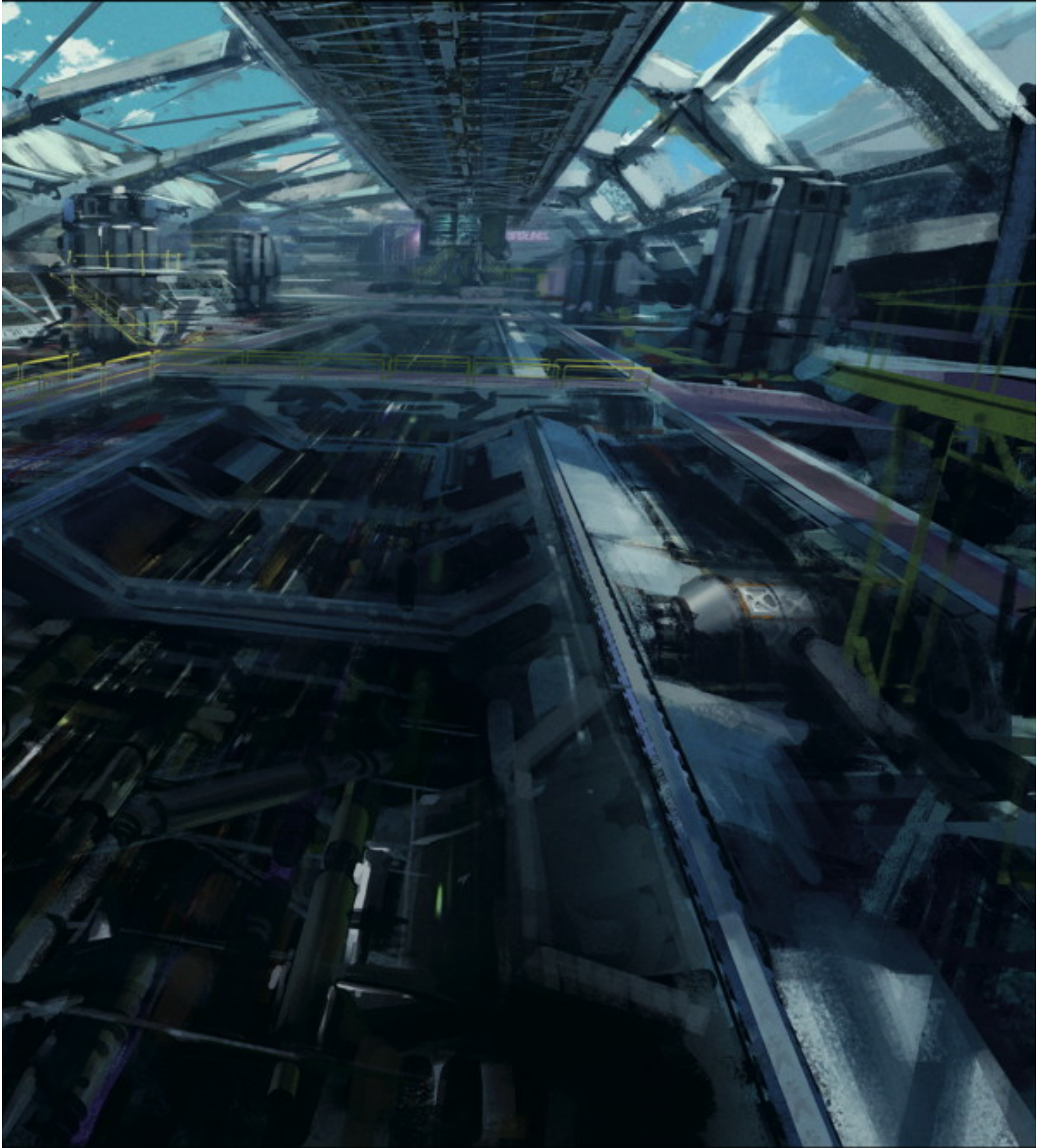


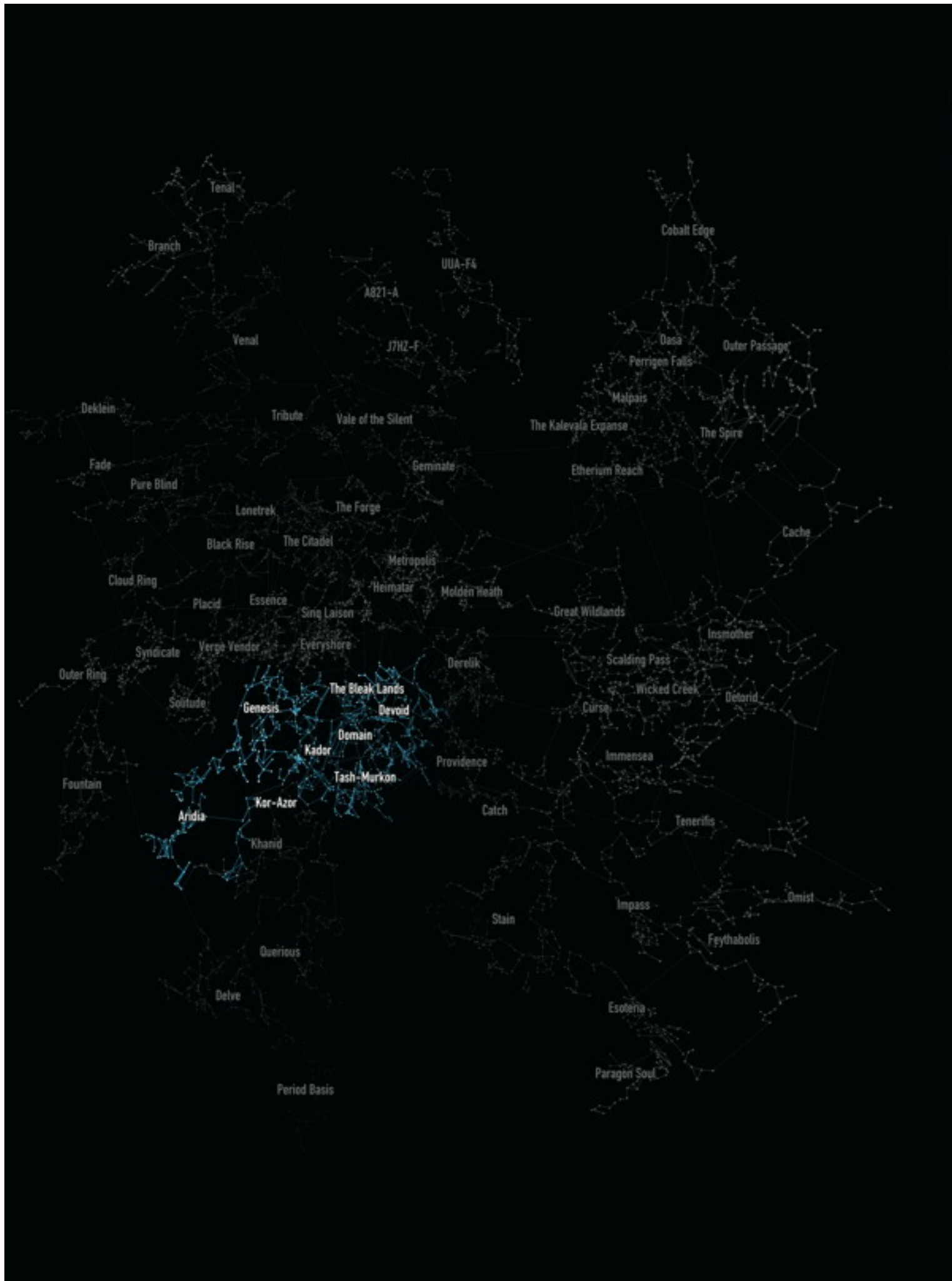
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SOURCE











AMARR EMPIRE

AMARR EMPIRE



The entrance to Theology Council headquarters, the moral police and hunter of heretics, who have the right to investigate, question and even imprison almost anyone at their whim. — Dam Torstad, Amarr Prime

INTRODUCTION

The Amarr Empire is a rigidly stratified authoritarian imperial state, both the oldest and the largest of the empires of New Eden. This vast theocratic society is supported by a broad foundation of slave labor, mostly drawn from people of Minmatar extraction, but also from several other nationalities subdued by the empire throughout its long history. As a culture, Amarr adheres to the basic tenet that what others call slavery is in fact only one step on an indentured person's spiritual path toward fully embracing the Amarr faith. Amarr citizens tend to be fervent and industrious individuals, deeply convinced from an early age of the moral superiority of their religion and the legacy of their favor in God's eyes, a phenomenon that makes them quick to take whatever action they deem necessary in order to bring the unenlightened into the fold.

In its efforts to enforce this view, the empire has for centuries engaged in a campaign known as the Reclaiming, a holy war against unbelievers. The unfortunate losers of this war have historically been enslaved by the empire. Nominally, this slavery is designed to work off the sins of the non-Amarr until the day they will be free to enter Amarr society as enlightened followers. In practice, however, the holders—the general name given to the slave-owning gentry—usually pay mere lip service to this traditional duty, then go on to brutally work their slaves to death for profit.

Holders are privileged elites who control hundreds of thousands of lives each, given more or less free rein to rule commoners however they see fit. Some are capricious tyrants, while others rule with temperance and justice. Due to their sweeping powers within their respective domains and the archaic bureaucracy they are entrenched in, the political interplay between holders is not so much a finely woven web as a tangle of thread, with rivalries, political marriages, and insidious double deals forming an impenetrable knot of interests and intrigues.

HISTORY

FOUNDATION

The oldest of all civilizations in New Eden, the Amarr trace their origins back to settlers on the planet of Athra thousands of years ago. Led by a prophet known as Gheinok the First, they were driven from the continent of Assimia following the collapse of the EVE Gate, eventually settling on an island known as Amarr. There they languished for centuries, as warlords waged bloody conflicts on each other and the church struggled to keep the faith alive.

From these warlords rose the legendary first emperor, Amash-Akura. Amash-Akura conquered via sword and scripture, bringing the entire island under his command and founding the Amarr Empire in AD 16470. He codified laws, established the hereditary noble class of holders, and founded the religious body that would rule the empire, the Council of Apostles.

