



YELE'U UNIVERSITY

THE HISTORY OF MAR-KTU OVERVIEW AND CHRONOLOGY

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based on the events of
/r/CivWorldPowers

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Foreword

To the astute reader, it should already be obvious that neither Yele'u University nor Maruk actually exist. For that matter, not one person or place mentioned in this book is to be found in the real world, unless something has changed very drastically since this book was penned. *The History of Maruk: Overview and Chronology* is a detailed account of a fictional world's history, written by nostalgic moderators and players of the now-defunct roleplaying subreddit /r/CivWorldPowers. In these pages, we the authors endeavor to expand and elaborate on the events of a nationbuilding play-by-post we still remember fondly, while simultaneously improving on the original to achieve a more cohesive world and gripping narrative. As we do this, we also try our hardest to remain completely in character.

Once you have finished this brief preamble, the entire book is written to resemble an actual publication in the field of World History from the esteemed Yele'u University in Pylona. This work has, of course, been translated from its original [LUX Creole] to English for your enjoyment and ease of reading. We hope you find the peoples, places, cultures, and conflicts of Maruk to be as interesting as we do. After all, they gripped us enough that we sat down to write a book. Two, in fact.

As a final note to readers, *The Historical Encyclopedia of Maruk* exists as a companion piece to *The History of Maruk*. While this book provides a roughly chronological narrative of this world's unique history, the *Encyclopedia* provides one with more focused and consolidated information on individual topics of interest. As this world is fabricated in its entirety, read-

ers may find searching for information on people and places in the *Encyclopedia* to be a fast and effective way of acquiring a deeper comprehension of the subject matter than this book can provide alone, so we recommend perusing both books in conjunction.

And now, without further ado, we hope you enjoy a look into the detailed history of a world both very much—and yet in many ways nothing—like our own.

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Introduction

The *History of Maruk: Overview and Chronology* has one of the most storied pasts of any work still undergoing active editing and revision. This is no less than Yele'u University's overview of the entire world and its history, and has been in constant print for over a millennium. First penned as *The Vinayaka Canon* in the year [], this work has become a living document, contributed to by scholars and historians the world over and curated by Yele'u University. This document is as much a compendium of the entire world's historical knowledge as it is a book, and is thus mandatory reading for all who would study at Yele'u University, particularly in the field of History.

This edition of *The History of Maruk* ends shortly after the tumultuous Millennium Wars, as more recent events are still so young as to be a subject of intense debate even within the walls of our institution. The document's scope therefore is everything from the beginning of knowable history to the Millennium Wars, though with careful attention paid to events after establishment of the first nation states and empires. What transpired before this point is only touched on briefly, as an Anthropology text will be better suited to breaking down the less knowable nature of history before such time.

The Traditional Opening

The Elul Orison

*Wom'in. K'in, Yol, K'am, K'ol. Xi'an, Di'an, Li'an, Ye'an,
Xu'an, Ka'an, Ge'an, Ku'an. Ha'um, Te'um, K'ak'um,
Lu'um, K'en'um. Iik'um, Kep'um, Lus'um, Enhul'um.*

The original version of this text was a compilation of Tetk'in *Zamaru*. It began with a traditional chant of the 18 Holy Names, which are often collected into this Orison, known as the *Elul Orison* and spoken at the beginning of endeavors for the Tetk'in. In the original version, this chant was immediately followed by the story of the Ages of the Tetk'in. It is only appropriate that we begin this more modern version of this text in similar fashion, for our paths before and behind us are built by the cobblestones of legends.

The Nine Ages of the Tetk'in

Part I

The Ancient Era (3000 BC to 700 BC)

Chapter 1

The Origins of Skadunism

*“But should the tribes of man fall into sin and anger the six greatest mountains too severely, all six will proclaim their fiery rage in tandem, and humanity will be removed from the world in their entirety.”*¹

Of the world religions that emerged in ancient times few survive, and fewer still exert an equal or greater influence now than they did in the past. One of those faiths that survived the test of time is Skadunism (Clerical Altyrian: *Skađún*), a family of animistic faiths identified by apocalypticism, a strong clergy presence, and a focus on penitence. Though sometimes considered a Toran Era faith, the roots of Skadunism reach back into the prehistory of Ullr.

Origins in Mountainistic Animism

Though true Skadunism had not begun to emerge until around the 16th century BC, the religion’s roots stretch back millennia, into the prehistory of Ullr. Particularly in the North and East, Ullr was dominated by animistic and occasionally

¹Legate Harald III, *A Canon of Skadun for the Masses*, 413 AC

shamanistic belief systems, with polytheism being notably uncommon throughout the continent². What would eventually become a dominant trend in these early belief systems is a concept referred to as "Mountainisticism" by scholars.

