

## Oelyte Culture and History

The origin of the Oelyte people has been an enigma to theologians, scientists, and mystics alike. Their appearance on this world has been very recent in the scale of recorded time, and as a race they possess almost no prehistory. It seems that almost from their creation, the Oelytes possessed the abilities of higher communication. Such mental abilities have only grown with the quick development of their race. Now, the Oelyte people have disseminated throughout the other cultures and have gained prominent positions in many areas due to their abilities. The Oelytes have no land they call their own. Rather, they have chosen to spread out amongst the other races so as to gather as much knowledge as possible. For knowledge is the one true craving of all Oelytes. Their natural abilities of reading and writing help them to quench this hunger. With training, Oelyte sages can become so mentally attuned that they are capable of feats of telepathy and masterful recollection. Do not assume that their physical capacities have withered due to emphasis on the mind. Such an assumption would be in error. When compelled, the Oelytes can mobilize effective fighting forces. Those Oelytes that have chosen to master the art of war are often great strategists and leaders.

Physically, Oelytes have avian characteristics. Patches of feathers are found on their bodies, most often on the face, around the eye orbits, shoulders, and around the joints of the appendages. Many males have a crest of feathers extending backwards from the crown of their heads. The hue of these feathers varies greatly. Most, but not all, have a residual beak-like structure near the mouth that varies in prominence. Aside from these features, Oelytes have the usual hominoid build and stature, including prehensile digits and 4 distinct limbs. Their young, which are reared from eggs, mature quickly. They attain intellectual maturity around the age of five, at which point they enter their first apprenticeship. They reach physical maturity shortly thereafter, around age ten. However, accelerated aging accompanies this accelerated development. Precious few Oelytes live to see their 40<sup>th</sup> year. Their lives are short, even compared to that of the humans. These avian people strive to make the best out of every hour they are given. You will not find them loitering around in bars, or passing the day in idle. Any intellectual discourse is considered to be time well spent in the eyes of an Oelyte. They can spend hours conversing on matters of fact and intellect. Due to this, and to the constant irritation of the Oelytes, the other races share a common saying that goes, "Don't speak to the beak unless you've got a week."

The Oelytes attempt to approach every matter with an analytical mind. This trait sometimes causes them to over-analyze a situation to the point of preventing action. They also tend to over-emphasize trivial details. Most Oelytes are perfectionists by nature, and discount work that does not meet their standards.

Most are also strict empiricists that demand evidence to substantiate claims. While these traits may sometimes be hindrances, any academic knows the importance of evidence and substantiation to the pursuit of knowledge.

The Oelyte historians have delved heavily into the past to determine the origin of their peoples and what they have learned so far is this: the primitive avian ancestors of the Oelytes would winter in the waters of the South Rim. For an unknown reason, a group of these birds underwent a glorious and rapid transformation, evolving into primitive Oelytes over several decades. While these predecessors did not have the mental attunement Oelytes now possess, they quickly learned to use tools to compensate for the loss of their natural abilities. Within a few more generations, these proto-Oelytes began to communicate verbally. Driven by some latent, archaic instinct, the population began a migration north on foot. Within a century, the Oelyte people entered the Sethen kingdom, where they were received with curiosity and apprehension. They carried bows for hunting and had mastered the art of pottery. Though the Oelytes came from the lands the Sethen once called home, the Sethen had never seen these creatures before. The Sethen, however, were not intimidated by the “fluffy” intruders. Instead, they were surprised at the multitude of questions the Oelytes would ask. Some of the Sethen referred to these newcomers as “mental sponges – kind of squishy and just as absorbent,” that is to say, all mouth and no muscle. As the Sethen directed them to the other races for authorities in various fields, the Oelyte population divided into smaller groups, and each group traveled to learn from its respective race. Following the advice given by the Sethen, each group was led by an individual skilled in diplomacy. This diplomat was referred to as the Oratorian. The skill of the Oratorians made the Oelytes’ integration into the other civil race quite painless. As the Oelytes came to learn the sheer size of Merdensa and the masses of information gleaned it became apparent that they would need a centralized point to gather their collected information. Thus, a great library was established for that purpose.

Oelyte diplomats were able to obtain a small parcel of land near the meeting point of the Cedargreen and Celapine Rivers. Under the leadership of Margiel Sagarius, the construction of the great library, Acedemos, was completed in Age of Council 13. The structure is truly an awesome sight to behold. Its delicate appearance is offset by its sheer size. The vaulted ceilings of its chambers are built out of materials that will resist the elements for ages to come. Margiel holds the title of Unsurpassed Architect for his designing of the Acedemos. Many other heroes are associated with its creation, such as Alchior, Superior Metallurgist, and Harvelka, Grandmistress Sculptor. Oelytes use a complex system of titles is used to honor their heroes. The wording of a title is dependent on the field that the individual has excelled in, how he stood in relation to his peers, and how many pupils he has trained to be masters.

Titles of honor are bestowed by those currently residing in Academos on a yearly basis. However, no such titles are given to living members of the race. The masters of their field have not the time to deal with such frivolous ceremonies while they are alive.

Within the library of Academos is stored the history and knowledge of the ages as it is collected, and also found there are wondrous laboratories where scores of alchemists, mages, and craftsmen unlock the secrets of matter and energy. While no person or race (with the exception of the Dark Elves) is specifically barred from researching or working in Academos, permission is required for entrance. Though small, the library guard is not a force to be trifled with. Their armory contains unusual and potent weapons. Those who attempt to sneak in or steal from Academos are dealt with severely. The library is the jewel of their race, and the Oelytes protect it dearly.

It did not take long for the Oelytes to detect the interracial animosity that existed between the peoples of Merdensa, particularly between the Dwarves and Elves. Most Oelytes accurately perceived this friction as a force that was counter-productive. Thus a team of 18 diplomats, led by Pearlae Volmour the Undisputable, sought to create a council where all races would have equal representation and be able to settle disputes quickly and peacefully. Contingents of four Oratorians were to each of the races: Humans, Dwarves, Elves, and Sethen. In order to lower the potential loss of life, only one was sent to the Orcs and one to the Dark Elves. Sadly, the Oratorian sent to contact the Dark Elves was never heard from again. While the Oelyte sent to parley with the Orcs did not meet death, he was tossed aside by laughing warriors before he could speak to any of the clan leaders. It quickly became apparent that the Orcs had no interest in interracial relations. The other races saw potential in this council and agreed to give it a try. There was really nothing to lose. And so, 94 years after their arrival to Merdensa, members of the Oelyte race were successful in creating “The Board for Cultivation of Inter-Cultural Relations Through Proactive Diplomacy.” However, the influence of more practical races changed the name to simply “The Peace Council.” For the purposes of standardization, the year that the Council was created was set as year 0 in the Age of Council.

Average natural lifespan: 30 years (Oelytes are considered adults by age 10)