

# THE TRUE SEAT OF POWER

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## An anatomy of the Brine Alcazar and its unelected autarch

*For circulation and reprinting.*

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When Sovereign **Justin Hibbert Nekator IV** surrendered his final breath on in 725 Y.S., the bronze bourdon atop the Brine Alcazar tolled thirteen solemn times—twelve for the decades of his reign, and a thirteenth for the continuity of the realm. It was widely assumed the carillon would soon peal again for a coronation. It has not uttered a note since.

### THE INTERREGNUM *Frostmere 725 - Fellwind 726 Y.S.*

Two emergency conclaves, convened beneath salt-crusted vaults, failed spectacularly to reach the uncompromising verdict: unanimous assent from Azure, Silt, Caldwell and Duskhaven—or no crown at all. Tempers frayed, emissaries duelled over protocol minutiae, and the throne room was ultimately dismissed *sine die*. Scholars of constitutional law note that the Alcazar library contains no precedent for an interregnum lasting longer than a single month.

### THE CLAUSE FROM THE CATACOMBS *Vinetide 727 Y.S.*

Into this vacuum glided a grey-furred tabaxi, nominally ‘adviser’ to the late sovereign, actually a fixture in every significant procurement file for the past twenty years. From deep within the Alcazar’s salt-stained archives he produced the *Act of Continuity* (codex ref. IV-Θ-113), a statute unnoticed by most modern jurists.

*If the Potentates, through incapacity or dissent, neglect their electoral duty for one full solar year, the Steward shall assume the daily prerogatives of the Crown until such unanimity be attained.*

— **Act of Continuity**, §3.

With the five Pentarchs hustled into a midnight signing ceremony—and a discreet cordon of Lamyan halberdiers guarding every exit—Ra’Jerr accepted the keys of office and styled himself **Steward of the Brine Throne**.

### PATRONAGE, PECULATION, PERMANENCE *Duskwane 727 - Starfall 730 Y.S.*

Freeholder Boom – A blizzard of *Writs of Freeholding* showered the frontier. Each parchment bestowed land—and bound its recipient to a tithe “not less than one-tenth of all yields” remitted directly to Alcazar coffers.

Clerical Re-alignment – Ledgers emptied of veteran scribes; their desks now manned by graduates of Silt’s Bureaucratic Seminary, notable for identical handwriting and identical loyalties.

Procedural Labyrinth – Every request to reconvene an electoral conclave found itself trapped in a freshly discovered sub-clause, awaiting a certification that never arrived.

### **THE MASK SLIPS**    *Starfall 741 Y.S. - present*

765 Y.S. - Remote settlers discover that arrears on the Brine tithe result in forfeiture—usually to a steward-friendly intermediary who appears with unsettling haste.

771 Y.S. - Azure and Margraeve-Duskhaven refuse to sit beneath the Steward’s gavel. Decrees from the Brine Throne are ignored outright.

776 Y.S. - A battalion of mercenaries garrisons the Alcazar “pending restoration of normal electoral business.” Their pay-roll traces back to the Citadel.

### **SOVEREIGN IN ALL BUT NAME**

The Steward today exercises every material prerogative of the crown—minting edicts, levying tariffs, commissioning sheriffs. Only the formal declaration of war eludes him; consequently, the Azure-Silt frontier bleeds in an interminable sequence of “incidents” that somehow never coalesce into open conflict.

The Potentates mutter, manoeuvre and postpone, yet none can assemble the unanimity required to crown a rival—nor the coalition required to storm a palace encircled by Lamyan pikes.

*“Power most secure is power that pretends each dawn to be provisional.”* — Fragment attributed to an Alcazar Court-scribe (burned in the 732 Y.S. archives fire).

### **THREE THIN PATHS BACK TO BELL-SONG**

1. **Quadralateral Compromise** – Four distrustful realms pardon their grudges long enough to bless a single candidate. Odds quoted in the taverns: 200-to-1.
2. **Pentarchal Renegation** – The five High Priests rescind the very statute they once invoked. Yet Alcazar stipends have a curious way of stilling reformist zeal.
3. **Force Majeure** – A concert of armies converges upon the salt-white fortress. History reminds us that Silt’s legions typically arrive first—and leave last.

Until one of these improbable events occurs, the Brine Throne remains constitutionally vacant, materially occupied, and—let us say it plainly—hostage to a single, silver-tongued caretaker whose reign depends on eternal dead-lock.

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*Circulate discreetly. Possession of this pamphlet in Silt, Lamya or Caldwell territory is discouraged.*