



HISTORY & POLITICS OF THE TOWERS OF MAGIC

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The History

1. Foreward

One in a known location in the heart of the mountains of Aieland and another an unknown location, assumed to be within the borders of Haylem, 'tis said there stand forbidding and high unassailable fortresses of magic. Brooding with the weight of centuries, the Last Towers stand guarded by the buildings of the Knights Solis. These men and women are drawn from warrior families that have been attached to the Towers of Magic since the Necromantic Wars.

Though the Last Towers reach for the sky, the true mysteries - and dangers - lie deep below in vaults of solid stone. These dungeons contain provisions and mundane supplies; a little deeper and the cells contain a wealth of coin and treasure - trinkets for which the scholars of the Towers once had no use for, before times changed.

Deeper still one will find the scriptoriums where ancient codices, books and scrolls await transcription or translation - this is the true wealth, more valuable than gold.

In the lowest levels, set in the very bones of Tyrra is a maze of passages designed to keep people and things *in* rather than out...it is here the Sages work with volatile and powerful Ritual Magic, exploring the secrets of the planes or luring undead terrors towards their final end.

There are two things that accompany war; death and fire. Legends, histories, songs, entire bodies of learning, philosophy, secrets of magic, the spells no longer spoken - all these things burned in the libraries or died on the lips of defenders, during the Necromantic War. It was out of this death and fire that organizations we today call the Celestial and Earthen Towers - were born.

There are many unexplored and forgotten ruins dotting the landscape, whispering of ancient battles and mysteries. Some of these ruins were once Towers.

2. Twelve Towers

It is said that in the shrouded times before recorded history, nine Dragon Mages appeared, coming out of the West from across the sea. It is unknown or forgotten what race they were, even the proud elves, with their long memories, do not know. It is whispered that these first nine cast a mighty spell to obscure all but the most vague memories and accounts of their time.

In those days there were many open doors. Extraplanar monsters stalked the world at will and made sport of mortals as they wished. They waged destructive battles with each other that laid waste to the lands around them. Many times, even the Dragon Mages could not destroy the worst of the otherworldly foes, yet they were able to bind them with promises, trick them with spells and lock their doors with magic.

Even then, by accident or design, life was sometimes twisted into undeath, resulting in abominations that preyed upon the living with insatiable hatred and hunger.

The nine were not enough. So they drew all magic about them and let it be known that the power was loose on Tyrra. They would not have done so were the need not so great. Those who sought secrets came to the nine to learn. Many were called in this way, although few were chosen.

Freed from the terrors of Extraplanar threat, and given respite from the creatures of darkness, the peoples of Tyrra continued to progress and build up their Kingdoms. Within a few years the Dragon Mages had many Wizards about them, and they caused twelve towers to be built, one for each Kingdom of the time.

They stood watch from their towers as civilization dawned upon the various peoples of Tyrra. They helped the process along when necessary, and always kept a jealous eye on the unseen borders of the world, warding it from baleful, lazy eyes that would at times regard Tyrra and yawn, waiting on other planes of existence for the time and the way in, or they would root out the malignant evil that waited in the darkness of their own plane.

The first Kings were like kin to the Towers. Indeed, many Nobles had brethren within the walls of the Towers, learning magic and weaving spells. All worked together, and prosperity increased. It's been said that humans were taller and lived longer in those days, that elves came out of the woods to sit and study in the Towers, and 'twas the Kings that paid tribute to the Towers in exchange for their beneficent presence and protection.

This tribute was not gold; it was an abundant supply of those things necessary for life and the pursuit of the magical arts. The mages had no use for coins or treasure in those days, save what gems or metals they required to work their spells.

All Wizards wore plain, coarse robes and were easily recognized in their simple attire. None were plainer than the mighty Dragon Mages, who were already seeking to be forgotten by the very world they protected.

3. Circa 1066 B.U. to Present, Necromancers & Hedge Wizards Too

Prior to 1066 B.U. the nine Dragon Mages had long since disappeared; some doubted they had ever been, particularly anxious to doubt accounts of the benevolent nine, were the shadowy and dangerous new Dragon Mages that began to pursue power for its' own sake, well outside the influence of any Tower or Kingdom. The Twelve Kingdoms by this time has already degenerated into a series of blood feuds and constantly shifting alliances. Learning lost much of its' prestige during the petty wars, and bullies with swords ruled the day. Learned folk could weave spells like trained dogs for their brawling, spitting masters, or they could seek retreat from the petty world within the first and last great bastions of knowledge, the Towers.

As always, it was in the Towers that those with power were taught not to use it. The smoke of ancient battles obscures the centuries, but we can piece together this much:

As a protest the Towers withdrew their support of the Kingdoms. The nobility reacted by cutting off tributes of food, study materials and components. As a result, the Celestial Wizards threw off their robes of poverty and became mercenary, charging gold for all magical services, drawing all Celestial Magic users into their order and barring their gates to the Nobility.

Although loathe to do so at first, the mighty Earth Wizards soon did the same, for they had limited power over life and death itself and would not be anyone's lackeys.

