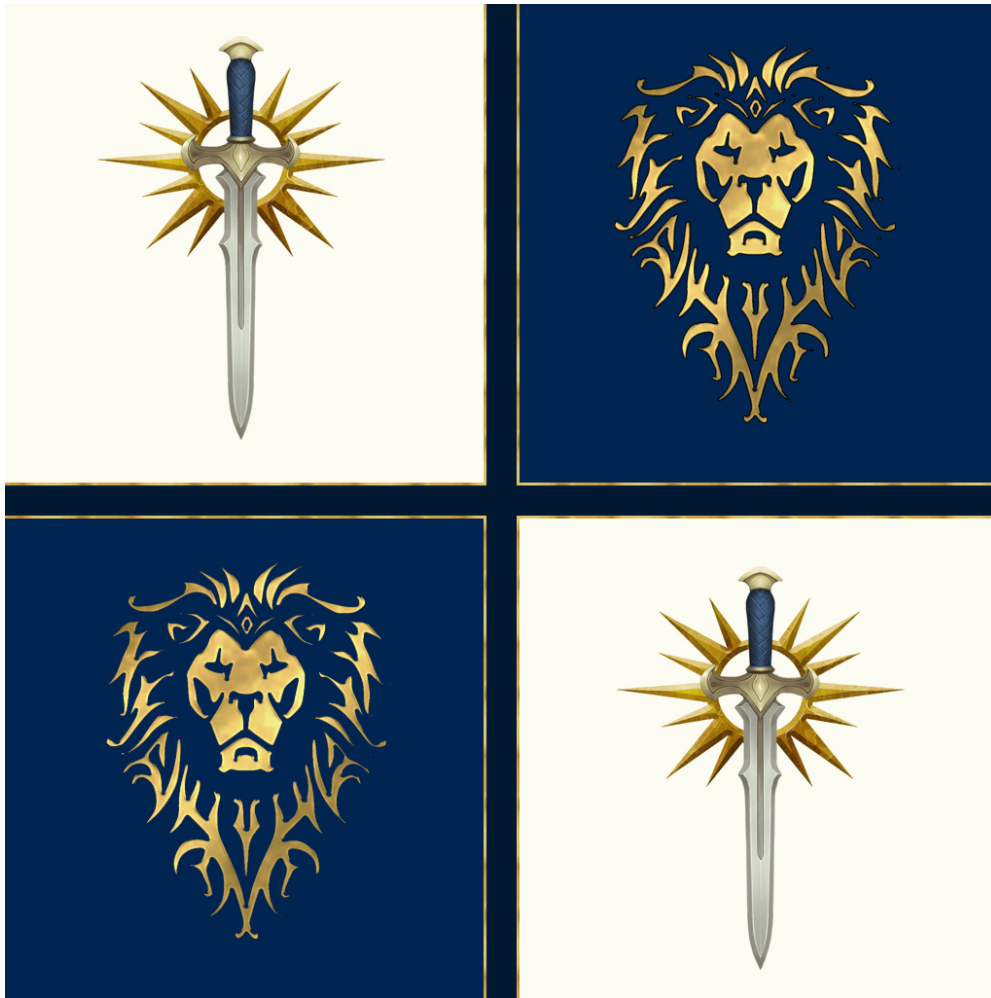


Azeroth

"Before the coming of the Age of Chaos when the Portal was first opened, the kingdom of Azeroth was the mightiest of all Human nations. Ruled by the wise and just King Llane, Azeroth stood as a beacon of light and truth throughout the known world."

Official name of the political entity: Kingdoms of the Crown of Azeroth



Banner of Azeroth before the Second War, containing the Lion of Stormwind, Cross of Azeroth and Azerothien symbol of the Holy Light.

Unofficial names: Kingdom of Azeroth, Kingdoms of Azeroth,¹ Royal Domain of Azeroth, Lands of the Crown of Azeroth, Crown of Azeroth, Azerothien kingdom, Azerothien domain, Azerothien Crown, Land of Azeroth, Lands of Azeroth², Kingdom of Stormwind, Azeroth, Stormwind.