THE RECLAIMING

For nearly four thousand years the Amarr stagnated, unable and unwilling to venture beyond the confines of their island. This changed abruptly in AD 20022, when foreign ships belonging to the mercantile Uldorian people landed. Though initially eager to trade, the Uldorians brought with them ideals that threatened the Amarr way of life. The emperor ordered them enslaved and declared the beginning of the Reclaiming, a holy war intended to make the entire world part of the empire.

During the early stages of the war, the Amarr discovered a nomadic people who had long fought against the Uldorians. Finding eager and willing converts, the Amarr graced them with the name Khanid (meaning "little lord" or "lordling") and employed them as shock troops and heavy infantry against the much larger but disunited Uldorian states.

One by one, the Uldorian nations fell and were enslaved by the Amarr until AD 20371, when the last holdout fell. The empire now covered Amarr Island and the continents of Assimia, Ves-Udor, and Cas-Udor. Eventually they managed to travel across the treacherous sea to discover the continent of Kathis, whose natives were powerless to stop the empire's inexorable march.

In AD 20544 the last independent nation on Athra fell to the empire. The victorious emperor renamed the planet Amarr in celebration of the conquest. Millions of slaves toiled under wealthy holders who worked them harshly, while simultaneously offering them the salvation of God.

EXPANSION INTO SPACE

The Amarr dedicated the spoils of conquest to science, art, and philosophy. Eventually they began to spread off their planet, starting in AD 20572, when they first launched people into space. A slow expansion soon followed, especially once the Amarr discovered microbial life on the ocean world of Tamiroth. They placed a permanent colony there in AD 20725.

In AD 21134, the Amarr stumbled across the remains of a star gate. Though the ancient structure no longer functioned, they were able to reverse engineer it and construct a completely new star gate. In order to open it, they had to send a cryoship filled with materials to construct a sister gate in the nearby star system of Hedion. It reached its destination fifty-three years later. With a foreign sun lighting their progress, the awoken workers constructed the star gate and sent a signal back to Amarr. In AD 21290, the gates flared to life.

INTERNAL SCHISMS

The rediscovery of star gate technology sent the Amarr expanding across their local cluster, but as they spread, their ability to control their populace weakened. Under these conditions, an ancient cult known as the Sani Sabik was reestablished and allowed to proliferate. These blood worshipers had lurked in the shadows of Amarr religion for

generations, always being stamped out, only to return decades later. This time, a group of them managed to evade imperial authorities and fled to the then-distant constellation of Araz, where they founded the short-lived kingdom known as "Takmahl." Though the Takmahl themselves are no longer to be found and their fate remains unknown, they are believed by many to be the origin of the feared Blood Raiders organization of today.

Additionally, there was the unfortunate case of Emperor Zaragram II. While initially just and pious, Zaragram slowly began to view himself as the living embodiment of God. He issued decree after decree that transferred power to him and transformed the state religion into a cult centered around himself. At the height of his delusion, Zaragram II ordered the construction of a "City of God" in the system of Sasta where he could reside in seclusion from worldly distractions. As he entered his palace there for the first time, he was assassinated by his nephew, who came to be canonized as St. Tetrimon. It took the Council of Apostles years to purge Zaragram's changes, and indeed, some were never removed.

FIRST CONTACT

In AD 21423, the Amarr opened a star gate to the Ealur system. There they discovered primitive humans living on the sixth planet. Though the Amarr were shaken by the existence of humans living on another planet, the emperor ordered them Reclaimed. They were quickly enslaved with minimal difficulty, replenishing a slave stock that had dwindled greatly over the previous thousand years.

With the revelation that they were not alone in the universe, the Amarr were thrown into a frenzy of rapid expansion. The thirst for slaves had been rekindled among the holders, and they rapidly constructed new star gates, searching for slaves. This rush yielded very little, however: only a few small populations, with now-forgotten names like Amdonish and Jakrin, were ever discovered.

MORAL REFORMS

A new emperor, Heideran V, was crowned in AD 21870. In those days, the emperor was still considered the first among equals on the Council of Apostles. Heideran V was ambitious and noticed a few of Zaragram's changes had never been undone. This tipped the balance of power in his favor, and he declared the start of the Moral Reforms, designed to rewrite Scripture to make the emperor the undisputed political and religious ruler of the empire.

The Council of Apostles rebelled, but Heideran had allied himself with the five largest and most powerful holder families. His own family was the noble and esteemed Kador, who counted numerous emperors among their number. The Kor-Azor were ambitious up-and-comers who had begun a rapid ascent. Religious fundamentalists, the Ardishapur had seen their fortunes wane over the previous centuries but were eager for a comeback. The militant Sarum family







THE AMARR EMPIRE

counted some of the best generals among their ranks. Finally, the Khanid family, named after the people they were given dominion over, possessed the most elite troops in the empire.

