



THE CITY OF TALABHEIM

This section describes the city of Talabheim, where most of this adventure takes place. Like Nuln, Altdorf, and Middenheim, Talabheim is one of the great cities of the Empire, though the

recent Chaos Incursion has left an indelible mark on this place. It also covers Taalagad, the largest settlement claimed by Talabheim, and its port on the River Talabec.

— A BRIEF HISTORY OF TALABHEIM —

After Taal gifted his brother Ulric with the flat-topped mountain that would one day become Middenheim, he ventured deep into the woodlands to the east in search of a place where his own worship could flourish and thrive. The legends say Taal encountered a gigantic Wurm as he searched, and the enraged creature attacked him. The two fought for several weeks, their battle shaking the foundations of the world. At the very last, Taal grabbed the beast by its tail and lashed it against the ground again and again, carving out the western reaches of the Talabec River as he did so. With a mighty heave, he flung the dragon high into the air and watched its fiery corpse plummet to the ground.

When it struck the earth, it formed a great crater several miles across. Taal came to see what had become of his enemy, but he found little remained. The Wurm's flesh had spread across the crater bottom, mixing with the earth and making it incredibly fertile. In addition, the scales of the creature found their way into the soil and rock of the crater. Pieces of this magical material are occasionally found by Talabheim's farmers as they plough their fields, and it is much prized by blacksmiths in the creation of weapons and tools.

Taal saw the crater and was pleased with his work. He called it *Taalabim*, "Taal's Victory," and proclaimed that, in time, his faithful would come and make the land their own. He bore a great tunnel through the crater wall to allow his people access the fertile bowl within. After hundreds of years, Taal's prophecy came true. The Talabec, descendants of the ancient Taleuten tribe, happened upon the crater and the tunnel that led within. Kruger, chief of the Talabec, ordered his folk to venture within the crater and construct a great city to honour Taal.

The city of Talabheim was not realized within Kruger's lifetime. Instead, in I.C. 40, Kruger's son, Talgris, founded the city his father had demanded built. It would carry the name Taalabim for centuries, but over the years, the place came to be called Talabheim, and it is now known as one of the most defensible cities in the Old World.

OF SIGMAR AND TALABHEIM

As is well known, Sigmar left the throne and travelled into the east. Before he reached his final destination and dismissed what

remained of his retinue, Sigmar chose to pass through Talabheim. It is said he rode through the Wizard's Way upon his white stallion and looked out upon the budding city below him in wonder. In a loud voice, Sigmar proclaimed, although it would weather many storms, Talabheim would never fall so long as it remained true to its patron deity, Taal.

Sigmar and his men only remained in Talabheim for a day, but they left their indelible mark on the city's founder. Sigmar dined with Talgris, son of Kruger, and the two shared tales of their youth. Talgris was impressed with Sigmar, who had known and fought alongside his father. Though he asked Sigmar to remain for a few days longer, Sigmar declined. Instead, the Emperor granted Talgris his white horse in exchange for his hospitality. With a fraternal nod, Sigmar left Talabheim behind, leaving Talgris' lands, never to return.

About 20 years later, a new religion bloomed in the Empire. A mad preacher in Nuln proclaimed he had a vision of Sigmar being crowned by Ulric himself, thus implying Sigmar had risen to join the Gods. Whilst the new Sigmarite faith spread north into the Reikland, the people of Talabheim remained staunch adherents to Taal. But Sigmar's Cult caught fire, gaining legitimacy and attention from the new Emperor, and Sigmar's proclamation—or as some said prophecy—that Talabheim would not fall began to carry more weight, and the people feared this upstart new religion. The Talabheimers largely held to the worship of Taal, and though the Sigmarites founded a temple in their city, Taal remained the dominant religion.

TALABHEIM AND THE AGE OF WARS

Though the Cult of Sigmar would grow unchecked for centuries, with it came an increasing resentment from those in the Empire who believed and followed the older Gods. Those who followed Ulric and Taal saw the burgeoning Sigmarite movement as a threat to their way of life. The situation only worsened when the question of religion entered into the political arena. In I.C. 1359, the Grand Duke of Stirland, a staunch apologist and puppet for the Cult of Sigmar, was elected Emperor. This was the final straw, and the Grand Duchess Otilia of Talabecland refused to recognize his title. To make matters worse, The Elector Count of Stirland imposed a series of taxes upon the Cult of Ulric. In response, Otilia crowned herself Empress in I.C. 1360 and banned the Cult of Sigmar from Talabecland.

