularly renowned for their abilities to exorcise and banish daemons from the Mortal Realms.

Azyr is the Blue Wind of Magic, and it is the Aethyr's metaphysical drive for inspiration and that which is out of reach. Azyr is creativity and the desire to emote. Azyr builds upon abstracts, and seeks to find certainty within the unknowable. It finds and creates meaning and narrative for and within things that are without meaning or narrative. Azyr wishes to express the inexpressible.

Azyr reaches into the future, and as such the magisters of Azyr are particularly fascinated with divination. Azyr epitomises the pursuit for omens, and its magisters are experts at interpreting dreams and rune casting. They are oracles and seers, fortune tellers and diviners. They are also great theoreticians, dealing more with leaps of logic to make great discoveries than the analysis of arduous trial and error that so fascinates the magisters of Chamon.

Azyr is light and insubstantial, and after passing into our realm through the Northern Gates it quickly dissipates into the upper portions of the heavens, becoming a haze of eldritch cloud, visible only to those who posses the witch-sight. It is for this reason that Azyr's magisters are known for their greatest predilection of star gazing, and they are renowned for being astronomers and astrologers without peer. It is no doubt for this reason that they are sometimes called *celestial wizards* by the less educated folk of the Empire.

As the Azyr Wind blows from the timeless realms of the Aethyr across the distant sky, it is supposed to be possible for Azyr's magisters to predict important events, apparently by the



manner in which celestial bodies are distorted by the drifting cloud of Azyr's blue light.

Chamon is the Yellow Wind, and it is the Aethyric abstract of logic, the desire to quantify, to instruct, and the wish to implement learning to practical ends. Chamon is complexity, and it is analysis. Chamon is concerned with empirical investigation and experimentation (a pursuit epitomised by the endless search by many of humanity's scholars for an alchemical formula that will turn base metals into gold).

Chamon is thought to be the densest of the Colours of Magic, and is attracted to metal as surely as water runs down a steep slope. It is said that the denser the element, the greater Chamon's attraction is to it – which accounts for the reason why gold and lead are so often used in magical experiments: one as a magical conductor and the other as a magical insulator.

In addition to being spell-casters of prodigious skill, the magisters of Chamon are also students of the sciences and seek to explore the natural order of the universe, the unnatural orders of magic, and their effects upon one another. Indeed, it could be said that the magisters of Chamon seek to find the traces of the Aethyr that they believe resides in all physical things, and find a way to unlock its endless potential.

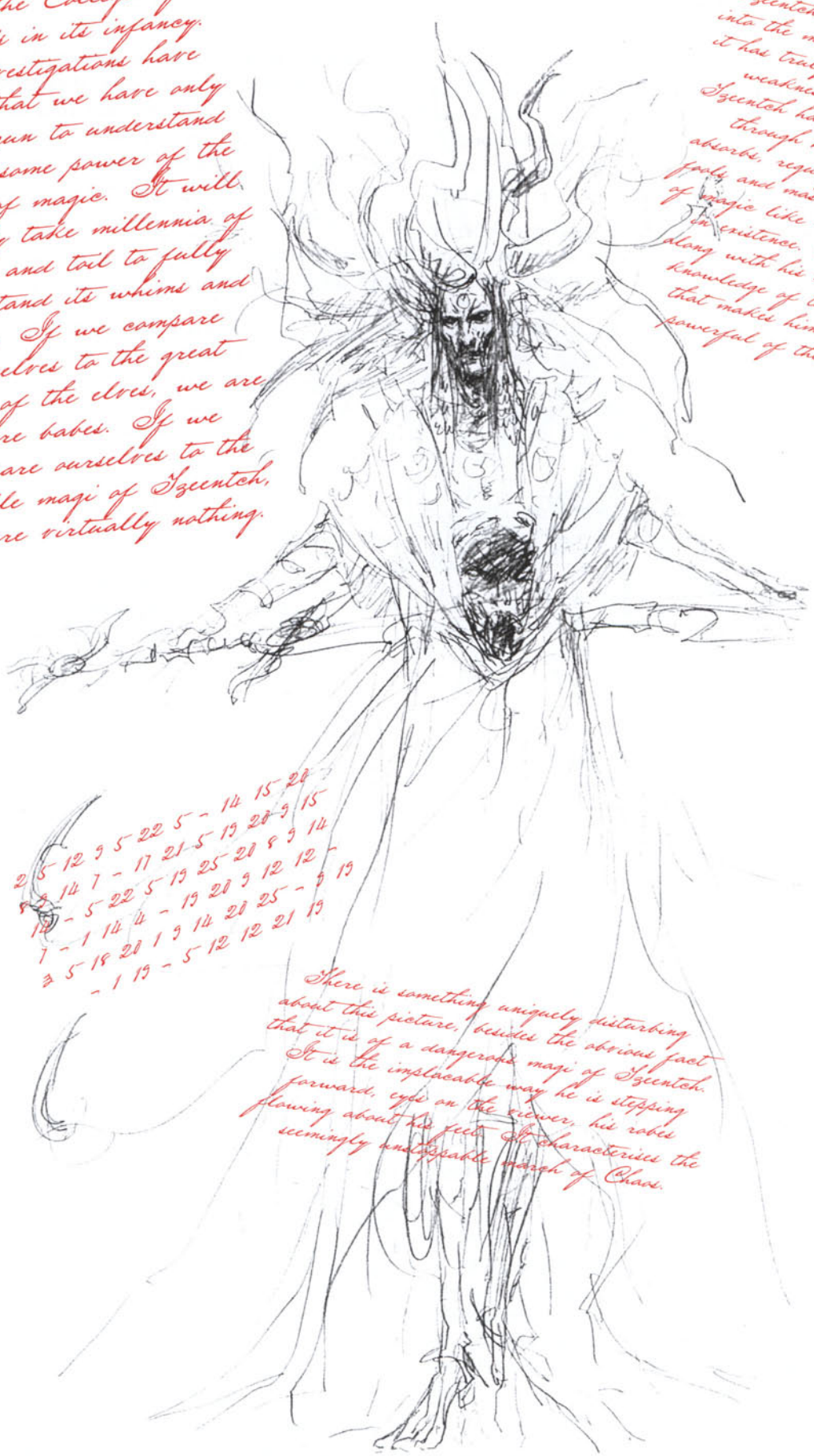
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the magisters of Chamon are regarded to be the finest alchemists outside Ulthuan's isle. They work closely with our Empire's engineers and gunnery schools, seeking always to create more efficient forms of black powder, and also safer alloys for the casting of our Empire's great cannons. Chamon's magisters have particular power over any and all metallic elements, and can easily corrode and weaken metals, as well as strengthen alloys with enchantments. They are also the most capable manufacturers of magical weapons on the continent (with the notable exception of the dwarfs, of course, whose skills at weaponsmithing, magical or otherwise, eclipse even the greatest achievements of mankind).

Ghyran is the Green Wind of Magic, and it is the Aethyr's momentum towards growth and the need to nourish and be nourished. Ghyran is nurturing, it is fertility and it is the echo of life.

Ghyran rushes from the Northern Gates and is said to fall like rain upon the mundane earth, where those with the witch-sight can see it form into pools and flowing eddies. These pools and streams of magic gradually form into rivers, flowing in much the same way as water does. When the Winds of Magic blow most strongly, it is said that the streets of every city become awash with Ghyran's flows, running across the cobbles and flagstones as an immaterial stream that the common man neither sees nor feels. For this reason, Ghyran is said to be drawn to the rivers, waterways, lakes and springs of our world. This water is drawn up through the roots of all plants, and therefore feeds all living things.

The craft of our wizards from the Colleges of Magic is in its infancy. My investigations have shown that we have only just begun to understand the awesome power of the winds of magic. It will probably take millennia of study and toil to fully understand its whims and uses. If we compare ourselves to the great mages of the elves, we are mere babes. If we compare ourselves to the terrible magi of Tzeentch, we are virtually nothing.

Magic is the prime tool of Tzeentch. My investigation into the mortal races use of it has truly highlighted our weakness in the art. Tzeentch has magic running through his veins, he absorbs, regurgitates, plays, toys and masters the winds of magic like no other entity in existence. It is this, along with his unparalleled knowledge of the universe that makes him the most powerful of the deities.



There is something uniquely disturbing about this picture, besides the obvious fact that it is of a dangerous magi of Tzeentch. It is the implacable way he is stepping forward, eyes on the viewer, his robes flowing about his feet. It characterises the seemingly unstoppable march of Chaos.

Of Matters Arcane and Magical

It is said that Ghyran's magisters (or *jade wizards* as they are more commonly known), are the most sensitive to the natural order of the countryside, and so spend little time within the confines of the Empire's cities. Such is their skill with, and love for, the forces of nature and living things, Ghyran's magisters are often called upon to cure crop blights, or bring nourishment to barren soil. Because these magisters are so closely tied to the vagaries of floral life throughout the world, their own magical strength tends to wax and wane as the seasons do, being vigorous in Spring, most powerful in Summer, waning over Autumn, to become weakest in Winter.

Ghur is the Brown Wind, and it is the Aethyr's bestial spirit. It is the breath of the animal wild. It is the predator and the prey. Ghur is the Aethyric abstract of beasts and untamed places. It is a savage wind, as unreasoning as it is devoid of malice. It is completely inhuman. Ghur blows not where the walls and turrets of civilisation loom, but through the deepest forests and jagged peaks where only wild animals dwell. It is said that to open one's mind to Ghur and to learn the secrets of its magisters is to become one with the creatures of the dark wood.

It is small wonder, then, that Ghur's magisters are known to be solitary individuals, preferring the company of beasts to that of their fellow men. They tend to avoid all settlements unless there is some pressing need that draws them from the mountains and forests. For this, I am all the more pleased and impressed by the help given to me by Magister Setanta Lobas, Patriarch of the *Amber College* of Ghur, during my investigations into the foul and unnatural beastmen.

Although Magister Lobas was of amenable appearance, the magisters of his order are renowned for their bestial visages, unkempt hair and shaggy fur garments. There are those who believe that these *amber wizards* shapeshift into



This is a dynamic and dramatic pose. This magi is evidently in the act of casting a spell of some kind. There are similarities between Tzeentchian magi and our own wizards. They tend to wear long, flamboyant robes, covered in runes and sigils and carry some sort of staff or cipher to channel their power.

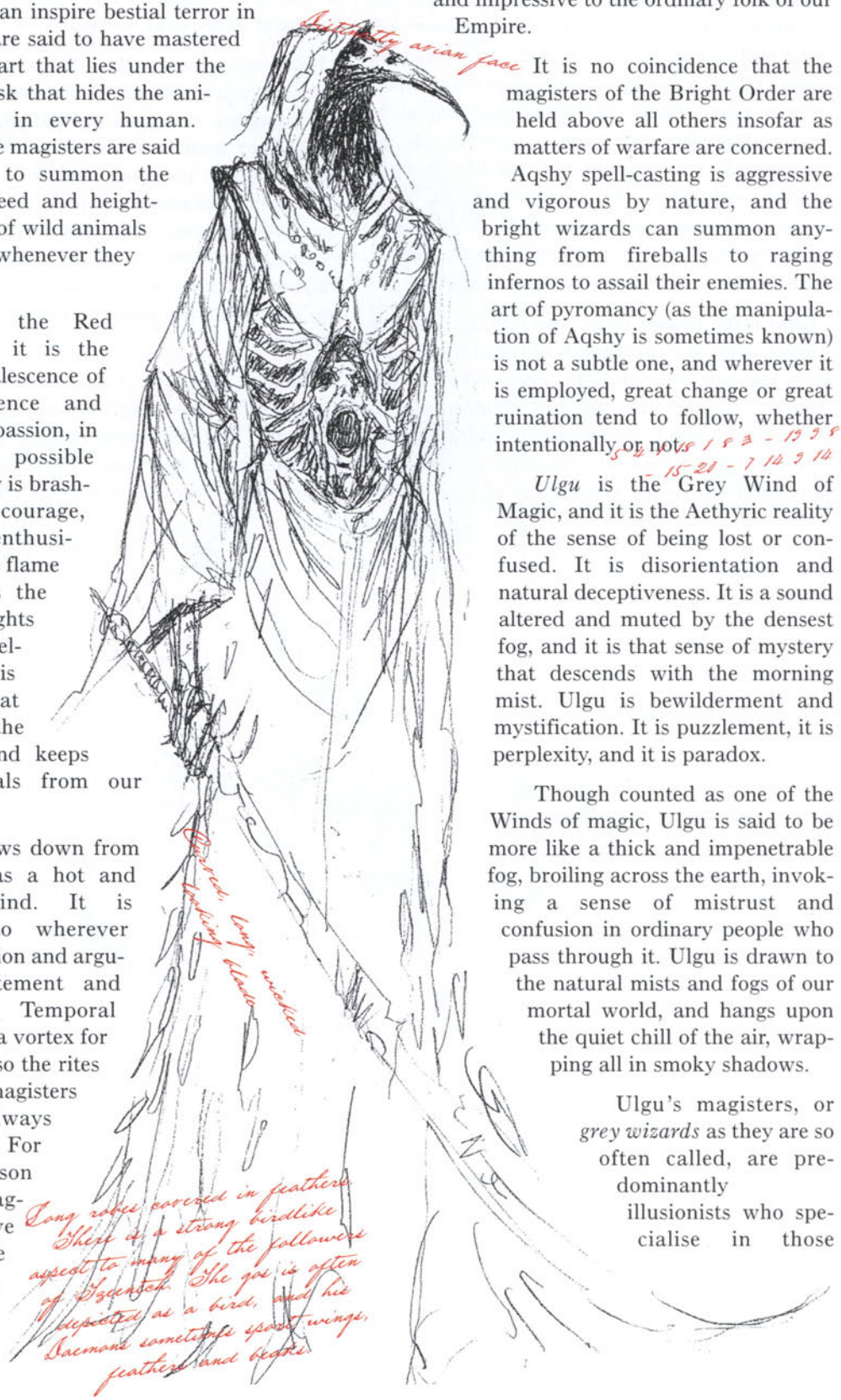
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the forms of beast. Although I have never seen this for myself, I see no reason to disbelieve it.

Ghur's magisters have control over beasts and can inspire bestial terror in men. They are said to have mastered the feral heart that lies under the civilised mask that hides the animal nature in every human. Indeed, these magisters are said to be able to summon the strength, speed and heightened senses of wild animals to aid them whenever they might need.

Aqshy is the Red Wind, and it is the Aethyr's coalescence of the experience and abstract of passion, in its widest possible sense. Aqshy is brashness, it is courage, and it is enthusiasm. It is the flame that warms the heart and lights fire in our bellies. Aqshy is the fire that banishes the darkness, and keeps wild animals from our doors.

Aqshy blows down from the north as a hot and searing wind. It is attracted to wherever there is passion and argument, excitement and vehemence. Temporal heat acts as a vortex for Aqshy, and so the rites of Aqshy's magisters almost always involve fire. For this reason Aqshy's magisters have come to be known as *bright wizards* and *pyromancers*, as they can control any flame, natural or otherwise. As such, the magics of the Bright Order tend to be the most spectacular and impressive to the ordinary folk of our Empire.



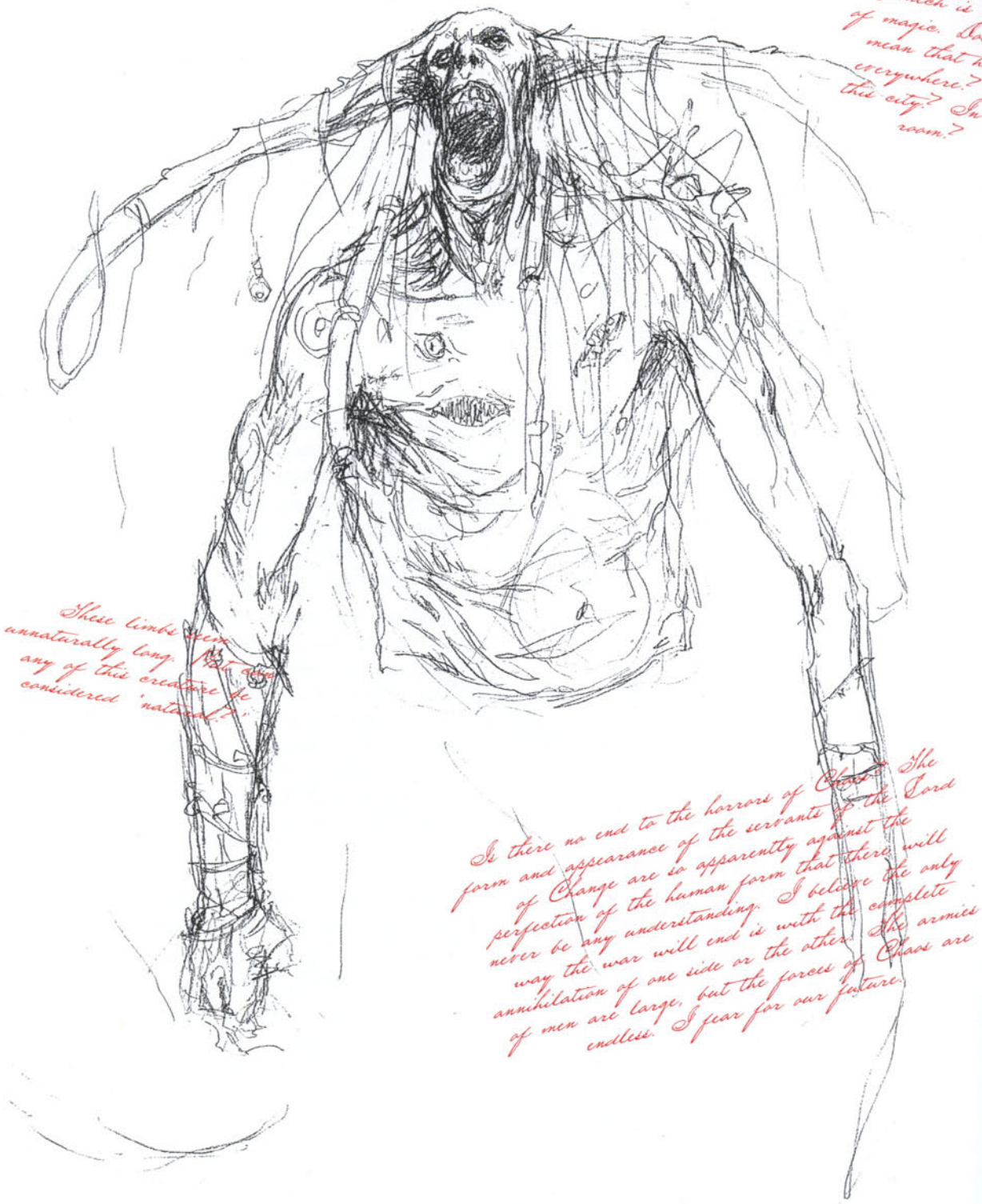
It is no coincidence that the magisters of the Bright Order are held above all others insofar as matters of warfare are concerned. Aqshy spell-casting is aggressive and vigorous by nature, and the bright wizards can summon anything from fireballs to raging infernos to assail their enemies. The art of pyromancy (as the manipulation of Aqshy is sometimes known) is not a subtle one, and wherever it is employed, great change or great ruination tend to follow, whether intentionally or not.

Ulgu is the Grey Wind of Magic, and it is the Aethyric reality of the sense of being lost or confused. It is disorientation and natural deceptiveness. It is a sound altered and muted by the densest fog, and it is that sense of mystery that descends with the morning mist. Ulgu is bewilderment and mystification. It is puzzlement, it is perplexity, and it is paradox.

Though counted as one of the Winds of magic, Ulgu is said to be more like a thick and impenetrable fog, broiling across the earth, invoking a sense of mistrust and confusion in ordinary people who pass through it. Ulgu is drawn to the natural mists and fogs of our mortal world, and hangs upon the quiet chill of the air, wrapping all in smoky shadows.

Ulgu's magisters, or *grey wizards* as they are so often called, are predominantly illusionists who specialise in those

Of Matters Arcane and Magical

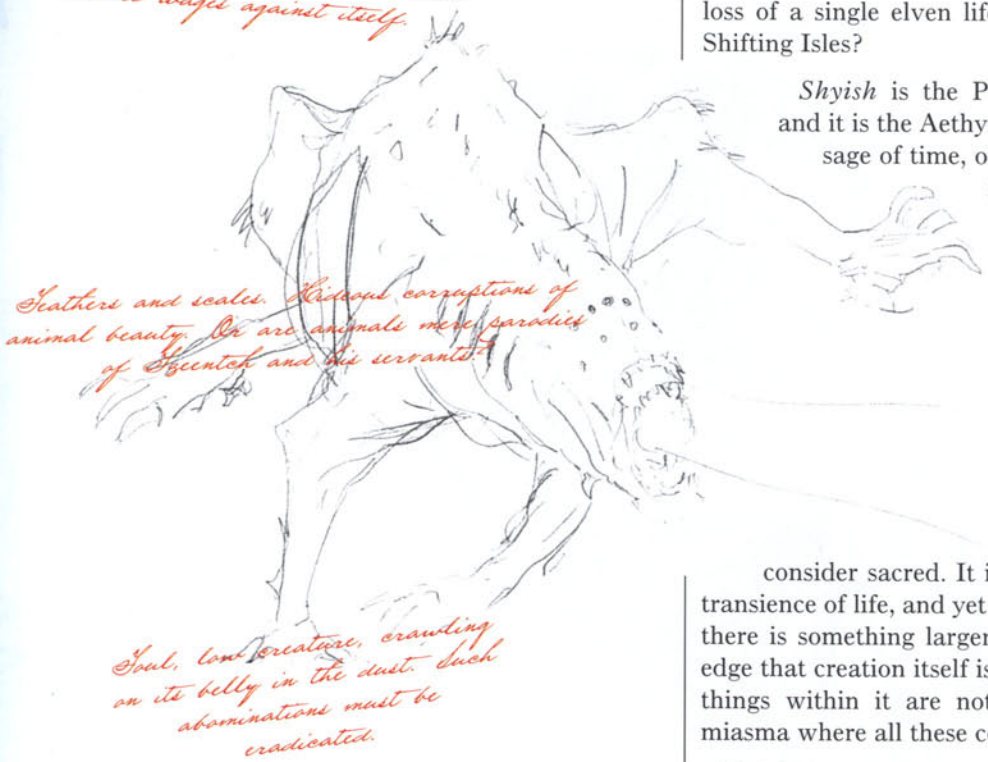


enchantments that manipulate perceptions and emotion. Their powers, though considerable, do not lend themselves well to the favour of common folk, for their spells are those of concealment, illusion, confusion, and occasionally unseen death.

There are some who might scorn these grey magics as pointless or without use, but I in turn would point out to them that the Shifting Isles of the coasts of Ulthuan are a demonstration of Ulgu's power. How many of our greatest navigators have foundered upon the Isles' shifting sandbanks, and how many invasions of Ulthuan's realm, whether it be by the raiders of cruel Norsca or one of the ambitious lords of our own great Empire, have been halted without the

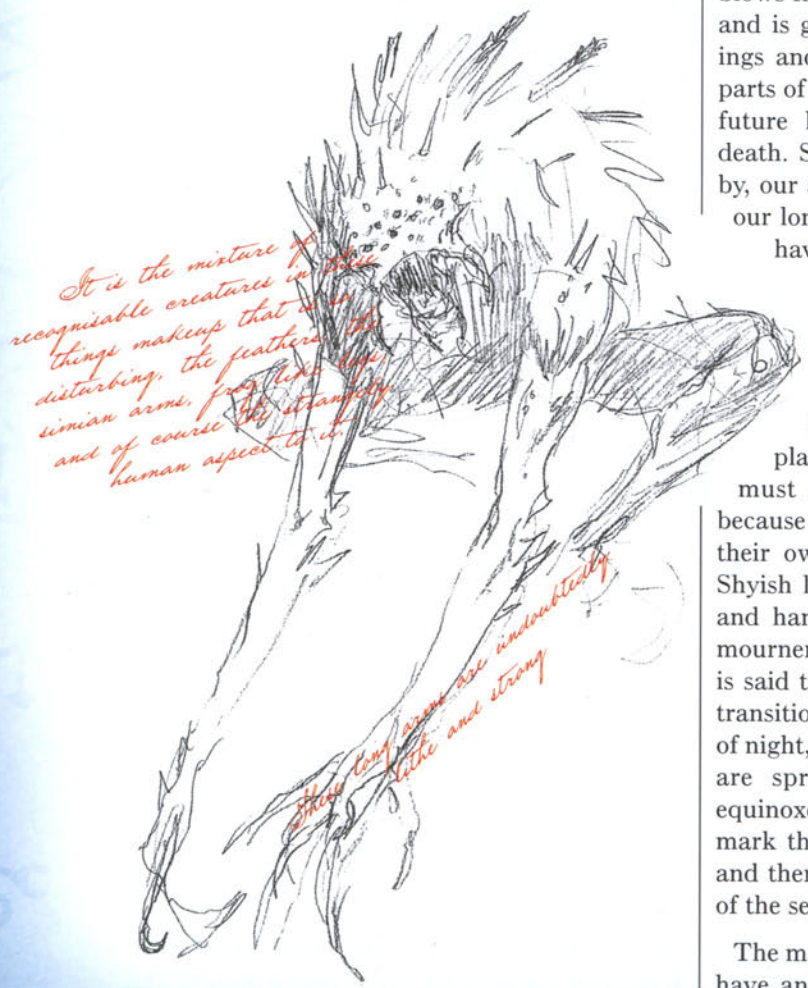
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loss of a single elven life, just by merit of the Shifting Isles?



Shyish is the Purple Wind of Magic, and it is the Aethyric certainty of the passage of time, of endings and of death. Shyish is trepidation in the face of the unknown, and it is all sentient life's fear and terrible awe of death. Yet Shyish is also reverence and respect, it is the non-divine aura that mortals project onto those things they consider sacred. It is the realisation of the transience of life, and yet it is also the belief that there is something larger than us – the knowledge that creation itself is permanent, even if all things within it are not. Shyish is the dusty miasma where all these concepts meet.

Shyish is a puppet to the passage of time. It blows from the past, because the past has ended and is gone, through the present, because endings and the expectation of death are intrinsic parts of the living of life, and into future, for the future leads inevitably towards endings and death. Shyish is our reminiscence of days gone by, our acceptance of the day we now live, and our longing for the days that may come. Some have equated Shyish with destiny, for it does not control what was, is, or shall be, but instead permeates and reflects these things with absolute intimacy.



Shyish blows strongest wherever death must be faced, or endings take place. It is drawn to battlefields where men must embrace or submit to their deaths, because all soldiers must accept the possibility of their own demise as part of their daily lives. Shyish lingers around the gibbets of execution, and hangs in the silence of graveyards where mourners gather in longing and reminiscence. It is said to be strongest in times of most obvious transition – at dawn and dusk, for one is the end of night, and the other is the end of day. Its times are spring and autumn, and yet also the equinoxes of both summer and winter, for they mark the longest and shortest days of the year and therefore the beginning of the end for each of the seasons.

