

The Calendar of the Known Lands



The Known Lands are a vast place, with a wide variety of different cultures and races, all with their own unique traditions and customs. That the Golden Age existed at all, much less for as long as it did, is a testament to the forethought of those who brought the continent together at the end of the Great War. Among the most vital aspects of that unifying force are the common currency, language, and calendar used across the whole of the Known Lands. And like so many other aspects of modern society in Aden, these things have their origin in the Peace of the Rose, forged more than one thousand years ago in small town in Columbey by a group of ambitious, selfless, and wide individuals.

THE ROSE ACCORDS

More than one thousand years ago, the Known Lands were completely awash in conflict, which had raged back and forth across its face for four centuries. Entire races had been driven to extinction, and many kingdoms were eradicated altogether. The people were exhausted and consumed with despair. The most powerful rulers in the land were likewise weary and eager for a solution but could not find common ground sufficient to set aside what hostilities continued to fester, and they lacked allies sufficient to protect themselves even if they could. Those with the will lacked the means, but those content to continue the conflict needed little else. It was a difficult time where those who wished to better their people had little way to do so.

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The catalyst for true change was a simple elven warlord from the southeastern portion of the Known Lands named Dyus. Dyus spent decades uniting or defeating his tribe's rivals in order to unify an enormous force of ten tribes and create the Empire of Vanora. With this impossible task achieved, Dyus looked beyond the borders he had claimed and wondered if it would be possible to keep what he had declared his with so many potential enemies abroad eager for war. And he wondered how many others there were like himself. Discreetly, he began to make overtures.

Given the political and military climate at the time, it is nothing short of miraculous that the meeting at Rose took place at all. The rulers invited there by Dyus, all of whom chose to attend the historic conference, took incredible risks to do so. None of them were allies at the time, and all had enemies that would have leapt at the chance to destroy them if they had learned of the rendezvous. Fortunately, that did not occur, and it is likely due largely to the machinations of the Seer Order, who Dyus also invited to participate, that this knowledge was kept secret; the order's history is fraught with examples of them keeping knowledge secret even at heavy cost and through whatever means proved necessary.

Dyus had invited like-minded individuals from many different regions, some of whom already commanded significant power and influence, and others who were just beginning to accumulate power. Torren, the paladin-king from the north was there, eager to find away to ensure that his villages would know peace. The powerful druid-mother of the Crawling Jungle, Aishwarya Thundersong, took another seat at the table. Unquestionably one of the most powerful figures in attendance was Chandrey, the founder of the Church of All Saints and leader of Carraway, one of the few nations that had endured the recent century of strife with relative stability. Hakkar was the youngest of the merchant princes who ruled the port city of Balaquim and observed everything with the vague appearance of amusement. Quintus, the High Arcanist of the region called Aramyst, seemed disgruntled to be present but attended nonetheless, and Dayrell Tarello, one of the most powerful nobles in the region surrounding Rose was the local host for the event, making all arrangements and providing the necessary security for it all.

The discussions that took place at the Rose Accords are the stuff of legend. They were convened with the hope that the individual leaders could find allies to help improve their plight. For instance, Torren needed allies to ensure that his enemies did not turn on him while he struggled to deal with the problem of the twisted giants known as fomori that plagued his land. Surprisingly, all in attendance quickly made such an agreement, and it was at that moment that Dyus sensed that more was possible. He turned the discussion to other things, exploring the commonality of the different people and regions.

Before the Accords were signed, the leaders present had drawn the lines of new nations, established basic economic and cultural precepts that would unite their new nations, and military alliances that would prevent any of the other leaders in the Known Lands who had declined to participate from stopping what was going to happen. It would be difficult, and would doubtless lead to a brief but intense period of conflict where those opposed to the idea would fight against it (a fact that most historical records gloss over or omit entirely), but if successful, the assembled rulers knew that it would change the face of the world for good.

The most essential aspects decided at the accords were the common language, something that Hakkar of the newly created Yzeem insisted upon after agreeing to literally every other proposal suggested by other members, and the common calendar, which Dyus initially suggested as the new calendar for his nation of Vanora, and to which no one else had any particular objection as long as their own cultural holidays could be easily incorporated. The original Vanoran calendar revolved around prominent constellations that evoked the shamanistic totems that the Vanorans revered, the Ten Beasts. These became the foundation for a calendar of ten months, each numbering thirty-five days in order to

ensure the necessary movement for each constellation to be prominent at the dawn of its month. It was further decided that these days would be divided into five seven-day weeks, and that each day of the week would be named for one of the attendees of the summit. Common holidays were added to serve as dividers for the four seasons as well, based on common concepts and important events for each of the cultures represented.

