

Cult Distributions in Dorastor

Cult Availability

The tables below give a comprehensive view of cult membership among the native races of Dorastor. Only the most important cults (worshiped regularly by a significant number of creatures) are included in these tables. Especially in the case of broos, the percentages given are only rough estimates, and can never be known absolutely. Many chaotic races have standard deities, and it is rare that a scorpion man (for instance) will worship a deity other than Bagog. This is true of the Telmori as well.

Local variations always exist, and many obscure daemons and spirit cults are worshiped that are subsumed under the "Other" category in the tables. For example, the Telmori worship Dorasta at certain times of the year as just another spirit (though more friendly than most), but have no permanent shrines to or worshipers of this deity.

The tables can be used to randomly determine cult membership by rolling 1d100 and consulting the appropriate table. This method is most appropriate for non-player characters, as players will probably want to pick their character's religious affiliation rather than making a random die roll.

The tables can also be used as a guide to the relative strengths of the religions in the area. With some modification these tables can be adapted to other lands. The tables can also be used to determine the religion of a randomly encountered shrine or temple, as well as to see which religions dominate a given race or area.

Temple Sizes

In Telmori lands there are no permanent major or great temples. Instead, the equivalent are achieved at seasonal gatherings. Among chaotic races the equivalent of even a major temple is rare, although some permanent locations are known.

Access to a temple may not always be easy for a character. A journey of weeks may be necessary in order for a priest to renew common divine spells or spells granted by an associate cult, and many adventures may be had on such a journey. Among chaotics in Dorastor, the difficulty is more often in convincing the strange priest to assist the worshiper in regaining spells, if he is not part of the priest's normal congregation.

The gamemaster will have to make the final ruling as to whether or not the requested size of temple is available in a particular area or at a particular time. Cults not listed by name are unlikely to have any major or great temples available, and in many cases worshipers of such unusual or obscure gods will have to make do with shrines. Again, this is especially true in Dorastor.

Holy and Unholy Places

It is beyond the scope of this work to give the locations of each and every shrine or temple in Dorastor. Should the exact location of a temple be important, the gamemaster must make a ruling. Remember that Dorastor is inhospitable to everything except chaos, and cults which must normally remain hidden exist there in the open. The surrounding lands are wild but fertile, and support a large but non-centralized population. Even chaos shrines might occur almost anywhere, secreted amongst small villages, or hidden in ruins and wild areas. In Dorastor itself, one would expect that the warrens beneath Fort Wrath would house a large proportion of all of the major temples of the broos.

However, a number of permanent shrines or temples exist in the area. With the exception of the Dorasta Shrine and the temple at Oxhead, these are almost universally locations of chaotic worship. Some are associated with specific daemons (such as the infamous Temple of Heads, feared for miles around as headquarters of the Dorastan Thanatar cult; or the Great Temple to Krjalk in the Hellwood), while others (such as the Devil's Nose) are general Chaos altars, useful for contacting any malevolent daemon. Some are related to no cult, such as the Walktapus Moot, which serves as a spawning ground for that foul race every twelve years. Other locations can be inferred from the contents of Dorastor: Land of Doom and Lords of Terror. Finally, neither players nor gamemasters should take any map as authoritative: nothing in Dorastor is permanent for long!

Cult Availability Tables (native races only)

Broos, Feral

See *Dorastor: Land of Doom* (pp 19-20).

<i>d100</i>	%	<i>Cult</i>
01-25	25	Ancestor Worship
26-85	60	None, or primitive worship of individual daemons only
86-97	12	Malia
98-00	3	Thed* (+ Kedderoth, Sidana, etc.)

* males only; females should replace with Malia

Broos, Wild (including Ralzakark's broo tribes)

<i>d100</i>	%	<i>Cult</i>
01-03	3	Ancestor Worship
04-05	2	Illuminate (roll again for "public" cult)
06-07	2	Krjalk
08-09	2	Krarsht

10-29	20	Malia only
30-44	15	Malia + additional cult
45-47	3	Pocharngo
48-53	6	Thanatar
54-83	30	Thed* only (+ children)
84-93	10	Thed* + additional cult
94-96	3	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only
97-00	4	Other

* males only; females should replace with Malia

Broos, Fort Wrath

All of Ralzakark's Broos are initiates of his personal cult, though none worship him alone. Roll below to determine additional cult. See ***Dorastor: Land of Doom*** (pp 19-20, 30-31, and 80-82). On a roll of 96-00, the broo worships a chaotic or non-chaotic cult of the gamemaster's choice. For non-chaotic cults, Lightbringer or Lunar gods are most appropriate.

