

An Alternative History of the Scarlet Brotherhood

The Kingdom of Shar and The Secret Order of the Scarlet Sign

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"A Monk of Fife" (page 208); by Andrew Lang (1896) (British Library Catalogue digital ID 014815487)

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THE KINGDOM OF SHAR

INTRODUCTION

A discussion on the CanonFire! Discord channel with Jason Zavoda in mid 2021 led to this article. He indicated he didn't like the approach Sean Reynolds had taken to the Scarlet Brotherhood in his book of the same name, and had always viewed them as more of an Illuminati type secret organization operating in the shadows and pulling strings. As such, the approach of the Scarlet Brotherhood as expansionist invader in the Greyhawk Wars jarred with him.

This got me thinking, given I could see Jason's point which intrigued me, as to how the lore would need to change to reflect that. After starting to review this I also saw some other people on Discord post about taking a similar approach to the Scarlet Brotherhood (including, from memory, Gary Holian).

Having bought *The Scarlet Brotherhood* book previously (I am interested in Hepmonaland and the Touv, which it covers), and also the *Fate of Istus* module (which has a part based within the Tilvanot Peninsula), it seemed to me that the Kingdom of Shar would need to be a proper political entity if the Brotherhood stepped back into the shadows.

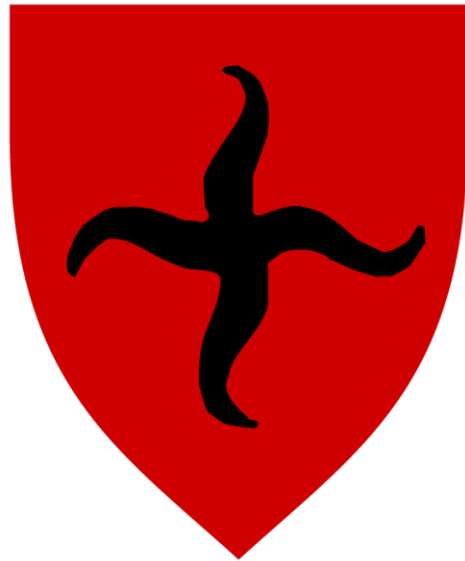
Rewriting the Greyhawk Wars to remove the Scarlet Brotherhood and its invasions is too great a change. The Brotherhood might have been replaced by the Great Kingdom invading Idee and Onnwal, and the Sea Princes attacking Keoland on their own (which they had done before), but this was a more drastic change I did not want to touch (at this time - maybe a later "what if?" scenario to examine). So making Shar the antagonist with The Brotherhood in the background achieves a similar end.

So how would a more secretive Scarlet Brotherhood work?

Firstly, I commend to you an article on CanonFire! by Rich D "Longetalos" on the population of the Tilvanot peninsula at: <http://canonfire.com/cf/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1235>

I have adopted that analysis and populations numbers in the article below.

THE SECRET ORDER OF THE SCARLET SIGN



Heraldry of the Scarlet Brotherhood (from Anna B Meyer web site - www.annabmeyer.com)

The Scarlet Brotherhood would not have the same name., even if others might refer to it by that name. The Order clearly has members of both genders, and had such since the beginning (the second head of the Order was female). Suel Mages of Power were presumably male and female, and the Suel respected power above all - irrespective of gender. So it is properly The Order of the Scarlet Sign.

The term Scarlet Brotherhood is instead the term used by others in the Flanaess, outside Shar. After the first spies and travelers that were able to enter Shar observed the monastic order that supported the churches in Shar, and enforced the strict social rules of the king and churches for Suel "purity" (in reality according to the plans of the Order). These monks were mainly male (as the enforcement arm, more suited to male members) and wore scarlet

robes (unlike outside Shar, where they do not wear these as they do not want to reveal their membership).



The Great Migrations ("My Mission to Abyssinia" p.121 - British Library digital ID 014827632)

ORIGINS

The Scarlet Brotherhood (1999) provides a history of the Order that must be amended for them to withdraw into the shadows.

