

An ancient empire in an even more ancient world, the Korachani empire stands as the yardstick by which other nations in the Inner Sea are measured.

At the peak of its power in 3000 RM, it was the largest Fifth Age empire ever to spread across the Inner Sea. Its ruler is the most infamous and chronicled otherworlder ever known. Its deity is the only known Demiurge to still be openly worshipped by a major power. It was an innovator of industry and technarcana, and its feats of engineering were inspired by the Great Acts of Shaping, from the *Bridge of Valamir*, to the *Bastion of Steel* in Khadon. Its language is possibly the most widely-spoken language in all of Elyden.

Rich in resources, and gifted with an idyllic climate for supporting the military campaigns that characterised the expansion of its early centuries, the Korachan of today could not be more different.

Its resources spent centuries ago, its lands rendered barren by millenia of exploitative farming and deforestation, Korachan survives today through the momentum of past conquests. Once opulent patrician houses exist now in the crumbling ruin of their ancestral lands. Its military, once the envy of the civilised world, has abandoned its elite vat-born clones in favour of cheaper, more-numerous, mortal troops.

Yet still the Korachani empire maintains its bitter grip over the Inner Sea, as its rivals - The Republic of Almagest to the North, the Reformed Empire of Sarastro to the South-East, and the Secular Republic of Parthis to the South-West - consolidate their positions around the Sea.

## **the Koracha Civilization**

From a Neolithic background centred around a popular fertility cult, the people of proto-Korachan, known as the Koracha, discovered iron as far back as c. -700 RM. The Koracha people were skilled craftsmen, already adept at creating alloys such as brass and working them into tools, weapons, and jewellery, and their discovery of iron came centuries before neighbouring people. As a contrast, take the city-states of the neighbouring Pelasgosi peninsula. Its people lived in extended familial groups with little other ties. In C. -500 RM, when Koracha was already intimate with iron, the people of Pelasgos and other surrounding lands were still in a bronze age culture.

The early development of iron gave the Koracha people many advantages: stronger weapons, better tools, the basis for a more efficient agricultural system and development of religious beliefs, granting it a stable foundation from which it could rise from many different tribes into a true nation.

Moving elsewhere, it is perhaps no small coincidence that around this time, the phenomenon called '*the Shadow in the Desert*' was growing more prominent in Kharkharadontis, showing a bulging in the strength of the Atramenta, boosting an already burgeoning mystical tradition in the Korachani peninsula, which would lead to the growth of the *Cheiroahim*, immigrant shapers who would, by the

time of Malichar's birth become rulers of the Korachani states.

Wealthy from trade along the Northern coast of the Inner Sea, the Koracha people became influential. Societies grew around a caste of merchant-lords who built strongholds that attracted more people, becoming by c. -300 RM the seven states of Korachani - Bachan, Caldera, Goradach, Palun, Khadon, Makhara, and Zephanichan.

The rise of the merchant-lords led to the emergence of a dichotomous religion that was the only common-ground for the increasingly belligerent states, which commonly faced each other in skirmishes over territorial rights. Already, the resource-stripping that would characterise the later Korachani empire was beginning to be felt, with the plentiful natural resources across the peninsula allowing for the rapid growth of the states.

The Koracha people traded with their neighbours as they expanded. This led to an inevitable spread of their secrets across Elyden. Over the next centuries the three great city-states of Almagest would emerge. In the West, the state of Aglaia would appear. In the East, Pelasgos was entering its Judiciary-age, and further East, the city-empire of Xanthos was expanding in extant Nárthel.

All grew in power over the next hundred years, rivalling Koracha.

## **The Odyssey of Malichar**

It was to this world of tension and trade that Malichar was born in -41 RM. The grandson of a merchant-lord, and second of three siblings, he was almost certainly well-schooled and literate in an age when few

were, of relative wealth, and, through his bloodline, in command of a merchant vessel. Tenured captains often lived dangerous lives, defending ships from pirates and other threats at sea.

In his eighteenth year (-23 RM) his ship was shipwrecked on the isle of Maleth, in the middle of the Inner Sea. The island features little in the history of the region, for it is largely barren, with no resources, its people descended from Fourth Age tribesmen.

Despite its lack of culture, the island plays an extremely important role in both mythohistory and the future politics of the Inner Sea, for it is home to the *Scripture of Shadows*: the collected visions of the Demiurges Dopellanich and Achaia, prophesizing the reunification of the plagi (the children of Rachanael) who, eons past had been divided by the Demiurge Talantehut into seven nations. It was believed that the prophecy pointed to one who would help reunite and lead the plagi.

Malichar was alone, without hope of rescue, and wandered the small island, finding a Neolithic temple in which was buried the *Scripture of Shadows*, guarded by a cadre of mystics, who saw him as one who may fulfil the prophecy. The mystics read to him from the book, and in it he saw the seven states of Korachan united by his hand.

## **The Unification of Korachan**

The influence of the *Cheiroahim* had increased in Malichar's absence, and he returned to a home that was much changed. The merchant-lords were their puppets, subordinate to the whims of the shapers, who had appropriated their lands and holdings as their own, living off of their profits.

Within months of returning home, Malichar had amassed a group of loyal followers, old allies of his house, though others also heeded his call. He worked silently, turning the extensive black market and smuggling cartels that had plagued the states to his own purpose. Publicly, he admonished the corruption of the *Cheiroahim*, though secretly he had come to admire the way they had gained power.

In -5 RM he discovered in a barrow in Bachan (one of the seven Korachani city-states) the relic shield he would later name Aegis. With this shield, and the sword Tartaruch, he successfully deposed the *Cheiroahim* in his home state of Khadon, which was quickly fortified against retaliation. War gripped the peninsula, with Khadon beset by the forces of the *Cheiroahim*. Later the same year, Malichar's forces were welcomed by dissenters into the state of Goradach, after which charges were levelled against him by the other states in a bid to turn the people

Thus were set into place events that would change the future of Elyden.