<i>d100</i>	%	<i>Cult</i>
01-05	5	Chalana Arroy
06-20	15	Humakt
21-27	7	Ikadz
28-35	8	Illuminate (roll 1d3-1 for other cults)
36-37	2	Krjalk
38-41	4	Krarsht
42-61	20	Malia + additional cult
62-64	3	Seven Mothers
65	1	Sorcery only
66-80	20	Thed* only (+ children)
81-95	15	Thed* + additional cult
96-97	2	Other non-chaotic cult
98-00	3	Other chaotic cult

* males only; females should replace with Malia

Broobats, Glargs

These native creatures have no culture or religion. Few enter a cult due to their low

intelligence, but exceptional members have been found as worshipers of large, organized chaotic cults, usually as cannon fodder for some priest or shaman.

Elves, Hellwood

These elves augment the worship of Aldrya with worship of chaos. Some worship Aldrya exclusively, but they believe in the benefits of chaos, and accord shamans and priests of chaos the same respect as Wood Lords and Elder Sister dryads.

If a Rune-level elf worships chaos, he or she is also an Illuminate. Initiate elves follow normal aldryami cults, and roll on the Poisonthorn Elf table (pg 71). Only on a roll of "Other" could an initiate worship a chaotic entity. See ***Dorastor: Land of Doom*** (pg 19), and ***Lords of Terror*** (pp 58-60).

d100 % Cult

01-30	30	Normal aldryami cults only; roll under Poisonthorn Elves
31-35	5	Aldrya + chaotic cult
36-37	2	Cacodemon
38-45	8	Ikadz
46-65	20	Krjalk only
66-75	10	Krjalk + additional chaotic cult
76-86	11	Malia
87-88	2	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only
89-98	10	Than/Thanatar
99-00	2	Other chaotic cult

Shamans

Hellwood Elf shamans are evenly split between dedication to Aldrya and chaotic deities. Few worship non-chaotic deities other than Aldrya, and none worship both Aldrya and a chaotic deity.

d100 % Cult

01-50	50	Aldrya (or other non-chaotic tradition normal to elves)
51-55	5	Cacodemon
56-85	30	Malia
86-90	5	Krjalk
91-00	10	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only

Elves, Poisonthorn

Poisonthorn elves are typical brown elves. Unless the roll indicates "Ancestor Worship only" or "Other" they worship Aldrya plus the rolled cult. See ***Dorastor: Land of Doom*** (pp 19-20). These tables are for **Dorastan elves** only; other aldryami in Dorastor have different numbers, as do elves in other lands.

<i>d100</i>	%	<i>Cult</i>
01-80	80	Aldrya only
81-99	19	Aldrya + additional cult:
01-20	20	Eron [<i>Arroin</i>]
21-30	10	Bebeester [<i>Babeester Gor</i>]
31-45	15	Dorasta
46-50	5	Gata
51-55	5	Falamal [<i>Flamal</i>]
56-95	40	Halamalao [<i>Yelmalio</i>]
96-00	5	Other Aldryami cult
00	1	Non-aldryami Cult (only)

Grayskins

Grayskins are too degenerate to have an organized religion. Most "worship" the Mad Sultan, but derive no benefits from this worship. They are often driven by broos to worship various chaotic entities. See ***Dorastor: Land of Doom*** (pp 49-50).

Harpies

All harpies worship Magra as their primary cult. Roll below to find additional cult, if any. See ***Dorastor: Land of Doom***, (pp 50-52) and ***Lords of Terror*** (pp 34 and 85).

<i>d100</i>	%	<i>Cult</i>
01-50	50	Magra (Ancestor Worship) only
51-60	10	Ikadz
61-62	2	Illuminate (roll again for cult)
53-97	35	Malia
98-00	3	Other

Krarshtkids

Krarshtkids worship Krarsht universally and exclusively. See *Dorastor: Land of Doom*, (pg 55) and *Lords of Terror* (pg 77).