The founding of the Order remains in 5091 Suloise Dating (**SD**) (or -425 Common Year (**CY**)), 3 years prior to the Rain of Colorless Fire, when the Order was founded by Kevelli Mauk teaching Suel purity.

Kevelli and his followers fled by magic to the Hellfurnaces in the hour prior, warned by Kevelli's premonition. They journeyed through Kendeen Pass, the Sheldomar Valley, and Veluna, avoiding migrating Oeridians but also gathering other Suel refugees as they went. They continued being forced to move east and south as Oeridians continued to push them out of each new area they settled in. Finally, they came to the Vast Swamp in the south-east of the Flanaess where they sought refuge.

After 2 months they moved south and found themselves on the Tilvanot (Suel for "south-hill") peninsula. The cool breezes and misty skies of this place were to their liking, and similar to their now destroyed homeland. Moving on they encountered several thousand followers of the Suel Emperor's son, Zellif Ad-Sol, who had established a colony there in 5071 SD (-445 CY). The colony had driven off, bargained with, or enslaved the humanoid and

Flan tribes found there. However, earlier that year Zellif had disappeared to the north, travelling to the Griff Mountains on an unknown quest.

Zellif had led a group of refugees including those loyal to him from the Suel Imperium prior to the Rain of Colorless Fire, fleeing the internal strife and opportunism that allowed Suel houses to eliminate rivals. They greeted Kevelli and his "loyalists" with some suspicion. The establishment of the Order had occurred after Zellif and his followers had left, but Kevelli and those with him were known to be or clearly loyal to the previous Emperor and regime. Those nobles who had fled with Zellif had been ruling the colony as a council until Zellif returned, and could rule for or appoint a regent for Zellif's young son if he did not.

Kevelli's news of the destruction of the Suel Imperium in the Rain of Colorless Fire dismayed the colony, but to Kevelli's disappointment took this as confirmation they had been right to flee the Imperium and its flaws. Kevelli could see that the Order's views and aims could lead to internal conflict in the short term if pressed.

While the Suel colonists were resistant to certain aspects of the old order resuming, they were still clearly Suel. They looked down on the native inhabitants of the Tilvanot peninsula, and were quite willing to enslave them in the same way the Imperium had enslaved other races. The colonists were also trying to create a new Suel realm echoing the old - in culture, architecture, social norms and worship of the Suel gods.

Kevelli took a long-term approach to this challenge. First the Suel must master themselves, then they could master all others. The Order would ensure this, even if it had to do so in secret.

Kevelli could see the way to do this - the Suel religions. The Suel had continued to be faithful followers of their gods in the years since fleeing their lands. Years of travelling had forged their faith in their gods, who had continued to watch over them in that time. The colonists had built shrines and temples to their gods in their new land, and the priests of those gods played a

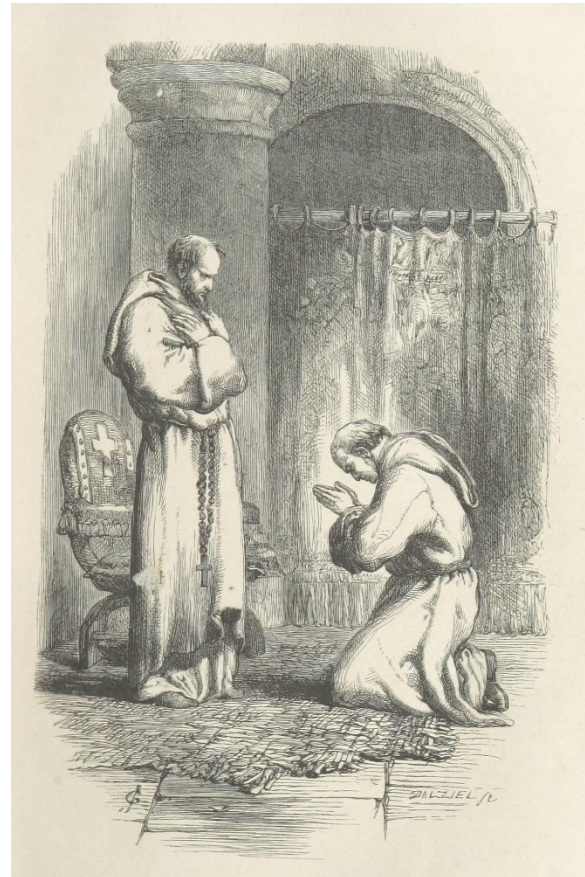
major part in daily life including schooling the nobles' children.

