



History of Altdorf

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The Unberogen tribe settled along the western valleys of the River Reik and its tributaries centuries before the birth of Sigmar. They were a farming tribe and one of the largest and more powerful in the land north of the Black Mountains. In time, they built small villages and became prosperous. The largest settlement in the entire land, Reikdorf, was founded by the Unberogens long before the appearance of the twin-tailed comet and the birth of Sigmar.

The Emperor Sigmar

By popular acclaim as victorious war chief, Sigmar was proclaimed Emperor in the following year and crowned by Ar-Ulric, the High Priest of the Ulrican cult. Except for an occasional outbreak of hostilities, Sigmar's reign was the first period of extensive peace in the land. Under Sigmar's wise rule, towns and cities began to grow and prosper. In addition, many Dwarfs immigrated to the Empire, setting up shop as blacksmiths, craftsmen, stonemasons, and traders in these growing settlements.

Many of the details about life in the early years of the Empire are lost to history. Suffice it to say that after 50 years on the throne, the still hale 80-year-old Emperor abdicated his throne. With Ghal Maraz in hand, Sigmar departed for one last journey, this time to the Imperial Dwarfhold of Karaz-a-Karak. There, he would return his runic warhammer to the Dwarfking.

The Empire's first millennium

Sigmar's departure caused consternation among the tribal chieftains. They needed a system to select who among them would succeed Sigmar as Emperor and the first among equals. The chieftains gathered in Reikdorf where they debated long in council along with the High Priests of

the various cults across the land. In time, the assembly crafted an Electoral system whereby each chieftain, known as an Elector, would vote for one among their number to become Emperor. The vote would continue until one of them won the majority and that person would serve until their death. The chieftains agreed and soon Drestan, chief of the Avermanni, was elected to succeed Sigmar.

The New Cult

Years after Sigmar's departure, Reikdorf was preparing to celebrate the goddess Dyrath's Summer Feast as the people have done since well before Sigmar's time. In the midst of the revelry, a malodorous hermit climbed upon the table where the Unberogen chieftain sat and proclaimed to all that he had a vision where he saw Sigmar in all his glory join the council of the gods. Further, the hermit claimed that Sigmar was proclaimed as the greatest patron of the Nation of Mankind. The scandal caused much excitement among the crowd. The ranking priest of Ulric sought the hermit to inquire more about the vision, but the recluse had vanished without a trace. Word of the hermit's vision began to spread across the Reikland.

Within a year, the cult of Sigmar was established in Reikdorf. Johann Helstrum, one of the Unberogen sub-chieftains, became the cult's first High Priest. He then arranged the construction of Sigmar's first temple in Reikdorf. The Ulrican priest Volman objected strenuously as there was no proof that the hermit had received a divine vision. It mattered little to the new cult as many were eager to proclaim Sigmar's divinity.

Religious Strife

The cult of Sigmar quickly grew in power and influence in the Unberogen homeland. By the second century, the cult was as influential as any of the established cults in the Empire.

Soon after his ascension as Primate (formerly High Priest) of Sigmar, Kazgar I began gathering evidence which supported allegations that practitioners of the Old Faith partook in "unwholesome rituals of worship," including human sacrifice and "wanton immorality." Once he was satisfied with his proof, Kazgar I met with the leaders of the cults of Ulric, Taal, and Mórr to call for the salvation of the souls of the duped followers of the Old Faith and the suppression of that tainted belief.

After examining the evidence, the religious leaders jointly declared "all who follow the Old Faith must denounce their heretical faith and embrace the true gods. The leaders of the proscribed cult will be persecuted unto death unless they abandon their sacrilegious ways and seek our mercy." The Druids throughout the Empire rejected these demands and many in the Reikland were burned at the stake. Others quickly fled with their people into the trackless forests, hidden mountain valleys, and remote borderlands of the Empire. A few small outlying villages in the Hagercrybs and Skraag Hills escaped this War of Cleansing.

The Conqueror

With celebration, the people of Reikdorf marked the ascension of the Reiklander Elector Sigismund to the Imperial throne. In recognition of its importance, Emperor Sigismund II renamed the city Altdorf in honour of it being the oldest settlement in the Empire as well as giving it a name that would make it more than the province's capital. He returned the Imperial

Court to the capital of the Reikland. After initiating a building programme, the likes that Altdorf has not seen, Sigismund embarked on a mission of conquest. Several battles northwest of the Empire resulted in the subjugation of the independent Kingdom of the Jutones. Sigismund renamed the land as the Barony of Westerland and allowed the old king to become his vassal.