¹ While Azerothiens use both terms, they do so with a different semantic value. The kingdom of Azeroth term is used when expressing the fact that Azeroth is a singular political entity, while the kingdoms of Azeroth is used when expressing the fact that Azeroth is actually composed of different lands.

² The same applies for the terms of the land of Azeroth and lands of Azeroth.

Area: 1 186 000 km².

Estimated population: Around 23 700 000 souls at the beginning of the First War.



Azeroth before the First War

National colours: Deep blue, gold, white.

Ruling house: House of Wrynn (present)

House of Arathi (past)

1 . Introduction

One of the Seven Kingdoms of Humanity, Azeroth was the youngest child of ancient Arathor. Founded in a wake of its disintegration, it soon established itself as a regional power, expanding into surrounding lands. Eventually, it became the most populous and powerful of the Seven Kingdoms thanks to the vast deposits of natural resources, particularly minerals, verdant farmlands and advantageous geographical location.

2. History

Fall of Arathor and the founding of Stormwind

It is known that the fall of the great Arathorian Empire saw the lands of Lordaeron filled with blood, pain and sorrow. All started with the coronation of its penultimate king, Wodanin III. For the last centuries of its existence, the kingdoms of Arathor slowly grew distant, achieving new rights and privileges and in the end, they were independent in all but a name. But King Wodanin had a different vision in his mind. He longed for lost glory of ancient Arathor and wished to bring its kingdoms back under the strong, centralized rule. To achieve this end, he designed a new codex of laws that would remove many of the privileges his predecessors granted to the kingdoms, but met a fierce opposition in doing so. Opposition that eventually led to the war that lasted for almost thirty years, with the core lands of Arathor on one side and the children of Arathor on another. In the end, Wodanin was murdered and most of his family killed, either by poison, dagger or sword in battle. And when the eldest of his surviving sons, Aelbert, proclaimed himself a new king with the intention of continuing the war, even Trollbanes, Grand Marshals of Arathor and Stewards of Strom, rose against him and eventually forced him to abdicate. This led to the end of Arathor. Trollbanes took the throne of Strom, but not the crown of Arathor, proclaiming themselves the rulers of the new kingdom, Stromgarde, and fully acknowledged the independence of Gilneas, Kul Tiras, Alterac, Dalaran and newly formed Lordaeron. The Arathi family was left with two options; stay as a lesser nobility, or leave voluntarily with whomsoever would choose to follow them. They chose to leave for the south.

Southern reaches of the Eastern Kingdoms were largely uncivilized during this time, although there were small Arathorian colonies on the island of Balor and the coast of Azeroth. These small colonies became independent with the fall of Arathor, as not a one of the newly formed kingdoms claimed dominion over them, and since Balor was a home to the only surviving cadet branch of the house of Arathi, the Lothar family, Aelbert and his followers made it their destination. After long seasons of travel, they arrived in a small

valley at the coast of Azeroth. Seeing it as a perfect place, defensible, full of natural resources and with an access to the sea and thus the neighbouring island of Balor, they chose to settle there. As a small fishing town already existed upon its shores, they built a small keep on a hill overlooking it and named it Stormwind, for the stormy winds that echoed amongst the surrounding peaks. Although Aelbert did not live long enough to see this, Stormwind Keep was soon surrounded by a bustling city of the same name. And as Balor and other small colonies proclaimed their allegiance, the Arathi lords of Stormwind crowned themselves kings of Stormwind.

Kingdom of Stormwind and the Arathi kings

For the next six centuries, Stormwind slowly grew in power. Its residents gradually colonized the remaining parts of the Stormwind Range and penetrated the vast forest of Elwynn, founding towns of Goldshire and Sunnyglade. Using the rich mineral deposits, large sources of lumber and fertile soil, they soon built a perspective economy and established themselves the main power in the region. The Arathi kings ruled absolutely in their new kingdom, with the notable exception of the island of Balor, and as their kingdom had to be fully sufficient due to its geographical location, they supported the formation of their own national institutes independent from those found in Lordaeron. And so it was that the famed College of Conjurers was established to give Stormwind its own magical school, while the Northshire Abbey with its Holy Order of Northshire Clerics was founded to give it its own order of higher learning and to support the faith in the Holy Light. And as the kingdom expanded further south, into the lands of Westfall and Southern Elwynn, new towns like Moonbrook, Raven Hill or Grand Hamlet were founded, giving Stormwind further access to the natural resources of the lands of Azeroth.