However, the plantation economy that had begun to emerge in the colony was a danger to staying true to the Suel ways. Suel farmers and workers had to deal with and supervise the Flan that had been enslaved and worked the fields, or that continued to live in the adjoining areas yet to be brought under the colonists' full control. In the Order's view consorting with "inferior" races raised the risk of diluting the purity of the Suel race, and exposing the Suel to heretical beliefs and worship of the Flan gods. So Kevelli's first step was to gain the support of the Suel churches, and begin to infiltrate them with those loyal or beholden to the Order at the upper levels. The Order did not need to control every person, for now - just those in charge. Through the churches the Order could ensure the beliefs and breeding of the colony remained pure.

Kevelli could also see the colony was vulnerable, as much to infighting as external threats. He might have sought to claim a key role in the fledgling colonial government or nobility himself, given his noble blood, but instead he sought to simply advise and counsel (a model the Order would employ to great effect over the centuries), and again co-opted what already existed. The noble council would rule in place of Zellif until he returned, or his son came of age. In time that son would become King Zellif, the first king of Shar and the first of that name. The name became tradition for the ruler to adopt as their own upon gaining the crown, and continued to the present day. That the Order would rule Shar using a virtual puppet king bearing the name of a man who would probably revile them was ironic.

The threat of external foreigners was also used to deal with the threat of internal division. The fragmented Suel were reordered in new houses under the remnant nobles, and each put in charge of a division of the peninsula. Each would be responsible for guarding their part, under the command of the noble council and, in time, the king. A standing army was organized, but the main protection was provided by

putting the enslaved or recruited humanoids to guarding the northern approaches against any non-Suel. At that time the Flanaess was still undeveloped, with the waves of migration from the west still flowing east. The Flan were being overrun by the Suel, with the Oeridians coming behind them. The Tilvanot peninsula was simply the furthest in the Flanaess anyone could travel, and difficult to reach beyond the Vast Swamp. However, the Suel needed to be ready when that eventually happened. For it would.



Kevelli Mauk - Father of the Order ("Alvetham & John Paslew - The Lancashire Witches" p.59 - British Library digital ID 014803695)

Over time, other Suel refugees came to the Tilvanot peninsula. Kevelli and the Order continued to sow the seeds of their philosophy in Shar minds. Lesser races and minds were responsible for the suffering of the Suel people, and they would repay the debt owed their superiors. Only the wisdom of the Suel could

properly guide them all, and prevent the tragedy that had befallen the Suel before.

The colony built towns along the coast, and a nascent navy to protect it. However, the main defence was sheer isolation, the powerful mages who could protect the coast with their magicks and controlled monsters, and the humanoid tribes protecting the northern approaches. In time ships would come from foreign lands seeking to trade with the Shar. However, this was always done on Shar's terms.

Only the capital, Kro Terlep, in the north and Ekul, on the east coast, were open to trade. Visitors were not allowed outside demarcated trade districts, and attempting to land elsewhere was punished harshly, being enslaved or simply never being seen again. Those wishing to come to Shar learned to put up with these terms if they wanted to visit. The rare woods, fruits, and spices drew them back, but otherwise the aloof and unassuming Suel nation drew little attention.