Lamiae

Lamiae do not normally worship deities, for they have no POW. They may occasionally sacrifice magic points to a god worshiped by an ally, but this is rare unless the ally provides them with a means to replenish their magic points on a regular basis.

Ogres

Ogres in Dorastor worship the Cacodemon as their primary cult. Roll below to find additional cult, if any. As with broos, most wild ogres worship individual daemons as well.

Ogres who are part of Ralzakark's Sword Troop roll on the table given above ("Broos, Fort Wrath") instead of this one, replacing any result of Thed with Cacodemon. Thus, if a Sword Troop ogre rolled a 92, he would worship Cacodemon (instead of Thed) plus another cult (chosen by the gamemaster).

The Cult of Cacodemon is available in *Elder Secrets*. An older version is available in *Glorantha Classics Volume I: Pavis & Big Rubble*, available now!

<i>d100</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cult</i>
01-65	65	Cacodemon only
66-69	4	Ancestor Worship
70-75	6	Ikadz
76-78	3	Illuminate (roll 1d3-1 for other cults)
79-81	3	Krarsht
82-88	7	Malia
89-91	3	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only (do not worship Cacodemon)
92-94	3	Than/Thanatar
95-96	2	Lunar Cults (Etyries, Seven Mothers)
97-00	4	Other

Scorpion Men

Renegades scorpion-men often do not have the means to contact their ancestress, and so worship a wide variety of cults.

All scorpion-men that live in tribes ruled by Scorpion Queens worship Bagog as their primary cult, and only rarely worship another deity as well. Roll below to find additional cult, if any. In most cases, a tribe has scorpion men that worship only one other deity. For more information, see **Lords of Terror** (pp 40-45).

Scorpion Men, Wild

d100 % Cult

01-60	60	Bagog
61-65	5	Ikadz
66-75	10	Korbog
76-90	15	Malia
91-95	5	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only
96-99	4	Than/Thanatar
00	1	Other

Scorpion Men, Tribal (with Scorpion Queen)

d100 % Cult

01-80	80	Bagog only
81	1	Illuminate (+ possible additional cult)
82-89	8	Korbog (Hunter deity)
90-95	6	Malia
96-99	4	Primal Chaos + worship of individual daemons only
00	1	Other

Spider Folk

The Spider Folk have no religion in the human sense, but revere an "Ancient Great Mother" as ancestress and source of unique magics. They do not worship any gods. Their "cult" is similar to that of Aranea (available in **Troll Gods**), with web-based ritual spells also available. See **Dorastor: Land of Doom** (pp 21-24).

Telmori

Telmori are hsunchen, and worship Telmor almost exclusively. There are two types of Telmori, Cursed Ones and Pure Ones. See **Dorastor: Land of Doom** (pp 24-28 and 119-122). Roll below to see if a tribe worships a deity in addition to Telmor.

Cursed Ones

d100 % Cult

01-90	90	Telmor only
91-95	5	Spirit Cult worship
96-98	3	Ralzakark
99-00	2	Other chaotic deity

Pure Ones

d100 % Cult

01-92	92	Telmor only
93-100	8	Spirit Cult worship



Cult of Brastalos
Storm Bride of Magasta

I. Mythos and History

Once Kolat First Spirit-Master tamed the One True Wind and took his daughter as a bride. From this coupling came the Seven Winds, the North, South, East and West, and the Three Secret Winds, the Higher Wind, the Lower Wind and Brastalos, the No-Wind, the Eye of the Storm.

During the Gods War, in an epic struggle which caused the Raging sea to climb and flood the Spike, Magasta, the Terror of the Deep, drove off the Storm Gods and held Vadrus underwater so long that he gave up Brastalos, his niece, in tribute. When the Storm Gods sought to brake Brastalos free, Magasta again defeated them and subdued Brastalos to be his obedient wife.

When the Spike exploded and left the cosmos with a vacuum at its center, there where some gods who leapt in to fill the breach. Brastalos was one of those, and of the many who tried she was one of the few suited to the task. With the aid of Magasta she turned an unholy vacuum into a compromise between real emptiness and empty reality.

The children of Magasta and Brastalos are the deadly Waterspouts and Whirlpools which dot the places where the air and sea meet, a plague to all who are godless at the sea.

Brastalos is associated with runes of Air, Change and Spirit.