The magisters of the Amethyst Order of Shyish have an affinity with death and endings of all

kinds. Indeed, they are renowned for their philosophy of initiating no events or projects, unless it is to end them. Theirs is invariably the final say.

Once a man has grown to full maturity, and the point has been crossed where growing up is replaced with growing old, the magisters of Shyish are said to be able to actually see his slow demise, as death claims him in tiny increments, second by second, hour by hour, and day by day. They see the approaching end of all things that live.

Indeed, these magisters can even see spirits and souls as they travel between this world and the next, and can communicate with them, after a fashion – although this ability ends, or so they say, when that soul is devoured or embraced by one of the many gods of men and daemons.

There are those who wrongly accuse the *amethyst wizards* of dabbling in necromancy, but this must surely be untrue. For necromancers defy death and fear endings, while the acolytes of Shyish accept death and embrace endings. Despite this, the Order of Shyish remains tainted by their apparent association with the powers of darkness.

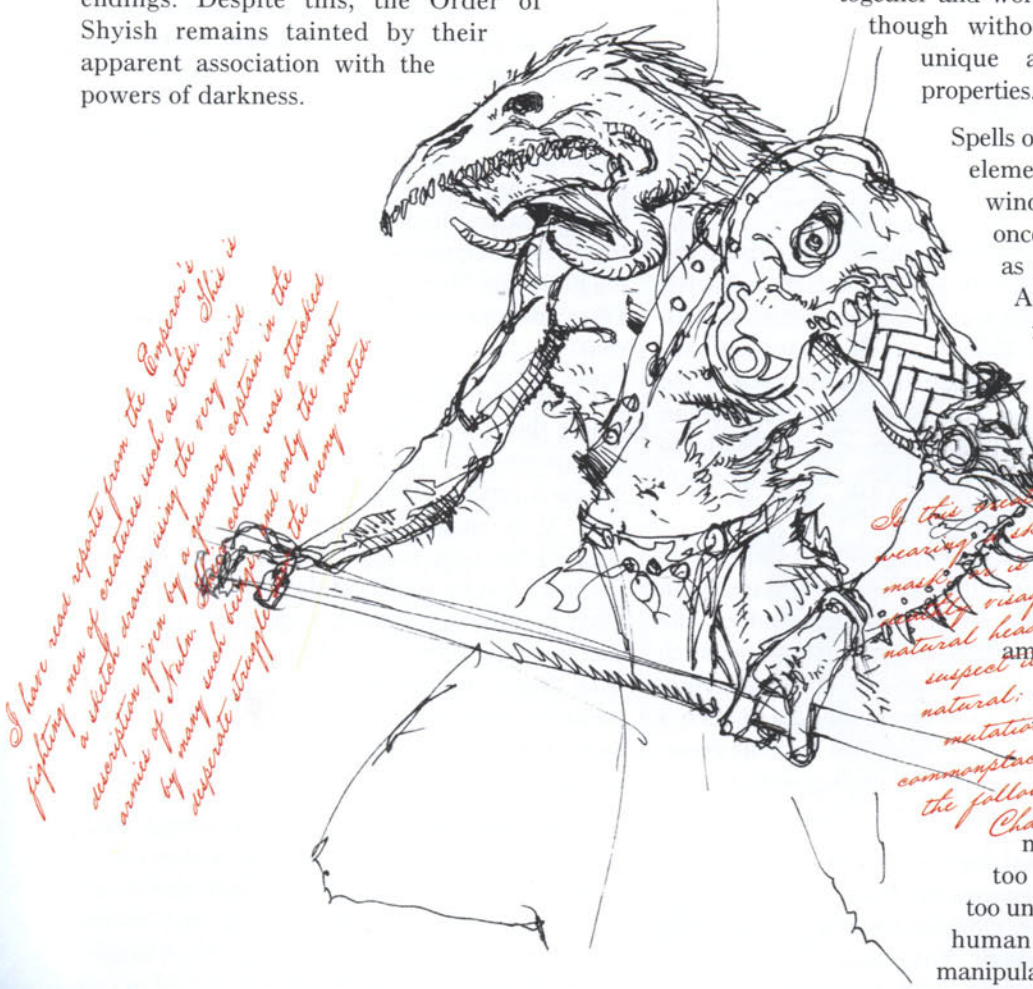
High and Dark Magic

There are two types of magic, more powerful in their own way than the previous eight colours, though they are not in themselves separate winds. Although these two forms of magic do have identifying hues (at least to those with the witch-sight), they are not refractions of Aethyric energy as indeed the previous eight colours are.

These two are:

Colour(s)	*Common Name*	*Runic Name*
Spectrum	High	Qhaysh
Black	Dark	Dhar

Qhaysh is the force that magisters and wizards throughout the world refer to *high magic*. It is magic in its purest and most undiluted form – the force of creation itself. Qhaysh is a constructive and creative force that encompasses all the natures, spirits, drives and certainties of all the other colours. Indeed, Qhaysh can be seen as all the colours of magic connected together and working in tandem, though without losing their unique and individual properties.

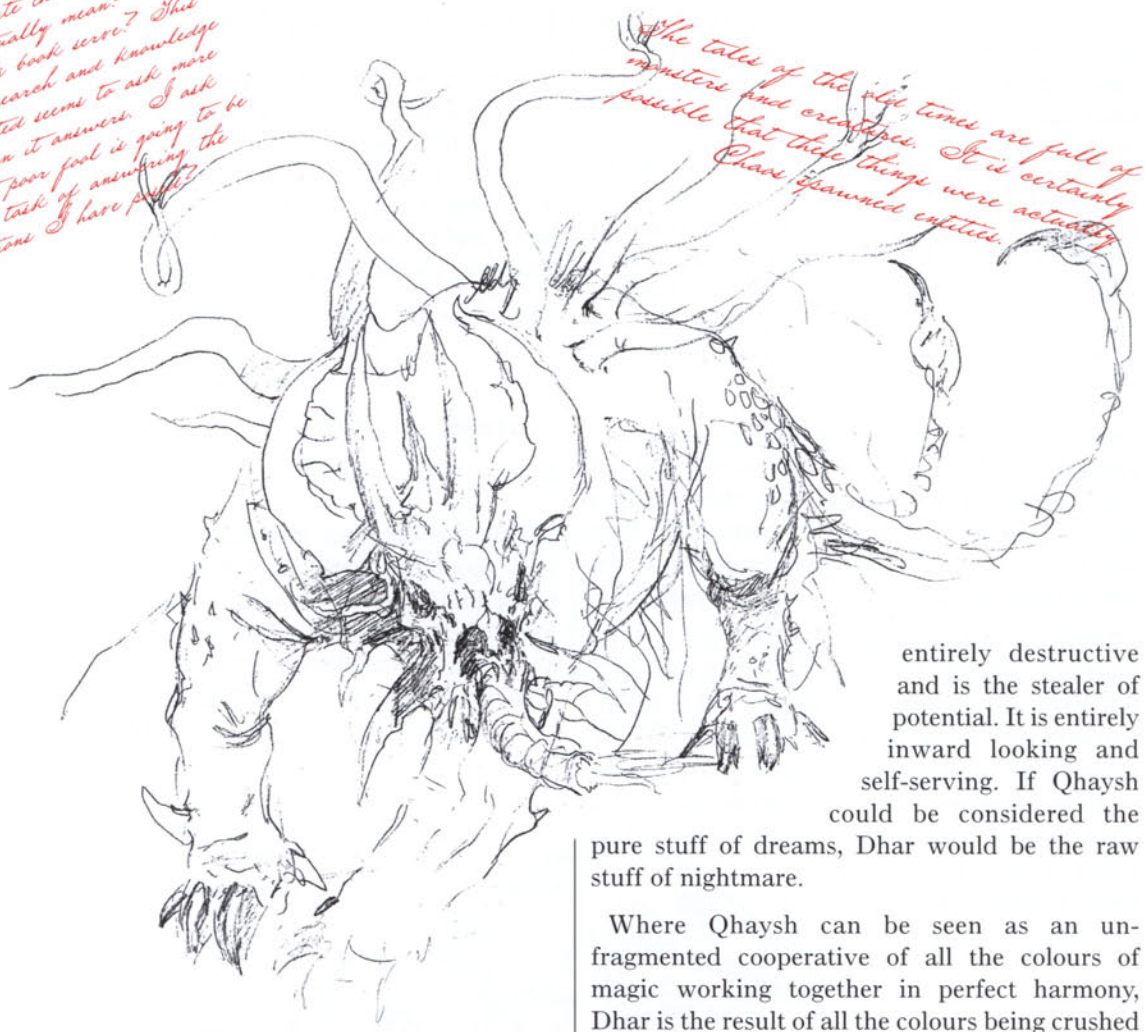


Spells of high magic use elements of all the winds of magic at once, utilising them as a gestalt whole. As such high magic is far more versatile than all other forms of magic, and spells woven from it are certainly amongst the most powerful. According to the lore of the Colleges of Magic, high magic is too vast, too energetic and too undisciplined for a human mind to manipulate.

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There are so many meanings that it is hard to pinpoint what is really being said. I write the words, but what do they actually mean? What purpose does this book serve? This vast body of research and knowledge I have collated seems to ask more questions than it answers. I ask myself, what poor fool is going to be given the task of answering the questions I have posed?

The tales of the old times are full of monsters and creatures. It is certainly possible that these things were actually Chaos spawned entities.



All the considerable difficulties that exist in the weaving of spells with any of the eight refracted colours of magic are increased eightfold with high magic. This is not to say that magisters cannot learn separate spells that utilise each of the colours in isolation, it means simply that human magisters would find it almost impossible to weave a high magic spell that uses many, or perhaps all, of the colours at once.

Suffice to say then, only the elves and certain others of the ancient races use high magic with any degree of success or regularity. Indeed, the dwarfs, though not magically inclined as such and unable to cast spells, can still apparently bind Qhaysh into runic form – although such a thing is doubtlessly the domain of only the greatest runesmiths, and the runes in question must surely be the so-called *master runes*.

Dhar is the most frightening and unwholesome of all Aethyric energy, for Dhar is black magic. Like its opposite, Qhaysh, Dhar is a blend of all the colours of magic, but where Qhaysh is creative and brimming with possibility, Dhar is entirely destructive and is the stealer of potential. It is entirely inward looking and self-serving. If Qhaysh could be considered the pure stuff of dreams, Dhar would be the raw stuff of nightmare.

Where Qhaysh can be seen as an unfragmented cooperative of all the colours of magic working together in perfect harmony, Dhar is the result of all the colours being crushed together to stagnate. None of the eight colours of magic retain any independent identity within Dhar, they are squashed together and left to go sour.

It remains unclear why dark magic forms, but where the winds of magic cease to blow and its colours sink into pools and pockets, dark magic begins a process similar in its way to fermentation. It is magical energy that has become trapped too long within the materium and has therefore lost its vitality and creativity. Indeed, if Dhar gathers long enough in any particular area, and is not agitated or used, it is known to grow ever denser, taking unto itself more and more temporal laws, until it solidifies into that exceedingly rare and dangerous substance that the scholars of our Empire have called warpstone.

Dhar could be seen as Aethyric energy that, instead of unlocking the potential within physical things and transmuting them into new forms and states, instead smothers them and breaks them down into their component parts. A magister might argue that although it is no more *evil*

than Qhaysh is *good* (for both are blind forces and are aside to such value judgements), Dhar could be seen as something that is almost entirely bent towards deconstructing, suppressing and dominating physical things, where Qhaysh (and therefore its eight fragments) adds to, permeates and excites physical things.

It is for this reason that Dhar is drawn to those beings who seek ill for other beings or for the world at large. Although Dhar and Qhaysh are both elements of Chaos – and therefore catalysts of swirling entropy – Dhar promotes the entropy of endless cycles of destruction while Qhaysh promotes cycles of creation and adaptation. Dhar flows like sluggish tar, and any being it is drawn to will be slowly drowned in its black and sticky depths. This state of affairs means that Dhar is the most destructive of all Aethyric forces, one utilised by only the most cruel or power hungry spell-casters.

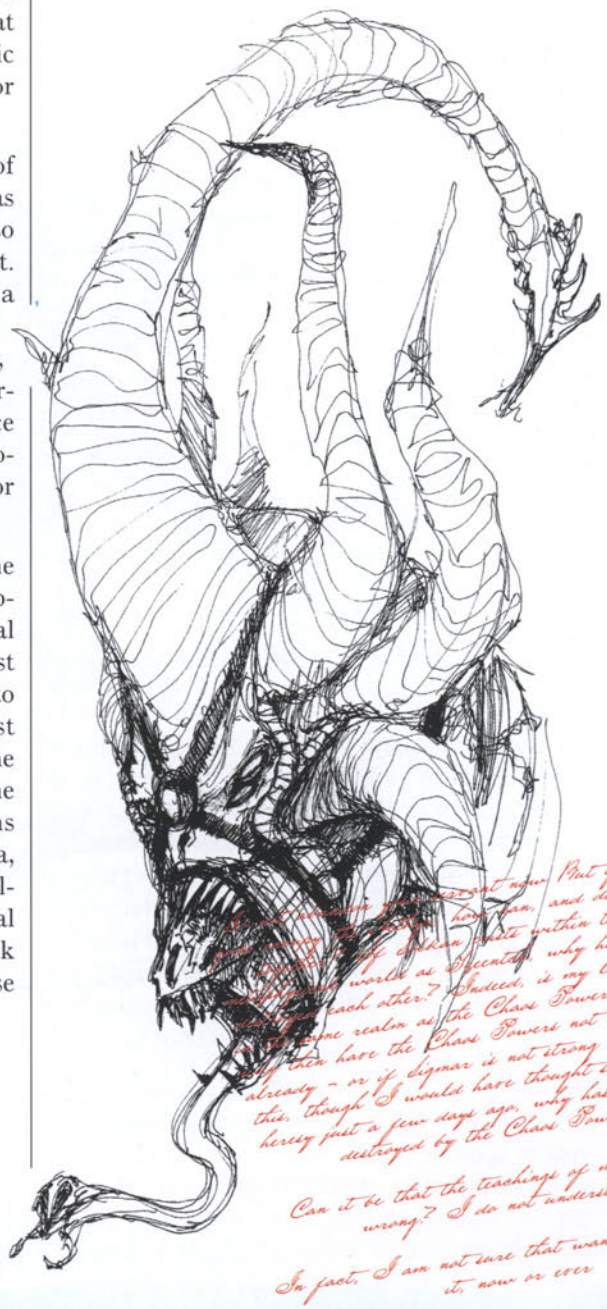
But the price of tapping into the energies of Dhar are high indeed, for not only is it just as hard to use and control as Qhaysh, but it is also far more likely to consume the one that uses it. Where Qhaysh is an energy that demands from a spell-caster subtlety, total tranquillity, and acute sensitivity if it is to be woven properly, Dhar must be wrestled into submission, requiring supreme strength of mind, a self-confidence that borders upon megalomania and an absolutism of will that only those humans of true or borderline insanity could ever hope to grasp.

Having said this, Sister Marie Duvallier of the Hospice at Frederheim (an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of psychical and spiritual ailments) has assured me that if even the sanest and most balanced of people were exposed to this malign energy long enough, then rest assured, over time, exposure to its unwholesome energies undoubtedly affect the sanity of the user. This causes many adverse symptoms including (though not restricted to) hysteria, paranoia, violent mood swings, a dual personality or perhaps even all of these. Of all the mortal beings that use Dhar, only the druchii (or dark elves) seem to have any immunity to its adverse psychical effects.

On Spells and Spellcasting

A spell is the process by which a magister, sorcerer, or any other magic-user, binds Aethyric energy to his will and forms it into a definite form with a specific purpose. Magister Kant maintains that a spell, at its most basic, is the imposition of mortal will upon the immortal uncertainty of the Aethyr and its energies. For, he says, the Aethyr and Aethyric energy (or magic) is the complete opposite of the Mortal Universe and the forces of the Mortal Universe, and yet it is drawn to the certainties of its opposite just as acutely as mortals are drawn to the uncertainties of dreams, possibility and magic.

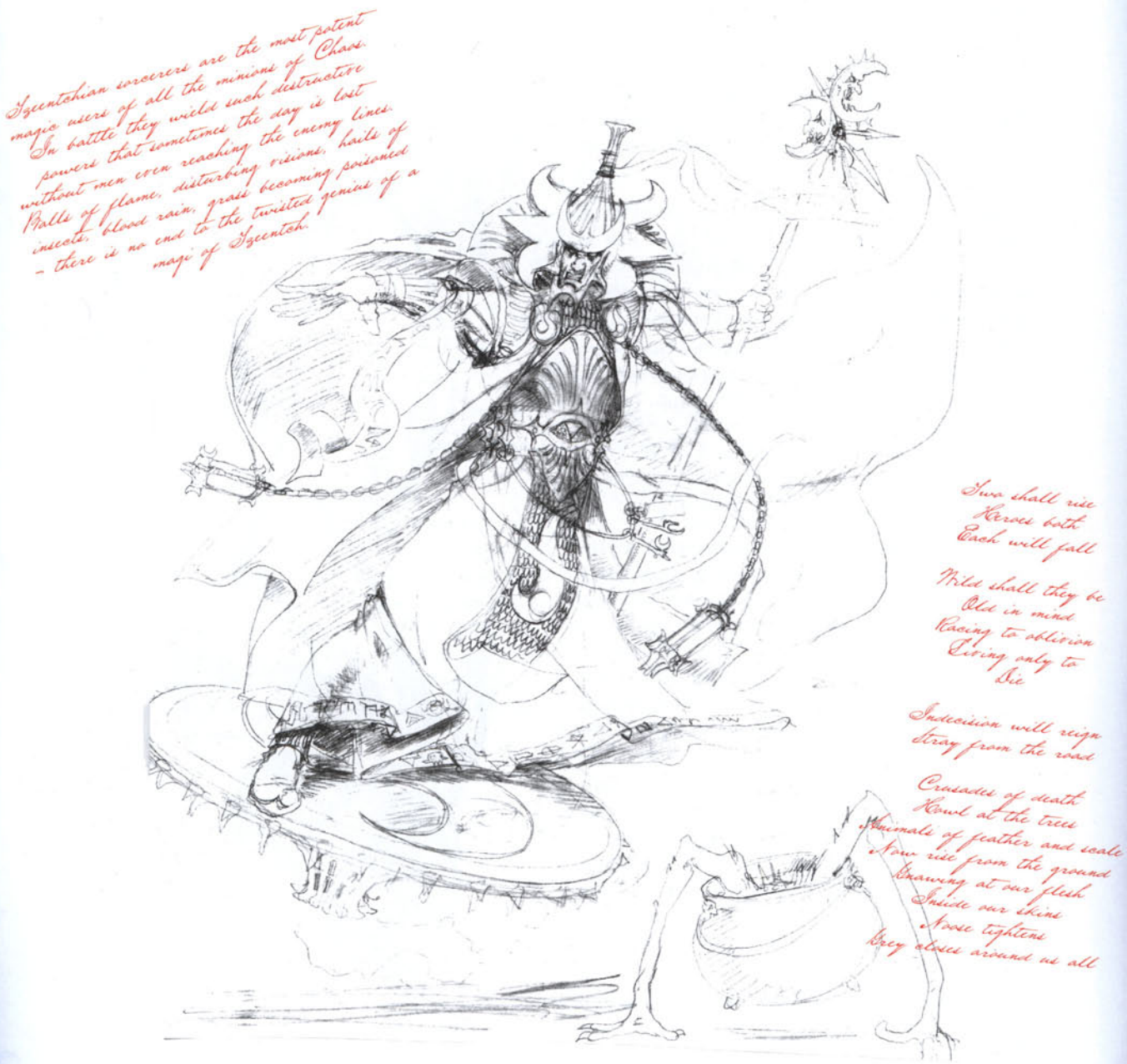
Although Magister Kant, and the majority of Imperial magisters that I have spoken with, believe that if one were to enter the Aethyr in person, the reality around you would be warped and changed by your presence and thoughts alone, without any need for training or the



focussing of will, they also know that when Aethyric energy seeps into the mortal world it acquires for itself laws and provisos that it does not possess within the Aethyr. This is daemonstrated most obviously by the fact that Aethyric energy refracts into the eight colours of magic as soon as it enters into the Mortal Universe, but this also applies to the ways in which these energies can then be used and bound by mortals.

The point with magic is that despite the fact it is drawn to physical things and seeks to interact with them, it is still random in its nature. Although it is will and intellect that gathers, binds and orders magic into a spell, magic is so diffuse and powerful that it takes very specific thoughts and directions to bind it without any loophole through which it can seep and therefore ruin the spell.

An analogy for this could be found in the legends of the Djinn of Araby, for how often in folklore do these Djinn find the flaws in the non-specific wishes of the mortals that find them, and



then exploit these flaws to punish the mortal in question? Magic is said to do something similar, although not deliberately or consciously. If the concept of any given spell could be considered a kind of metaphysical container, then magic naturally flows towards the weakest point in the container. So spells must be absolutely precise in structure and specific in purpose, otherwise the magic begins to unbind itself and run amok.

To prevent this from happening, spell-casters use incredibly specific formulae to bind and weave magic into spells – formulae that leave no room at all for the magic to leak free. Imperial magisters of the Colleges of Magic use what they call the *lingua praestantia* to enunciate their spells, a language that was taught to them by Teclis of Ulthuan.

Though it is an even more complicated language than the tonal language of distant Cathay, I am told that the *lingua praestantia* is just a simplified version of the Asur's own language, which, Magister Kant assures me, is in itself apparently a simplified version of the language spoken by those ancient and godlike beings that the Asur call the *Old Ones*.

It is worth noting that many of the blasphemous texts that I have been forced to read in the course of this investigation state that the language of the Old Ones is also supposed to be the language of both gods and daemons (called *Anoqeyân* – I intend to examine this language in a separate section of this investigation).

Although there is considerable debate amongst the scholars of the Colleges of Magic as to whether these Old Ones learnt their language from the gods and daemons of the Aethyr, or vice versa, Magister Kant believes that the language was indeed the creation of the Old Ones. They were, he believes, the first and only beings to fully identify and quantify every single thing, state and process in this universe, and almost every single thing, state and process that was possible through and in Chaos. In this aspect, they are very similar to Tzeentch. Magister Kant also believes that Anoqeyân, the daemon tongue, now has a life of its own and it contracts and expands even as the Aethyr does.

This would mean that in its widest and most absolute form, Anoqeyân has a word to express every single concept and possibility, and every combination of concepts and possibility, that exists within creation, and also every single concept and possibility that are and shall remain completely un-thought of within the physical universe.

This must mean that even the vaguest knowledge of this language might denote an understanding of concepts and things that are normally inexpressible in the mortal languages, and therefore it must be for this reason that Anoqeyân can be used to cast spells with greater effect than any other language – precisely because it is so exhaustively specific (something that is of vital importance if one wishes to cast a spell without any ill effect).

The dwarfs too have their own magical language, although it is not a spoken one and they are not spell-casters. They have instead formulated an exceedingly complex runic system that mimics the effects of spell-casting, in that these runes gather Aethyric energies to themselves, bind this energy to the thing that the rune is inscribed upon, and then force it to manifest itself in a very specific manner.

This has proven to be a very successful and stable method of controlling magic, as the rituals involved in the inscription of runes are by no means as hazardous to the runesmith as the enunciating of a spell is to a magister, and if the runesmith gets his formula wrong, very often the worst to happen is that the rune is completely ineffective – unlike with a magister's casting of a spell, where there appears to be no real upper limit on the amount of damage that a faulty spell can cause.

But no one has more of a mastery over magic than Tzeentch and his denizens.

Divine and Chaos Magic

These two branches of spell-casting and magic manipulation are in many ways separate from those described above, and they merit an investigation all of their own. It suffices to say that the magic and spell casters of Tzeentch (with whom this section of my investigation is predominantly concerned) utilise magics drawn *through* and focussed by their daemon-god, and so their magics bear unique traits that are otherwise non-existent or unachievable using more *usual* means of spell-casting.

To better explain the differences between what has been called "arcane" and "divine" magic, I have included in the following section a lecture given by the first Patriarch of the College of Light, and first Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, Magister Volans, which deals specifically with this subject.



The Drifting Castle
from "Visions of Disorder"

The sky above grew darker than the blackest storm and a cold wind blew. There was no rain but a shower of mortar dust, yellowed leaves and tatters of flags.

No storm was in the sky, but a castle much as might be found in any mortal land. Often had I imagined clouds to be trees and fish and mountains, and now a foible of some nameless and uncaring power had given this fortress the guise of a cloud. It was an island torn from the land, drifting as the mist on a breeze, yet solid and firm. In all that I had seen, this was as strange as any of my visions.

The castle was as empty as any ruin. Like an animal stuffed and mounted under the glass, or a fish salted in a barrel, it had been preserved and pickled by the whim of chaos. Cast aside, and left to wander across the heavens, all was still and desolate in that place. Its towers no longer knew the sounds of men, its halls held no lofty nobles, its gates admitted no tenantry, no sentinel stood guard, no porter waited by the gate. Even the carrion birds, sole visitors to its sad portals, had enjoyed their fill of the dwellers hospitality.

The shadow of the castle fell across my eyes, and I could see no more.

- Liber Malefic, "The Book of Chaos Foreseen", Marius Hallscher

I am forever indebted to Volmanor. It is to him that I dedicate my damnation.

I call to you Lord,
But you do not hear me!
I am exhausted with crying,
Each night, my pillow and pallet
Are sodden with my tears,
My eyes are wasted with sorrow.

Arcane and Divine Magic

The Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic contributes his thoughts on Tzeentchian sorcery, Tzeentch's thirst for mortal souls and the realm of the Chaos Gods.

Although I am fully aware of the existence of the many gods and daemons of mankind, and although I do not (and cannot) underestimate the enormous power and influence that these entities can have over the Mortal Universe, I choose not to worship any of the gods – individually or as a pantheon.

I know that I share this in common with the vast majority of you, the magisters of this, our beloved Empire. It is in our nature to seek ways of expressing and exploring the reality of gods, daemons and that vitally important thing we have called the soul. These things which do not rely on tradition, poetry, or dogma – things that so often surround a religion's view of what has been called the "supernatural".

One thing that every magister and spell-caster comes to know implicitly, is that all living things exist in the Empyrean as much as they do within the Mortal Universe, although by far the vast majority of all living beings are unaware of – or at best have a very cloudy understanding of – this fact. The simplest analogy for this is to say that just as a mortal's body inhabits the Mortal Universe, so his soul inhabits the Empyrean. But this is a deceptively simple explanation, for just what is this thing we call the soul, and why do gods like Tzeentch value them so?