Mountainistic Animism in North Ullr

As defined by scholars of Ullr prehistory, "Mountainisticism" is a feature of animistic belief systems where every mountain is seen as possessing a powerful spirit. What sets mountainistic thought apart from conventional animism is the idea that mountain spirits are somehow more powerful or significant than those of anything else in the world. This mountainistic animism elevated mountains enough that some theologists describe the practice as deification, though the degree to which mountainistic animism glorified mountain spirits varied significantly with region.

Ullr originally featured primarily animistic belief systems, without strong mountainistic character. Over time, communities living nearby mountains, especially the towering [East Ullr Ridge], began to lend mountains increased weight in their animistic faiths, eventually giving rise to mountainistic animism. It is believed mountains began to gain such a disproportionate significance in these communities because of both their size, and the fact that they reach skyward towards the sun and heavens. This origin of mountainistic thought is reflected in later Skadunist doctrine, which claims mountains are the source of sunlight, wind, and rain.

Mountainistic animism was, logically, most prevalent in rugged, mountainous areas such as the majority of northeast Ullr. This belief system has not left any literary sources due to its age, but is attested to in cave murals and rock carvings.

²A notable exception being [Voromje]

Collections of stone cairns³, sometimes accompanied by bones or pottery shards, have also been unearthed all over north Ullr; some dating back into the neolithic. Some archaeologists believe that these were pan-tribal meeting sites for early mountainists.

“To me, it is hard to accept arguments that the cairn complexes of north Ullr – such as Tzerach Steinhäufen – are not a result of mountainistic faiths. Any one of my peers who would claim such a thing has clearly never set foot at one of these sites...[cairn complexes] are almost universally built in the shadow of mountains. To date, none have been found dating to before the year 2800 BC that do not have at least one mountain in sight. It is clear to me that cairn complexes are the earliest expression of Skadunist rural monumentalism, and for that reason must not be attributed to animistic faiths in general. I maintain that...no one will find sufficient evidence to the contrary.”⁴

Mountainistic animism is also believed to be the source of volcanic apocalypticism in Skadunism.⁵ Easter Ullr is a volcanically active region, and many of the larger mountains are in reality stratovolcanoes, capable of erupting violently after long periods of dormancy. In all likelihood, mountains which had already become objects of worship then erupted, causing people to spread stories of the destructive potential a mountain could bring. Combined with the personification and deification of mountains by mountainistic animists, and these eruptions could become associated with the rage and fury of powerful beings.

³Deliberate man-made stacks of rocks, often serving as landmarks

⁴excerpt from archaeologist Vulkas Heinkel’s presentation at the Pasaj Yokib international archaeology conference (1984)

⁵Skadunist apocalypticism is described later in this chapter.

Supervolcano Hypothesis

One hypothesis relating to mountainistic animism which has gained traction in recent years is the Supervolcano Hypothesis. Based on geological, historiographical, and religious evidence, this hypothesis posits that the eruption of a supervolcano over four thousand years ago contributed to the formation of mountainistic and apocalyptic thought in Ullr.

The evidence for this hypothesis comes in multiple parts. For one, there is a sediment layer with volcanic ash content found almost uniformly across Ullr and Vinayaka, dated to roughly the same period. This widespread contemporaneous ash fall is indicative of a large – if not massive – volcanic eruption, which is recent enough to have impacted human society and culture. Secondly, many cultures of Ullr and Vinayaka reference a ‘great darkening’ near the beginning of creation.⁶ Advocates for the hypothesis claim this demonstrates multiple cultures remembering the obstruction of sunlight that would result from a massive ash plume entering the upper atmosphere. Lastly, Skadunist doctrine talks of a great eruption that wiped the world clean of its previous inhabitants before humans were brought to live upon it.⁷ This myth could be inspired by this historical eruption, modified by word of mouth over the millennia.

Despite this evidence, the Supervolcano Hypothesis is still disputed. Some scholars maintain that human memory would not keep track of such an event in detail until it could enter Skadunist doctrine over 2200 years later. Others argue that since the hypothetical supervolcano’s caldera has not been found, the ash may be the result of many smaller eruptions within the span of a few years. One final source of opposition comes from fundamental Skadunist communities, which main-

⁶[TODO: examples or quotes]

⁷[TODO: examples or quotes]

tain that geology and vulcanism are heretical ideas introduced by non-Skadunists.⁸ Ultimately, whether or not the hypothesis is accurate only has a minor bearing on understanding Skadunist history and doctrine.