II. Cult Ecology

Brastalos is rarely noted except as the Kolati wife of Magasta. Whereas the Four (Directional) Winds are quite mundane in their bearing, and the Two (Hidden) Winds are quite magical, Brastalos, the Seventh Wind is mystical in its concept and its origin.

As the Seventh Wind, the No-Wind, she is the Eye of the Storm, the Calm of Violence. She is always recorded as being in the centre of the world, the same place where Umath always is. She is the Secret Breath of Umath, and the source of the secret power of the Storm Gods, the "Inner Breath". Sometimes she is called the Mother of All Storms and some writers have taken that quite literally

and used her name in their desire to make everyone have a mate and a pair of parents. It is certain that each God of Storms has certainly got his own Secret Power, a seat of immutable balance and calm within the surface of violence.

Brastalos' holy night are celebrated along with Magasta's.

III. The Cult in the World

Brastalos' temples are rare, but her shrines are always alongside Magasta's. Those who find Magasta too terrible might favor Brastalos, thus finding an acceptable path to the Lord of the Sea.

Her shrines teach Command Sylph.

IV. Initiates

Requirements: Anyone wishing to become an initiate of Brastalos must succeed in

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a test abstracted as a POWx5 roll and sacrifice 1 point of POW to Brastalos.

Note: The skill Wind Sense (Knowledge 00 base%) is taught to initiates. It allows the initiate to sense the speed, nature and direction of the wind. The initiate also knows with around six hours notice when the wind is going to change.

Spirit Magic: Befuddle, Coordination, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Mindspeech, Mobility, Second Sight, Shimmer

V. Priesthood

Requirements: standard. Skills- Wind Sense 90%, Summon and Ceremony 50%

Common Divine Magic: all

Special Divine Magic: Cloud Call, Command Sylph, Decrease Wind, Increase Wind, Storm's Eye, Waterspout, Wind Warp

Allied spirit: Storm Gull

VI. Special Brastalos Rune Magic

Storm's Eye, 1 point

ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable

This spell creates an area of absolute calm. The area affected is 1 metre in diameter and three metres in height. The winds in a circle twice the size of the

area are doubled in strength for the duration of the spell. Each point stacked into the spell doubles the size of the area affected.

VII. Associated Cults

Dormal

Provides the spell Predict Weather

Magasta

Provides the spell Whirlpool

A New Face for Lanbril <http://home.primus.com.au/arkat/runeq.html>
Ian Thomson's Unofficial Glorantha Site
(Glorantha is owned by Issaries Inc.)

The Lanbril Cult in Pavis

There was a flurry of discussion on the Glorantha Digest in March 1998 about the infeasibility of the Lanbril cult in Pavis being structured as described in the original Pavis supplement. After reading some of this I reluctantly decided that

some of these people were correct. Whilst a wide-ranging Thieves Guild could function in a large enough Gloranthan city, Pavis is not such a place. Therefore I have decided in my RQ world to design the Pavis Lanbrilites as follows:

Firstly the exceptions - These are foreign Lanbril cultists from large cities elsewhere in the continent. Presumably run out of their place of origin, or fleeing a few steps ahead of The Law. Such people in my campaign include Griselda and Wolfhead. These also illustrate part of the newer concept - that Lanbril is not usually a straight Thieves cult, but actually includes brigands, pick-pockets, bushwhackers, highwaymen, and all manner of low-life. Although, of

course, certain Lanbril factions will embrace higher codes of ethics, even to being a sort of shadow side of Orlanth Adventurous. (Griselda and Wolfhead again.)

Then, the majority - The Lanbril cult in Pavis is scattered groups of disparate individuals - from professional muggers and petty-theft orientated beggars, to seasoned brigands that dwell in the Rubble. The most organised branch is the group that deals with fencing stolen property (interacting with the local Arin cultists), and providing guides and body-guards for expeditions that are not quite above the law. Other Lanbrilites with a highish profile are those Confidence Men, drunk rollers, and Wide-boys who prey on gullible Pavis newcomers. Sometimes this is by promising aid and then disappearing into the crowd. And they were probably using the Face of Lanbril spell in the first place. Others are some of the outlaws hanging out in the Big Rubble, undesirables and neer-do-wells. They use their skills plundering old buildings and robbing adventurer parties, and paradoxically out in the Rubble is likely to

be the only place where formal Lanbril ceremonies are held, with bandits and organised con-men/fences mingling periodically to renew Rune spells and practice

tricks of the trade. A dangerous place at best. Quite a challenge for unsuspecting PC Lanbrilis. I contend that it is the prescence of the Big Rubble which allows the Lanbril cult to survive in any significance at all in Pavis.