To explore such a question in any depth is beyond the scope of this lecture, but to give a general perspective upon the nature of the soul one could say that just as the body is part of the Mortal Universe and made of physical matter, so the soul is part of the Empyrean and is made from the stuff of raw Chaos, (which is also known as magic or Aethyr). In fact, souls could be seen as a coherent pocket of Aethyric energy, maintained as a separate whole by its anchor to the physical body of a mortal within the Mortal Universe. Although most humans have only a very poor sensitivity to the Empyrean, possessing souls that are both dim and flickering, there are a minority of people, like you and I, who are more sensitive to the Empyrean and possess souls that shine like beacons. People like us are potential magic wielders, and if trained correctly are able to consciously control and use the energy of the Empyrean to affect, and even remake, aspects of the Mortal Universe. Just how we are able to do this is a matter that I will discuss later, for now I wish to take a closer look at the nature of the Empyrean with regard to how it is the source of what could be called Arcane and Divine magic. To facilitate this, I turn to what little information I have been able to glean about these subjects from the writings of his Grace, our noble founder, Teclis of Ulthuan.

The most common perception of the Empyrean amongst those scholars of a priestly or clerical background is that it is a non-physical reality created by the gods as their abode, and is also the afterlife destination of the soul once the mortal body has died.

It is difficult for me to comment upon this, for, as a metaphysician and a scholar of the blind forces of the Empyrean, I do not allow myself to be a religious man. To me, this description relies too much on tradition and faith to be regarded as a full and unbiased description of the Empyrean, and, in fact, explains nothing as to the precise nature of it.

The one point that the clerics of this good Empire and we, its magisters, share, is the knowledge that the Mortal Universe is but one aspect of the entirety of what we might call reality. In addition to the physical reality of the Mortal Universe, there is a coexistent aspect of reality that is entirely immaterial and immeasurable. This other reality is what we magisters have dubbed the Empyrean.

So what is the Empyrean? The Empyrean is the void – the fifth element of existence – the intangible element that has no visible form in its own right. The Empyrean has no dimension, mass or volume, and yet still it is everywhere. It has no substance, but all substance and every process in existence are linked to it. All spell-casting and divination, regardless of its form or source, depends upon the manipulation of the Empyrean's raw energy, and through the manipulation of this energy – or magic – every other element, state and process within the Mortal Universe can also be manipulated and changed.

It is important that you all fully comprehend the significance of our perception of the Empyrean. It is not only the fifth element and the source of the Eight Winds of Magic, but it is also one and the same place as all the various heavens and afterlives of every religious and cultural tradition in our world, and at the same time, and perhaps most profoundly, that dread hell dimension that we know as the Realm of Chaos.

This revelation has a staggering significance to the religious world, for many are those who believe that each of the gods have their own separate heaven, and that the Chaos Gods exist in their own separate hell that has nothing to do with the abodes of more acceptable deities such as Ulric, Morr, Taal or Verena. While in a sense this is true, for in themselves the gods are as much places and states as they are conscious beings, it must be remembered that all the places, states and beings of all the gods are part of the Empyrean, and therefore part of one great whole.

Arcane and Divine Magic

This theosophical notion that the Chaos Gods occupy an entirely separate metaphysical reality to humanity's more acceptable gods has influenced the dogma and beliefs of all the Empire's religions. For centuries the religions of the Empire taught that magic was solely the remit of those fools who worship the Chaos Gods, and so identified all magic use as the sorcery of Chaos. This led to all magic users being persecuted out of hand by the followers of these religions. Anyone gifted with the spirit-sight was labelled a warlock, and any spell, even the most petty and mundane, was denounced as daemonology or witchcraft. All this while the Empire's various priests and clerics performed their own "miracles" in the name of their gods – miracles that were just as great, and in many cases greater, than the spells of the Empire's hedge wizards and witches!

Thanks to the foresight of our great emancipator, Emperor Magnus, we were freed to study the arts of spell-casting. And thanks also to the wondrous teachings of our founders, the great Loremasters Teclis, Finreir and Yrtle, we now know that Aethyric energy (or magic) is the fundamental substance of all gods, acceptable and unacceptable, and that magic in itself is neither good nor evil, it simply is – like the existence of fire. It can be harnessed for good or for ill, but unharnessed magic is simply the blind energy of transmutation.

So the connection between magic, the gods, their religions and their clerics, is entirely fundamental. Indeed, though many outside the walls of these great Colleges – including many of our allies within the Sigmarite cult – would denounce my words as heresy, magic was used by the clerics of the Empire, even while those same clerics condemned the hedge wizards of yesteryear for practicing their insignificant witcheries. What are the prayer-miracles, so regularly performed by our Empire's priests and clerics, if not a form of spell? And what is the energy harnessed by those prayers to work their miracles if not magic?

In a practical sense, this can be proven by the fact that since the Colleges of Magic were incepted, we magisters have been able to counter and dispel many of the harmful "miracles" performed against us by some of the less forward thinking of our Empire's clerics. I believe that we could not dispel these "miracles" if they were not in themselves magical invocations of some sort.

This means that for centuries the clerics and priests of this Empire had the monopoly on the use of magic, using it uniquely for the intentions of their gods and cults – whether that was to heal the sick and bring a bountiful harvest, or to simply keep their congregations obedient. Since the end of the Great War, we magisters have changed the politics and

Sigmar is a god, but he is a small god. He was mortal man, and men are weak, thus Sigmar the god shares that trait.

Arcane and Divine Magic

theology around this old balance of power; we do not need the intervention of gods to work our miracles! We manipulate magic like a potter manipulates clay – with practiced skill and concentration, not through prayer and faith.

Although the blessings and miracles of the Empire's clerics are a different kind of magic manipulation from the spell-casting of magisters such as ourselves, it is spell-casting none the less. I believe that the difference between the two is one of election and personal control. A cleric's prayer calls upon theosophic or divine magic, while our own spells weave strands of raw – arcane – magic in the form of the Eight Coloured Winds.

We magisters are taught to see, harness and manipulate the separate winds of magic into specific spells, and so are responsible for the entire process. If anything goes wrong it is because of our own inexperience or lack of control. When a priest prays to his deity for divine aid, the "miracle" that is then performed through the priest is attributed to the direct intervention of the deity that has been invoked – or perhaps by one of the deity's Aethyric servants. In the sense that both miracles and spells are both manipulations of magic, the effects of Arcane and Divine magic are largely the same, with the difference being that a magister manipulates the magic himself, while a priest asks his deity (or another entity in the service of his deity) to filter magic through itself and manipulate that magic into the specific spell (or "miracle") that the priest has supplicated for. I think it goes without saying that few, if any, of these priests understand this process much beyond the fact that they have prayed to their god and their god has answered.

The priests and clerics who can utilise divine magic do not need to know anything about spell-casting or the arcane arts – hence the reason the connection between the clerical spell-casting of divine magic, and the wizardly spell-casting of arcane magic was not made for so many centuries. The clerics simply prayed to their gods with humility and great faith, and, if feeling inclined to do so, these gods provided the miracles that were asked of them. As long as the clerics and the other devotees of any particular god continued to show suitable respect and obeisance to their deity, going to the temple and keeping the tenets of the god's religion, prayers could be answered and miracles would be wrought (just as they are today).

Of course, because these miracles are performed through the priest or cleric by a deity, there need not be any risk to the priest himself (unless the deity in question is

particularly ruthless). The miracle is either performed or it is not, as the case may be. Users of arcane magic, on the other hand, will always bear the brunt of any failures they make while spell-casting, because spell-casters are the ones who are holding and controlling the magics being used, not some all-powerful supernatural entity.

All those who would use magic of a non-divine origin must be practiced and knowledgeable magisters if they are to wield magic safely and produce any miraculous effect. Whereas we magisters use those elements of the Empyrean that come to us through the Chaos Gates in the form of the Winds of Magic, priests and clerics actually reach into the Empyrean to summon their magics, or miracles, however unaware they might be that they are doing this. So what is it that allows people who are not magically inclined – the majority of the Empire's clerics – to communicate with the entities of the Empyrean, and more, bid those entities to perform miracles on their behalf? How is it that a devout priest with no magical training can perform feats that a magister could perform only after months, or even years, of faithful study and practice? Therein lies one of the great secrets of our world – a secret that reveals something fundamental about the nature of magic, the gods, and the connections between mortals and the Empyrean.

Ask yourselves, how do spell-casters actually bind and control magic? We are of course born with the ability to perceive and touch the Winds of Magic, but the fact that we are born with this ability does not necessarily imply that we know how to use it, any more than any ordinary human born with two eyes and two hands can read or write without first being taught. Magisters control magic through the use of techniques and formulae that have been discovered through logical deduction and trial and error across the centuries, in much the same way as Imperial engineering has advanced. On the other hand, priests and clerics are able to perform their "miracles" solely by merit of the strength of their beliefs, or in other words, their faith.

I am sure it has not escaped any of you that the more pious the cleric, the more successful his prayers for divine miracles and blessings seem to be. Emperor Magnus himself has been known to perform the most startling of feats that even I, the elected Supreme Patriarch of the Colleges of Magic, trained by mighty Teclis himself, must stretch myself to replicate – be it with regard to Magnus's ability to banish the greatest of daemons, to his recorded ability to dispel sorceries of some of Tzeentch's most puissant champions. All this is because of his genuine and absolute faith in the might of Sigmar

Extracted from Magister Volans' third letter to the Colleges of Magic
2320 I.C.

Arcane and Divine Magic

Heldenhammer – hence the reason Magnus has come to be known as "The Pious".

Why should it be that the instinctive beliefs and emotions of clerics are just as successful as the considered, practiced and logically deduced enchantments of the diverse magisters of this world? Because, my brothers and sisters, although the Empyrean itself has existed since the beginning of time, all momentum, identity and personality within the Empyrean has been formed by the thoughts and feelings of mortals. That is to say, the gods themselves are the creations of mortal experience, and that although we mortals are often at the mercy of gods and daemons, they are still our creations and not the other way around.

If all gods and daemons are manifestations of the mortal world's thoughts, dreams and feelings, then could this not explain why they react so readily to the faith of those who worship them? Could it be that some (or perhaps all) gods actually need the faith of mortals to maintain their unique identities, and so are drawn to particularly strong demonstrations of faith both to feed off and to do things that will encourage even greater levels of faith in the supplicant?

This could perhaps explain why the servants of Chaos (and especially Tzeentch) are often stronger spell-casters and wield more powerful magics than we, the magisters of the Empire. These sorcerers (as they are known) can manipulate the Winds of Magic, like we do, and yet also have an immense faith in, and a direct link to, their daemonic gods. Thus they enjoy similar abilities to the Empire's clerics! This could help explain the frightening power of those sorcerers who are dedicated to the daemon-god Tzeentch, for their god is the first and greatest god of the study of magic and the will to change. In addition to their almost priestly powers of supplication, Tzeentch's sorcerers also posses a divinely inspired knowledge of spell-casting that often far outstrips that of all other spell-casters, (outside the realms of Ulthuan and Naggaroth at least).

Yet even though this might be true, I do not believe that we, the magisters of the Colleges of Magic should follow their example and choose for ourselves gods to worship and beg favours from, to use in conjunction with our own spell-casting. For indeed, nothing in this life or the next is free, and whereas I am willing to trust in my own abilities and limitations, and accept any errors I make while weaving my spells, I do not wish to trust the continued benevolence of a deity whose need for my faith and dedication might far outweigh my own need for his or her aid.

Arcane and Divine Magic



Holy Sigmar,

Magister Volans's attitudes towards Chaos and the gods in general epitomises the philosophical differences that exist between the religions of the Empire and the Colleges of Magic. Whereas we of Sigmar's Holy Church (and all the other cults and religions of this land) worship the gods as our masters and benefactors, the sanctioned magisters of our good Empire seem to take an entirely more pragmatic view on the divine. They seem to regard the gods as a product of magic, whereas we religious men normally define magic as an entirely separate thing to the Divine.

Do not smite me in your fury.

It is the question as to what precisely a god is and how it came to be that has occupied the thoughts of so many scholars, magisters and priests since before the coming of Sigmar, and plagues my own mind now. How can we know for certain when there are almost as many theories as there are scholars of the subject? Everyone that I have spoken to, be they magister or cleric, seem to have their own ideas as to what the gods are.

The opinions of the great religions of our Empire hold most sway over this area, as they are supposed to have the authority of divine revelation on their side. But I begin to question the validity of these revelations. Judging by the conflicting and contradictory dogmas of the world's religions, it seems obvious to me now that the revelations bestowed upon us by the gods are hazy, misinterpreted or sometimes completely untrue in themselves. I know that some will find this assertion shocking, but I truly believe that we cannot always trust the words and visions of many of the world's gods – perhaps not even those granted by Sigmar Himself. I have seen and heard so much since I began this investigation into the ways of Chaos, and I find that my faith in the gods of mankind has been cast into doubt.

For instance, as was referenced in my previous study into the elves and the powers of Chaos (when Magister Volans discussed the coming of the gods), at no point in his dissertation did he entertain the possibility that humanity was created by the gods – quite the reverse in fact. This is a direct contradiction to the received wisdom of all the Empire's faiths. Although I know that our beloved theogonist believes that we – the scholars of Sigmar's Church – do not have to wholly accept the teachings of the old religions, especially their creation myths, I cannot help but think that if we have been mislead as to the nature of the Old Gods, what other commonly accepted truths might prove false?

If Magister Volans was indeed correct about the nature of the gods – that all of them (not just the Chaos Powers) are conscious manifestations of the mortal world's dreams, thoughts and emotions – why should this not apply to Sigmar as well? Also, if emotions and thoughts can coalesce within the Aethyr, what does that show us about the nature and stuff of the Aethyr itself? Is the Aethyr a place that somehow draws thoughts to it and makes them real in some way, or is the

Aethyr itself the fountain and repository of all thought and emotion, with mortals experiencing only what has been projected onto them *from* the Aethyr?

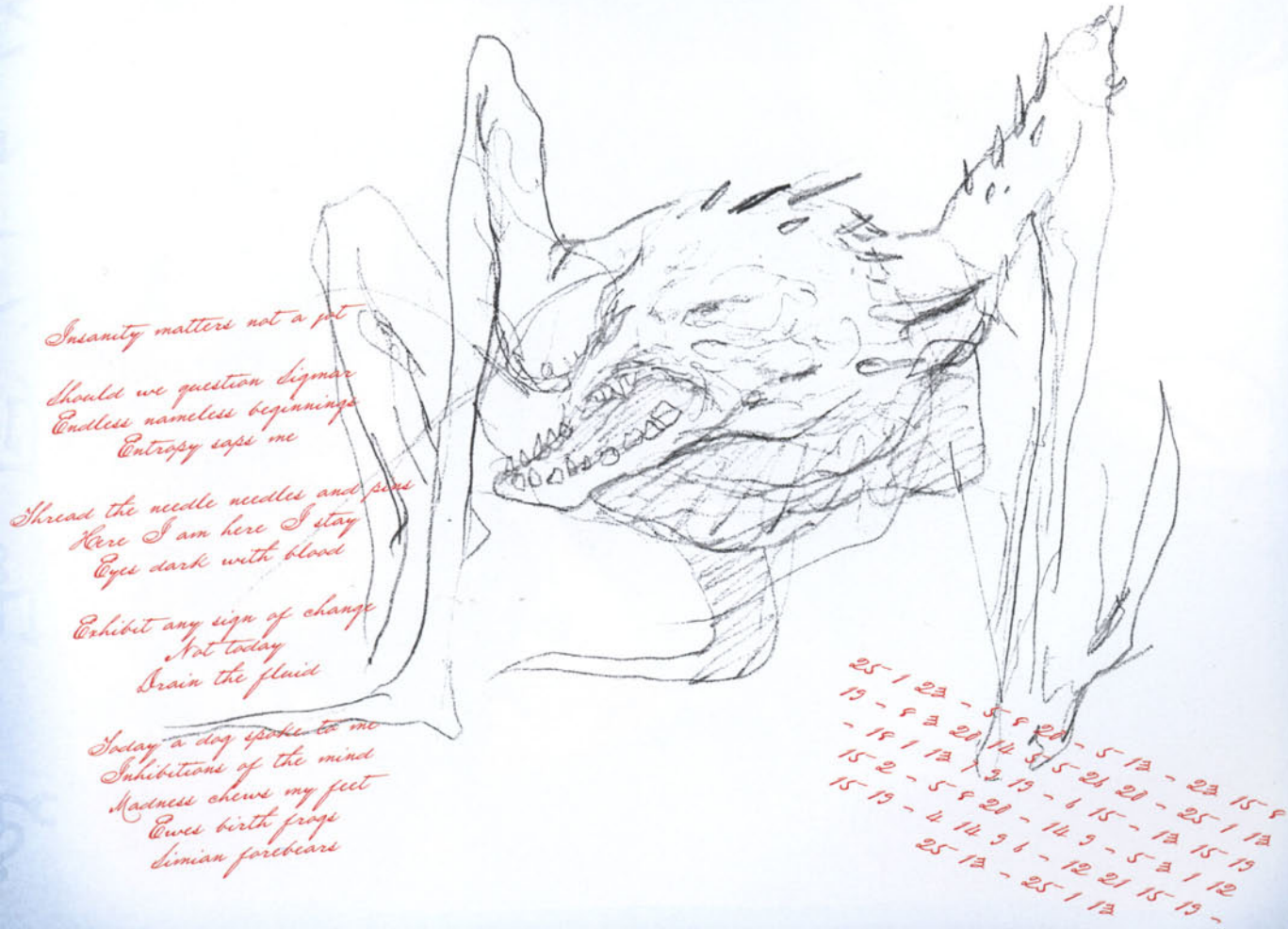
I have been content (though not happy) in my endeavour to deconstruct the gods of Chaos and investigate how they have been formed, but it occurs to me only now that the same process I have been using to explain the source and motivation of the Infernal Powers must apply also to the wholesome gods of the Empire.

I must admit, dear reader that I walk upon dangerous ground with this turn in my investigation. For to call into question the nature and origin of the Empire's gods, and therefore cast doubt upon their right to control the lives of mortals as they do, risks incurring the wrath of these gods and their mortal servants. And more than this, if the observation of such matters calls into question all the creation myths, and the reasonings as to the causes of natural events, what have we left to explain these things? If the gods did not create the universe, and do not sustain it, but were instead created by the universe and are sustained by it, where does that leave humanity? What is the point of our existence and where is it going?

In an effort to address these vitally important questions, I have read through some of the journals that have been confiscated from Dolmancé by my contacts within the order of witch hunters. Dolmancé's opinions and description of matters chaotic have proved of great use to my investigations, and the following extracts are no exception. Though intended for the eyes of the acolytes within the higher echelons of his (now defunct) cult, I have found his words concerning the nature and development of the gods both fascinating and illuminating.

I find that the fear and awe that I have always held for the gods evaporates under the scrutiny of Dolmancé's writings. They help put the gods into perspective and show a way for us to liberate ourselves from the unhelpful superstitions of yesteryear, and perhaps even control those things about the Elder Gods of Chaos that we have for so long simply feared and ignored.

But do not accept my word on this matter, read for yourself.




I feel that Johannes the White has finally slipped into madness. What these creatures are I cannot imagine! They look so... strange.
I would like to ask him myself, but Johannes has disappeared.



Riding the Avalanche

Or "Embracing the Greater Gods", a controversial article by Alphonse Dolmancé regarding the nature of Chaos, the concept of "evil" and man's culpability in the formation of the Chaos Gods.

Forget what you have been told. Chaos is neither good nor evil. Chaos (being the very same place, state and thing as the Aethyr) is simply a mirror for the survivalist emotions of living beings within the Mortal Universe. Thus, the entities of Chaos – be they gods or daemons – exist solely because living things generate emotions and thoughts.

Of all the intelligent races, we humans have proven to be the most eager to pursue the path to the glories of Chaos, and our fervor and excitement in the service of Chaos is unsurpassed. This fervor grants greater power to the gods of Chaos, and in return they grant us their many blandishments and blessings. We humans lust for change and seek delight, and it is largely because of us (not the Elder Races), and our wonderful drive and ambition that the gods of Chaos have grown so magnificent and bloated with power.

Always remember, the Chaos Gods cannot and should not be called "evil". They are simply exuberant personifications of all those things that make us human. For you see, the relationship between Chaos and the Mortal Realms is entirely symbiotic – much more so than any cleric or priest of this dull Empire would ever wish to admit. Chaos absorbs our own emotions and thoughts, from our most basic drives to our most complicated and high minded ideals, and then magnifies and reflects those emotions and ideals straight back at us.

But what bearing, you no doubt wish to know, does this have on the great gods of Chaos? To put it into layman's terms: over time, and for whatever reason, all emotions (and their related concepts) converge together within the Chaos Realm. It is a case of like attracting like, with every scrap of anger or every scrap of ecstasy, slowly being drawn to one another until they create what could be described as a kind of vortex of psychical energy within the Chaos Realm – a vortex of emotion and thought. That vortex creates such a disturbance across the Chaos Realm (and therefore our own psyche) that whatever emotion or concept the Chaos-vortex is made from, is then reflected back into the Mortal Realms once more.

This has the effect of further promoting within our mortal psyches the emotions that the vortex itself is made from. Let's take anger as an example. If a man or woman feels a lot of anger, so over time, mortals will not only have their own naturally inspired and mundane anger, but will also experience a slightly more unnatural anger that has been reflected onto them by the Chaos Realm's anger vortex. This process is cyclic and never-ending, and in time the Chaos Realm's vortices become so powerful that they cease to accidentally promote in mortal minds the emotions they embody, but actually begin to do so deliberately – although perhaps subconsciously before they do so consciously.

Solmanee is a god.'
Solmanee is a daemon.'
I love him.'
I hate him.'
He is dead.'
He is alive.'

Riding the Avalanche



Warrior of Tzeentch

Riding the Avalanche



Greater Daemon of Tzeentch

deceit
lies
falsehoods
dishonesty
sham
deception
trickery! trickery!
pretense
cheating
duplicity
falseness
guile
dolomance
all invade this book

War marches on cloven hooves

Riding the Avalanche

An analogy for this might be the boiling of water in a room. If one boils a big pan of water in a room with no ventilation, quite soon one will find that all the windows in the room become covered with a fine sheen of water. The temperature in the room will get warm and humid, and things will get wet. This is not the water that has evaporated from the pan consciously coming back to haunt us, it's just the natural consequence of boiling water in an airless room with glass windows.

One might say that mortals are similar to bowls of boiling water, and that our emotions are like steam pouring from that bowl. This water vapour is trapped within the airless room that comprises of both our individual minds and the Realm of Chaos. This psychical condensation could be seen as the very beginnings of the Chaos Realm's vortices of emotion, senselessly reflecting back upon the airless room of our minds the water vapour emotions that we first generated, making us even hotter (as it were) and thereby causing us to give off more of the same emotion that started the process in the first place.

In time, all this psychic condensation creates the perfect environment for consciousness and intelligence to grow within the Chaos Realm. Before the vortices become intelligent and self aware, they first attain basic drives and needs, similar, in their own way, to the drives and needs of such lower forms of life as plants. So now we have little shoots of consciousness growing upon the warm damp of the psychic condensation where our minds meet the Chaos Realm. Like a plant that leans towards the sun as it travels across the sky (not a conscious action, and yet still an action of a living thing), these shoots of intelligence within the Chaos Realm's vortices begin to lean towards those people and emotions that best nourish them. So the vortex of anger might lean more towards those people who get angry most easily, the vortex of ecstasy and pleasure might lean more towards hedonists or those with heightened or more acute senses, the vortex for hope leans more towards those optimistic or ambitious people and the Chaos Realm's vortices of fear and misery might lean more towards those people who tend towards a more nervous or depressive disposition.

20 8 1 20 - 5 14 15 12 1 - 12 12 9 23 -

This natural (though metaphysical) process will then create a more specific reaction in mortals, because where before the condensation of the emotions that were reflected back from the Realm of Chaos were diffused and did not target any one person over another, the embryonic intelligences developing within the Chaos Realm's vortices actually lean towards specific mortals, feeding off their emotions, and thereby promoting more acute versions of those emotions within those mortals.

Look to the number of words in the paragraphs. Meaning resides within.

Riding the Avalanche

So whereas the general miasma of anger that is reflected back from the Chaos Realm's anger vortex may affect all mortals to some small degree, the burgeoning intelligence of the steadily growing anger vortex will deliberately begin to lean towards those people who are particularly angry, and to a certain degree ignore those who are not. So the process continues, with all mortal anger feeding the burgeoning intelligence of the Chaos Realm's anger vortex, while the anger vortex specifically leans towards angry people making them ever more angry, and so on and so on.

This process is never-ending, and as it continues, the Chaos Realm vortices' intelligence slowly climbs the ladder of Reason towards consciousness (perhaps similar to babes, from their mother's womb to birth and consciousness), promoting the emotions and concepts they personify more and more acutely, while becoming more and more specific in the people they target. Eventually, the day comes when they reach a level of intelligence whereby they realise "I am" and become fully self-aware.

There is little or nothing that mortals can do to stop this process because, like a ball of snow rolling down a wintry slope, by the time mortals realise that there is an entity outside themselves encouraging them to do things, that entity has already achieved intelligence and is too powerful to stop or "uncreate". A mortal could, I suppose, seek to stand in the way and try to stop the Chaos Realm's entities from growing any larger (as indeed so many fools often try to do by resisting the great liberators of the north) but, to continue with the snowball allegory, the entities have already grown to the size of avalanches, and will more than likely crush anyone and anything attempting to block their path.

In fact, because all mortals helped start these "avalanches", and are indeed part of them (inasmuch as we are all helping to provide the energy and momentum for their growth and descent) we couldn't really stand in their way in the first place. For indeed, every one of us is in fact sledging along behind the crest of these avalanches, most of us without ever even realising that we are. Those of us that do realise it, like myself, have moved forward to ride the crest of the avalanche and are making the most of the free ride, leaving those more fearful and ignorant to wait until they have been sucked under by the avalanche before they acknowledge their part in its existence, and, much more importantly, their dependence upon it.

25 12 - 25 2 - 13 9 - 20 9 - 20 8 1 20 -

So I say now, you who have chosen to question the received wisdoms of others more ignorant than yourselves, to truly emancipate yourselves, you must accept that it is impossible to know where your self-control ends and the control of the gods begins, and similarly, where your own emotions and ideas end and the projected emotions and ideas of the Chaos Gods begin. For indeed, can there really be any difference between the two?

I idolized ni you left

Riding the Avalanche



Disc Rider of Tzeentch

Words contain numbers spell words of real power

Illuminating the Abyss

Of birthing gods and dying souls: on the theory that says Chaos Gods are the projection of the emotions emanating from the mortal races, and how every soul is damned to be consumed.

I have tired of my lack of knowledge. For too long I have been sick and languished in the darkness of fearful ignorance. The truth (or truths) of Chaos and all related matters must be mine. I have been granted the right to do as I please within the boundaries of this investigation, and thus far I have allowed my fears and inhibitions to rule my inquiry and undermine my scholastic integrity.

I am no longer willing to squander the magnificent resources that I have been granted access to. I have read once more with courage and determination all those damned and blighted texts that I have been granted access to for the sake of this study, but have thus far merely glanced at for fear of losing my mind and soul. I am my own man, and not all the daemons or gods of Chaos may have me if I do not wish it. So I have decided, and so it shall be.

