

# Imperial Legion



*Angry Games Theme Pack #2*  
*August, 2021*

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# INTRODUCTION

Another month, another theme pack.

I say that like these have become routine. But they haven't yet. For all my talk about building a workflow and a process, these still take a lot more time to put together than I'd like. Not writing that content. Nah. That's easy – humble brag. It's all the formatting and laying out and stuff.

It doesn't help that I decided to include a simple map this month.

Nor does it help that my definition of simple is a little skewed.

This month's theme is the Imperial Legion for reasons that made sense a couple of months ago when I decided what the next theme would be. You'll find a bunch of military and combat-themed optional rules and a writeup about the Angryverse's stand-in for the Roman Empire – both the classical one and the later Holy one – the Zethinian Empire. And because of that holy bit, you'll also find some references to the major religion of the central and western Angryverse, the Prophets of the Vasaar. And there's even a new category of divine magical items for you to use.

As always, if you like this content, leave a comment on Patreon. And if you don't like this content, also leave a comment. This is still a new project and polite, constructive feedback is always useful.

Meanwhile, have fun stomping your PCs flat with a tiny, skirmish-sized phalanx. Yes, I know phalanxes were Greek. Leave me alone.

# THE ANGRY GM

AUGUST 30, 2021

# ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

The *Dungeons & Dragons* game is not about massive forces clashing on the field of battle. Rarely do the heroes encounter legions of soldiers in their adventures. Nonetheless, occasionally, the heroes will end up doing battle with small forces of highly trained, disciplined soldiers. And if they want to prevail, they will need strategy and cunning to counter their foes' numerical superiority and discipline.

Below, you'll find a collection of rules designed to make discipline and strategy a greater part of the *Dungeons & Dragons* combat experience.

## Formation

A formation is a single, contiguous group of three or more allies. A creature is part of a formation when it is adjacent to at least one other member of the formation and when it is not incapacitated or demoralized.

### Formation Benefits

There are no special benefits to being part of a formation. However, some creatures have traits, actions, or special abilities that require them to be part of a formation or that affect an entire formation. So long as the creature is part of a formation of three or more allied creatures, it can use any such abilities.

Creatures do not lose access to formation-related abilities and traits simply because turn-based D&D movement briefly separates the formation. If a formation breaks up during an allied creature's turn, all members of that formation retain their formation-related benefits until the end of that creature's turn.

To make formation benefits easier to manage within D&D's turn structure, however, consider using the variant initiative rules described below.

## Variant Rule: Initiative Ties

Disregard the instructions on *PHB 189* regarding tied initiative checks and use the following rules instead.

When two or more allied creatures have the same initiative check result, those allies all act on the same single turn. The allied creatures can take their actions in any order and even divide up their turns as they wish, provided each creature moves no farther than its allowed speed and takes no more than one action and one bonus action.

*Example: Alice and Bob both roll a total initiative check of 17 at the start of battle. When the GM reaches that count in the initiative order, Alice decides to take the first of her two allowed attacks. Bob then moves half his speed and*

*attacks, pushing an enemy adjacent to Alice. Alice then uses a bonus action to activate a special ability, attacks the newly adjacent enemy, and then moves to engage another enemy. Bob then finishes his move.*

When two or more enemies act on the same initiative, first resolved all tied NPCs' turns with simultaneous turns as described above. After all the NPCs' turns have been resolved, then resolve all the PCs' turns with simultaneous turns as described above. Non-allies can never take simultaneous turns.

## Variant Rule: Delaying

Immediately before starting its turn, a creature can choose not to start its turn but to instead delay its turn until later in the round. The creature must specify the initiative count on which it intends to take its turn. The creature cannot specify an initiative count higher than its current count or lower than one, despite the cyclical nature of initiative. The creature cannot interrupt another action, creature, or turn by delaying its turn.

When its newly specified initiative count arrives, the creature takes its turn as normal. Possibly in simultaneity with any allies that share its new count. Thereafter, each round, the creature acts on its new initiative count.

## Variant Rule: Group Initiative

Whenever an initiative check is required, any group of allies — PCs or NPCs alike — can roll initiative as a group if they want to act on the same turn and do not want to spend their first turns delaying to adjust the initiative count. The member of the group with the lowest total initiative modifier — including feats, temporary magical abilities, and other effects — rolls a single check. The result determines the initiative count for all members of the group.

## Status

Status describes the current, visible state of a creature's health. Status must be announced whenever any creature's status changes by damage, healing, or any other effect. A creature's status is visible to any creature that can see it.

Status has no mechanical effect by itself. It's a convenient way for you and your players to communicate the states of creatures in the game without resorting to calling hit point counts. However, the morale rules described below make extensive use of status and it is possible to create monster and PC abilities that are keyed to the creature's or its targets' statuses.

# ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

## Statuses

- Uninjured. A creature that has taken no damage at all is uninjured.
- Wounded. A creature that has taken at least one point of damage, but less than half its maximum hit points, is wounded. It shows visible signs of minor injury, fatigue, or debility.
- Staggered. A creature that has taken damage equal to or greater than half its maximum hit points, but not more than three-quarters of its maximum hit points, is staggered. It is visibly affected by its wounds, fatigue, or debilities.
- Critical. A creature that has taken damage equal to or greater than three-quarters of its maximum hit points is critically wounded. Its wounds, fatigue, and debilities are life-threatening.

## Tracking Hit Points

If you use status in your game, record hit points for all PCs and NPCs as follows:

37 | 18 | 9

A creature's staggered threshold is equal to half its maximum hit points rounded down. Its critical threshold is equal to half its staggered threshold rounded down.

