

Creation and early history

In a land far, far away in an arid and treeless land, two great rivers arose in the north and flowed south until they merged in their descent into the sea. On the banks of the river a great civilization arose dedicated to the worship of the Gods of the Mountains who had led the people from their original home in the hostile mountains of the north and east to the fertile river banks.

To honor their gods, great Ziggurats of fired-brick were built in their new cities upon the summits of which, sacrifices were made to their Gods.

Anu, Great God of the Sky, looked upon his people with favor and they flourished. To the far west, he noted that Zeus, chief god of the Hellenes, had often taken mortal women as brief consorts, usually after having assumed the form of some great and perfect beast. In a moment of competition, Anu decided that he too would create a line of offspring upon the fairest maidens of his people. From each of the noble and priestly families he had brought to him one of their nubile daughters, 47 in number. In the shape of the greatest beast he knew, the Bull Auroch, he spent some of his godhood upon the virgins. After a long gestation of 10 months, from the wombs of the women burst forth a new breed.

Of the 47, there were 3 new forms. First to come forth was a male child in the form a mighty bull with the head of a wise, bearded man. Four were born in the shape of tall, muscular men with the horned head of a bull. The remaining 42 were in the shape of cows with bovine featured female heads. To Anu's disgust, the nobles and priests brought these children to the tops of the Ziggurat Mountains to offer up as sacrifice thinking it would please their Lord and also to remove these deformed and twisted creatures from their midst. Anu took them up and caused them to be sent to a new home on the world of Nibirum onto the Isle of Artemisia.

On the north coast of Artemisia, between the sea and the Phindardol Forest and the Afutunke Forest there lies a plain that varies in width from 10 to 100 miles that extends from west to east nearly 1000 miles. Upon this plain the herds of the Minotaurs flourished and multiplied. A culture developed that relied on 4 castes to maintain the peace and power of the Minotaurs: Majerna, Bulls, Steers, and Cows.

Of every 200 births, 120 are female cows. Of limited intelligence, they spend their time in the harems of the males, grazing, caring for the very young calves, and producing milk that forms the basis of many food products.

Of the remaining 80, one is a Mejerna, the human headed bull. This caste comprises the rulers and priests of the Empire. There are very few Mages within the Empire and those that do exist are primarily interested in forces of destruction and conquest. The Mejerna are the only ones allowed to cast Magical spells and as priests only they have access to higher level Clerical Magic.

Four of the remaining 79 are the Bulls. They lead the various herds and act as the Generals of the Armies, Guild-masters for the various trades, and the lower ranks of the Empire's priests.

The remaining 75 are steers, neutered males. The nature of the bulls is very competitive and early on in their history it became necessary to limit the number of breeding males to prevent continual civil war. The steers act as the warriors, servants, traders, and craftsmen. As a side effect of their castration, they tend to grow to an immense size; most are over 7 feet in height and close to 400 in weight. Their horn width can reach up to three feet. For distances up to 2 or 3 miles, a steer can run as fast as a horse and wielding their great axes, they can overrun most opponent forces.

At first the minotaurs self-divided into Mejerna led herds which were often in conflict, one with another. Over the span of a 1000 years, the herd of Khelaphet began to dominate all others and a great leader of the herd, Magumul, founded the first true city of the minotaurs and founded the empire that to this day still carries his name. He wisely funneled the martial spirit of the Minotaurs into wars against their nearest neighbors. Not comfortable in the great forests, they accepted wealth, resources, and slaves instead of claiming the forested land as their own.

Birth & Death

Cows come into estrus once a year for a period lasting for no more than a week. If impregnated by a bull, a calf is born 11 months later.

If the calf is a Majerna, he is removed from the harem to be cared for and educated by a special caste of Steers. At the age of 15, the young Majerna is assigned a mentor mature Majerna and begins assuming his duty to the full herd.

Bull calves are raised in the harem until the age of 5 years at which time they undergo the "Scrutiny." Only about 1 in 20 Bulls are to begin training so that they may be prepared for their future duties. The remaining 75 are examined. Any showing good strength and intelligence are castrated and assigned to a training barracks where they will be taught how best to defend the Herd. Those that exhibit physical afflictions but are strong of intellect are also castrated and sent to be trained as scribes or other tasks that require mental skills. Those suffering from both physical and mental defects are culled.

Heifers remain with the harem until they approach their first estrus at about the age of 7 or 8, at which time they are traded to a different herd to ensure that the bloodlines remain strong. At their first estrus, they are bred to younger bulls of the herd, as the small size of their first calves is easier for the young cow to birth.

The only Majerna that breeds is the Emperor. Each year on the night of the full moon festival of Nanna, God of the Moon and Lord of Wisdom, the Bulls of Khelaphet bring forth their finest heifers before him and he selects one to be his consort for the night. The heifer always gives birth to a Majerna calf 11 months later, and those that survive the birth which is always difficult due to the large size of the calf are never bred again, spending their few remaining years in pampered splendor in the Harem of Nanna.

Majerna live for 70 to 80 years on average. Bulls remain vigorous to the age of 60 and can live for another 10 years as Elders of the Herd. Steers and cows seldom live beyond 40 years.