A bloody civil war tore the empire apart, leaving millions dead. It raged for decades, finally ending in AD 21930, with Heideran and his forces victorious. The five families who had allied with Heideran became the Heir Families, from whom future emperors would be chosen. Together with the emperor, they would form the Privy Council to govern the empire, while the Theology Council would oversee the Scriptures.

THE NI-KUNNI AND MINMATAR

Slave stocks were hit hard by the Moral Reforms and subsequent rebuilding effort. Fortunately for the empire, they discovered the Ni-Kunni in AD 22103. Living on a harsh, arid world, the Ni-Kunni viewed the Amarr as saviors almost as much as conquerors.

A mere two hundred and fifty years later, the Amarr detected the first signs of another spacefaring race, the Minmatar. They conducted a few probing raids on the outskirts of Minmatar space before determining that this new race of people was greatly inferior to them technologically.

In AD 22480, Emperor Darius II ordered the full conquest of the Minmatar. While the Amarr Navy brutally destroyed defenses and infrastructure, six slave ships touched down on the inhabited planets in the Minmatar home system, Pator. Three whole planets were depopulated and two lost half their number, with only the home world, Matar, managing

to put up significant resistance. At the end of the so-called Day of Darkness, hundreds of millions of Minmatar had been enslaved.

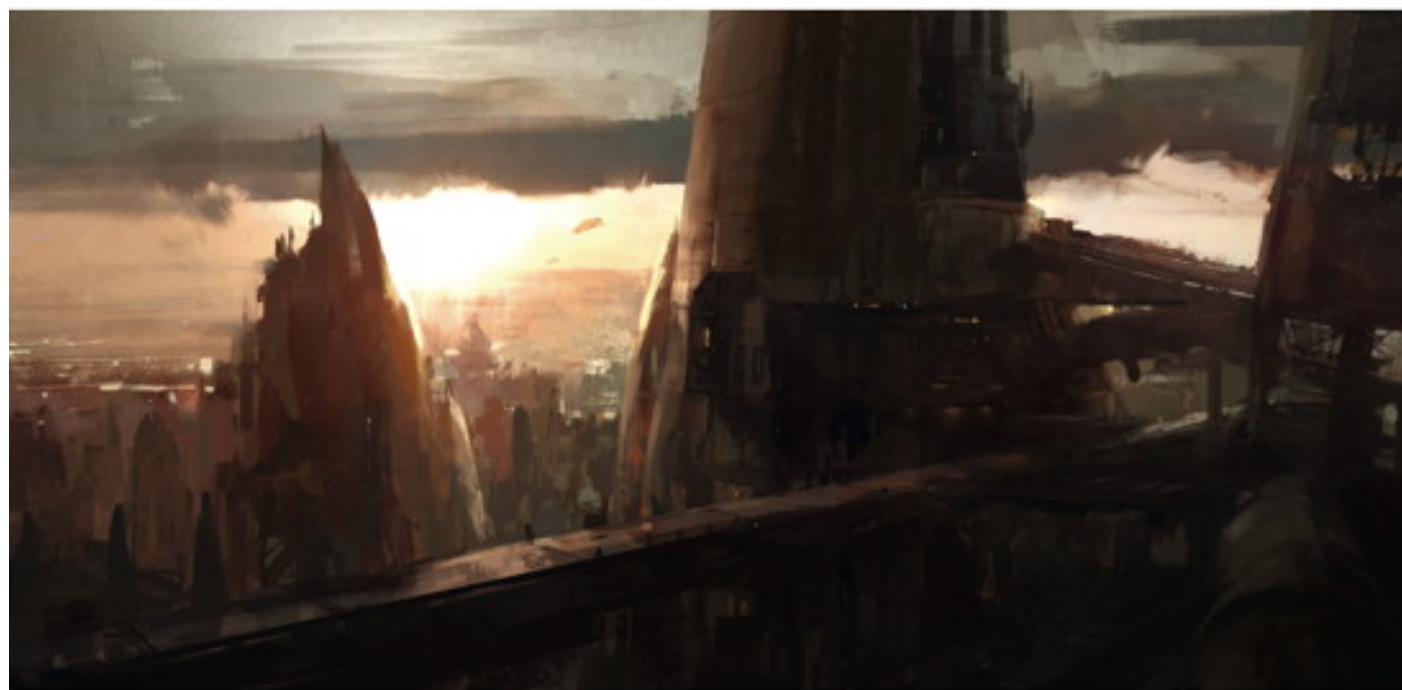
The Amarr continued their assault on the Minmatar, assisted by collaborators in the Nefantar tribe (who came to be known later as Ammatar). By AD 22485, the empire had fully conquered the Minmatar people. However, small bands managed to escape and form a resistance that would prove a constant thorn in the empire's side.

UNCHALLENGED NO LONGER

The Amarr developed the jump drive in AD 23058, allowing them to move large ships instantly from one system to the next without first constructing a star gate. The surge of expansion that followed quickly brought them into contact with additional spacefaring nations.

In AD 23180, they made first contact with the Gallente Federation, a nation of democratic liberals to whom the Amarr theocracy and entrenched slavery was anathema. However, both nations proved too large and powerful to attack the other and they settled into an uneasy truce. Shortly after, they encountered the Caldari State, who were locked into a bitter war with the Gallente.