## Variant: Identifying Creature Status

At your option, you can make it more difficult to identify the status of non-humanoids and non-beasts. Whenever you would announce such a creature's status or whenever a player asks about the status of such a creature, use an Intelligence check to determine whether the PCs can deduce the creature's status, adding proficiency bonuses as appropriate. For example, a PC could make an Intelligence (Arcana) check to identify an aberration's status or an Intelligence (Religion) check to identify that of a fiend.

DC	Creature Appearance or Biology
5	Unusual humanoid or beast E.g. manticores, owlbear
10	Fantastic humanoid or beast E.g. dragon, dryad, hell hound
15	Completely alien creature E.g. black pudding, fire elemental, beholder

## Morale

Very few creatures are willing to fight to the death. Most will flee after they've suffered their first injury. Morale rules allow you to determine when NPCs — allies and enemies of the PCs alike — give up the fight and focus on getting out alive.

Note that, outside of magical effects such as those that impose the frightened condition, players decide when their characters attempt to run from battle. PCs do not have morale ratings and never make morale saves.

## Morale Rating

An NPC's morale rating determines the status (see Status above) at which they begin making morale saves and what happens when they become demoralized. Morale ratings are listed as follows:

*Staggered (Panic)*

In addition to the statuses described above, some NPCs might have a morale rating of fearless indicating that they don't make automatic morale saves due to taking damage (see below).

*Fearless (Berserk)*

## Morale Saves

Whenever a creature's morale might break, the creature rolls a special Wisdom saving throw called a morale save.

Any bonus or penalties to which the creature is entitled regarding the frightened condition also apply to morale saves.

Except as noted otherwise, the DC for a morale save is equal to the passive Intimidate score of the enemy with the highest such score visible on the battlefield.

If a creature's current status is worse than the status described by its morale rating, it has disadvantage on all morale saves.

If a creature's current status is better than the status described by its morale rating, it has advantage on morale saves.

## Automatic Morale Saves

Whenever a creature takes damage sufficient to change its status to that of its morale rating or worse, make a morale save for the creature. Note that you don't make a morale save every time a creature takes damage, only when its status changes as a result of that damage.

Fearless creatures do not make morale saves from taking damage.

# ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

## Demoralized

When a creature fails a morale save, it becomes demoralized.

- A demoralized creature has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws.
- A demoralized creature recovers from being demoralized after a short or long rest.
- The creature does not act normally as long as it can see, hear, or perceive any enemies. Instead, it chooses its actions as described below.

## Panic.

A panicked creature is no longer thinking rationally.

- The creature can only take the Dash action.
- The creature drops what it is holding.
- The creature moves such that it ends each turn further from all enemies than when it began.
- If the creature cannot move as described, it drops prone and cowers, taking no actions.

## Retreat

A retreating creature attempts to escape safely or surrender if it can.

- The creature can take only the Dash, Dodge, or Disengage actions.
- The creature moves such that it ends each turn further from all enemies than when it began.
- If the creature cannot move as described, it takes the Dodge action until it can escape.
- Intelligent creatures might attempt to bargain for their lives or surrender while Dodging.

## Berserk

A berserk creature flies into a murderous rage, becoming a danger to friend and foe alike.

- The creature treats all other creatures as enemies. It has no allies.
- The creature can take only the Attack action.
- The creature attacks the nearest enemies, moving to engage as necessary. If multiple enemies are equally close, the creature attacks a random target.

## Defect

A defector attempts to change sides or else turns on its former allies.

- The creature recognizes its allies as enemies and, if allowed, treats its enemies as allies.
- The creature can take any actions entitled to it as normal.
- Intelligent creatures will indicate they've changed sides to their new allies. If attacked or threatened by their new

allies, they may take the Dodge action while negotiating terms. Otherwise, they act as a retreating creature instead.

- Unintelligent creatures will simply attack their new enemies and ignore their new allies. If attacked or threatened by their new allies, they act as a berserk creature instead.

## Assigning Morale Ratings

Generally, non-combatants and non-predatory beasts start making morale saves when they become wounded. Normal combatants and predators start making morale saves when they become staggered. Highly disciplined combatants and unintelligent beasts start making morale saves when they become critically injured.

Mindless creatures and certain non-mortals such as celestials, fiends, and elementals are fearless.

Most non-combatants, non-predators, and mindless creatures panic when they become demoralized. Combatants, predators, and disciplined or strong-willed individuals retreat when they become demoralized. Some creatures known for their ferocity such as badgers, boars, and ogres go berserk when they become demoralized. Intelligent, chaotic opportunists defect when they become demoralized.

As a flavorful risk of summoning and binding magic, consider making all summoned, bound, and magically enslaved creatures defect when they become demoralized. And have them make morale saves when critically injured even if they would otherwise be fearless. This is a good way to introduce the classic trope whereby summoners can lose control of their thralls.

## Special Morale Action: Bolster

As an action, you try to restore a demoralized ally's fighting spirit. One demoralized ally of your choice that can see and hear you can attempt a morale save. On a success, it ends the demoralized condition on itself.

If you are familiar with the ally and use your knowledge of the creature's ideals, bonds, traits, or values to appeal to it, the demoralized ally has advantage on the morale save.

## Special Morale Action: Demoralize

As an action, you attempt to scare an enemy into fleeing. One enemy of your choice that can see and hear you must make a morale save whose DC is equal to your passive Intimidate score. On a failure, the enemy becomes demoralized.

If you brandish something the enemy is particularly afraid of — a flaming torch before a wolf, for example — or use your knowledge of the creature's bonds, ideals, traits, or values to threaten it, the enemy has disadvantage on the morale save.

## ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

### Adjudicating Morale

The above rules are highly mechanical, but you should use them as guidelines and build on them as you see fit. Use morale saves whenever creatures — enemies and allies alike — are fighting in unusual or dangerous situations, provide advantage and disadvantage on such saves based on various circumstances, and give the PCs wide latitude when deciding what constitutes particularly bolstering or threatening actions.

Do not, however, allow players to combine morale actions with other actions. Except when damage forces a morale save, a player must choose between demoralizing an enemy or taking another action.



# IN THE ARMORY

On the field of battle, the better-equipped force usually has the upper hand. It is true for armies and it is true for adventurers.

Below, you'll find two new equipment options for your legions and adventurers, the massive tower shield and the magical relic.

## Tower Shield

A tower shield is a massive shield, almost as tall and wide as the soldier wielding it. Tower shields are exceptionally heavy, impeding stealth and slowing all but the strongest bearers.

In addition to the normal AC bonus, tower shields provide the wielder with half-cover as described on PHB 196. Additionally, if the bearer of a tower shield takes the Dodge action, they enjoy three-quarter cover and become an obstacle that provides three-quarter cover to other creatures as described on PHB 196.

## Relics

Relics are magical items derived from the mortal remains of divine spellcasters or faithful individuals, or from objects in close contact with such individuals at the time of their death and thereafter. Relics cannot be crafted. Instead, they are imbued with divine magic by the passage of a devout soul from this world.

Relics might include fragments of bone, skulls, vital fluids, locks of hair, ashes, shrouds, jewelry, holy symbols, or other funeral attire. Even shackles and bonds that held an individual when they died have turned up as relics. Relics are usually kept in small containers called reliquaries even if they might otherwise be worn. And non-magical relics in reliquaries are used as holy symbols by some divine spellcasters. Small reliquaries include leather cases, wooden tubes, or locket, while larger relics might comprise cases, chests, or arks.

A divine spellcaster of the appropriate faith can use a relic as a holy symbol.

Magical relics function like staves and wands, but they always require attunement by an individual of an appropriate alignment. Relics have a limited number of charges. The attuned individual can use an action to expend those charges to cast one or more divine spells or invoke other magical

effects. However, with each expended charge, there is a chance that the relic will lose its imbued magic forever. It remains, however, a serviceable holy symbol.

Although every relic is unique, each has a rarity to help you determine its value and when it's appropriate to include it in an adventure.

## Relics in Aerth

Relics are highly sought after and considered sacred by most religious organizations in Aerth. Human devotees of the Prophets of the Vasaar — especially the servants of the Shining King and His Knights — prize relics highly, as do most dwarves. Temples and shrines are honored with the interment of non-magical and magical relics alike, and devout individuals will carry relics into battle in dire need. Enemies of the various faiths often purposely destroy relics.

After the fall of the Zethinian Empire and in the chaos and strife that followed, pagan followers of the Old Ways and reavers of the savage races destroyed many interred relics. Many others were lost. And some yet remain, buried in the vaults of fallen or abandoned temples. Many a human cleric of the Shining King or the Twins of the Tower and more than a few dwarven clerics have undertaken the quest to recover the lost relics of their order.

## Blessed Finger of Saint Eimeer

*Relic, uncommon (requires attunement by a good-aligned creature)*

The blessed finger of Saint Eimeer is a finger bone, the middle joint from the saint's right index finger. It is usually stored in a simple wooden tube.

The relic functions as a holy symbol for any divine spellcaster devoted to the Prophets of the Vasaar. It does not require attunement to serve as a holy symbol.

The relic has 7 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 charge as an action to cast either the bless or bane spell from it. For 1 charge, you cast the 1st-level version of either spell. You can increase the spell slot level by one for each additional charge you expend.

Each time you use one or more charges, roll 1d6. If the result is more than the number of remaining charges, the relic loses its magical properties but remains useful as a holy symbol. The relic regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges each day at dawn.

Armor	Cost	AC	Strength	Stealth	Weight
Tower Shield	30 gp	+2 and Cover	15	Disadvantage	30 lb.

# THE RISE, FALL, AND RETURN OF ZETHINIA

The history of Aerth — and of its most populous, civilized race: humanity — is one of rises and falls. Unique amongst the civilized races, the ambitious humans are driven to build great kingdoms. Empires. The elves surmise the humans' short lifespan is to blame for their drive to leave a lasting mark on the world. The dwarves claim it is down to the human's rash individuality and lack of communal purpose. Nonetheless, the history of humanity is the history of its empires.

The Age of Empires ended several centuries ago with the decline of three great empires. Zhou in eastern Aerth, Alqaad in south-central Aerth, and Zethinia in central and western Aerth. Wracked by civil war, Alqaad is now an isolated, insular theocracy. Zhou is a crumbling, corrupt collection of feuding states. And Zethinia has been reduced to a tiny kingdom where once it was a continent-spanning Empire that presided over the most prosperous, peaceful, and unified era western Aerth had ever known.

## The Birth of an Empire

Zethinia began as little more than a trade outpost, independent of the larger kingdoms that surrounded it. But through its amassed wealth and military strategy, it conquered those lands and then pushed outward. Few nations stood against it and many settled for self-governance as Imperial protectorates over military conquest.

The Empire was cosmopolitan and progressive, absorbing ideas from its conquests and its neighbors. It readily adopted the use of arcane magic, modeling academies after those built in Alqaad or the enclaves of the High Elves. When the Prophets appeared and spread the teaching of the Vasaar, the Empire and the newly formed church quickly found a common purpose. The greatest of the Zethinian emperors were idealists. They envisioned a golden age of peace, prosperity, and unity amongst the civilized races. No longer would the civilized people of the world hunker behind stone walls. No longer would they be afraid of pillaging goblins, marauding orcs, and rampaging dragons. And, to some extent, at its height, the Zethinian Empire presided over just such a world.

