

Stars and Constellations of Faerun

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Astrology has been practiced by the peoples of Faerun since the dawn of time. From elves to humans to orcs, each race (and even individual societies) has their own constellations and accompanying myths. Even (perhaps surprisingly) the subterranean dwarves recognize images in the night skies overhead.

For humans in Faerun, the art of astrology extends back to the ancient empire of Raurin. Although not the first humans to look up into the night skies and see images (that honor going to their primitive cave-dwelling ancestors), the Imaskari were the first to identify the visible planets and set down a codified set of constellations (in fact, they were strong believers in astrology, the art of studying signs and portents hidden in the stars and constellations, a bit surprising for a nation that denied the existence of godly power). It is believed that the Imaskari gained much of their astronomical knowledge from the elves of the South, as well as through contact with the eastern cultures of Kara-Tur. The Imaskari's contemporaries to the north, the mighty Netherese, knew of spelljamming and of magics that allowed one to travel the stars, and it is thought that this scientific approach to the heavens prevented the rise of such frivolous star-gazing.

After the fall of the Imaskari, their observations of the stars were carried on by their descendants, the priests of the Mulhorand empire. Indeed, it is through the Mulhorandi that much of the rest of Faerun gained their constellations (though along the way each culture often re-named and re-attributed these heavenly bodies to fit their own needs). In modern times, astrology has become widespread throughout Faerun, although the more scientific field of astronomy has dwindled until, today, it is mostly practiced only by mages and priests of Selune. However, increasing contact with the societies of Zakhara and Maztica (both highly-developed in the field of astronomy) is re-kindling Faerun's interest in the heavens.

Listed below are a sampling of some of the stars, constellations, and other heavenly bodies that make up the crowded night sky of Faerun. Somewhat complicating matters is the fact that each race, and often individual societies within those races, has their own names and myths associated with a constellation. The most common names are given below, in alphabetical order.

- **NOTE:** *The planets and the Galleon and Color Spray Nebulae were first described in the accessory **SJR2** Realmspace. All spelljamming references have been removed from their entries.*

- **NOTE2:** *I seem to remember a couple Realms-constellations appearing in a TSR product, but I can't find them to save my life. If anyone can find them (or let me know if they even exist), please let me know.*
- **NOTE3:** *All stars marked with an asterisk (*) are from these TSR supplements: **FR13** *Anauroch*, **FR5** *Savage Frontier*, and the novel *Elfshadow*. Some of them have been slightly modified from their original descriptions.*

Stars and Constellations of Faerun

Angharradh

This female-shaped constellation is of major importance to the silver elves of Faerun, as they believe it represents Angharradh, the tripartite goddess of Sehanine, Aerdrie Faenya, and Hanali Celanil. To humans, the constellation has a much less-important designation as Vessesea, a powerful witch long famed in the North for her untiring battle against the hordes of goblin-kin, and her timely aid of travelers and the needy.

Belnimbra's Belt

A string of five stars. It is one of the oldest named constellations on Faerun. Named for the legend of the first human female to have been turned into a swanmay, and how the god Lathander chased after her. It is known as *Ishtar's Belt* in Unther and Mulhorand, and the halflings add in two nearby stars and call it *The Pipe*. To the elves, the five stars are known as *Corellon's Tears*, and they have a more somber tale; the elves believe that the Tears are actual tears of grief Corellon cried when Lolth corrupted the drow, and elf first fought elf. Elven legends also state that the Tears glowed blood-red during the Fall of legendary Myth Drannor.

The Brow Star*

The brightest star in the Mystra's Star Circle constellation, it marks due north. The Bedine of Anauroch know it as "Alagairtha," after the legend of a proud Bedine sorceress who is said to have challenged the gods long, long ago, and been imprisoned in the heavens as a punishment; to preserve her breathtaking beauty, but keep her forever frozen and helpless.

