



FICTIVE'S
PORTABLE
PANTHEON
BY ANDREW SHIELDS

A RESOURCE FOR OLD SCHOOL HACK

2012 EDITION

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Pace Yourself. Think of this book as the grocery store. You don't go to the store to eat everything in it. You go to get what you need to make delicious meals and snacks at home. I do **not** recommend trying to use all these deities at once, figuring out charts of relationships between them and locating them in the alignment of morality and the stars. You can pick and choose, and savor various flavors.

History of the Gods—Broad Strokes

The basic idea is that human worship of certain ideals personified them, back when the world was more awash with energy than it is now. Those personifications took steps to assure their continued worship, and created avatars, and ultimately did battle with the (then much more powerful) dragons for stewardship of the world's breathing energy.

To do that, the gods realized they had to be individually stronger. So, their followers converted and/or conquered the followers of other minor gods, so there were ever fewer gods with ever more worship. By the end of the conflict, Saegrak was the most powerful deity, with four others—the Ascendant Five. They received most of the worship, and other gods were folded into their traditions.

After they defeated the dragons, the gods split the energy so many ways it clogged the breathing of the energy of the world; when they pooled their divine energies to create a Most High source, it plunged into the earth, so for the first time the world breathed for itself. As a consequence, gods are still mightily powerful, but no longer the masters of the world.

- *For more detail, check out "An History of the Energy of the Breathing World" later in the book.*

This book provides the Ascendant Five, and some deities that may have gotten together enough worshipers to get free of the Ascendant Five. Here is a model for how you can make your own deities if you like, by making up new talents or by combining existing talents in new ways. The pantheon has the stability of having five main gods, and the flexibility of providing many more, and a good back story to explain how that could be.

Patronage and Chapters/Cults/Churches/Temples/etc. You can give a city-state or region a patron god, instead of having an area worship all these gods (or even the Ascendant Five.) Then, through trade and war, as these regions or city states deal with each other, they are accommodating, making shrines for visitors. So you can have one big presence and a few smaller presences as nods to neighbors.

Also, the deities and spell lists are provided here, but also a method for making the organizations that worship them. I do not recommend having a monolithic "Church of Saegrak," but instead having many organizations that worship Saegrak that sometimes work together and sometimes don't get along, squabbling over methods, finer points of doctrine, cultural differences, or whatever.

Followers of any god should be able to find circumstances to get along with followers of any other god—or be in conflict with them. Instead of saying which gods get along and which don't, that focus and specificity goes to the groups of their followers. This is intentional. Have fun with it.

The Power of Randomizing. Where possible, the book includes ways to randomize. While picking the things you want is encouraged and great fun, it can also be an entertaining and fresh creative exercise to randomly generate the pieces and use your imagination to put them together.

DIVINE MECHANICS

Divine Worldview. These talents come from a god, so they can be gifted to devoted servants of the god, or others, as rewards.

- The DM is free to allow a god to give magic power to those who are not clerics—but that power comes with an understanding that the character will pursue the god’s agenda and work for the god’s best interests. If the character does not, consequences will follow.

CANTICLES (CLERICS)

Each god has a base 5 divine talents that flow to their servants. Clerics can have two base templates at once—the cleric template, and one of the canticles. (“Canticle” means “song” and is a quick reference to the liturgies, catechism, lore, legendry, and practices of one of the worshiping traditions.)

If clerics displease their gods, they may lose access to the canticle talents—but they only lose access to all divine talents if they have really misbehaved. In either case, they atone by sacrificing things they care about or questing for the god with negative conditions (like foregoing armor or weapons, taking no money, fasting, etc.).

Clerics may only take talents from other canticles with the permission of their god, and the DM. Taking talents from the base canticle or the base template both count as talents from the base template, for purposes of determining how many cross-template talents the character can learn.

DESCRIPTION OF TALENTS

Difficulty to Learn. How widely available is the talent?

- **Base Template Talents.** You can gain talents on your base template without further training.
- **Open Talents.** Training for “open talents” is easily located, or spend 3 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling to automatically “figure it out” somehow.
- **Restricted Talents.*** Gaining “restricted talents” (with 1 asterisk) that are not on your base template is only possible if the DM agrees, and there are special circumstances and training (or if the DM allows you to spend 5 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling.)
- **Exclusive Talents.**** Training for “exclusive talents” (with 2 asterisks) is not possible unless the talent is on the character’s base template, or the character is a spellcaster learning appropriate magic.

Frequency of Use. How often can the character use the talent?

- **Constant.** The character can always use this talent, it is available any time its use is appropriate.
- **Arena.** The character can use this talent once per arena. If the talent involves moving between arenas, the talent is reset when it enters a new arena. The talent is only exhausted in the arena if its use is successful. The talent can be “recharged” in the same arena by spending 1 Awesome Point.
- **Rested.** The character can use this talent successfully once between periods of rest and nourishment. The talent can be “recharged” between periods of rest by spending 2 Awesome Points outside combat, or 3 points during combat.

Time to Use. Different talents take different amounts of time to use.

- **Free action.** This takes no time, but if in doubt about when it activates, can only be used on the character’s turn.
- **Action.** This counts as a shoot action, move action, fight action, etc.
- **Focus action.** This starts in phase 3 and activates in phase 7 of the round if the character is not injured in that time. The talent is only exhausted if it is successful.
- **Longer.** Some talents specify they take a minute, or an hour, or some other time increment.

THE CLERIC

Devoted to a deity, the cleric acts and lives and teaches so the deity's desires are reflected in the world.

INHERENT—DIVINE FAVOR

- You have divine protection. If your holy symbol is visible, it gives you +1 Armor Class.

LIMITATION—DEVOTION

- You are bound by the strictures of your faith, whatever they may be. It is important to you to present the ideals of that faith to others.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Holy vestments, holy symbol, incense. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 gold.

Clerics begin with one of these talents, and choose a deity to serve (or become generalists, using this list of talents and possibly gaining others from the "Unknown God(s)" list.) These talents, and those in the canticle they choose, both count as being from the cleric base template.

CANTICLES OF DIVINE AID

- **Blessing.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Borrow up to 1 Awesome Point per level; the deity garnishes awesome wages until the debt is repaid. These borrowed Awesome Points can go to you, or to the bowl, your choice—but you must pay them back to the deity either way.
- **Channel.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Channel divine energy through a holy symbol. This is usually used to affect a holy site or object sacred to the god, or to strike the god's enemies. The effect is equal to inflicting 1 wound or 1 point of change per Commitment of the cleric. The effect is up to the DM's ruling of what the god wants or what is holy or what is an enemy; none of the gods take a casual use of this talent lightly.
- **Empowerment.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Recharge all divine spell talents (except this one) as though you rested.
- **Inspire the Faithful.**** *Rested.* At least 5 minutes to cast. Pray with the faithful followers, and afterwards they all get +2 to Commitment tests until they sleep again.
- **Reinforce Symbol.**** *Rested.* Focus action. For about an hour, either get +1 AC from the displayed holy symbol, or have the god's sacred weapon do +1 wound to those hit.

ARETCHYA

GODDESS OF THE COSMIC FLOW

Aretchya is the goddess of time, geometry, and philosophy. She is usually depicted as an infinity loop, a compass (for drawing circles, not for determining north), and a discussion scepter (a special stick used in philosophical discussions—the one holding it gets to talk.)

Her holy symbol is an hourglass. Her favored weapon is a scepter mace. Her followers wear the colors of dawn and twilight.

She is pleased by well-kept histories and genealogies, ambiguous asymmetry, and recontextualizing. She is angered by shoddy workmanship, dementia, and anti-intellectualism.