The coasts of Shar are defended by sea monsters ("The Blue Poetry Book" p.255 - British Library digital ID 014817022)

Suel from the north continued to find their way south to the Tilvanot peninsula. Some stayed while others continued on to the south across the shark infested Tilva ("southern") Strait to the jungles of the continent there.

Kevelli's work continued on after his death in 5105 SD (-411 CY). His most talented student, Reshek Nes, continued her mentor's work. She strengthened the Order's use and control of the

churches as a tool of social engineering, creating a scarlet robe wearing monastic order that ostensibly was to enforce the moral and social rules of the Suel churches and culture.

However the Order of the Scarlet Sign, as it was publicly known, was secretly the master not the servant in that relationship. The Order was able to operate in the open, in an apparently humble role that insinuated itself into Shar society. They were able to operate as a virtual secret police force, quietly pulling the strings in Shar life. While the average Shar citizen thought their life ruled by the king, the nobles and the churches, such was simply a facade for the Order that sat behind them all. But also enforcing the regime for them. The Order hid and operated in plain sight - the humble servants of the Shar kingdom.

In that role the head of the Order continued to advise the king and council of nobles (and churches), counselling patience and against aggressive moves against any nearby realms. Those that were seen as a threat to the Order or Shar were dissuaded, coerced or died of "natural causes" or "accidents".

In 5271 SD (-245 CY) the Order uncovered a conspiracy amongst three houses to overthrow the king and replace him with an ambitious cousin. The conspirators were arrested, tortured to reveal their fellow traitors, and publicly executed. No opposition to the king's regime would be tolerated. The loyalty of the Order to the king and the regime was reinforced in the eyes of all citizens by the uncovering and crushing of the plot.

Over time the Order and Shar lapsed into complacency. Kevelli was a visionary whose ambition and drive had carried the Order on, but needed a similar visionary to continue. They would come only every few generations. Preserving and protecting the Suel culture and race in Shar had been secured, and the underlying aim of Kevelli to build a new empire and conquer the Flanaess become more of a dream and less of an agenda. Rare visitors from the outside world saw only a stern nation of patriotic citizens. Any visitor who traveled too far or saw too much disappeared, either into

slavery, or torture for information and then death.

That complacency would eventually be ended centuries later.

THE SLEEPER AWAKES

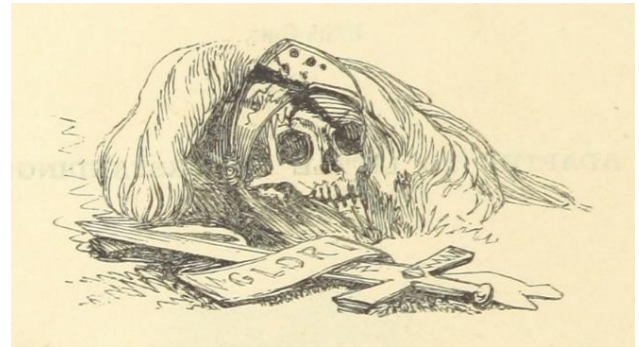
WG8 *The Fate of Istus* (1989) suggested the cause of the Order beginning to stir.

The complacency of Shar was shaken in 489 CY (6003 SD). Southern Shar was unexpectedly attacked by a small band of foreigners who were disturbingly similar to certain of the Bakluni tribes of old, accompanied by exotic monsters also never seen before. These aliens appeared from nowhere, apparently arriving by magical means, and Shar forces that tried to deal with them were driven back by unarmed monks with fearsome fighting skills, and mages with unusual powers.

Irith Van, the head of the Order at the time, sent agents to investigate and negotiated a secret meeting with the strangers. These aliens proved to have arrived on Oerth by a magical portal, created by a powerful mage to escape even more powerful enemies in their homeland of T'u Lung in Kara Tur. The portal had closed behind them with no way to return. Irith Van was intrigued by the novel but effective skills of the intruders, which resembled the similar unarmed prowess of some orders of their previous Bakluni enemies according to ancient tomes of Suel history preserved by the Order (see "Fighting Monks", *Oerth Journal* #35; Winter 2020/2021). He proposed an alliance, which they accepted.

