

## **History of the Khund from the earliest days to 592 CY**

By Bob Beck

For years beyond reckoning, the Dwarves of the Yatils were content to mine the depths of the earth, constructing beauty from stone, metal and gem. They pursued craftsmanship, striving to better each other with each new item or construction. During this time, they fought constantly with the Lesser races, the races made by the evil powers in mockery of the Greater races.

In the southern Yatils, there were reports of another race, Humans who called themselves Suel. These Suel outcasts built hidden temples to the dark god Tharizdun in the inhospitable regions of the Southern Yatils. The Dwarves, secure in the mountain holds, ignored the short-lived humans.

Around -2250CY, a new race found its way into modern day Perrenland. They were a Human race that called themselves the Flan. Fleeing persecution, the Flan spread throughout Eastern Oerik. One of the Flan tribes, the Ur-Flanne, settled the area of modern Perrenland. The Ur-Flanne marvelled at the craftsmanship of the Dwarves and praised their works. The Dwarves enjoyed the praise and recognition from the Humans, and a friendship between the races was quickly established. Goods and services were traded. The Ur-Flanne were content to form small villages and raise crops and cattle on the plains, whilst the Dwarves continued to mine the mountains of the Yatils.

In time, the Ur-Flanne grew in number and sought cities of their own. The Ur-Flanne leaders sought the Dwarven craftsman to make them a great city. Agreements were reached, goods were traded, and the Dwarven craftsman set to work on several magnificent cities in the Yatils and the Mounds of Dawn.

Around this time, the Ur-Flanne, trading now with the Gray Elves, discovered arcane magic's. Naturally adept and keen, they pursued them with vigour. Soon, magic became common amongst the peoples, as their sharp minds sought more and more mysteries of the arcane. Even mundane items were infused with magic, from Quills that never run out of ink, to liquor magically enhanced for potency. Using their arcane skills, they worked with the Dwarves, making their cities truly a marvel. The Ur-Flanne specialised in magic of travelling and they used lore long since lost that allowed travel from city to city.

After a few centuries of golden peace and research, some Ur-Flanne grew discontent. They wanted to make a city to the east of the current domain, across LakeQuag. Many wondered why they would want a city away from their brothers in the Yatils, but the leaders of those wanting the new city were charismatic and convincing. Eventually their wish was granted and the Dwarves, never lovers of water-travel, were convinced with magnificent gifts and payments.

Long the Dwarves and Ur-Flanne laboured, striving to make the city the greatest yet. The stone itself was made from pure obsidian, creating a vast, black city, unlike any ever seen. Upon its completion, it was named Dagovach by the Ur-Flanne who took possession of it, and the Dwarves headed home to the Yatils.

Hundreds of years passed, the Ur-Flanne grew more powerful. Strange reports were heard from the area to east of LakeQuag. The leaders of Dagovach assured the Ur-Flanne and Dwarves that there was no problems. Life continued. Then, early one morning, the Dark Treachery was unleashed. The true nature of the people of Dagovach was revealed, as they openly declared their alliance to Tharizdun.

Servants of the Dark God rose up amongst the other cities, Dagovach sent unspeakable horrors inside the Yatil cities. Rebellion was at hand. Walls were cast down, hundreds of thousands were slaughtered. Brother fought brother, mother fought daughter, and the Ur-Flanne kingdom was destroyed by their own hands. The Ur-Flanne cities were destroyed in the centuries long conflict. Dagovach became a haunted ruin of pure evil.

The Dwarves were not left untouched by the conflict. Demons and Humanoid hordes attacked the stout miners. Horrors from the deep stirred. A dark power forged bands of orcs into a tidal wave of terror. Many Dwarves fell defending their mines and fortresses. Much of their vast works were torn down or taken over.

The Dwarves prepared to make a final stand in their greatest city, Dunolorae Ilith. They vowed that as long as the Great Horn, Olhupe- Baraknoror, was in Dunolorae Ilith, none would breach its walls. No enemy would enter its gates. No foe would take its halls. Its magical protection sealed the city from harmful magiks.

Olhupe-Baraknoror was the sacred horn of the Khund peoples. Carved from the very mountain itself, its coiled length measured longer than a hundred dwarves. Its entire surface was the Creation story of the Dwarven people, and the founding of the city of Dunolorae-Ilith. The very magic of Oerth permeates through it, giving it an aura of stability, of fortitude, of lasting. When the horn is sounded, the pride of the Khund is echoed through every hall, every passage and every cavern.

The Creation story, the founding of Dunolorae-Ilith, the eternal pride of the Khund and their creator, Moradin, awakens in their minds, in their hearts. The Walls of the City are reminded that they are unbreakable. The doors of Keep are reminded that no magik can break them. The very stone itself heals damage done by eternal time. As long as the Horn sounds, Dunolorae-Ilith is unbreakable and unbreachable.

For decades, the enemies of the Dwarves laid siege to Dunolorae Ilith's walls. Every day, the Holy Horn of Moradin, Olhupe- Baraknoror, would be blown thrice at the rising sun, its sound echoing the Dwarven defiance across the Yatils. Great magic's were unleashed at the walls, countless hordes threw themselves at the gates. Yet none could breach Dunolorae Ilith whilst the Horn was blown.