The island was attacked by slavers, who slew the mystics, taking what few natives lived there as their prize. Malichar was amongst them. Taken to Vaalk, he was sold as a slave, then six years later, a gladiator. Over the next ten years he carved out a successful career in the arena and escaped in a revolt of his devising in -7 RM, slaying his owners. He fled, taking the road back to Korachan, forsaking its two-faced god of Life and Death. Instead, he dreamt of another entity, one he could not name or place.

In the wilderness of Vaalk he found the sword Tartaruch, which he carried until his mortal death in 133 RM, and again following his rebirth as an otherworlder. He was visited by the otherworlder Neaishia, who foretold of great wars that would, in the settling of their dust, unite the tribes of the Inner Sea under the single banner of his house.

He successfully made his way back to Korachan, where his rebirth as Archpotentate would begin.

against him. Most expected him to ignore this and continue in his campaign, but he walked into their court in the city of Caldera and stood trial, challenging them, confident that their laws and rituals would keep him safe. Amazingly, he won, and some now say that he used shaping to influence the decision of the court.

Walking free on condition that the war end, he continued working with the merchant-lords against heavy taxes and united the remaining states against the remaining *Cheiroahim*. He deposed them finally in -2 RM, after storming into their temple and executed their leaders and forcing their families to choose between following him or exile. Fully half their families left Korachan in exodus, eventually settling in Skaros and Almagest. Those who remained became subservient to Malichar, who was made Archpotentate of the united Korachan in 1 RM, under a new calendar devised by the Scholar Maccabeus.

His final act against the old regime was the toppling of the high temple of Life and Death, signifying a new beginning for the peninsula. With his crowning, dawned the Age of Steel and the birth of the Korachani empire in Elyden. Thus was born the nation of Korachan.

## **The Age of Steel; the conquest of the Seven Tribes and the Subjugation of the Inner Sea.**

Malichar's coronation brought great change. Industry, already a part of Korachani life, was promoted, as was trade as far afield as possible. Malichar, born and

raised in a merchant family, knew the meaning of money and the power that wealth brought with it.

The old merchant-families would go on to become the patrician houses that make up today's nobility. Half their earnings were taken by the empire, and still they prospered. All land was seized by the empire and doled out to sycophants who had the strength to maintain them, demanding tithes and taxes from the commoners. Though harsh, his rule fomented growth and hard-earned prosperity, and those who lived true lives lived well. Conversely, those who broke laws were made examples of the few who would follow.

After abolishing worship of the two-faced god of Life and Death, Malichar would promote worship of an abstract entity known as the Iron Deity. Embodying the industry of his new empire, the Church of the Iron Deity attracted members from the heart of the empire - labourers, merchants, and industrialists alike.

Malichar's Empire was ruthlessly policed, and free-thinkers were chastised, as were shapers - both Firmamentists and Atramentists. In 3 RM the Iron Guard was founded to defend the state of Khadon, and it grew rapidly following his subjugation of the peninsula. This force was well-funded, and was amongst the first institutions to don full plate armour when it came into fashion. The group would later spawn the Borderguard and the Censors, who continued enforcing the empire's harsh laws.

Treaties were made with Azazem, forcing it deals it could scarcely afford, though Korachani influence within its court ensured the fulfilment of such agreements.

Malichar launched an attack on Laaskha in 4 RM, appointing the Tyrant of Balaam as general of the campaign. Many thought his actions were too rash, that he was better-off consolidating the new empire. But political agreements with Azazem bore fruit in 7RM, when it was forced into conflict with Laaskha, enabling Korachan to continue in its increasing monopoly of trade in the East of the Inner Sea.

By 11 RM, Malichar's manipulation of Azazemi politics was complete, and it became a puppet of the empire, though remained independent in a move that was uncharacteristic of the leader. Malichar's full acquisition of Azazem enabled his lieutenants to concentrate on the war from there as he ruled Korachan and oversaw the spread of the Church of the Iron Deity. It was around this time that the insular Demiurnes appeared from the distant south, becoming caretakers of the Iron Deity's churches. Few outside Malichar's circle of confidantes understood their purpose, though they were not only tolerated, but treated with great respect by Malichar, who claimed them to be the children of the Iron Deity.

In 15 RM, Laaskha fell, becoming the second nation to fall to Korachan, though even as the Tyrant of Balaam was instated as Lord of Laaskha, Malichar was already turning his attentions to the growing numbers of halfbloods and otherworlders that had appeared in the empire. In them he saw a threat to his new Church and began planning a crusade against their

kind, entrusting its planning and execution to the Church itself.

As the empire fortified Laaskhan industries, it turned its sights across the Sea, South, to Vaalk. Subterfuge and planning began as early as 14 RM, with military actions opening in 17 RM, capitalising on the internal turmoil its spies had caused. The war was bloody and brutal, leaving many Vaalkan cities in ruins. Malichar, believing he was fulfilling part of the prophecy from the *Scripture of Shadows*, led from the front, becoming a hero. Vaalk was defeated on the eve of the 20th year of the Imperial calendar, becoming the third nation taken by the Empire, though its heart remained strong, with unrest taking decades to quell.

Even as the dust of war settled and the Iron Guard set its roots in Vaalk, the Church of the Iron Deity busied itself with its first genocide of the so-called false races, in what became the first of many Anthropeidos Crusades, engulfing most Vaalkan cities until 23 RM, leaving it devoid of halfbloods and otherworlders. This crusade spawned another great war at the centre of which was the Iron Deity - the Scourge of Icons, where the religions of nations outside the empire were targeted and attacked in a bloody period that lasted until around 500 RM.

Seemingly without pause, the empire once again turned north to Skaros. In a great naval battle that lasted three days and nights, the Skarosian fleet was crippled, leaving its lands open to occupation. Three months later Skaros fell to the armies of the empire, its entire nobility killed in a night of unbridled bloodshed, in which Malichar dealt many a killing blow. It was in this war that Malichar was recognised as being a great shaper, nullifying his great age - though he was in his 64th year, he acted as a man half his age. The Church attributed his vigor to his favour with the Iron Deity, further strengthening its position across the Inner Sea.