Paying to learn thieves' skills:

In normal game terms you might expect these to be from the Lanbril cult directly, however I have just explained how such a cult does not properly exist here. It may be extant to some degree as close as Furthest or even Boldhome. Therefore such things as breaking and entering skills are NOT easily available. The Rubble Trackers (Flintnail Dwarves) will teach a variety of related skills such as sneaking, opening locks. A suitably specialised Donandar cultist might teach acrobatics, foiling restraints etc. Yes after due consideration and with great sadness I have relagated the majority of the Lanbrillis in Pavis to a bunch of opportunistic bully boys, wide boys, and bandits. You can pay to learn from them and to join worship ceremonies in the Rubble, but this is not recommended for outsiders and can be extremely hazardous. Technically a foreigner paying enough and able to prove cult loyalty should be able to join in, but many have had their throats cut just asking too many questions. There are always exceptions: a scattering of Sartarite and Heortlander Lanbrilli from cities to the West. These form a very small organisation that corresponds to more recognisable Cult structure, and charge highly for their training and other

services.

Lanbril Alchemy

Over time the thief has stolen many secrets to help him combat magical defences,

including those of alchemy. In Pavis the cult is in a degenerate form (with a

few cultured outsiders), and no specialised Lanbril alchemist is known to exist, however some Rune Level cultists know rituals to create their own devices. These can also be used as template ideas for regular alchemy items. Raw materials cost

over 100L usually for each item. If non-Lanbrilli can ever purchase alchemical items, add 50% to the cost. Normally such precious resources are not sold to outsiders, however rare members of other outlaw cults, such as Arin, Eurmal, or Black Fang might form professional relationships and be allowed to purchase at an extra 50% of the price.

Lanbril Special Alchemy Devices:

Potions - knowledge varies by local cult. Each costs 1POW to activate, and around 150L per spell point to buy within the cult.

Thunder Lung Dust - Cost 10,000L to learn, and the ritual costs 1POW but creates

6 lots (8 on a Special Success, 10 on a Critical). Used by breaking a special flask. Anyone taken by surprise inhales unless rolling half CON or less as %. If

aware that the Lanbrilli is up to something the full CON may be used, and if experienced in Lanbril devices 2CON. Coughing, sneezing and respiratory stress are caused in a large cloud of dust. The cloud dissipates at various rates depending on air flow, and may take several minutes in a still room. Escaping the dust the effects linger for minutes, with each minute allowing 2CON as % to fully recover. To buy within the cult is 1,000L

Visibility Dust - Costs 5,000L to learn. Most details as Thunder Lung, but its effect is to cling to any invisible creature or item caught in the cloud, as well as reveal any areas of magical effect, such as Wardings. To buy within the cult - 1,500L

Scent-Stop Dust - Details as Thunder Lung except it is sprinkled on a trail, and

double the amount of portions is created for POW. Prevents any tracking by scent, blocking nasal passages. To buy within the cult 500L

Stink Dust - As Scent Stop, but the reverse, and not pleasant. Very hard to wash out, like skunk smell. To buy within the cult - 500L

Sleep Dust - as Thunder Lung, but costs 1000L per point of POT to learn, and puts victims to sleep for several minutes if they fail to resist. To buy within cult - 300L per POT.

Smoke Bombs - Cost 7,000L to learn and creates a much bigger cloud that blankets

an area. The duration is reduced to only a couple of minutes in an open area, but longer in an enclosed space. Cost within cult 1,000L for powders, 3,000L for

throwable globe of liquid.

Flares - 10,000L to learn process, as Thunder Lung but double the amount of items made. Can be made to burn in any colour, or even propel burning material into the air. Used to provide light at a moment's notice without worrying about MP, and the good ones last for up to 20 minutes.