Not every emperor was so idealistic or pure. There were wars — attempts to conquer the elven lands and the dwarven kingdoms and several attempts to wipe out the devotees of the Old Ways — but eventually, peaceful coexistence, trade, and cultural exchange became the order of the day.

But the Empire wasn't without its enemies. The savage races, of course, were forever pounding on the gates. Especially the hobgoblins in northeastern Aerth beyond the Sunderlands. And the humans of the Western Kingdoms and the Sunderlands resisted imperial rule, often as not. The Empire grew too large to manage. Its resources stretched too thin.

The weak, the corrupt, and the opportunistic became a cancer, devouring the Empire from within while the Empire's enemies chipped away at it from outside.

## The Fall of Zethinia

Though historians speak of the fall of Zethinia, there was no actual collapse. No Decade of Ruin like the one that beset Zhou. No Three-Way War or Conquest of the Flame as in Alqaad. Zethinia just fell apart. Slowly. Surely. One bit at a time. And its fall devastated all of western and central Aerth.

Without the Imperial army protecting the roads and borders, human civilization shrunk to isolated settlements. The darkness pressed in on all sides. Without the unifying force of the Empire as an enemy, the Sunderlander kingdoms fell back to their old ways of warring amongst themselves. And that left them unprepared for the hobgoblin onslaught. The elves and dwarves shrunk in on themselves, retreating back to their own lands. Some with regret, others with relief. Without Zethinia as an ally, the resurgence of dark monsters and savage humanoids weighed heavily on them.

Meanwhile, without the networks of roads and trade routes, the great institutions of old — the arcane academies, the knightly orders, the great Church of the Prophets — survived only in isolated pockets, hidden monasteries, and half-ruined fortresses. Or, more often, passed on from teacher to student.

In some corners of Aerth, however, old traditions and cultures were born anew. Without the weight of the cosmopolitan but ultimately homogenous culture of the Zethinian Empire crushing them down, the unique values and ways of life born of human variability started to grow anew. A resurgence in the faith of the primal spirits of the Old Ways took place, often in peaceful and harmonious coexistence with the teachings of the Prophets of the Vasaar. Old differences were put aside as communities were forced to fend for themselves in a dangerous world. With danger surrounding you, you can't care much who your neighbors are. Small communities grew around lordships who, in turn, formed complex networks of feudal alliances. And thus, new kingdoms were born. Or, in many cases, old kingdoms were reborn. And the shared sense of danger helped prevent the worst exploitation by greedy lords and ladies, kings and queens. At least in some realms. For a time.

For humans are still humans. Ambitious, ever reaching, and ever searching for meaning. For humans are truly capable of the very best and the very worst of all the civilized races.

And nothing signifies the nature of humanity more than the Legion of New Zethinia and the Order of the Phoenix Risen.

# THE RISE, FALL, AND RETURN OF ZETHINIA

## The Rise of the Phoenix

*At its height, a pilgrim could travel the Zethinian roads from Dyfal in the west through the capital and on to Sitrabad on the edge of the Alqaadi east unmolested by man or beast. And at every teeming city and every mean little village on the way, that pilgrim would find safe quarter and comfort for the night. If we are each to be judged in the next life by our works in this one, let our work be to restore that age of history, that every civilized being knows peace, prosperity, and safety under the banner of the Zethinian Empire, risen from the ashes of history.*

*Commander-General Tyverus Nolo of the Order of the Phoenix Risen*

Zethinia is little more than a city-state in central Aerth and a collection of trade colonies. But as the world recovers from the Age of Darkness in which it finds itself, trade and travel have resumed across the Circle Sea. And Zethinia is growing wealthy again. And on the edge of what might be generously called the lands of Zethinia, in an isolated temple-fortress, an order of knights has arisen under the command of the charismatic paladin Tyverus Nolo. And a legion of soldiers is gathering around that order.

Orphaned when sahuagin attacked the trade ship on which his family was traveling, Nolo was raised in a monastery dedicated to the Knight of Mercy, one of the Shining King's three Sainted Knights. No one doubted Nolo would someday don the cloak of a Hospitaler. Apart from his burning passion to help those in need, Nolo demonstrated great charisma and leadership potential. On his Mission of Mercy, he organized relief for a number of Zethinian border villages struck by famine. But as his mission drew to a close, he chose not to return to his order. Instead, he joined a Zethinian host on the march to confront a warband of orcs raiding frontier villages. While the orcs were routed, the Zethinian host was decimated. Nolo himself organized the remains of the force under his command and led the company across the Zethinian borderlands.

Nolo saw disaster and death everywhere. People slaughtered by the savage races, by terrible monsters, by brigands and barbarians. People starving. Diseased. Impoverished. People afraid to leave the walls of their towns. And it was during this campaign that he swore an oath to the Shining King and the Prophets of the Vasaar to devote his life to bringing peace, prosperity, and safety. He swore to resurrect the Zethinian Empire. And to forsake all ambition — all the temptations of power — he swore that he would never sit upon the throne of that Empire.

Nolo adapted the old Zethinian symbol of the Phoenix and

called his army the Legion of New Zethinia. And, for the next several years, the Legion traveled central Aerth doing good works for the civilized people of the world. And wherever they went, they gathered more followers. The Legion began to grow. And soon, others distinguished themselves. Proved their own devotion. Nolo knighted the best of his officers and they swore the same oath he did. To unite all the people of Aerth under the banner of Zethinia, to usher in a golden age of peace, and to never wear the crown of the empire they served. But should that crown ever rest on an unworthy head, they swore to cut the head from the body and find a more worthy one.