Then, on the 32nd year of the siege, the Humanoids sappers and commandos managed to gain entrance to Dunolorae Ilith. Some say it was treachery from secret Dwarven followers of Tharizdun Cult who gave them access. The commandos knew their target, they killed hundreds of dwarves with magic and blade, as they made their way to Olhupe-Baraknoror. The defilers assaulted the great chamber and the Evil Priest cast a mighty spell upon the chamber. The doors to Olhupe-Baraknoror swing shut and were sealed forever.

Without the protection of the Horn, the Fortress-City of Dunolorae Ilith, became vulnerable. The enemy struck. The vast evil magicks of the Humanoid Shamans and Sorcerers, and their Outsider allies was finally able to be brought to bear against the Dwarves. Still, the Dwarves were resolute, their spirits strong. And then their foes unleashed their greatest incantation, what the Dwarves now call, the Curse of Beldarak.

Beldarak is the Dwarf word for Treachery, leading many scholars to give some thought that indeed Dwarven traitors were involved. The Dwarven sense of community, of loyalty to Khund, of kinship, was sundered by the Curse. It is thought that only through the power of Tharizdun himself could such evil have been made possible. The walls fell, the doors were breached. Thousands of Dwarves

were slaughtered in fierce battles. It is said the Great all, Arau-Splendarr Ultok, itself was a sea of blood. The survivors, few in number, fled, swearing vengeance, yet separate in their ideals.

The last Dwarf to leave the city was the Khund High Priest of Moradin. As he left the city, he turned to it, raised his hands and spoke in righteous fury. All the exits to Dunolorae Ilith collapsed and were buried under tonnes of rock. The Invaders lost the final battle, but the Khund lost their home. It is said he then prophesised the return of the Khund to their city, and the breaking of the curse, when a Dwarf, descendant of the chief once more blew the Great Horn, Olhupe-Baraknoror.

The Ur-Flanne themselves were almost destroyed at this time, fighting amongst themselves and the horrors released by Tharizdun's cult. All of their cities were cast down, the last being Dagovach, who's walls remained intact yet the people dead. Some say that the priests of the city cast a spell upon it, others that the Ur-Flanne, lead by Pelor, cursed the inhabitants. None now live who know the full tale.

The followers of Tharizdun fled to an ancient Suel temple built high in the Southern Yatils. It was then that the source of the corruption was revealed. Millennium before, Suel outcasts, worshippers of Tharazdin, had raised a temple to the Dark God. Ur-Flanne explorers had found the ancient Tomes and eagerly sought the power the books promised. These explorers were the founders of Dagovach. Rumours abound that some of the traitors fled to the Clatspurs and founded a Monastery to Tharizdun, where martial and mind prowess was sought.

The Ur-Flanne were too weakened to pursue their fallen brethren any further. The Ur-Flanne people were gutted. Their strongest and brightest dead. Distrust was a way of life, and the people scattered into tribes, forsaking their haughty ways and returning to their nomadic roots.

About a millennium ago, the Oeridians arrived in Flaness. The old Oeridians were a people who fled the wars between the Suel Imperium and the Empire of the Bakluni. They were aligned with neither the Bakluni nor Suel peoples, but sought instead to escape the steadily escalating wars between the two empires. When the Suel Imperium and Bakluni Empires at last annihilated each other in the Rain of Colorless Flame and the Invoked Devastation, the Oeridians had already departed western Oerik, and begun their long conquest to the east.

In the area of the Flaness around the Yatil Mountains, the Oeridians ran into the Flan of historical Perrenland. In most parts of the continent the Oeridians had conquered quickly and fully; around the Yatils the results were very different. Despite being driven from some lowland territories, the Flan continued to dominate the bulk of the Yatil and Clatspur Mountains, absorbing the few Oeridian tribes that had penetrated that far, and successfully resisting the invaders who had overrun the lowlands. The result was an essentially pure Flan people in the mountains of Perrenland, and Oeridian tribes in the Feronwold and the lands around Schwarzenbruin, Traft, and Krestible.

The only significant Oeridian penetration into the mountains proper was around the Mounds of the Dawn. Here the Oeridians established their oldest city in the entire Flaness, Exag, meaning "Refuge" in Old Oeridian, their first home after fleeing the Suel and Bakluni. Many of the Dwarf survivors had lived a life of guerrilla attacks and hiding in tunnels and caves.

With the arrival of the Oeridians, some trade was arranged, the beleaguered Dwarves gladly trading raw minerals and gems for foodstuffs. Eventually the Oeridians convinced the Dwarves to craft for them a great city, on the ruins of the Flannae trading town named Exag. Many of the Dwarves remembered the Ur-Flanne and their fall, and so few magic's were used in the construction of the

city. Rather, Dwarven engineering was raised to a new level as the Dwarves, for the first time in centuries, were able to pursue their crafts in unbridled passion.

