

## Chapter 1 : Ptolus: City by the Spire | Obsidian Portal

*City by the Spire is an amazing feat of world-building. From the history of the city, to the description of the individual city wards, to the unique personalities that populate it bring the setting to life.*

All of the following races are common in Praemal. There are two great overclans of dwarves in the known world—the Stonelost and the Grailwardens—but rumor claims there was once another. Dwarves, Stonelost These are the children of the dwarves of Dwarvenhearth, said to be the greatest of all dwarven cities. Hence the name Stonelost. When Ghul fell and Dwarvenhearth was liberated, influential dwarven leaders would not allow their people to repopulate the city. No one knows why. Instead, the city was sealed. Use the standard rules for dwarves when creating a Stonelost dwarf. Dwarves, Grailwarden Deep within the mountains of the Prustan Peninsula, the Grailwarden dwarves build large underground cities devoted to industry. Their name comes from their stewardship of the White Grail, one of three powerful, linked magical artifacts the Black Grail and the Unseen Grail are the other two. While the Stonelost dwarves—and the Stonemight dwarves of Dwarvenhearth before them—developed stalwart fighting skills by warring against evil humanoids and dark elves, the Grailwarden dwarves focused their attention on science, craft, and even magic. When creating a Grailwarden dwarf, use the standard rules for dwarves except that they enjoy no special bonuses versus orcs, goblinoids, or giants. Today, the Elder Elves are thought to be extinct. Elves have always preferred the deep woods or the open sea to the mountains or cities, magic over the mundane, the moon and stars over the sun. Generally dark-haired, these elves are prevalent in the Sea Kingdoms, for they love the sea and ships. Some can be found in the Moonsilver Forest along the Whitewind Sea as well, but they care less for the cold, and so are fewer in number than those in the south. The other exception is that elves in the world of Praemal need sleep, like humans and other races. Unlike in the Core Rules, halflings and gnomes are technically distant elven relations. In fact, they were once considered elven subraces. Gnomes Frequently mistaken for halflings or the other way around, gnomes are the rarest of the major races, particularly in Ptolus. Unlike halflings, they are more likely to consort with elves than with humans. Use the standard rules for gnomes with this race. Half-Elves and Half-Orcs Although understandably rare, these races are more common in Ptolus than in many other places in the world. Half-elves are always half Shoal elf, while half-orcs usually come from the Ornu-Nom tribes of Palastan and Rhoth. They are small, fair, and nimble, but their childish size does not carry with it a childish demeanor. Although originally considered a type of elf, they do not have much contact with other races of elves—in fact, they interact more with humans. Nomadic halflings often move about in roaming tribal caravans throughout the nearby lands of Rhoth and Palastan. Use the standard rules for halflings with this race. Humans According to the elves and dwarves, the humans are the youngest of the common races. Despite this fact, they are the most prevalent of all intelligent peoples. They live in both Palastan and Rhoth. Many have found their way into human communities—but usually as individuals rather than groups. More common in the western mountains, these winged elves are frail but graceful even by elven standards. They live mainly in Cherubar, a land named for them. They are aloof again, even by elven standards and rarely travel outside their homeland. The parents and grandparents of these very rare individuals were tortured and changed by the dark lord Ghul almost a thousand years ago. Once Elder Elves, they now are misshapen and cursed, often displaying perverse magical powers. While not strictly evil, most seem continually besieged by some darker nature within, tugging at them to do wrong. Once masters of the Plains of Panish to the east, the golden-maned, feline litorians were scattered in the Wars of Fire thousands of years ago. Small prides hunt here and there in the wilderness, and occasionally a litorian attempts to fit into a human culture. More common in the lands to the south, these saurians attempt to keep out of the affairs of other races but often fail. Their own myths say they originated in a vast, swampy forest that once covered most of what is now the Cold Desert, Palastan, and the Whitewind Sea. Sages indicate there are reasons to believe this is true. Graced with celestial blood in their veins, these fortunate scions of blessed creatures have a representative of Heaven as part of their heritage. One must delve deep into elvish history to trace the origin of this splinter race of elvenkind. Mostly subterranean, dark elves are rarely seen, although the Stonelost dwarves