The last fragments of the resisting Maorate were destroyed or assimilated by the Imperial government in Vaalk. It seemed then that a time of peace would follow, but the Archpotentate Malichar would not rest. Exploration of lands surrounding the empire increased, and trade garnered with newly discovered nations and peoples. The coffers of the empire grew, allowing for the creation of a central trade network and well-guarded highways between its nations. Azazem became known as the *Garden of the Empire* in this time, providing most of the empire's food within its vast fields.

But peace was not to last.

Seeing the lull in Imperial growth as a sign of weakness, the Tyrant of Balaam defected from Malichar's rule in 26 RM, rallying support in Laaskha and Skaros, amongst others. The conflict that followed became known as the *Balaamite Heresy* and ended in 30 RM with the death of the Tyrant following a shaping duel with Malichar, restoring Laaskha to Imperial rule.

Imperial pioneers explored Karakhas and the maddening depths of Carceri in this time, their

missionaries spreading word of the Iron Deity as they went. Construction of the Basilica of the Snake was completed in Korachan in 27 RM, a momentous occasion for the Church of the Iron Deity, centralising the church's rule.

Manufactories grew around the empire, as did use of the Atramenta amongst the upper classes, as patricians competed amongst themselves for the favour of Malichar. Trade with other nations increased with Imperial productivity, driving prices down. Many influential Korachani families set roots in major ports around the Inner Sea, and beyond, securing relations with foreign nations, and sowing the seeds for future expansion.

In the south, explorers penetrated the Umbra Sokhar and crossed the Moloth Khammothul mountains into the wastes of Kharkharadontis. The Atramental phenomenon known as *the Shadow in the Desert* was first documented here in c. 50 RM and many heathen tribes, as well as corrupted creatures and ancient ruins, were discovered. Though countless explorers died of exposure to the Atramenta, Malichar insisted that the southern continent continue to be explored.

Exocrines and settlers explored Varr in this time, clashing with natives even as Karakhas was settled by immigrants between 50 – 70 RM. Clashes with locals over territory and resources were common, though by the end of the period a degree of integration occurred, mostly enforced by the superior military of the empire. The cults of Khar'illae that were first discovered in Karakhas during this time, and various attempts to quell them through censors and iconoclasts failed.

The Atramenta became a major resource by c. 200 RM; one of the few that was not readily traded. The art of Atramental shaping became inimical to Imperial growth and survival and demand increased with the number of practitioners. As use of the Atramenta

gained a foothold in the empire, birth defects were also noted to increase.

Following decades of squabbling between the Pelasgosi City-states, Malichar took action in 73 RM and moved east across the Sea of Lemas, sweeping across dozens of city states, as his navy blockaded others to the South. Within 3-months most of the major city-states were subjugated or destroyed, though resistance in the east remained for some months. By the end of 73 RM Korachani rule was fully-implemented and a capital established in Octira.

The next decade was one of consolidation, where an imperial infrastructure was established in Pelasgos. In this time trade East increased, ranging as far as Hara (today in the Haréshk) and Ahrishen, but Malichar would not rest until the prophecy was fulfilled and in 82 RM he attacked the twin nations of Nárthel and Lyridia.

Following just under two years of war, the lord of Nárthel abdicated in 84 RM, opening the doors of his palace to Malichar. Nárthel was subsequently occupied and assimilated by the empire, but following his victory, the Achpotentate disappeared.

In Lyridia, the augur's troops counterattacked Korachani forces, leading to the seven-day war, which it lost. Many of its people fled east into Ahrishen and Saua following this time, however, Malichar's disappearance had thrown the Korachani armies into disarray and they were only able to hold on to the West of Lyridia, which would become known as Lyridia Dhai - *New Lyridia*, in the Korachani tongue.

The Prophecy of the *Scripture of Shadows* was fulfilled – seven tribes (Korachan, Azazem, Laaskha, Vaalk, Skaros, Pelasgos, and Nárthel) united – but its champion was nowhere to be seen. For the first time since its creation, over 8-decades past, Korachan was without its titanic leader.

## **Reign of the Empty Throne**

The Consulite, Malichar's chief advisor, founded the Council of Seven in 84 RM, made up of the rulers of the seven Korachani nations to act as rulers in the Archpotentate's absence. However, roughly a year before his disappearance, the Archpotentate appointed a powerful shaper, known as Ruggorath, as his proxy in Khadon.

There was much politicking in the capital as to who should rule. There was much resentment towards the shaper, who was thought unfit for the job, and there were unsuccessful attempts on his life, even as different power-groups within the capital wrestled for control.

Today he is most infamous for the construction of the Bridge of Valamir. The story follows thusly: after a particularly trying meeting between him, The Seven, and the Consulite, he was called out for being unable to rule, and that the people would only follow him if

he could walk across the Bay of Gress, implying that it would never happen.

Taking the insult as a challenge, he ordered the construction of a massive bridge spanning the steep sides of the bay. It was a monumental task that took decades to accomplish. Ironically, Ruggorath disappeared under suspicious circumstances in 105 RM, before the bridge was completed. By that point so much money and resources had been pumped into his project that construction continued, finally completed 12-years later, upon which point it became a major route connecting the disparate sides of Southern Korachan.

Outside of the machinations within the court, the rule of Ruggorath was relatively stable, lasting 22 years until his disappearance. Blame for his disappearance was placed upon many groups, though a true culprit could never be found.







Ruggorath's death brought chaos on a scale unseen since the dawn of the empire. Lords and Patricians vied for power, with various groups laying claim, no matter how flimsy, to the Throne. There was fighting in the capital as gangs loyal to varying power-groups clashed, with the Iron Guard barely managing to maintain control. The Church of the Iron Deity imposed its own structure upon the city of Khadon even as The Seven slowly regained control of the Korachani peninsula, whilst struggling to maintain their grip of the subjugated nations.