A devout Sigmarite, Emperor Sigismund then turned his attention to spreading the worship of the Father of the Empire. Resistance was met with force of arms and several rebellions had to be violently suppressed. Word of a Norse invasion of in the north-eastern Empire compelled The Conqueror to move his armies northward. Meanwhile, the worship of Sigmar expanded beyond the Reikland and Stirland, the cult's heartlands.

Sigismund was unable to expel the Norse, but did reach an accord after several indecisive battles which limited the invaders expansion as well as forcing their leaders to pledge an oath of fealty to the Emperor. Satisfied with the terms, The Conqueror led his armies to eastern Stirland to suppress the uprising in that fell land. Sigismund was severely wounded in the engagement, but prevailed in destroying the rebellious peasants. He returned to Altdorf to the acclaim of being the greatest Emperor since Sigmar.

The Beginning of the Decline

From Sigismund the Conqueror's time few Emperors set their mark on Imperial history. One of these was his son, Emperor Siegfried I. The Conqueror's successor passed laws that established the rights and obligations of the Emperor, the Electors, and the Nobles of the Empire, with the highlight being the Imperial Codes of Law. These achievements earned him the nickname of "The Lawgiver". In addition, Siegfried oversaw the completion of the building programme that his father started, including the new and enlarged Temple of Sigmar. After Siegfried's passing in 557 I.C., the Imperial court moved from Altdorf.

Though no longer the seat of Imperial power, Altdorf continued to prosper as both the seat of the Reikland Elector and the centre of the cult of Sigmar. Now known as the Grand Theogonist, Yorri II invited Dwarf engineers in 934 I.C. to lead the building of the first Grand Cathedral in Altdorf. The immensely influential Grand Theogonist intended that the massive House of Sigmar would stand finished in the 1000th year of Sigmar's Empire.

In 990 I.C., Grand Theogonist Grimnar I convince the newly elected Emperor Ludwig I during a rather extravagant feast that it was Sigmar's will that the Head of the Sigmarite Church should be appointed as Imperial Elector in perpetuity. The corpulent Emperor issued an edict to this effect, which caused enough backlash that Ludwig moved the Imperial court from Nuln to Altdorf.

The Collapse of the Empire

The Incompetent

As Sigismund represented the zenith of the Emperors following Sigmar in the first millennium, Emperor Boris I represented the nadir. Known to history as "Goldgatherer" and "the Incompetent" for his insatiable appetite and destructive tendencies, Emperor Boris was one of the longest reigning Emperors. He was elevated to Emperor at the young age of 21 by Electors who believed that they could manipulate the hot-headed, but dull-witted Count. One of Boris'

first acts was to establish his court at Nuln, the most cosmopolitan Imperial city at that time. Tilean architects and Dwarf artisans were employed to rebuild Nuln into a city of splendour, matching its influence on politics of the Empire. Another 1400 years would pass before Altdorf would once again be the capital of a unified Empire.

Decades passed before Emperor Boris I showed his true colours and obsession with wealth. At the beginning of the twelfth century, Boris conspired with the High Priests of the Imperial cults to charge wizards across the land with heresy and daemon worship. His principal aim was to lay claim to their riches and treasures under the guise of dealing with enemies of the Empire. Many wizards perished while others denounced their trade as the religious cults moved to solidify their own power. A number of wizards were able to make their way to Middenheim where the Graf protected them from the Emperor's wrath. Meanwhile, a few of the more dedicated wizards continued their art in utmost secrecy.

When the Black Plague broke out in the Empire two years later, many blamed the Emperor and the Grand Theogonist for offending the gods. Riots broke out in Altdorf amid the misery of the pestilence. The Cathedral of Sigmar was stormed and the cowering Grand Theogonist dragged out by the murderous mob from his hiding place among his concubines. The mob hoped to appease the gods, especially Sigmar, by offering the Grand Theogonist as a sacrificial offering. The crowd shouted with glee as Mordrek I went up in the flames. If not for the timely intervention of Grand Prince Manfred von Schilderland (whom some scholars confused with Graf Mandred of Middenheim) and his retinue, more Altdorfers would have perished in the rioting. Within a few years, Emperor Boris I died of the plague.