Under Irith Van's firm control, the Order was remade. The alliance with the monks was kept a secret from all but the highest circle of the Order. Irith Van and the highest level learned, and then began to teach, the new martial arts and discipline of the newcomers. Irith also led a radical reorganization of the Order's by then stale structure, which is what it operates under now. The monks were to become the highest level and, with a new focus on external spying and espionage, assassins and thieves developed as the new levels below them in turn.

In 6006 SD (492 CY) the building of a new headquarters was ordered, at the location of the aliens' entry to Shar. It was to become Hesuel Ilshar, the Breedhome of the Suloise - a fortress and city operating as the base of the newly energized Order. The entire episode was erased (or rather never entered so as to need to be) from official histories, and the existence of the newcomers' descendants remains a strict state secret. In the course of five generations, the precise age of Hesuel Ilshar and the reorganization of the Order was largely forgotten by all but the highest level of the Order.



The fate of many a spy to Shar ("Prose & Verse" p.16 - British Library digital ID 014817205)

A NEW PLAN

The encounter with the alien monks in 489 CY also caused the Order to change its entire philosophy and operations. Whereas previously it had been committed to preserving and protecting the "purity" of the Suel race and culture in its new home in Shar, now it was clear this was no longer enough. This was a return to the Order's original dream under Kevelli. The alien monks had shown that other cultures could develop in new and unexpected ways, and threaten Shar no matter how secure it (and the Order) thought itself.

The Order could no longer content itself with controlling Shar in the shadows, and preserving the Suloise race and culture in an isolated corner of the Flanaess. A new force could arrive at any time to threaten the future of the Suloise. The Order has to move from being a shield to a sword, and ensure the Suel took

their place in the sun in the Flanaess. A plan had to be drawn up. It might take decades or centuries, but the Suel Imperium's preeminent place in Oerik would be restored. Only by subjugating the inferior races of the Flanaess could the survival of the Suel race be ensured. In fact, by doing so the Suel would bring the enlightenment of the ancient culture of the Suel Imperium to all peoples.

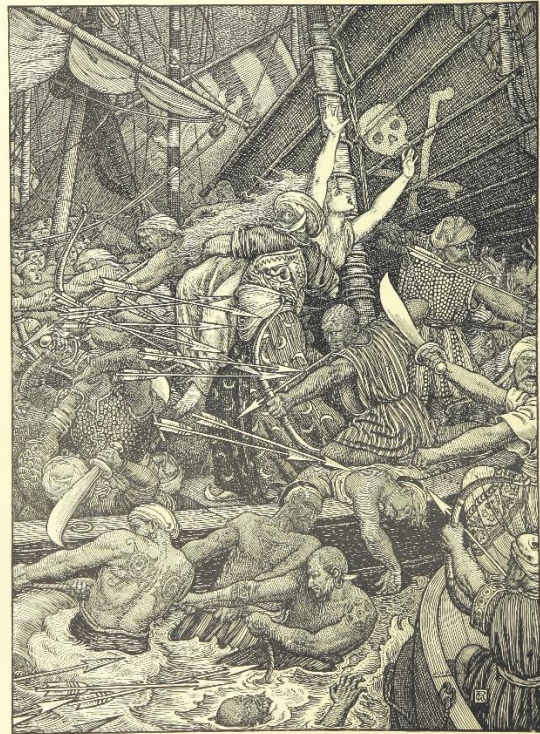
Previously the Order had maintained agents and spies in nearby lands like Hepmonaland, Sunndi, Onnwal and the South Province of the Great Kingdom to maintain a watch for any potential threat against Shar. This now changed. The Order began training and building a network of spies throughout the Flanaess, to monitor and spy on all lands and threats, and properly plan who and how to conquer them all in time. Who might be undermined, who might be corrupted, which realms or peoples turned against which - all to make it easier to conquer them in time.