Finally, they encountered the Jove in AD 23191. Initial contact was limited, and the Amarr took this as a sign of weakness from the Jove. The Amarr, hungry for fresh slaves, believed the Jove were a soft target and announced their plans to invade.



AMARR-JOVE WAR

The Amarr sent a single squadron, numbering roughly two hundred ships, to invade the Jove system of Vak'Atioth. Confident the battle would be a one-sided affair, the Amarr imagined quickly overrunning the panicked Jove and pressing them into bondage.

Instead it was the Jove who turned the battle into a massacre. Their small, nimble frigates pinned down the lumbering Amarr battleships while the massive doomsday weapons of the Jovian mother ship cut swaths through Imperial forces. Battle doctrine compelled the Amarr to stay on the field until they were slaughtered to a man.

MINMATAR REBELLION

Bloodied but not beaten, the Amarr prepared a second strike on the Jove. At that moment, slaves across the empire rose up in rebellion. Backed by Minmatar freedom fighters, Gallente sympathizers, and a small group of Jove agents, the Minmatar rebels were able to make swift gains before the Amarr could counterattack.

The massed, synchronized rebellion was something the Amarr had never envisioned. Millions of Amarr, holder and commoner alike, were slaughtered in the first few days. In the course of a few months, the Amarr were forced out of Minmatar space. Under the orders of Emperor Heideran VII, the Amarr abandoned large tracts of territory to the rebels, who founded the Minmatar Republic.

REIGN OF DORIAM II

In YC 105, after a three-hundred-year rule, Heideran VII succumbed to Tunit's disease. The Succession Trials were held, with the heirs being represented for the first time by the newly emerged capsuleer class. Dorian Kor-Azor, championed by the pilot Eclipticum, emerged victorious.

Dorian II caused waves within the empire by interceding in arguments between the new heirs and taking a stance of appeasement toward the Minmatar Republic. However, in YC 107, the Blood Raiders—an offshoot of the Sani Sabik—began a reign of terror against the empire under the direction of the deranged Omir Sarikusa. Dorian declared war on the Blood Raiders and, within a few short months, the empire ousted them from the Bleak Lands.

The victory was short lived, however, as Dorian was assassinated by unknown assailants on July fourth of that year.

KARSOOTH INTERREGNUM

The loss of two emperors within such a short period was nearly unprecedented in the empire. The Sarum family had not yet even named a successor to the fiery Jamyl Sarum. The other heirs, young and ambitious, were reluctant to begin the Succession Trials and put their own lives at risk.

Instead, Court Chamberlain Dochuta Karsooth assumed power. Unbeknownst to many, the once-pious Karsooth had grown twisted and cynical in his long years of service, giving himself fully to the corrupt Sani Sabik faith. As holders battled each other in capricious wars, Minmatar freedom

AMARR EMPIRE:

ESTIMATED TOTAL POPULATION: 21,449,105,690,000 (29%)

AMARR: 74% 15,872,338,210,000 (74%)

CALDARI: 3,860,839,024,000 (18%)

GALLENT: 1,501,437,398,000 (7%)

ENSLAVED MINMATAR: 10,712,558,277,000 (14%)

FREE MINMATAR: 214,491,056,000 (1%)

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION ACTIVELY PRACTICING RELIGION: 98%

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SLAVES PER HOUSEHOLD: 6.7

(Ministry Of Internal Order Census YC114)

fighters harassed the empire's lawless borders, and heirs such as Aritcio Kor-Azor engaged in tyranny, Karsooth watched with glee.

ELDER INVASION

The Starkmanir tribe had long been thought extinct following a genocide perpetrated by the Ardishapur family, but in YC 110 a group was discovered alive on a remote slave colony. Karsooth secretly ordered their execution while publicly assuaging the Minmatar.

Before his assassins could strike, a fleet of rogue Minmatar under the legendary Elders invaded. Throwing the empire into confusion, they struck multiple slave colonies by deploying Insorum, the antidote to a drug called Vitoc which was used to keep slaves under control. The suddenly free slaves rose up in rebellion as the Amarr Navy was repeatedly driven back.

Just when the Amarr seemed poised to fall, Jamyl Sarum returned from death to lead a counterattack. At the helm of a powerful superweapon of mysterious origin, she devastated the Elder fleet and sent it fleeing to the republic.

REIGN OF JAMYL I

Despite having committed suicide following her loss to Dorian II, Jamyl claimed to have been resurrected by God to be the savior of the empire. Though the heirs knew she had been cloned—a grave sin for Amarr heirs—all but Yonis Ardishapur bent their knee to her. Even he eventually grudgingly agreed to crown Jamyl empress.

Under Jamyl's reign, the empire has regained much of its previous glory. She made the reformed Aritcio Kor-Azor her imperial chancellor and tasked her rival Yonis Ardishapur with repairing the destruction wrought by the Elder fleet. In a calculated move, she freed millions of Minmatar slaves with a single decree, sending a surge of religious converts into the republic, where they began to sow dissent. With the aid of the Khanid Kingdom, she captured and executed Karsooth, leading to a reconciliation with Khanid II.