This period of unease lasted until 133 RM, when Two Patrician families - houses Olon and Croton - declared open war against each other after decades of shadow-warfare. Their actions would later name this period as the Throne Wars. Other houses, not to mention merchant conglomerates, rogue generals and wealthy magnates eventually joined in the fray. Those loyal to Malichar and the empire managed to maintain control, but various figures and groups were able to wrest control at different times, never successfully holding on to power for long.

Largely responsible for deposing them was an independent group in Pelasgos, headed by triplet daughters of Malichar and other powerful individuals who remained loyal to the empire above their personal gain. In 203 RM the group would become known as the Throne Warders, and they remain amongst the

Archpotentate Malichar's most trusted guards. Despite their actions, faith in Malichar and the Church waned in this period and heretical religions and cults became prevalent - endocrines and the private forces of the Church of the Iron Deity worked hard to keep these cults in check, but they were outnumbered, and the cults continued to spread like rot, undermining the church, drawing warbands and fanatics loyal to the Church and cults joining in the chaos.

Outside the Korachani peninsula, nations revolted against the imperial occupation - this was most felt in Karakhas, where imperial forces were largely united against the oppressed populace.

In 205 RM another group, now known as the Quintai, began manipulating events within and without the empire. By stalling the expansion of the empire's borders during this time they were able to stabilise its politics and economy, which had been struggling in the absence of Malichar.

In 331 RM Malichar was reborn as an otherworlder in Kharkharadnotis and worked to release the Demiurge Rachanael from a subterranean prison and, through the help of irothani technarcianists, was able to return him to power in Daekyn in 339 RM. Following this he returned to Khadon and reclaimed the throne, ending the Reign of the Empty Throne, and cementing Rachanael's position as the true Iron Deity.

## The Papal Heresy

In 1190 RM cardinal Avienus Hateh became pope, taking on the name Asiel III. Under his aegis the Church of the Machine was reformed, and attitudes towards non-humans were radicalized, regressing to a level of xenophobia unseen since the time of the Anthropeidos Crusades, almost a millennium earlier.

Malichar was missing, and The Seven were busy controlling an empire that stretched across the Inner Sea. In the span of a year non-human mortals became persecuted across the empire, with most actions of aggression against them taking place in the forested North of Korachan, beyond the Rhaecha mountains, which were known for their large dverg. Driven out of their homes, they were forced to live in the hinterlands between settled areas. Others were hunted by the Iron Guard and ruthless opportunists, eventually forced out of the empire's borders completely.

The dvergai fortified their new home in the North of Korachan, building deep warrens, where they returned to the ancient ways of their people, revering the chthonic world and its guardian, the Demiurge Synchthonith. The human inhabitants of the region did not take kindly to this, and took up arms against them. The dvergai only wanted a new home. Driven so far from their birthplace, they defended themselves against the attackers. There were losses on both sides.

In the millennium since its founding the Church of the Machine had become a monolithic entity with

influence in a dozen nations, and millions of faithful that followed the words of their religious leaders. Asiel III affected reforms, stripping power from the dioceses around the empire, taking it for himself, making Khadon the centre of the church.

Tithes were collected from parishioners, most of which went into his own pockets and those of his allies - powerful patricians and members of the imperial government - in return for favours that saw him become the most powerful man in the empire.

Pope Asiel III made further changes to the church, all of which were in his interest. By 1213 RM all minorities, including humans, were persecuted and enslaved, set to work in the industries of his allies. At the behest of the church, imperial embassies were closed outside the empire's borders, isolating the empire from other nations abroad.

Asiel III's changes to the church has its opponents, many of them within the church itself. These dissenters were sent to far flung colonies and territories where they would be less of a threat. Patricians who did not pledge allegiance to him were stripped of their titles and lands. Church and state were truly one as they never had been before and thousands were executed.

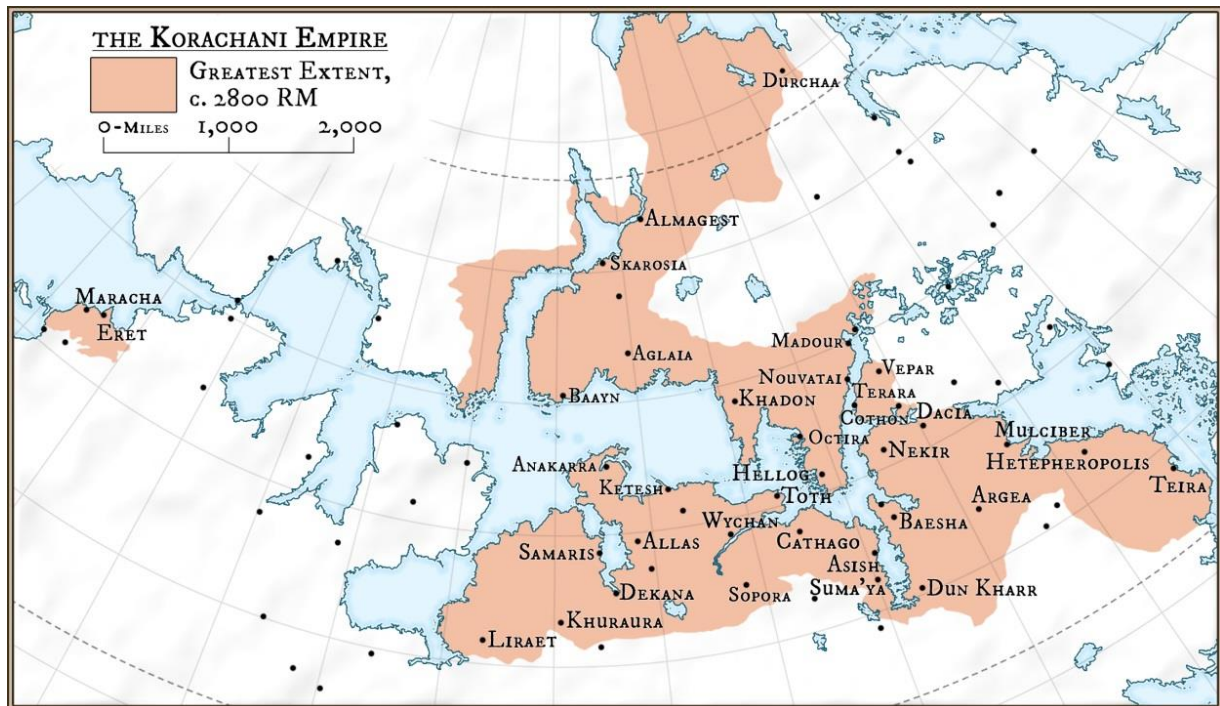
Asiel III became paranoid, fearing that he would lose his power. He never left his chambers, ate only food that had been tasted for him, and never allowed

himself to be alone, though he feared betrayal by his guards at every moment.

