

On the other hand, churches and temples serve as vital gathering places where citizens of different classes can discuss the issues of the day as well as conduct important rites of passage. Often the climate of a given community can be gauged by what transpires at houses of worship. During times of war, families gather to honor the fallen dead, complain about the choices of nobles and kings, and point fingers of blame at shared enemies and clamor for action. The priests who lead congregations wield considerable power to either reassure the faithful or fan the flames of zealotry.

RELIGION BY REGION

Additional details on these faiths will be provided in forthcoming books for the *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. Regional variance in religions for the human kingdoms will be provided in Volume 2; the religions practiced by those dwelling in the wilderness regions will be explored in Volume 3; and the faiths of those nations beyond the Iron Kingdoms including Rhul, Ios, the Skorne Empire, and Cryx will be covered in greater detail in Volume 4.

DOMINANT FAITHS OF THE IRON KINGDOMS

There are two broadly accepted religions among the nations of mankind, represented by the Church of Morrow and the Temple of Menoth. The relationship between these religions is complex and has changed over the centuries, alternating between periods of relatively stable peace and ones of strife and violence. Usually the tensions between these religions are more subtle. In most large communities, members of these faiths have learned to coexist.

Exclusive communities exist, particularly in the Protectorate of Menoth, a nation arising from a religious schism in Cygnar and one that is nearly exclusively Menite. Even in communities such as these there can be differences in beliefs and the possibility of multiple sects. People attending a specific church or temple share similar beliefs, but those beliefs may be starkly different from the ones held by people attending church in another quarter of the same town. Any sizable town or city will have dozens of smaller churches and temples and usually a larger cathedral, central temple, or abbey that is overseen by the highest-ranking priest of the community's majority faith. In cities with multiple sects, this hierarchy is less clear, and some priests may act independently.

The worship of Menoth is particularly ancient, as this god is the Creator of Man. In many regions, however, this faith began to diminish as it was replaced by the rapid spread of the Morrowan faith after the ascension of the Twins. The Menite religion

entered a drastic decline during the Orgoth Occupation, when the oppressed population increasingly turned to the comforting teachings of Morrow.

Morrowans do not consider themselves opposed to Menoth, whom they acknowledge as humanity's Creator, but they have chosen to entrust their spiritual wellbeing to Morrow and his priests. The Morrowan belief in free will and personal accountability combined with the sympathetic examples of the various ascendants prompted the rapid spread of this faith across western Immoren. The Morrowan faith is presently the majority religion in Cygnar, Ord, Occupied Llael, and Khador.

Many historians believe the advances in engineering and mechanika that define the modern age were made possible only after the teachings of the Twins, which promoted critical thinking and challenged old beliefs. Menite theologians argue instead that these faiths gave rise to widespread corruption and exposed mankind to insidious and unholy influences. There may be truth in both perspectives. Morrow's dark twin, Tamar, is a pervasive shadow in every Morrowan community, with her worshipers and teachings existing in those places Morrow's light cannot reach. The Twins remain philosophically connected, and it is impossible to examine the faith of one without the other.

THE CHURCH OF MORROW

Across western Immoren, the Church of Morrow is indisputably the dominant faith, with a sizable majority in every human kingdom except the Protectorate of Menoth. Khador is the only kingdom with a substantial minority of Menites, but even there Empress Vanar is a recognized Morrowan and the church has tremendous reach and influence. Ord and Cygnar both recognize the Church of Morrow as their state religions, as did Llael when it was independent. The Morrowan faith emphasizes the individual as a potential agency of good and stresses how each person can contribute to society. Its beliefs resonate with people in many walks of life and social strata, advocating improvement through self-reflection, good works, honorable conduct, and self-sacrifice.

Core to the Morrowan faith is the idea of Volition—that every person in life makes choices that determine whether they will be a force for positive empowerment or for selfish gain. By association, pious Morrowans are seen as good and reliable citizens while those who succumb to the “dark path” of Tamar are seen as evil, self-serving, and destructive. This is a simplistic reduction of the subtleties of Morrow's and Tamar's respective philosophies, but clear distinctions appeal to the masses. The more nuanced aspects of the Twins are left to theologians and scholars. Before his ascension, Morrow was both a philosopher and a soldier, a thinker who endorsed the virtues of peace but who allowed that armed conflict was sometimes necessary. The Morrowan faith teaches that honor can be maintained amid violent strife if applied judiciously, such as to defend the





helpless. Morrow insisted the better side of man's nature could rise to the fore even amid the bloodiest of conflicts. This allows his message to have impact in times of both peace and war and to appeal to soldiers as well as those they protect.

The preeminent status of the Church of Morrow is a relatively recent phenomenon; before the arrival of the Orgoth this faith existed with the reluctant sufferance of, and occasional bloody clashes with, members of the Menite temples. Morrowans look back on that time as a period of religious oppression, when they were forced to pay burdensome tithes and attend Menite temples despite their true beliefs. They were quick to reverse this situation after the Orgoth were driven from Immoren. Since the Corvis Treaties were signed, the Church of Morrow has worked to unravel the hold the Menite clergy maintained over the ruling castes of the various kingdoms.