The Caltrop*

This constellation is formed by three converging lines of stars, each with a cluster of stars at its outward end, or "point." Where the three lines come together is due east. To humans, these stars are also known as the *Arrows of the Gods*, or the *Sun's Signpost*. The elves call this constellation *Adarivael*, and

hold it sacred to Solonor Thelandira. The nomads of Anaueroch call the Caltrop *At'ar's Arrows*, and believe that they are three fiery arrows launched by the sun goddess, to clear and mark her way (as the sun rises here).

Cassima

Also known as the *Bird of Paradise*, or the *Phoenix*. Although elvish in origin, humans have also adopted the story of Cassima, a young maiden who was held to be an evil witch and burned at the stake. Before she dies, a god (Hanali Celanil to the elves, most often Selune or Lliira to humans) reaches out and transforms her into a Phoenix, a bird of flame, whereupon she rises up and joins the goddess in the heavens.

The Chalice

A relatively minor constellation, this cup-shaped grouping is often referred to in ancient texts as *Chebelos* or *The Odalin*. Although the meaning of these words, believed to be Raumatharian in origin, is lost, the texts indicate that the Chalice once played a much more important role in the heavens, at least to the peoples of that empire.

Color Spray Nebula

This nebulosity looks very much like the effects of a color spray spell. It is a fan-shaped object that is seen primarily during the spring and early summer. It is approximately two million miles long, with a width of one million miles at one end, and 100 feet at the other.

The worshipers of Mystra believe this to be a sign from their goddess, that their use of the magic that she awards them pleases her. The cult of Bane (and later, Cyric) believes that the nebula is the wrath of their deity, spreading its way across the heavens. They believe that everything within its destructive path is utterly annihilated.

Correlian*

Thirteen stars make up the autumn constellation of Correlian. To the moon elves, the appearance of this star formation marks the final demise of summer, and has great religious significance, especially in moon elven strongholds like Evereska.

For humans and gold elves, the other autumnal constellation of the Jester/Dancer is more important, although with a rising number of Eilistraee-worshipers claiming the Dancer as their own, many gold elves on the mainland are also choosing to hold the Correlian constellation ascendant, to avoid associating with "drowish notions."

The Double Daggers*

Located in the western sky, this constellation is two fuzzy clusters of blue-white stars, which appear as two side-by-side crescents or arcs in the sky, points downward. True west can be found exactly halfway between the two arcs - heading "straight between the eyes."

In the Sword Coast North, the Daggers are known as *The Eyes of the Watching Woman*, and in the western Heartlands men speak of "where Selune looks back." To the Bedine of Anauroch, the Daggers are known as *The Two Jambiyas*, or the *Eyes of Elah*. Similarly, the elves know this constellation as *The Eyes of Uelaereene* (named after the long-ago Queen Uelaereene of Evermeet), and the halflings of Luiren connect the two arcs and call it *The Gull*.

Galleon Nebula

This nebula looks very much like a large, multi-colored galleon ship. Its sails appear to blow in a celestial wind that does not exist. With mariner spyglasses, the oars on the sides of the ship can be seen rowing in their never-ending task. The nebulosity is two million miles long and high, and well over 100,000 miles wide. It is visible primarily during the autumn and early winter.

The Galleon Nebula sails around the heavens in a very slow orbit. It takes nearly 4,000 months for it to make a complete revolution around the celestial heavens. This nebula and the Color Spray Nebula are never seen together in the same sky. They orbit around the sun in the same orbit, within that same orbital period, but they are at opposite positions in that orbit.

The Gorgon

Among the cities of the North, the constellation known as the Gorgon is generally agreed to come from the myth of the hero Uthgar, who once wrestled and killed a great gorgon with his bare hands, making the lands of the Savage Frontier safe for his peoples to settle.

Further south, the constellation shifts slightly, and is known to the nomads of the Shaar (and through them, the rest of the South) as the *Chameleon*, the shifty trickster of the gods who eternally pesters Uerdyl the Lion (the *Swordsman* constellation) as it follows him through the heavens.