CANTICLES OF TIME

- **Age Mastery.** *Rested.* You stop aging—that is the price you pay to control the aging of others. You can use the talent to channel divine energy to rapidly draw off the consequences of aging, or to pile them on; drawing them off grants about a decade to the target, and may remove one disease or painful symptom of aging. Piling them on wrenches the target badly enough to cost the target a level, including the talent and attribute point, and resetting all progress to the next level to 0 Awesome Points spent. If the target is a minion or guard or animal, the target must test Brawn difficulty 10 or die horribly (for harder targets, the DM will feed the bowl to boost their rolls). Elvish targets, and others with longer life spans, lose 6 Awesome Points towards leveling, and suffer no other effects.
- **Catch Out of Time.** *Rested.* Move action. You can snatch a target in the same arena, or yourself, and catch that target out of time. The target is immune to damage, is not aware of what is going on in surroundings, and becomes intangible, out of phase. When the elapsed time passes, or when you release the target, the target is only aware of a flicker between what was occurring and what is now occurring. The target gets a Commitment roll to resist, difficulty [your level + your Commitment]. The DM will feed the bowl some for bigger creatures, magical monsters, and other hard targets.
- **Master of Time.** *Constant.* You always know what time it is. You get your Commitment as bonus on initiative rolls. You can change your action type in the round forward or backward, possibly even to the part of the round that has already passed.
- **Peer Through Time.** *Rested.* This is a one hour ritual. You can look forward and backward in time. Entering a trance, you meet a strange Guardian of Time, and ask to see forward, or backward, looking for an event or a person. The Guardian considers the request, and shows you what you may see; sometimes this is relevant, sometimes not. Sometimes you see something important that you didn't know to ask for. Sometimes you don't understand what you see. To plead with the Guardian, use Commitment, and the minimum difficulty is 12. To argue or show disrespect, you fail, and lose this talent until you atone.
- **Timeshift.** *Arena.* As a free action, target yourself or someone else in your arena. You can upgrade or downgrade the time taken to do an action for the target by moving the target's action one in either direction on this spectrum: free action, defend/protect action, another kind of action, focus action, one minute action.

BOOMAXLE

GOD OF THE MAGNIFICENT SELF

Boomaxle embodies enlightened self-interest, development, and self-defense. He is usually depicted as a mirror, a portrait of a smiling person with closed eyes, or a barred gate.

His holy symbol is a mirror or an image of the self, with eyes closed. His favored weapon is a halberd. His followers wear headbands with the image of eyes on them.

He is pleased by education, generosity, and grooming. He is angered by guilt, contracts, and slavery.

CANTICLES OF SELFISHNESS

- **Amazing.** *Rested.* As a focus action, gain 1 Awesome Point per your level, as you think about your experience and your value and award yourself some Awesome Points. *This can only be done once between resting periods of at least 6 hours of sleep.*
- **Attention!** *Rested.* As a focus action, draw every eye in the room; for a few seconds, everyone stops talking and looks at you. For the next few minutes, your voice will project up to 1 arena in every direction per Commitment rating.
- **Confidence.** *Constant.* Always add Commitment to Daring rolls; you don't care whether you are confident or arrogant, but you don't often second-guess yourself or allow others to change your mind, and you trust yourself when you take risks.
- **Life Force.** *Constant.* If injured to 0 Wounds you are always knocked out, never bleeding out (unless hit again.) If you roll under your level on 1d12, you do not scar when badly hurt. You can rest and regain Wounds (if not injured to 2 Wounds or less) as much as you want in a day with no cap.
- **Presence.** *Constant.* Always add Commitment to Charm rolls. You are deeply convinced of your own value and charm, and that radiates to others.

CYCLARIA

GODDESS OF THE PALE NIGHT

Cyclaria is the goddess of the moon, insanity, and revelations. She is commonly depicted as a silver crescent, a bloody madwoman in a broken straitjacket, and an ancient child.

Her holy symbol is a silver and onyx disk, with various moon cycles depicted based on the chapter. Her favorite weapons are scythes and sickles. Military orders wear orange and black, investigative orders wear silver and black, and contemplative orders wear white, gray, and black. In formal situations, they wear either black tight-fitting clothes or armor under pale loose outer garments, or tight white under black outer garments.

Cyclaria is pleased by madness striking down the untouchable, secrets being revealed, and progressive change. She is angered by abuse of the insane, ruthless secret-keeping, and ultra-conservatism.

CANTICLES OF THE MOON

- **Agitation.** *Rested.* Speak to an individual or a group for at least 5 minutes. Those listening must test Commitment, difficulty of [your level x2, + your Commitment]. Those who fail are gripped with a passion to cause the change that you are talking about. Difficulty may be higher or lower based on the circumstances.
- **Combat Cycle.** *Arena.* You are trained in circular spinning combat techniques. Spend 1 Awesome point to raise your armor class by your Daring rating for the rest of the round, or lower a target's armor class for one attack from you.
- **Mind Tide.** *Rested.* As a focus action, stare at a target. The spell is effective if you roll higher than the target on a Commitment test. That target's mood will shift; if insane, the target becomes lucid or wild, your choice. If sane, the target can be driven to rage, or crippled by grief, or made giddy with delight.
- **Moonlight.** *Constant.* At will, you can cause your arena to be lit as with moonlight.
- **Sense Hidden.** *Rested.* As a focus action, achieve a trance-like state. For a minute per level, or until you move again, you gain +1 to your Awareness per level. You can sense lies (only rolling for skilled liars or cunning or magically hidden lies.) You can sense secret doors, read riddles and unknown script, and generally solve any secrets before your eyes.

DUFELL

GODDESS OF THE WORLD'S DEPTHS

Dufell is the goddess of deep places in the earth, endless darkness, and the blind. She is usually depicted as a wise and ancient goblin sage, or a troll, or sometimes as a blind elf child.

Her holy symbol is a black circle. Her favored weapon is a flail. Her followers favor black robes.

She is pleased by acts of extinguishing light, erasing records of secret caves, and sealing dark places. She is angered by bringing flame and natural light to her secret places, abusing the blind, and mapping caves.

CANTICLES OF THE DEEP

- **Dark Kin.** *Constant.* Can see up to 10 meters in the dark, and sense where light disrupts it (even if not visible from current location.) Communicate telepathically with living things that cannot see that are in the same arena. +2 to Cunning to be stealthy where there are shadows.
- **Gravity Gifts.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast, and to maintain. You can personally rise or sink 1 arena, or cause something else to rise or sink by 1 arena, each round. You must be underground (spend Awesome points to bend the definition, with DM permission.) You can move up to 200 pounds per Commitment rating. An arena is about 5 meters of height.
- **Nourishing Earth.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can turn sand, rock, clay, or mud to food or water, creating 5 servings of food or water per Commitment rating.
- **Passage.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can open and close walls, floors, and ceilings made of stone or earth. You can move 5 cubic meters of material per Commitment rating, for creating or collapsing doors, pits, and tunnels. Those who would be caught can test Daring difficulty 7 to leap to safety, if it is possible.
- **Spatial Gifts.** *Constant.* You always know how deep you are and which way is north, when underground. You automatically memorize maps and remember where you've been.

ELEVHIA

DEITY OF GREENERY

Elevhia is the deity of life energy, the plant world, and fertility. It is commonly depicted as an oak tree, a dandelion, and a wooden bowl or cup.

Its holy symbol is an acorn. Its favored weapon is an unworked, unadorned cudgel. Its followers wear green, with minimal leather and no metal.

Elevhia is pleased by untamed plant growth, old forests, and new life. It is angered by agriculture, twisting and shaping nature to suit those living in it, and clear-cutting.

CANTICLES OF GREEN

- **Fertility.** *Rested.* After about a minute of prayer, you make new life possible where it was not possible before. You can rejuvenate a field, affect a mammal's reproductive cycle, help roots crack solid stone, or whatever other miracle seems necessary. This prayer can also accelerate growth modestly.
- **Mark the Enemy.** *Rested.* Focus action. Look at Elevhia's foe in the same arena and cast this highly dangerous spell. Any time the target is in contact with unshaped plants for more than a minute, or pushes through brush, or is swiped by a tree branch, or has other contact with plants, the target takes 1 Wound. If the target can endure 1 Wound without taking damage, the target takes 2 Wounds through the DM's use of Awesome Points. This lasts until the target makes peace with Elevhia or dies.
- **Plantkin.** *Constant.* You can move through arenas with plants as a focus action, and leave no trace. You can mentally communicate with any plants that have a mind (including Sylari) and are in the same arena at +2 Charm. You can spend an hour in contact with earth and water and sun, or any two of the three, and get a full day's nourishment.
- **Quicken Plants.** *Rested.* You can animate plants by using the talent to channel divine energy. Each point of Commitment generates up to 3 wounds of animated plant minions, guards, or monsters. They can only move ½ an arena a round at most, but those bigger than minions can have heavy, light, reach, or very heavy weapons as appropriate, and Armor Class ranges from 8 for light bushes to 16 for oak trees. Plants can impede at +2. This wears off after about 1 minute per Commitment.
- **Treeflesh.** *Rested.* Focus action. Your flesh takes on the hardness of wood. Ignore the first wound from any attack. This lasts for an hour. You are +2 to Cunning to hide among trees, and others can see your condition with an Awareness difficulty 6 test. Instead of armor, you can choose to become a tree shape for up to 1 day per Commitment, minimally aware of your surroundings, but difficulty 14 to an Awareness test to detect. Upon taking damage, you return to human form.