He died a wreck in 1217 RM, his body wasted, his mind plagued by paranoia. He left behind a church that was fractured and a nation on the brink of collapse. His successor, pope Angelus IV, was a traditionalist, appointed to assuage the fears of an empire by the

Archpotentate Malichar himself, who was drawn forth from his ennui by the death of Aseliel III.

He was pope for close to 100-years, and under his leadership normalcy was returned to the empire. With the blessing of the Malichar, the North of Korachan was gifted to the dvergai and all other displaced peoples, becoming known as the nation of Chthyrid, effectively ending the Papal Heresy.



## The War of the Artifexes

Tensions in the administrative hierarchy of the empire began to show between 2940 - 2960 RM. The Edict of Nicaea in 2746 RM left many patrician houses weakened, and dwindling resources in the empire began to manifest in its waning economy and industries. Indeed, many regions in the heart of the empire had already been bled dry centuries before, for instance Azazem. Once regarded as the so-called garden of the empire, Azazem had been reduced to a lifeless dustbowl through deforestation and mismanaged agriculture. Prices of raw materials increased, and the empire was beginning to tax certain industries to maintain revenue, taxing already struggling industries.

The civil conflict that would later become known as the War of the Artifex originated as a series of trade disputes and conflicts in Almagest, spreading later to Skaros, Durchar, Asibaia and Azazem. Embargoes slowly increased, and by the end of the third millennium RM clashes in warehouses, depots and marketplaces across the empire increased, with the Red Route becoming host to many armies and private

forces that preyed on caravans transporting raw materials.

By 2997 RM the charismatic *Lord Antitheos*; the halfblooded *paterfamilia* of House Artifex based in Almagest, was leading a large group of patricians and industrialists, who made various demands of the empire, all of which were denied.

The Korachani administration was facing unrest in its major cities as food shortages became more common. Battles along the Red Route between the patrician's armies and imperial forces increased, and by 3001 had escalated into outright war, with the imperial siege of patrician-controlled *Viranul* in Azazem ended with the razing of the city and the fortifying of its citadel which became head of the imperial armies throughout the conflict.

Most battles were fought at sea in the *Strait of Skaros*, where Parthis became an ally of the dissenting parties, though land conflicts remained common along the Red Route, particularly at the borders of Azazem and Asibaia. By 3003 RM Almagest had been completely swayed to the side of the patricians, and it

declared its intentions of leaving the empire if a solution could not be reached.

As conflict raged across *Llachatul*, dissent inevitably reached some Sammaean states. This reached a crux in Karakhas, where another civil conflict, later known as the Blood Heterodoxies, would engulf the nation for close to five centuries.

The war was finally decided in 3014 RM following a massive battle outside Almagest, near the Asibaian border in *Samihual*, ending what had become a war of attrition. Both sides were left devastated by the prolonged conflict, with Almagest pressuring against Korachan, threatening many of its cities.

## **The Sarastroan Sanction**

The loss of Almagest in 3014 RM is now considered to be the marker after which the empire's golden age was to considerably wane.

It had ceased most attempts at expansion outside of small colonial efforts in the East of Meniscea. Indeed, its borders were collapsing as beleaguered Iron Guard and Imperial armies struggled to defend its cities and borders, respectively. Many of its territories had been lost, not least of which was the industrial centre of Almagest.

The loss of Almagest was a terrible blow that left Korachan weakened, its trade and industry along the Strait of Skaros lost, its armies battered. The following centuries were a long struggle, with dissent in Sammaea, particularly Karakhas, plaguing it. News of such uprisings was suppressed by the Minasteria of Censors, in a bid to quell any form of unrest across the empire, though inevitably news would make its way across imperial territories, albeit slowly. This would foment further unrest, which would, in time, lead to further calamities, amongst which was the Sarastroan Sanction.

This controversial authorisation was proclaimed by the Archpotentate Malichar himself in 3103 RM, in the

## **The Blood Heterodoxies**

Though word of the civil war known as the War of the Artifexes was slow to reach Sammaea, the censors could not completely stifle the spread of news there. When news of the war did arrive in Karakhas, a land already known for the general dissent of its populace, the people rose against the imperial occupiers there, beginning what became known as the Blood Heterodoxies.

Though the Korachani military might was concentrated in the North at the time, the escalating dissent in Karakhas necessitated the diversion of forces. A single Steel Legion was moved there in 2973 RM to police the region alongside the long-beleaguered Iron Guard corps. Martial law was declared in 2976 RM after which public executions

This forced Korachan into signing the *Almagesti treaty*, which left Almagest as a free nation.

Though House Artifex was left devastated by the conflict, it rose in the next decades to a position of great power in Almagest and, by 3096 RM became the main governing body of what became the Republic of Almagest and annexed Northern *Skaros* by 3137 RM and much of the Korachani territory of *Durchaa* by 3204 RM. Almagest was prouder that it had ever been, venturing West and North into the *Black Mountains* in the search for resources, knowing that the empire could never ignore it as a threat again.

ruler of Sarastro, Sathep the Risen was granted complete autonomy over Sarastro, *Zion*, Northern Ba'akh, as well as territories immediately South of the *Haagen mountain*, in return for its armies and military forces, which would fall under the control of *Korachan*. Also, Malichar promised *Sathep* that should he honour his obligations for at least two centuries, he would in turn begin to share with the *Saostanan Dynasties Atramental* secrets, which had not even been shared with his own people.