These efforts have largely succeeded, with the Morrowan church now holding primacy of religion outside the Protectorate and having tremendous sway over all walks of life, from commoner to noble and among laborer and scholar alike. The church has a hand in kingdom politics and cultivates its own formidable

network of contacts and spies to keep its leaders well informed of matters abroad. The heart of the Church of Morrow, the Sanctum, is a sovereign nation with its own armory, soldiers, and warjacks dedicated to protecting the faith, its clergy, and its holy sites. Lower-ranking priests are spiritual bastions for local congregations, while the highest-ranking ones stand as trusted advisors to nobles and sovereigns.

CHURCH HIERARCHY

One of the great strengths of the Church of Morrow is its extremely cohesive and inclusive hierarchy, allowing it to function as a single body despite being spread across multiple nations and being arguably the most pervasive human organization in western Immoren. While there are many individual interpretations of Morrow's message nearly all are welcomed into the larger hierarchy. Only a few unusually radical reinterpretations of the message of the Twins have been excluded from being recognized as official arms of the Church. Individual priests within the hierarchy are given considerable leeway in following their own paths to enlightenment and finding a personal connection to Morrow and his ascendants.

Individual churches are similarly given considerable autonomy but are supported by the larger hierarchy. Such a large organization requires a sizable bureaucracy, handled by priests with an aptitude for administration as well as pious laypersons chosen for the task. There is regular correspondence between

church leaders and their superiors. In the aggregate these reports provide the Church's hierarchy with a high degree of awareness of events occurring across the Iron Kingdoms. Ranking church officers and their clerks make decisions based on incoming reports as well as personal inspections and determine when additional support or shifts in personnel might be required. For example, a local priest who suspects a cult of Thamarites in his community would send an urgent plea to his superiors for assistance, who might in turn hand the matter over to the dedicated witch hunters of the Order of Illumination, who would then dispatch an armed investigative force.

As the center of this faith, the Sanctum in Caspia is afforded sovereign status as a state in its own right, a courtesy afforded to church grounds across the Iron Kingdoms. Although it prefers to remain neutral in ongoing wars, the Church has considerable military might and can field small armies fully equipped with modern mechanika and warjacks if need be. Most of this armed might is housed in the Sanctum, but elements of its arsenal may be sent abroad to protect cathedrals or commit to battles

deemed vital to the Church's interests. The Church's size and scope make it difficult for the organization to act quickly or decisively to intervene in foreign matters, as any action it can take is likely to be opposed by some branch of its membership.

The current leader of the Church of Morrow is Primarch Arius, who rarely leaves the Sancteum—or even the Archcourt Cathedral, which is his ecclesiastical seat. Primarch is a lifelong position, and new primarchs are elevated only after the death of their predecessors. They are selected through a display of divine approval that includes a manifestation of archons representing the Host of Morrow. This gives the primarch a degree of authority rarely found in other faiths, but each is nonetheless a mortal who serves as best he can, making the crucial decisions for this far-flung faith. Primarch Arius has close ties to the Cygnaran government, being a mentor and personal advisor to King Leto Raelthorne. Because of this, some foreigners consider him too careful of Cygnaran interests and biased against Morrowans of other nations, especially Khador. His detractors are vocal but have been largely ineffective in changing the situation. For the moment the Church of Morrow seems strongly invested in the security and safety of Cygnar. Arius is an aged priest, and eventually mortality will claim him, necessitating another to take his place.

The primarch is aided in governing the church by the Exordeum, a governing body of thirty-six leading priests with the lifelong rank of Exarch who manage the majority of day-to-day matters. While they also convene and dwell within the Sancteum, the exarchs are drawn from across the Iron Kingdoms and include prominent members from Khador, Ord, and the Llaelese region. Exarchs are appointed by the primarch to replace those who die—or, rarely, those who withdraw from the post. The dictates and decrees of the Exordeum are passed to vicars who are the seniormost priests dwelling outside the Sancteum and who oversee sizable regions called vicarates. Most vicars are organized into Vicarate Councils, each composed of seven vicars, which are present in many major cities, including: Caspia, Ceryl, Fharin, and Mercir in Cygnar; Merywyn in Llael; Merin in Ord; and Khardov, Korsk, Ohk, and Skirov in Khador. Answering to these councils are the prelates and high prelates who oversee Church business in individual cities and towns, taking care to ensure myriad smaller churches are adequately staffed and tending to the faithful. The church also counts among its membership hundreds of battle-chaplains, members of the military in multiple nations who serve as soldiers while performing church services, tending to the injured, and providing last rites.