say their people fought great underground wars with them before Ghul drove the dwarves from Dwarvenhearth. Sadistic and cruel, they revere evil gods who urge them toward conquest and dominance. Most of these intelligent individuals are outcasts, although sometimes they become leaders. They often become powerful sorcerers or clerics as well. Orc myth contends that these creatures were birthed by an evil demon god, although some ancient texts claim they were created by an evil wizard. It is impossible to dispute, however, that the orcs who dwell in the area around Ptolus were modified and bred by the evil lord Ghul. The Toruk-Rul orcs are large, bestial, and ferocious. Both of these greater orc tribes live along the coast of the Whitewind Sea. They dwell in the wilderness throughout Palastan and Rhoth. The Ornu-Nom have a sense of savage nobility to them, but they remain the deadly enemies of humans and most other races. These individuals have fiendish blood in some small but measurable quantity flowing through their veins. Tieflings are a rare but significant force in Ptolus. The city also is home to goblins, ratmen, and other undesirable elements. Most people consider these creatures more of an infestation than true inhabitants, though. These creatures contribute nothing to Ptolus, but they prey on its populace, stealing what they need to live.

### Chapter 2 : Ptolus: City by the Spire |

*Ptolus has 59 ratings and 5 reviews. Caleb said: Ok, so my personal ritual when I buy a new sourcebook is to flip through, find my favorite new classes.*

It gives an overview of the city, the people, and the world in which the city resides. Next, the book goes on to give more information about the world around Ptolus: Monte gives just enough information to get you started here. Next, the book details the major organizations that can be found in the city, from the benign to the malevolent. This is where you start to find really great ideas for adventures and scenarios. Every region of the city gets its own section complete with important locations, rumors, adventure hooks, important NPCs, and how it all fits in the history of the city. The maps are well done down to the individual buildings and are supplemented with other maps throughout the book detailing typical houses, stores, apartment buildings, guild halls, government buildings, etc. This section is lovingly written almost like a travelogue. After the description of the city proper, comes a chapter that talks about running a campaign in Ptolus. This type of detail really makes urban campaigns stand out. Ptolus makes it easy to say the character just go home and deal with their day-to-day life while allowing the players a say in just what that day-to-day life entails. After the DM Companion section comes a section on what is beneath the city. You can use all of it, or none of it. How it affects the city, and how the city affects it is meticulously detailed, yet it is left open for DMs to insert anything they want down there. The first of these is a series of low-level adventures intended to get the players familiar with the setting and set up some recurring nemeses and allies for the characters. These are high-level near epic areas which spell certain death to anyone ill-equipped to explore them. They are intended as end-game areas in which a campaign can come to a glorious or horrible end. Finally, the product includes an index. I can find really no fault with this product. The book is heavy, though. Carrying it around all day in a backpack WILL cause pain. If you can find a copy of this, buy it.

Chapter 3 : Ptolus - Wikipedia

*Ptolus is crowded with buildingsâ€”you won't see many trees or grassy areas except in city squares or parks. The buildings are not tall, although a few towers and three- and even four-story structures rise above their lower neighbors.*

No matter where you stand, you probably smell the rain, because it likely either just finished raining, is just about to rain, or is raining now. The odors of damp clothes and people, moldy wood, wet straw, rain-slicked stone, and burning wood and coal mix together to create a unique aroma. Tolling bells and sounding horns signal various religious rituals from the Temple District, and entertainers sing, play instruments, and tell jokes in the street. Street orators attempt to inform and persuade those who will stop to listen, while bellringers shout out the news of the day for those too busy or too ignorant to read one of the many local broadsheets. As you look west, the city rises. To the east, it falls until it reaches the cliffs. It rises approximately three thousand feet above Midtown. Of course, it is only visible perhaps half the time due to the dark, looming clouds or the grey overcast skies that are so common, particularly in the winter. Even putting aside the Spire, though, the skies are rarely empty. Hot air balloons owned by the noble families are a common sight. House Abanar even owns a sailing ship that flies in the air as easily as it might ply the seas. Mages under the effects of a fly spell, adventurers mounted on flying carpets, griffons, or wyverns, flying familiars and animal companions, and even a demon or genie in flight all might be making their way across the skies above Ptolus at this moment. The sky is also periodically full of shadow sendings, although to the uninitiated they might just look like birds. Some of the puddles become deceptively deep. About once each block, a metal grate provides access to the sewers from the street. Water runs into the sewers from the gutters on either side or down the center of the street. The sewer grates are all hinged but locked. The locks exist mainly to keep some of the things that live down in the sewers in the sewers. The buildings are not tall, although a few towers and three- and even four-story structures rise above their lower neighbors. Although the structures vary from district to district, the typical Ptolus building has two stories. The bottom one is built of grey stones and mortar with wooden beams and slats. The top story is made of wood and generally has the same dimensions as the bottom story; some buildings are a bit wider on the top floor, creating an overhang of two or even three feet. Roofs are usually slanted with gabled ends. They are covered with wooden shingles and patches of dark green fungus, due to the damp climate. Every building has at least one stone chimney. Typically, the buildings of Ptolus abut each other on at least one side, and usually two. One side of a structure typically runs along a very narrow alleywayâ€”often no more than three or four feet across. Most such alleys are full of trash, empty crates or barrels, and other clutter. The streets are narrow and slick with rain. Most measure about ten feet across, while major thoroughfares are fifteen or even twenty feet across. In the morning, amid the ringing of bells, someone on the street is likely to see people rushing off to work, merchants opening their shops, and middle- and upper-class children on their way to school, books and wax tablets tucked under their arms. Vendors selling fresh baked goods and fruit are common, and cafes are filled with people drinking their morning tea or coffee. Vendors selling goodsâ€”particularly foodâ€”are common on almost every street in every district. This is an unofficial campaign site of Ptolus and Dungeons and Dragons. None of the images used on this campaign-specific site were created by the DM or Players. No specific permissions were gained to use the images on this site. All of those really awesome Dungeon maps were created and released for public use by Dyson Logos. If you are an owner of one of the images used on this site and do not approve of its use or would like to be added to our Credits page please contact the DM. If you would like to use any of the code from our page, please contact the DM and he will point you in the right direction, with payment in favorites as we may create a help page for future use. Ptolus, City by the Spire.

