Factions of Ank'Harel

Numerous political, academic, and criminal factions are active in Ank'Harel. Driven by ambitions both apparent and unseen, these organizations and their rivalries shape the city's social and political landscape, and they offer opportunities for adventurers to rub shoulders with powerful individuals and thereby enhance their reputations.

Three of the groups have a strong interest in the Apotheon and what he represents: the Allegiance of Allsight, the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream, and the Library of the Cobalt Soul. Each of these factions has a set of missions the adventurers can undertake, which are detailed later in the chapter.

Allegiance of Allsight

"*To peer into the past is to illuminate the future.*"

- **Headquarters.** The Crystal Chateau, a university in the Sigil District, is the Allegiance's headquarters.
- **Leader.** The Allegiance is led by two headmasters: the dour James Cryon, a lawful neutral elf, who is also the head of the Crystal Chateau's program for the arcane arts; and the kindly Gryz Alakritos, a neutral good goblin, whose infectious enthusiasm makes him the more popular of the pair. Both use the scholarly mastermind stat block (see appendix A).
- **Allies.** The Allegiance and the Library of the Cobalt Soul are staunch allies.

Headmasters James Cryon and Gryz Alakritos of the Allegiance of Allsight
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Headmasters James Cryon and Gryz Alakritos of the Allegiance of Allsight

Tyler Walpole

- **Opponents.** The Allegiance opposes the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream and the Sentinels of Memory (see "Minor Factions" later in the chapter).

The Allegiance of Allsight is an academic collective known across Marquet. Its original members came to Ank'Harel from across the continent to rebuild the robust academic tradition that defined the elves and orcs of ancient Cael Morrow.

The Allegiance of Allsight is embodied in two of Ank'Harel's academic institutions: Teres Schoolhouse, the city's largest center of education, and the Crystal Chateau, an elite school of arcane principles and the center of the Allegiance's operations. Students from anywhere in Ank'Harel are welcome at Teres Schoolhouse, but the Crystal Chateau's programs are extremely competitive, and all pupils there are required to join the Allegiance of Allsight.

In recent years, the faction's leadership has been focused on uncovering the secrets of Cael Morrow, the sunken ruins beneath the city. For decades previously, the headmasters of the Allegiance petitioned J'mon Sa Ord for permission to unseal the long-lost ruins, and finally, the city's mysterious leader relented. The opening of an entrance to the ruins infuriated the Sentinels of Memory, a minor faction whose members fanatically believe the sunken city is best left forgotten, lest some unknown terror left over from the Calamity be disturbed.

How to Join. Joining the Allegiance of Allsight requires one to be referred by an active member, then be reviewed and audited by the Allegiance's council of leadership prior to the issuance of a judgment on the candidate.

Allegiance Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Allegiance of Allsight is described in "What Lies Beneath," later in the chapter.

Consortium of the Vermilion Dream

"*Seek the stories others fear to know.*"

- **Headquarters.** Consortium members meet in First Eclipse, a tavern in the Suncut Bazaar, and hold private conversations in a secret storeroom there.

Master Aradrine the Owl
Image not found or type unknown
Master Aradrine the Owl
David Sladek

- **Leader.** The Consortium is led by a council of five masters who all use the occult silvertongue stat block (see appendix A). They are Aradrine the Owl, a lawful neutral goliath (see the "Goliaths of Exandria" sidebar later in the chapter); Dendarron the Sun Bear, a chaotic neutral halfling; Larthul the Wolf, a chaotic evil human; Khelkur the Gull, a neutral evil dwarf; and Vrill the Moth, a lawful evil elf.
- **Allies.** The Consortium maintains a tenuous alliance with the Sentinels of Memory (see " Minor Factions" later in the chapter).
- **Opponents.** The Consortium opposes the Allegiance of Allsight and the Library of the Cobalt Soul.