In *Khadon*, *The Council of Seven* and the *League of Patricians* opposed the *Sanction*, calling it folly for *Korachan* to willingly hand over territory to a steward as powerful as *Sathep*, so soon after the devastating losses of the *War of the Artifexes*, in which Almagest, the N of *Skaros* and *Durchaa* were lost.

In c. 3800 RM, following inaction from the Archpotentate Malichar, *The Seven* attempted to wrest control of *Zion* from *Sarastro*; though after a century-and-a-half of sporadic conflict, their hopes were abandoned to the more pressing needs of the fragmenting empire.

and torturing became common-place. Most opposition ceased at that point, though at the cost of the people's freedom. The single regiment of the Steel Legion, known as the 'Anvil of Steel', was stretched thin, its resources barely managing with containing the populations' emotions, which were always close to boiling point.

A large part of the regiment defected in the city of *Lateritia*, burning its imperial banners and joining the masses. In a short and largely bloodless coup in 3103 RM, the defectors won control of the city, fortifying the West of the nation, subjugating the surrounding lands and gathering their people against the imperial might.



This occurred during the height of the War of the Artifexes, which had engulfed the North of Korachan. The empire's troops were mired in a protracted conflict against Almagest, and it could not afford to redirect more troops to the unrest in Karakhas. The defected region was allowed to fester, its manufactories producing more troops and equipment, allowing it to expand West into Tartak and East into Karakhas, where it gained the support of Lateritian tribes, who joined their cause and repopulated 'liberated' cities.

During this time, the biomechanists and technarcianists of Khuraur were ordered to alter the biologies of the new Legionnaires produced, to allow them to reproduce with humans. This process was largely discouraged elsewhere due to the difficulties in producing stable offspring, but Khuraur was partially successful, with around 15% of offspring born to a legionnaire parent being healthy simulacra of their male father, minus occlusions. As the original

generation of Legionnaires lessened in numbers due to war, these new-born so-called 'freemen' were raised to be a noble caste who could breed true; their descendants the future rulers of Khuraur.

Khuraur prospered under the old Legionnaire's leadership, the fertile lands around it cultivated, one manufactory converted to the production of food; its people were well-fed and content, trading technology with Tartak and Jurras, which both prospered for a time.

In 3243 RM, Korachan dispatched three newly-created legions South with the sole purpose of securing Karakhas and Khuraur. All-out war had engulfed Karakhas by 3245 RM, with Parthis aiding Khuraur. The conflict was bloody, with territories changing hands many times, and Korachan withdrew with the signing of the Covenant of Khuraur in 3478 RM, leaving Karakhas smaller and fractured in three – two Korachani states and Khuraur; a free nation that would in 3752 RM become a vassal to Parthis.

## **The Sundering of the Empire**

Possibly the most important and consequential event in Korachani history, the Sundering of the Empire that happened in 3705 RM saw it divided in two distinct entities – the High Empire of Korachan to the North of the Inner Sea, in Llachatul; and the Reformed Empire of Sarastro, to the South of the Inner Sea, in Sammaea.

This schism took place after a period of strife that began in c. 3562 RM, when the Archpotentate Malichar withdrew into the Bastion of Steel in a prolonged instance of ennui. This led to a time where the empire was under the control of The Seven, many members of which were corrupt and interested in accruing personal power over the stability and potential growth of the empire.

Without the borders of the empire, other nations and empires were becoming more powerful. To the North-West Almagest solidified its position as an industrial power. To the South-West Parthis had a long history of meddling in the affairs of the Korachani empire, aiding its foes whilst remaining neutral in larger conflicts. To the South, Sathep was growing more confident in the wake of the Sarastroan Sanction, his armies and slavers becoming more daring in the targets of their raids. To the East, Venthir, still a protectorate of Korachan, and its ruler, the Sphinx Queen Hetepheres, grew jealous of what Malichar had done to Sarastro, and were making more demands of the Archpotentate, who, once more, was nowhere to be seen.

Korachan was surrounded by foes, each of which had managed its resources more responsibly, or which were not over-extended.

Between 3640 and 3672 RM, Sathep inserted agents within Korachani cities South of the Inner Sea in an effort to destabilise the regions. This was easy in Karakhas, which was perpetual tinderbox, ready to

blow. Some of these spies were apprehended, leading Korachan to tighten its borders with Sarastroan-controlled lands. Sanctions were levelled against Sarastro in 3674 RM, crippling its trade. This was not without its effects on Korachan, which lost on some valuable resources, but The Seven needed to punish Sathep for his brazenness - after all, he was still a subject of the Korachani empire.

Hetepheres, seeing the empire chastise Sarastro, took action, moving against Sarastro, defiant of commands from Korachan to remain neutral. Sarastro saw this aggression as an abandonment of treaties that were in place between the three nations and the major powers in the Korachani empire, and responded against Venthir in force, attacking all Venthiri trade across the Strait of Nárthel, instating its own merchant houses along the strait, anticipating its silting in the next century.

The Seven had squandered much of the empire's riches on expensive mercenary forces and other extravagances they could not afford, were not in a position to fight Sarastro whilst trying to manage the belligerent actions of Hetepheres. With little option, Korachan gave Hetepheres free reign over her actions against Sarastro. This led to open war along the Sarastroan/Venthiri border, which forced Sarastro to dedicate its full attentions to the East, allowing Korachan a reprieve to collect its forces in preparation for outright war.