THE ENKHEIRIDION AND ITS MYSTERIES

The Enkheiridion is a complex and difficult sacred text that contains the writings of both Morrow and Tamar accumulated before their respective ascensions. These ancient books include many deliberately cryptic passages. The original Enkheiridion was written in Old Caspian and is kept in the Archcourt Cathedral of the Sancteum. Immediately after their ascensions, Tamar's and Morrow's writings were lost. It was several centuries before they were restored by the woman who would become Ascendant Angellia, who compiled them in their present form. Asc. Angellia was also the first to copy and translate the texts into formal Caspian, which at the time was the language preferred by the educated. Modern copies of the Enkheiridion are copied by hand from Angellia's text—itsself a sacred relic—to preserve its complex inscriptions, notations, illuminated pages, and intricate symbols. In Khador a similarly precious translation of the original book exists in Khurzic, translated by Khardic Angellian monks.

Due to the cost to produce these tomes as well as the nature of the ancient languages, the Enkheiridion is not accessible to the common layperson. The text is studied by clergy or university educated scholars. Morrowan priests have long warned against allowing untrained laity from reading Tamar's portion of the Enkheiridion in particular, as Tamar's teachings are considered highly subversive and dangerous to unprepared minds.

The religious text commonly used by the vast majority of the faithful is a heavily abridged and translated catechism. Varying

slightly by region, catechisms are written in the common vernacular tongues, such as Cygnaran, Ordic, Llaelese, or Khadoran, and are produced by church printing presses. The most widely available catechisms focus almost exclusively on Morrow's teachings and include only a select few passages from Tamar to highlight the Volition. They also include tracts written by later ascendants, particularly Asc. Angellia and Asc. Rowan. Some catechisms include explanatory notations by revered theologians.

Different Morrowan sects emphasize different passages of this holy text or focus on a specific ascendant as a lens for understanding Morrow's philosophies. The most widely read collection of Morrowan doctrine is the *Prayers for Battle*, a tome focusing on Morrow's life as a soldier as well as lore about the Martial Trinity of Ascendants: Asc. Katrena, Asc. Solovin, and Asc. Markus. *Prayers for Battle* describes honorable conduct in warfare and the last rites for those who die by violence. This book is favored by pious Morrowan soldiers and is fundamental to martial orders allied to the Church of Morrow. A less widely distributed collection called *The Flickering Flame* is required reading by agents of the Order of Illumination and includes passages by Asc. Corben and Asc. Solovin but also a large number of Tamarite references, including tracts by Scion Ekris, Sc. Delesle, and Sc. Nivara in addition to Tamar herself. This collection is deemed vital to witch-hunters but is kept within the order lest its contents encourage the profane cults the order battles.

A number of specialized groups and orders serve the Church. Dozens of regional martial orders exist to protect holy grounds and cathedrals, one of the most prominent being the Precursor Knights of Cygnar, members of which sometimes march to war alongside the Cygnaran Army. The Order of Keeping is a monastic and reclusive branch interested in the preservation and protection of the Church's greatest relics and secrets, and its well-armed and armored knights sometimes serve as bodyguards for high-ranking priests. The Church has sanctioned to root out organized Thamarite sects as well as those practicing the dark arts of necromancy and infernalism and is aided in this capacity by the Order of Illumination, a powerful and militant group of witch-hunters and pious arcanists. The Exordeum and the primarch are extremely well informed about current events abroad by their vast network of contacts and informants, including those stationed in high office. Intelligence gathering is overseen by the Llaelese Exarch Dargule, one of Primarch Arius' most trusted confidants.

THE CHURCH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

In most of western Immoren, when a person speaks of going to church or attending to prayers, it is presumed they are speaking of Morrowan services. Small churches of Morrow are numerous in most cities, excepting those few townships that are exclusively Menite. Generally there is a church or sheltered shrine for every few hundred Morrowans. In some cases the faithful may be tended by a pious lay preacher rather than a consecrated member of the clergy with formal religious training.

Larger and more established churches become centers of their communities and are among the most impressive and well-built structures in their townships. These are usually assigned at least one ordained priest, along with supporting novices and pious volunteers who attend to the grounds, cooking, and other needs. Ordained priests vary widely in temperament and intelligence, depending on their natural gifts. By and large priests are literate and well educated, being versed in Morrowan philosophy, history, law, and extensive study of the Enkheiridion, the sacred text of the faith.

Priests are expected to make themselves available to their congregation to advise them on matters of spirituality and morality in addition to conducting regular services and performing significant ceremonies. Funeral rites are deemed one of the most important and essential of Morrowan services, particularly in recent years, as the evidence of the misuse of corpses through necromancy has been on the rise.