The Order began a recruitment campaign in Shar. While previously it had recruited to control and enforce the Order's will within Shar as a virtual secret police force, now it needed more members and with different skills. Spies and assassins needed to be recruited, trained and sent forth. Foreigners needed to be recruited or kidnapped to provide training in languages and customs if spies were to infiltrate unnoticed. However, Shar contained only so many people, and the Order had certain standards for genetic purity.

The Order also began turning its mind to building the genetic stock of the Suel people. As their network grew north (and west) and they found the Thillonrian peninsula had become a haven of Suel refugees, albeit reverted to barbarism and who had forgotten their great heritage. This became a target for recruitment or kidnapping of prime subjects to use in their breeding programs.

Previously the Order had dominated the humanoids guarding the northern approaches to Shar through threats, rewards and magic. Now it began building them into a stronger and larger force that in due course could be used for

invasion. Better humanoid blood be spilled as shock troops than precious Suel blood.



"He saw two cities in a thousand boats all fighting for a woman on the sea."

Shar waters - rife with piracy ... for those not of Shar ("Idylls of the King" p.58 - British Library digital ID 014830686)

In addition, the Order turned its mind anew to using magic to breed new monsters and creatures to use as troops or for its plans. The exotic creatures that had come with the alien monks had piqued their interest in such things (or re-piqued, given the Suel of the Imperium had been know to dabble in such things, but Shar had not needed too much until now). Previously Shar (and the Order) had used magic to both defend the naval approaches to its lands and command sea creatures to assist in this defence (pirates and freebooters have a tendency to not return when their ships keep getting eaten by kraken or other fearsome sea creatures).

Now the Order expanded its war-thrall program in earnest. Previously Shar had always undertaken a primitive bred-thrall program, little more than the equivalent of animal husbandry and breeding with slave stock. Now

the Order began using magic in earnest in its own program, beyond simply ensuring the plantations and mines of Shar had appropriate slave stock.

Wars and invasions would need supply chains and support networks that could be relied on and trusted. New populations of subjects needed new ways to ensure they were made obedient quickly, to avoid messy and ongoing guerilla wars that would distract from the next theatre of conquest.

The Kingdom of Shar too changed its demeanor. Whereas previously it had regarded itself as removed from the affairs of the Flanaess, and determined to stay uninvolved, the Order began sowing the seeds of a changed policy. Shar could not remain uninvolved or rely on previous strategies and plans. Other realms might begin to turn their eyes on Shar's riches and peoples with greedy eyes. The Great Kingdom was showing signs of instability that might affect Shar. Shar needed to be ready to defend against any such incursions. In turn that would begin to develop into a strategy of pre-emptive defense, that would justify the invasions launched in the Greyhawk Wars. But that was almost a century away. Shar changed slowly, but the Order was patient and took a long term view. The Imperium had not been built in a day.

576 CY

How were things different in 576 CY then?

The **World of Greyhawk Fantasy Setting** (1983) had an entry for the Scarlet Brotherhood as a realm. This should be replaced by one for the Kingdom of Shar. The basic details should read as follows:

Kingdom of Shar

His Royal Majesty, Zellif XXXIII, King of the Supreme Suloise Kingdom of the Shar

Capital: Kro Terlep (pop. 5,000 est.)

Population: 350,000 +/-

Demi-humans: None

Humanoids: Some but details unknown

Resources: rare woods, spices, gold, gems (I, III, IV)

The remainder of the details remain such the same, with references to the Scarlet Brotherhood changing to refer to Shar. However, the timeline in the Setting book should refer to 573 CY as being the year "*Envoys of Kingdom of Shar first reported; Prince of Furyondy/Provost of Veluna kidnapped.*" with Shar, not the Scarlet Brotherhood, beginning its more overt diplomacy that year.



