

Askar Mercenary Warriors

When humans first began to explore Antarean space they soon encountered the Askar, already an advanced race of great antiquity, whose worlds spread across a significant portion of the Antarean Nexus. As humans expanded their worlds beyond Old Earth the Askar appeared unconcerned, watching on benignly, but largely ignoring the new-comers who were but one among many such emergent races after all.

The Askar disappeared entirely from the Nexus after the long isolation that followed the gate collapse at the end of the Third Age. During the Fourth Age of Xon Times the only Askar worlds that returned to the Nexus were discovered to be uninhabited; the Askar congregates long since abandoned and fallen to ruin. The same was true of many human and alien worlds, but where some human planets retained high levels of civilisation and survived to repopulate Antarean space, the Askar were nowhere to be found. From the heights of space-spanning civilisation they appeared to have plunged to the depths of extinction. It would not be a unique fate for an Antarean race by any means, were that to prove the case.

The next contact between the Askar and humans happened many thousands of years later, towards the end of the Sixth Age, during the bitter conflict between the Trisapients and the newly resurgent Vorl. Like the Askar the Vorl were believed extinct, so it was a considerable surprise when Vorl armies began to raid and destroy human worlds. The Vorl armies of those times were observed to include a number of subservient races, including entire formations of creatures that were soon identified as Askar. However, these Askar

exhibited practically none of the marks of high-civilisation that had characterised the peaceful, progressive and technologically advanced race of former times.

The deployment of trans-dimensional weaponry against Vorl gates would lead directly to the collapse of the Nexus, known as the Trisapient Catastrophe, bringing an end to the Trisapient Age altogether. When the Nexus began to reform thousands of years later there appeared at first no sign of the Askar. However, soon small numbers began to turn up in the service of other races, including their old masters the Vorl. Subsequently, Askar appeared as mercenaries for hire in those Freeborn Houses whose routes lay closest to the marches of Vorl space. Following the PanHuman Schism (When the Isorian Senatex divided from the PanHuman Concord) the Askar spread throughout much of known Antarean space upon the backs of the Freeborn as suppliers of mercenary soldiers.

Today the Askar can be found in small, scattered groups throughout the Nexus, where they serve as mercenary warriors in the forces of many different species. They travel the Nexus via the ships of the Freeborn and other, alien races that have need of their fighting qualities. No Askar homeworlds have ever been discovered. Perhaps the surviving Congregations have their own reasons for maintaining a low-profile, or possibly they have been subjugated by some other power, driving bands of warrior-protectors across Antarean space; all this is conjecture and impossible to confirm at the current time.



Agile Askar react quickly to leap across scrubland on their way to another punishing victory.