Through training and faith, priests can pray to manifest small miracles, acts of sacred magic that can be a boon to their community. This includes attending to the injured and diseased. These efforts are limited; despite the expectations of the suffering, priests cannot erase all illness or affliction with the wave of a hand. Morrowan priests following the example of Asc. Solovin are well versed in the mundane aspects of caring for the wounded, such as splinting broken bones, binding cuts, and applying alchemical salves to cleanse wounds and prevent infection. Such priests can lend their prayers to quicken the healing process, but primarily for superficial injuries. In most

cases a body must heal naturally, and particularly grievous wounds require extended bed rest even when closely attended by the most capable of Morrowan healers. Truly miraculous healing requires the direct intervention of the divine, which rarely happens and can only be invoked by the most spiritually potent priests when the need is tantamount for the common good. Such great miracles usually come with unpredictable repercussions, as the raw energy of the divine does not easily manifest on Caen.

A priest does not have the time or ability to attend to every injury or complaint among his congregation and must manage expectations. In large cities major churches are inundated by those seeking assistance, requiring strict policies to maintain public order while providing charitable aid. These policies vary from church to church and priest to priest, with those emulating Asc. Rowan being the most accommodating to the masses. Overworked priests may refer petitioners to neighboring churches or recommend nearby apothecaries or physicians.

Each community is expected to donate time and funds toward the upkeep of local churches, although the clergy prefers voluntary donations and does not impose strict tithes—a point of differentiation with Menite temples. Major construction projects or commissions for significant works of sacred art, stained glass, or sculpture are supported by funds drawn from the Sancteum treasury, often augmented by sizable donations from sponsoring local nobles. Supporting the church is expected of landed nobles, who gain good will among the common people and preferential treatment for burial rites and entombment. In regions where Church leaders are actively involved in politics, having the sympathy of the clergy can be of pragmatic value.

Among the greatest works of architecture in the modern age are the massive cathedrals of the Church of Morrow, found in many major cities, with notable examples in the capitals of Cygnar, Khador, Ord, and Llael. These vary considerably in style and ornamentation, drawing on the regional cultures where they stand, but most are intricately ornamented and set with gargoyles and other statuary depicting legends from the long history of the faith. The Archcourt Cathedral in the Sancteum—which houses the primarch and the Exordeum—was built just before the arrival of the Orgoth and is counted a wonder of western Immoren. The construction of cathedrals and major abbeys are tremendous works, requiring decades of labor by hundreds of craftsmen and thousands of laborers.

These structures are major attractions for their cities, drawing an influx of pious pilgrims and other visitors, thus supporting commerce in the city. Many of these cathedrals preserve relics of the faith, items of great historical and spiritual significance, often associated with specific ascendants or notable holy priests. Only a handful of relics of Morrow himself exist, and these are preserved either in the Sancteum or in the hidden Divinium, the old seat of the Morrowan Church. The wonders of the Sancteum bring hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to Caspia every year, along with donations and vows of support. Major holidays like the Ascension Feast draw additional worshipers, pilgrims, and funds.

Smaller churches in remote areas may be more modest, but the Church of Morrow as a whole is an extremely wealthy

WITCHCRAFT AND BLACK MAGIC

Witchcraft and black magic are legal terms in the Iron Kingdoms that can be acted upon by the authorities, particularly the Order of Illumination, which has a mandate given by the Morrowan Church to investigate and persecute offenders. A witch is defined as an individual who is practicing black magic, a charge that can carry severe penalties, including execution.

Within the Morrowan Church, black magic and witchcraft have traditionally been defined by the primarch and Exordeum. The current standard is any magic used for the following:

- 1) Infernalism—the practice of communicating with and negotiating with infernal entities.
- 2) Necromancy—the practice of animating the dead, interfering with the immortal soul, or using magic that draws in whole or in part on the energies released by death or suffering.
- 3) Mesmerism—any magic that interferes with free will by forcing a person to make decisions or actions not their own.

The third category is the most difficult to prove or disprove and is consequently the most rarely utilized in accusations. This definition has sometimes been deemed inadequate by specific sovereigns or other authorities, who have implemented broader stipulations. For example, during the reign of Vinter Raelthorne IV, the Inquisition in Cygnar created an extremely broad standard for witchcraft that included anyone born a sorcerer, though there was special dispensation given to those employed by the Cygnaran military. The Inquisition did not leave these matters to the Church but conducted its own investigations and was notorious for its excesses, as virtually anyone could be accused of and executed for witchcraft, even those incapable of magic.

organization. Ranking priests allocate this wealth to broadening the reach of the faith through the construction of new temples, shrines, and cathedrals as well as printing and distributing religious texts and fostering charitable works. Considerable funds are also spent on special branches of the church responsible for its protection, including its own well-armed soldiers and groups like the Order of Order of Illumination. In addition to remaining ever vigilant for signs of infernalism, the Illuminated Order is also a prime reason the Church has remained free of widespread corruption despite its wealth, for it sees that senior Church officers are subjected to scrutiny and regular tests of piety. These efforts have largely eliminated self-serving pretenders, so while it is possible for priests to be lured down the wrong path of the Volition, compromised individuals rarely reach the upper ranks. Scandals over local priests corrupting Morrowan philosophies are dealt with swiftly by Illuminated agents while rumors are quashed by the church hierarchy, often with the help of pious nobles.