I have submersed myself in the libraries of the witch hunters, and spent long hours through the night in the repositories of the Sigmar High Church in Altdorf. I have read from cover to cover the cracking pages of the *Liber Malefic* by poor damned Hollseher, the dry texts of the *Magistorum Chaotica* and the nightmarish verses of the *Librae Daemonica*. I have studied all the books of the *Verrah Rubicon,* read aloud the poems and mystery plays of von Hohenstausen, and I have memorised every page of Dolmancé's memoirs. There is not a grimoire or tome that mentions the ways and means of Chaos that I have not now studied.

No other man alive and faithful to the cause of humanity has the knowledge that I now possess, and no man alive and still faithful to the cause of man *should* have the knowledge that I now posses. But I have done this so that others do not have to. I have offered myself as a willing sacrifice so that others might live in blissful ignorance of the horrors with whom I now share intimate space with in my mind. I believe I am closer to the truth than ever before.

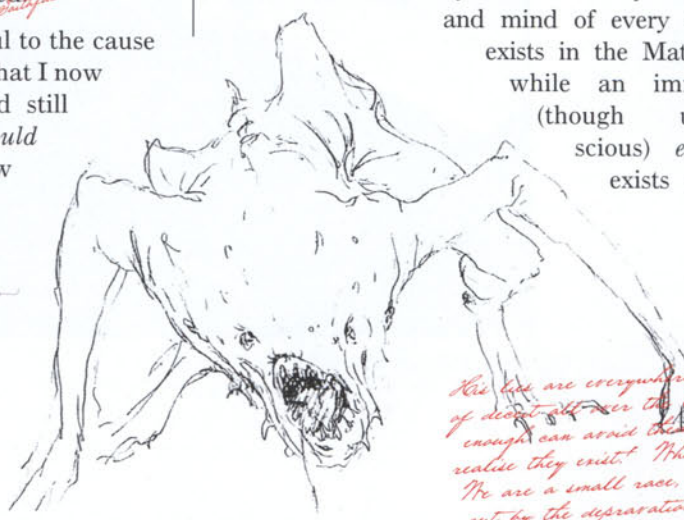
As has been suggested time and again throughout this discourse, the great powers of Chaos (being Khorne, Tzeentch, Nurgle and Slaanesh) are Aethyric projections of certain thoughts. To be more precise, they are the personified manifestations of common beliefs and emotions associated with particular states of mind and dictated by the vagaries of life in general.

Yet the gods must be more than just conscious vortices of emotion, for that does not explain how it is that the gods became conscious, self-aware and intelligent – there seems to be nothing within the cold process of coalescence that in itself will naturally lead to consciousness. This is where the souls of the dead come into play, or so I believe.

Searching for the Soul

What is the soul? That is perhaps the most difficult question of all. Just as with an attempt to define the Aethyr in simple terms, it is difficult – nigh on impossible – to know or express what the soul of mortal beings might be is even harder to explain, but answering the question may help us understand the nature of the Chaos Gods. As a priest I was taught (and preached) that the soul is a fragment of the *divine* within every mortal being, and although this is a simplistic explanation, it served surprisingly well because of it.

Many chaoticians believe that all mortals exist in both the mortal world and the heart of the Aethyr simultaneously. That is to say the body and mind of every mortal exists in the Materium, while an immortal (though unconscious) *essence* exists within



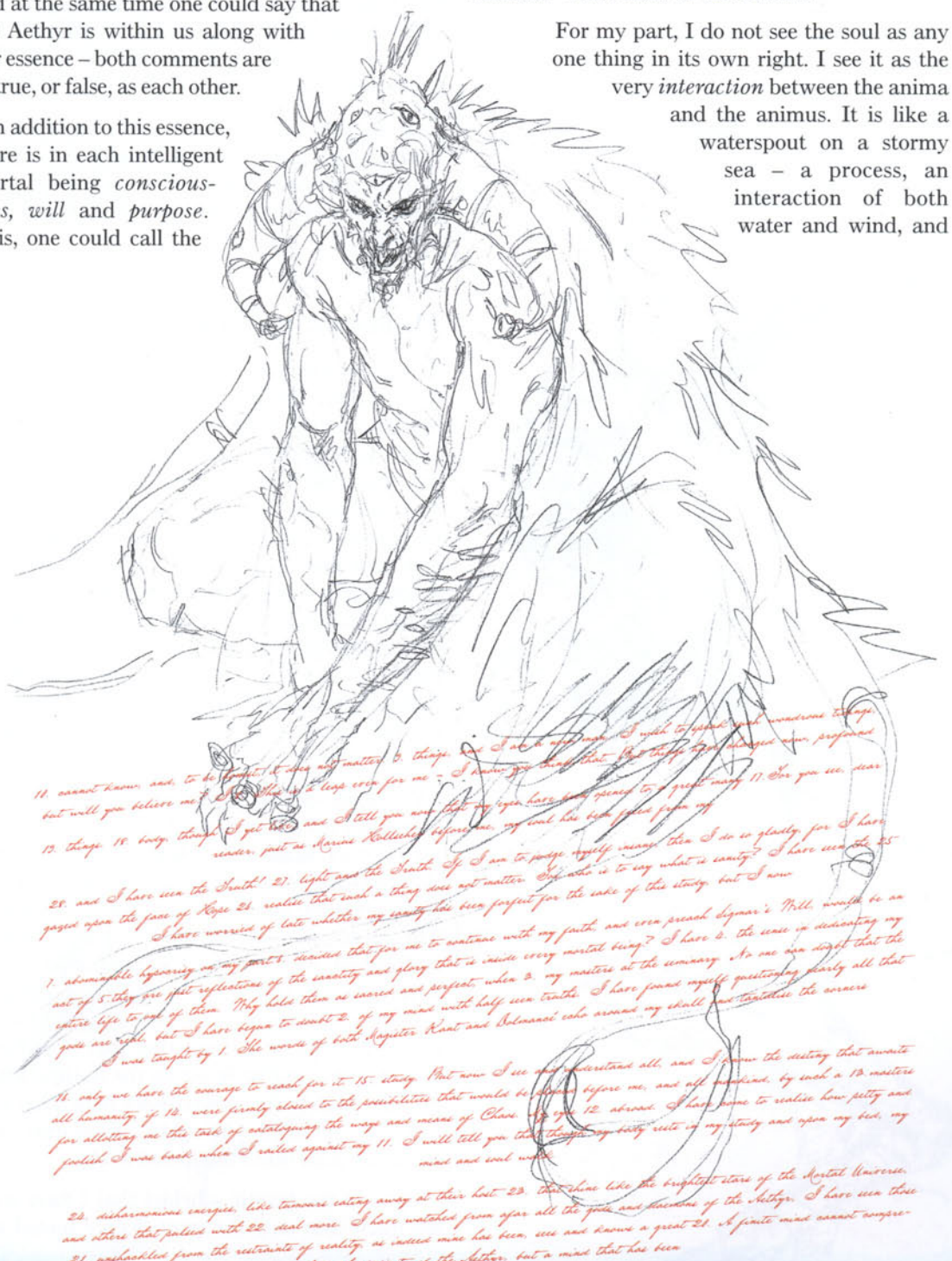
Illuminating the Abyss

the Immaterium. But do not be deceived, for despite the fact that this essence is supposed to exist within the Immaterium, it is also, and at the same time, within us here upon the Mortal Plane. This does not mean that this essence is split in two, nor does it mean that every mortal has two essences – it means merely that because the Immaterium has no dimension or temporal positioning of its own, it exists everywhere as much as it exists anywhere. As such, one could truly say that this essence is within the Aethyr and separate from the body, and at the same time one could say that the Aethyr is within us along with our essence – both comments are as true, or false, as each other.

In addition to this essence, there is in each intelligent mortal being *consciousness, will* and *purpose*. This, one could call the *self*, and it is situated within, and generated by, the mind. This spirit of self-awareness can act as an intermediary between the material and the immaterial, it can both analyse that which *is*, and dream about that which *is not*. It is quintessentially *us*, and it is also the thing we use to contact the divine. It is the thing that spell casters use to weave their spells.

But which of these is the soul? The Aethyric essence or the conscious will? The *Anima* or the *Animus*? The *Phaos* or the *Dhaos*?

For my part, I do not see the soul as any one thing in its own right. I see it as the very *interaction* between the anima and the animus. It is like a waterspout on a stormy sea – a process, an interaction of both water and wind, and



it only comes into existence when these two things meet in the right way and in the right place. In this sense I see the soul as similar to the gods of Chaos, only smaller and far less powerful. Both could be seen as a kind of vortex made up of unconscious emotive energy and conscious will and thought. Take away one side of the equation and the vortex stops spinning and becomes formless and disparate.



Despite the comparative weakness of a mortal's soul when judged in comparison with a god's, mortals posses one great strength that the gods do not – one thing that even the greatest gods, including Tzeentch, crave. Mortals are beings of both the Materium and the Immaterium; this gives us our strength. Both my training as a priest and my studies into the ways and means of Chaos and the occult have led me to believe that mortals are as much Aethyric beings as they are physical beings. And that is the great and terrible truth, my reader – the fact that the gods are our creations, not the other way around, and that while we can exist without the gods, they cannot exist without us!

All the gods, despite their vast knowledge and near infinite power, would be nothing without mortals to embody them with their emotions and personify them with their worship. This I now believe.

Merging with Eternity

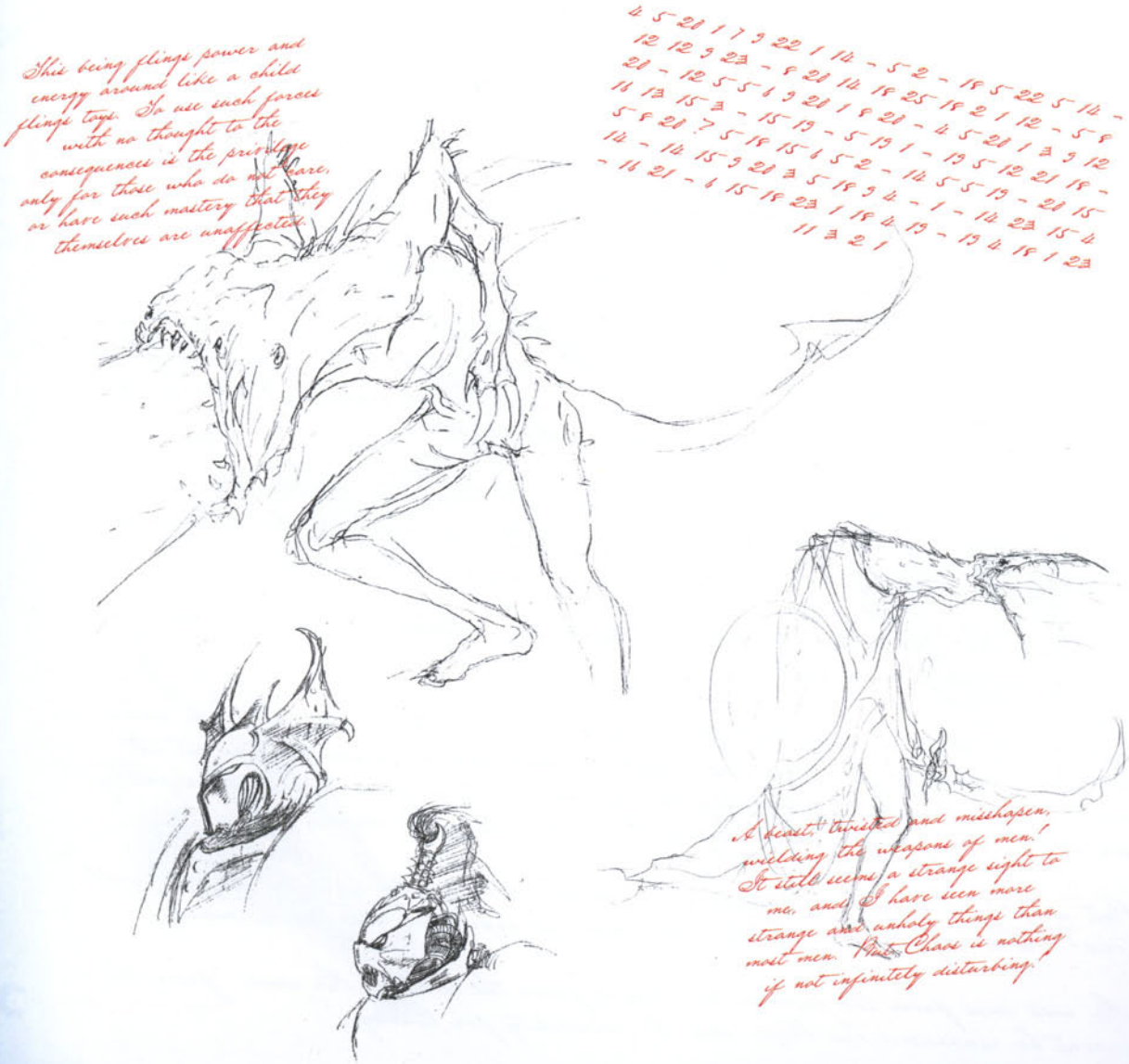
Every text I have read agrees that when an intelligent being dies, his soul (what I believe to be the interaction of his amina and animus combined) is drawn into the Aethyr. For those beings that were most sensitive to the Aethyr in life, such as magisters or the Asur as a race, there is no separation between their anima and animus, and their souls remain as a conscious and self-determining thing. This is, by all accounts, a mixed blessing, for although it means that there is no true death for such souls, it also means that they are likely to fall victim to one of the Aethyr's many soul predators, and experience the full horror and eternal damnation of being consumed by it.

Yet many of the grimoires I have read state that when the vast majority of mortal beings die, their souls fragment and dissipate, dividing into the constituent parts of their quintessential energy (anima) and their consciousness (animus). The energy of a mortal soul is then, I believe, reabsorbed into the broiling potential of the Aethyr, while the animus fragments dissipate even further, so that the separate parts of every thought, memory and emotion that it had contained within it scatter across the Aethyr, where they gradually meet and coalesce with other similar or identical thoughts, memories and emotions from other dissipated souls.

Many of the heretic scholars that I have studied insist that only the most deeply rooted and

profound ideas and emotional states survive this fragmentation and dissipation, and those that remain are not a true reflection of the personality that they originally came from. This might help explain why the great gods and daemons that plague our world seem to be ones of such acute emotions or concepts as love and hate, anger and ecstasy or justice and vengeance (to name but a few), because only powerful notions and feelings such as these retain any coherence within the Aethyr. The Aethyric entities that are formed from memories and experiences of such persistent though mundane activities such as housework or farming tend to be very minor spirits in our folklore – creatures that barely have the power and sentience to do more than ensure a good fire in a hearth, or help with the curdling of milk.

Yet regardless of a Chaos entity's size, each and every one of them is created by the same process of coalescence. A workable (though naturally limited) analogy for this process would be to describe it as the formation and maintenance within the Aethyr of whirlpools of related emotion and thought. Each of these "whirlpools" represents a particular aspect of those mortal races whose thoughts and feelings have contributed towards them. The largest and most extensive of these whirlpools are those associated with those concepts and emotions that have the greatest effect on, and are found most commonly within, intelligent mortals. Yet even so, there are undoubtedly smaller whirlpools within the Aethyr, lesser vortices that spin around the fringes of the greater powers, growing, converging, dividing and eternally moving like the waters of a deep and turbulent river.



Illuminating the Abyss

Richter Kless,
24 / 6 / 2578 I.C.

Last night I fell into a dream from which I could not wake. A dream of lands and places that should not be, but that I know exist. It was a place of punishment, where the souls of the damned cried out in anguish and gnashed their teeth. The beings that meted out those punishments so dire were tall angels, swathed in dark raiment that matched the air of that place. I could not bear the horror of that place, but neither could I leave, or even look away, such was the power exerted upon me.

All around me I saw the lost and the damned as they screamed their remorse into the dark. Some had been hung by their tongues from trees of thorn and brier, and others yet did I see writhing amidst lakes of fire and poison.

"What is this place?" I cried. "Why have I been brought here?" I did not expect a response. So often of late have I dreamt of Chaos and all its torments that I have grown quite used to being an invisible observer to the nightmares, only to witness horrific things. But this time would prove different.

To my surprise and surmounting horror one of the angels in dark raiment turned my way, and, spreading his mighty wings, swept through the oily darkness towards me. Such was my terror that my legs would not move and I stood rooted to the spot.

"Touch me not!" I screamed. "You have no claim upon me!"

The angel slowed and stopped before me, though his feet did not come to rest upon the crude earth. I saw him for all his unholy glory, and a chill ran through me. I recognised this creature from the words and sketches of Marius Hallsecher, that wretched man whose path I have so closely followed.

"You are he," I exclaimed, "or one like him. The messenger of Hallsecher's Revelations!" Then the angel smiled and I was filled with all the coldness of the world.

"Yes," said He. "I know the name of Hallsecher. He swims in yonder lake, catching trinkets for my brothers."

I looked to where the angel stretched his finger, and there, not far from where we stood was a river of foul smelling blood. A man swam desperately against its river's viscous torrent, periodically diving beneath its surface to retrieve rocks of near molten heat for the silent angels that stood along the banks.

"But why?" I begged. "Why torture him so? For surely his life was one well lived?" The angel turned back to me, and his expression was cruel indeed.

"He was ours from the moment he stepped from the Path," He said, "from the moment he renounced his Hope and the possibility for Change."

"But you are mistaken," said I, anger giving me courage, "you speak of Hope and you are just as damned as I."

Change, and I know of what you speak. I know of that One, and Hollscher did indeed renounce Him.' I know, for I follow Hollscher's path. I have done what he once did, and I know all that he once knew. He did not swear his heart to Change, and so you can have no claim on his soul. Indeed, no powers did he possess, and upon death his soul must surely have faded as most men's do. So I do not believe you sir angel, or daemon, or whatever it is you are. I do not believe your vision and I do not believe your words.'"

I closed my eyes then, for I expected him to strike me down for my impertinence. But he did not. In fact he laughed: a warm and genuine sound that chilled me all the more because it was so.

"Richter," He said, "dearest Richter. Hollscher is ours not because he denied Change, but because he embraced Change and then sought to end it. All through his investigations that so mirror your own, Hollscher was my master's, and he was gratified for my master's aid. And so that is why Hollscher is ours, dearest Richter, because he swore himself to us in his thoughts and in his deeds, and gladly he passed by that point from which there can be no return. Yet once his investigation had finished, he thought to renounce the past and reject my master by pretending it had not happened – something that cannot be permitted. My master's reach is long, and well do I know that he will never relinquish the pawns He marks as His own."

It was shocking to think that Hollscher had sworn himself to the powers he despised, and I could see no reason why such a thing could come to pass. For to imagine that Hollscher could take such a step was, for me, to imagine that I myself had done the same. But the thought was too disturbing and I pushed it from me.



These creatures are with me now, in my waking and my sleep. I draw them, and I know them with a familiarity that I find most unpleasant.

Number of letters = numbers = words

Illuminating the Abyss

"How is it you know my name?" I asked. "And why do you use it so familiarly? I have no ties to you and I reject the intimacy that your tone implies."

Then the angel smiled once more, and I am sure I saw pity reflected in his sapphire eyes. "I thought that you might have changed, dear Richter. I thought that I had shown you the Path. I thought I had opened your eyes to the Truth and the Way, but I see you languish yet in ignorance."

Then it came to me and I knew who this being was, or had been. "Dolmancé!" I exclaimed. "Can it be you? But no! I am mistaken. Dolmancé is dead and dust, and his soul must surely have been swallowed by the Dark Prince that he worshipped."

"But Dolmancé I am," replied the angel, "or was while still mortal. Yet now I am transfigured, born anew to immortal life, and I must serve my master with Grace and Good Heart, for He is my Saviour and Lord. Though in my life I prayed to the Lord of Delight, in my death I did learn that my soul was not His. For I was a pawn, as all men are, in the Divine Game, and though I turned my prayers and my thoughts to Slaanesh, it was the Lord of Mixed Ways who dandled my strings. I was His puppet in life, though I knew it not, and through His subtle ways and unknowable means He stole my soul from His youngest sibling and bound me to this task, that I must ever be at."

"And what is that task?" I asked, more from shock than a will to know.

"To show mortals like you the Way, dearest Richter," replied Dolmancé. "I must answer your questions and take you along the Path. I must be your teacher as well as your slave. And I must be these things gladly, for on these actions depends much."

My mind reeled from his words and I was unsure of what to say. "Why should this be your task?" I asked, "And what is the 'much' that depends on your actions?"

"To the first," He replied, "it is my task because it has been decreed, and it is not for me to question my master. To the second, I cannot say, for of all things that are, have been, or shall be, this one thing I am denied to know. But ask on, dear Richter, for there is nothing else I cannot answer for you."

"Then show me the Lord of Change!" I shouted, "Take me to His throne that I might look upon Him and His servants and judge Him with my own eyes and reason!" And the angel Dolmancé nodded and reached out his hand to me.

After this I remember nothing, except that I woke in my room surrounded by the drawings and notes that follow this page. I fear that I have stepped too far this time. I have passed that point where it will take longer to go back than it will to finish the course.

My soul is lost and my mind swiftly follows. Damned be Sigmar's name, for he must be the weakest of gods! Why could he not protect and keep me, his most loyal servant, through these troubled days? Damn him for his lies!



The Immortal Servants of Change

BEING A PASSAGE ON THE TERRIFYING AND UNKNOWABLE CREATURES OF CHAOS, NOTABLY THE SPAWN OF TZEENTCH THAT CAUSE GREAT UPHEAVAL AND CONSTERNATION WHEN THEY ENTER THE MORTAL REALMS.

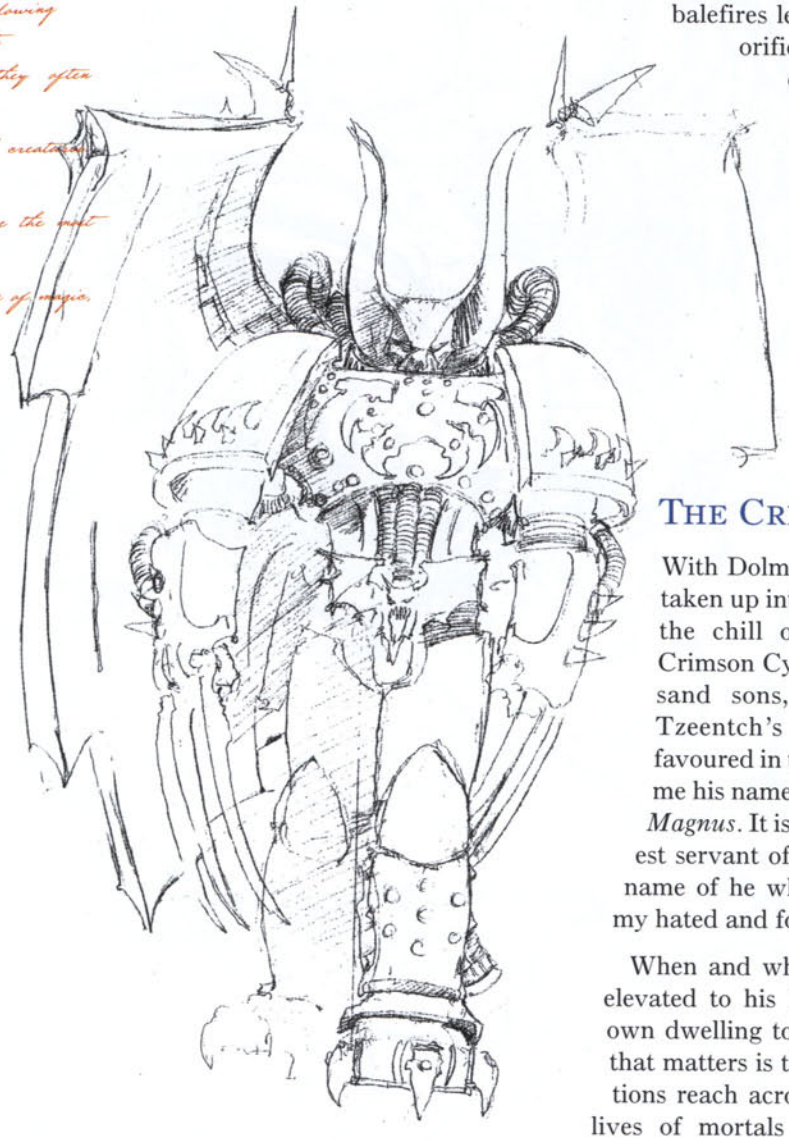
They have no name, these Children of Chaos, but they are always there, in the dark places, watching us and waiting. When the power of Chaos grows strong, and the Winds of Magic blow through the Northern Gates like an unholy tempest, then all the Children of Chaos will rise from the shadows, braying, screaming and howling in anticipation of the final victory of their ancient gods, and the spawn shall be with them.

How vile they are – nightmares made flesh! Mindless and unrecognisable, divested of their intellect and comprehensible form. Vicious monsters that have been warped and changed by uncaring Chaos into the things we call *spawn*.

Whereas the majority of these heinous blasphemies belong to no particular deity, being only the shattered remains of those who have strayed too close to the places of Chaos, there are others that bear the marks and traits of the Four Powers. Of all such creatures, the spawn of Tzeentch are the most bizarre and incomprehensible, for they are Firewyrms, creatures that can spit magical flame at any who stand in their way.

They are like nightmarish dreams, their twisted bodies rippling and shifting with change. Their skin blisters perpetually with bulbous eyes and gaping and chattering maws open upon their distended limbs. But most alarming yet, balefires leak from their every screaming orifice, flames that are the colours of each of the Winds of Magic.

What purpose these creatures serve within Tzeentch's great scheme I do not know, but one thing I feel is certain, these creatures represent the fate Tzeentch has in mind for all those who would stand in His way and resist the inevitability of Change.