The Horn

A grouping of several stars in a V-formation. To ancient, primitive cultures, the symbol of a horn represented good fortune, wealth, and fertility. Thus, it is believed that the Horn figured prominently in early Waukeen-worship,

especially among the societies of Amn, Tethyr, and the Western Heartlands. For the elves, the Horn is known more poetically as *Shansibal*, the mythic Cornucopia, and is sacred to the priesthood of Aerdrie Faenya (similarly, the halflings call the grouping *Sheela's Bosom*, after the halfling deity of feasting, revels, and romance).

Most interestingly, both the dwarves and the orcs refer to the constellation as *The Dagger*, and see it as much more of a martial portent. To orcs, especially, the Dagger is sacred, as it is seen as the manifestation of Ilneval, the god of war.

Ieriyn (The Sailor's Star)

The brightest star in the heavens, outshining even its' sister, Mystra's Star. The star's name comes from the navigational aid it has given to sailors through the ages. Located far above the northern pole of Faerun, as the night progresses Ieriyn does not rise or set, but always seems to be glued to a single point in the sky. So, at any time in the night you can find the Sailor's Star, as it is always in the North. If a ship got lost, they could always figure out their direction by finding Ieriyn. Not surprisingly, the Sailor's Star is held sacred to Selunites, and praised by sailors across Faerun. However, the navigational use of the star is not limited to the seas, and travelers, prospectors, and worshipers of Shaundakul all use the star for land-based travel.

Jansreene's Throne/The Anvil

This grouping of stars is known as *The Throne* to humans, named after the legendary Queen Jansreene of Asram. To dwarves, the constellation is known as the Anvil, and holds great religious significance to them, especially in relation to the church of Moradin. A comet passing through the Anvil around - 700 DR is said to have heralded the founding of the dwarven nation of Delzoun.

In ancient Narfell, the Throne was known as *The Altar*, and represented the altars upon which sacrifices were made to their dark gods. The name is still in use today by their descendants, the Nars, even if the sacrifices aren't.

The Jester

This constellation shines brightest in Eleint, especially around Highharvestide. It is known as The Jester to humans and halflings; to elves, this constellation is called *The Dancer*, and in recent years it has become associated with Eilistraee, the Dark Maiden (at least on the mainland. On Evermeet, elves have been known to react violently at any suggestion that the Dancer has become "corrupted" by "drowish notions").

King's Coin

A brightly-shining, yellowish star which forms the "pommel" of the sword in the Swordsman constellation. It is traditionally held to foretell the lives of Faerun's rulers, and many tales through the ages tell of the Coin glowing brightly at the birth of rulers destined for greatness (indeed, the star's little-known "proper" name, *Imadain*, is believed to come from the ancient Imaskari, meaning "Lucky Star of the King"). A few fables even tell stories of the Coin disappearing from the heavens upon the deaths of several kings, the most famous of which is Faerlthann, the first king of Cormyr.

In recent years, the King's Coin has become prominent in the religion of Siamorphe, the deity of nobles and nobility, and members of her faith have taken to adding its' image to their heraldic devices, especially in the land of Tethyr.

Labraen

More commonly called *The Archer*, this constellation is often seen as a companion to the Swordsman, whom he faces across the nighttime sky (a major exception is the people of Thay, whose myths hold that the Archer is *Rivalyn*, a warrior famed for his part in defeating the first Mulhorandi invasion of Thay. The Thayans believe that Rivalyn gives unending chase to the Swordsman, called *Amentira* after the pharaoh who launched the invasion, across the heavens).

The elves also call this constellation *Labraen*, and each elven enclave seems to have their own legends and stories about him.

The Lion/The Wolf/The Dog/The Leopard

This animal-shaped constellation is known by a different name to almost every culture on Faerun. In the Gulthmere, it is known as *Nobanion*, the Great Lion; in the Shaar, it is the Leopard; in the North, it is commonly referred to as *Asglyn the Wolf*, the loyal companion of Gwaeron Windstrom. To the Rashemi and Aglarondans, it is the vigilant *Narnos the Dog*; further south in the Old Empires, it turns into *Ghastis*, the savage Jackal.