The Legion of New Zethinia and the Order of the Phoenix Risen grew large enough to claim an abandoned fortress-temple off the Zethinian coast. The Legion and the Order have entered a quiet phase now. Building. They've stopped campaigning in earnest. Instead, they send out small missions to raise funds, recruit followers, and to recover the lost temples and relics of Zethinia. The Legion and the Order never go begging, though. Instead, they go where they are needed, deliver the innocent from harm, and then take whatever donations and recruits are volunteered. It is very effective.

The Legion and the Order have laid no claims. They've conquered no lands. They have nothing but their one small fortress. But no one is sure how many soldiers and knights are actually out in the world. They turn up where needed, earn the gratitude of the common folk, and then either move on or establish an official semi-permanent garrison or camp to stand against further threats. They challenge no authority and accept the rule of whoever's lands they are in. But the lands in which they have a presence is growing. And the number of people who owe them a debt of gratitude is also growing.

Some worry that, one day, Commander-General Nolo will simply come out and say that all of Aerth is under his rule. Or his proxy's rule. And everyone will look around and realize it is just so.

The knights of the Order of the Phoenix Risen are fiercely devoted to their missions, to the honor of the Order, and to Nolo himself. The soldiers, officers, builders, medics, and servants of the Legion of New Zethinia are another story. Most are good-hearted enough. Many were rescued by the Legion, one way or another. But some are twisted by the tragedies they lived through. And every army has its opportunists, ambitious climbers, grifters, and scoundrels. Armies are armies and people are people.

Of course, the Order and Legion make many rulers nervous. And more than a few of the non-human races who remember the Zethinian Empire at its worst and not just its best are keeping a watchful eye on the Order.

# THE RISE, FALL, AND RETURN OF ZETHINIA

Officially, the High Speakers of the Great Citadel in Zethinia have disavowed association with the Order. But they haven't actually denounced the Order. And the current queen of Zethinia has also put some distance between herself and the Order, but she hasn't denounced them either. Perhaps she has a quiet alliance with Nolo and her distance is part of his plan to conquer the world without shedding a drop of blood. Or perhaps she simply believes she will be named the rightful Empress when the time comes. Or perhaps she recognizes her own meager forces are already no match for the Legion under the Order's command.

Time will tell.

## The Legion and the Order in Your Game

The knightly Order of the Phoenix Risen and the Legion of New Zethinia can fill many roles in your game. As an order of knights devoted to protecting the innocents of the world and recovering holy sites and artifacts, they're a great source of adventure. Individual knights have enough latitude and independence to hire adventurers to undertake missions in their name. Especially in lands where they've been barred from direct action by nervous rulers. In such cases, a knight of the Order or an officer of the Legion could hire a party of adventurers to undertake any sort of fantasy adventure.

Adventurers who betray or dishonor the Legion or the Order will find they are swift to mete out justice and to protect their good name.

Of course, the Legion and the Order represent a force of conquest. While they are idealistic and claim to serve the good of the world, conquest is conquest and the ends never justify the means. The heroes might oppose the Legion and the Order on principle or they might be engaged by nervous rulers or free-thinking people to oppose them.

And neither the Legion nor the Order are monoliths. No organization is. While Commander-General Nolo might be sincere in his mission and while his knights might be above reproach, the whole of the Legion of New Zethinia might not be so pure. Paladins and clerics number only among the Order itself. The soldiers of the Legion are just soldiers. Any officer, any company, might be corrupt. Or opportunistic. Or ambitious. And the Order itself might give in to zealotry. Its knights might believe the ends justify the means. You can't conquer an Empire without crushing a few skulls.

# SOLDIERS AND KNIGHTS OF NEW ZETHINIA

During their adventures, the heroes might encounter soldiers of New Zethinia or knights and clerics of the Order of the Phoenix Risen.

Below, you'll find information and statistics so that you can include these soldiers and knights in your own campaign.

## The Legion of New Zethinia

The Legion of New Zethinia has adopted many of the military traditions that made the Zethinian Empire of old such an unstoppable force. These traditions were developed for large-scale battle, but even a small company of ten-to-twenty soldiers utilizing the Zethinian tactics can present a formidable foe.

Common foot soldiers are called Legionaries. A company of up to twenty Legionaries is commanded by an officer who fights in their formation called a Tribune. Higher-ranking officers command three, four, or more companies and are called Legates, but adventurers are unlikely to face such large forces.

The Zethinian Empire used arcane magic effectively on the battlefield and the Legion of New Zethinia continues that practice. Warmages — called Magi — are usually trained in the ancient tradition of the Golden Chimera. They specialize in evocation and abjuration. A single magus might be installed with the archers in a company. Because the Zethinian Legions relied on close-packed formations that could be destroyed with powerful magic, the magi were especially trained to identify enemy spellcasters and to destroy them, disable them, or use spells like *counterspell* and *dispel magic* to disrupt their spellcasting efforts.

Anointed knights of the Order of the Phoenix Risen regularly travel with soldiers from the Legion as the Order effectively forms the upper command echelons of the Legion. Among those knights are true paladins who have sworn oaths to revive the Zethinian Empire in the name of the Shining King. The knights rarely fight in formation with the Legionaries but will usually travel with a company under the command of a Tribune. Such knights usually have warmages, personal bodyguards, and other attendant officers of their own.

## Legionaries of New Zethinia

Trained to fight in close ranks, three men deep, legionaries are equipped and trained specifically for their rank. Legionaries in formation do not obstruct their allies' attacks.

Shieldbearers, armed with tower shields, short infantry spears, and short swords form the front ranks. In battle, they usually hold the line and wait for the enemy to close ranks. They take the Dodge action to provide enhanced cover for themselves and their formation until the enemy gets into me-

lee range.