This propagated a series of responses between the three powers, escalating over the next years in a 2-year civil war starting in 3703 RM that is now known as the War of Sundering. This war impacted the Church of the Machine, which by then was showing signs of internal fracture itself, eventually splitting into two denominations - the Church of the Undying Machine,

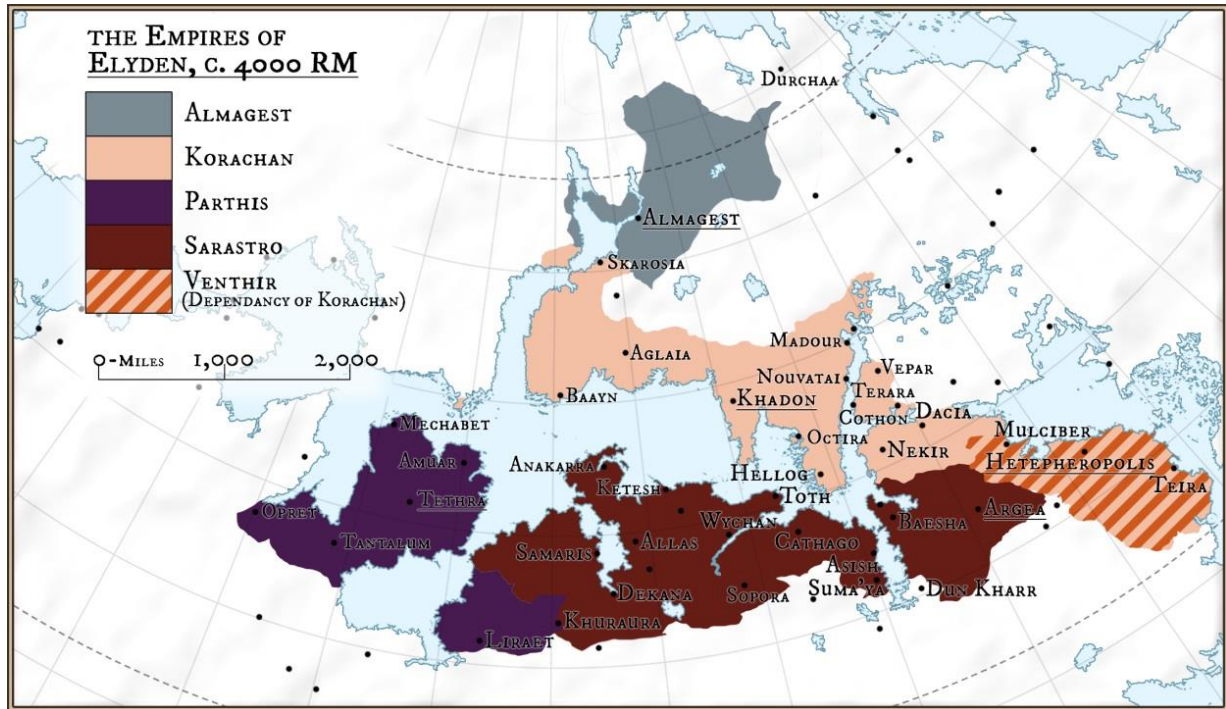
based in Llachatul; and the Reformed Church of the Machine, which was starting to gain popularity in Sarastro and which would become its official religion following the Sundering in 3705 RM.

Like the church, the imperial government, was fractured, with four of The Seven wanting to maintain a united Korachan that included Sarastro and Venthir, and three, wanting Sarastro cut lose. There was

squabbling in the capital, even as the Korachani fleet took the war to Sarastro.

When a cease-fire was agreed to late in 3705 RM, all three nations were broken, both literally and figuratively. Korachan was truly a sundered nation, with over half of its territories lost. Any dreams of returning to its former glories were lost.

And so began the slow fading of the empire.



## A Timeline of The Korachani Empire

- c. -700 RM - the people of the Koracha master the secrets of iron
- c. -500 RM - the '*Shadow in the Desert*' expands in Kharkharadontis. This leads to the appearance of the *Cheiroahim* in Koracha: immigrant shapers who would gain influence due to their shaping powers
- c. -300 RM - the seven states of Korachani - Bachan, Caldera, Goradach, Palun, Khadon, Makhara, Zephanichan - emerge
- 41 RM - birth of Malichar
- 23 RM - Malichar is shipwrecked on isle of Maleth, finds the *Scripture of Shadows*
- 20 RM - Maleth is attacked by slavers, who take Malichar
- c. -20 RM - the Cheiroahim gain influence in Korachan, becoming its rulers
- 13 RM - Malichar becomes a gladiator
- 7 RM - Malichar escapes slavery
- 6 RM - Malichar finds the Sword Tartaruch in Vaalk and returns to Korachan, amassing followers
- 5 RM - Malichar finds the shield Aegis in a barrow
- 4 RM - Malichar deposes the Cheiroahim in Khadon, bringing war to Korachan
- 3 RM - the Cheiroahim try Malichar for treason. He is acquitted, though is suspected of using shaping to manipulate the verdict
- 2 RM - Malichar destroys the temple of God of Life and Death, exiling the Cheiroahim
- 1 RM - Malichar is made Potentate of a united Korachan. The Maccabean calendar is devised in honour of his exploits.
- 1 - 100 RM - industry is promoted in Korachan. The old merchant families of Korachan become patrician houses, many of which remain to this day
- Worship of the so-called Iron Deity is enforced by Malichar and his disciples
- 3 RM - the Iron Guard is founded and to defend Korachan
- Treaties are made with Azazem, forcing into an alliance with Korachan
- 4 RM - Korachan attacks Laaskha. The Tyrant of Balaam is appointed general
- 7 RM - Azazem is forced into war with Laaskha
- 11 RM - the nation of **Azazem** is annexed by Korachan
- The church of the Iron Deity spreads to Azazem
- 14 RM - Korachan begins planting spies in Vaalk
- 15 RM - **Laaskha** falls to Korachani armies
- 17 RM - Korachan attacks Vaalk
- 19 RM - Korachan defeats **Vaalk** on the eve of 20 RM.
- 23 RM - **Skaros** is taken by Korachan following a 3-day naval engagement
- The first of the Anthropeidos Crusades is launched against halfbloods in Vaalk.
- 23 - c. 500 RM - the Scourge of Icons. Korachan attacks all religions, enforcing worship of the Iron Deity.
- c. 25 RM - imperial pioneers explore lands without Korachani borders
- 26 - 30 RM - the Tyrant of Balaam defects, commencing the Balaamite Heresy, that would engulf Laaskha and Skaros for 5-years. He is killed by Malichar
- 27 RM - the Basilica of the Snake is completed in Khadon