Most people view the Church of Morrow as a positive, benevolent organization. The criticisms it does receive are most often for simply not doing enough. There are many who clamor for the Church to exercise its power to intervene in specific kingdoms. The Church has a history of neutrality in times of

war, rarely participating in the conflicts except to defend its holy sites. Regional biases are nevertheless inevitable, which has sometimes threatened the cohesiveness of the church leadership. Ranking members of the clergy are eager to avoid a schism, but the divide between the northern and southern church is expanding.

While unified by a single hierarchy, the Morrowan faith is far from homogenous, differing considerably by region and particularly by nation. These distinctions can be seen at every level, from church architecture to worship rites and holy days. Such differences can cause friction between the faithful of different sects, but they illustrate an essential part of the Morrowan philosophy.

ASCENDANTS AND ARCHONS OF MORROW

Caught up in the trials and tribulations of ordinary life, most who follow the faiths of Morrow and Thamar—even exceptionally pious priests who give their lives to worship—have no expectation of ascending themselves. In the centuries that followed the Twins' lives, however, some exceptional few rose to prominence and paved their own paths to ascension. Those associated with Morrow are known as ascendants and are revered as saint-like paragons; those linked to

Thamar are called scions, seen by outsiders as unholy beings that spread corruption to mortal minds, yet to Thamarites honored as singularly holy and proof of the myriad routes to enlightenment. These beings are not treated as gods by either faith, being subordinate to Morrow or Thamar, but are vital intermediaries with the divine.

After ascension, each individual became part of the religious canon, held as examples to demonstrate the vastly different ways in which both Morrow's and Thamar's teachings could be interpreted. The rise of a new ascendant or scion is a major and exceptionally rare historical and theological event. Each of the spectacular miracles by which the ascendants have transformed into divinity has demonstrated the proof of Morrow's teachings and provided an ideal toward which the pious strive. Scions are seen by Morrowans as proof that the dark twin continues to exert her own insidious influence on the world.

The ascendants play a vital role in Morrowan worship, and many individual churches and cathedrals are dedicated to one or more of them. Most Morrowans see them as approachable and comprehensible examples of their faith. The ascendants are thought to hear prayers closely tied to their spheres of influence and on extremely rare occasions have even

SYMBOLS AND PATRONAGES OF THE ASCENDANTS OF MORROW

In addition to their use as ascendant talismans, the symbols of the ascendants are sometimes imprinted, embossed, or engraved on items associated with their areas of patronage. Religious books bear on their spines the symbol of Asc. Angellia. Asc. Corben's symbol can be found on alchemical formulae. Battlefield hospital tents or rooms set aside to attend the sick or dying bear Asc. Solovin's mark. Asc. Markus' symbol is found on keystones of city arches and gates, Asc. Doleth's symbol is branded into the prows of ships, and Asc. Gordenn's symbol is affixed to the hafts of farming implements. Asc. Katrena's symbol is engraved on the arms or inside the armor of nobility and protectors of the church. Bank documents and other contractual papers often include the symbol of Asc. Shevann.



Asc. Angellia (f) ascended 1027 BR
Patron of history, lore, and the written word

Prodigious Rynnish scholar, historian, and linguist. Wrote the definitive history of western Immoren up to her time. Recovered the lost Enkheiridion and wrote its definitive notated translation.



Asc. Corben (m) ascended 102 AR
Patron of alchemy, astronomy, and the arcane

Notable arcanist who advanced astronomy, mechanika, and alchemy. Cured Rip Lung plague. Ascension seen as sign of Morrow's endorsement of arcanists who apply their powers to good works.



Asc. Doleth (m) ascended 1411 BR
Patron of sailors, boatmen, and fishermen

Fisherman on the western coast. Followed quiet, solitary path toward enlightenment. Meditated on Morrow's teachings while at sea. Selflessly rescued victims of shipwrecks amid storms of the Meredius.



Asc. Ellena (f) ascended 1590 BR
Patron of pilgrims, proselytizers, travelers, and messengers

Conducted pilgrimages in a particularly dangerous era. Spread teachings of Morrow to farthest corners of continent. Proselytizing ensured rapid spread of the faith. Performed charitable works where Menite temples had turned a blind eye to suffering.



Asc. Gordenn (m) ascended 812 BR
Patron of farmers and family

Monk and farmer devoted to alleviating suffering during Time of the Long Sun, a horrible drought. Credited with countless miracles, such as turning barren farmlands fertile and calling down rainfalls. Saved thousands from starvation.



Asc. Katrena (f) ascended 1810 BR
Patron of valor, knighthood, and nobility

First Ascendant, born in frozen north, ascended after protecting Morrowan priests and thinkers from the Menite Purging. One of the first and greatest defenders of Morrowan faith. Died from wounds suffered in battle with Menites defending one of the first primarchs.