### Chapter 4 : Monte Says: Ptolus 10 Years Later - Monte Cook Games

*Monte Cook's ultimate masterpiece, Ptolus: City by the Spire, is without a doubt one of the finest gaming supplements I have ever seen in the nearly 30 years I've been gaming.*

City by the Spire. That hardly seems possible. Ptolus was a huge undertaking, and I feel, an incredible achievement for both editor Sue Weinlein and myself. It has a textured cover by Todd Lockwood and binding like a tank well, like a high school textbook. The content was enough to literally run not one but two d20 campaigns from levels 1 to 20 I know, because I did. Its entire design was based on travel guidebooks. That means that every page that described locations had a little reference map in the corner showing what district it was in. When an NPC, item, location, or organization, was mentioned in the text, a page reference could be found in the margin where you could find more information and often, a little image to help you rememberâ€”the book is so heavy with art its like has really never been seen since. What lessons can we learn from the product itself? As you can imagine, that was an incredibly expensive undertaking. Behind the scenes, the people we worked with were pretty nervous about such a risk. So you know what we did? We turned to the audience. It was a big deal. We got our preorders. Yeah, in a way, we were doing Kickstarter before such a thing even existed. And that idea really helped birth the idea of high-end, deluxe, expensive-but-worth-every-penny sorts of products that we see today. People willing and able to pay for quality. And looking ahead, I can see more of that approach in the future. And Ptolus taught me the way RPG sourcebooks should be written. Ptolus shows that you have to think about how a book will get usedâ€”and the bigger the book, the more important that is. You see the legacy of Ptolus in every MCG product, with the page references in the side margins, and a real focus on not just the content, but the usability of the product itself. This entry was posted in Monte Says. Monte Cook Monte Cook has written hundreds of roleplaying game products, along with numerous short stories, novels, nonfiction titles, and comic books. He is a cofounder of Monte Cook Games, and is our lead designer.

*Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire. A full-color illustrated fantasy city sourcebook. Either in print or in PDF, Ptolus is the most deluxe and useful roleplaying product ever produced.*

The campaign centers around the city of the same name, which lies on the Whitewind Sea at the edges of the crumbling empire of Tarsis. The city lies in the shadow of an impossibly tall and narrow spire. The Banewarrens and Chaositech. The book was produced in hardback on full color glossy paper. It was available for separate sale from several months before Ptolus either individually or in packs of five. As well as five copies coming free with pre-orders of Ptolus, it is also available in PDF format on CD that comes with all printed copies of the Ptolus book and available for free download. The contents of this book is designed to represent the common knowledge available to city residents or visitors to Ptolus. It is intended that each player in a Ptolus campaign should have access to a copy of this book.

**World[ edit ]** The world of Ptolus is called Praemal. The planet has two visible moons, and allegedly a third that disappeared eons ago.