Religion, now used as a political tool, had come to be central to the wars of the Empire. The Cult of Ulric in Talabecland, supported by the worshippers of Taal, took up arms against their Sigmarite enemies. For two hundred years, the squabbling continued, one Emperor in Talabecland and the other in Stirland. In I.C. 1547, Grand Duke Heinrich of Middenland sought to garner enough votes to legally establish himself as Emperor. He took his case to Frederik V of Talabheim, the so-called "Otilian Emperor," who soundly rejected Heinrich's claim.

Heinrich returned to Middenheim in a rage and pronounced himself Emperor nonetheless. He then declared war on Frederik V, as well as the whole of Talabecland, in I.C. 1550. Frederik, not one to be undone, declared his own war against the self-proclaimed Emperor in Nuln, while simultaneously defending his own province from Middenheim's armies. In I.C. 1557, Middenheim sent an army to destroy the city of Talabheim, but the crater wall was never breached by the invaders. However, the port of Taalagad

was razed and subsequently occupied by the invading army. An abysmally unsuccessful siege of Talabheim, which lasted almost twenty years, followed.

Talabheim felt few repercussions from these incidents. Due to the verdant interior of the Taalbaston, the city was able to support itself almost indefinitely. Whilst times were often tight for the citizens of Talabheim, they rarely suffered. The results of these wars were to have a lasting effect on Talabheim, especially in regards to its complex series of laws and edicts. As the rest of the Empire seemed to slide ever deeper into confusion, the Lords of Talabecland rejected the growing anarchy by implementing an overabundance of stringent regulations and rules.

Talabheim came to show its own penchant for independence during the Age of Wars. In I.C. 1750, the Emperor of Talabecland, Horst the Cautious, was asked to help repel an invading army that was approaching Talabheim. When Horst refused to send his troops to the city's aid, the city revolted, seceding from Talabecland entirely. Talabheim went so far as to crown its own Emperor, Helmut II. Unable to assail Talabheim's walls, Horst could do little but issue idle threats. The estrangement of Talabecland and Talabheim would continue for several hundred years, until Emperor Magnus of Nuln acceded to their formal reunification in I.C. 2304.

THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS

When the Kislevite Tsar sent requests for help to the provinces of the Empire in I.C. 2302, none returned to him with the aid he had requested. Talabheim's response was no different than any of the other provinces or city-states. It had managed to gain a great many enemies since the Age of Wars, and the city parliament was more concerned with the city's own defence than with that of Kislev. Chaos Cults surfaced in Taalagad, revelling in the imminent arrival of their twisted masters, but these were quickly and fiercely rooted out and destroyed.

It took the actions of Magnus of Nuln to reunite the Empire after centuries of distrust and war. As Praag fell to Chaos in the north, Magnus came to Talabheim to request the city's aid. Just as an apparent miracle had earned Magnus the loyalty of the Ar-Ulric of Middenheim, so too did Magnus convince the leaders of Talabheim to join his cause against Chaos. Upon Magnus' arrival in the city, it is said the wolves of the Sacred Forest loosed a howl that echoed between the crater walls like thunder, and that a single stag with a hammer-shaped mark on its forehead appeared at Taal's temple in Talabheim. The patron God of the city had spoken in support of Magnus, or so it seemed.

Talabheim mobilized its troops and joined Magnus' formations. They marched to the north, and the armies of Chaos fell before them. The armies of Talabheim, at home in the forests, proved to be invaluable to the war effort. They used their woodland skills as trackers and scouts to maintain the security within their own ranks, as well as to harass the Warherds of Beastmen that roamed the countryside. Following the war in the north, Magnus was unanimously declared Emperor in I.C. 2304. Talabheim's Elector Count surrendered his own Imperial crown, and the line of Otilian Emperors came to an end.

Plague and pestilence descended upon Talabheim. Brought by Skaven in the wake of the war, the diseases decimated the people of Talabheim. Taalagad was especially hard hit by the virulent epidemics that spread through its poorest neighbourhoods. Plague-