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She also oversaw the creation of the first cloned soldiers as part of the Templar project. When they proved unstable, she abandoned the project and warned the other nations against it—advice none followed, to their own detriment.

Today the empire is perhaps the strongest nation in New Eden, with the largest population, most stable economy, and the greatest amount of territory. However, the Minmatar wage war against the empire, while the heirs each scheme for their own power.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Amarr Empire is a feudal theocratic monarchy which can best be described as a single state made up of five vassal kingdoms governed by princes—known as the Amarr heirs—who submit to the central authority of the Amarr emperor. Beneath the heirs sit the feudal lords known as the holders, who rule as the dukes and barons of various planets, moons, space stations, colonies, continents, and other holdings.

THE EMPEROR

The emperor has numerous roles within the Amarr government. He is both sovereign of the Amarr state and leader of the Amarr religion. Primary among his duties is that of enforcer of the Scriptures, the holy laws of the empire. He also holds tremendous sway over the creation and issuance of new laws. Such decrees can be widespread and sweeping or extremely limited in scope. As the emperor speaks with the voice of God, he may countermand the Scriptures when necessary, as well as emphasize those that reinforce his position.

The emperor is technically the highest court in the empire as well, able to overturn any ruling set forth by the lower courts of heirs. In the past, he held open court, but this practice became untenable as the empire grew. These days, the emperor only levies judgments in extreme cases, such as when the empire itself is harmed.

In theory, the emperor's rule is absolute. In practice, he typically only has influence when personally present. Instead he relies on a number of officials, vassals, and governmental bodies to carry out his orders. While the emperor can make decisions that run counter to the wishes of his underlings, he does so at risk. An emperor must carefully balance the wishes of a number of rival factions so that none undermine his rule.

When an emperor dies, his successor is chosen from the heirs of five royal families. The families undergo a ritual known as the Succession Trials, with the winner cutting himself off from his family when crowned. The losers all must commit ritual suicide, a ceremony known as Shathol'Syn. In theory, this prevents the losers from challenging the new emperor's rule.

THE HEIRS

The Amarr heirs are the heads of the five royal families who hold permanent seats on the Privy Council. They are

the Ardishapur, Kador, Kor-Azor, Sarum, and Tash-Murkon families. The heirs are often compared to kings or princes of vassal kingdoms.

The heirs function in a way similar to the emperor, albeit on a more limited scale. They are responsible for keeping the peace and enforcing the empire's laws. They may also create their own laws which may be limited or broad, for the greater good or utterly capricious. They also collect taxes, regulate trade, and act as judge and jury for their vassals. In some ways, they are less fettered than the emperor, as their domains are so subdivided that organized opposition can rarely mobilize. However, widespread abuses by the heirs have historically met with severe repercussions.

PRIVY COUNCIL

The Privy Council is technically the governing body of the empire, but in reality it is a political battleground for its members. It is composed of the emperor, the five heirs, the imperial chancellor and court chamberlain, the high deacon of the Theology Council, the Khanid family representative, the heads of the five imperial ministries, and the grand admiral of the Imperial Navy. The council holds informal meetings known as closed sessions attended by the emperor, heirs, and chamberlain. Full sessions with everyone in attendance are rarer.

The council is almost always split into various factions vying for their own way. The emperor must carefully juggle their interests, trying to keep from angering any one faction too much. It has often been joked that if the council does not end with every side feeling it has lost, the emperor has done a poor job.

HOLDERS

The holder class makes up the diverse, byzantine hierarchy that sits below the heirs. Much as the heirs are lesser emperors, the holders are lesser heirs. They possess many of the same powers, albeit restricted to their own spheres of influence. However, the majority of holders are far more hands on in their rule than the heirs and are personally responsible for more mundane tasks.

There are three basic tiers of holder, though these are rough approximations and may vary from region to region or even system to system. At the top are holders who oversee entire constellations or groups of systems. Somewhat below them are the holders who control individual systems. Last are planetary holders, who despite their name may only own a single continent, city, or even space station. Of course, not all domains are made equal. The holder of a rich, populous city may be better off than one who holds three desolate planets in the dead end of Aridia.

IMPERIAL COURTS

The empire possesses two separate, empire-wide courts. They are typically referred to as Imperial Courts and consist of the Theology Council and the Civic Court. The Theology Council is by far the more powerful and prestigious of the two, as it deals with religious crimes, which hold a much wider scope in the

empire than is often realized. The Civic Court deals solely with secular matters, limiting both its influence and power.

In truth, the Civic Court tends to deal with commoners, misdemeanor crimes, and violations of local ordinances. The Theology Council deals with any crime that is proscribed by the Scriptures. This covers a wide range of potential crimes, everything from murder and heresy to theft and adultery. The Theology Council also acts as an appeals court for both the Civic Court and the courts of holders and the heirs.

IMPERIAL OFFICES

The two Imperial offices are often referred to as the left and right hands of the emperor. The two offices are often conflated and tend to step on each other's toes in pursuit of power. When one is ascendant, the other is often weakened as a result.