Asc. Markus (m) ascended 305 AR
Patron of soldiers and city watchmen

Ordic soldier who single-handedly stalled an invading barbarian horde at the Siege of Midfast by challenging its fourteen chiefs to a series of duels. Died and ascended as the siege was lifted.



Asc. Rowan (f) ascended 289 BR
Patron of the poor and downtrodden

Lived during height of the Occupation. Renounced all material wealth and spent her life alleviating the suffering of the enslaved Immorese. Achieved enlightenment through self-sacrifice.



Asc. Shevann (f) ascended 500 AR
Patron of merchants, oratory, and conciliation

Most recent ascendant. Negotiated peace with the Sul-Menites after the Cygnaran Civil War. Considered patron ascendant of Caspia.



Asc. Sambert (m) ascended 605 BR
Patron of craftsmen, artists, and builders

Masterful sculptor, architect, painter, mason, and engineer with skill to manifest the divine on Caen through craft. Revolutionized sacred architecture with Archcourt Cathedral and other buildings in the Sancteum.



Asc. Solovin (m) ascended 1253 BR
Patron of healers, battle-chaplains, and midwives

Soldier and priest from Thuria who visited countless battlefields to treat wounded regardless of their affiliations. Sacrificed himself to destroy Scion Remel.

manifested on Caen to lend their aid through visions or more overt displays of holy power.

Each ascendant has a history, a distinct philosophy, and associated rites and prayers. The remains and possessions of each ascendant are holy relics that are preserved and displayed at various major cathedrals and monasteries. Most of these are reputed to possess miraculous properties and serve as conduits for the divine. Occasionally a revered priest will receive similar treatment after death. Each of primarchs join Morrow after death, transfigured into special messengers called archons. Their remains are preserved in the catacombs below the Archcourt Cathedral, contributing to the holiness of this most sacred ground.

Ascendants and archons are reputed to sometimes manifest before chosen faithful to deliver signs and portents from Morrow, the Prophet. These manifestations are sometimes translated into cryptic prophecies, the meaning of which is studied and interpreted by theologians. All witnessed manifestations of ascendants and archons are preserved and recorded in church records and are frequently the subject of religious art and sculpture.

The faithful sometimes feel a closer relationship with their patron ascendant or ascendants than with Morrow himself and spend much of their time in prayer addressing this patron. It is common for Morrowans to keep spiritual tokens on their person, most commonly a necklace bearing the Radiance of Morrow together with coin-like talismans representing ascendants. These vary in detail and quality. The finest of these talismans are minted in the Sancteum and sold to pilgrims who visit the holy city. Even the less pious will often superstitiously pray to or name an ascendant when engaged in a difficult task related to their areas of patronage. A physician cleansing a difficult wound might mutter a prayer to Asc. Solovin, for example.

THAMARITE CULTS

While Morrow has become the most prominent deity of the Iron Kingdoms, the cults devoted to his twin sister Thamar exist in relative obscurity, a fact her adherents prefer. Despite this, the teachings of Thamar have had tremendous impact on the Morrowan faith, forming a conceptual counterpoint by which their beliefs and morality are defined. To adhere to Morrow's path one must reject Thamar's, and vice versa. Thamar has had just as profound an impact on the thinking and philosophies of mankind as her brother, but her legacy is cast in shadow since Thamar's faith is inherently subversive and is associated with the darker aspects of human nature.

The concept of transgression as a gateway to enlightenment is fundamental to Thamarite belief. For this and other reasons, this faith has always been relegated to cult status, and its adherents are both feared and loathed by the dominant religions. Those who truly understand Thamarite philosophy know there are many roads to unlocking one's own inner potential, some subtler



than others. Thamar is seen by her faithful as the goddess of knowledge in all forms. She is a champion of the downtrodden, the outcast, the vengeful, and the iconoclastic. She is a goddess of freedom, self-expression, and perseverance. Those drawn to her darker aspects for their own sake or who use their faith as an excuse to justify atrocious deeds are blind to her true path. Besides the nefarious villains among her faithful there have also been heroes advocating the liberation and freedom of the spirit. When it has suited their ends, Thamarites have even shown a willingness to come to the defense of pious Morrowans.

The relationship between Morrow and Thamar and their respective paths is complicated and difficult to quantify even for theologians. On one hand, Morrowan doctrine suggests it is natural and inevitable that some people will choose the "dark path of Thamar" when confronted with the Volition. Church doctrine suggests these people are to be pitied and treated humanely, advising that those who have taken this turn might be set back on the path of light. The Church of Morrow makes a significant distinction between those who have unknowingly fallen under Thamar's sway and those who outright worship the goddess, forsaking all other faiths. Those who act from selfish or misguided desires but who have not actually devoted themselves to the Dark Twin can be redeemed, while those who have sworn allegiance to Thamar are enemies of the faith.