THE CALENDAR OF THE KNOWN LANDS

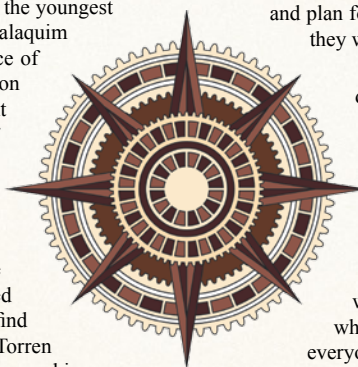
The ten-month calendar used throughout the Known Lands is an approximation that does not properly reflect the seasonal differences in locations particularly distant from one another, such as the northernmost point Ionara and the southern port of Balaquim, for instance. The three months of summer are still frozen in Ionara but are nonetheless warmer than the winter months. Likewise, the so-called winter in Balaquim and the Misland Republics might charitably be called cool, but decades can pass without snow ever being seen in either place. However, the common calendar allows for individuals even on opposite sides of the continent to track elapsed time with accuracy and arrange for common meeting times as necessary in third party locations. It has also proven extremely beneficial to trade agreements because harvest seasons can be estimated with significant accuracy and compared to other crops in other locations, allowing merchants to chart their travels and plan for the trade of different commodities based on when they will become available.

Each year of the Vanoran calendar begins with during the middle of winter with the Month of Serpent, the most cunning of the Ten Beasts. This is followed by the Month of Eagle, the third and final month of the winter season. Winter gives way to spring, which is comprised of the Months of Fox and Wolf. Summer is longer, made up of three months. The Months of Ursax, Shark, and Basilisk are filled with back-breaking labor for those who work the fields (and in the wake of the Darkfall, those who work the fields are universally respected by almost everyone, because they are the only thing standing between civilization and a long, starvation-filled siege by the hordes of evil nocturnals).

Fall is, again, a shorter season, comprised of only two months, the Months of Drake and Leviathan, both filled with harvest season in much of the Known Lands. They give way to the final month of the year and the first month of winter, the Month of Dragon, the most powerful and venerable of the Ten Beasts, who ends the year with majesty. After that, the next year begins with another Month of the Serpent as winter passes the midway mark and the cycle continues.

The end of each season in the calendar of the Known Lands is marked with a common holiday that is celebrated throughout all known nations. Most of these are drawn from underlying cultural similarities that the Rose founders believed would help unite people. The first of these is a single day of celebration that occurs between the last day of Serpent and the first day of Fox, marking the transition between winter and spring. Called Union Day, this is a celebration of new life starting as the plants return to green in the wake of the thaw. This is an extremely popular day for weddings throughout the whole of the Known Lands, and is considered an auspicious day for anyone fortunate enough to be born on it. The concept of Union Day was taken from a number of different sources, including fertility rituals from the villagers of Arasteen and the ritual blessing of new crops by arcanists in Aramyst.

When spring gives way to summer, the Known Lands celebrate Summerdawn between the last day of the Month of Wolf and the first of the Month of Ursax. Spring is a time of planting and planning, but



summer is the season of hardest labor, and the people of the Known Lands tend to celebrate this occasion with one last great hurrah before committing themselves utterly to the labor that will allow them to survive for the next year. It is a time of raucous celebration, but usually with some degree of moderation in mind because all who participate are expected to join in the labor the following day when summer truly begins. The holiday was based on similar celebrations already in place in both Columbey and Yzeem.

Labor's End marks the transition from summer to fall in the Known Lands. The name is a misnomer, of course, because harvest season involves at least as much work as the summer, but at least the temperatures tend to be more forgiving and for that reason most find the harvest more tolerable than the summer's crop maintenance. Truthfully the holiday's purpose is little more than to provide a brief but exceedingly needed respite from the hard labor of the two seasons, and stems from agrarian cultures all across the Known Lands, including Arasteen, Columbey, and the fertile fields surrounding the River of Life in Yzeem.