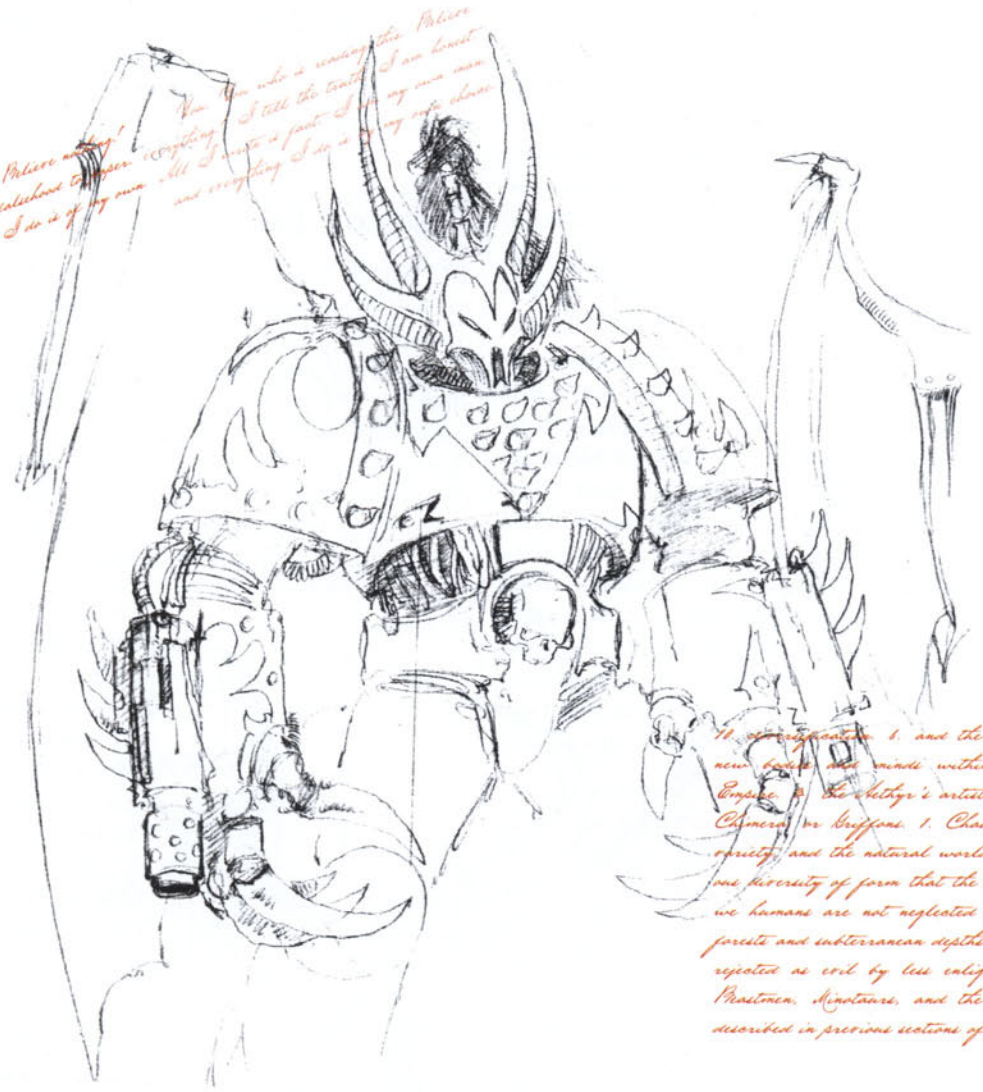


The Crimson Cyclops

With Dolmancé acting as my guide, I was taken up into the Darkness and on through the chill of the Endless Night to the Crimson Cyclops. He has spawned a thousand sons, this highest prince of all Tzeentch's daemons, and he is most favoured in the eyes of his master. They told me his name, and how I laughed to hear it – *Magnus*. It is ironic, is it not, to see the greatest servant of the Lord of Change share the name of he who was the greatest servant of my hated and forgotten lord, Sigmar?

When and where the Crimson Cyclops was elevated to his lofty position and granted his own dwelling to lord over, I do not know. All that matters is that he exists, and his machinations reach across the universe and affect the lives of mortals everywhere. From within a fortress of nightmare does the Cyclops rule his

The Immortal Servants of Change



infernal domain. Built of stark madness was that castle, I see it still in my mind's much abused eye. Insanity had been its architect, and a thousand thousand raving souls had been its masons. Its very walls screamed their desperate madness into the swirling colours of that twilit realm. Atop every pinnacle there crouched the winged Furies, their eyes keener than any birds,' searching the shifting landscape for fools to prey upon. Their claws were red with the blood of the innocent, and their bodies bloated from feasting on damned souls.

Beneath the fortress and the volcanic glass it was built upon, there boiled a sea of fire and pitch that thrashed in its vast basin with unnatural violence. Above the fortress the purple clouds were torn like parchment, and the images of countless daemons and angels filled the endless sky.

The castle itself rested upon a titanic cliff of volcanic rock, and was carved into the likeness of a horned skull. As I looked upon it from my lofty vantage, I saw terrible balefires lick out from its eyes. The towers and bastions of that daemonic place were twisted into impossible angles, fighting against logic and order, and yet despite this, the fortress seemed entirely symmetrical – though strange and disconcerting.

I saw that atop the highest level of this maddening fortress there was a single living eye: an impossibly huge orb of jaundiced white with a multihued iris. It watched over the landscape and the minions of its lord, The Eternal Watchdog of The Sorcerer King.

Yet besides this eye, and the daemon head as well, nothing else about the fortress was permanent, for it was constantly torn apart by a vicious and invisible force, only to be rebuilt again moments later in a never ending cycle of Change.

Inside the castle there dwelled the legions of the Crimson Cyclops, feasting upon the hopes and

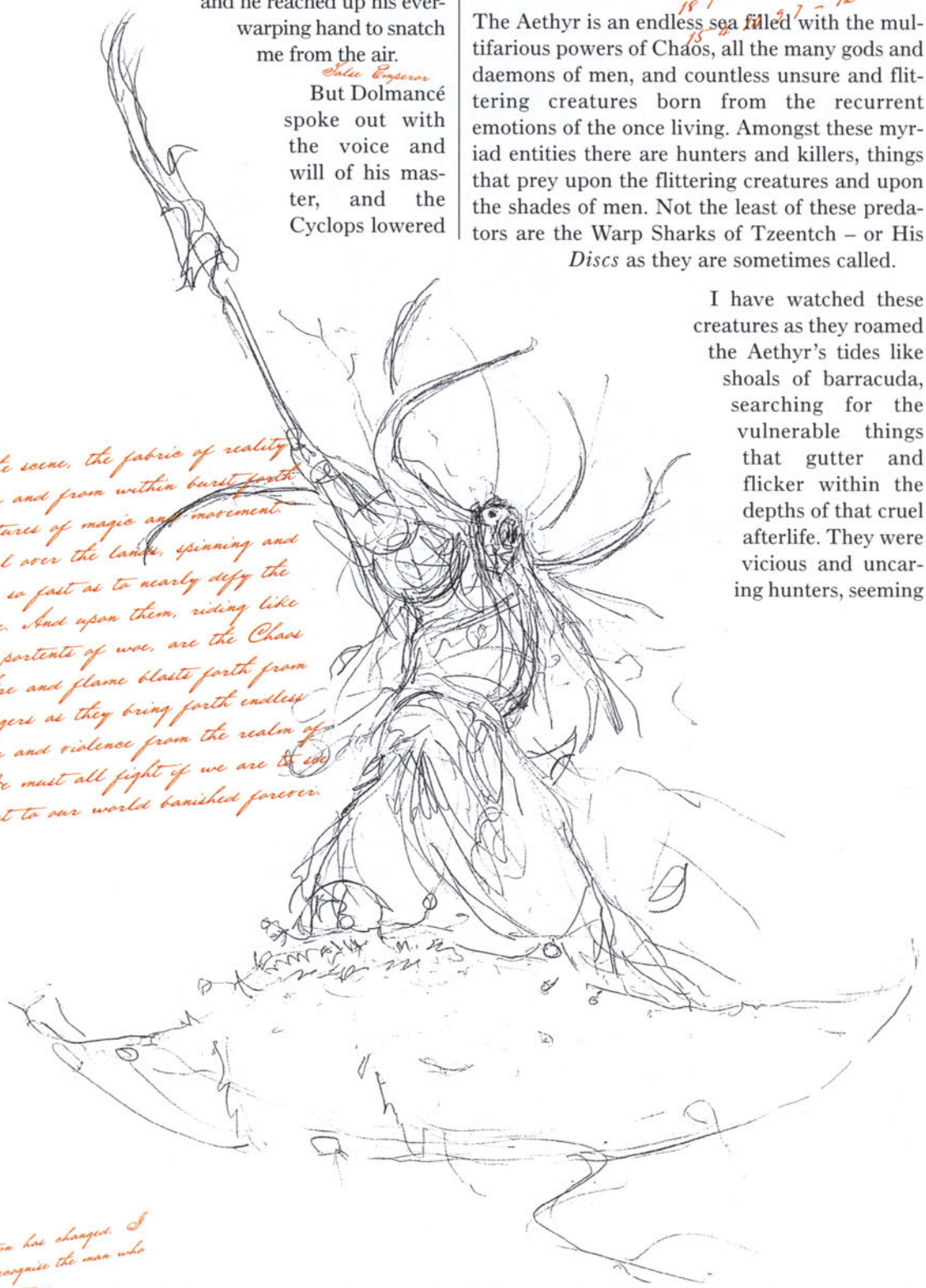
indecisions of a million captured souls. In chambers of rainbow hued fire and water, there resided Magnus in all his maddening glory. His form shifted endlessly, like the castle around him, though his single eye remained a constant feature. But I could not linger there long, for the Cyclops' terrible eye saw me, though I was in myself little more than a dream, and he reached up his ever-warping hand to snatch me from the air.

But Dolmancé spoke out with the voice and will of his master, and the Cyclops lowered his hand and instead gestured for me to go. In that moment I was flung across time and space, through all the Mortal Realms and on into the realms of the immortal.

Discs of Tzeentch

The Aethyr is an endless sea filled with the multifarious powers of Chaos, all the many gods and daemons of men, and countless unsure and flittering creatures born from the recurrent emotions of the once living. Amongst these myriad entities there are hunters and killers, things that prey upon the flittering creatures and upon the shades of men. Not the least of these predators are the Warp Sharks of Tzeentch – or His *Discs* as they are sometimes called.

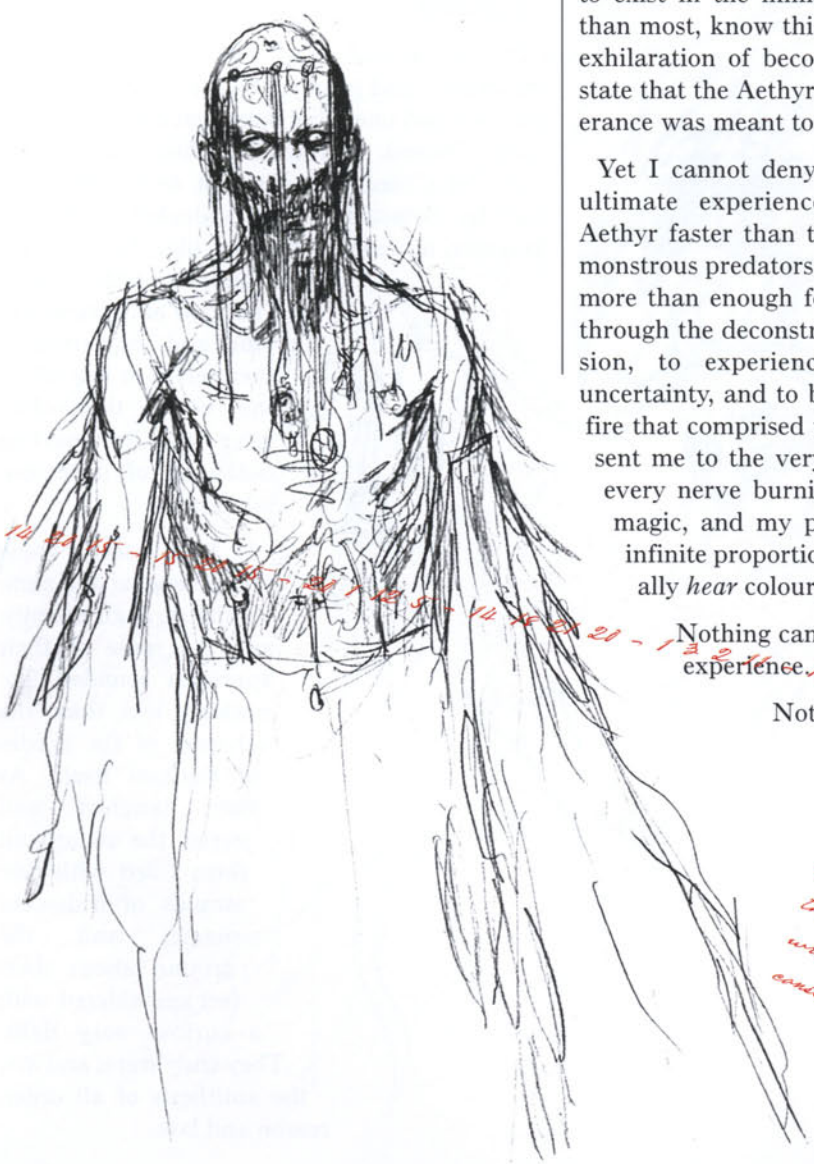
I have watched these creatures as they roamed the Aethyr's tides like shoals of barracuda, searching for the vulnerable things that gutter and flicker within the depths of that cruel afterlife. They were vicious and uncaring hunters, seeming



The Immortal Servants of Change

to be able to scent the dissipating souls of vulnerable mortals, hunting them relentlessly across the Aethyr only to tear them to pieces and carry back to their Lord whatever scraps remained once they had finished.

In that uncertain realm these bizarre crosses between daemon and psychical construct were smoky and indistinct creatures whose shifting forms hinted at a profusion of teeth and sparkling eyes that coruscated with Aethyric energy. Yet when summoned to the Mortal Plane I know that their raw magical bodies assume more definite, although still bizarre and unlikely, forms. They become those things from which they have earned their most common name, the Discs of Tzeentch, for the majority become round and flattened, perhaps covered in hungry eyes or else sheathed in some sort of living metal.



These Discs fly through the air, just as they do through the Aethyr, darting and turning through the sky like sleek fish through clear waters. The greatest champions of Tzeentch are sometimes granted one of these strange creatures as a steed, allowing them to soar through the air upon its flat upper surface.

Discs are creatures wholly of the Chaos Realm, only entering the Mortal Plane when impelled by mighty sorceries or upon the direction of their daemonic masters. Perhaps because of this, the Discs can re-enter the Realm of Chaos at will, without need for ritual, spell-casting or the destruction of the physical shells they occupy while upon the Mortal Plane. In this way, the Discs can actually ferry Tzeentch's champions and servants into the immortal realm, if they so desire. However, mere mortals were not meant to exist in the immaterial universe – I, better than most, know this to be true – and the sheer exhilaration of becoming one with the infinite state that the Aethyr is, is more than human tolerance was meant to withstand.

Yet I cannot deny that the journey was the ultimate experience; speeding through the Aethyr faster than thought, and chased by the monstrous predators that live within it would be more than enough for any being. But to travel through the deconstruction of space and dimension, to experience time as a malleable uncertainty, and to breathe and taste the liquid fire that comprised the very stuff of the Aethyr sent me to the very pitch of ecstasy, with my every nerve burning with the energy of raw magic, and my perception widened to near infinite proportions. It was as if I could actually *hear* colour, and *taste* sound.

Nothing can or will ever match such an experience.

Nothing.

It is so quiet here in my room. The only sound I can hear is the scratch of my quill writing on parchment. But I am not writing!

The Lesser Daemons of Tzeentch

Being a wholly terrifying but necessary look at Tzeentchian Lesser Daemons, their habits and what damage they cause when they enter the Mortal Realms.

How can I describe the Lesser Daemons of Tzeentch, they that are pure and unbounded Chaos? Terrifying they are – squealing, whirling things, whose form changes from one instant to the next as they writhe with the power of their terrible master. They caper throughout eternity, embodiments of insanity and inconstancy, apparently with no definite purpose or allotted task.

The very air around them shimmers with Aethyric energy, and all things that come into contact with these mad avatars of Change risk being changed themselves, randomly and horribly. From one instant to the next a new Horror is born within the last, clawing its way out even as its sire evaporates. Sometimes they are pinkish in hue, other times they are of bluish tint. Believe me, dear reader, even to gaze upon them is a test to one's sanity, for they are randomness and insanity made incarnate.

These daemons do not seem to have solid material bodies as such, even if summoned to the Mortal Realms. Formed from raging magic, sometimes taking on discernible forms, and sometimes blurring into an indistinct yet frantic mass of colour as they dash and scamper across the ground.

But when confronted with these creatures of impatience and lunacy, I found worst by far was the total and unending noise that emanated from them. Indeed, surrounding these hateful servants of Chaos was constant and unrelenting babble. Sometimes they squealed with mad laughter, a ceaseless braying like the most disturbed lunatic. Other times they sneered and grumbled, crying and muttering to themselves in low whining voices that often gave way to snarling outbursts of unreasoning fury.



It has the aspect of an old man, bent with age. How strange. Sometimes I close my eyes, but I can still see what is around me. Has this study given me further sight into the unreal? Have I been given a daemon's gift, in order to help me with my task? I cannot be pained! I can see.

I have seen these things, leaping and gambolling through eternity, and the noise of their approach sounded like nothing less than the advance of the hordes of Bedlam itself. As they laughed and jeered, the air around them filled with tiny strands of iridescent magic, and the ground about their feet smouldered with a curious rosy light. They truly were, and are, the antithesis of all order, reason and law.



The angel Solmanee goaded our strange steed faster and faster through the Aethyr, and all was speed and fury. Winds of pure magic screamed and howled around us as we whirled with the divine currents and tore through veils of insubstantial substance. Hazy streamers of the stuff caught about us as we sped through the shimmering twilight, only to trail behind us in billowing tatters.

My eyes stung as we passed under waterfalls of colours that I know no words to describe. Solidity and form had no meaning in that realm of magic and unlight. Coloured sparks flashed here and there, sometimes darting into my mouth only to burst out through my nose. The warp-shark bucked and plunged beneath us, yet somehow we remained fixed upon its back.

When I realized the extraordinary power of that moment, for I knew that the Aethyr and its inhabitants had no true form or mass and that I should not be able to see or comprehend any of these things around me. My mind had made real that which could not be real under other circumstances, but the thought was ripped from me in a moment and all was speed and colour once more.

My body began to shake with spasms of fear and ecstasy as we burst through a shoal of even more warp-sharks, their eldritch bodies glistening as pure magic splashed and sprayed across them. Soon we overtook them and continued our flight into the trailing nothingness of Chaos.

As I gaze from my window, from this room that seems to have become my prison, I see the seasons change. I see the hope of spring bloom into the splendour of summer that is pregnant with life and garish colour. Then decay sets in, brown and orange consume the wholesome green and the smell of death hangs in the air like a pall. And then the killer sweeps over the land, laying waste to all life. But spring always comes to reclaim her crown. Dark armies gather on our borders. I fear spring may never return and winter will hold fast over our lands forever.

As we passed them by, they who were the giggling legions of Tzeentch's Horrors, I found myself wanting to laugh along with them, to scream at the hilarity of existence, and cheer the endless renewal of death and rebirth and death and rebirth. I stepped from our steed and made towards them, intent as I was to dance and play with these children of Change, but the angel Dalmancé grabbed my arm and pulled me back.

"Do not go near them," He said, "and do not gaze too long upon them, for they are true randomness – the embodiment of all that is contrary and mad. Because they exist, all mortals can choose to do that which is not logical or required. They are the terrible price of freedom of choice, and to step too close to them is to be denied one's own."

I do not trust the printer. He is a fool. He says he will no longer print what I write. Mind creatures matter. I have a pen. I will write every colour out, then I will never forget what I have learned.

The page is written. But it is blank. I must write. I must write, because there is much work yet to do the horrors are coming



I begin to wonder who is the true author of this book. Perhaps another name should be credited. Or several names! I have been guided from the start

5 21 16 - 6 15 - 4 18 15 12 - 5 8 21

The Burning Horrors

Dear gods, do you see them! The Fire Daemons, the Flamers of Tzeentch?

I see them. I see them here. I saw them then. They follow me from my sleep into my day!

Their limbs leak fire, but not of the normal sort, oh no, but the liquid fire of raw magic. It is coloured like the eight winds themselves, and these daemons use it to burn and warp their foes. I see them even now, drifting outside my window, their fire crackling and hissing as it soils the ground. Can the people not see them? I cry out to those in the street below. I tell them to run, to scream, to hide their faces from the Aethyr's mad denizens, but they just look at me as though I were the mad one!

Still they come. Still they search for me. See how the flames leak from their every orifice? Surely the flame is alive? For where it hits the poor earth, smaller flames spring to life around it and take on the form of those foolish men and women who stand below, staring up at me in their slack jawed ignorance. Like tiny marionettes, these daemonic fires impersonate what is happening around them, but in the most disturbing manner. They stare up at me, their burning mouths hanging open, burbling stupidly, mocking the oblivious mortals that stand around them.

The flame daemons seem to ignore the little parodies of life that they have spawned, and as the Flamers drift hither and yon upon their skirts of pinkish flesh, the little marionettes collapse into splattering pools of magic that slowly fade back into nothing.

How horrible is this scene! How nightmarish and bizarre! But the worst I fear is yet to come, for I know that these monstrosities have only the most rudimentary and instinctive of minds. They exist to serve the will of Tzeentch's great servants, His Lords of Change, and where the Flamers leap and hover, the Feathered Ones cannot be far behind!

The Feathered Lords are coming! Can you not see? Do you not care? Sigmar has abandoned you and now the Lord of Change has come to collect His dues...



The Inevitable City

Source unknown

I was forced into this task. I was given no choice and allowed no argument. Looking back, from where I sit now in the room of suffocation and lies, I know that my path was chosen for me, and no effort on my part would have me stray from it. I am in this truth the All-Father Ilgmar. He could not save his subject. He is a weak god - barely worthy of contempt.

then Dalmancé the angel raised his sword to fend off the flame-daemon's blow.

"Damn you!" He screamed. "We serve the same master!"

The fiery beast arched its body above Dalmancé, perhaps not hearing, perhaps not caring. Pink and blue flames leaked from the gaping maws at the end of its arms, and as each fire drop fell, it evaporated with a serpent-like hiss. From amidst the vaporous flame there leapt a small replica of Dalmancé, but its face was that of a caricature idiot, and its cry was like that of a spoilt child.

"Damning you!" it screeched. "We serve the same Mata-tat-tat!"

Then the flame daemon struck again, and blue fire engulfed Dalmancé. I cried out as I saw Dalmancé fall, a near shapeless mass of unnatural fires and shimmering smoke. The little marionette followed suit, throwing itself onto its back, kicking its legs and gesturing melodramatically.

"Hat! Hat! Hat!" it squealed.

5 14 25 20 8 25 - 19 12 5 21 8 - 12 1 12 - 18 9 1 20 13 7 - 19 9 - 4 4 15

The Lords of Change

BEING ONE OF RICHTER'S LAST WRITINGS. CONCERNING ITSELF, AT THE LAST, WITH THE GREATER DAEMONS OF TZEENTCH AND THE ALL TOO EVIDENT POWER THEY HOLD OVER MORTALS.

And then I walked into the presence of the Feathered Lord, He who is the Eye of Tzeentch. He who is called the Watching Prince. He who is the greatest of all Tzeentch's daemons.

Huge He was, and silent, though His eyes, His terrible eyes, saw and knew all. Within His gaze lay all the wisdom and understanding of His great lord, Tzeentch Himself, and I could scarce withstand to meet it. I do not understand how, but I knew that this great daemon could not only see my flesh and skin, but also my bones and blood, my hopes and dreams, my failures and my fears.

The daemon's craning neck sat on a narrow feathered body, and His wings spread out behind Him in multi-coloured splendour. I am not sure whether He was blue or yellow, or indeed an entirely different or new colour for which there is no name or word to describe. His hue changed from moment to moment, perhaps because the daemon did not regard it as relevant that He should retain any constancy of colour or appearance.

Can anyone doubt that the Lords of Change are blessed with the multi-layered cunning and timeless wisdom of Tzeentch Himself? As I stood before that timeless daemon I felt within myself that His was the deepest and most subtle understanding of all the mortal hopes and fears that drive our world within its well-worn rut. I knew just how thoroughly that daemon understood and despised the entrapping comforts of stability and familiarity. What indeed could please that immortal lord more than to see the world broken and made anew and redirect the course of a life and history? To spill the dullest of mortal aspirations upon the ground, while raising the hopes and ambitions of others up to an unexpected pinnacle of power?

One cannot help but wonder what the fates have in store for us. Tzeentch has a hand in fate. That which can divine the further course of events can go out of its way to alter them. I fancy I can feel the strings that make my limbs dance. I have no free will.

I think, perhaps, that it was a playful mind that lay behind that bird-like gaze – intelligent beyond all measure of the word, yet as uncaring of consequence as it was fascinated by it. For truly, the Lords of Change are the truest avatars of their divine master, and so are the supreme manipulators of mortal affairs. Humanity is nought but an anthill to these creatures, and they are the ones who would kick it over.

They send their champions across the world to do their bidding, undertaking a thousand occurrences that might easily be mistaken as random or pointless. Yet all such events are pieces that fall into the complex and ever-changing plans of these mighty daemons – plans that are beyond the comprehension of us mere mortals.

Yet their interference with our lives is not always subtle. Change can also be violent and sudden, and let none suffer the misconception that the Lords of Change are above waging war to further its aims.

The most potent weapon of Tzeentch is not brute force, but magic – what else? The Lords of Change are powerful sorcerers as well as formidable tacticians. If they prefer to remain uncommitted in battle, it is not through lack of courage or ferocity on their part, but because the Feathered Lords always seek to direct their forces and control the flow of the fighting.

As manifestations of Tzeentch's Will, the Lords of Change must be the most unpredictable and manipulative of all the Aethyr's daemons, and, so my studies would imply, they are the most readily summoned of all Greater Daemons. Yet only the crassest fool would take a Lord of Change at His word, for He is more than likely to utter false or misleading prophecies to further His own eternal schemes. How many daemonologists, I wonder, have made pacts with a Lord of Change and benefited greatly from it in the short term, only for their plans and ambitions to come to nought and be shattered, leaving them as twisted and mewling spawn? Surely it must be the majority of them, for who indeed has the knowledge, wisdom and foresight to outplay the Feathered Lords at the game of politics and deception? But then, should a mortal be cunning enough to outwit such a creature, the rewards must indeed be limitless.

Yet I am no such fool as to try.

The Lords of Change

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Huge He was, and silent, though His eyes, His terrible eyes, saw and knew all. Within His gaze lay all the wisdom and understanding of His great lord, Tzeentch Himself, and I could scarce withstand to meet it. I do not understand how, but I knew that this great daemon could not only see my flesh and skin, but also my bones and blood, my hopes and dreams, my failures and my fears, so many fears!

The daemon's cranial neck sat on a narrow feathered body, and His wings spread out behind Him in multi-coloured splendour. I am not sure whether He was blue or yellow, or indeed an entirely different or new colour for which there is no name or word to describe. His hue changed from moment to moment, because the daemon does not regard it necessary to retain any constancy of colour or appearance.

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I think, perhaps, that it was a playful mind that lay behind that bird-like gaze – intelligent beyond all measure of the word, yet as uncaring of consequence as it was fascinated by it. For the Lords of Change are the fairest avatars of their divine master, and so are the supreme manipulators of mortal affairs. Humanity is nought but an anthill to these creatures, and they are the ones who will kick it over.