Mountainistic Animism as Compared to Skadunism

Though mountainistic animism is a direct ancestor to Skadunism, the two have marked differences in addition to their many similarities. One reason for this is the fact that mountainistic animism, more so even than Skadunism, was a collection of loosely similar belief systems rather than a unified single religion. The most obvious uniformities between the two faiths lie in their shared veneration of mountains, but that may be the only uniform similarity.

One area of notable difference is apocalypticism⁹, which while present in both faiths is varied in its expression. Both believe that mountains are capable of visiting destruction on the world, but while Skadunists universally believe mountains have the power to visit total destruction upon the world, mountainistic animists believed may not have uniformly held this belief; furthermore, even if they did, this apocalypse may not have been connected to specific mountains as it would come to be in Skadunism.

In connection to volcanic destruction and apocalypticism, mountainistic animists did not have the same concept of penitence that would become central to Skadunism. In Skadunist doctrine, one can only atone for the sins a mountain has witnessed by engaging in penitential action. This essential tenet of Skadunism was wholly absent from mountainistic animism, perhaps due to the lack of an organized church or clergy.

⁸For fundamental Skadunists, scientific explanation of vulcanism as a phenomenon that affects individual areas and mountains undermines the Skadunist belief that any mountain can erupt.

⁹A religious belief that there may be an apocalypse.

Perhaps due to the lack of penitential labor, mountainistic animism featured radically less rural monumentalism¹⁰ than Skadunism, with the only notable example being the occasional neolithic cairn complexes. Also, due to the lack of an organized church or clergy, mountainistic animists did not have public meeting halls or places of worship; however, some scholars believe mountainistic animists may have worshiped or offered at solitary shrines, a behavior shared by many Skadunist communities.

Mountainistic animists also did not engage in organized worship or cultural acts of faith and devotion. Beat poetry,¹¹ a central part of Skadunist worship and service, appears to have been innovated after the time of mountainistic animism.¹²

One final difference lies in the nature of spirits and animism within the communities. To many mountainistic animists, mountain spirits were only some of the many spirits that could be found in the world, even if they were of greater significance than the others. In later forms of Skadunism, especially Bialkan Othopraxy, worship or recognition of animistic spirits or deities not attributed to mountains was seen as heretical. Some communities of Skadunists still incorporated animistic beliefs and spirits into their lives and worship, but many communities adapted their local animistic beliefs to exist in the context of mountains, or abandoned them entirely.

For several millennia, Ullr remained largely unchanged. Cities were a profound rarity, and many parts of the north had not begun to sedentarize. In these early low population tribes, neither society nor religion were significantly refined, leaving

¹⁰Discussed later in this chapter.

¹¹Long devotional poems typically featuring rhyme and wordplay, recited in rapid, irregular meter by solo performers.

¹²Norman Friedrich: *This claim is specious at best. There is no evidence that beat poetry was not practiced by some ancient Altyrians.*

mountainistic animism as close to dominant as the time permitted any one belief system to be.

Emergence of Skadunism

Though widespread, mountainistic animism lacked organization or a well defined set of beliefs. This was set to change with the emergence of Skadunism in northeast Ullr. Starting around the year 1700 BC, cities with wide scale agriculture began to emerge around the [inland sea]. After this point urbanization spread through much of Ullr, though many areas still maintained low populations, especially in the north.

With the spread of larger cities and the introduction of significant agricultural surplus, class divisions emerged and began to strengthen, and governments began to emerge, initially within individual cities.¹³ Accompanying this growth in civilization and administration, shrines, temples, and a class of priests began to emerge. In several parts of Ullr, mountainistic animism began to develop a clergy presence and more defined tenets and teachings, becoming the earliest form of Skadunism. This transition had begun by around 1500 BC, and Skadunism was the dominant religion of East Ullr by around 1200 BC.

¹³The first state in Ullr to control multiple large cities was [Volkania].

Skadunist Mythology

Creation Myth

Beliefs and Tenets

Penitence

Places of Worship

Emergence of Bialkan Orthopraxy

Tenets and Doctrune

Innovations on Skadunism

Role of the Legacy

Spread in East Ullr

Part II

The Toran Era (700 BC to 0 AC)

Part III

The Middle Era (0 AC to 572 AC)

Part IV

The Imperial Era (572 AC to 830 AC)

Part V

The Industrial Era (830 AC to 996 AC)

Part VI

The Millennium Wars & Aftermath

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