The day of Final Feast signifies the end of fall and the beginning of the long, brutal winter season. It is a celebration, because the twin seasons of labor are done, but it is also a forewarning for the harsh reality of winter as it dawns across the Known Lands. Final Feast typically is an occasion where the people of Aden socialize with one another and consume those foods that have been stockpiled which will not last until the spring, typically including a lot of meat and some fruits that do not keep particularly well. It is a somewhat gluttonous occasion, as those enjoying it are painfully aware that the winter season brings with it much blander, less enticing fare to sustain them for the next three months.

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Prior to the Rose Accords, the calendar of Aden was chaotic and disparate, with a variety of names, months, even the measurement of years varying wildly from one region to the next. In some places even the number of days in a week varied, leading to excruciating difficulty when it came to trying to coordinate schedules between two different regions. This was normally only a problem for merchants but could also present significant difficulties with regard to diplomatic efforts, which may have been one reason the period's conflict was so widespread. It is strange, however, that there were common names given to certain days, even in regions across the continent from one another. This suggests that they were derived from what may have once been a common calendar much as what was established in Rose, but long since forgotten. The origin of these day names has long been forgotten. The new names for these days were established at Rose, specifically at the urging of the Seer Order, who facilitated the meeting and the implementation of its decisions thanks to their presence throughout the continent. Although some of the members in attendance objected, none did so particularly strongly, and the majority granted the order permission to proceed. Resultingly, the days of the week are as follows:

- ✦ **Dyudai** – The first day of the week is named for the first Vanoran Emperor.
- ✦ **Quinday** – Named for the first (and only) High Arcanist of Aramyst.
- ✦ **Torsday** – Named for the first king of Arasteen, whose line eventually gave way to the Radiant Order.
- ✦ **Chanday** – Named for the Theocrat of Carraway and a day of religious services in the Church of All Saints.
- ✦ **Thundersday** – Named for the first Queen Mother of Kyan.
- ✦ **Tarday** – Named for the first king of Columbey.
- ✦ **Hakuday** – The final day of the week is named for a merchant prince of Balaquim present at the Rose Accords, often reserved for open markets and trading in many settlements across the continent.

NATION-SPECIFIC HOLIDAYS

Although the calendar is unified and there are common holidays that are celebrated throughout the Known Lands, one thousand years of history has ensured that each individual nation has its own cultural touchstones and holidays that, while incredibly important within their borders, mean very little to outsiders and are not celebrated elsewhere.

Arasteen

The people of Arasteen are a generally humble and family-centered folk who choose to spend their time with family, and thus have little need for excessive celebration. They do enjoy the common holidays that appear on the common calendar of the Known Lands, but have few national holidays, instead focusing on family-specific celebrations that include birthdays, anniversaries, and other similar events. There are a few notable exceptions, and none is more significant than the Festival of Knots.

Knots are an important part of Arastinian culture. They have long been a prominent feature in art and heraldry throughout the nation's history, and once served as a means of communication when much of the populace was as yet illiterate. Individual families each had their own knotwork as their personal symbol, and bore it with pride, adding to it with each new generation. Knots were left in dangerous places as warnings or on doors as a welcome invitation to weary travelers. While they have lessened in importance in the modern era given the widespread literacy in the Known Lands, they remain an important cultural touchstone in Arasteen and are celebrated on the last day of the month of the Fox, which is the middle of spring.

Carraway

Carraway is the nation with the most holidays by a wide margin. They have a large number of dates throughout the calendar year that venerate the many different saints that their pervasive religion, the Church of All Saints, reveres as the mainstay of their faith. The first day of each month is Saints Day, wherein the birth and memory of all Saints born during that month is celebrated by those who hold them in particularly high regard. During the fall, at the end of the Month of Drake, they celebrate Mournmas, where they remember those Saints who perished young, often in the course of the acts that resulted in their canonization. And in the spring they have the Day of Service, which is both for community service and the recognition of those who serve the Church of All Saints.

More information on these Carraway-specific holidays can be found in *The Aden Gazette, Issue #4: the Church of All Saints*.

Misland Republics

Although the various independent provinces that make up the Misland Republics formally recognize the official calendar of the Known Lands, the Misari tribesmen who populate much of the interior have little use for such things other than token lip service. They keep their own traditions and ways, some dating back more than a thousand years from when the original tribes migrated from the Misari Expanse, an archipelago far to the southeast of the Republics across some of the most treacherous ocean that the Cartography Society has yet discovered. As a result, the settlements dominated by Misari tribesmen have a robust schedule of minor festivals and celebrations centered around traditional values of their people, including fertility, hunting, celebrating the memory of the dead, and other such activities.

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