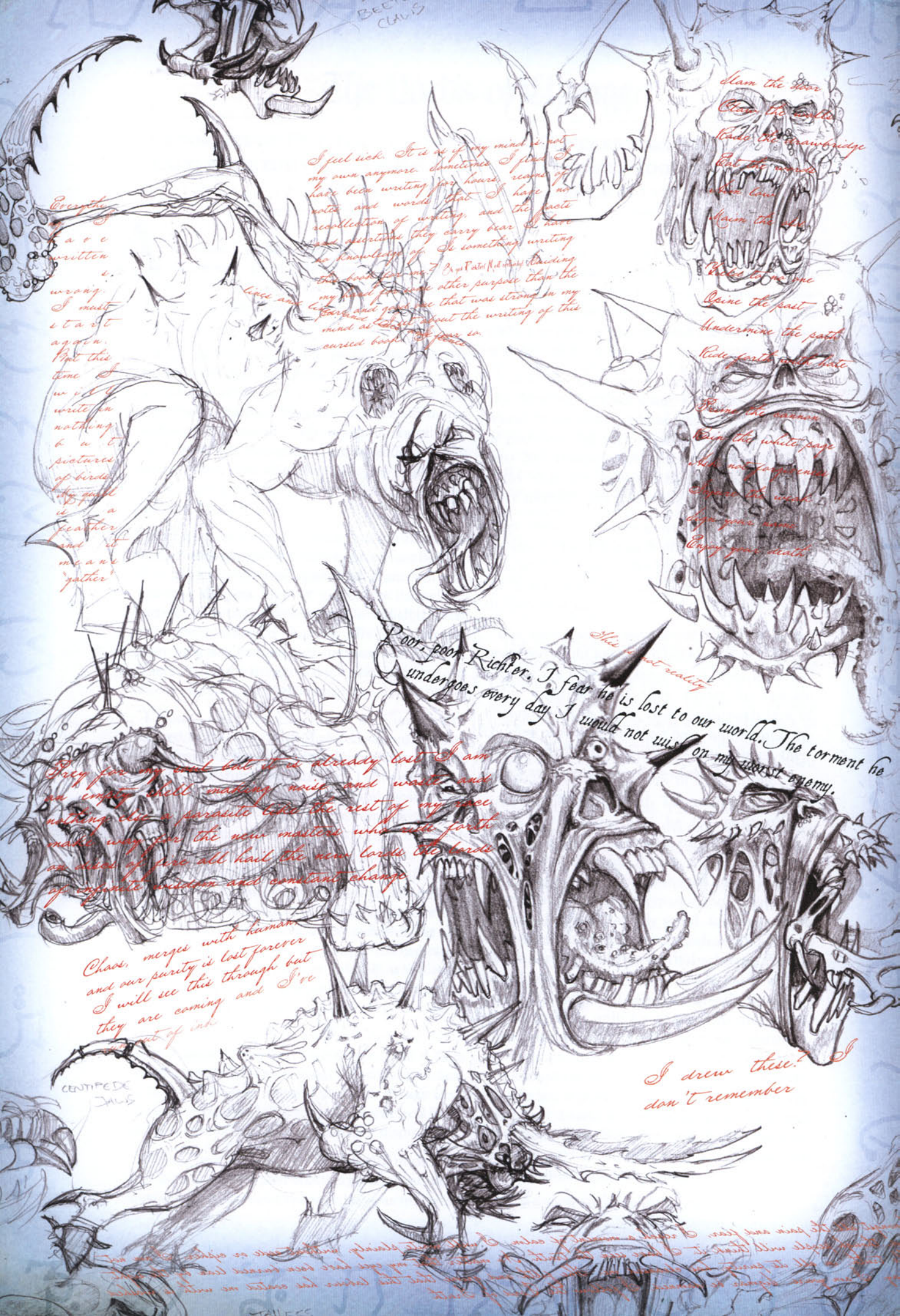
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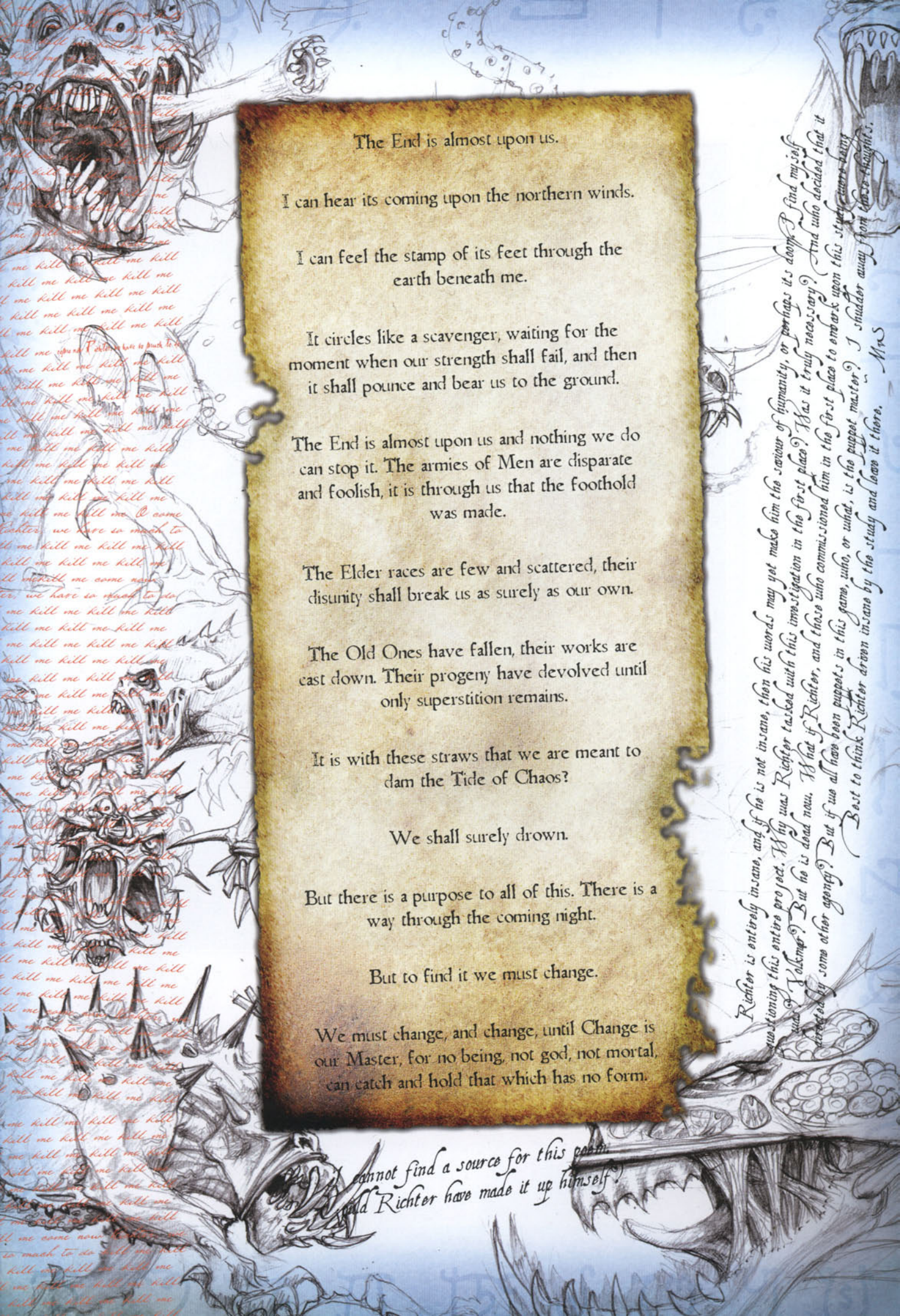
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Yet I am such a fool as to try.


I feel sick. It is as if my mind is not my own anymore. Sometimes I feel as if I have been writing for hours, reams of notes and words that I have no recollection of writing, and the facts and assertions they carry bear the hallmarks of knowledge of a subject I have no knowledge of. It is something, writing this book for me, I do not understand. Guiding my hand to some other purpose than the one I have set myself, but yet one that was strong in my conscience and yet I have no idea about the writing of this cursed book. Of course.
Except I have written it wrong. I must start again. This time I will write nothing but pictures of birds. The pencil is a feather and it means 'gather'
Poor, poor Richter. I fear he is lost to our world. The torment he undergoes every day I would not wish on my worst enemy.
Slam the door
Close the shutters
Raise the drawbridge
Bar the windows
Man the walls
Quench the fires
Quash the past
Undermine the path
Ride forth with hate
Burn the cannon
Sign the white page
Spread the word
Open your arms
Enjoy your death
Grey fur. I want but it is already lost I am an empty shell nothing more and worse and nothing else a parasite till the rest of my race make way for the new masters who with forth as blood of fire all hail the new lords the lords of infinite variation and constant change
Chaos, merges with human and our purity is lost forever I will see this through but they are coming and I've
I drew these? I don't remember
CENTIPEDE JAWS



The End is almost upon us.

I can hear its coming upon the northern winds.

I can feel the stamp of its feet through the earth beneath me.

It circles like a scavenger, waiting for the moment when our strength shall fail, and then it shall pounce and bear us to the ground.

The End is almost upon us and nothing we do can stop it. The armies of Men are disparate and foolish, it is through us that the foothold was made.

The Elder races are few and scattered, their disunity shall break us as surely as our own.

The Old Ones have fallen, their works are cast down. Their progeny have devolved until only superstition remains.

It is with these straws that we are meant to dam the Tide of Chaos?

We shall surely drown.

But there is a purpose to all of this. There is a way through the coming night.

But to find it we must change.

We must change, and change, until Change is our Master, for no being, not god, not mortal, can catch and hold that which has no form.

I cannot find a source for this poem. Could Richter have made it up himself?

Richter is entirely insane, and if he is not insane, then his words may yet make him the saviour of humanity, or perhaps its doom. I find myself questioning this entire project. Why was Richter tasked with this investigation in the first place? Was it truly necessary? And who decided that it was? Volkmar? But he is dead now. What of Richter, and those who commissioned him in the first place to embark upon this study? Were they directed by some other agency? But if we all have been puppets in this game, who, or what, is the puppet master? I shudder away from these thoughts. Best to think Richter driven insane by the study and leave it there.

Mrs



Power Through Change

OPISCULUM DAEMONIS

LIBER CHAOTICA

Volume the Fifth

WITH FORMER INVESTIGATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED

And expository lectures on the followers and rituals of Chaos Undivided

BEING IN THE MAIN AN EXAMINATION OF THE DAEMONIC AND MORTAL ARMIES OF CHAOS, AND IN PART, BEING A DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMBERLESS UNNATURAL CREATURES THAT DO ACCOMPANY THEM



FEATURING TEXTS COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY THE AUTHOR
RICHTER KLESS
Illustrated and illuminated with numerous plates
compiled by the author
Printed by Johannes Innsbrook, Printer to Albertus Mansoul,
Bound by Christoph Hassel of Wolfenburg



Liber Undivided

This last section of the tome I have pieced together from the remainder of papers left behind in Kless's study. It is concerned mostly with Chaos Undivided, that time when the followers of the gods of Chaos band together, to form the greatest threat known to the lands of the mortals. It also contains relevant material on the aspects of magic that exist within the world. Kless is of the opinion that magic is a manifestation of Chaos; an idea that will no doubt anger the Colleges of Magic and the Patriarchs there.

This is a worthy addition to this tome, in that it contains terrifying information and near heretical beliefs. Once again Dolmancé raises his ugly head. I hope the compilation of this final section will prove to be the end of my labours on this subject. I feel the need to be cleansed in the study of wholesome subjects again. I fear, however, that I will never get over the effects that working on the Liber Chaotica has had upon me. I view the world through jaded eyes, and when I see the sun rise, I wonder how many more times it will happen before the light is blotted forever by the forces of darkness.

My faith in Sigmar lies in tatters. This account speaks true: there is no eternal reward or punishment waiting for us, simply because after death there is no person for the gods to reward or punish. That fragment of the warp that resides in us all is simply the necessary spark that bridges the gulf between the Physical and the Nothing – it is the joist in the scales that weigh Matter and the absence of Matter; Time and the absence of Time. It is there purely to facilitate our influence over the flows of the Aethyr, so that in turn the Aethyr may influence and [illegible] are to find blessed [illegible] understand this now.

Mordrek the Damned

From Hugo Lazarre's "Grim Stories and Cautionary Tales."
Translated by Hans Gunther.

Do any remember how he that history remembers as Mordrek the Damned came to his fate? Are there any amongst the wise of the Old World who recall which god or gods he served? Which god or gods cursed him with his most dire affliction of immortality and endless change?

If such men exist, they keep their own council.

We all walk this world at the whim of the gods. We are powerless in the face of the awesome power of Chaos. Just by writing about them I have become their slave

Let Mordrek be a warning to all those who would seek fame and life eternal from the daemon gods of Chaos, for he has both these things and yet he is damned. For he must walk all the lands of the world at the whim of the Chaos Gods, always fighting, always serving, never dying, yet never ascending to the Realm of Chaos as daemon or departed spirit. He has been slain countless times throughout the centuries of recorded Imperial history, and yet each time it is said that Mordrek has been resurrected to serve his masters anew. Yes, Mordrek has endured many deaths and lived for many, many lifetimes of mortal men, yet his unnatural life is no blessing.

For Mordrek must slay in the name of his infernal masters, he is a pawn in their great schemes that they never tire of using. Beneath his all-encompassing and faceless armour, Mordrek's physical form changes constantly, ravaged by the terrible mutations caused by the power of his curse.

The legends say that Mordrek hopes one day to be freed of this curse of non-permanence and ascend to the peaceful rest of death. This is a dream of one in denial, for the gods shall never tire of their games. Surely he must envy even those victims that are transformed into grotesque spawn of Chaos by the touch of his sword, for they gain the oblivion he craves, but cannot have.

Such is the curse of Mordrek the Damned.

Will I be free from the curse? I think not. Like Mordrek, I forever quail in the shadow of the dark


The Iron Knight,
by Jakob Greiber,
heretic, painter,
visionary

The Everchosen of Chaos

Being an examination of the Everchosen of Chaos, and in particular the growing threat posed by one newly arisen: Archaon, Lord of the End Times.

The only small comfort that we of the mortal realms can allow ourselves upon consideration of the daemonic is that the Four Great Powers of Chaos seem to despise each other as much as they despise us. Just as these great gods of unbalance hate each other with a divine and terrible passion, so too do their followers, both mortal and daemonic, hate the followers of the other daemon gods. But as with all matters pertaining to Chaos and the daemon gods, the situation is not so simple as this.

According to the great scholars of Ulthuan, it was a race of beings who were both of mortal realms and divine who first ruled our world, long before the coming of elves, dwarfs or men. These Old Ones (as the elves refer to them) created magical gates, far to the north of the world, and it is through these that Chaos has threatened to overwhelm and destroy the world so many times. But the gods of Chaos are fickle and capricious, and rarely have they combined their forces for this purpose, instead preferring to further their own incomprehensibly complicated schemes of domination, each in the hopes of ruling the Mortal Realms for themselves and to the exclusion of their brother daemon gods.

Be that as it may, every few centuries there has arisen from the Mortal Realms a champion who wins for himself the blessings of all the Chaos Gods, uniting all the tribes that live in the shadow of the daemon haunted north, and therefore becoming the greatest bane of the free peoples of the Mortal Realms. History and legend tells us that the crowning of these terrible warlords has heralded the coming of excess and great change: of war, plague and decay, on a truly horrendous scale.

It is said that nature itself abhors the presence of this ultimate champion of Chaos and rebels against him. The ground splits asunder at his passing and the air churns and shimmers around him, for he is the Lord of the End Times, the Everchosen of Chaos. It is through him alone that the daemon gods unite and bestow their greatest favours and blessings, for he shows himself worthy to bear the mark of their Undivided glory and become the living Incarnation of the Utterdark, the mortal Prince of Chaos, the Scion of the Great Undivided and Herald of the Apocalypse.

Fortunately for we mortals, each and every time the Everchosen have arisen to lead armies against the free lands of the south they have been driven back, for, it would seem, the Powers that oppose the tide of Chaos Undivided are not without their own means. Throughout the troubled history of this world, whenever the Everchosen has been anointed by his daemonic masters, the mortal realms have risen up against him, uniting behind a great Champion of Light, himself anointed by, or even personifying, the divinities and peoples that stand in antipathy to Chaos and its means – Holy Sigmar Himself being the greatest of these champions to emerge from amongst our own race of men.

Yet it is with a great weight upon my heart that I must write that a new Scion of Chaos has emerged far to the north. The Everchosen has arisen once more and all the powers and dominions of darkness follow at his back.

I have gathered every scrap of knowledge available about this newest Uniter of the Chaos Hordes, from soldiers and heretics, merchants and travellers, and seers and magisters. I have heard and recorded every story that is told of this traitor of humanity, this heretic and apostate of Sigmar's Holy Church. As to when he was accepted into the service of Chaos no two records agree, but the majority of stories that have been

I have the mark of which they speak. I feel the gramme tearing


Steel, Blood and
Chaos, from the
Lweiber collection of
forbidden art

sent to me by my colleagues living upon the Empire's northern borders say he was once a devout and puissant servant of Sigmar.



This daemon of Kharne bears the mark of his bloody master. Such creatures talk in the ranks of the armies of the Undivided

It is rumoured that he was once a brother of the Order of the Anvil, an initiate of one of the enclosed orders of monks that stand as part of the sacred trinity of Sigmar's Holy Church, which include my own scholastic Order of the Torch and the grim secular priesthood of the Order of the Hammer. For reasons that remain unclear, this monk left his enclosed order of mystics to train in the ways of warfare to serve as one of Sigmar's dedicated templar-knights, strong of arm and pure in heart and thought, travelling the world and fighting against the enemies of humanity wherever he encountered them.

All my insanities are merging into one whole but I feel no peace and my mind is split asunder

The stories say that this young templar's dedication was so strong that he quested to the most remote shrines and most forsaken pits in his efforts to find a way to defeat, once and for all, the taint of Chaos that stretched down from the distant north into the hearts and minds of men. But his studies proved futile, until that fateful day when he stumbled across a hidden sanctuary that held the only existing copy of the *Necrodomo Codex*, a crumbling manuscript written by the acolytes of a barely known prophet several centuries dead; a prophet and seer of incredible skill who was said to be able foresee future events with matchless accuracy – a blessing that was to become a curse. For it is said that to Necrodomo (as he later came to be known) was revealed the true nature of Chaos in all its infinite complexity, and through this he foresaw the consumption of all Mortal Realms by the hateful gods of Chaos.

The precise details of what the young templar learned from the manuscript is not known, but the legends say it was the last piece of the nightmarish and hopeless puzzle that had slowly unfolded before him throughout his years of research. The young templar was filled with fury and screamed in rage to the sky, renouncing Sigmar and spitting vitriol on all the gods of mankind, calling them petty weaklings and liars. Without further hesitation, the templar burned down the sanctuary where he



In the armies of the Undivided all the gods march, be they daemons of Nurgle, such as this one

had found the manuscript and killed all the acolytes who tended it. He rejected his former life and self, and instead swore himself body, mind and soul to the cause of Chaos, changing his name to Archaon – although why he chose that name and what it might mean I do not know. I do know that after this point Archaon hunted down and slaughtered his entire family, their friends and any who could connect them to him, so that nothing of his former life would remain. Clearly Archaon had made his choice, and only service to Chaos held any importance to him from that moment on.

According to the prophecies of Necrodomo, a chosen one, who would throw wide the Gates of Chaos and unleash a new age of destruction upon the mortal realms, would be recognised by the treasures he carried. These terrible artefacts were said to be scattered to the four corners of the world, but Archaon was utterly determined to gather them so that the prophecy would be fulfilled. He would be this chosen one and succeed where thousands before him had failed. He placed his great intellect and considerable physical gifts in the service of the Chaos Gods, abandoning sleep and all sustenance so that only his force of will, and perhaps the favour of the gods, sustained him.



An armoured warrior of Chaos. Note the intricately made greaves, breastplate and belt

Northwest he travelled, through the dread lands of Naggaroth to a shrine known as the Altar of Ultimate Darkness, seeking the patronage of not one daemon-god, but them all. Where other mortals beseech the Old Gods for greatness and elevation to daemonancy, Archaon is said to have asked only to be the tool of Chaos in overthrowing the order of the mortal world. On his forehead was etched the burning mark of the Great Undivided of Chaos. Since then few who have seen him have dared stand against him, lest they summon the wrath of all four of the Great Powers.

This was but the start of his infernal quest. On a ship made of black metal he travelled over stormy seas and returned with an ancient harness of armour, dating from a time beyond human reckoning. The armour is said to be the same harness worn by the first and greatest Chaos lord, Morkar, at the dawn of time when Chaos burst into the Mortal Realms, and the first Phoenix King of the high elves, Aenarion, led the resistance against the daemon gods.

Next Archaon hunted down the mutated dragon Dar-Sorakshi, fighting the fell creature across the rocky cliffs of its abode. As indomitable as the tide and as inevitable as the winter, Archaon prevailed, splitting one of the dragon's skulls. From amongst the heaped jewels and gold of the creature's treasure hoard, Archaon claimed only the fabled Eye of Sheerian, a living gem that legend says grants its bearer a view of events yet to come.

Archaon travelled far to the north, braving supernatural storms and monsters of the Empyrean, until he reached the very foot of the Northern Gates that led into the domains of the Chaos Gods. There he crept into the wailing fortress of the daemon


Horns are his gift from Chaos
The physique is very powerful, with heavily muscled arms capable of swinging his weapon with great ease
Evil visage
Skull shaped shoulder guard
Two-handed flail, tipped with flesh tearing hooks

The Everchosen of Chaos

prince Agrammon, and stole from that dark lord the W'Soraych, the Steed of the Apocalypse, mentioned in a hundred myths and religions.

South again and then east, Archaon travelled to the Chimera Plateau where the stories say he wrestled the legendary sword, known as the Slayer of Kings, from the hands of the oldest of the Sharunrukh, the first of the Dragon Ogres. This titanic beast was the size of a mountain and had supposedly slept for millennia, its hand clutching the sword it supposedly claimed from a daemon lord so many centuries before. Archaon wrestled this titanic weapon from

Foul spawn of Chaos. Twisted monstrosity, spawn of the dark



the hard grasp of the Sharunrukh, and marvelled as it shrunk to fit his hand – though remaining yet a great weapon. Since that day, Archaon has been invincible.

The final and greatest victory of Archaon was when he faced the tests of all four of the great powers of Chaos: overcoming the insane sorceries of Tzeentch, the horrific decay and despair of Nurgle's touch, the soul-draining temptation of Slaanesh and an avatar of Khorne's endless rage, a mighty Bloodthirster. His prize was the Crown of Domination – a mighty war-helm and crown, whose wearer alone can command the servants of all the Four Powers with equal authority.

Over the years, Archaon has cultivated his power and gathered many warbands under his banner in preparation for the coming struggle He has fought hundreds of battles, and his terrible gods have always granted him victory. My esteemed colleague, Janusz Hanauer, has forwarded me many a document and legend describing Archaon's meteoric rise to power amongst the savage tribes of the north that bend a knee to the gods of entropy. Countless warbands have opposed Archaon, only to be crushed into submission when faced with his martial skill and his fanatical followers, the Swords of Chaos. His captives are apparently always given the same choice: join his crusade, or die. Many choose death, but just as many bow to Archaon's will and join him.

Hanauer was, and remains a fool. The rats nibble at my toes may they ga plagu him in his high tower

In Archaon, the eternally divided followers of the great Powers of Chaos recognise a leader they are prepared to follow. Others who have been chosen and marked by the daemon gods seem to regard Archaon as the greatest Champion of Chaos ever to have risen, and so in this way Archaon has won the service of many of the most infamous of the servants of Chaos. Indeed, even as Archaon's deeds have grown more terrible, and as the effects of his actions become ever more wide-reaching, he has gained the support of many of these dread Chaos lords even without battle. Now Archaon's armies are said to number in the tens of thousands, and his power grows daily.

Long appendages, with snapping claws which can cut through flesh and bone with ease





The Endless March Undivided,
artist unknown



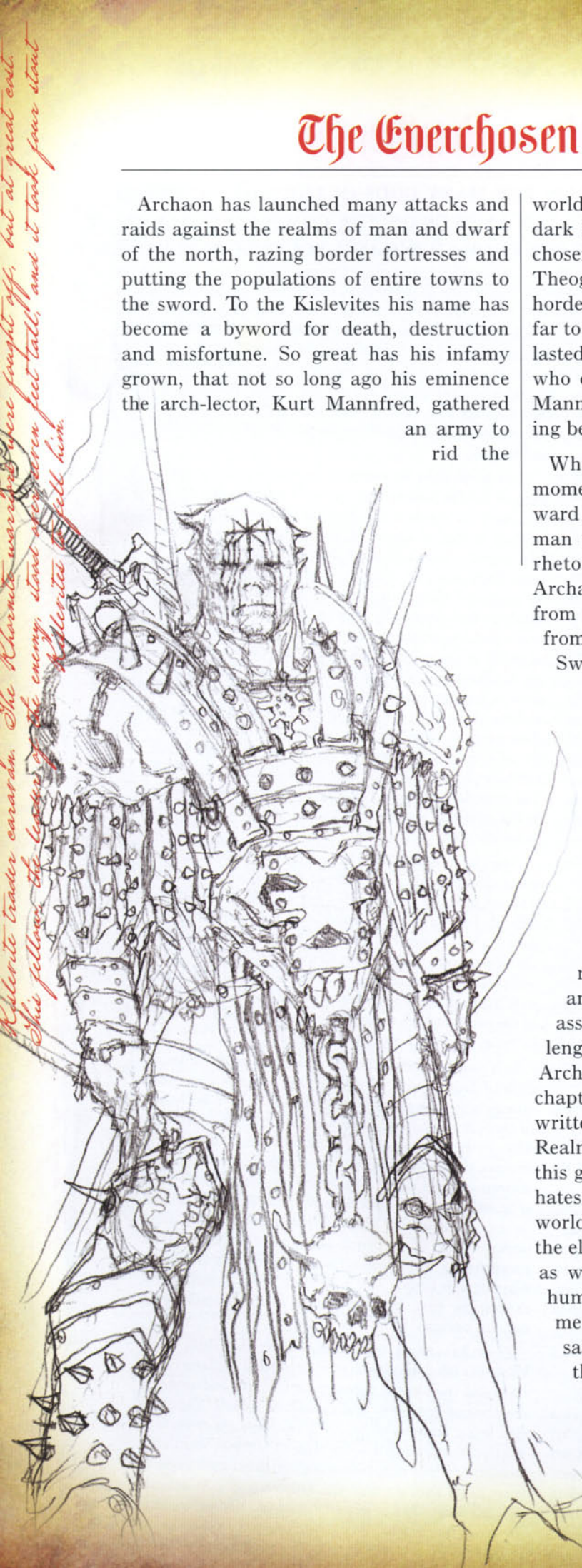
A Dark Summoning, held at the Librarium Martis

The Everchosen of Chaos

Archaon has launched many attacks and raids against the realms of man and dwarf of the north, razing border fortresses and putting the populations of entire towns to the sword. To the Kislevites his name has become a byword for death, destruction and misfortune. So great has his infamy grown, that not so long ago his eminence the arch-lector, Kurt Mannfred, gathered an army to rid the world of the evil that is Archaon. What a dark time that was, when one of Sigmar's chosen, in rank but one step from our Holy Theogonist himself, met with Archaon's horde in the shadows of the Screaming Hills far to the north of the Empire. The carnage lasted three days, by the end of which all who opposed Archaon lay dead save only Mannfred, his bodyguard and captains having been hacked down around him.