FYLSIFIAS

DEITY OF DECEPTION

Fylsifias is the god/dess of lies, sorrow, and deception. He is usually depicted as a cloaked and cowed figure, an innocent mask, or a contortionist.

Her holy symbol is a mask. His favored weapon is a stiletto. Her followers wear black or motley.

He is pleased by truth creating misunderstanding, the pain of innocents, and suicide. She is angered by forgiveness, love, and justice.

CANTICLES OF DECEIT

- **Despair.** *Rested.* Activate this at will, on a target in the same arena who has just heard bad news or discussed something unpleasant. The target must make a Commitment test, difficulty of your level + your Commitment. If the target gets half or less, the target will commit suicide in the next hour or so. If the target fails, the target is too depressed to function for a day or so. If the target passes, the target sees everything in the worst light until cheered up. If the target gets +1/2 the difficulty, the target is unaffected.
- **Flexible Pockets.** *Rested.* When this is activated, you can reach into your pocket or coat and access the pockets, coats, bags, and containers within the same arena as though their contents were in your pockets. This lasts for 1 minute or use per Cunning.
- **Mistaken Blow.** *Arena.* After an attack is rolled to hit you, add your Cunning to your armor class against that attack as you duck out of your own image to avoid being hit.
- **Powerful Truth.** *Constant.* When you speak the truth, everyone instinctively believes you are telling the truth (whether they admit it or not). To conceal a lie among truths, the DM may still call for Cunning vs. Awareness rolls while you tell the truth, but no matter the roll, the targets believe you.
- **Uncertainty.** *Rested.* When a person says something (or you say something), you activate this power at will, and as they listen to what is said, they feel doubt. They must go and verify it, or it haunts their thoughts until they go check it out to be sure the statement is right. If they cannot be sure, then events take their course from there, but the seed of doubt is planted until the target uproots it.

GELDURK

GOD OF WAR

Geldurk is the god of logistics, large-scale violence, and occupying armies. He is usually depicted as a bronze giant, a gory centaur drawing a flaming chariot, and as a hooded reaper.

His holy symbol is a cross with eight points. His favored weapon is a spear. His followers wear burnished brass armor with red trim.

He is pleased by military success, unbreakable morale, and breaking unbreakable morale. He is angered by cowardice, stupid tactics, and decayed fortifications.

CANTICLES OF WAR

- **Fighting Strength.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can affect the fatigue and nourishment of a group, up to [5 wounds of others per Commitment]. They count as rested, or count as carrying +1 heavy object until they rest.
- **Master of Death Dealing.** *Rested.* Cast as a free action on your turn. For about a minute, or 12 rounds, you can spend 2 Awesome Points a round to add damage or reduce damage to yourself, without spending Awesome Points (or counting them towards leveling.) You can spend Awesome Points normally, but 2 per round are free.
- **Master of Minions.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can affect all minions in one arena, either bolstering them to Guard status for about an hour, or disabling them, up to [5 wounds of others per Commitment].
- **Master of Walls.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can double the effectiveness of walls and fortifications in an arena, or halve them, for an hour. This affects the cover they offer and their ability to withstand intrusion and damage.
- **Steal Reason.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. Everyone in one arena, up to [5 wounds of others per Commitment], must pass a Commitment difficulty 10 test. If they fail, they become mindless fighting machines that get +1 wound and cannot be intimidated or balked from their attack. They accept orders from you or those you designate.

INSPYRIA

DEITY OF INSPIRATION

Inspyria is the androgynous deity of love, heroics, and art. He is commonly depicted as twining lovers that are two in one, a winged figure bearing a sword, and a harpist.

Her holy symbol features a heart. His favored weapon is a longsword. Her followers wear patterns with a feather or wing motif.

Inspyria is pleased by true love conquering all, beauty, and the courage to face unwinnable odds. He is angered by crafty manipulation of the innocent, wanton destruction of beauty, and jealousy.

CANTICLES OF THE HEART

- **Background Music.** *Rested.* You can play your instrument or sing in the background as someone offers an inspirational speech, granting that person +2 to Charm or Commitment to stave off despair and to inspire those listening. If multiple characters use this, it does not stack.
- **Fearless.** *Constant.* You have seen the beauty in the world, and know it is worth fighting for. You are impossible to intimidate or drive to despair, even magically. You can also add your Commitment to your Daring.
- **Inspire.** *Rested.* Play music or talk to the target for a minimum of one minute. The target is inspired. Use your Commitment rating to help the target. 3 Commitment can heal the target from 0-2 wounds up to 3. A target can be given points equal to your Commitment that become points of Inspiration; they can be spent as Awesome Points by the recipient, they can heal 1 Wound each, and they can add to a to-hit roll or Armor Class against a single strike. They last until they are all spent, or the target sleeps.
- **Remorse.** *Rested. Focus action.* Look into the eyes of another, up to 1 target per your Commitment in your arena, and compel them to face the truth that the world has beauty in it. They are forced to look at their own actions in light of that truth. If they are bullies, or if they destroy beautiful things, or if they harm the innocent, they are wracked with shame. If possible, they will flee or surrender. If they are especially bad people, they may take 1d5 Wounds. If the DM feeds the bowl, the target gets a Commitment test difficulty (your level + Commitment) to shake off the effect.
- **True Love's Kiss.** *Rested.* You can tell when you encounter True Love. It is super-rare in the world, but your connection to Inspyria means you see it more often than should be possible. When you see two people who are truly in love, and also in trouble, you can bless them. Should one of them ever be in desperate trouble, whether under the shadow of death or a curse or whatever, if one kisses the other then Inspyria will personally intervene, brushing away death and curses and restoring joy. Sometimes Inspyria will direct you to an area to do just that. Even though this talent is not often used, those who have internalized it have the special favor of Inspyria, and other followers recognize that.

KYTANLISK

DEITY OF CARAPACES

Kytanlisk is the chittering deity of swarming, survival, and adaptation. It is usually depicted as a beetle (of various aspects), a pointillist cloud, or a mantis head.

Its holy symbol is a scarab. Its favored weapon is bladed or spiked tonfa. Its followers wear armor plating and/or iridescent cloth.

It is pleased by strict and mindless obedience, survival, and adaptation. It is angered by contempt for insects, flame, and privacy.

CANTICLES OF CHITIN

- **Cast Swarm.** *Rested.* Move action. Fling a swarming mass of flying insects from under your skin. The swarm can automatically interrupt one target's focus action. The target must be in the same arena. You can interrupt up to 1 target per Wound spent creating and releasing bugs from your skin. The swarm is dispersed when the round ends.
- **Devour.** *Rested.* Focus action. Summon a mass of scarabs from the earth. The next round, as a focus action, the scarabs will devour up to 1 heavy load of meat, supplies, leather, wood, or earth per your Commitment. Living meat takes 2 wounds per load devoured, unless they make a Daring or Brawn test difficulty 10, so they only take 1 wound per load devoured. You can keep them in existence for 1 Awesome Point per round after the first. They cannot leave your arena. When they are done, they burrow back down into the earth. This does not work if there is no earth to act as a summoning gateway.
- **Exoskeleton.** *Rested.* Mediate for 10 minutes, forming an exoskeleton that counts as light or heavy armor. The exoskeleton comes with weaponry that counts as a light, heavy, or reach weapon. The armor lasts until you sleep next or until it is removed, and the weapons dissolve at that point as well. This process can also excrete a pale luminescent chemical as bright as a torch that lasts for up to 12 hours; it can be smeared on weapons or armor to give light.
- **Scuttle.** *Rested.* You can gain short-range flight (no more than 1 arena a round), ability to walk on ceilings and walls, and ability to jump 5 times normal distance, for 1 round per Commitment. You can automatically manage most unusual movement, and if a roll is necessary, add your Commitment to it, possibly in addition to another attribute.
- **Survival.** *Constant.* You can eat what insects eat to survive; carrion, small animals, insects, offal, slime, mold, etc. You can always heal with a short period of rest, even if you have less than 3 wounds left. You are immune to sickness and disease that would not affect an insect.