Masks - A Lanbril hero also invented protective masks. These are hoods that can be fixed inside a helm or other headgear and pulled down quickly to use. They are

magical rather than scientific, and etched with various Runes. The most common masks protect from three types of Lanbril alchemical effect, others may protect from several, and a few rare items may protect from many. Lanbrilli may buy them

from the cult (if available) for 500L per effect they work against. They are created at a cost of 1POW for each three effects that the mask shields the wearer from. Additionally the masks must be attuned to the owner in a Lanbril ritual, and will only function when within 15yds of the (living) owner.

Alchemists of any cult are a branch of sorcery and spend the vast majority of their time in study and production, which means also a higher than usual rate of

regaining POW. This makes professional alchemists a bad choice for PCs. Active thief characters will obviously be loathe to spend POW often, which makes Lanbril Rune Levels treat the items like precious Rune Spells. (Although of course the successful Lanbrilli in areas where the cult presence is notable can buy them at exorbitant rates from cult alchemists.)

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The Book of Drastic Resolutions: Cult of Taeterisus
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CULT OF TAETERISUS
by Stephen Martin, with thanks to James Frusetta

Mythos and History
Cult Ecology
The Cult in the World
Piece of Taeterisus (Acolyte) Membership
Taeterisus Special Divine Spells
Miscellaneous Notes
Greg Stafford on Chaotic Tricksters

MYTHOS AND HISTORY

There are many aspects of Trickster, for many powers and elements were influenced by his presence. Chaos gave rise to its own version when it was forced into the laws of creation. This chaotic version of Trickster is usually not distinguished from the local aspect, since both beings caused trouble wherever they went. He is worshiped only among chaotic beings, who know him by different names: he is Tokaz Varaz to the chaotic goblins of the Pavis Rubble, spirit of all that is scary in the darkness; and Ragnaglar's Balls to the broos,

formed when a jealous and vengeful Thed learned of Ragnaglar's affair with Malia. Among sophisticated Lunar chaos-philosophers, he is called Taeterisus (Risus for short). Chaos foes sometimes call him Twisted Trickster or Wakboth's Tears.

Taeterisus did all that he could to integrate Trickster into the void, but was eventually dismembered by Eurmal. He re-formed in Prax, and played a joke on Wakboth which distracted the Great Evil at a crucial moment. He managed to survive when the Sun returned by hiding under a pile of dung, and is still around to play his dangerous and malicious pranks on whoever is available, much like all aspects of the Trickster.

Taeterisus is rarely depicted by chaotic beings. He is pictured as a warped version of Trickster among sane societies. Thus, among Orlanthi he is seen as a monstrous version of Eurmal, with great fangs and many deformities. Dead members are handled in whatever fashion is held by the local chaos community. Many members prefer to use their Swallow spell to devour the dead (or

dying). Taeterisus promises members that he will swallow their souls when they die.

The runes of Taeterisus are Chaos, Disorder, and Illusion.

CULT ECOLOGY

Taeterisus' cult is a refuge for those creatures of chaos who do not conform to their particular race's "norm." Even among chaotics there are some with a sense of humor, which is liable to prove deadly unless they can gain some kind of power to defend themselves. The cult is never large, smaller even than most widely-known Trickster aspects. Members can worship at regular Trickster shrines

if they are not recognized as chaotic, possible for human and ogre members. Worshipers of Taeterisus have all of the worst features of Tricksters and

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chaotics. They are destructive and vindictive, with a penchant for practical jokes, the deadlier the better. No one will put up with them. They hate other tricksters more than they do the rest of the world, and go out of their way to destroy or corrupt them; Chaos Slime is a favorite tool for this. However, they will normally not do anything to destroy a shrine to Trickster, perhaps to save it for their own use.

Taeterisus has no established worship days. Members who tend a shrine will decide when they want to perform services, and will usually choose the most inconvenient times.

THE CULT IN THE WORLD

Taeterisus' cult is as little-organized as any Trickster's. Members with more power rule, and others serve as slaves. The cult is uncommon, since it is more sophisticated than most chaos societies can support, but the occasional worshiper can be found anywhere in Genertela except Prax.

There is little cooperation between members, and none between individual shrines. If pressed, most members would say that the "temple" in Dorastor heads the cult. Members from other areas often try to emulate the feats of that site, since it has had a number of "famous" worshipers.

Shrines are the only worship site. Each provides a different spell, as is normal

for Tricksters; Swallow is most common. The oldest known shrine is in Dorastor, near the zombie town of Neverdead. It is actually a multiple shrine, with four worship sites located in close proximity. These sites provide Chaos Gift, Panic,

Create Dung Heap, and Swallow, giving local Terrors a useful complement of spells.