Emissaries of Shar ("The voiage & travaile of Sir J. Maundevice" p.157 - BL digital library 014818303)

THE GREYHAWK WARS

The **Wars** (1991) book alludes to the realms of the Flanaess beginning to investigate the stirring of Shar.

At some stage King Archbold III of Nyronnd commissioned Marquel, a paladin of Nyronnd, to investigate rumors coming from the Densac Gulf and Tilvanot Peninsula. Traveling in disguise, Marquel travelled even farther south and, while unable to penetrate the ranks of the Scarlet Brotherhood, he recorded every rumor, tale, and experience of his journey in his book "*An Honest Traveler's Strange Tales of the South*" which provided the best source of information on the Scarlet Brotherhood.

While Archbold sending Marquel south to Shar may have occurred after 573 CY when the first Shar envoys arrived in Nyronnd's Iron League allies, it likely occurred earlier given it was said to have been prompted by rumors

from the “Densac Peninsula” (rather than the arrival of envoys from the Scarlet Brotherhood in 573 CY). Nyrond had enough challenges in dealing with the Great Kingdom and a returned luz in the north. It did not need any new enemies, and tales of a mysterious kingdom on the Tilvanot peninsula with resources and strength far beyond previous tales would have aroused Archbold’s concerns even if only to ensure Nyrond’s Iron League allies were not threatened so they could continue to support it.

As such, Marquel journeying south and spying out Shar before returning with tales of their land may well have taken place prior to 573 CY. The Order’s long term plans to infiltrate and undermine the realms of the Flanaess might be threatened if those realms were alerted by this Nyrondese spy who had managed to infiltrate and escape them. As such, the Order may well have brought forward their plans for sending envoys to various realms before they were alerted by Marquel’s reports being circulated. Better those envoys already be in place to placate those rulers with soothing words than arriving to courts already suspicious of any visitors from Shar. Thus, when the Greyhawk Wars broke out, the Order was having to act sooner than their previous agenda and plans, with envoys dispatched sooner in the original strategy but also the opportunity of war and chaos too good to miss.



The well guarded environs of Hesuel Ilishar (“Cloisters of St Honorat - The Maritime Alps & Their Seaboard” p.170 - British Library digital ID 014803913)

591 CY

The *Scarlet Brotherhood* (1999) book sets out details of the state of affairs in the Tilvanot peninsula as at the end of 6104 SD (590 CY).

However, the details of the Order contained in the book must be considered to be of the covert organization in place to control Shar. Each province, settlement and the realm overall still require details of the Shar realm that rules the land, which the Order sits behind, amongst and pulls the strings of. As such, any DM approaching the Order and Shar as suggested will need to create the details of Shar in this regard.

The *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* (2000) entry for the Scarlet Brotherhood should, similarly to the Setting book above, be replaced with an entry for the Kingdom of Shar. The basic details should read as follows:

Kingdom of Shar

Proper Name: The Supreme Suloise Kingdom of the Shar

Ruler: His Royal Majesty, King Zellif XXXIII, King of the Supreme Suloise Kingdom of the Shar

Government: Tilvanot is governed by feudal plantation lords under the rule of a monarchy; red-robed monks representing the various Suel churches are an ever-present force that underpins the rule of the king and enforces social rules.

Capital: Kro Terlep (pop. 6,000 est. plus several hundreds to thousands of tribesmen troops in transit at any time)

Major Towns: Ekul (pop. 7,000 est., plus several hundred to thousand tribesmen troops in transit at any time), Hesuel Ilishar (exact location & pop. unknown - possibly in excess of 12,000), Taree (pop. 9,500 est.)