The demi-humans, for their part, do not seem to recognize the constellation, and so have no names for it. However, for the elves, part of the Lion is used for Elael, the Songsmith (a constellation based on an ancient elven fable about a bard who crafts a song so pure and sweet that even the gods are humbled).

Maerilzoun

The name of this serpent-shaped constellation is ancient, so ancient that only a few sages and astronomers know its' origins or meaning, and most simply call it *The Serpent*. The constellation was named by the inhabitants of ancient Raurin, before even the mighty empires of Unther and Mulhorand were born. In their legends, Maerilzoun was a huge, evil serpent that would one day descend from the skies at the end of the world to devour the sun (today, that figure is known as Dendar the Night Serpent, an Elder Elemental Evil). In the Empires of the Sands, the Serpent is looked upon favorably by thieves, assassins, mages, and others who practice their black arts by night. To the nomads of the Shaar, the Serpent is the godly counterpoint of Uerdyl, the Lion (personified by the Swordsman constellation).

Mystra's Star

One of the brightest stars in the heavens, this bright blue light is known to have shone even brighter on the births of several notable mages, including Ahghairon of Waterdeep. About the only star or constellation to hold the same significance to all races (human or demi- human).

Mystra's Star Circle*

High in the north sky is an awesome circle of large, bright stars with utter darkness between them (Mystra's floating Castle of Night, in children's' fairytales, is said to float in the center of the darkness). Due north is marked by the brightest *Brow Star*, also known as *Alagairtha* by the Bedine of Anauroch.

Other folk in the Realms call this constellation the *Crown of the North*, or just the *Cold Crown*. Some believe it to be the *Eye of Evil*, the *Hole That Leads To Darkness*, or the *Circle of Coins* (thrown on high by the gods, to taunt poor men). Some Bedine tribes believe that this place is N'asr's Tent, the dwelling-place of the Lord of the Dead. Most Bedine call it the *Circle of Swords* (the shining scimitars of the greatest Bedine gathered by N'asr).

According to elven astronomers, there was once a star centered in the middle of the Circle. This star, known as *N'landroshien* (Darkness in Light), figures prominently in several ancient elven end-of-the-world myths, but has not been seen in the night skies for several millennia.

Shaundral (The Drifting Star)

An oddity among heavenly bodies, Shaundral is an erratic star that pulses in brilliance, and seems to move randomly about the heavens, sometimes staying in one place for years, and then suddenly slowly moving to another. Astronomers have discerned that Shaundral is not a planet or other

solid body, but what exactly it is, is still a mystery. Also, it seems to shine brightest when a great misfortune or disaster is about to befall on Faerun, and so is often attributed to the Maid of Misfortune, with the secondary name of *Beshaba's Eye* (similarly, the Bedine of Anaueroch attribute the Drifting Star to Shaundakul, the Treacherous Lurker in the Sands).

Star of Osiris

One of the brightest stars in the southern hemisphere, Osiris is not visible to anyone living north of a line drawn through the middle of the Sea of Fallen Stars. In Mulhorandi lore, this heavenly light is the gateway to the Realm of the Dead, through which the souls of the deceased rise up into the care of Osiris.

The Swordsman

Also known as *The Warrior* or *The Sentinel*, this constellation shares the same traits in cultures across Faerun; loyalty, guardianship, battle, freedom. Many legends and myths have been attributed to the Swordsman through the ages, although most recent human ones tend to center around the exploits of Torm or Tempus. In the Moonshaes, the Swordsman is called Cymrych Hugh, and is believed to be the soul of the legendary hero, placed in the heavens by the Earthmother.

Similarly, the elves have many myths about the Swordsman; the most popular is that the Swordsman was Auranamn, the first elf, who fought at Corellon's side during the great battle with Gruumsh. Although Auranamn died in that battle, Corellon lifted his soul up and placed it among the heavens, to spend eternity watching over the elven race.