MULVISK

GOD OF THE OPEN ROAD

Mulvisk is the god of cartography, escape, and exploration. He is usually depicted as a weary pilgrim, an albatross, or a signpost.

His holy symbol is a spyglass. His favored weapon is a staff. His followers wear the colors of dust and sweat.

He is pleased by excellent walking footgear, useful maps, and courage in the face of the unknown. He is angered by wrongful incarceration, fences or walls, and unnecessary violence.

CANTICLES OF TRAVEL

- **Automap.** *Rested.* You can spend appropriate time with appropriate materials and draw a to-scale map of any place you have been or seen.
- **Light the Path.** *Constant.* Focus action. Conjure a small light that can function as a torch, a hooded lantern, or a dim blue or red light. It lasts about an hour per Commitment, and can be assigned to an object or to float around a person. It will not leave its target to scout on its own.
- **Passage.** *Rested.* Focus action. Automatically disable 1 lock, or conjure up permits or passports to get through 1 encounter.
- **Ramble.** *Constant.* For 1 hour per day per Commitment, you can carry 1 heavy load that does not count towards encumbrance or walk at +1/2 speed without tiring.
- **Signpost.** *Rested.* Focus action. Stand at a crossroads (or on water, if it flows to places or is the open sea) and know the nearest destination along each road (or direction). The DM may call for a Commitment test to sense further destinations along the paths. This can also be used to sense the way out of an enclosed place, or to choose direction on the sea when the stars are shrouded.

NIHLOS

GODDESS OF DEATH

Nihlos is the goddess of death, summary, and punishment. She is usually depicted as a scribe in pale robes, a winged woman of white stone, and a hooded executioner in white.

Her holy symbol features a device of a white skull on a black field. Her favored weapon is a garrote. Her followers wear white.

She is pleased by concise summaries, the judged enduring their punishments, and ritual sacrifice of life. She is angered by rambling speeches, escapes from lawfully determined punishments, and immortality.

CANTICLES OF DEATH

- **Sense Destination.** *Constant.* As a focus action, activate this vision. Living sentient creatures give off a field indicating who would receive them if they died at that moment. Most go to Nihlos, but those who are committed to other gods or destinations have other auras. A skilled cleric can often sense whether Nihlos (or other destinations) will soothe or torment the individual upon arrival. You have no requirement or even expectation of being honest about what you see using this talent, and the auras do change sometimes. (Some people will pay to hear about themselves and others.)
- **Shadow of Death.** *Rested.* As a focus action, target those in your arena or an adjacent arena, affecting wounds up to Commitment x5. Those affected take double damage from all attacks for the next minute or so, and automatically die if they reach 0 wounds.
- **Swift Release.** *Constant.* As a focus action, release a target who has no wounds left, to die peacefully or in great pain (your choice). Using this talent sends the target to Nihlos (even if the target would normally go elsewhere) and carries with it a recommendation for how the new arrival is to be treated. This talent is used in ritualistic sacrifice to gain favor with Nihlos.
- **Unfinished Business.** *Rested.* The ritual takes an hour and the presence of a body or something dear to the departed. Remains will be reanimated, or a ghost created, and the created force will have the opportunity to finish some task so it can rest. This may be a conversation with a loved one, confession of a crime, identifying a treasure's location, gaining revenge on a murderer, and so on. The animated thing gains 1 trait from the necromantic death talents per your Commitment, possibly adjusted up or down by Nihlos's inscrutable agenda. This is a talent not to be used lightly. Nihlos uses the reanimated for her own purposes, often unhelpful to you, and decides how long they last and how they are punished if they fail.
- **Unstoppable.** *Rested.* As a focus action, add +1 Wound per Commitment to yourself. If this heals existing wounds, they don't go away. If they go beyond your normal limit, they do not refresh when you heal, and they are lost when you sleep next.

OBLIVORIX

DEITY OF OBLIVION

Oblivorix is the god-thing of oblivion, forgetfulness, and disintegration. It is usually depicted as black water (still or agitated), a black goblet, or a broken cage.

Its holy symbol is a black choker. Its favored weapon is a blackjack. Its followers wear black or go nude, often painted white or black (they favor black and white body paint even when dressed). They favor clothes with no ties, clasps, buckles or fasteners of any kind, like wraps, ponchos, and robes.

It is pleased by silence, peaceful death, and minds sacrificed to chemicals. It is angered by loyalty, relationships, and memory that triggers powerful emotion.

CANTICLES OF OBLIVION

- **Amnesia.** *Rested.* As a focus action, touch the target's head and face. The target will forget the past. You can choose to delete one increment per Commitment; minute, or hour, or day, or week, or month, year, or decade. If you wipe the slate clean so the target remembers nothing but language and reflexive skill use, then the memory will return unpredictably. Otherwise, the target will gain flashes of memory each time the target gains a 12+ result on an Awareness or Commitment test until the DM decides it all comes rushing back (usually after 1 flash per your Commitment rating). This *does* work on clerics of Oblivorix, and is often part of their rituals. It can be self-inflicted. The forgetting does not always hold forever, the DM is the final word; the mind is a tricky thing.
- **Forget Injury.** *Rested.* As a focus action, touch the target (including self) and cause the body to "forget" up to 1 wound per Commitment (or one dose of poison.) This works on reviving a dead target if the target has been dead less than 1 minute per your Commitment, but if done, a price will be paid at some point for the audacity.
- **Knockout.** *Rested.* As a shooting action, choose a target in the same arena or an adjacent arena. That target must test Brawn or Commitment, difficulty of [your Commitment x3] or collapse unconscious for an hour.
- **Taste of Oblivion.** *Rested.* As a focus action, affect any food or drink in the arena or an adjacent arena, up to 5 servings per Commitment rating. ("Servings" and "food" are from the target's perspective; this can be cast on human bait for monsters, for example.) Those ingesting the food or drink must test Commitment or Brawn, difficulty 12, or fall into a deep sleep for at least an hour (though they can be woken as from a deep sleep.) This does not work on clerics of Oblivorix.
- **Unremembered.** *Rested.* As a focus action, adjust reality around yourself and up to 1 other with you per Commitment rating. Those who see or interact with you and those you shield with this spell will not be memorable; if you do something dramatic, like shout or fight, they will only have a vague impression. Anyone trying to remember talking to or seeing you for less than 1 minute per your Commitment must test Awareness difficulty 12 to recall the experience. This does not work on clerics of Oblivorix.

PREYVASK

GODDESS OF THE HUNT

Preyvask is the goddess of pursuit, camouflage, and sniping. She is usually depicted as a horned woman with goat legs sounding a horn, leading a wolfpack; an arrow in flight; and a wall of vines or ivy.

Her holy symbol is a flanged arrowhead. Her favored weapon is a longbow. Her followers wear dress to blend into their surroundings, but tend to include an ivy leaf insignia somewhere.

She is pleased by nighttime chases, offering the heart of a fresh kill in sacrifice, and one-shot kills from concealment. She is angered by traps, domesticated animals besides hunting companions (dogs, horses, hawks, etc.), and rulership structures that are not meritocracies.

CANTICLES OF THE HUNT

- **Archery Gift.** *Constant.* If you shoot a longbow as a focus action, you can always get +2 to hit or +1 damage, decide after the to-hit roll. If you hit by 5 or more, add +2 wounds.
- **Blend.** *Constant.* Focus action. You can add your Commitment to your Cunning to avoid notice in the dark or in a natural environment. This also allows blending into crowds.
- **Evade the Hunter.** *Rested.* Focus action. Automatically succeed in some improbable method of movement to escape being trapped, or to elude pursuers. Move an entire arena in an unexpected way. This might be scrambling up a sheer wall, flipping over a spiked fence, diving through a hole that looks too small to pass through, etc.
- **Mark the Prey.** *Rested.* Focus action. Watch the target for a focus action. Until you choose a new target, you will be able to take a focus action to know the rough direction (within 90 degrees) and a vague sense of distance (in the room, less than a kilometer or so, less than 100 kilometers, more) for the target you have chosen. (This can be improved so it functions as a move action to acquire and track the target.)
- **Watchful.** *Constant.* Add your Commitment to your Awareness; your senses are honed, so whether you are hunting or being hunted, you are difficult to surprise or escape.