With the kingdom's borders moving further south and east, its citizens soon found themselves at odds with new, inhuman rivals. Most of these, such as the Gnolls of Redrige, posed only a limited threat to the security of Stormwind, even though many of their tribes migrated as far as Westfall lies, but there were some who represented a far greater danger, namely the troll tribes of the failing Gurubashi Empire. Brave Stormwindians frequently clashed with their raiding bands in the southern reaches of the Elwynn Forest and in time

even sent numerous preemptive expeditions into the Stranglethorn Vale itself, but they were not yet powerful enough to fight the Gurubashi Empire directly and root the threat out. But neither were the Gurubashi, as their empire was divided by infighting since the Gurubashi Civil War. And so the whole conflict never went beyond the point of limited border skirmishes.

War for the Crown and the King's Calendar

For six hundred years, kings belonging to the House of Arathi ruled the kingdom of Stormwind. Their subjects settled the vast reaches of the Elwynn Forest and Westfall, founding large number of towns, villages and small hamlets and the kingdom prospered. But nothing lasts forever. The last king of Stormwind belonging to the Arathi dynasty, Tristen II, had no legitimate children of his own and despite his efforts to secure the crown of Stormwind for his natural born son Lyonel, including Lyonel's legitimization, the succession crisis broke out as soon as he sighed out his last breath. This eventually led to a civil war that is known as the War for the Crown. A myriad of works has been written about this long and bloody conflict, including the well known Emerald Lion's War by Brother Samuel of Northshire, so a mere broad description will be sufficient for our needs.

There were three major players that could press their claim to the throne. First was the Lothar family. Last agnatic descendants of King Thoradin and junior branch of the Arathi family, they ruled over the island of Balor for hundreds of years and held considerable power and respect throughout the kingdom. This was perhaps the reason why King Tristen, as a part of his efforts to secure his son's succession, had them imprisoned and executed, all while confiscating all of their holdings, eventually giving them to Lyonel. Only the youngest children of the current Lord Lothar, twin siblings Aden and Ellena, managed to flee and find refugee in the dwarven city of Ironforge. Second was the Wrynn family. Descendants of King Aelbert by his eldest daughter, this family kept close ties with the Arathi kings, often marrying both their sons and daughters. Latest Lord Wrynn even married the eldest sister of King Tristen, giving his eldest son, Adamant, a very strong claim. Owning vast swathes of land in western Elwynn and Westfall, they were considered very powerful and had resources to back this claim. The last one was no

other than Lyonel, legitimized bastard of King Tristen. Known as the Emerald Lion, for his mother was famous Queen³ Danna Proudmoore of Kul Tiras and he proudly wore her colors, he declared himself the king of Stormwind immediately after death of his father. Following his demand of the proclamation of loyalty from the noble houses of Stormwind, most of the kingdom rose in opposition to him, instead declaring for young Adamant Wrynn. Still, with the control of Balor, Stormwind City itself and support from his mother, he certainly had means to break this opposition, but as we know, the wheels of fortune are always uncertain.

Once the lords of Stormwind had declared their support for Adamant Wrynn, Lyonel branded them traitors and took arms against them. Long and bloody conflict took place, with Lyonel initially holding the upper hand. Many noble houses were wiped out and at certain moment, it seemed that even Wrynns would become only a memory. But with the death of his mother, the tide turned against Lyonel. New ruler of Kul Tiras, Lionel's half-brother Derek, had feared Lyonel would eventually claim the throne of Kul Tiras as well, and thus sided with Wrynns. Still, being a mighty warrior and cunning general, Lyonel wouldn't give up. Taking all of his forces, he pushed his enemies northeast, towards the range of Redridge. There, alongside the waters of Everstill Lake, he fought against them for the last time. At first, it seemed Proudmoore, Wrynn and their men would not live to see another day. But in the end, it was not so. To a great surprise of many, a large force from Khaz Modan came upon Lyonel from the north, led by none other than Aden Lothar. Finally having an opportunity to bring justice for his family, Aden struck deep into Lyonel's lines and faced him in a single combat. Both these men were considered legendary warriors of their time, but in the end, Aden was the one who kept standing. And with Lyonel's death, the war was finally over.