There is a broad spectrum of people labeled Thamarites, among them many who do not actively worship the goddess or her scions. The Church of Morrow has sometimes placed emphasis on "unknowing worship" as a proof of Thamar's corruptive influence seeping into a community and to frighten the wayward back to lives of rectitude. Anyone prone to pursuing vices can be subject to this scrutiny, and this has led to persecution by groups like the Order of Illumination, which is charged with rooting out Thamarite cults.

Even as Morrow and his ascendants look after those who are kind and generous, Thamar is thought to watch over and lend aid to the wicked. Those raised in Morrowan communities who turn to lives of crime may seek Thamar's benevolence, knowing Morrow would not accept them. This is particularly true for those contemplating imminent death and an uncertain afterlife. Thamar's followers encourage this, supporting the notion that Morrow's faith is judgmental while Thamar is welcoming. Her worship finds the warmest welcome in underworld and criminal circles, where her teachings most easily take root.

Nearly all acts of transgression, crime, and pathos are seen as the purview of Thamar. For Thamarites morality itself is an enslavement of the spirit. Acts of crime and rebellion for their own sake are hollow in the goddess' eyes, however. Thamar and her followers find enlightenment only in unshackled spirit and the triumph of the individual over the many. She is the patron not of selfishness but of self-accomplishment.

While the broad persecution of Thamarites may seem unjust at times, the septs of Thamar do include many genuinely dangerous and insidious individuals. To those who follow the dark goddess, nothing is forbidden.

THE MANY PATHS

In life Thamar had a strong fascination for the occult and ardently pursued arcane lore at a time when such powers were almost unknown. Delving into these matters was key to her ascension. She pieced together an occult alphabet called Telgesch that is related to the arcane alphabets used by all arcanists in western Immoren who shape reality by force of will and that is believed to be fundamental to necromancy. She also obscured knowledge of her own path by placing enigmas and riddles in her writings, intending her followers actively pursue enlightenment their own way. Indeed, this need to work through the tortuous philosophical conundrums to understand the secrets of reality is a central tenet of Thamarite faith.

According to Thamar's words, every path to ascension is different and every worshiper must find his own interpretation of her teachings. Some beliefs and aspects of her faith have been codified over time, however, and like-minded worshipers drawn to a particular aspect of the goddess may form septs. Most often a sept is a small group, but the most prominent septs contain hundreds or even thousands of worshipers scattered across western Immoren. Some argue that banding together in this way is inherently antithetical to Thamar's teachings, but the scions who have ascended prove that some paths are more viable than others. Septs are a means for Thamarites to work together toward common ends and to share insights, lore, and rituals. Several of the largest septs are dedicated to specific areas of forbidden knowledge, such as necromancy or infernalism.

Thamarites reject the term "priest" for those who study the goddess, preferring to call themselves advocates. At the heart of the most lasting septs are advocates of an intellectual inclination who seek to better themselves by understanding Thamar's philosophies and acting upon the goddess' words and the examples of her scions. There is no single organization that unites all the divergent Thamarite advocates, although some of the larger septs have established hierarchies and rules. Thamar's symbol, called the Ternion Brand, is adopted by dedicated followers as a sign of their commitment. It is sometimes displayed openly in defiance of authorities but more often is kept hidden.

Thamarite advocates do not usually channel her power through prayer like priests of other faiths; while dark miracles have been known to manifest when her name or those of the scions are invoked, this is exceedingly rare. Most believe the best way to gain power over reality is to master the arcane arts. Thamar is the goddess of magic as well as knowledge, as it was she who bestowed the Gift on humanity. Arcane practitioners are thought to carry forward the mystical work Thamar began before her ascension. No arcane path is forbidden to Thamarite worshipers, at least in theory. Necromancy in particular has been embraced as one of the oldest and most primal of arcane arts, inextricably linked to life, death, and the power of the immortal soul.

The Church of Morrow brands all Thamarites malefactors, a term conveying the belief they are irredeemably profane. Thamarites are viewed as a major threat, an enemy of civilization itself. They are actively persecuted by both Menites and Morrowans. The Church of Morrow's belief in the Volition

INFERNALISM AND THAMARITE ARCANISTS

The Thamarite faith has a complicated attitude toward the practice of infernalism. According to Thamarite teachings, all routes to power are acceptable. This would seem to endorse seeking infernal fonts of arcane knowledge and empowerment. Certainly most of western Immoren's experts on infernalism are Thamarites who have studied and accumulated considerable lore about these beings, including the names and titles of many. Scion Ekris is reputed to have had dealings with infernals, and the very Gift of Magic may be rooted in contact between Thamar and the greatest infernal powers.