SAEGRAK

GODDESS OF THE SKY

Saegrak is the goddess of the winds, the airless heights, and visions. She is usually depicted as a soaring roc, an ethereal gossamer woman with four arms, or a flame.

Her holy symbol is a pennant with a curl of wind. Her favored weapon is a chain mace. Her followers wear sky blue, with no more than light armor.

She is pleased by freeing birds, open buildings in high places, and fires with thin white smoke. She is angered by thick heavy smoke, suffocation, and windowless buildings on the heights.

CANTICLES OF AIR

- **Buffet.** *Rested.* Focus action to begin, and each round to maintain. You can affect up to ½ an arena. In that area, wind surges unpredictably. Defensively cast, this adds +4 difficulty for archery and thrown weapons to hit, and +2 difficulty to melee attacks or movement. Offensively, gusts do 1 wound to everyone in the area, unless the target passes a Brawn test difficulty 7 or moves out of the arena in the direction the wind blows.
- **Gift of Breath.** *Rested.* Focus action to begin, and each round to maintain. The target can breathe no matter what; even if the nose and mouth are clogged, or there is no air, or the air is poisonous. The air comes from divine energy, not the surroundings, and goes directly into the body. Used as an attack, this can withdraw the gift of air; the target cannot breathe, and must test Brawn each round or take an unsoakable wound. The difficulty starts at 3 and goes up 1 a round, +1 more per action taken without breathing. Once suffocated, they count as “bleeding out.”
- **Healing Breeze.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. This spell automatically heals natural and supernatural fevers, respiratory problems, insomnia, and 1 wound.
- **Sturdy Air.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. Lasts for about 1 hour, or until released. This can create an arena. It can take many shapes; a wall, steps, bridges, a slide; it can be as visible or invisible as the caster wishes. It has as many wounds as the caster’s Commitment, and can hold 50 pounds per point of Commitment. (Improving this affects both wounds and weight from Commitment by +2.)
- **Windrider.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast, lasts for about an hour. The character cannot carry more weight than normal, but can move 3 dimensionally. In general, every 5 meters of height marks a new arena. The character can move through or over 2 arenas a round, seeming light on currents of wind.

SOLASTIAN

GOD OF THE SUN

Solastian is the god of the sun, light, purity, and justice. He is usually depicted as a flaming sun, a burning disembodied eye, or a fiery fountain.

His holy symbol is a gold or brass circle surrounded by 8 wavy rays. His favored weapon is a shield emblazoned with his symbol. His followers wear white with yellow or gold trim.

He is pleased by exposing secrets, destroying vampires, and summer noontime rites. He is angered by dwelling underground, promoting undead, and attempts to replace sunlight with artificial light.

CANTICLES OF THE SUN

- **Child of the Sun.** *Constant.* At any time, generate light equal to torch light from any holy symbol of Solastian that will last about an hour. Using the “Channel” talent creates the equivalent of full sunlight in an arena, based on a holy symbol, inflicting wounds on those damaged by sunlight, lasting up to 10 minutes per Commitment rating. Never sunburn or suffer from snow glare.
- **Energize.** *Rested.* As a focus action, pour the sun’s healing energy into a living thing you touch. The target gains 1 advantage per every 2 Commitment rating. Each advantage can recharge 1 rested talent, count as a day’s food and water, or heal 1 Wound. You can affect multiple targets at once, as long as you can touch them. Plants gain a week’s growth per advantage point, or heal 1 Wound. Undead take 1 Wound per Commitment rating.
- **Immolate.** *Rested.* As a focus action, burst into flame that does not consume clothing or equipment. The flame lasts for up to 1 minute per Commitment, deactivated at will. Anyone touching you takes 1 Wound, and you can increase that to 2 Wounds by spending Awesome Points for each touch. Your attacks gain +1 Wound, and you gain +2 Armor Class against opponents relying on sight, because of your brilliance.
- **Sunbeam.** *Rested.* As a range action, aim a ray of the sun’s flaming energy at a target in line of sight. The target takes 1 Wound for every 2 Commitment you have.
- **True Sight.** *Rested.* As a focus action, you ignite your vision, and any illusion you look upon that is within 1 arena per Commitment rating is dispelled at least temporarily (rounds for very powerful illusions, or minutes, or hours, or forever). Since the source is affected, this works for everyone while the talent is active.

SOOTHOTCHA

GOD OF WOUNDS

Soothotcha is the god of healing, crippling, and pain. He is usually depicted as a bright bone saw, a bloody bandaged invalid, and a pitcher pouring clear water.

His holy symbol is a “V”. His favored weapon is a cleaver. His followers wear red.

He is pleased by skillful healing, high quality prosthetics, and silent endurance of pain. He is angered by botched healing, suicide, and infection.

CANTICLES OF WOUNDS

- **Animate Prosthetic.** *Rested.* Take an hour of prayer with the subject and the prosthetic. Bless the prosthetic, so it functions as well as the original limb or organ did. If it is made out of special materials, it can do one of the following: act as a light shield, inflict +1 Wound (and act as a weapon type), or grant +2 to rolls of a specific type. The prosthetic will heal as though it is part of the body from now on. It will cease to be animated if the recipient of the blessing ever angers Soothotcha. The prosthetic will only work for one person; it does not work if detached (until it is reattached.)
- **Healing.** *Rested.* Focus action. Those touched (or those touching your cleaver or holy symbol) can be healed. (Without a cleaver or holy symbol you can only use this spell on yourself.) Generate 2 wounds of healing per Commitment, to assign to those touching your staff or holy symbol. This works no matter how badly injured the target is.
- **Inflict.** *Arena.* It only costs 1 Awesome Point to inflict an extra Wound on a target you hit.
- **Protection.** *Constant.* You ignore the first Wound from any attack.
- **Relief.** *Constant.* Focus action. Anyone touched (including self) is freed from fever, infection, rash, illness, bad dreams, emotional pain, and any other kind of suffering. Minor pain may be eliminated in this way. More serious pain creeps back after a period of time, but the target should be free of suffering for about half an hour per your Commitment.

THOGRO

DEITY OF THE SEA

Thogro is the androgynous godling of storms, tides, and lightless deeps. He is usually portrayed as a crustacean-cruled dwarf with flowing beard and frothing pate, or a giant shark, or a devil fish (octopus).

His holy symbol is an infinity-shaped wave pattern. Her favored weapon is the chain mace. His followers wear sea-shaded layered garb, with white gold jewelry.

She is pleased by sparing the lives of sea creatures, increasing the free flow of water, and offering ceremonies and sacrifices during intense storms. He is angered by reclaiming land from the sea, intruding where air breathers should not go, and boasting of sailing skill.

CANTICLES OF THE SEA

- **Bounty of the Sea.** *Rested.* Focus action to cast. You can summon food from the sea, and cleanse sea water to be potable. You can cleanse or summon 5 servings per Commitment rating per casting.
- **Move Ship.** *Rested.* You can becalm or move a ship, increasing or decreasing the wind by 1 per Commitment. You can affect the ship for up to 6 hours per casting.
- **Saturation Mastery.** *Rested.* You can make dry things wet, or wet things dry. You can make material flammable, or impossible to burn. You can make things float, or sink. You can affect about 1 arena per casting; subsequent context and action may change the state of the material again, but when you change it, the spell does not elapse. This does not work on living material or metal.
- **Sea Kin.** *Constant.* You can breathe water or air. You can communicate telepathically with sea creatures. You ignore the first 4 penalty for moving in water or swimming.
- **Sense Seapath.** *Constant.* You can navigate as if constellations and a compass were available, and you know where the nearest land is, and what dangers are near the ship. If caught by surprise, an Awareness test may be needed to get details.

URMIA

GOD OF CIVILIZATION

Urmia is the god of spreading civilization, protecting the weak, and the social contract. He is usually portrayed as a white-robed old man; sometimes a judge, sometimes a doctor, sometimes a teacher.

His holy symbol is a keystone. His favored weapon is a heavy sledgehammer. His followers wear white tunics.

