

## **Texts for the Cowled Wizards' Library in Athkatla**

### **PRINCIPLES OF THE COWLED WIZARDS**

#### **On the Protection of Amn**

...In the hands of common people, the arcane arts threaten the function of everyday life. How can a merchant sell his wares in the market, if he knows at any moment he may be bamboozled, charmed, pickpocketed or robbed? How can a farmer work their fields, if they know a spell-plague might ravish their crops, whenever some sorcerer loses control of their mind? How can justice be done, how can the courts sit, how can a magistrate make firm and fair decisions, if a user of the arcane might simply slip out of the room and escape into thin air? How can any man or woman take another's hand in marriage, if they might be embracing a shapeshifter or a trickster? We have seen magic cause untrammelled disaster in the other countries of Faerun; it is therefore our sacred duty to protect Amn from the same fate.

#### **On Preserving Arcane Art**

...and young apprentice, do not misunderstand this: the arcane is an art, as delicate and balanced as any other. You will learn, in time, to appreciate the subtle shimmer that radiates from different spells; you will refine your palate and nose, until you can identify a school of spellwork from scent and taste alone; you will cultivate your arcane senses, until you can sense the smallest scrap of magic as if it were footsteps in autumn leaves. But remember: we are followers of Azuth, and so we are guardians of the balance. All our actions must maintain the equilibrium of the arcane. Any deviation or mis-weighting will be frowned upon most heavily.

#### **The Yauntarian Heresy**

...Certain of Azuth's followers have come to believe that the arcane, being most sacred and precious of all the arts of Faerun, ought to receive reward on the mortal plane: preferably in the precious metals, but accepting also fine jewelry, rare artefacts and sumptuous clothes. In this, they follow the teachings of Ilmurk Yauntar, a mage who had such a ravenous desire for gold that he eventually took the form of a dragon, to hoard it all the better. The Church of Azuth condemns such avarice as heresy. As spell-casters, we work for the Art. We do not beg for coin.

A Scribbled Addition: Someone should tell the Grand Arcanist she's a heretic, then...

## **PRAYERS**

### **The Cowled Wizards' Prayer to Azuth**

Azuth

O High One

Hand of Sorcery

And the Lord of Spells

We ask you, First Magister,

To observe our arcane practice,

To keep order in the arcane world,

To preserve our knowledge,

from those before us, for those after us,

And to bless our spell-craft.

We pray to you, Azuth,

Hand of Sorcery

And Lord of Spells.

### **An Apprentice's Appeal to Deneir**

O Deneir

I ask you

Steady my hand

Make firm my voice

Keep planted my feet

Let my mind be wise

And let my courage be true.

### **An Archivist's Lament to Deneir**

My hands are ink-stained,

and my pen-nib is blunt;

my mind is featherbrained,

and my back takes the brunt

of the strain from here sitting,

hunched over my desk:

Lord Denier, if it's fitting,

please grant me some rest.

## **HISTORY OF THE COWLED WIZARDS**

### **The Journey to Alisarhold, Part 1; by Zakariyya of Amn**

For some time, I had longed to visit the stronghold in the Snowflake Mountains, having heard so often about the great library of the Cowled Wizards from those who had previously made the treacherous journey. Having come into the age of full maturity, and finding myself still longing for adventure, after a rather sedentary life in the Athkatla Sanctum, I resolved to make the journey. If I had only known then what perils I would face!

I left Athkatla by the River Road, journeying first to Crommir, and then via Amnwater, Keczulla, and Eshpurta, accepting the hospitality of the Cowled Wizard cells in each of these cities. I then went south from Eshpurta, taking the small, winding road to Trollford. I could have chosen at this point to venture even further south, travelling to Riatavin and skirting the Shilmista Forest entirely; but I was conscious that my journey had taken several weeks already, and the Cowled Wizards would not permit my absence indefinitely. I therefore went through the Shilmista Forest, arriving at the base of the Snowflake Mountains just as the last of the winter snows cleared.

### **The Journey to Alisarhold, Part 2; by Zakariyya of Amn**

After several arduous weeks' travel across the Snowflake Mountains, with their bitter, penetrating cold, which even my strongest warming charms could not displace, and their curious flocks of ice mephits, I arrived at Alisarhold. I was greeted by the Keeper of the Hold, the great Purgan of Riatavin. Despite his advanced age, Purgan is still spritely; I could barely keep up as he led me down the halls of the Hold.

And what halls they were! A great central room took the shape of a globe, lined floor to ceiling with perfectly curved bookshelves, every one stacked with tomes, scrolls, and pamphlets. And there were a hundred or more doors dotted over the sphere, each leading to a new hall, which had its own winding corridors and twisting shelves. As I cast my eyes over the shelves, breathless, I saw works on all the strangest, rarest and most terrifying of the arcane arts: oneiromancy, spellfire, the ways of hags, wild-magic zones, the manipulation of dimensions, the purpose of human sacrifice, the use of magic to affect the Weave itself. In the sight of all this, I could not but raise my hands and give thanks to Azuth: truly, we are a blessed people.

And yet my wonder was to be short-lived.

### **The Journey to Alisairhold, Part 3; by Zakariyya of Amn**

That evening, as we were together partaking in some light refreshment, I asked the great Purgan why he kept Alisarhold inaccessible to the broader brethren of the Cowled Wizards. My eyes lit up as I spoke of the possibilities of sharing these extraordinary tomes; we could still guard their secrets carefully, but how beautiful a thing it would be, and how glorious to Deneir's aims! I was so caught up the ecstasies of my own wild imagination that I had not noticed the pale look that had come over Purgan's face, nor the red flash to his eyes. I only ceased my jubilant rant when I felt the table between us shaking.

In a low hiss, he told me of the creation of the Cowled Wizards. Magic had been banned by the last king of Amn, after a group of inexperienced mages had summoned demons that ravaged the whole country. After the demons had finally been banished, the whole of Amn had spat at wizards in the street; in Athkatla, they had burnt the Temples of Azuth and Mystra. Alisar of Esmelteran had created the Cowled Wizards, in a desperate attempt to save the secrets of the Art. And so Purgan told me: if we do not keep our Art secret, they will destroy us.

And so I returned to Athkatla, a wiser and sadder man.

### **SCRIBBLED NOTES**

#### **A Scrap of Paper Tucked Into A Book**

...I believe Magister Artizar when he tells me that our work is just and right; I have seen by my own eye how the people suffer when we do not guard the arcane arts carefully. But when I arrest a mother for casting spells so she might care for her children while she toils in a workshop, or when I see Wardens greasing their palms with gold in exchange for a blind eye, or the Inquisitors questioning those against whom the Council has a vendetta, or even my fellow Archivists recording wrong-doings too selectively, or keeping certain arcane texts aside for their own private perusal – I wonder if we are truly doing good.

But I am one person. What could I do? This is the way of Athkatla; the city groans with coin. Nothing here goes unmeasured. Why should we be any different?

#### **A Scrap found in the Library**

O High Azuth

I've had enough

Don't be tough

Please don't huff

Or me rebuff

I've done your stuff

Let me eat a cream puff