However, most Thamarites do not endorse contact with or arrangements with infernals. Infernals ultimately seek to enslave mortal souls and are exceptionally intelligent and manipulative besides being immortal. Thamarites are expected to keep their souls free from entanglements and enter Urcaen after death unfettered by the Mark infernals place on those who have bargained with them. Maintaining the upper hand with these powers over an extended period of time is nearly impossible for most mortals, even the most learned Thamarites.

extends mercy only to those who unknowingly walk the dark path and can be brought back to the light; those who consciously choose to explore Thamar's teachings are deemed worse than damned. In most nations the Church of Morrow is lawfully empowered to capture, interrogate, and sit in judgment over Thamarite malefactors. For these reasons most Thamarites seek to hide their religious beliefs, particularly in regions where the Church of Morrow is prominent. Thamarites with position in society pretend to be Morrowans, at least to a minimal degree, attending church services and keeping Morrowan iconography prominently on their persons.

The most pious followers of Thamar keep a small, secret shrine for worship. This usually includes a small metal or clay statue of Thamar and possibly a second smaller statue representing one or more of the scions. Due the secrecy of Thamarite worship, open funeral services are rare. More often, Thamarites are buried in Morrowan ceremonies.

SCIONS OF THAMAR

Even as Morrow has saint-like ascendants, there have been a number of individuals who have ascended to a higher state of being at the moment of death by heeding Thamar's teachings and seeking their own distinct paths. In keeping with the iconoclasm endorsed by this faith, these individuals have often been branded by history as notorious criminals and madmen, as infamous as Morrow's ascendants are revered. To the Morrowan majority the list of scions is a roster of villainy, while to Thamarites it represents the infinite ways in which an

SYMBOLS AND PATRONAGES OF THE SCIONS OF THAMAR

It is quite rare to find the symbols of the Thamarite scions on anything other than a small coin-like talisman a worshiper may carry for luck or to use in prayer. These symbols are sometimes used in underworld circles as markings to designate access to areas utilized as safe houses or meeting places, such as hidden shrines.



Sc. Aidan (m) ascended 344 BR
Patron of thieves, relic seekers, and the hunted

Outlaw and grave robber who undermined Orgoth rule defying their laws and evading those hunting him. Desecrated Morrdhic, Rhulic, and Orgoth tombs to acquire occult lore.



Sc. Bolis (m) ascended 271 AR
Patron of gamblers, smugglers, and fences

Criminal mastermind and entrepreneur. Popularized gambling as a gateway to deeper vice and laid foundation for Five Fingers to become a free haven of crime, manipulating Ord and Cygnar to do so.



Sc. Delesle (f) ascended 1610 BR
Patron of necromancy, rebellion, and self-determination

Conducted campaign of terror against Menite temples and priesthood in the early Thousand Cities Era. Desecrated burial grounds and animated the dead to make war on Menites. Shielded Morrowan communities from scrutators during the Menite Purging.



Sc. Drayce (m) ascended 1400 BR
Patron of liars, politicians, and pleasure seekers

Most charismatic and subtle of Thamar's scions. Influential leader, master of human weakness, singularly ruthless and manipulative politician, and notorious hedonist. The full scope of his influence was not realized until long after his ascension.



Sc. Ekris (m) ascended 1780 BR
Patron of secrets, diviners, and forbidden lore

First Scion, alleged disciple and lover of Thamar before her ascension. Peerless occultist who determined Telgesch glyphs derived from Morrdh. Expanded early mystical writings of Thamar. Made pacts with infernals to extend his life and complete enlightenment.



Sc. Khorva (f) ascended 1250 BR
Patron of duelists, assassins, and criminal enforcers

Peerless assassin and killer. Assassinated Primarch Lorichias in the Divinium. Her actions and ascension were witnessed by a Menite delegation. This eventually ended the Menite Purging, allowing Morrowans and Menites to coexist.



Sc. Lukas (m) ascended 995 BR
Patron of the depraved, the mad, and the visionary

Sadistic hunter and killer, least understood of the scions. Sought immortality through a legacy of horror by murdering and torturing hundreds, including Morrowan priests. Chose victims based on prophetic visions and dreams. Feared even by Thamarites.



Sc. Nivara (f) ascended 25 AR
Patron of arcanists, artificers, and teachers

Most influential arcanist of the early Rebellion. Kerwin's true successor, who innovated use of arcane power in war. Her rune-inscribed puzzles laid the foundation for the cerebral matrix.



Sc. Remel (m)
Ascended 1700 BR, destroyed 1253 BR
no current patronages

Ancient scion noted in Morrowan records as destroyed during the ascension of Solovin. Most modern Thamarites disavow his existence.



Sc. Roth (m) ascended 687 BR
Patron of bandits, mercenaries, and outcast soldiers

Bandit lord who carved out a fiefdom along the Dragon's Tongue River leading an army of cutthroats. Displayed brilliant tactics when he was almost victorious against three vastly superior armies in the Battle of Roth's Stand.



Sc. Stacia (f) ascended 421 AR
Patron of arsonists, revenge, and the persecuted

Sorceress of tremendous power branded a witch and sentenced to death. Defied authorities in Mercir, where she obliterated every arcanist in the area and consumed three-quarters of the city in an inferno.