Although many were uncertain why Lothars had aided Adamant, all became clear as Aden declared his loyalty for the House of Wrynn. For this, Adamant took Ellena Lothar as his wife and offered to make Aden Lord of Balor once more. But Aden refused, preferring to stay a simple knight, and so Adamant made him his Champion instead. With the crown won, Adamant made arrangements for his coronation and soon declared his

³ Although the standard title for rulers of Kul Tiras is Lord Admiral, Danna chose to crown herself as a queen, turning her position more regal and less military.

intention to reform the kingdom. No more would he rule as a mere king of Stormwind, but instead, he would rule as the king of all Azeroth. And so he did, with his coronation marking the beginning of new King's Calendar and of a new era, the era of King's Peace.

Kings of Azeroth

As we have already learned, the rule of King Adamant Wrynn I saw Stormwind transformed into something larger, greater. Azeroth. When creating this new establishment, Adamant was very generous in rewarding his supporters. He divided Azeroth into three separate entities bound by one throne, but each having its own lords paramount. Lands of Stormwind remained under the direct rule the house of Wrynn. The island of Balor became another separate entity. But the most important change happened in the east. Adamant claimed large swathes of land previously unsettled by the people of Stormwind, giving them a name of the Borderlands and making the house of Morgan, his strongest supporters, their lords. Morgans built themselves a home in the northern reaches of the Redridge Range and soon, large number of settlements dotted their domain, with the town of Lakeshire being the largest of them all. To keep on his promise made during the war, Adamant also granted his nobles certain political rights and allowed the formation of the House of Nobles, which became a legislative and judicial body of the kingdom.

The rule of the Wrynn kings saw Azeroth prosper and grow stronger. Adamant's successors, wanting to restrict the power of the House of Nobles, granted new privileges and rights to the ordinary citizens of Azeroth, all the while supporting the lower nobility and scholar institutions, such as the Northshire Brotherhood, Academy of Arcane Arts or College of Conjurers. To secure the borders of the kingdom, they organized the landless knights of Azeroth into the Brotherhood of the Horse, institution answering only to the king, and had the Conjurers of Azeroth, together with the help from the Northshire Clerics, create powerful magical items known as the Eyes. These Eyes, called as such for they were connected with each other and allowed their holders to communicate and see their surroundings, were placed at strategic places around the kingdom, allowing Azeroth to act swiftly against any threat. All of this helped the people of Azeroth to develop a

strong sense of common identity, forging them into a single, powerful nation. Soon, they began to proudly call themselves Azerothiens⁴ and with this, the formation of Azeroth as we know it was complete.

Yet, shadow can never disappear completely, as it is a brother to the light, and one can always find black stains on a nation's history. In the aftermath of the War of Three Hammers, year 358 of the King's Calendar, a large volcano which later became known as Blackrock Mountain⁵ erupted along the northern border of the Redringe Range. With most of the surrounding lands inhabitable, Morgans and their subjects had to leave and resettle in the southern parts of the Redridge Mountains. But a larger shadow was yet to come, as an ancient enemy awoke in the far south.