Currently, the post of imperial chancellor is the more powerful of the two. Held by Heir Aritcio Kor-Azor, the office of the imperial chancellor administers the vast bureaucracy of the empire by being the overseer of a majority of the Imperial Ministries. He additionally acts as the penultimate law enforcer in the empire, answering only to the emperor himself.

The court chamberlain is the emperor's primary advisor and confidant. He speaks with the full authority of the emperor and, when the emperor is absent, is considered to be of equal importance. The court chamberlain thus functions, in many cases, as a surrogate for the emperor, essentially allowing the emperor to exert his authority in two places at one time.

IMPERIAL MINISTRIES

Finally, the imperial bureaucracy is overseen by several ministries. These ministries are all highly political and can engage in skulduggery easily equal to that of the most cunning heir. Each wields enormous power and influence, particularly over the commoners of the empire.

The Amarr Civil Service is the largest employer in the empire and deals with the more mundane acts of governance. It is responsible for issuing permits, managing the Imperial Archives, maintaining public utilities, and overseeing the infrastructure of government.

The Amarr Trade Registry oversees the finances of the empire. It monitors all commercial transactions within the empire—at least those made legally—and collects taxes for the emperor. With its hands in the economy of the empire, it is perhaps the most important of all ministries.

The Ministry of Assessment has fallen on hard times recently, as exploration by the empire has slowed significantly. It continues to hold dominion over the empire's natural resources and parcels out contracts to various holders to exploit those resources.

The Ministry of Internal Order is the primary intelligence and police force within the empire. It works alongside the Theology Council to root out heretics and keep the peace. It also spies on foreign nations, though it is regarded as less adept at this than the intelligence offices of the other empires.

THE RETURN OF JAMYL SARUM

As the mighty Amarr Navy retreated in disarray from the power of the Elder Fleet, Okum felt a swell of pride in his chest. That darkness which had been cast over the Minmatar people was finally being lifted. The wrecks of Amarr ships littered the skies over Mekhios. The bodies of slavers lay broken and bloody on the planet below. The Elders would sweep victoriously onward, freeing every last Minmatar from bondage. It was a day Okum would remember for the rest of his life, even if his part had been as a crew member on a lone battleship.

A glint in space caught Okum's eye. He squinted and looked out the window. It was a small wing of Amarr ships, a single Abaddon flanked by twelve Apocalypses. Okum smiled despite himself, were the Amarr suicidal or merely foolish? Then Okum saw the light.

Finally, the Ministry of War oversees all branches of the empire's armed forces, including the cluster's largest navy, the Imperial Navy. While traditionally staffed by civilians, under the rule of Jamyl I the ministry has become far more militarized and now acts as a central command for the empire's military.

CULTURE AND RELIGION

Perhaps the most notable cultural characteristic of the Amarr (and certainly the one most often cited by their detractors) is their apparent unwillingness to be influenced by other cultures. As with most generalizations, this one is not entirely correct, yet not entirely wrong either: the empire's cultural output is tremendous, but as is the case with its population and several other aspects of its national makeup, the emphasis is more on quantity and uniformity than on thematic originality or stylistic invention.

Due no doubt to its ubiquity, religious iconography has represented a starting point in most of the Amarr's major artistic movements through the ages. Sculptures are by far the most common form of art, usually depicting scriptural figures varying in size and importance, from the most minor (children, slaves) to the grandest (saints, angels). Despite the natural variance in terms of styles and materials across inhabited Amarr worlds, art historians have nonetheless found the general similarity of designs and motifs among planetary cultures to be remarkable. In addition to sculpture, the Amarr cultural oeuvre is largely taken up with painting and theater. Their painting tends to utilize both traditional oil paints, as well as more modern light paints and hypertexturized materials, but again the modernity ends there: in terms of both style and content, the scriptural influence is front and center.

The general consensus among cultural scholars is that the empire's strong preference for strictly scriptural visual arts and its disinclination toward original literature are phenomena

THE AMARR EMPIRE

stemming directly from the top—that it has been ingrained into the populace for hundreds of years by their emperors that art and beauty lie in visual depictions of the truths that have already been recorded in words, rather than trying to rephrase those truths in different words. Indeed, it appears the general feeling is that any attempt to do so would be not only useless but also rather unseemly—perhaps even sacrilegious.

Naturally, as would happen anywhere, this has given rise to rarified artistic movements that make it their mission to be as subversive in this regard as possible. Mostly hailing from peripheral worlds, these movements tend to crop up every few years, each making a defiant stand against their art establishment's deeply rooted conformism, and each ultimately falling prey to the deadening effects of the Amarr's cultural inertia. The government need not even intervene; most of these movements are quietly and slowly quelled by the crushing weight of millennia-old tradition.

Ever since early settler days on Athra (the planet now known as Amarr Prime), religion has been of paramount importance to the Amarr. After the closure of the EVE Gate, faith provided the social glue that kept their sect together. Later, it was their beliefs that provided the moral certitude which enabled them to expand and blossom into a full-blown empire.