He is pleased by making and keeping oaths, healing flesh and relationships, and maintaining order. He is angered by the undead (an ultimate violation of the social contract), chaos, and slavery.

CANTICLES OF CIVILIZATION

- **Auras of Evil.** *Constant.* Some places, things, and people reek of true evil. You can sense this by concentrating as a focus action. Making an Awareness test, you can tell the source or nature of the evil if it is disguised.
- **Bless Weapon.** *Arena.* As a focus action, touch a weapon and declare a purpose for its blessing, either quick or long term. The weapon does +1 wound with each successful attack, but you are down 1 wound until the purpose is reached or declared unobtainable, when the weapon returns to normal and that wound heals.
- **Prayers of the Hurt.** *Rested.* Casting takes a focus action. Spell to close wounds and restore health. Touch target who is down to 2 wounds or less (possibly self) regenerated to 1 wound less than full. Lights up the nearby area.
- **Turn Undead.** *Rested.* As a focus action, invoke your god and touch your holy symbol to acquire a divine aura around you and those nearby. Non-Minion undead must test their Daring against your Commitment (at +2) to attack anyone in your party and arena, minions cannot attack at all. If you remain undamaged for three rounds, the aura can sweep outward, destroying any one undead or group of minions in the same arena.
- **Work the Room.** *Rested.* Make an impassioned speech for at least five minutes and inspire people around you. They get +2 to their Daring or attack rolls for the next hour. Or, convince people of your point of view, getting +5 to a following Charm check if needed.

THE UNKNOWN GOD(S)

The following talents are not a Canticle; they are individual spells that a cleric may learn from their patron *divine source*. What is that source? 1. Demon Prince. 2. Statue with a spark of divine energy. 3. Space vampire. 4. New godling struggling to emerge. 5. Ancient god struggling free of a bigger god.

- **Banishment.**** *Rested*. Tear time-space open in your arena or an adjacent arena (but only one). Then 1d10+your level wounds of creatures are yanked out of your dimension. Only whole creatures are taken. The DM decides which ones go.
- **Divine Mouthpiece.**** *Rested*. The gravity of speaking for a divine source can lead to respect in believers and non-believers alike. Gather your energies as a focus action, then for the next persuasive task or ceremony, add Commitment and Charm together to test either.
- **Divine Protection.*****Rested*. Once per game session, you get lucky. An unobtrusive escape route opens up, a fatal hit does not land, you meet a friend in a surprising context, weather cooperates, or you get some other windfall of luck.
- **Façade.*****Rested*. Manipulate mundane and supernatural circumstances to affect perception of strength and weakness, projecting or hiding either. Few have any idea how potent your divine source really is. Tell the DM how strong or weak the target thinks you and your forces are.
- **Fertility.**** *Rested*. Cast in a 12 hour ritual. One person becomes fertile for 24 hours, a farm's crops will have a higher yield, a herd animal will be more productive for a year, and so on.
- **Protection Circle.**** *Rested*. Take 1 hour per Commitment to make a circle of protection up to 1 meter per Commitment across, and decide what it protects against. Then, at a later time, the circle takes 1 focus action by the caster (or a cleric of the same divine source) to activate. The circle has an AC of the caster's Commitment x4 that must be overcome to enter the circle. Ranged attacks cannot go in. Magic attacks that succeed against the circle reduce it by 1 Commitment, shrinking it and lowering its AC.
- **Recall Secret.**** *Rested*. Take an hour of prayer with an appropriate sacrifice, and learn 1 lost secret from your divine source.
- **Religious Fervor.**** *Rested*. If a character or group owes you a debt, and you accept no payment except asking for their religious fervor, they accept a level of enthusiasm for your divine source. The greater the debt, the more long-lasting and passionate their fervor.
- **Resurrect.**** *Rested*. A ceremony takes 24 hours of constant prayer and meditation. You, someone else, and the target all lose 1 from an Attribute. Each person chooses which Attribute is affected. The dead character rises with 1 wound. Missing limbs remain missing. The body cannot have been dead more than a month, and it must be present for the spell to work.
- **Smite.**** *Rested*. Focus action. One target in your arena or an adjacent arena takes 1 wound per your level, and loses 1 round of acting and any magic enhancements.

INHUMAN CLERICS

The gods have a special relationship with humanity. After all, the humans first gave them shape and might that they used to depose the dragons. They are the eldest race that the gods trust—there are older races, but they have traditionally not worshiped the gods.

In the Age of Steel, the situation has changed. With the coming of the fey and the ghim, as well as a scattering of other races that have some appreciation for the gods, sometimes a god sees fit to bestow miraculous power on a non-human. This can take two basic forms.

GRANTING POWERS

A character may pick up one or more talents that are clerical spells. This represents the god's favor, and a sharing of energy. The one receiving the gift is responsible for advancing the will of that deity in the world, or facing punishment more severe than any nonbeliever would endure. In case of betrayal, atonement is required to regain the talent's use.

OVERLAY TEMPLATE

An overlay template represents supernatural power added to a creature, so when a god chooses a non-human follower, sometimes that calling provides an overlay template.

Requirement to Level. Under the influence of an overlay template, a character must spend 15 Awesome Points to level up instead of 12. This does not affect previous leveling, and if the overlay template is somehow removed, the requirement to level returns to 12.

Inherent Abilities and Limitations. As soon as the overlay template applies, the character gains the inherent ability of the overlay template, as well as any limitations.

Talents. You can spend 3 Awesome Points to access talents from the overlay just like you can for your base template. Taking talents from the overlay when you level does not count as a base template talent or a cross-template talent.

CHAPTERS, CHURCHES, CULTS, ORDERS, AND TEMPLES

Entries for deities are standardized with 3 main foci, 3 depictions, 3 pleasing foci, and 3 angering foci. Randomize each of those four elements to get a sense of the specific focus of this religious group. (You can also randomize from the title of this section, to see what kind of group it is.)

Roll 1d5 on each of the following lists to build a basic foundation to get to understand your religious group. This should provide enough information to quickly get into the final touches of developing the faction, without getting too bogged down.

If you get results that seem contradictory, think, “why would that happen?” This can be a satisfying creative process. If it is not working for you, you can always choose a result, or re-roll. It is best to do all the rolls then look at the whole, for interpretation. When finished, keep the data and make a summary.

Secrecy

1. We want everyone to know all about our god, history, and teachings, to improve life for everyone.
2. We have a message to get to people, but our share of embarrassing history, theology, and practice that we reserve for those who are invested.
3. The precepts and teachings of the god are for everyone, but there is lore that only the priesthood might know, and our rituals have secret elements that must be guarded and kept in the inner circle.
4. The world may know we exist, but we have little interest in sharing our lore with them. Some of our secrets are dangerous.
5. We are a secret society. Only the initiated may know of us, by invitation. We will kill to protect our secrets.

Theological Complexity

1. Some basic teachings, some basic rituals, you can learn it in an afternoon.
2. Teachings and stories inform lifestyle, and some rituals, become a teacher. Takes about six months.
3. A systematic theology addressing the deity’s interests has various catechisms and studies. It can be learned in about a year of study.
4. Integration of multiple influencing traditions, scholarly research, expectation of interpretation from various authorities that do not always agree. Three to five years of study.
5. Intense memorization, high level of detailed ritual, many thinkers and saints contributing nuance. Minimum ten years to gain respectable proficiency and integration in thinking as well as capacity to perform rituals satisfactorily.

Structural Complexity

1. Grassroots, local leaders of small groups, very loose.
2. Generally a clear charismatic leader and flat organizational structure.
3. Three level structure, with sub-levels for each.
4. Multiple integrated structures, with contextual authority, usually ruled by council of representatives.
5. Impossible to chart, shifts as fast as it is learned, highly political, including innovations over time from various fronts that never reconciled or were clearly implemented or replaced.

Ecumenical (Attitude towards other groups worshiping the same god)

1. We can find something in common with all worshippers of our deity.
2. We usually share certain core elements of worship, belief, and practice; we can generally get along.
3. We have the right way to worship the deity. Others are misguided and wrong, but not necessarily bad.
4. We know the only true way. Practices of the less enlightened offend the deity. They must be corrected or stopped.