PIECE OF TAETERISUS (ACOLYTE) MEMBERSHIP

This status is the same as in other Trickster cults. The initiation process is the same, but Taeterisus' worshipers are more likely to be sent on truly dangerous missions. Where a normal trickster might have to steal a stick from a wyvern's nest, or find a pearl in a dung heap, Taeterisus' followers are likely to be sent for the grave earth from a vampire's coffin, or to retrieve a gem from inside the body of a gorp.

Pieces are acolytes, and gain reusable Divine spells. If a Piece maintains a shrine he is called Terror, and gains a yearly increase in POW if he leads worship services. Pieces learn no Spirit Magic from the cult, but none is forbidden.

For a description of Chaos Gift, see Gods of Glorantha, Cults Book (pg 66).

Duration is 15 minutes, with no cyclic effects. The Chaotic Feature rolled has an equal chance to be beneficial or detrimental, as normal.

Divine Magic available: Chaos Gift, Create Dung Heap, Illusory (Smell, Sound), Panic, Reflection, Swallow, Worship Taeterisus

TAETERISUS SPECIAL DIVINE SPELLS

Create Dung Heap

2 points

ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable

This is a specific illusion spell, described in Gods of Glorantha (Cults Book, pg 71). It turns whatever is covered into a heap of dung for the duration of the

spell. The spell covers an object of average human size, and additional points can increase this (13 SIZ per spell stacked). The spell includes a strong and very accurate olfactory component.

If the illusion is cast on a target, the caster must overcome the victim's MPs with his own. If successful, the illusion travels with the target, masking his appearance and smell, though not the sounds he makes.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

OGRES

This cult is a favorite of ogres, since through it they gain access to other Trickster shrines, because of their normal human appearance. As long as the tender of the site does not identify the ogre as chaotic (and possibly even then), a Piece of Taeterisus will be able to sacrifice for spells just like any other Trickster. A well-traveled Piece of Taeterisus can gain a large complement

of spells in this fashion. A favorite such spell is Lie, which the ogre then uses to confound Storm Bull worshipers the world over.

GREG STAFFORD ON CHAOTIC TRICKSTERS

Excerpt from the Lore Auction, RuneQuestCon II, January '95.

Audience Member (AM): Does Trickster have a chaotic aspect that is worshiped by chaotic Beings?

Greg Stafford (GS): No.

AM: Yet in Wyrms Footnotes 7, Steve Perrin had a Trickster cult associated with chaotic creatures of the dark.

GS: The cult is probably there, but has changed its form as our continuing education allows us to evolve a better understanding for determining these things.

SP: And saying there are no chaotic tricksters is not the same as saying there are no chaotic Trickster deities.

GS: It's not saying that chaotic deities are not Trickster-like. When I say there are no chaotic Tricksters, I mean that all chaos breaks the rules. In a sense, that makes them all Tricksters, because that's what Tricksters do.

Return to The Best of Volume Chaos

Glorantha: Cult of Aldrya

Cult of Aldrya

originally published in Cults of Prax and Elder Secrets

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

The tale of this goddess starts early in godtime, with the meeting of the tender

and gentle portions of the elements upon the edges of their worlds. There was, in those times, a kind god of light who shyly met a tender goddess of wetness, and one lay upon the other like the sunlight on the sea. Where they met they mingled and made something new, and this something was born to be a god called Flamal.

Flamal was a god of bright potentials bursting within him. He is called by many names, and known by many races, but for the beings who rule in the forests he is

the Father of Seeds. Among those he knew his most beloved was Ernalda, who was turned bountiful by the meeting with him. They had a child, and her name was Aldrya.

Aldrya was loved by two jealous gods, each of whom threatened to destroy her if she loved the other. She sought refuge among the greater gods of the Celestial Court, and they gave her a place to remain forever upon the slopes of their citadel called the Spike. Thus was the first tree planted upon the cosmic mountain.

She bore wondrous fruit there, and others took these fruit and planted them far and wide. Each of these was born to be a Great Tree, and each of these was called Aldrya. The Great Trees bore fruit in their turn and covered the earth with vegetation according to the needs and capacities of the place. Thus, despite differences in local variation, all children of Aldrya know they are one

kin. The vast and peaceful Green Age spread across the earth.