The Nobles needed magic to fight each other, and feared the Wizards besides, or they would have made war upon the Towers. The Towers formed the Guilds, growing rich in their own right. Still they did not try to conquer the Nobles, as such was not their intent, and they lacked the numbers anyway.

Hedge Wizards

Not all Celestial Wizards sided with the Towers. Some were bribed, blackmailed or bullied into the service of Nobility. Others that had been of Noble family chose to remain loyal to their kin. Still others left the confines of the cities to avoid the watchful eyes of the Guilds. These last mages wished to pursue power without restraint, seeking to elevate themselves through dangerous magical experimentation, that threatened to unmake what was wrought in ages past by the first Dragon Mages. In some cases, they succeeded in unlocking doors. Hated by the Towers for their greed and betrayal, these fugitives were named Hedge Wizards for the wilderness haunts the Guilds hunted them to.

Necromancers

One of the greatest mistakes made by the general populace in the past was to underestimate the threat of Hedge Wizards, but there was no such mistake in the case of Necromancers. Corrupted and fallen Wizards of Tyrra [Earth Mages]...they had betrayed their compact with life itself and learned to reverse Earth Magic, tearing rents in the magical fabric of the world, and creating Chaos Magic, a destructive power that was dangerously out of balance, which in turn created other reversals. These reversals manifested themselves in the spontaneous generation of Undead monstrosities. Long a practice of certain barbarian clans, it was some of the most powerful and evil Wizards that began to perfect the black art of Necromancy, helping to unleash an age of unparalleled slaughter and darkness.

The warring between the Twelve Kingdoms created fertile ground for all manner of evil. The Necromancers gathered on the Plain of Skulls, together with the Hedge Wizards and all manner of miscreants and power-mongers. The result was the Army of Sherikand, as recorded in the chronicles of the Necromantic Wars. After the fall of Taboria in 1038 B.U., and with it one of the Twelve Towers, Loctus Urbs rose on the broken backs of slaves; the invading Army of Sherikand swept down upon the remaining eleven of the Twelve Kingdoms.

The might of Sherikand was unimaginable, and as each Kingdom fell, the Tower within its borders fell with it. With each fallen Tower burned a library and the wealth of knowledge it contained. The first few Towers were defended to the death by Wizards, who blasted as many undead as they could before being overrun.

The remaining Kingdoms stood by as their neighbours fell, and more mages died. At this time, even the Wizards of the Towers were not above petty rivalries, as the conflicting methods of Earth and Celestial magic-users created ill-timed and damaging internal strife.

On one side, the Star Chamber was formed; consisting of 9 of the most powerful men and women of the Celestial Towers, 1 for each of the 9 Dragon Mages. On the other, the Hall of Light, holding 9 of the Earthen Towers' elite. Meeting in one of the lesser Towers, they settled upon a course of action, determining that all pettiness had to be put aside, and self-interests sacrificed for the greater good, which had become nothing more or less than survival.

The Legend Grey Council

There is very little known about what happened next. The following story is what has been whispered for generations but mostly it is believed to be myth.

Three figures, dressed in drab robes with grey skin and eyes, strolled non-chalantly into the secret, heavily guarded and warded meeting place. How they gained the trust of the eighteen men and women of power assembled before them, is unknown. Who would sacrifice power? Who would eschew the temporal pleasures of wealth, comfort, lust and even love? Who would turn their back on their kin, and upon life itself as they once knew it? The first volunteers were turned away. To volunteer so readily meant they were seeking to escape something, or did not love their life enough. Sacrifice was demanded, and made. One each, from Star Chamber and Hall of Light, was selected. They became as the Grey Ones, and before they disappeared, promised that the Grey Council would return in time, if only the Necromantic Wars could be survived.

In later years, the Grey Council did indeed appear, moving effortlessly and purposefully between the highest echelons of Tower & Crown, their servants incapable of temptation or bias, with the influence of secrets known and held in trust, the influence of fear. They became known as the Conscience of Haylem and would work as ambassadors, adjudicators and messengers, their numbers coming from some unknown place, never fighting except to defend themselves, perfectly balanced between both schools of magic, and residing in what some called The Heart of the World, though they knew not where. Some whisper that the Grey Ones are sent by the Dragon Mages of old, whereas still others say they are the very ones...others do not revere them much, but suffer their presence because they are the one sure moral force on Tyrre, having proven it countless times. Finally, it is thought that they may be far older than history suggests.

Their bearing is always humble when they appear, and they treat peasants and Nobility with equal respect. [That alone is enough to make many Nobles very uncomfortable].

Wizards everywhere began casting powerful rituals to aid the men at arms of the Twelve Kingdoms and counterattack the elementals and undead of Sherikand. Circa 1032 B.U., the

Towers sent Wizards and magical items to aid Virro Persephont. The last great collections of learning and history were transferred in secret to a Greater Tower, in one of the most powerful remaining Kingdoms. It was thought that in such a stronghold, the collected knowledge of ages would be protected. The unforeseen Magical Cataclysm of 1030 B.U. shattered their plans.