Provinces: Plantation lords under the rule of the king on the Tilvanot Peninsula; foreign holdings include part of the Sea Princes (Monmurg, Port Toli, Jetsom Island, Fairwind Island, Flotsom Island, Sybarate Isle), Onnwal (Scant only), both Olman Islands, and

strongholds in the Amedio Jungle and Hepmonaland; the Lordship of the Isles is an allied puppet state

Resources: Rare woods, fruits, spices, gold, gems (I, III, IV)

Coinage: Unknown (accepts foreign coinage in its trade ports at strict rates, but allows no coinage of its own to foreigners except for local paper currency)

Population: 450,000 (exact numbers unknown)—Human 87% (Sfzt - citizens are Suel, slaves are non-Suel), Other 13% (Humanoid (60,000 - hobgoblins, goblins, and orcs)

Languages: Ancient Suloise, Common (Goblinoid languages amongst humanoids, in addition to Common)

Alignments: LN, N, CN (Scarlet Brotherhood - LE*, NE, CE)*

Religions: Pyremius, Syrul, Wee Jas, Bralm, Llerg, Nerull (in secret by a few Brotherhood assassins), Tharizdun (claimed by Brotherhood agents but not actually worshiped)

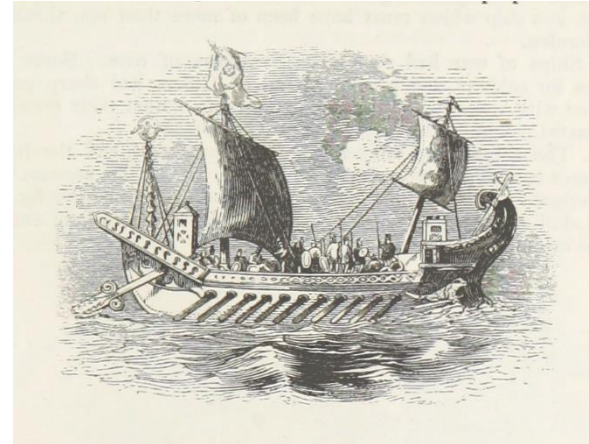
Allies: Lordship of the Isles (puppet state), certain followers of Suloise gods in foreign lands (Syrul, Pyremius, etc.)

Enemies: Yeomanry, Sterich, Keoland, the Ulek states, Gran March, Furyondy, Veluna, Verbobonc, Dyvers, Greyhawk, luz, Duchy of Urnst, County of Urnst, the Pale, Nyrond, North Kingdom, Ahlissa, Sunndi, Sea Barons, Rel Astra and allied cities, Ice Barbarians, rebel forces in the Sea Princes, rebel forces in Onnwal, Knights of the Hart, Knights of Holy Shielding, Knights of Luna, Knights of the Watch. Only luz can count more enemies than Shar.

The remainder of the details remain such the same, with references to the Scarlet Brotherhood changing to refer to Shar. However, the reference to the leaders of the armies of Shar (comprising mainly Suel and Olman tribal warriors recruited from southern lands, and humanoid troops) should be of Shar military officers advised by black robed (rather than scarlet) monks or other advisers, all clearly of pure Suel heritage betraying their origins in Shar. The Scarlet Brotherhood does not wish its

involvement in supervising the operations of Shar known.

The ambassadors to foreign lands tend to be of priestly and monastic origins, being agents of the Order.



Shar sea power ("A Pictorial History of Ancient Rome" p.299 - British Library digital ID 014871826)

CONCLUSION

Generally, in published sources references to the Scarlet Brotherhood can refer to the Kingdom of Shar, with the assumption outside Shar that it has a very good network of spies that assist its schemes. The actual network of the Order goes far beyond what anyone could probably anticipate, and their aims are far more ambitious than anyone could guess - not just Shar dominance of the Azure Sea and Tilva Strait but eventual conquest of the Flanaess by the Suel (under their control).

Some rulers of realms and powerful figures (such as Mordenkainen) suspect or are confident they understand the role of the Order as the true power in Shar, but generally the Order should be regarded as a shadowy organization unknown to almost all people in the Flanaess, and whose long term plans are beyond the time frames of most inhabitants or realms there.

If Shar were to fall tomorrow this would present a major set-back to the Order's plans, but its remaining members would survive and adapt.