Time passed, and the competing Flan and Oeridians slowly developed a mixed culture, a culture that mostly embraced the better aspects of both. The Flan and Oeridians found they had much in common, and one of those common factors was a joint hatred of the Suel.

The Suel Imperium might have been destroyed, but several powerful houses had escaped, rich in magical might and hardened in warfare. The Suel saw themselves as the natural leaders and rulers of the Flaness, and followed their invasions with slavery, torture and dishonesty. Understandably, the Flan and Oeridians much preferred each other as neighbours than the Suel, and the two peoples of ancient Perrenland managed to work together sufficiently well to deny the Suel any foothold in the Yatils. The Dwarves worked along side their human allies, helping to repel the Suel.

The Bakluni were seen as an even greater threat. While a reasonable and generally honest people, the Bakluni's sheer numbers represented a direct threat to the way of life of Flan, Oeridian and Dwarf. And so they worked together, intermixing and learning from each other. More time passed. Flan raided Flan, Oeridian raided Oeridian and Flan and Oeridian raided each other on generally friendly terms. Slowly sixty or so mixed Flan/Oeridian tribes emerged throughout the Yatils, divided roughly into eight or so clans. Real unity among the clans was rare, however, except when external invaders threatened. And so it was for several centuries. The Dwarves, a broken people, eagerly sought the camaraderie of these Clans. The Vurrzwaard, Vosser and Moorgenrood Clans were especially welcome of their bearded ones. Many tried to fill the void left by the Curse by embracing the culture of the Clans.

The Dwarves traded equally with all the clans, quickly earning themselves a reputation as superior stone workers and miners. During this period, Gnomes began to arrive in the Yatils, joining the Dwarves in their efforts. The Dwarves found the Gnomes to be excellent negotiators, securing better trade deals for the miners.

For the first time in centuries, the Dwarves in the East and West of Perrenland began to communicate on a regular level. Ironically it was the expanding Oeridian and Flan tribes that enforced the communication, as trade deals were ratified by the Dwarves of both areas. The Dwarves continued their mining in the Quagfludt and Clatsburg areas to the East, and the Yatils to the West.

In the uttermost east the Flaness, the Oeridian tribe of the Aerdi was about to change the history of a still nascent country. The Aerdi had settled down centuries before and forged a kingdom. Centuries passed and the Kingdom of the Aerdi had become an Empire. The Empire grew, conquering almost all the continent. And about four hundred years ago the Empire reached the area that would become historical Perrenland.

The initial result was a quick domination of the region by the Empire. The years and then centuries that followed however were marked by a state of almost constant revolt. While the local Flan and Oeridians might have lacked the unity to prevent the incursion of the Empire, the Empire in turn lacked the men and material to consolidate its gains. Perrenland was a border province many thousands of miles from the capital of Rauxes, and the Empire had bigger fish to fry.

In spring and summer the Empire would send its taxmen and bailiffs into the Clatspurs and Yatils to collect their dues. In autumn those same persons would retreat to their walled towns while the local Flan and Oeridians reasserted control.

The mines of the Yatils and Clatspurs are rich in natural resource and precious metals. The Aerdi oversaw the operation of the mines, taking the bulk of the materials back to the workshops of the Great Kingdom. In this oppressive environment, the Oeridian and Flan workers formed tight bonds, sabotaging shipments, collapsing tunnels, and making small guerrilla attacks on the Aerdi. These were the conditions that lead to the formation of the Order of the Mine, by the Dwarf and Gnome miners.

In 254 CY, the Kingdom of Furyondy was declared and all across the western Flanaess the shackles of imperial rule were thrown off. The Furyondains were fair and reasonable rulers, yet still Perrenlanders wished to rule themselves. The Order of the Mine continued and thrived.

When Perren helped forge the Clans and Cantons into its own nation, the Order kept itself secret, yet it silently backed the new leader, assisting where it could. The Order modified its Oath to include the defence of the new country and its Clans.

In 480 CY, the Witch Queen Iggwilv enslaved Perrenland. The miners were worked in unsafe and terrifying camps. Once again the silent Order of the Mine worked as a guerrilla organization, defying the Witch Queen. However, many miners were killed in the poor conditions, or slain by the servants of Iggwilv. It was at this time that disaster struck. Agents of Iggwilv infiltrated the organization and its secrets were revealed. Most of the Order was hunted down and killed, its members forced into hiding.

When the threat of Iggwilv's humanoid armies was vanquished, the Order slowly rebuilt itself. However, the Order does not forget the betrayal and its members are now even more tightly bound to its secrets.

There is still tension between the Dwarves, but the unity forged during the years of Aerdi and Iggwilv oppression has gone far to build bridges. Recently, especially amongst the younger Dwarves, some speak in whispers of the prophecy and reclaiming the great city of the Dwarves and the breaking of the Curse of Beldarak.

**Terminology:**

1. *Beldarak* - Dwarven word for Treachery.
2. *Olhupe-Baraknoror* - translates Magical Horn that Shields from Enemies.
3. *Dunolorae Ilith* - translates Under all the world, this is the most golden and trustworthy place.
4. *Arau-Splendarr Ultok* - which translates Great Beautiful/Bright Meeting Place.