A Brief Interlude

After the death of Emperor Boris I, the Empire nearly collapsed into anarchy. The Black Plague decimated more than a quarter of Altdorf's population and rumours circulated that inhuman, bipedal beasts were killing and kidnapping whole villages in the eastern provinces. There were even fanciful stories of the walking dead battling these abominations. Graf Mandred von Middenheim gathered an army to combat these unholy evils. He soon became Emperor with his capital in Middenheim. Peace reigned across the land as the Empire rebuilt and strengthened itself after decades of unjust rule by Emperor Boris I and years of devastating plague. Then it all came crashing down. An unknown assassin ended 28 years of Emperor Mandred I Skavenslayer's glorious reign and plunged the land into war.

Age of Wars

The Electoral Council was unable to agree on a successor to Emperor Mandred I and found itself reduced to petty bickering and reprisals. Many Electors led their retinues away in disgust while plotting their own bid for power. Soon, armies were raised and war commenced between those who believed that they should be Emperor.

Cities were devastated and the countryside ravaged. Altdorf shared the fate of other large settlements and found itself at the centre of many battles. Many records and artefacts from the Empire's first millennium were either destroyed or lost during this time.

Altdorf as Provincial Capital

Conflicting Emperors

After more than 200 years of continuous war, the ambitions of the nobility were near exhaustion. An attempt at reunification of the Empire failed as Talabeclander Grand Duchess Otilia Untermensch storms out of the Electoral Council of 1359 I.C. to protest the election of Grand Duke Otto von Wurtbad of Stirland to the Imperial throne. With the support of the Ar-Ulric, who fled to her court to escape the intrigues of Middenheim, Otilia soon proclaimed herself Empress.

Altdorf found itself caught between the competing Imperial Courts of Nuln and Talabheim. Only its position as the centre of the Sigmarite cult provided Altdorf with some measure of security. Many nobles still affiliated with Nuln left Altdorf for the southern city. The influence of the Grand Prince over Altdorf diminished while that of the Grand Theogonist rose. The latter also presided over the constitution of the Order of the Fiery Heart in order to protect Sigmarites from the predations of the Ulricans from Talabecland.

Age of the Three Emperors

The election of 1547 I.C., brought further ruin to Sigmar's Empire. Rebuffed by his attempt at securing the Imperial throne, Graf Heinrich von Middenheim declared himself Emperor in the same fashion as Empress Otilia nearly two centuries before.

The Reikland princes at this time were too busy patrolling their borders and fending off Ulrican encroachments that they were unable to effectively govern Altdorf. The Grand Theogonists used the opportunity to step into this vacuum and solidify their own political hold over Altdorf. They quickly expelled the cult of Ulric from the city and, in time, placed undue hardship on the other cults. This forced a number of priests of the other deities to seek freer places to continue their beliefs. Thus, the birthplace of Sigmar effectively became a theocracy.

The only interruption to the Grand Theogonists' rule came in the early 18th century when an Orcish invasion laid waste to the southern Imperial provinces and forced the court at Nuln to flee to Altdorf. Emperor Sigismund V died protecting Altdorf from the ravages of the greenskins. The Orc Warlord also perished, which caused the Orcs to disperse. The Imperial Court returned to Nuln under the leadership of Sigismund's successor, Emperor Heinrich IV.

With the Empire spiralling further into decadence in the early 20th century, the Grand Theogonist officially granted the Order of the Templars of Sigmar a charter to eradicate the scourge of daemonology and Chaos-worship wherever it hid. Witch trials and burnings became commonplace in Altdorf and the surrounding lands. Eventually, these events spread across the Sigmarite provinces as well as those lands held by the Emperors of Middenheim and Talabheim.

Dark Ages and the House of Holzkrug

In 1979, Magritta (Margaritha) of Nuln was elected Empress despite the Grand Theogonist's less than subtle efforts to get himself elected. Thus frustrated, the Grand Theogonist declared that the Electoral system was effectively ended. Empress Magritta I ignored "the vile little man" and established herself in Nuln. Meanwhile, the "Wizard's War" that erupted in Middenheim spread

across the rest of the Empire. Many wizards and suspected wizards met their fate at the stake and the Sorcerous Arts was declared illegal by the Ulrican and Sigmarite cults (each accusing the other of following their lead).

Two decades later, a meteor slammed into and destroyed the eastern city of Mordheim. Soon, rumours of riches and unholy creatures in Mordheim reached Mordrek's ears. Determined to keep the prize of Mordheim away from the Faithless (which includes everyone other than devout Sigmarites), the successor Grand Theogonist to the one who ended the Electoral system dispatched his witch-hunters to do their sacred duty.