Fall of the Gurubashi Empire

For hundreds of years, the Trolls of the Gurubashi Empire had been leaderless and divided by infighting. But in the aftermath of the Gurubashi civil war, a powerful chieftain, known as Var'gazul, united the factions within the empire and reforged its armies into a weapon of reckoning. Aided by Min'loth the Serpent, he made war upon Azeroth, a war that left the southern reaches of the kingdom devastated. Although Azerothiens eventually managed to push him back, it was merely a setback for him, for he still had countless warriors at his disposal. Azerothiens knew he was mustering a host far greater than what they had faced ever before and so they decided to use drastic measures. Their Conjurers, aided by the very Guardian of Tirisfal, summoned and binded great Neptulon, promising to return him to his plane for his assistance. Although Neptulon was enraged by this, he was offended by Min'loth's magic as well and ultimately decided to crush the Gurubashi Empire. He commanded his mighty Krakken and they answered. Min'loth tried to oppose them, but in the end, he met this death as the ocean fell upon Stranglethorn Vale. Var'gazul, seeing his vast host disappear beneath the waves, was broken and his people never again posed any real threat to the kingdom of Azeroth.

4 As we know, Azerothien, both as an adjective and noun, is used when dealing with human denizens of the continent and kingdom of Azeroth, while Azerothian is used when dealing with the world of Azeroth.

5 For most of the time, the volcano has been known as Darkrock or Darkiron Mountain. Only when the Horde made it their capital in Azeroth did it become known as Blackrock Mountain.

3. Geography

Climate and ecosystems

The lands of Azeroth are located in the southern part of the Eastern Kingdoms. Its northern reaches, together with the island of Balor, feature an oceanic climate, while the south has more of the humid climate of subtropics. The weather is seasonal, dominated by northwestern humid winds, with mild winters. The exception is the area of the southern Redridge Mountains, which, thanks to its location, has dry winters and less humidity all together.

A large part of the kingdom is covered by a deciduous temperate forest, known as the Forest of Elwynn. Most of the forest is broadleaf, comprised of oaks, beeches, elms and satinwoods, although the areas at the foot of the Stormwind Range tend to contain conifers, particularly spruces and firs, as well. The northern reaches of Azeroth, featuring the great Stormwind Range and countless small valleys, are by predominantly covered by coniferous forests, once again comprised of spruces, pines etc. The Redridge Range, or what is left of it to be more precise, is of the similar nature, although due to its latitude, beeches and oaks take preference over conifers. In the west lies the land of Westfall. Unlike the rest of the kingdom, it doesn't have large forested areas, but instead features grasslands and plains. Although usually possessing a fairly humid climate, Westfall is prone to be arid during certain time periods.

Natural resources

Azeroth has always been very rich in terms of natural resources. All the foothills of Westfall, foothills of Elwynn, Stormwind Range and Redridge Range contain vast deposits of numerous kinds of ore, arguably the largest of all the human kingdoms. Gold, silver, iron, copper and tin can all be found in vast amounts within the borders of Azeroth. Mithril and truesilver can be found as well, particularly in the northern part of the Stormwind Range and Redridge Range, although they are far more rare. Thanks to the Forest of Elwynn, Azeroth also has large deposits of lumber and timber, although not as

large as Lordaeron. The same could also be said about arable land, as Azeroth has large abundance of it thanks to Westfall and glades within the Elwynn Forest, although not in the same degree as Lordaeron does. The grasslands of Westfall and slopes of both the Stormwind and Redridge Range also provide vast swathes of pasture, comparable to those found in Arathi Highlands. The only resource Azeroth relatively lacks is an oil, as there are only smaller fields found around the island of Balor.

4. Economy

Due to its vast mineral deposits, Azeroth has always been a large exporter of both ore and metalwork. Having a large manufacturing center in form of Stormwind City, it is not only able to meet its inner needs and demands, but also export huge numbers of goods to its neighbours. Metalworking is on a very high level, both thanks to hundreds of years of experience and their contact with the dwarves of Khaz Modan. Thanks to its climate, giving Azeroth fertile arable and pasture land, Azeroth also has a highly productive agriculture. Although most of its wheat and corn production is used to satisfy its own needs, there are many other crops they have in overabundance and therefore can export. Southern reaches of Westfall are used to produce cotton, while the vast reaches of the Elwynn Forest house countless vineyards. As Azeroth has a very mild climate, it has always produced a wine of the highest quality, rivaled only by the wine of Tirasian origin. One must also note their large production of dairy products, maintained thanks to vast herds of cattle and sheep. As we know, different kinds of Azerothien cheese, ranging from Stormwind Brie to Redridge Roquefort, are well known across all of the Seven Kingdoms.