**Chaositech[ edit ]** The technology of Ptolus is slightly better than usually found in other fantasy settings. Gunpowder and clockworks are quite mundane. It is considered an abomination in the world, although there are a few who consider it to hold great potential and would sell their own soul for a piece of it - as they usually do. As can be discerned from the name, this technology originates from chaos. Some of the greatest experts in chaositech are the drow. Races that are considered savage in other settings are civilized people in Ptolus, like the minotaurs.

**Harrow elves[ edit ]** Despite the fact that dark elves exist in the world of Praemal and, as usual, are greatly feared and despised, there is another twisted kind of elves. The harrow elves, which were created by Ghul, are terribly deformed and considered second-class citizens by most of Ptolus. They are considered more apt to be tempted by evil and most often do not have good family lives. Since every child produced by a harrow elf will be a harrow elf, there is a common conception that the race has a tendency towards rape. Harrow elves have considerable magic abilities, and their favorite class is monk.

**Cherubim elves[ edit ]** Winged elves, who are more fragile, but very swift, too. They usually live in the mountains, and do not interfere with the life of other mortals. They have thin bones and pale skin.

**Litorians[ edit ]** Humanoid lions, who have a very strong sense of honour. They have extraordinary physical abilities and senses.

*Sheva Callister's pointless search through the city of Ptolus has taken her many places, but it's at last time for some answers. Who really sent her on her mission?*

It was published by Malhavoc Press on August 10, Ptolus is also the name of the city featured in the campaign. It has received good reviews [1] [2] , and won the ENnie award for Product of the Year [3]. The campaign centers around the city of the same name, which lies on the Whitewind Sea at the edges of the crumbling empire of Tarsis. The city lies in the shadow of an impossibly tall and narrow spire. The Banewarrens and Chaositech. The book was produced in hardback on full colour glossy paper. The first pre-publication orders of the Ptolus book had their copy signed and numbered by Monte Cook. It was available for separate sale from several months before Ptolus either individually or in packs of five. As well as five copies coming free with pre-orders of Ptolus, it is also available in PDF format on CD that comes with all printed copies of the Ptolus book and available for free download. The contents of this book is designed to represent the common knowledge available to city residents or visitors to Ptolus. It is intended that each player in a Ptolus campaign should have access to a copy of this book. World The world of Ptolus is called Praemal. The planet has two visible moons, and allegedly a third that disappeared eons ago. Chaositech The technology of Ptolus is slightly better than usually found in other fantasy settings. Gun powder and clockworks are quite mundane. It is considered an abomination in the world, however, there are a few who consider it a great potential, and they would sell their own soul for a piece of it - as they usually do. As someone can find out from the name, this technology originates from chaos. One of the greatest experts in chaositech is the draw. Races, that considered savage in other settings, are civilized people in Ptolus, like the minotaurs. Harrow elves Despite the fact that dark elves exist in the world of Praemal and, as usual, are greatly feared and despised , there is another twisted kind of elves. The harrow elves, which where created by Ghul, are terribly deformed and considered second-class citizens by most of Ptolus. They are considered more apt to be tempted by evil and most often do not have good family lives. Since every child produced by a harrow elf will be a harrow elf, there is a common conception that the race has a tendency towards rape. Harrow elves have considerable magic abilities, and their favorite class is monk. Cherubar elves Winged elves, who are more fragile, but very swift, too. They usually live in the mountains, and do not interfere with the life of other mortals. They have thin bones and pale skin. Litorians Humanoid lions, who have a very strong sense of honour. They have extraordinary physical abilities and senses. Dwarves Dwarves are not actually new to this setting, but dwarves within Ptolus are somewhat different than your usual dwarves. The Grailwarden and the Stonelost clans focus on different aspects of dwarfdom respectively. Also, not every dwarf is warrior-like, as in many other settings; some of them are exceptionally better crafters and smiths, than others.