5. We compete with other factions who want our deity's love and support. They must be stamped out.

Interfaith (Attitude towards groups worshipping different gods)

1. Those who serve the divine can generally find a common ground against dragons, monsters, etc.
2. There are many truths. Ours is best, but others may benefit the world in their own way.
3. Our god is most worthy of praise, and should rule the other gods.
4. Worship to your god is wasteful, and your god is a problem; only our god should be worshiped.
5. Other gods are offensive, their worship must be ended, it is blasphemous, they must be destroyed.

Local Popularity

Check for "The People," "The Experts" (depending on the setting, maybe craft guilds, merchants, wizards, whatever specialists provide something like a middle class; maybe more than one,) and "The Rulers" (whether royalty, city council, mageocracy—whoever is in charge and has the wealth.)

1. This god is a real problem. It is worth our resources and effort to end worship for good.
2. It is distasteful, but people will worship the weirdest things. Whatever. But not in my house.
3. Doesn't hurt to show some respect and make a few donations now and then.
4. Our territory is better off because of this god's patronage, and we are proud to support this worship.
5. The territory strongly identifies with the deity, draws meaning from its worship; it is central to the culture and to the lives of the people.

Longevity

How long has this particular chapter, temple, etc. been around?

1. Relatively new movement, founded in the last decade or so.
2. Over a century old.
3. Over a thousand years old.
4. Dates back to the Age of the Gods, 5,000 years or more.
5. From very early on, records are lost in the mists.

Legality

1. Highly illegal; the strongest punishments in the area can be brought to bear for association.
2. Illegal, but poorly enforced. Distasteful, can have serious consequences, but not too risky.
3. The law doesn't care whether you associate with this organization or not.
4. Some standing; not much on the books, but there are a few perks to working through the organization.
5. Connected with the law, with exclusive rights, ties into the tax structure, and significant authority.

Attitude Towards Magic

1. We can all use our various gifts to make the world better.
2. As long as they stay out of our way, they can do as they please.
3. The age of the dragons is past, and their unholy energies should pass away too.
4. Don't count the dragons out. When wizards worship them with their spells, they give them power. We don't want to have to revisit the Draconic Wars. Stamp out wizardry.
5. The Draconic Wars never really ended. Dragons and their students are the enemies of the gods. Slay them. Slay them *all*.

Wealth

1. No money is available, members work out their own expenses.
2. The organization uses donations and earnings to fund their leadership and important projects.
3. The organization is comfortable, and can afford to have ongoing expenses.
4. The organization is wealthy, paying its members well, investing in various projects.
5. Funded by diversified sources, the organization can throw money at its problems until they go away.

MAKING RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Unfortunately, humanity is really good at fighting and killing on a massive scale—over ideas. When culture, religion, economics, and history mix together, humanity can make a tremendous explosion.

Conflict is at the root of all good stories. Having a big pile of deities, and a quick system for whipping up religious orders, you can take 2-4 religious groups and set up a conflict they're managing. This can be in the background of your game setting, or it can be providing adventures for a one-off or a longer series. Using this method works best for a single game or the beginning of a series or first contact in a whole new area. (Otherwise you might have to explain why the group never heard of them before.)

The great thing about these religious conflicts is that you don't have to solve them. Instead, use them to motivate those who take action to create an adventure for your group. Sometimes it can end win/win, but more often, someone loses and the conflict is delayed.

1. **Which gods, and how many?** Roll 1d3+1 to see how many factions are involved. Then roll 2d10 that number of times, to see which gods have factions in the conflict.
 - If you roll the same god twice, it's a heresy! One group fighting another group because they have the doctrine wrong, or are the wrong culture, or they pronounce the deity's name differently, or whatever.
2. **Design each faction.** You can use the process randomly, or draw inspiration from it.
3. **Each Faction's Role.** How is each faction involved?
 1. Aggressive.
 2. Defensive.
 3. Affected by the conflict.
 4. Asked to judge or settle the conflict.
 5. Secretly encouraging the conflict.
4. **Contested Location.** What is the focus of the conflict?
 1. Pilgrims on the road.
 2. Active temple.
 3. Small unsupervised shrine.
 4. Ruined temple.
 5. Houses of worship in the center of town life.
 6. Under a temple in a city.
 7. A settlement's political council/ruling body.
 8. Reaction to monster attack.
 9. Border preparing for war.
 10. Island used for rituals near town.
 11. Religious festival. (Randomize whose, of those involved, or pull in a third party.)
 12. Focus on one faction's clergy.
5. **Level of Tension.** This is the tension between the factions, and depending on their strength, that affects the tension around the contested location (and possibly further.)
 1. Grumbling and rhetoric.
 2. Individual clashes, wariness, feelings run high.
 3. High alert, negotiations.
 4. Skirmishes, scouting, preparing for war.

5. War.
6. **Integration.** Now you have all these pieces. Tumble them around in your mind, let them bounce off each other, until things start clicking. Look at the pleasing and angering focus for the gods involved, and think about how as one faction was trying to please their god, they offended the other god's followers.
7. **Application.** Now what you have is a back story and some basic information on the factions involved. Come up with a significant object, or with some people who are involved, or a conflict spilling out into the countryside, or—regardless, this is where you take the background and place an adventure in it. Now, give your player characters something to do!

AN HISTORY OF ENERGY IN THE BREATHING WORLD

Creation

The sea was wild and untamed, and it was all. Then a rock emerged from the sea, formed of cold and heat and the screaming of night; the rock was Ugrophiak, in the First Language. The sea shattered upon it as the sea struggled to smash it, and in that shattering were the dragons born, of the first wrestling of shapeless strength and inflexible might.

The dragons betrayed the sea and chose the Rock. More land emerged, and the dragons claimed it and all that moved upon it.

Prehistory

Tribes of many strange creatures roamed the world, nomadic, and the world was “ruled” by dragons. They hunted, ate, mated, and traveled as they pleased. The world was still cooling, the seas were high, and the world breathed through the immortal dragons.

Birth of Civilization

Some dragons chose to rule, gathering clans of humanoids and establishing them in one place, and for amusement or spite sending them against the territories of other dragons. Thus were born cities, and of necessity, agriculture, currency, and division of labor followed in the places ruled by dragons. Those who venerated the dragons most fervently were given a portion of the dragon’s world-shaping powers, to aid them in managing the dragon’s will among the lesser slaves. Immortal and invincible dragons had little use for making a record of the passage of the centuries of their dominance; so it has been, so it will be.

The Power of Worship Emerges

Worshulia was the city state that venerated its dragon, whose name has ironically been lost to history. However, when the dragon was slain, they continued venerating the dragon’s memory, and their priesthood discovered that they retained their powers. The ghosts of dragons could be elevated to something greater by continued worship, and other dragons took note and established cults to worship them so fervently that the energy could sustain them beyond death, in case of the worst.

Barbarians and Belief

Unfortunately for the dragons, the many populations not under their direct command observed this phenomenon, and began worshiping what protected them; the sky, flame, the earth, and so on. Their organized beliefs began to elevate the latent energies in the wilds, giving them more strength and form, and eventually purpose.

Some of the more belligerent of these gods took exception to the dragons and the power they exercised over those who could be worshiping the new gods instead; also, dragons were one of the few forces that could slay a god, and the new deities fiercely clung to life, nurturing the cosmic flame that grew in them.

Saegrak, Goddess of the Winds, was the first to directly assault a dragonhold. She slew the dragon, and her human and elemental followers conquered the dragon’s followers, setting up the first divine city—

Saegraxia. History began on that day—nothing was inevitable or invincible, things could change, and dragons were not the only ones who could shape the world.

The Draconic Wars [1-3400]

The gods attracted worship, and to compensate, dragons began granting ever more power to their followers, each dragon teaching a particular style of shaping the breathing of the world.

The world had been regulated by breathing through the dragons, but with the creation of the gods, that breathing became unsteady. Instead of the dragons regulating the energy flow of the world, now it also tumbled through the rapids of mortal spellcasters, and the gods. To their dismay, the dragons realized that the gods were unwilling to accept their dominance; either the dragons would diminish, or the gods would!

Three thousand years of war followed, as the gods swelled their ranks with new worshiped deities created from the energies of their fervent worshipers, and the dragons gathered the more pragmatic of the world to their physical presence, ancient history, and depthless violence. Cities rose and fell, weapons were crafted and shattered, gods and dragons were slain.