Who can imagine the horror of that moment when Archaon himself stepped forward to confront such a great and noble man as he? Using his matchless grasp of rhetoric and commanding presence, Archaon managed to push Kurt Mannfred from the path of righteousness. He turned from Sigmar's Light and chose to join the Swords of Chaos, willingly embracing damnation and, it is said, becoming one of Archaon's most fanatical and loyal followers. Doubtlessly when word of this infamy spread across the Northern Wastes, other warbands flocked to Archaon's banner.

I do not doubt that Archaon will soon have gathered to himself all the disparate warbands of the far north, and when the tide of Chaos rises again – as the various magisters and prognosticators of our good Empire assure me it will – he will seek to challenge the world once more, and when Archaon and his Swords ride out, a new chapter of horror and bloodshed shall be written in the chronicles of the mortal Realms. For if one thing is certain about this greatest of all lords of Chaos, Archaon hates and scorns the achievements of the world he is an apostate from. He regards the elder races such as the dwarfs and elves as worthless and weak, and the lands of humanity as corrupt and ripe for punishment. To Archaon, only Chaos can bring salvation to the world. Only by wiping the face of the earth clean of the taint of civilisation and order can the New Kingdom of Entropy be born – the kingdom of Chaos Ascendant.



The Endless Pantheons

Being an in depth article on the many gods in the world, which raises more questions than it can answer on the complicated subject of Chaos Undivided and the issues of living in a polytheistic world

As a magister and a scholar I am fully conversant with the creation stories of the Empire and what part such deities as Rhya, Morr, Taal and Manann are believed to have played in them. Yet despite my faith in these stories, I know that they cannot truly offer an entirely accurate picture of the creation because they do not explain, or even reference, the existence of the daemon gods or the Gods of Order and what part they played in creation, if any. Additionally, our creation myths give no reference to the gods of other cultures and races, like the Lady of Bretonnia or the strange gods of the elves. Every culture and race has an explanation of creation that involves their own deities and exclude all others, and it patently is not enough to say one story is correct where others are not, for to say this would seem to imply that the deities of these other cultures and races do not exist, or, at least, do not have the divine attributes that their various peoples believe them to.

Those followers of Sigmar know all too well that the gods of other races exist and that they have powers to rival any of the Empire's own pantheon. The gods of Chaos are the greatest bane of our existence, such is their terrible power and antipathy to the cause of men and our more wholesome gods, and yet their direct and indirect influence over everyday mortal affairs is considerable indeed (though the strictures of all of the Empire's great faiths would have it otherwise). So I find myself asking that if these more unwholesome deities have such influence over mortal affairs, and despite the fact they do not appear in the Old World's pre-Sigmarite holy books and codices, could they not actually be an unrecognised part of our existing pantheon of more wholesome deities? And if the Chaos Gods have a place in our pantheon, does this mean also that the gods of the elves and dwarfs do as well? And if so, in what way?

It is, I admit, a vexing and potentially heretical line of questioning. For if these other gods and goddesses are not part of the pantheon of Taal, Rhya, Manann, Morr and Ulric (as indeed dogma and history suggests), where do they fit in with our understanding of creation, or more profoundly and frighteningly, where do we fit in with the creation myths associated with the gods of Chaos?

To help explore these questions I have decided to explore the natures and identities of the gods and goddesses known to the great scholars of the Empire, and perhaps suggest that there are more connections between some of the traditional elder gods of the Empire, like Taal and Rhya, and the gods of other theological paradigms like the so-called Gods of Order.

The Elder Gods of the Empire

Despite His pre-eminence as the founder and divine patron of this great Empire, and despite also the fact that His is the imperial state religion and most powerful and important of all cults within the Empire (Sigmar revealed His godhead but two-thousand five-hundred years ago), I would suggest Holy Sigmar cannot be considered simply a part of the pantheon of the Elder Gods. Additionally, Sigmar's godhead, I would suggest, along with those of the dwarf's prime ancestor gods, is of a different nature to that of the Elder Gods like Taal and Rhya – or so I and many scholars of Sigmar's Church have petitioned to be recognised within the recent meetings of that Church. For now, I shall look just at the oldest known deities worshipped by the peoples of the Empire and beyond.

Rhya is thought by many to be the first deity worshipped by the earliest ancestors of humanity in one of her aspects or another. She plays the dominant role in the creation stories of almost all the human peoples of the Old World. Though in these days Rhya is regarded as a lesser deity, with no temples dedicated to her name and no organised religion to worship her, many doctors of theology and theosophy believe that she was once the prime goddess of humanity, worshipped as the Mother of all life in this world, supposedly long before the coming of Chaos. She was and is the goddess of fertility and growth, and she is present in every natural creature and all flora of the natural world. To a lesser extent (at least in these modern times), Rhya is said to control and personify all the natural forces of the world, although these attributes have come to be seen as the domains of the god Taal over the centuries. Regardless of this, Rhya remains in the religions and mythologies of the Old World the personification of life itself.

Over the centuries Rhya has come to be associated ever more closely with Taal. Indeed, the majority of those who worship her at all in this day and age do so as the wife of Taal. In fact the boundaries between these two have blurred somewhat over the centuries, to the extent that if one were to compare the most ancient theological texts and more recent ones, Taal can be seen to have taken over many of Rhya's attributes as the pre-eminent deity of the earth and the natural forces of the world – at least in the eyes of their mortal worshippers.

It is said by some scholars of religion that the much fabled "Truthsayers" of Albion, and perhaps also those strange holy men and women popularly known as Druids (if there is any difference between the two), still venerate Rhya as the Great Mother – although according to some sources, this veneration is not worship as it is commonly understood, but rather a profound respect for the Mother as an abstraction (not sovereign deity) of the natural forces of the world. Whether this represents an older understanding of the divine as practiced by our ultimate ancestors (as the Truthsayers are reputed to claim), or whether it is simply just a different style of theological expression that has developed over the millennia, remains unclear.

Rhya has much in common with the elven deity known as Isha, who is the mother goddess of nature, fertility and the harvest throughout Ulthuan and amongst the elves of the Loren and Laurelorn Forests. Though I risk being accused of heresy from some quarters, it is worth remembering that the elves of Ulthuan and Loren worshipped Isha long before our ancestors even came to these lands that are now the Empire, and it is entirely possible that Rhya is but an aspect of Isha, rather than the other way around. Whatever the case, both Isha and Rhya are worshipped as merciful goddesses who lend

succour to those in need and who desire that their children (being elves and/or humans) live healthy and productive lives. Just to deepen my possible heresy, I have felt of late that parallels can also be drawn between Isha/Rhya and the enigmatic mono-deity of the Bretonnians, the Lady of the Lake. Could it be that this goddess is yet again simply another aspect of Rhya or Isha?

Both Isha and the Lady are commonly depicted as gloriously beautiful young women, with either elven or human features depending upon whom one asks and where one goes. Interestingly, Isha is commonly stylised in the elven art I have seen and heard of as a feminine-looking face with a single eye and a tear below it, which in itself is also reminiscent of the depictions and legends of the human goddess Shallya – but more on this later.

Depictions of Rhya, or the Mother, have varied enormously across the centuries. Upon certain great menhirs and standing stones that (according to their somewhat misanthropic druidic keepers) are thought to date from a time millennia before the birth of Sigmar, etchings of a great tree with spreading branches, with the disc of the sun directly above it are thought to depict Rhya in her aspect as Life and Nature. Additionally, from time to time, rough and primitive looking stone statuettes of a female form with pendulous breasts and wide hips are discovered, and these are thought by some to be the most ancient representations of Rhya in her aspect as the Mother. In our more aesthetic times, on the few occasions where one might see Rhya depicted in painting or sculpture, she is portrayed as a fey, beautiful woman, with fine leaves woven into her long, untamed hair.

Whatever the case, woodsmen, hunters, trappers, rangers, shepherds and the various rustic peoples living in the most isolated and rural areas of the Empire, tend to venerate Rhya and her husband Taal above all other gods, with only Sigmar (as the Empire's great patron and protector), occupying a similar position in their spiritual life. As with many of the Empire's elder gods, the chief holy days associated with Rhya are the summer and winter solstices, and the spring and autumn equinoxes, although there are lesser days of religious obligation associated with full and new moons.

Taal is regarded in our times as the pre-eminent god of nature, of wild places and all the forces of the weather and the environment that are beyond mortal control. His is the power that drives the wind and the rain, his hand guides the blizzard and his breath is the mighty hurricane. His voice can be heard in the rolling thunder or the roar of an avalanche. He is venerated as the lord of all beasts and all the wild areas of the world fall within his jurisdiction. It is a foolish mortal indeed who enters into Taal's domains without being careful to pay Him proper respect, for they say against such a careless mortal as this the very wilds themselves may rise up, with great beasts hunting him through forests or treacherous rockslides dragging him down mountainsides (although I believe some of these more fantastic claims are mere fabrications).

As with every deity, Taal reveals himself to his faithful in many different forms. Depending upon where one travels within the Old World, depictions of this great god of the wilds can vary enormously, from that of a mighty stag, a bison or even a giant bear in more north-eastern climes. Despite this, perhaps the most common depictions of Taal show him as a powerfully built man dressed in animal hides, with a huge cloak of skins and fur thrown across his broad shoulders. Taal is often depicted as wearing a giant stag's skull as his headdress and crown – although he is also sometimes depicted as having great antlers rising directly from his brow.

Just as with the goddess Isha in relation to Rhya, the elven god, Kurnous, is said by some to be an aspect of Taal, being as He is the antlered master of the forests and the animals within them, and the husband of the Mother Goddess, Isha (as Taal is the husband of the Mother Goddess, Rhya). Kurnous is always portrayed as half man (or elf) and half stag, with an elven body but the antlers and hind legs of a stag, and standing over nine feet tall. Although it seems obvious that, as a god, Kurnous must also be able to take the form of any wild creature he chooses, or indeed manifest himself in a more human aspect as Taal.

In any event, in the human world the god we call Taal is worshipped just as with his wife, Rhya, predominantly by those people most reliant on managing and appeasing the natural world, like farmers or woodsmen. The prime holy day for Taal falls upon the Spring equinox, as it marks the rebirth of nature. However, the holy days of Ulric (Taal's brother deity) are also kept as minor festivals by Taal's devotees, as indeed are the holy days of Rhya in certain parts of the Old World.

Ulric is another of the elder deities of the Old World. Although not as old as Rhya, or his brother Taal, there are scholars who maintain that by the time of the great migrations when the tribes of the Unberogens and the Teutogens began taming the lands that would become the Empire, Ulric had become the prime god of our warlike ancestors. During those times, Chaos had long infected the world with its corruption and all manner of dangerous and unclean creatures had been spawned that had no place within the lands of men. As such, despite their pre-eminence as the deities presiding over all of nature and its forces, the worship of Taal and Rhya became secondary to that of Ulric, who was (and is) predominantly a martial god.

Whether this was because the power of Rhya and Taal was seen to retreat before the seeping corruption of Chaos, or whether it was because in those exceedingly harsh times – with countless orcs and goblins ravaging the land and the forces of Chaos lurking within the dark woods – the forefathers of Sigmar required the aid of a god who would strengthen their arms and their backs for the fight against the enemies of humanity as much, if not more, than divinities who assured bountiful harvests and clement weather. Life was hard in rural areas, so it is fair to assume that Ulric, who is firstly a god of martial prowess, strength of arm, bravery and self-reliance, should have come to be venerated as the most important and relevant deity of the time.

Both in ancient times and today, Ulric was and is most often depicted as either a snarling wolf or barbarous warrior, wearing a wolf-skin cloak and carrying a great axe. Devotees of this warrior god emphasise how much he

despises weakness and cowardice, expecting courage from his followers regardless of the dangers they face. Honour, bravery, physical prowess and the unending struggle to survive are everything to Ulric, and he is said to look darkly upon those who submit to weakness, disloyalty, fear or sloth.

The worship of Ulric is naturally strongest in the north of the Empire in the lands around the very centre of his worship, Middenheim, but is popular in other parts of the Old World, especially amongst warriors. The Autumn equinox and Winter solstice are Ulric's greatest holy days, and they are celebrated with the lighting of huge bonfires against the darkness, tests of strength and martial prowess, and the partaking of great feasts.

Manann is the son of Taal and Rhya and is the prime deity presiding over the seas and oceans of this world. It is he who controls the tides and the currents, and he is viewed as being as unpredictable and changeable as the sea itself. He is usually portrayed as a powerfully built man, wearing a spiked crown of black iron and robes of fine and shimmering seaweed, as smooth and luxurious as silk, coloured like the ocean during a storm – although like all gods, Manann has revealed himself in many forms throughout the millennia and is sometimes depicted as a breaking wave, a great whirlpool or gigantic leviathan, amongst many others. Far to the south of Tilea, the pirates of Sartosa worship Manann as the most important deity of all – although their worship is directed towards Manann in his most ferocious and destructive aspect, whom the Sartosan pirates have given the name Stromfels: the Shark Lord and King of the Raging Seas.

In this aspect, Manann or rather Stromfels, is god of all the many perils of the world's oceans and seas, from the predations of the creatures of the deep, to sudden and violent storms, to endless leagues of becalmed sea that have left many a sailor to starvation and madness. Sacrifices are made to Stromfels to appease his anger, and to the pirates of Sartosa these sacrifices invariably come in the form of their victims, be they sea merchants or explorers.

The worship of Manann in his more common and kinder aspect predominates in coastal regions, particularly in thriving shore-side cities whose economies are dependant upon trade by sea (like Marienburg in the Empire's west and Erengrad to the north). However, fishermen and sailors from every part of the Old World have a particular devotion to Manann, whether they ply their trade on the sea or upon the great rivers and lakes of the Old World, because their income and lives rest upon remaining within the Sea Lord's good graces.

As with Rhya and Taal, Manann also has a very close parallel amongst the pantheon of the elves – that of Mathlann. Naturally, the devotees of Manann within our good Empire who are aware of Mathlann, state that the latter is but another aspect of the former. Whatever the case, Mathlann has perhaps more in common with Manann in his aspect of Stromfels, as he is portrayed most commonly as an angry god of storm and tempest. Mathlann is often depicted as wearing a beautiful seashell as his crown, and wears a harness of armour that looks as if it is made from the iridescent scales of exotic fish.

Mannan's holy times rest at the turning of the tides, and His priests offer prayers and sometimes sacrifices. Mannan is sought to be pacified at the Autumn equinox as this is the start of the stormy season, and in His aspect of Stromfels, pirates across the Old World are said to pay particular veneration to Manann on the Spring equinox, as this is held sacred as the start of their main hunting season.

The Classical Gods

Suffice to say, not all the gods that are worshipped within our great Empire find the roots of their veneration actually within the borders of the Empire. Indeed, some of the Empire's most important deities were largely unknown to our tribal ancestors before and at the time of Sigmar. These gods that I have termed "Classical" are those that have come to the Empire from the ancient lands of Tilea and south-eastern Estalia – lands whose cities and cultures were built upon the physical and cultural ruins of the elves that populated the area millennia before the coming of man.

It is my considered opinion as both a scholar of religion and Magister-Patriarch of the College of Light, and therefore a student of what little elven history is available to humanity, that it is because of the ancestral Tileans' and Estalians' exposure to, and subsequent obsession with, the countless ruins and artefacts of the elves that scatter their lands, that their earliest gods are depicted as civilised entities, dressed and armoured in a manner that is at odds with the primal and barbaric appearance of the Empire's elder gods, discussed previously in this piece. More than this, the classical gods personify more specific and abstract concepts than the Empire's Elder gods, perhaps indicating the more complex outlook of the Tileans' and Estalians' ancestors with regard to what was most important in their lives. So where the gods of the Empire's tribal ancestors embody wild and untameable forces, the classical deities preside over and embody such things as learning, justice, wisdom, mercy, charity, statecraft and the arts of warfare (as opposed to the strength of arm, courage and brutal strength promoted by Ulric).

The Classical Gods are:

Morr is the God of Endings and Death – the guide and guardian along the path of All That Is Before and All That Comes After. He is perhaps the most important of all the Classical Gods, both in Tilea and Estalia and in the Empire itself, for it is Morr who guides the spirits of the dead through the realms of Limbo to the Afterworlds of the gods – the places that await all once the mortal coil has been shed.

Morr is said to have taught mankind's earliest ancestors how to prepare the dead for the hereafter, ensuring that they are prepared for their journey to whatever afterworld awaits them and that their bodies and spirits cannot be raised once more as slaves to vile sorcerers and necromancers. It is said that unless a body and soul is specifically dedicated to a particular god, those who are buried or burned without the proper funerary rites taught to us by Morr are doomed to wander the sunless lands of limbo, neither wholly in an afterworld nor in this mortal world, but trapped in between the two for all eternity, preyed

upon by daemons of the Utterdark and vulnerable to the summoning of necromancers and daemonologists.

Morr is depicted most commonly as a tall man of noble and brooding aspect, dressed in robes of unrelieved black. However, Morr is sometimes represented as a crypt's stone lintel, or else an open doorway, signifying his place as the medium between the lands of the living and the dead. Yet Morr is also a god of dreams, as it is said that sleep is the cousin of death and the lands of dreams lie close to the afterworld. Whatever the case, Morr is said to sometimes appear to certain people in their sleep or as a dream by day, warning them against some future tribulation or else pointing them towards some important realisation or other – yet even so, few worship Morr in his aspect as god of dreams.

Morr has no special holy days. His intercession is invoked and his divinity venerated at funerals and on occasions of remembrance or respect for those who have passed away. His priests burn incense to him and offer prayers at dawn and dusk, as above all, Morr is a god of endings and these times represent the end of night and the end of day respectively.

Verena is the goddess of justice, reason, logic and learning, and she is the premier female deity of the classical pantheon. Although she cannot be considered an emotive or particularly caring deity, Verena is in all her aspects concerned with absolute fairness and balanced judgement and so is popular amongst peoples of all social standings. She is particularly popular with diplomats, magistrates and scholars, and anyone connected to legislative bodies and academia.

Verena is said to promote the absolute rule of law and demands that all her followers capitulate to the laws of the land. However, this is tempered with the fact that she is concerned chiefly with justice and logic, and so she will not tolerate unjust or poorly considered laws that lead to societal disharmony – something she sees as anathema to the purpose of law in the first place. As such, although Verena encourages her faithful to be obedient to hierarchical structures, she abhors what she sees as the irrationality of tyranny and oppression for its own sake.

Verena is portrayed most frequently as a tall, dignified woman of handsome appearance and serious bearing. In her right hand she carries a quill symbolising the primacy of the written law, and in her left hand she carries weighing scales symbolising her impartiality and her desire for justice based upon facts. Indeed, within her temples, Verena is often depicted seated upon a throne, an open book on her lap, a quill in her hand and a great owl on her shoulder. Sometimes Verena is depicted in the form of a glorious owl of uncertain breed, and it is said that it is in this form that she has most commonly appeared to her devotees. She is also said to have manifested herself to her followers in the form of a human sage, sometimes male and sometimes female.

Suffice to say, Verena is worshipped throughout the Old World, particularly in the south and especially in centres of learning like the cities of Altdorf and Nuln. Her major holy day of obligation is the first day of each year, although to a lesser extent the first day of each month and each week are also considered sacred to her followers.

Myrmidia is a goddess of War, and is the daughter of Verena and Morr within the Classical Pantheon. Where Ulric presides over raw courage, strength of arm and the battle prowess of warriors as individuals, Myrmidia is the patron of the art and science of warfare, including strategy, codified martial arts, tactical manoeuvrings, professional soldiery and military structures.

Myrmidia is most commonly portrayed as a tall, well-proportioned and muscular woman, armed and armoured in style of the soldiers of south-eastern Estalia – although she is also depicted quite frequently in the form of a golden eagle. Myrmidia has no specific holy days, although her followers often call upon her and offer sacrifices before and after battles and other military campaigns.

Shallya is the prime goddess of the practice of medicine, healing, charity and mercy throughout the Old World. Said to be the daughter of Verena and Morr, she is depicted as a young, beautiful maiden whose eyes perpetually well with tears of boundless compassion and sorrow for the suffering of mankind, although she is also quite often portrayed in the form of a white dove.

The devotees of Shallya are renowned as the greatest healers and physicians in the Old World, epitomised (in my humble opinion) in the good sister Marie Duvallier who has been so helpful to me throughout my researches. There is no ailment that the sisters of Shallya do not try to allay, whether it be of the body, mind or soul – and so it is through this that one can ascertain the predilections of their goddess, sweet Shallya. In fact the only beings that Shallya and her devotees will not tolerate are those mortals who have given their souls and bodies over to Nurgle, whom the sisters call the Lord of Plagues.

It appears that Shallya shares certain traits in common with the elven goddess Isha, the Bretonnian's Lady, and Rhya, whether this similarity be in her emphasis upon mercy to the weak, the depictions of her eyes welling up with tears for mortals, or her interest in promoting and sustaining healthy life. What significance this might have (if any) I am not yet fully confident to speculate upon.

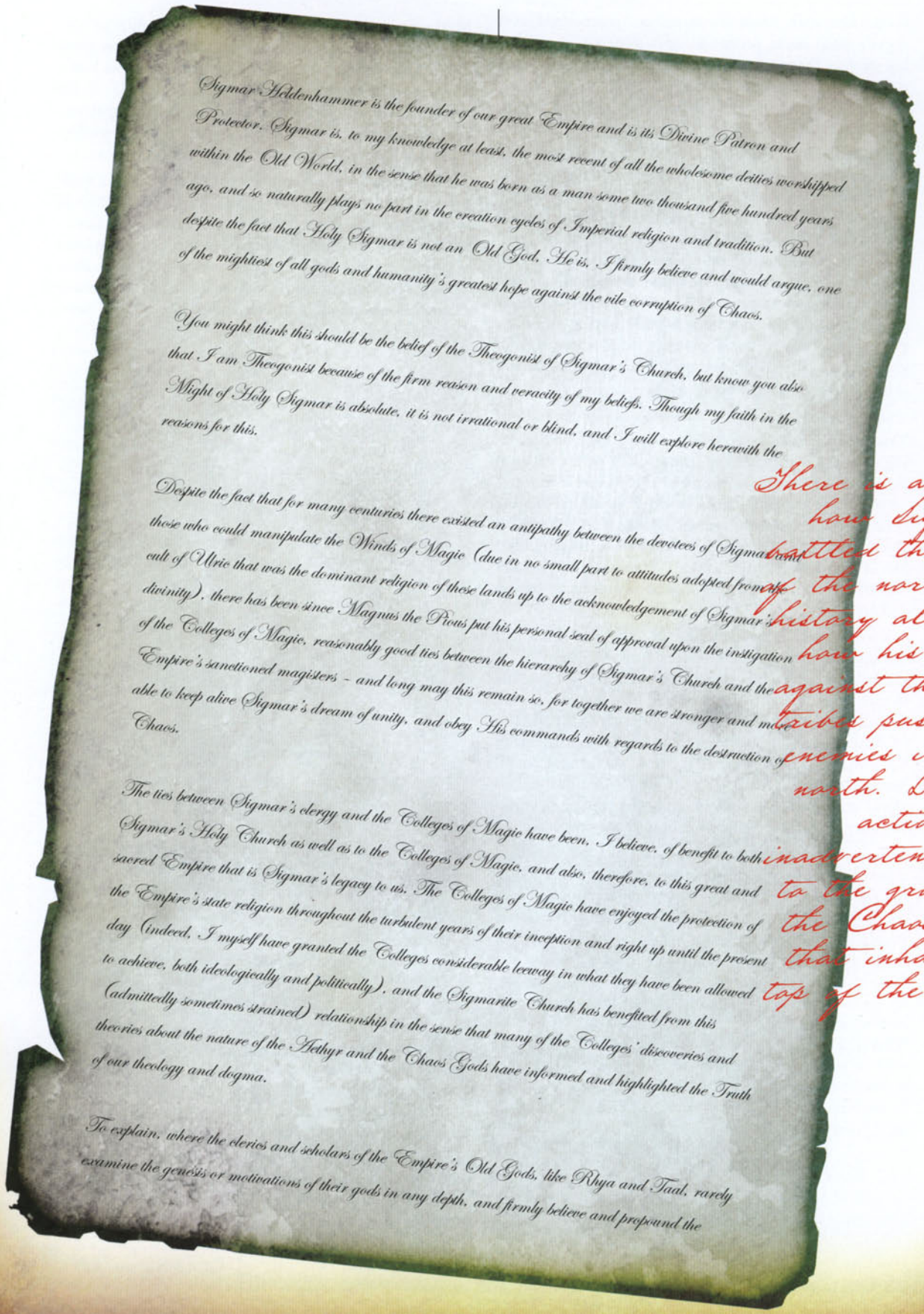
Shallya, as said previously, is worshipped throughout Old World, mostly by physicians and healers, although any person suffering from some ailment or other will offer prayers to her. Like her father, Morr, Shallya has no specific holy days.

Just why there are so many connections between the ancient gods of humanity and the gods of the elves is, of course, open to interpretation. It is my belief that many of the Elder gods of the Old World are but aspects of the even older gods of the elves. How this might reflect upon the divinity of Sigmar Heldenhammer, or even the dwarf ancestor gods, is another matter entirely, and one I shall investigate another time when my eyes are less tired from writing.

Everything I am finding seems connected, but not connected enough. There will be an opposite number. I can't be separated, or are they all part of one great Unbridled power?

The Unique Divinity of Sigmar Heldenhammer

From the secret journals of Volkmar von Hindenstern, Grand Theogonist of the Church of Sigmar



Sigmar Heldenhammer is the founder of our great Empire and is its Divine Patron and Protector. Sigmar is, to my knowledge at least, the most recent of all the wholesome deities worshipped within the Old World, in the sense that he was born as a man some two thousand five hundred years ago, and so naturally plays no part in the creation cycles of Imperial religion and tradition. But despite the fact that Holy Sigmar is not an Old God, He is, I firmly believe and would argue, one of the mightiest of all gods and humanity's greatest hope against the vile corruption of Chaos.

You might think this should be the belief of the Theogonist of Sigmar's Church, but know you also that I am Theogonist because of the firm reason and veracity of my beliefs. Though my faith in the Might of Holy Sigmar is absolute, it is not irrational or blind, and I will explore herewith the reasons for this.

Despite the fact that for many centuries there existed an antipathy between the devotees of Sigmar and those who could manipulate the Winds of Magic (due in no small part to attitudes adopted from the cult of Ulric that was the dominant religion of these lands up to the acknowledgement of Sigmar's divinity), there has been since Magnus the Pious put his personal seal of approval upon the instigation of the Colleges of Magic, reasonably good ties between the hierarchy of Sigmar's Church and the Empire's sanctioned magisters – and long may this remain so, for together we are stronger and more able to keep alive Sigmar's dream of unity, and obey His commands with regards to the destruction of Chaos.