5. Politics

Founded in a wake of Arathor's fall, Stormwind was ruled by the iron fist of the Arathi dynasty for most of its existence. With its transformation into Azeroth, its political nature changed somewhat. Although the common citizens always had certain rights guaranteed, Wrynn's and their efforts to curdle the power of the nobility granted them larger political powers. With its national spirit, embodied by the Wrynn dynasty, binding it

together, Azerothien society became very egalitarian, although the House of Nobles still holds considerable power and privileges, as does the king himself. In principle, nobles are not above mere citizens, although they still hold more power as the legislative organ for the kingdom itself is composed only of high nobles and certain high offices can be occupied only by nobles.

Political system

King

The king holds most of the executive power within the kingdom of Azeroth. He is the supreme leader of its military forces and the force behind its foreign policy, although all his actions must be approved by the House of Nobles. He can veto laws approved by the House.

House of Nobles

Main legislative and judicial organ. Members of the House belong only to certain noble families and only they can be appointed to certain high offices.

Academical, scholarly and military orders

These organizations have right to appoint its leaders and create their own laws, although those can't contradict the laws of the kingdom.

Citizen

Each citizen belongs to a certain municipality. These municipalities elect their own leaders and councils. They can create their own laws, although those can't contradict the laws of the kingdom.

Administration

As we know, Azeroth is divided into three separate lands; the lands of Stormwind, the Borderlands and the island of Balor, with some differences existing between them. For example, in Stormwind and Balor, the elected leaders of municipalities are called mayors,

while in the Borderlands, they are called magistrates. All denizens of Stormwind itself are direct subjects of the king, while denizens of Balor and Borderlands answer to respective ruling houses, who in turn answer to the king. In certain situations, the king is represented by the House of Nobles or appointed officials.

6. People and culture

Values

One thing is sure about the people of Azeroth; they are very individualistic. This stems both from the nature of their colonization of the southern continent and living conditions they found there. As Azeroth is very fertile and lush and their colonization of its lands was very decentralized, they often founded only very small settlements or even single farms that had to be fully self sustained. This led to the lower need for interdependence than found in the northern kingdoms and in turn turned the people of Azeroth very individualistic. This kind of individualism also manifested on a national level. As Azeroth was fairly isolated from other human kingdoms, it had to develop its own institutions, leading to lesser need for interdependence and larger degree of independence from other human nations.

On the other hand, they also value truth, hospitality, inner strength, bravery and valor. Azerothians, more than any other human nation, celebrate their great heroes, reminding themselves of their acts of heroism, while building them great monuments. They are indeed a hearty people, kind to their friends, but resolved when fighting their enemies.

Faith

The people of Azeroth are truly a religious folk, arguably as much as their brethren from Lordaeron. But there is a certain difference. Unlike Lordaeronians, who profess their faith in a collective manner, Azerothians, once again, are far more individualistic. While Lordaeronians gather in their chapels and churches, found in every settlement, almost

daily, Azerothiens reserve such gatherings for special occasions or festivities. Instead, each house holds a small place of worship that is used for daily prayers and meditation. This practice created a certain philosophical outlook, allowing Azerothiens to establish more personal relation with the Light. This, in turn, allowed the Brothers of the Northshire, who also shared this outlook, to explore the Light in the ways their northern brethren couldn't imagine, resulting in the creation of new techniques and holy spells.

People

When speaking about the people of Azeroth, one can safely divide them into three major groups. First two groups consist of the humans of Arathorian origin, with the first one being composed of the descendants of the people who settled there during the old Arathorian colonization or of the people who arrived with the Arathi family. The second one consists of the descendants of the later arrivals, who left for Azeroth during the rule of Wrynn. Third group is composed of the dwarves from Khaz Modan, who settled the mountains of Stormwind and Redridge, eventually becoming full citizens of Azeroth. There also might be fourth group; the original human natives who were assimilated by the Arathorian folk, but as we have no direct proof of their existence, it is purely hypothetical.