Tassabryl

Legends speak of a beautiful princess that lived in some long-ago kingdom. Deemed the most beautiful woman in Faerun, this vain and rash creature dared to boast herself even more beautiful than Sune, goddess of love and beauty. To punish the foolish woman, Sune cursed her; the woman would still be deemed beautiful by everyone who saw her, except for the woman's true love, who would find her hideous and repulsive. In the end, after being spurned by the one man her heart desired, the princess threw herself into the sea, never to be seen again. Especially vain or foolish people (especially women) are still referred to today in certain parts of Faerun as "Tassabryl's Children."

The Triton

To humans, this reclining figure is known as the Triton, mainly due to the trident he holds in his upraised hand (this holds true in most cultures, although

the name varies; in the region around the Alambar Sea, the constellation is *Poseidon*; in Calimshan, *Bhalaene the Sea King*; to the people of Sossal, it is *Ulutiu*).

The elves have named this constellation *Deep Sashelas*, after the god of sea elves. Two stars to the left of the constellation have the names of *Tilvadar* and *Tambaun*, named after Deep Sashelas' two loyal dolphin companions.

Ulazimir/Iziaslau/Rahnieda

A grouping of three stars known collectively as *The Wizard's March*. Although the name of the constellation (and, to a lesser extent, the names of the individual stars), have passed into common lore among the peoples of Faerun, it is believed that their origins lie to the east, in the lands of Rashemen and ancient Raumathar. The myths of these lands feature several stories about the three, said to have been powerful mages who wandered the lands, defending people from monsters, brigands, and other enemies, while dispensing wisdom and advice to local rulers.

Uruath*

South in the desert sky of Anauroch is marked by a zigzag line of stars that "crawls" along the horizon, from west to east, beginning with an upswept "head" or bright starry cluster, and ending with a curving "tail" of stars. To the Bedine, this constellation is the *Serpent of the Sands*, *Uruath*, "*The Swallower*." The desert nomads believe that this creature is wild and amoral, older than the gods, and that it swallows mountains, trees, and grasses to create the desert, leaving only sand in its wake. Its presence in the southern sky, most Bedine believe, means that the desert will continually expand southward, as it eats its way across the Outlands.

Folk elsewhere in Faerun do not see this line of stars so clearly; not being on their horizon most of the time, it is enmeshed in a tangle of smaller constellations, and is not thought of as a unit. In Tunland, Cormyr, Iriaebor, and Westgate, however, it is recognized as a star configuration marking the direction "south," and is known respectively as *Faeraula*, the *Sword of the South*, the *Southfires*, and the *Lightning Bolt*.

Y'landrothiel (The Traveler's Star)*

The elven name for Ieriyn (*The Sailor's Star*). It is believed that humans first learned of the star's navigational uses from the fair folk of the North.

Y'tellarien (The Far Star)*

No information available.

General Notes

Nearby Planets

Of the nine planets in orbit around Toril's sun, the inhabitants of Toril can see four others in the nighttime skies (indeed, to most people, these other four planets are all that is out there, although there are mages, astronomers, and spelljammers that know the truth of the matter). It is believed that the Netherese were the first to give names to these planets (through their contact with Wildspace), and those names have since spread to the rest of Faerun.

Sometime in the prehistory of Faerun, these four planets, apparently due to their colors, became associated with the four elements and, later, with the four Elemental Gods (Akadi, Grumbar, Ishtishia, and Kossuth). While this still holds true today (for humans and halflings, at least), some cultures have associated the planets with their own gods and tales. The planets are detailed below:

- **Anadia (Kossuth):** reddish color, also often associated with Garagos the Reaver (humans). The orcs call the planet *Gruumsh's Eye*, and believe that, at the end of the world, the Eye will purify Faerun in a rain of fire, leaving only the orcs to rule. The elves call Anadia *Uluemyn*, and associate it with the god Solonor Thelandira.
- **Coliar (Akadi):** bluish-white color. The elves call Coliar *Luridel*, and associate it with Erevan Ilesere.
- ***Karpri (Ishtishia):** blue-green color. The elves call Karpri *Ochael*, and associate it with Rillifane Rallathil.
- **Chandos (Grumbar):** brownish color. The elves call Chandos *Iaras*, and associate it with Labelas Enoreth.