*A Player's Guide to the City by the Spire A city of mysteries, secrets, and dark histories, Ptolus lies forever in the shadow of a towering stone spire reaching impossibly high into the sky, an enigma and reminder of evil long past.*

The flashback ends after Pallen is incinerated. Back in the present, Sheva is still facing off against Godfred Vladaam as Allister Vladaam, his brother, looks on. They are demanding her hungersword, which Sheva had revealed in the first issue that it was something their father, Itistrul, wanted. Using an old magical device, she is able to escape through the window only to be surrounded by werewolves such as those she encountered on the way in. She explains what she had done to their companions and that they should know she has a hungersword. They back off as she gets away. Elsewhere, a hellhound enters the city, most likely in search of Sheva. The following day, Sheva begins to investigate who might be behind the trap at House Vladaam. He tells her that the information on the Brooch came from Havander, a mage working for the Sorn, a mercenary sorcerer group. Deciding she needs back up, Sheva calls upon old friends Daersidian Ringsire and Brusselt Airmol who agree without any questions. Another one page flashback shows Sheva conferring with a Gaen priest about bringing Pallen back, but since he was holding the Crown when incinerated, he is stuck between worlds. She then vows to get a necromancers help. The three go to find the sorcerer, but encounter the Shuul guarding the place. The Shuul are an organization bent on bringing science and technology back to the forefront of the world. After invisibly scouting the building, Brusselt says there are many Shuul and some mages inside. The three agree that the direct approach would be best. Another quick flashback before the battle shows Pallen and Sheva talking for the first time thanks to ghostweed. He is grateful for her being his friend and doing this. Sheva confronts Havander after a bloody entrance to his hideout and questions him where he got his information. It turns out it came from Kevis Killraven, one of two major players in the criminal underworld of Ptolus. They come bursting through the door, guns blazing, and gun down Sheva. The issue ends with a panel of her shot to hell looking dead.

*Ptolus is the one place in the world where technology is actually advancing, as the city actually produces devices such as firearms, clockworks and steam powered carriages. Adventurers aren't the only immigrants drawn to here.*

Please log in to add or reply to comments. Dennis H July 19, 1: My printed copy of this book just arrived. This was my first print on demand purchase and it arrived in about two weeks. This is a impressive tome, definitely recommend this to Ptolus fans. The only sad thing is no city poster map or pdf of one. Benjamin B July 05, 2: The marginal references are linked to the referenced content. Am I missing something? Or is his presumably dishonest PDF more useful than my costly one? Adam C September 13, 2: Erik H September 16, 5: Standard is fine, but Premium really shows off the art and the color. R July 04, 8: The difference between each other. Yves F September 11, Thanks Clinton M January 27, 4: Has anyone purchased one and found out? Leslie W August 25, 3: Are there notable differences? The original book was so beautiful Also - does the premium hard cover include any of the additional materials CD and map that came with the first printing? Reviews - June 2nd, This immense campaign setting is better than I could imagine any urban and dungeon resource. I have it in hardcopy and now electronic form. The electronic form makes it perfect for reading anywhere, and for extracting pictures and maps. This is a 1s [ I wish I had purchased a hard copy, back in the day, when that was an option. There is so much material and in great detail too. Ptolus works well on its own [

### Chapter 9 : Ptolus | Obsidian Portal

*Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire. Background. I have been out of the market for fantasy campaign settings for a few years now, a dedicated junky of Kingdoms of Kalamar.*

Maps You have recently arrived in the port city of Ptolus. New or not, you know a few things about this city—it is not without a reputation, to say the least. This is like no place else in the world. To call Ptolus a dynamic place with a strange and varied identity is to understate the situation greatly. Rival criminal gangs war in the streets. Chaos cultists hide among the citizenry. Ratmen over-run the sewers spreading filth and disease. Adventurers explore ancient ruins beneath the city streets. A emerging merchant class struggles for political power against entrenched nobility. Demons animate undead in the necropolis. An association of technologists struggles to break the monopoly on the trade in magic items enjoyed by a secretive order of wizards. The streets are plagued by addiction to Shivel, a narcotic seaweed. Meanwhile the entire city falls under the shadow of a massive evil monolith known as The Spire. The city lies in the world of Praemal within the bounds of a very old Empire unsure of whether or not it has toppled. Three different emperors claim the throne, and portions of the once great realm cleave off like icy shards from a melting glacier. This decaying society looks upon previous centuries and sees grander, more civilized, and certainly better days. Progress seems on the decline—skills and lore that people possessed just a few hundred years ago are lost now. Ptolus is currently the exception to the general imperial decline. In the past decade the discovery of vast treasures buried in a maze of ruins beneath the city has brought great wealth to the city. Economic growth has spurred activity in other areas, such as technology. Ptolus is the one place in the world where technology is actually advancing, as the city actually produces devices such as firearms, clockworks and steam powered carriages. Pilgrims come to see the Holy Emperor of the Church of Lothian. Bards and minstrels come to study at the Imperial Conservatory. Wizards petition to join the Inverted Pyramid.