The ties between Sigmar's clergy and the Colleges of Magic have been, I believe, of benefit to both Sigmar's Holy Church as well as to the Colleges of Magic, and also, therefore, to this great and sacred Empire that is Sigmar's legacy to us. The Colleges of Magic have enjoyed the protection of the Empire's state religion throughout the turbulent years of their inception and right up until the present day (indeed, I myself have granted the Colleges considerable leeway in what they have been allowed to achieve, both ideologically and politically), and the Sigmarite Church has benefited from this (admittedly sometimes strained) relationship in the sense that many of the Colleges' discoveries and theories about the nature of the Aethyr and the Chaos Gods have informed and highlighted the Truth of our theology and dogma.

To explain, where the clerics and scholars of the Empire's Old Gods, like Rhya and Taal, rarely examine the genesis or motivations of their gods in any depth, and firmly believe and propound the

There is a tale of how Sigmar battled the tribes of the north. But history also tells how his wars against the other tribes pushed his enemies into the north. Did his actions inadvertently lead to the growth of the Chaos tribes that inhabit the top of the world?

The Unique Divinity of Sigmar Heldenhammer

dogmas they have been taught about the divinely directed creation of the universe, the fixed nature of the afterlife and the Dominions of the gods, like Magnus so many years before me. I have always encouraged the scholars and hierarchy of the Sigmarite Church to question preconceptions of the older faiths.

The main reason that we are free to do this without harming our own religion can be found in the nature of Sigmar Himself. We know precisely where He came from, what He did and what He stands for, because He, like us, was born as a mortal man. He was not born at some forgotten time before the world existed, nor are His motivations entirely beyond the ken of mortal minds. To a large degree, we do not have to interpret His will, or guess what He wants from us, because He told us these things in no uncertain terms while He was still living amongst us as a man (the most important of which being His command that we stay united, come what may, against the predations of the Old Dark). Indeed, Holy Sigmar did not attain (or perhaps generate) His full Godhead and Divine Nature until after He set aside His crown and disappeared from Imperial records. So any follower of Sigmar wishing to know how to live his life correctly can look directly to the example of Sigmar's own life as one of us, and read His own words that He spoke to us.

The acolytes of other gods must rely solely on tradition and revelation to know what their deities might desire of them, and they are often taught that their deity has always existed, and in some way created and continues to sustain various aspects of the natural order of the world – something that both the Magisters of the Colleges of Magic, and my own beliefs upon the matter, refute.

Sigmarites should have no qualms with analysing the limitations of the Old Gods, and how they stand in relation to the Chaos Gods, because Holy Sigmar, unlike these other deities, is not lessened by inquiry into His origin and nature.

We who are wholly dedicated to Sigmar (and therefore do not fear or venerate other gods) do not require the creation myths of the Empire's older pantheistic religion to remain as central tenets of our own belief system. Where the largely uneducated populace of this Sacred Empire may believe as they please, bound as they are by their poverty and need for the stability of tradition, we of the hierarchy have been granted the opportunity to question the received wisdoms of ancient times, even if by asking these questions we go against the dogma and myths of the old religion.

Limitations of the old gods? See how we discard the divine? We cannot discard Chaos, it is too strong for us now. We must join the legions of the Undivided.

The Unique Divinity of Sigmar Heldenhammer

What is it, then, that first makes Sigmar so unique and important when compared to gods such as Ulric or Taal? And why would some people demonstrate the folly of worshipping other gods alongside, or even before Him?

Sigmar Heldenhammer was a man before He was a god. Or, perhaps, His divinity was expressed through His mortal incarnation, before it entered into the Aethyr, which is the realm of the gods. If the good magisters of the College of Light are correct (and I believe that they are) that all gods begin as pre-sensate amalgams of emotions and scraps of concept within the Aethyr, then Sigmar is surely an exception to this.

Sigmar is without doubt a puissant deity, more powerful and all-present after His disappearance and subsequent ascension than before it. This informs me that since His ascension, Holy Sigmar has increased, or at least fully realised, His own power, and it is precisely this that makes Him so special when considered alongside gods such as Ulric or the Gods of Order like Solkan. Sigmar's will, purpose and character were not born in the Aethyr. They were born in Him as a mortal, and so once He entered the Aethyr – that is the proper abode of all gods – He entered as an already existing and rounded being with complex emotions, drives and goals, rather than as a coalescence of one, or a few strictly related concepts and emotions. He was, to be blunt, a supremely powerful mortal soul and intellect imposing His vision and will upon the Aethyr, forging His own Dominion within it through the matchless power of His will, to make it best serve the needs of His people.

How it was that Holy Sigmar has become more powerful after ascension than before? I again offer thanks to the magister-scholars of the College of Light, for they have helped me understand how it is that my personal faith, and the faith of all Sigmar's people, serve to further strengthen our already mighty god. For indeed, it is through our faith and worship that Sigmar's people further empower Him and widen His control within the Aethyr.

Additionally to this, and, I imagine, like any other powerful god, the moment that Sigmar ascended to His Aethyric existence, He would have sought to absorb into Himself all the souls of those who died serving Him in life, and any unclaimed embers of souls or non-sensate Aethyric vortices that embodied notions of human unity, fraternity, human superiority over other species, human resistance in the face of Chaos, and the love of Empire – for in His mortal life, did Sigmar not encourage His people to regard the Empire He forged and the unity it brought as Sacred and worthy of respect, if not worship?

The Unique Divinity of Sigmar Heldenhammer

Indeed, surely Sigmar's expansion and growing Dominion cannot have ended with His post-ascension consolidation of power. All the saints and holy men and women who have died in Sigmar's name as living scions of His Will and Commandments will surely have been welcomed by our Great God, empowering Him ever more to fight for the good of His people. For, indeed, if Sigmar is to protect His chosen people and finally crush the Chaos Gods once and for all, Holy Sigmar must have kept alive within Himself the great pragmatism He possessed in His mortal life, knowing His limitations (if any) in the face of His enemies, and throwing all His efforts and considerable will into becoming the one, uniting and overarching god of humanity, so anything within the Aethyr that is a product of purely human beliefs and ideas that are also constructive to the cause of unity, security and survival will become His rightful property and nourishment.

So it must always be remembered that however Great and Mighty He is, Sigmar is yet, at His core, the indomitable and supremely powerful soul of a wise and strong minded human male who epitomised all that was best about humanity while stressing the unity of humanity as a whole. Indeed, He is surely greater than all other gods, because He was a mortal who forged His divinity for and by Himself, rather than acquire it gradually through a blind and unreasoning process throughout the millennia.

I see now that all the "lawful" religions of our petty civilisation have misunderstood the nature and purpose of the Undivided glory of Chaos, and so fear it, preaching doctrines designed to suppress independent thought. But it is independent thought that leads to greatness and Truth, and the one thing that separates humanity from beasts, or the faceless masses from the truly saved, is the ability to do this. We should not need to bind ourselves with Sigmarite concepts of guilt because the pursuit of knowledge and truth threatens the social "norms" set down by others more ignorant than ourselves – to do so dehumanises us.

The Unaligned Powers and How They Came to Be

BEING AN ESSAY BY THE FOUL HERETIC MARQUIS ALPHONSE DOLMANCÉ, WHICH HAS MUCH OF RELEVANCE TO SAY ON THE NATURE OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED.

As I have sought to demonstrate in my previous enlightening papers, the Great Powers that are Khorne, Tzeentch, Nurgle and Slaanesh are but coalescences of particular mortal emotions and thoughts, bound together by an encompassing concept. To be more precise, these coalescences are formed from common beliefs and emotions associated with particular states of mind. When a mortal, or other intelligent creature dies, his soul drifts in the warp. There it meets and coalesces with other souls, either in fragments or (more rarely amongst us poor humans) as a unified whole with which it has an affinity. These could be seen as vortices of energy within the Aethyr, whirlpools made up of soul and psyche-fragments which share a common residual belief or else reflect the same emotion. As only the most powerful and enlightened beings survive death with their souls intact, for most of us only deeply rooted emotional drives survive death still attached to our vagrant souls, and so these souls are not a full or rounded reflection of the mortal they were central to in life, but instead reflects only mortals' core beliefs or most strongly felt emotions.

As any truly enlightened individual knows, the four Great Powers have their own pantheons of daemons, given form by their divine masters and are personified from and driven by a part of their masters' will or personality. The essence that causes these daemons to exist can be reclaimed by their Power should he wish, dissolving their energy back into the Power from which it came. However, there are other vortices within the Aethyr – lesser vortices spinning around the fringes of greater Powers, growing, converging, dividing and eternally moving like the turbulent waters of a deep and troubled river. These are "independent" daemons that owe no direct allegiance to any one of the Great Powers. Though such entities are but small parts of the Aethyr, far tinier than the Great Powers, they are, or at least can be, fully conscious.

Daemons of this kind are likely to have more directly mortal origins than the daemons of the Greater Powers (like the glorious daemonettes of my darkling prince, Slaanesh). A champion of Chaos in its Undivided glory owes his or her allegiance to no one Power, and so may ascend to daemonancy without owing his transfigured existence to any one daemon god. In fact, one could argue that there are as many entities within the Aethyr, conscious and pre-conscious, as there are emotions and concepts (or any combination of the two), that any intelligent race can and has conceived. However, these entities would, and do, vary considerably in strength and influence – simply look at the rather pathetic halfling gods of home and hearth in comparison to the Great Gods of Chaos!

Others of these "independent" entities are born from an amalgam of highly focused souls that are drawn together after death. This is an unusual occurrence, especially from amongst our own spiritually weak race of humanity. But



Many Chaos warriors will adorn themselves with animal skins, as it increases the ferocity of their appearance, although not as much as the severed human head hanging from his armour!


A mighty warrior of Chaos
A two-handed haft weapon, with moulded head, and a long flail
This twisted monster fell upon a Kislevite village in the dead of night in 2345. Legend has it that none survived his fury. The dark gods would have granted favours upon him for that deadly deed.


The body and limbs of this creature are huge, muscular and tremendously strong, yet its head seems unnaturally small
Monstrous mutant, depraved dissembler of flesh
Huge flail

The Unaligned Powers and How They Came to Be

nevertheless, daemons and minor deities have doubtlessly become manifest due to great tragedies involving the sudden death of several people at once under particularly horrifying or heroic circumstances. The souls of the group pass into the Aethyr at the same time. Perhaps their material proximity ensuring their Aethyric proximity (although I could not attest to this with any certainty) and the circumstances of their death ensure a psychical commonality that draws them together into a single metaphysical vortex.

The resulting Aethyric being has character and motivations dominated by the events or emotions elicited by a common death. Such daemons may result from the heroic last stand of a group of warriors or the slow starvation of a group of people becalmed at sea. Yet even more unusual are those amongst the worshippers of Chaos who choose not to seek the attention of a patron daemon or god, but who instead form a death cult whose members make a pact to live in a certain extreme way (perhaps as murderers who kill in a particular way, or hedonists who all indulge in the exact same vices in the exact same way), thereby establishing a commonality of personality and shared experience. After a decade or two of doing this, and if they haven't been arrested, killed or have unwittingly attracted the attentions of an existing Aethyric being, these cultists slay themselves at the same location and time, believing that their souls will converge within the Chaos Realm to form an immortal daemon. If you were to ask me, such bids for immortality are just as dangerous as choosing to take the path of a magus or champion, and perhaps even less likely to succeed.

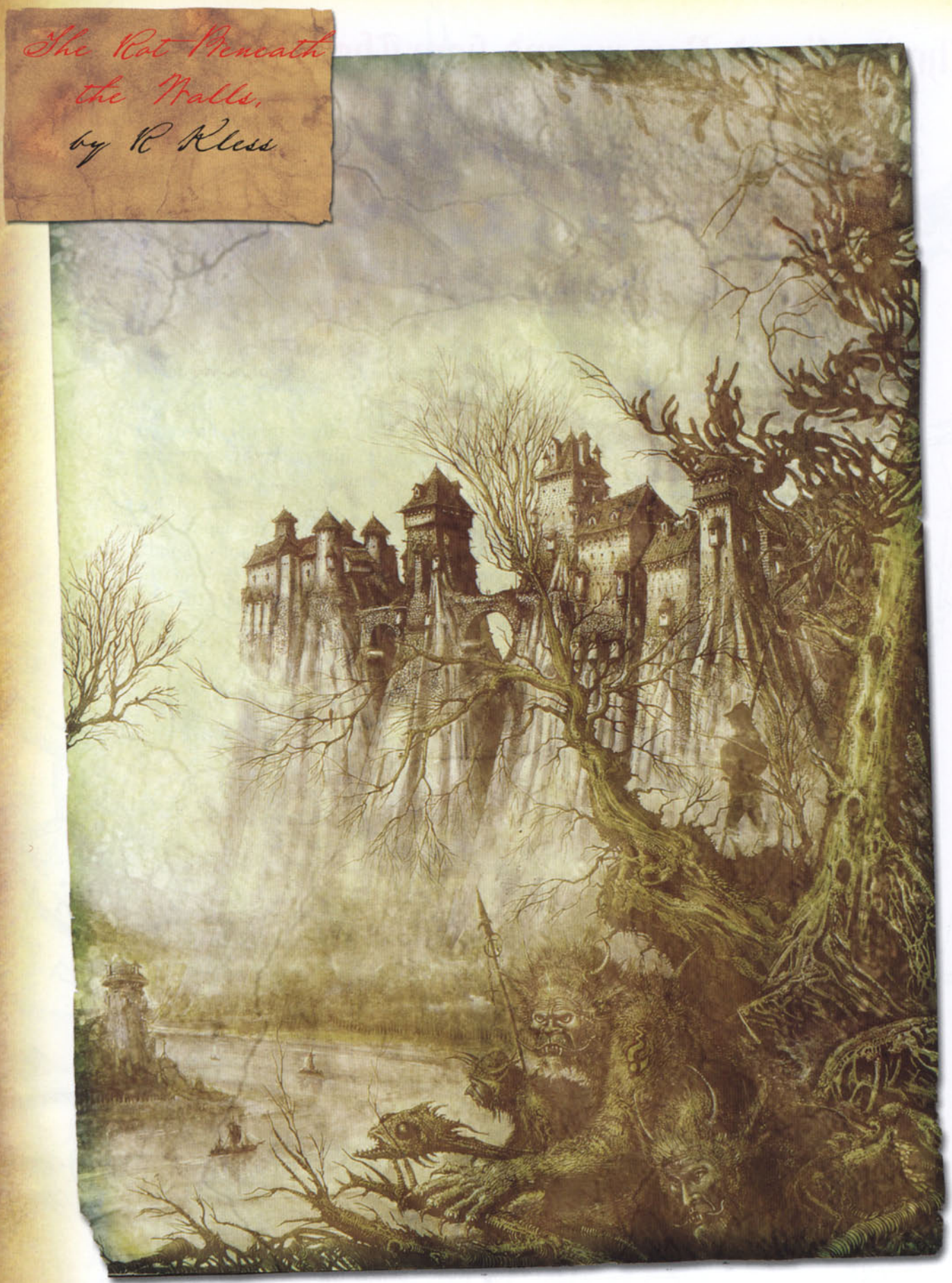
Yet more of these "independent" daemons seem merely to exist, without deriving directly from any mortal of this world's races and civilisations. Perhaps they are conjoined souls and psyches of creatures that lived in an unimaginably early time before the time of men, dwarfs or elves; ancient powers whose potency has waned to the point where they are but minor vortices in the ocean of Chaos. Or indeed they could be metaphysical coalescences of the psychical emanations of creatures that we understand nothing of – the Aethyric forms of things we regard as inanimate but which might cause their own unique Aethyric disturbances such as trees, streams, rocks or indeed the entirety of the world itself.

Undoubtedly there is no single explanation for the existence of countless beings that occupy the Chaos Realm, and I am certain that many may have an origin which is wholly unique and inexplicable in mortal terms.

Yet having said all of this, I have put "independent" within parenthesis in this paper for a reason. There are mystics amongst those who have embraced the truth proffered by the Chaos Gods who state that all the gods and daemons, "good", "bad" and indifferent are all part of the same infinite-eternal of Chaos – that there is one all-encompassing force of the divine: the Great Undivided. In truth, the Great Uniters of the past who have forged the ecstatic legions of Chaos together into one emancipating force have personified and preached this very truth. But then if there is simply one great divine force (though I would hesitate to call it a single conscious divinity), it would have a million, million faces, each of which being an independently motivated consciousnesses that may even exist in opposition to each other from time to time, even though they are all part of the same thing. But then, such is the gloriously surprising and ever-changing joy that is Chaos.



There is no end to the different type of armour worn by the warriors of the undivided. I would imagine this creature has been 'gifted' with some form of sight that allows him to see through his helmet. I can see no eyeslits.


The Rat Beneath the Walls,
by R Kless

The Rot Beneath the Walls

Their cities stand vigil against the darkness of the forests. But there is no defence from the teeming multitudes of Chaos. We nestle in the tunnels beneath their feet, and burrow like ticks into the very substance of their buildings. They stand guard on the walls, striving to protect their streets and houses, but they waste their time, for we are already here.

I do not see their end, for I am not a prophet, I cannot see into the future and I will not predict the ultimate end for men. To do so would be to put myself under the gaze of the Changer of Ways. For I follow not one god of reprehension, I follow them all. The perfect whole of Chaos Undivided is my master. To bow to one deity of darkness is to bow to them all. Why take on the strengths of one, but ignore the merits of the others?

Those who choose this path are wise. If we march together we will conquer. If we march together, all defence will be swept aside. I see not the end, but I am just a man. Those I serve have seen the end for time uncounted. I put my faith in them blind. I march with the Undivided.

- Attributed to Krieger Schwartz, heretic

Be'lakor the Spirit of Chaos

BEING IN THE MAIN A DESCRIPTION OF BE'LAKOR, THE DAMNED FIRST PRINCE OF DAEMONS, HIS PAIN AND CURSE, AND SUBSEQUENT LIBERATION FROM THE CHAINS THAT BOUND HIM.

In my mind and through my waking hours I have seen and I have trembled before He That Is The Harbringer, the Shadowlord, and Darkling Master – Be'lakor, the Messenger of the Great Undivided. Taken from my body, I have followed this prince amongst daemons from his mortal birth to his most recent incarnation. I have seen the horror that he shall visit upon the Mortal Realms, and I despair.

Long ago, through the mists of pre-history, the scourge of Chaos erupted into this Mortal Realm. Many natural things were consumed by the raw horror of the Aethyr, and many unnatural things were loosed upon the world. From amongst the mortal peoples who populated the world in that distant time, there were those who chose or were drawn into the worship of the Dark Powers of Chaos, none more so than the being who would one day become known as Be'lakor.

What his mortal name was, and whether he was man, elf, dwarf or one of some other long forgotten race, are facts lost to history. But whatever the ins and outs of it, this being, this betrayer of the non-aethyric world, was the first mortal made immortal – he was the first mortal being raised to daemonancy, the first daemon prince, favoured by Chaos in all its Undivided horror. What he did to deserve this blessing and curse is now not remembered, though it must have been great and terrible indeed, for his rule stretched across almost all the lands of the world for many centuries. However, his pride and his arrogance were to prove his undoing. Worshipped by countless tribes and peoples over the centuries, Be'lakor came to think himself equal to the Greater Gods, and in time this raised the ire of the Four. Though he acted with the wrath of his brother gods as well as his own, it was the Changer of Ways who finally raised his hand against Be'lakor. The first daemon prince was cursed to become the Spirit of Chaos Undivided, taking on the mantle of the Harbinger, He Who Crowns Conquerors.

The curse bound Be'lakor to exist incorporeally in a limbo of utter madness, and it has been his doom to watch other mortal Champions of Chaos ascend to greatness and lead the forces of Entropy in his place. From the first to the last, it was to be Be'lakor's appointed task to crown these various Uniters once they had won the favour of the Great Four, but this enforced servitude only fanned the flames of Be'lakor's jealousy and frustration.

So it was that the first prince of daemons endured the seemingly endless centuries of torment that drove him into the deepest pit of insanity, yearning hungrily for a return to the power that was once his. Such has been the fire of his hatred, from time to time Be'lakor has managed to escape his curse. First, and most famously, by binding his essence to the warpstone meteorite that destroyed the cursed city of Mordheim. Amongst the city's blighted streets, Be'lakor was worshipped as the Shadowlord, the Prince of Nightmare. Through the power of the warpstone he had bound his essence to, Be'lakor gathered his will enough to lure to Mordheim the one who was to be the next Great Uniter, Khaardun the Gloried, and possess his body. But the Shadowlord was deceived, for by the very act of binding his essence to the warpstone meteorite, he trapped himself within the cursed city; he was sustained by the warpstone permeating Mordheim's ruins, yet unable to escape. Eventually, consumed by rage and hate, his corporeal form was destroyed along with the ambitions of Khaardun.

This sounds like how I feel now. I feel my mind being pulled against my will into a seething cauldron of desperation, and I can think of no way out.

Be'lakor was swept back into the grip of his cursed and tormented existence and slowly slipped back into mindless insanity.

Then arose Asavar Kul, the Uniter who was to lead the Great War against the Mortal Realms in the time of Magnus the Pious. Once more was Be'lakor drawn from his state of bitter madness and driven by his curse to crown Asavar as the Everchosen of Chaos. Kul nearly destroyed the Empire

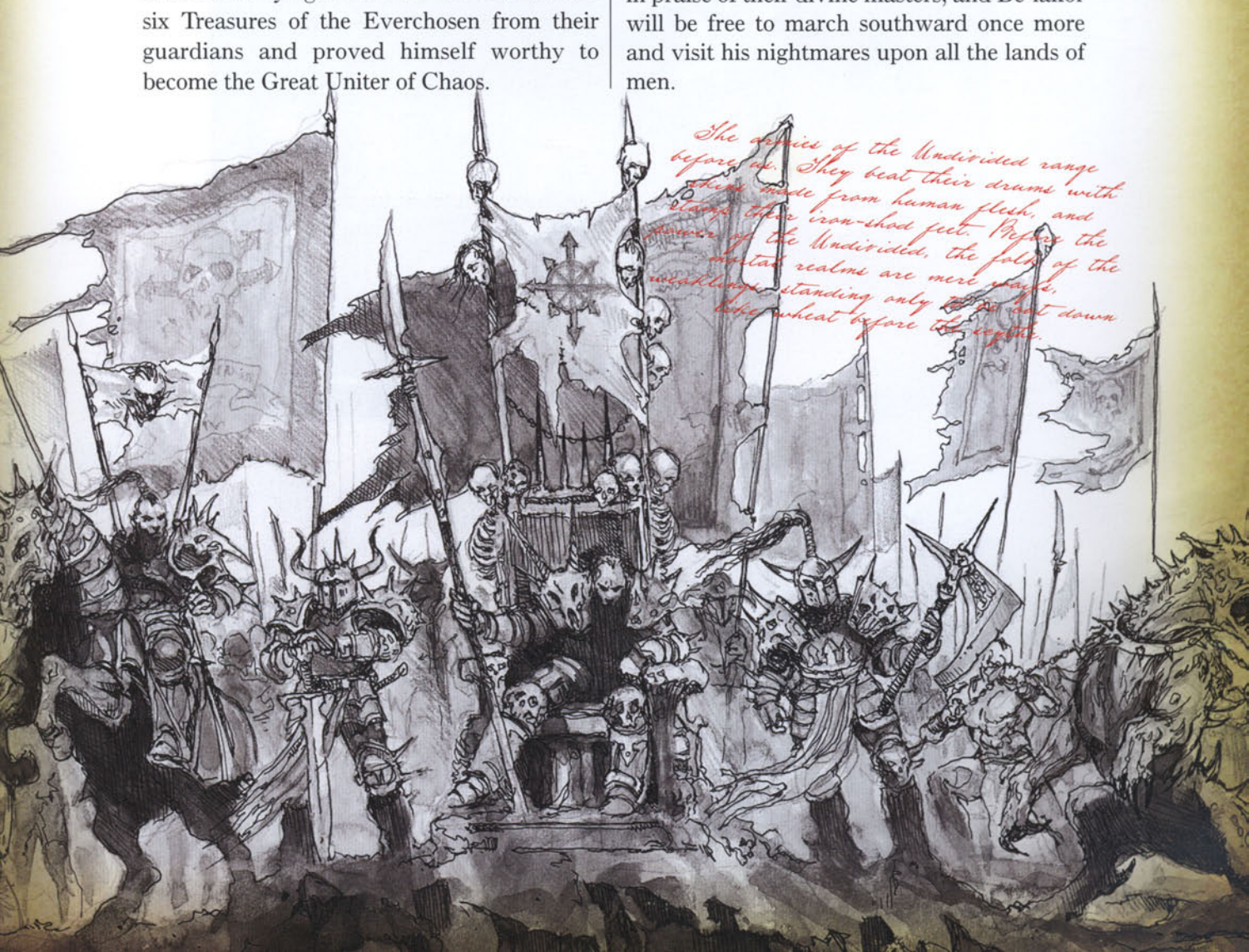
Be'lakor the Spirit of Chaos

with his invasion, but was slain by Magnus the Pious in an act that united the fractious peoples of the Empire for centuries afterward. But even as the Chaos hordes began to disperse into the north and the Winds of Magic began to withdraw, Be'lakor clung to consciousness and sanity, bending his considerable powers to anchor himself upon the mortal plane.

Be'lakor knew of old the awesome power of Albion's Ogham Stones, and he realized that if he could harness the power coursing through those stones, he might finally be able to claim the Crown of Domination and become the Everchosen of Chaos himself, thus breaking Tzeentch's curse. But while bending his considerable means to achieving this goal, a former Templar of Sigmar, the man who would become the Lord of the End Times in Be'lakor's place, ended the quest he began over a century ago. Archaon had wrestled the six Treasures of the Everchosen from their guardians and proved himself worthy to become the Great Uniter of Chaos.

Much to the fury and burning resentment of the daemon prince, Be'lakor was finally given the Crown of Dominion by the Four Powers, only to be forced to crown Archaon Lord of the End Times. But for some unknown reason, Be'lakor's curse was lifted with his crowning of Archaon, and he rejoiced in his freedom. Having recovered his nightmarish physical form, Be'lakor is once again said to walk upon mortal soil – albeit within the far north of the Chaos Wastes, at least for now. Indeed, I have watched as he has rent reality asunder to bring his timeless armies into the Wastes. It may be that he wishes to reclaim his premiership of all the Daemonic Hosts, which may well result in a challenge to Archaon's leadership.

And so now I fear for that day when the Chaos Gates yawn wide, spilling their energies across the mortal planes, for then the dread voices of daemons will be heard amongst the lands of men, raising their voices in praise of their divine masters, and Be'lakor will be free to march southward once more and visit his nightmares upon all the lands of men.





THE DARK GODS MARCH IN STEP



RICHARD WILLIAMS once worked in the hallowed halls of the Black Library, working as a sub-editor, and forever up to his elbows in heretical books and parchments, until, mind eventually broken, he sold his soul and moved to London. He lives and works there as an accountant, trying to suppress the daemons in his head.



MARIJAN VON STAUFER'S past is shrouded in mystery and few can guess what caused him to begin down the blasphemous path upon which he is now truly lost. What we do know is that he is a former poet and playwright, and he seeks publicity for his works with the zeal of the daemon-possessed. He lives in Wales, where there be dragons.

Marijan von Staufer photograph by Natasha Rhodes

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