The Five Ascend

The gods realized that they could not win against the dragons if they were many and the dragons were many. So they began to consolidate, so a few gods would have the inexorable might to crush the scattered dragons (who wisely refused to trust each other and unite.)

Five gods ascended, taking the followers of other gods by force if necessary. Crusades were frequent and brutal. The leader of the gods was Saegrak, Goddess of Air. She was supported by four others. Dufell, goddess of the Deep. Geldurk, god of War. Thogro, God(dess) of the Sea. Urmia, god of Civilization.

In their desperation, the dragons created Scythia, Goddess of Monsters. They funneled draconian worship into a new model, destroying their ability to channel the breathing of the world.

The Fall of Scythia

The Five first swept the other minor deities that survived the war out of the way and took their followers, then they dedicated three hundred years to hunting dragons; they became less and less corporeal, with more and more infrequent avatars, as the worship filled them with energies not easily contained on this plane. At last they closed in on the Slythrik Mountains, their followers systematically crushing hatcheries and lairs that had stood for untold ages.

They faced Scythia, Goddess of Monsters. Scythia was cast down and disemboweled by the other gods, who found they now managed the breathing of the world. Scythia slew Saegrak, who proved her ascendance by being reborn through the energies of her followers, who stubbornly refused to accept her death.

The dragons remained powerful in physical might and mystic prowess, but were no longer truly immortal (though their life spans still stretched over thousands of years.) They were cut loose from the primal bones of the world, and became creatures living upon the earth.

The Age of the Gods [3400-7000]

The gods ruled according to their natures, but they were victims of their own success. The energies poured into them during the war with the dragons rendered them ever more abstract and ever more dependent on working through their followers. It became more and more difficult for them to manifest avatars. They worked more and more through the leaders of their followers.

The Divine Fraying

The temples and theocracies were vast now, and prone to factionalizing. Increasingly, individual and factional interests mixed with worship, diluting and dividing it. The gods, formed of worship, were vulnerable to this diffusion of interests.

As the gods became embroiled in civil wars within themselves and within their factions, the earth groaned and cracked. The world struggled to breathe through the fractured and factitious gods.

Also, Scythia was defeated but not destroyed, and she screamed her rage as she peopled the world with monsters. The skies grew thin, the earth troubled and restless, civilizations fell to war and to ruin.

Some gods that had been assimilated for the war with the dragons struggled free of their bigger siblings, asserting pockets of worship here and there to gain enough strength to survive and act in the world.

Rule of the Avatars

Desperate, the gods began to weaken themselves by breeding with their followers, putting cosmic energy into mortal hands. Demigods walked the earth, slaying monsters and ruling in the name of their divine parent. As time passed, they spread their cosmic energy wider through the mortal population. Also, powerful avatars were slain, and the cosmic energy was lost, only some returning to its source.

The gods found they had diffused the focus of worship on themselves through use of avatars, and the avatars were not themselves immortal; over five centuries, the gods became increasingly desperate, dismayed as in some cases avatars led factions in theocratic civil wars.

The Questing Age

The gods could feel the labored breathing the world managed through their congestion, and realized that everything was at stake; they would discover a way to clear the congestion, or all that lived might suffocate. They inspired a mighty quest, sending their greatest warrior priests through the world to find a solution. The world wanted to survive, and would speak to their followers as it could not speak to them.

A quest to the Slythrik mountains discovered the hideous ancient rituals the dragons used to create Scythia; at first the gods thought to use it to unbind her, then they realized what they had to do.

As the dragons gave up their ability to channel the breathing of the world to gain their ongoing survival, so too did the gods; they followed a version of the draconic ritual, giving up a portion of their cosmic essence and the worship of their follows to create a Most High God that would be unified enough to channel the breathing of the world.

Their sacrifice did not have the intended effect.

The Awakening [7000-9800]

The Most High did not take on the worship model that the gods were accustomed to; instead of taking a tithe of their energies and ruling through proxies (including the gods themselves) the Most High dove into the world itself—for the first time since its creation, the world breathed for itself.

The lakes, trees, clouds, mountains—everything burned with a cosmic spark.

Fresh energy was available for those who had manipulated draconic energies, their magic gaining new potency. Those who worshiped the gods still had divine power to draw upon, but it did not regulate the breathing of the world. Most surprisingly, a new creative power emerged.

The Fey are Born

Humans who lived closest to the earth found energy swelling through them, reshaping them, prolonging their lifespans, connecting them to a new energy. Some seemed humans touched by fey energies, some were shaped to something new, and some seemed to blend with nature itself.

Even as the fey energy pulled at those close to it, it also formed avatars; spirits of water, trees, air, darkness, and so on emerged. Wildly unrestrained creative energy spilled through the world. The resulting creatures quickly organized into groups; those close to humanity organized courts based on human governments. Others formed wild packs, others took up solitary existence.

Elves settled themselves near the sea, or the forest, or mountains; they chose places close to nature that would keep their fey energies blazing. Humans gave ground to them, after a few abrupt clashes that were more costly than expected.

Now, in addition to the monsters continually shaped and released by the embittered Scythia, the wilds were full of capricious and energetic magics the likes of which the world had never seen. Arcanist inheritors of dragon lore were wary, divine channelers of the cosmic energy of the gods hesitated, and the fey ascended to rule the wild places of the earth. The gods managed to hold desperately to their specialties, but all between was newly energized by the Most High.

The Second Questing Age

Too much energy flowed into the earth. Stones took on fanciful shapes. Doorways began opening to other dimensions. Anything natural or formerly alive could animate without warning. Humanity was forced back towards cities as the world was overgrown with a strange new wildness that was, perhaps, not in its own best interests.

As weather grew strange, the first demons appeared. The borders of the world were barely regulated, and other more determined realities discovered the ease of access to this fresh and energetic world.

Life began gushing out into the void beyond the borders of the world, and as it did, negative energies also found death to be a two-way door. Intelligences beyond human comprehension, thirsting in the void, sent their energies and lusts into the world to settle in dead matter and raise it once again to murderous power. The first undead rose, and soon armies marched across the tormented lands.

Sobered, the gods realized that their survival was not yet assured. If the world was conquered by demons, the dead, or others, the gods themselves would eventually cease to exist. They knew they had to do something, but they lacked the raw power to take decisive action to seal the boundaries of the world.

Once again they inspired champions to go out into the writhing dangers of the world, through the awakened wilderness, against demon enclaves that began settling into the barren places of the world, into territories of freshly emboldened wizards, through the haunted battlefields where the dead rested uneasy.

The Birthing and the Shaping

They discovered how the unbridled desires of the world had been shaped into iconic races that managed those desires. So, together, the gods and their followers desired a limiting, shaping, forming, protecting influence to emerge from the Most High in its unbridled creativity. They focused on mountains, desiring the boundaries mountains represented.

From those mountains emerged a powerful force called the Ghim, humans called them dwarves. Fey energies blended the mountains with the overshadowed humans that lived among them, they became more and less than human. Compacted by their own focus, sturdy as the stone, they crafted the doors and walls both in reality and beyond it, shaping a protective barrier to limit the surging creativity of the Most High and give it useful form, also denying access to that which lurked beyond reality, thirsting for the blood and power of the world.

In only a century, the world was again stable—more stable than it had been since dragons ruled.

<h3>The Age of Steel [9800-11000+]</h3>
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The Gods had undeniable power, within the limits of their followers. The dragons still roamed the world, but mostly slept or schemed from the shadows. The wizards that inherited their magic still worked their will with arcane might. Scythia, though humbled, still raged under her mountain tomb, spraying monsters out into the world.

The Breathing Earth was the result of the Most High infused through it, and fey influences abounded. Elves and dwarves and fey creatures flowed from the energies of the earth, while monstrous influences twisted humans susceptible to their tastes. Variety proliferated across the land in abundance not seen since the Age of Dragons. The Ghim worked to seal the doors to the void beyond, and forces there (now with a taste for the life energy of the world) found weak places to claw their way in.

Now was the Age of Steel, where the various supernatural energies that had focused the breathing of the world found themselves countered, checked, and the humans had something like freedom for the first time in their long history. While some chose to embrace the influences that guided and shaped them in the past, others strove to carve out nations and empires to wield real power through steel, not alien eldritch energy.

The current year is 11312.