A terrible light shone forth from within the Astreal Empire, a precursor to the icy entombment that would destroy an entire people. The Dividian Mountains erupted in smoke, foul gases and ash, darkening the sky and turning day to perpetual twilight. The Army of Sherikand marched again.

The forces of nature went awry and lashed out at the peoples of Tyrra, so out of balance was the world due to the magic unleashed by the Necromancers and Hedge Wizards, as well as the counterattacks from the Towers. Valiant Arch Mages in several Towers tried desperately to use forgotten magic to shift the balance back. They only succeeded in limiting the magical holocaust, at the cost of their lives as their Towers were destroyed in the terrible rituals. None of them resurrected. It is said that even the Undead trembled at the energies unleashed and bottled again, on the night of the great magical upheaval.

General Guerre Doth razed the Greater Tower along with many great cities under cover of the accursed darkness. Along with it burned the greatest collection of history and learning anywhere in the Twelve Kingdoms.

A division of knights fought their way out of the doomed cities, losing half their number trying to cover the retreat of the fleeing citizenry. Many of these knights were witness to the fall of the Greater Tower. So impressed were they by the valor and ferocity of the mages who gave their lives, that these surviving knights presented themselves at one of the last Towers against the orders of the Nobles they were sworn to..

With so many of their number dead, and their liege lords and heirs slain in the holocaust, they were free to offer their services as Knight Protectors. The Star Chamber accepted some of their number immediately, as did the Hall of Light. Remembering the common threads needed to bind their interests, one order, the Knights Solis was formed; these knights of the Towers protect the Guilds and the interests of the Towers to this day. They are governed by a military leader who carefully moves troops of the right temperament between Celestial and Earth Jurisdiction, and manages the ascension of warriors who come up through the Guilds. Much strife exists even now amongst the Nobility and the Knights Solis because of their history. Most nobility sneers at the existence of the Knight Solis, calling them traitors to the Kingdom. The very fact that they call themselves 'Knights' is enough to spark fights behind closed doors, the fact remains though, if it wasn't for the original group of Knights who broke away from the Kingdom and finally unit the three powers, all would surely have been lost.

In honor of the battles and sacrifices in which the ten Towers from Taboria to Dividia fell, though there be only one Tower remaining to each school of magic, [the only one *known* to exist] the Wizards always refer to the "Towers" - in plural - so that they may be remembered.

The last Towers of each school have persisted through the end of the Necromantic Wars, the City State Wars following Virro Persephont's death, and the Barbarian Wars incited by Khaosor. They are the

pillars of Haylem. The Towers are politically, architecturally, magically and socially designed for two purposes; to help Haylem thrive, and to persist as before, should Haylem fall.

The Towers renewed ancient covenants with Sheris Von Haylem upon her rise to power and unification of the City States during the Barbarian Wars - so they keep vigilant as they did in the past, in times of Dragons.

Unlike ancient times, they remain self-supporting, using wealth to move in the world of the King and his Nobles, in order to retain a watchful and moderating influence, helping to avoid mistakes of the past. Their concerns are only political in the sense that they wish to maintain the Kingdom status quo and their autonomy; after which their interests are more far-reaching and esoteric than mere politics.

The Politics

In the Kingdom of Haylem, the Towers refer to the powerful organizations of Wizards, distinguished by the type of magic they use. Each Tower has in turn has several Guilds that they control.

The King owns all of the lands and properties within the Kingdom; the magical Towers have been given some lands for their own use but the King still owns them. The Kingdom and the Guilds respect each other's laws, and as such the Kingdom allows the Towers to govern their own members through their own laws.

The Towers are divided into the two separate areas of magic, represented by the Earthen Towers and the Celestial Towers. The Earth Guild is concerned with Earthen and healing magic and combating Necromancy. The Celestial Guild is concerned with Celestial and arcane magic and extra-planar influences.

The Guilds of Tyrre are centres of learning for magic, philosophy and nature. They see themselves as a learned community of scholars, helping guide a fragmented, ignorant and hostile world back to civilization by working with the Kingdom. While the Towers by law exist at the whim of the King or Queen, in practical terms the Kingdom knows that they cannot afford to lose their support nor does it necessarily have the strength to enforce that law. The Towers in return realize that they cannot exist without the support of the Kingdom.

The Guilds and the Kingdom cooperate with each other, and moreover, do not openly interfere with one another. As the Kingdom and Guilds need each other and work together, their collective is referred to as the Triad of Unity (or simply Triad).

Members of the Celestial and Earth Guilds are considered Commoners of greater rank and privilege. These individuals are often treated as foreign dignitaries, with those of greater rank in the Guilds given respect on par with the Nobility of the region which they support. Guild members at times act outside the basic structure of the Kingdom. The Guilds are however held accountable within their own Tower which in turn is accountable in many ways to the Kingdom itself.

As an important note is that while the Towers technically exist beyond political boundaries, it is rare that members of the Towers within one Kingdom/Empire do not support their homeland in times of strife.