This group of occult mystics has assembled a membership of like-minded souls from across Exandria. The Consortium of the Vermilion Dream focuses on studying the magic described in folklore that has been dismissed as fanciful by more "proper" institutions. The group takes its name from its foremost object of fascination: Ruidus, the ruddy moon of Exandria that is fabled to bestow ill fortune and suffering upon those who are born, enter into contracts, or begin new ventures under its baleful light.

The Consortium was founded by five influential individuals, all renowned in occult circles from across Exandria, who sought to gain wealth and prestige from their studies. The Consortium is still young, and thus all five of its founders still live. Older academic institutions such as the Allegiance of Allsight and the Library of the Cobalt Soul express concern and sometimes disdain toward the upstart Consortium and its aggressive, profit-driven attitude toward scholarship.

Due to the expensive nature of its research, the Consortium is in constant need of funding. It leans heavily on its members for such support, selling the services of its magically skilled devotees to government officials, wealthy diplomats, and other persons of means. A large portion of its income goes to support the Sentinels of Memory, the Consortium's tentative ally against the Allegiance of Allsight.

How to Join. The Consortium gladly welcomes any enthusiast of the strange and occult to its ranks—as long as the faction's leaders can be reasonably certain that the individual has no ulterior motives that would undermine their efforts.

Consortium Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream is described in "Vermilion Gambits," later in the chapter.

Library of the Cobalt Soul

"*Reason. Knowledge. Truth.*"

- **Headquarters.** The Marquesian branch of the Library of the Cobalt Soul is based at the Temple of the Mentor—a temple of Ioun the Knowing Mentor—in the Guided District.

High Curator Jamil A'alithiya of the Library of the Cobalt Soul
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High Curator Jamil A'alithiya of the Library of the Cobalt Soul
Anna Veltkamp

- **Leader.** At 29 years old, Jamil A'alithiya, a chaotic good human, is the youngest monastic high curator (see appendix A) in the history of the Cobalt Soul. He is often underestimated by his contemporaries and uses that fact to his advantage.
- **Allies.** The Cobalt Soul maintains alliances with the Allegiance of Allsight and the Hands of Ord (see "Minor Factions" below).
- **Opponents.** The Cobalt Soul opposes the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream.

The Library of the Cobalt Soul was founded in the heart of Wildemount centuries ago, before any of the nations that currently wage war over that land were born. Its archivists have stood strong against conflict, propaganda, and upheaval during all this time in their dogged hunt for the truth. Their mission has spread across Exandria, with advocates in various locales defying local governments in the pursuit of truth.

The Cobalt Soul founded the Temple of the Mentor in Ank'Harel nearly 150 years ago. The archivists here focus on rooting out evil in the city's civilian factions—principally the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream, whose members reportedly wield magic weapons made of some strange, red mineral the likes of which no Cobalt Soul archivist has ever seen.

The faction is wary of the Allegiance of Allsight's fascination with Cael Morrow, but as fellow academic institutions, the Allegiance of Allsight and the Cobalt Soul work together most of the time, sharing resources from their libraries.

How to Join. The Library of the Cobalt Soul accepts for consideration any volunteers who express interest in gathering and preserving knowledge. These volunteers are put to work as librarians, performing menial tasks such as organizing records and transcribing notes from expeditions—drudgery designed to weed out those who want to join the organization for the sake

of fame and adventure. Typically, this duty lasts about six months, after which a librarian is formally inducted.

Cobalt Soul Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Library of the Cobalt Soul is described in "Knowledge Is Power," later in the chapter.

Minor Factions

Other, smaller factions are important to life in Ank'Harel but take a backseat in the plot of this adventure.

Hands of Ord

"*By the code of Ord, we stand vigilant.*"

- **Headquarters.** The city guard is based in Ord Bastion in the Sand-Herald District.
- **Leader.** Ironhand Sem, a lawful good minotaur, commands the Hands of Ord and oversees all military operations in Ank'Harel.
- **Allies.** The Hands of Ord and the Library of the Cobalt Soul are staunch allies.
- **Opponents.** The Hands of Ord aim to root out and destroy the Veil (see below).