Pikebearers form the middle rank. They are armed with pikes and javelins. When the enemy begins to close in with the shieldbearers, the pikebearers will launch their javelins — even if the range imposes disadvantage — and then use the Ready action to attack enemies from behind the shieldbearers when they get into range.

Archers form the rear rank. They are armed with shortbows and short swords. While the formation remains intact, the archers attack foes with a constant rain of arrows.

## Magi of New Zethinia

When available, a single magus is installed with the rear rank of a company. Magi act much like archers, harrying enemies with ranged attacks while the formation remains intact. However, magi are trained to identify wizards, clerics, and other spellcasters and focus their efforts on disabling them.

Higher level Magi, such as you those you might create yourself, are usually know *counterspell* and *dispel magic* to counter enemy spellcasters.

## Tribune of New Zethinia

A company of ten to twenty legionaries usually includes a tribune in their middle rank. The mere presence of a tribune often helps keep the formation intact. And, while the tribune fights like a pikebearer, they are alert for opportunities and can quickly turn their legionaries attention to attack specific threats. They are especially watchful for spellcasters and will direct their archers' fire toward any wizards foolish enough to identify themselves in battle.

## Knight of the Phoenix Risen

Sworn to revive the ancient Zethinian Empire in the name of the Shining King, most knights of the Phoenix Risen are paladins. They hold themselves to the highest standards of duty, honor, and courage, but they are quite militant in their bent. Knights of the Phoenix Risen exude a powerful presence on the battlefield, bolstering their allies and terrifying their enemies.

When they join a company, which they do rarely, knights of the Phoenix Risen usually fight in the front rank with the shieldbearers.

## Example Encounters

### Patrol (Journeyman Tier, Easy)

- 4 Legionary Shieldbearers of New Zethinia
- 4 Legionary Pikebearers of New Zethinia
- 4 Legionary Archers of New Zethinia



# SOLDIERS AND KNIGHTS OF NEW ZETHINIA

## Company (Journeyman Tier, Moderate)

- 4 Legionary Shieldbearers of New Zethinia
- 4 Legionary Pikebearers of New Zethinia
- 1 Tribune of New Zethinia
- 4 Legionary Archers of New Zethinia

## Magus Company (Journeyman Tier, Moderate)

- 4 Legionary Shieldbearers of New Zethinia
- 3 Legionary Pikebearers of New Zethinia
- 1 Tribune of New Zethinia
- 2 Legionary Archers of New Zethinia
- 1 Magus of New Zethinia

## Knight's Company (Journeyman Tier, Moderate)

- 1 Knight of the Phoenix Risen
- 1 Legionary Shieldbearer of New Zethinia
- 2 Legionary Pikebearers of New Zethinia
- 1 Legionary Archers of New Zethinia

## Knight's Retinue (Journeyman Tier, Difficult)

- 1 Knight of the Phoenix Risen
- 1 Legionary Shieldbearers of New Zethinia
- 1 Legionary Pikebearers of New Zethinia
- 1 Tribune of New Zethinia
- 1 Magus of New Zethinia

## LEGIONARY OF NEW ZETHINIA SHILDBEARER

*Medium humanoid (human)*

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2   +4	+0	+1	+0	+0   +2	-1

**Proficiencies** athletics (+4), intimidation (+1)

**Passive Perception** 10

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
16	+0	30 ft.	11   5   2 2d8+2

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** usually lawful

**Languages** Trade Common, Zethinian

### Traits

**Phalanx Fighter.** Members of the legionary's formation are not obstacles to the legionary's attacks.

### Actions

**Spear (melee or ranged (20/60) weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage

**Shortsword (melee weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

### Equipment and Treasure

**Armor** breastplate, tower shield

**Weapons** shortsword, spear

**Wealth** 7 (2d6) sp, 10 (3d6) cp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

Organization mob (11-20)

# SOLDIERS AND KNIGHTS OF NEW ZETHINIA

## LEGIONARY OF NEW ZETHINIA ARCHER

*Medium humanoid (human)*

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0   +2	+2	+1	+0	+0   +2	-1

**Proficiencies** athletics (+2), intimidation (+1)

**Passive Perception** 10

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
14	+2	30 ft.	11   5   2 2d8+2

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** usually lawful

**Languages** Trade Common, Zethinian

### Traits

**Phalanx Fighter.** Members of the legionary's formation are not obstacles to the legionary's attacks.

### Actions

**Shortbow (ranged (80/320) weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

**Shortsword (melee weapon) +5**

*Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

### Equipment and Treasure

**Armor** breastplate

**Weapons** shortbow, shortsword

**Gear** arrows (20)

**Wealth** 7 (2d6) sp, 10 (3d6) cp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

**Organization** mob (11-20)

## LEGIONARY OF NEW ZETHINIA PIKEBEARER

*Medium humanoid (human)*

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+3   +5	+0	+1	+0	+0   +2	-1

**Proficiencies** athletics (+5), intimidation (+1)

**Passive Perception** 10

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
14	+0	30 ft.	11   5   2 2d8+2

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** usually lawful

**Languages** Trade Common, Zethinian

### Traits

**Phalanx Fighter.** Members of the legionary's formation are not obstacles to the legionary's attacks.

### Actions

**Pike (melee (reach) weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage.

**Shortsword (melee weapon) +5**

*Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

### Equipment and Treasure

**Armor** breastplate

**Weapons** pike, shortsword

**Wealth** 7 (2d6) sp, 10 (3d6) cp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

**Organization** mob (11-20)

# SOLDIERS AND KNIGHTS OF NEW ZETHINIA

## MAGUS OF NEW ZETHINIA

Medium humanoid (human)

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+3   +5	+1   +3	-1

**Proficiencies** arcana (+4), athletics (+2), intimidate (+1)  
**Passive Perception** 11

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
11	+1	30 ft.	33   16   8 6d8+6

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** usually lawful

**Languages** Trade Common, Runic Draconic, Zethinian

### Traits

**Phalanx Fighter.** Members of the magus' formation are not obstacles to the magus' attacks.

### Actions

**Quarterstaff (melee weapon) +2**

*Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage with two hands.

