

A photograph of a curved dagger, likely a historical or ceremonial weapon. The dagger has a long, curved blade with a slightly serrated edge. The handle is made of wood and is decorated with intricate carvings, including several circular motifs and a central design that resembles a stylized eye or a similar symbol. The dagger is shown next to its scabbard, which is made of a dark, textured material, possibly leather or wood, and has a series of raised, circular patterns along its length. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

The Principled Assassin

A Guide to the Church of Gatenen

Written by Kelly Thomas
and Julie Ann Dawson

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What this product is:

While the assassin is a legitimate, playable prestige class, game masters trying to maintain some semblance of believability in their games often have a hard time justifying an assassin player character in the party. A game master might refuse to allow the class because he doesn't want to run an "evil" campaign, or out of fear that the class will clash with other party members. Players too, might shy away from the opportunity to play an assassin class in a campaign world where it is not clear what role the assassin plays (if there is one at all).

The Principled Assassin discusses the Church of Galenen, an open game content deity of assassins. But Galenen's church is more complicated than just your typical den of murderers, and the faith serves a legitimate role (of sorts) in the greater society. This product provides details regarding how Galenen came to power, the evolution of his Church, and how his followers can function in society. This product is designed to be detailed enough to provide a new level of depth while remaining generic enough to fit into almost any campaign.

The Principled Assassin touches briefly on events first referenced in *Gods of the Dead*, in which we introduced four open game content deities of death and undeath. However, the history presented can be easily tweaked to work in your own campaigns. The references to the Great Reckoning can be ignored or altered as needed to fit Galenen into your campaign world.

Ultimately, this product offers you a ready-made mythos and institution to drop into your game setting to add a new level of detail to the world.

What this product isn't:

There are no new classes or prestige classes, and only a handful of new spells. There are other products available that already do a fine job of offering a host of new spells and magic items for assassin characters. We felt no need to recreate the wheel by creating a bunch of new magic items and spells that simply duplicate effects already available to the player.

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Sample file

Galenen

Intermediate Deity

(Other names: The Great Host)

Align: LE

Symbol: A Skull Sitting on a Silver Platter

Portfolio: Assassins, hospitality

Domains: Law, Death, Hospitality

Favored Weapon: Fulfillment (dagger)

How Galenen Achieved his Status

Before the Great Reckoning, Galenen was a minor deity of assassins. His church had little organization, and instead of the centralized, formal hierarchy it has today functioned as a patchwork of cooperative cabals. Each cabal handled its own affairs as the local High Priest saw fit. Cabals remained small to avoid detection, as authorities would seek to root them out and arrest members.

During the Great Reckoning, Galenen had remained indifferent to the battle between Nadru and Vagruth, and both gods tried to solicit his services to their respective causes. One day, as Nadru approached Galenen's domain to once more beseech his aid, Vagruth's minions caught him unaware and seriously wounded him. He arrived at Galenen's bleeding severely. Galenen gave him entry in order to rest and heal his wounds, but still insisted he would not take sides in the battle.

Meanwhile, Vagruth approached the domain, and demanded that Galenen grant him entry so that he could finish off his errant son.

"My guest is wounded, and unable to defend himself adequately," said Galenen. To allow you entry so that you could take advantage of him thus would in effect be picking sides. And that I will not do."

Vagruth then accused Galenen of taking Nadru's side and protecting him. Since Galenen would not allow Vagruth entry; he should then at least send Nadru out of the domain.

"If you wish to kill him, you may do so when he chooses to leave here. But as I have already offered him sanctuary before you arrived, I will not go back on my word to appease you. I do not pick sides in this. I would have extended the same courtesy to you. And again, if my current guest is wounded and I willfully send him away, have I not chosen sides by giving you an easy target?"

Realizing that if he forced the issue further he might force Galenen to side with his son, Vagruth stormed off. Nadru eventually healed and left Galenen's domain, but Galenen remained neutral throughout the remainder of the battle.

Though Galenen never formally chose a side in the battle, after the fall of Vagruth, Azaza Sun and Sky still rewarded him for his steadfastness to principle. Galenen was promoted to an intermediate deity and given dominion of Hospitality.

This caused some problems for the mortal realm, as suddenly the God of Assassins had what was considered a more esteemed position in the divine ranks. However many nobles began to recognize the value of a legitimate assassin's network. The ability to safely contract an assassin reduced the need for waging regional wars that often left countless civilians and soldiers dead and destroyed valuable farmland and villages. And forcing all assassins to work under the restrictions of an organized institution reduced the amount of more senseless acts of violence by creating a new layer of enforcement that could better track and monitor such activities. Over the generations, an elaborate web of laws and agreements was worked out that allowed the church to continue in its illegal work with some level of legal protection.

Church Organization

The patchwork of cabals gave way to a stringent hierarchy. Any assassin not formally recognized by the church could not benefit from the special agreements it had with various authorities. All contracts can only be authorized through the temple. An assassin accepting an unauthorized contract would not only be banished from the church, but also turned over to the local authorities for punishment.

Each local Temple is overseen by a Host, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church. He is responsible for accepting or rejecting contracts, assigning contracts, and handling any spiritual matters for the church.

Each temple is part of a *Blade*, a regional ruling group that oversees up to ten temples in an area. Each Blade has its own descriptive name, depending on its region. A Blade in a region populated by most dark elves might be called The Shadow Blade, while a Blade in a predominately Dwarven area may call itself the Stone Blade. The leader of a *Blade* is the Master Host, normally elected to the position by the member Hosts. The Master Host assists the local Hosts and insures that the tenets of the faith are kept. The Master Host also handles formal disciplinary actions for the region.

The Master Host answers to a Solicitor. Solicitor's oversee up to ten Master Hosts, and are appointed to the position by the Church's ranking High Priest (known as the Protor General). The Protor General serves until death, at which time the Solicitors meet to pray to Galenen in a ritual that is suppose to determine the next Protor General.

Clerics pray for spells at midnight. The Church does not recognize any High Holy Days of its own, however clerics in larger cities are often invited to participate or assist with the festivities of other churches in order to insure the blessing of Galenen upon the event. Nobles and politicians too are granting increased audience with Galenen's more powerful clerics in an effort to gain Galenen's blessings for their own events. This recent development concerns some, as it may give Galenen a more power than Azaza Sun and Sky intended.

How followers are perceived: Anyone who has ever provided lodging for a weary traveler, entertained house