- c. 30 RM - Korachani explorers first discover the inexplicable caverns of Carceri
- c.50 RM - the *'Shadow in the Desert'* is first documented by Korachani explorers, who begin studying the effects of the Atramenta
- c. 50 - 70 RM - Korachani colonists settle in Karakhas
- 73 RM - Malichar marches against **Pelasgos**, taking it within 3-months
- 82 RM - Malichar attacks the twin nations of Nárthel and Lyridia.
- 83 RM - Malichar secretly grants the shaper Ruggorath executive powers, should anything ever happen to him
- 84 RM - **Nárthel** is taken  
Malichar disappears, causing havoc in the empire  
The Consulite founds the Council of Seven, colloquially known as The Seven, to rule in Malichar's stead
- 84 - 339 RM - reign of the Empty Throne in Korachan
- 105 RM - Ruggorath is found dead under suspicious circumstances, bringing chaos to the empire
- 117 RM - the Bridge of Valamir is completed in Korachan. It will be remembered as Ruggorath's folly
- 133 RM - Houses Olon and Croton openly fight in Khadon as they both lay claim to the throne.
- c. 200 RM - the Atramenta becomes a valuable resource in the empire, and its people become expert shapers
- 203 RM - the Throne Warders are founded in Pelasgos by daughters of Malichar, who ensure that the throne remains empty
- 205 RM - the Quintai begin manipulating events to ensure that the empire remains safe
- 331 RM - Malichar is reborn as an otherworlder in Kharkharadontis, releasing the Demiurge Rachanael from his prison in Daekyn
- 339 RM - construction of the Leaden Throne is completed in Daekyn, restoring life to Rachanael  
Malichar returns to Korachan
- 1190 RM - cardinal Avienus Hateh becomes pope taking on the name Asieliel III
- the Church of the Machine was reformed. Xenophobia increases becoming rampant. Minorities are persecuted.
- 1190 - 1195 RM - dvergai are displaced by Korachani radicalism, settling the rough plateau in the far North of Korachan
- 1213 RM - all minorities within the empire are persecuted and enslaved, set to work in the industries of his pope Asieliel III's allies  
Imperial embassies were closed outside the empire's borders, isolating the empire from other nations abroad
- 1217 RM - pope Asieliel III dies a broken man, leaving behind a fractured church and an empire broken from within  
Pope Angelus IV is appointed by Malichar to nullify the damage caused by Asieliel III
- c. 2000 - Azazem is reduced to a lifeless dustbowl through deforestation and mismanaged agriculture
- C. 2500 - 3000 RM - resources in the Korachani empire begin to dwindle. Prices of raw materials increased, certain industries are taxed
- 2746 RM - the Edict of Nicaea
- 2940 - 2960 RM - tensions in Korachan lead to unrest amongst various patrician houses in Almagest which were left weakened by the Edict of Nicaea
- c. 2945 - 3478 RM - the Blood Heterodoxies in Karakhas
- 2973 RM - a single Steel Legion is moved to Karakhas to police the region against growing dissent and religious heresies
- 2976 RM - martial law is declared in Karakhas.
- 2997 RM - the charismatic *Lord Antitheos, paterfamilia* of House Artifex is leading a large group of patricians and industrialists against imperial sanctions in Almagest  
War along the Red Route in Korachan
- 3001 RM - civil war between Korachan and major patrician houses. Almagest remains neutral, doing the bare minimum dictated by Korachan in the war
- 3003 RM - Almagest's hand is forced and it enters the war, siding with the patricians, hoping to gain independence
- 3014 RM - following a massive battle outside Almagest, the Treaty of Almagest is signed leaving Almagest as a free nation
- 3096 RM - house Artifex rises to become the main governing body of the Republic of Almagest
- 3103 RM - the Sarastroan Sanction grants Sathep the Risen the territories of Zion and Northern Ba'akh in return for control of his armies
- A part of the Steel Legion regiment guarding the West of Karakhas defects. In a short and largely bloodless coup in 3103 RM, the defectors won control of the region, leading to the founding of Khuraur
- 3137 - 3204 RM - almagest annexes Northern *Skaros*, and much of the Korachani territory of Durchaa
- 3243 RM - Korachan dispatches three newly-created Steel Legions South with the sole purpose of securing Karakhas and Khuraur
- 3243 - 3478 RM - all-out war engulfs Karakhas, with Parthis aiding Khuraur.
- 3478 RM - the signing of the Covenant of Khuraur brings peace to a smaller Karakhas, with Khuraur an independent nation
- 3562 RM, - the Archpotentate Malichar withdraws into the Bastion of Steel, forcing The Seven into leading the empire. Many amongst The Seven are later found to be corrupt
- 3640 - 3672 RM - Sathep the Risen inserts agents within Korachani cities South of the Inner Sea in an effort the destabilise the regions.
- 3674 RM - sanctions are levelled against Sarastro, crippling its trade
- 3674 - 3681 RM - Hetepheres moves against Sarastro, defiant of commands from Korachan to remain neutral. Sarastro responds with force, blaming Korachan for abandoning treaties that were in place between the three nations
- 3703 - 3705 RM - the War of Sundering between Korachan, Sarastro and Venthir. This war leaves the Church of the Machine fractured
- 3705 RM - the Sundering of the Korachani empire into two - the High Empire of Korachan to the North of the Inner Sea, in Llachatul; and the Reformed Empire of Sarastro, to the South of the Inner Sea, in Sammaea
- 3752 RM - Khuraur becomes a vassal to Parthis.
- c. 3800 - 3950 RM - following inaction from the Archpotentate Malichar, The *Seven* unsuccessfully attempt to wrest control of Zion from *Sarastro*