Established four hundred years ago by J'mon Sa Ord, the Hands of Ord are a peacekeeping order of desert warriors who have long watched over Ank'Harel and kept the city safe and stable.

The order is governed by the code of Ord, which is the backbone of the city's legal system. Members of the Hands dedicate their lives to the city and the code, and many come from a long, respected bloodline of previous Hands. Well-appointed barracks in the Sand-Herald District provide members of the Hands with a comfortable home; places of worship; and sources of food, armor, and weapons.

Despite their best efforts, the Hands of Ord have failed to thwart the Veil, the crime syndicate that pervades Ank'Harel society.

Scarbearers

"*We do not break.*"

- **Headquarters.** The Bowl of Judgment, an arena in the Sand-Herald District used for combat tournaments, is the Scarbearers' headquarters.
- **Leader.** Once a mercenary in his own right, Quartermaster Croog Lynn, a chaotic neutral, goliath gladiator, has now taken to running the guild in his later years (see the accompanying "Goliaths of Exandria" sidebar).
- **Allies.** None.
- **Opponents.** None.

The Scarbearers are the most famous mercenary company in Ank'Harel. Named for the scars their founders displayed to J'mon Sa Ord as proof of their service to the realm, the Scarbearers occupy an honorable position in Marquesian society. They often take high-profile jobs, such as serving as bodyguards for diplomats and protecting caravans and expeditions into the desert. The members promote themselves as a guild that respects honor and guidelines, but they often come across as brash, thuggish fighters who are out for a paycheck.

In addition to their mercenary exploits, the Scarbearers also supervise the tournaments that take place in the Bowl of Judgment.

Sentinels of Memory

"*Let the past die in peace.*"

- **Headquarters.** The Tower of Memory in the Guided District is the meeting place for the Sentinels of Memory.
- **Leader.** Watcher Trast, a neutral, elf priest and a former cleric of Ioun, founded the Sentinels of Memory and maintains command over the faction to this day.
- **Allies.** The Sentinels are allied with the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream.
- **Opponents.** The Sentinels oppose the Allegiance of Allsight.

The Sentinels of Memory are a group of fanatics who believe the sunken city beneath Ank'Harel isn't some grand ancient wonder—it's a prison that must be kept sealed at all costs. Citing the lack of recorded history about Cael Morrow as proof that powerful forces wanted to expunge the city from memory, the Sentinels of Memory are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that no one

speaks of that ill-fated city ever again.

Since they oppose the excavation of Cael Morrow, the Sentinels of Memory are constantly at odds with the Allegiance of Allsight. Though their efforts to date have mostly been political, some of their members have been connected to violent acts intended to thwart the excavation efforts.

Recently, the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream has been supplying the Sentinels of Memory with funds and agents to support the Sentinels' conflict against the Allegiance of Allsight. The Sentinels are grateful for the aid but treat the Consortium with caution, suspecting the faction has ulterior motives.

The Veil

"*Welcome to the other side.*"

- **Headquarters.** None.
- **Leader.** Twenty-year-old Ilena Hapayhari, a chaotic evil, human assassin and ruthless pirate from the western coast of Marquet, recently disposed of the Veil's old leadership. She now rules the Veil from the shadows, though only high-ranking members are privy to this knowledge.
- **Allies.** None.
- **Opponents.** The Veil opposes the Hands of Ord.

A secret network of spies, thieves, and assassins, the Veil is the largest crime syndicate in Ank'Harel. It is the chaotic counterpoint to the order of the Hands of Ord.

Not much is publicly known about the Veil; the identities and personal details of its members are kept secret even among the group, and those who let such secrets slip are often found murdered before they can be apprehended. The Veil has no permanent headquarters in the city, constantly changing bases to cover its trail.

Although the Veil doesn't play a role in this adventure, you can use this faction as an adversary in your own adventures set in Ank'Harel.

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