### Spellcasting

Level	Ability	Spell Attack	Save DC
3	Intelligence	+5	13

**Cantrips (at-will)** *fire bolt, ray of frost, true strike*

**1st Level (4)** *chromatic orb, magic missile, shield*

**2nd Level (2)** *hold person, scorching ray, shatter*

### Equipment and Treasure

**Weapons** quarterstaff (arcane focus)

**Gear** small diamond (50 gp)

**Wealth** 7 (2d6) gp, 10 (3d6) sp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

**Organization** group (3-6)

## TRIBUNES OF NEW ZETHINIA

Medium humanoid (human)

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2   +4	+0	+2	+0	+1   +3	+2   +4

**Proficiencies** athletics (+5), intimidation (+4)  
**Passive Perception** 11

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
14	+0	30 ft.	39   19   9 6d8+12

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** always lawful

**Languages** Trade Common, Zethinian

### Traits

**Inspiring Presence.** Members of the tribune's formation have advantage on morale saves and on saving throws against being frightened.

**Phalanx Fighter.** Members of the tribune's formation are not obstacles to the tribune's attacks.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The tribune makes any combination of two weapon attacks and command issuances.

**Issue Command.** The tribune identifies an opportunity and commands a member of its formation to attack. That creature uses its reaction to make one weapon attack with advantage.

**Pike (melee (reach) weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage.

**Longsword (melee weapon) +4**

*Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage with two hands.

### Equipment and Treasure

**Armor** breastplate with plumed helm

**Weapons** longsword, pike

**Gear** gold-trimmed purple cloak (mark of rank)

**Wealth** 10 (3d6) gp, 14 (4d6) sp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

**Organization** group (3-6)



# SOLDIERS AND KNIGHTS OF NEW ZETHINIA

## KNIGHT OF THE PHOENIX RISEN

*Medium humanoid (human)*

### Abilities, Saves, and Proficiencies

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+3	+0	+1	+0	+1	+2

**Proficiencies** History +2, Persuasion +4

**Passive Perception** 11

### Combat Statistics

AC	Init	Spd.	HP
16	+0	30 ft.	55   27   13 10d8+10

**Morale** critical (retreat)

### Interaction

**Alignment** lawful good

**Languages** Trade Common, Low Celestine, Zethinian

### Traits

**Aura of Courage.** Allies within 30 feet of the knight that can see and hear it have advantage on morale saves and saving throws against being frightened.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The knight makes three longsword attacks.

**Longsword (melee weapon) +5**

*Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage with two hands.

**Conquering Presence (enemies that can see and hear the knight)**  
(recharge: short or long rest)

**Wisdom save DC 12**

*Fail:* The creature is frightened for 1 minute, repeating the save at the end of each of its turn and ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Thunderous Smite.** The knight makes a longsword attack, dealing an additional 10 (3d6) thunder damage on a hit, and the target must save.

**Strength save DC 12**

*Fail:* The target is pushed 10 feet and knocked prone.

**Healing Touch.** The knight lays a hand upon itself or one adjacent ally. The target recovers 5 hit points.

### Equipment and Treasure

**Armor** breastplate armor, emblazoned shield

**Weapons** longsword

**Gear** holy symbol (emblem, shield)

**Wealth** 14 (4d6) gp, 10 (3d6) sp

### Encounter Building

**Tier** journeyman tier (3rd level-5th level)

**Organization** pair (2)

# THE FALLEN TEMPLE AT CASINIA

The Zethinian Empire spread the faith of the Vasaar across central and western Aerth. Many great temples were built honoring the Prophets of the Vasaar across Zethinia, the Sunderlands, and the Western Kingdoms. And with the Empire's fall, many have fallen into ruin, though their forgotten vaults remain intact.

Below, you'll find a map of a typical temple of the Prophets of the Vasaar. You can use this map as you see fit, repurposing it to fit one of the faiths in your world and stocking it for whatever adventure you wish to run. Or you can use it and the notes below to introduce your players to the Legion of New Zethinia, the Order of the Phoenix Risen, and to give them a chance to discover a holy relic.

## Background

Casinia was an isolated trade town on a rocky shore during the reign of the Zethinian Empire. Its rocky soil and lack of nearby resources kept it from supporting a large population, but its rocky cover provided a safe, natural harbor for trade ships and for the construction of Zethinian warships. Thus, the town grew wealthy and the pious governor dedicated some of its wealth to the construction of a sizable temple to the prophets on a hilltop outside of town.

Built in a traditional Zethinian style, the temple prominently honors the Shining King and his Three Knights and also recognizes the Twins of the Tower and the Watchers Over All. Small corner shrines acknowledge the Wanderer and the Stranger.

After a storm damaged their ship, a group of pilgrims transporting a relic sought refuge in the temple and stored the relic in the vault there. Soon thereafter, the village was taken by Sunderlander reavers under the command of a brutal warlock of the archfiend. Under the cover of night, the reavers sailed into the harbor and put the ships to torch before slaughtering their way through the town. To defile the temple, the warlock summoned a demon which smashed through the temple's central dome and slaughtered the priests as they tried to fight it off. The demon has remained holed up in the temple ever since.

A recently anointed Knight of the Order of the Phoenix Risen named Albatia Civis has been sent with a small force to the forgotten village of Casinia. She might be there to recover the relic in the temple's vault or she might be unaware of it. Perhaps she is there to recover the temple itself. Or perhaps she's been asked to deal with the demon in the ruins.