Ten years later, an unholy army emerged from Sylvania ravaged the eastern provinces. The Grand Theogonist realised the imminent danger, but did not want to risk his own troops in the event that the Undead found their way to Altdorf. Instead, he used his influence to call upon the Imperial court of Nuln to ally itself with their rivals to end this threat to the land.

A new Grand Theogonist was elected and proved to be even more ambitious and unyielding than his predecessor. Not being satisfied by being the ruler of Altdorf in all but name; this Grand Theogonist wanted to be recognized as Holy Prince of Altdorf, and successor to the newly enthroned Emperor in Altdorf. In the name of the Church of Sigmar, Mordrek IV declared that Altdorf would no longer be part of the Reikland, but the religious city of Sigmar ruled by His priests and their agents.

Though concerned with the Vampire Wars in the east, Grand Prince Ludwig von Holzkrug had enough of these pretentious upstarts who cloaked their ambitions in the name of the Empire's patron deity. The Grand Prince led the Reikland army he raised to victory over the forces of the Church in a decisive battle east of Altdorf. Von Holzkrug executed the Grand Theogonist and his cronies before mercifully pardoning the minor offenders. Many of the Church rebels blamed their defeat on the Order of the Fiery Heart for remaining neutral. The situation became more acute when the Grand Prince compelled the Church leaders to elevate the Reikland Lector Wilhelm von Ostwald to the office of Grand Theogonist. The new Grand Theogonist then crowned the Grand Prince as the Emperor Ludwig V. Now, the Empire had one more Emperor to rival those in Middenheim, Nuln and Talabheim.

The choice of Grand Theogonist Vikram I (Wilhelm) proved to be a wise decision. Several years following his ascension, Altdorf was besieged by the Undead army led by Count Vlad von Carstein. The battle seemed to be lost until the Grand Theogonist hurled himself and the vampire Count over the parapets and to their respective deaths. Without their lord's will to maintain their unnatural existence, the army of von Carstein crumbled into dust.

The periodic struggle between the Grand Prince and Grand Theogonist for control of Altdorf continued. At the close of the 22nd century, the Grand Theogonist unsuccessfully attempted to compel the Lectors to choose his own son as his successor. Opposed to the perceived threat of a rival Sigmarite "dynasty," Emperor Manfred I von Holzkrug used his considerable influence to ensure that the Lectors not only rejected the Grand Theogonist's design, that they pass an edict which stipulates that all Lectors of Sigmar must maintain celibacy to hold the high office. The Grand Prince's favoured candidate, Alders von Walfen, was elected to succeed the disgraced Kazgar XII.

As a whole, the remainder of the von Holzkrug dynasty was rather unremarkable. Most Imperial historians hardly consider them equal to the other three Emperors and their line. The one noteworthy accomplishment was the founding of the Great Hospice near Frederheim. Altdorf Emperor Eberhardt the Just, a postulate priest of Shallya, granted the cult land and money to undertake their great endeavour.

Reunification of the Empire

The Incursion of Chaos was the event that changed the Empire and Magnus von Bildhofen – known as “The Pious” – was the catalyst. The future Emperor unified the country that has not been united since the days of Emperor Mandred Skavenslayer. During the two years of war, Altdorf was placed under martial law and under the watchful eye of the Grand Theogonist. The Templars of Sigmar virtually terrorized the populace while rooting out the followers of Chaos.

During the Battle of Kislev, Grand Prince Lorenz von Grünburg, last of the House of Holzkrug, is slain. Though a distant relative of late Elector’s made a bid to replace him, the Grand Theogonist declared that the would-be successor’s claims could not be substantiated. Instead, Kazgar XII elevated Magnus to the position of Grand Prince for his services to the country in the name of Sigmar. Thus as Elector, Magnus was then elected to become “Emperor of Sigmar’s Empire Restored”.

One of Emperor Magnus I’s first acts was to convince the High Elf mage, Teclis, to open a Wizards’ Colleges in Altdorf (this as a concession to the Grand Theogonist who wanted to keep an eye on the institution). The Emperor then began reforming the laws concerning sorcery, which caused strong opposition among the religious cults. As a concession, Magnus agreed that admission to the colleges would be regulated by the newly-created Governing Council of Sorcerous Practices. The members of this august body would include a representative of the Emperor, the Grand Theogonist, and the High Priest of Verena.

Thus settled, Emperor Magnus I followed with the Articles of Imperial Wizardry, which also settled the debate over the power of the Sigmarite Witch-Hunters by reaffirming the Church of Sigmar’s Charter of 1913 and charging the Church with enforcing the Articles.