Amarr religion is exacting and dogmatic, placing a great deal of emphasis on the service of the individual to the greater good (almost without exception expressed as "God" or "the empire"). Its tenets are laid down in a set of books known collectively as the Scriptures. An almost unfathomably large collection of holy texts, the Scriptures are Amarr's attempt to set in stone everything pertinent to the great mechanisms of religion and empire—they are not only a fundamental social contract but also a repository for historical codes of behavior, technological breakthroughs, and formative myths, among many other things. The collective writings have been maintained and updated throughout the centuries by imperial theologians and include texts that hark back to the very origins of Amarr society. The most defining characteristic of the doctrine, and one that emerges time and time again, is the affirmation of the Amarr as the chosen people of God, the race destined to rule the universe in his name.

Long ago, the Scriptures say, a great disaster befell a corrupt and sinful mankind. Through these dark times only the Amarr maintained faith, and they alone were spared the worst of the hardships. God then bade the Amarr go forth and conquer the world in his name, until all of creation was worshiping at his altar. This mission drives the Amarr in every respect. Those descended from the original inhabitants of Amarr Island (called True Amarr) are held aloft by the rest of Amarr society, viewed as sacred paragons of piety. Other bloodlines are forever tainted by the sins of their ancestors; no matter how pious, no matter how fervent and faithful, they shall never match the unstained purity of the True Amarr soul. Discrimination, while not always overt, is a fact of life in

the empire and accepted as natural. The impure can always strive toward the True Amarr ideal, but they will forever fall short.

This belief leads to great stratification in Amarr society, with the True Amarr presiding above and the conquered considered to be lesser citizens. At the very top stand the holders and the clergy. Below the nobles come the commoners, men and women who do not possess the divine right to rule but are still considered free in the eyes of the law. While free, however, they will rarely ascend past the rigidly defined ceiling of whatever caste they were born into. They must accept their place in the world and realize there is little opportunity for advancement. While the lowborn occasionally manage to become wealthy merchants, or win esteem as war heroes, they must resign themselves to never being viewed with true respect or admiration by those born into privilege.

Finally come the slaves. Slavery in the empire covers a broad range of professions. While many slaves are unskilled laborers in fields and mining colonies, a significant number are trained by their masters to fill roles that even commoners are rarely able to attain. The most intelligent and talented slaves receive higher educations and work as scientists, academics, accountants, and even military specialists. Others fill low-ranking clerical roles in both the civil service and the church. Regardless of occupation, however, one thing unites every slave: they are never allowed to forget that they are slaves, beholden to their masters' whims, liable to be bought and sold at any time.

GROWING UP IN THE AMARR EMPIRE

A person's life in the empire is largely determined at birth. The child of a holder can expect to be given healthy food, receive the best education, and never want for anything. Aside from the children of highly exceptional individuals, commoners must make due with less in all aspects. Their food will be acceptable, their teachers decent but unspectacular, and they will know the need to ration and budget. Slave children can look forward to hard lives, laboring for their masters, though the best and brightest might be selected to receive advanced education . . . or be taken from their parents to be indoctrinated as one of the slave soldiers known as Kameiras.

Regardless, everyone born in the empire has one thing in common: a constant reinforcement of religion, the natural order of True Amarr and holders at the top with all others beneath them, and an unrelenting loyalty to the heirs and the empress. The church will be a constant presence in their lives, from the day they are born (with their names recorded in the Book of Records by a trained priest) to the day they die (when another priest closes their entries in that same book). Daily worship and devotion is expected of everyone. The rare few who do not comply are shunned as heretics and sinners.

Even in this, the children of holders have an easier time of it. Their ancestors proved the piety of their blood. They

need not spend as much time on their knees in prayer; rather, they are tasked much more with learning how to rule. Private tutors educate them in the ways of economics, rhetoric, diplomacy, and war. The favored heir of a holder is given the best. Less-favored siblings may be expected to become priests, enlist in the navy, or take up a noble profession such as barrister, doctor, or slaver. Both young men and women may find themselves married off to other families to secure political alliances or produce claimants for titles or even to seal business deals.

Children of commoners usually follow in the footsteps of their parents. The eldest typically have the least freedom in this respect, as they are groomed to take over businesses or learn the family trade. Siblings may be recruited into the trade for larger businesses, but for those families with simple trades, they are free to explore their own path in the world. Commoners often take up the trades the nobles find distasteful, particularly anything that involves manual labor.

Finally, slaves rarely get any education beyond a religious one. Only those who display great acumen at a young age and

are singled out by their holders can hope to learn anything beyond the most basic knowledge necessary to do their jobs. Life as a slave child is hard and monotonous . . . yet it is rarely dangerous, as a child is a valuable commodity to a holder. In this respect, the children of slaves may find themselves taken from their parents at a young age, sold to another holder who has more use for future laborers than he does for money.

BLOODLINES

TRUE AMARR

Pious but intractable, charismatic but haughty, the True Amarr are the dominant bloodline in the empire and are both hated and respected for it. Foreigners often consider the True Amarr to be little more than slaving zealots who use religion as an excuse to tread on the backs of the commoners and slaves for their own personal gain. While this is accurate in some cases, the True Amarr are deeply faithful and want nothing more than their fellow man to be safe and happy . . . under the glory of God and the Amarr Empire, of course.