Albatia, her bodyguards, a company of legionaries of New Zethinia, and their servants have established a camp outside the temple. The force Albatia sent to scout the temple has not returned. Likely they were destroyed by the demon.

## Hooks

There are several ways to get the heroes involved in the adventure.

- Heroes friendly with the Legion of New Zethinia or the Order of the Phoenix Risen might have been sent to check in on Albatia. At her camp, the knight asks them to join her in exploring the temple and looking for her lost soldiers.
- Heroes opposed to the Legion and the Order might have been hired to investigate the Legion's presence in Casinia. Or perhaps the local leadership in Casinia has asked the heroes to investigate.
- Neutral heroes might be drawn by rumors of a military camp that's sprung up outside a ruined temple. If they approach the camp, Albatia might ask them to help her with her mission or to seek her lost soldiers. If the heroes sneak past the soldiers and explore the temple, they might encounter Albatia's forces on the way out. Or their fight with the demon might draw Albatia and her forces to investigate, resulting in a three-way battle. If the heroes discover the lost relic in the vault below the altar, they might have a conflict with Albatia over it. She might try to take it from the heroes. Or she might barter for it or even surrender it to the heroes in return for their help. Her reaction depends heavily on her mission and how you are playing her.

## Notes

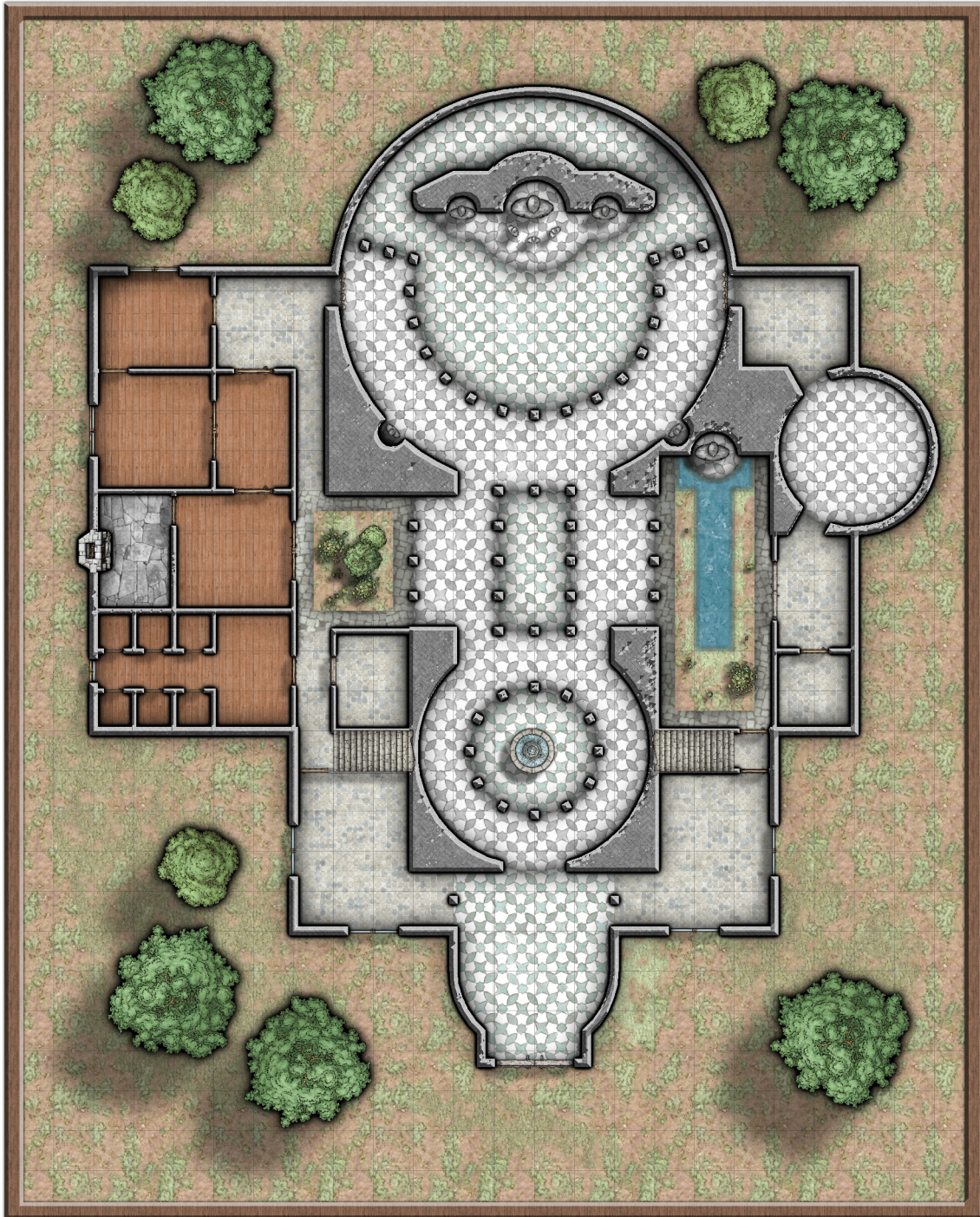
If you're running this for a journeyman-tier party of 3rd to 5th level PCs, Albatia's camp could include a single Magus Company as well as a Knight's Retinue, representing Albatia herself and her bodyguards and assistants. It should also include a half-dozen non-combatant camp servants and Albatia's scribe and record keeper.

The vault beneath the altar should contain the *blessed finger of Saint Eimeer*.

A bargura demon from the Dungeons & Dragons Monster Manual (page 56) works very well for the temple's final challenge.



# THE FALLEN TEMPLE AT CASINIA





# THE FALLEN TEMPLE AT CASINIA