A decade later, Emperor Magnus I issued the Shallyan-sponsored Law of Imperial Salvation and Mercy, which encouraged the Electors to reform the capital punishment for certain crimes by establishing prisons for their confinement and (hopefully) rehabilitation. In his role of Grand Prince of the Reikland, Magnus had Mundsens Keep converted into Altdorf’s most infamous prison.

After Emperor Magnus the Pious died, the Electors named Count Leopold von Krieglitz of the Stirland House of Unfahiger as Emperor, passing over Magnus’ brother and heir Grand Duke Gunther von Bildhofen of Middenland.

Imperial Altdorf... again

The Rise of the House of Holswig-Schliestein

When Magnus became Emperor, he decided to make his old city Nuln the centre of the restored Empire. He then elevated Wilhelm Holswig-Schliestein, the Duke of Ubersreik, to the position of Chancellor and Plenipotentiary of the Reikland, while the Emperor - successfully - concentrated on re-establishing Imperial institutions. When it became obvious that Magnus would have no legitimate offspring decades later, he named Wilhelm Holswig-Schliestein heir to the Grand Principality of Reikland.

The fortunes of the Holswig-Schliesteins improved further when Emperor Dieter IV, last of the Unfahigers, was forced to abdicate the Imperial throne after the Marienburg Provincial Council declared the Wasteland's independence and seceded from Empire. Grand Prince Wilhelm Holswig-Schliestein of Altdorf, great-grandson of Magnus' Reikland Chancellor, is elected Emperor Wilhelm II and moves the Imperial Court to his seat of power. Altdorf becomes the Imperial capital once again, roughly 1400 years after Emperor Boris I's ascension.

Dieter von Krieglitz attempted to win back the Imperial throne, but the War of Succession failed and the former Emperor was forced to flee to Talabheim. In response to the destruction of much of Altdorf, Emperor Wilhelm II stripped von Krieglitz of his lands in the Stirland and elevated Erich Haupt-Anderssen von Striessen to Grand Count and Elector of that province. Von Krieglitz was soon given the title of Grand Duke of Talabecland, which resulted in the declaration of Talabheim as an independent city-state.

Whilst he unsuccessfully waged war to forcibly return the Wasteland to the Empire, Emperor Wilhelm II abolished the Governing Council of Sorcerous Practices over the protestations of the Grand Theogonist. He declared that each of the Colour Colleges would administer their own affairs and the Primarch would be answerable to the Emperor for any breach of the laws established for the sorcerous arts.

In order to placate the wounded Church of Sigmar, Emperor Wilhelm II commissioned the Empire's foremost architect of his day, Hotto Krieger, to rebuild the Grand Cathedral as the previous one had been destroyed in the War of Succession. After three decades, the new Cathedral was consecrated.

Altdorf today

Through the efforts of Emperor Wilhelm II the Wise and his successors, Altdorf reached its former splendour and became the foremost of Imperial cities. The Imperial Capital is famous for its University, Colleges of Wizardry, libraries and other aspects of learning. Prominent scholars throughout the Empire make their way to Altdorf as do many students – both the serious and those who do so in order to continue to live off their wealthy parents.

In addition to the Cathedral of Sigmar, many of the other temples and shrines in Altdorf have benefited from reconstruction programmes. Many clerics and other pilgrims, particularly Sigmarites seeking the blessings of the Grand Theogonist, come to the great city to see the holy sites.

Altdorf is the largest trading port in the Empire and gateway to the rich markets in the Empire's interior. Traders from all over the Old World make their way to the Imperial capital. Imperial messengers frequently pass through the gates of the city, bearing messages to the Imperial Court or to the ambassadors from far-flung provinces and other realms in the Known World.

Most travellers arrive in Altdorf by boat, though there are some who will brave the roads. One leaves through the north gate of the city heading towards Middenheim. The other road departs through the southwest gate and branches into two roads. The right fork heads towards the direction of Bögenhafen and Helmgart to the southwest while the left towards southern Reikland. Visitors arriving to Altdorf will first notice the city's tall, majestic white walls topped with red tile roofs. They may also notice activity on these walls as recent events in Kislev have led to the decision to strengthen city's defences, including the modification of the outer walls to allow larger gun emplacements. Dwarf Engineers are the major contractor, but there are a number of humans labouring on the wall as well.

Just before the turn of the 25th century, Lector Jan Todbringer of the Reikland was elected to succeed the late Gludred III as Grand Theogonst. He took the name Yorri XV. A few years later, Karl-Franz of the house of Holswig-Schliestein, was elected Emperor Karl-Franz I.