Aldrya took for herself a husband who is named Shanasse, who was a son of the goddess of Love. His presence added new depth and expression within the goddess,

and together they brought forth the souls and spirits of the forest. From the trees came the beings known as the Dryads, who were the spirits of the trees, free to move but ever bound to the woody groves. From smaller plants, brush and wild shrubbery, came the Runners. They are less subtle and intelligent than their larger kin. Even in the Green Age these beings filled the woods.

When it was fashionable among the gods to do so Aldrya took the being called Man, first of his race, and they made a race like him for her. These were the People of the Woods, also known as Elves, who are also counted among the Aldryami.

The pixies have a different origin. They are said to have been fashioned by Shanasse for his wife out of some spare magic left over from the creation of the

world. He gave them to her in a small turn of phrase and a jest to make her smile.

The Green Age filled itself with more life as the gods made more and more creatures. There was no problem when the woods and fields filled with beasts, but the Aldryami did not recognize the inherent dangers to come when beast began

devouring beast. The ancient woods slowly reacted to the growing disaster of the

Gods War, and more often such innocent bystanders were bruised and broken by the

greater war.

During the fighting of the Gods Age, the new Power, Death, came into the hands of the elves through a wager by the Trickster. They took the Power and enchanted

it upon the edge of their sacred earth tool, the Axe. With this they slew many Dwarf foes, and thus turned cold all the world's stone forever.

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Zorak Zoran, a troll god, then stole the weapon from the elves and, as he escaped, slew Flamal, father of Aldrya and beloved of all the gods. Thus the axe

then became the bane of elves. In her grief the goddess Ernalda commanded all of

her children to withhold their bounty from the world until Flamal was returned to life. Aldrya obeyed and slept the unending sleep, and her children began to die, one by one, in the cold darkness.

The liberation of Flamal is sometimes called the "Secret Quest" of the Lightbringers, or the Greater Bonus by some. However, even his return to life would have had far less meaning without the long struggle of the Protectors on earth to save the sleeping form of their wards.

The Protectors were led by High King Elf, the leader of his race from among the undying Green Elves. He led a beleaguered band of elves through the whole of the

Darkness, ever struggling to protect the empty bodies of the forest from their foes. In this he was aided by the gods Arroin and Yelmario, another wounded survivor, but he hated the god Oakfed, the Wildfire deity who devoured the once-magnificent forests of Prax and slew almost all there.

High King Elf was among those beings present in Dragon Pass for the I Fought We Won Battle where chaos was turned back upon itself.

Thus when the Dawn came and the spirits of the living returned again to the world there was a prepared place for the Aldryami, who returned to their old places, inside of Time.

The activities of Aldrya, as manifest by her cult, are usually proclaimed to be the affairs of the elven races when reported by human chronicles. This is only partially true, but the elves were usually the most noticeable part of the Aldryami and were the usual agents sent out by the Great Forest to carry word to

the world.

During the Dawn Ages the Aldryami were one of the more powerful races of the world. Their woods covered much of what was otherwise empty land. In their interiors there was never knowledge that any other inhabitants existed in the world.

On the fringes, though, elf armies mingled in the political affairs of other peoples. In Dragon Pass they sat on the councils of the wise. At the end of the Dawn Age they fought against the chaos god Gbaji and, like the rest of the peoples who resisted, suffered heavily for it.

The Second Age was one of worsening Aldryami affairs. Where humans lived they turned back the wild forests for their fields, and while some of the wars which followed were elf victories, the woods rarely grew back. Where there were no men, as through most of Peloria, the Elder Races of trolls, dwarves, and elves engaged in long and exhausting wars over grudges left from Godtime. When men moved into these Elder regions, they found lands emptied by wars, and they populated the lands quickly. If the Elder races caused trouble, they were driven

into their utmost refuges.

The Third Age found a subtle Aldryami comeback. The first few hundred years saw more and more of their vast forests razed, but at the same time there appeared exquisite gardens growing in old sacred territory. This time, though, the native

Aldryami were under the protection of the local humans. Examples of this phenomena are the Gardens of Carresh, in the Lunar Empire, and in Old Pavis, where The Garden eventually outgrew its old beds when the city fell to ruin. Throughout all this 1600 years of change the religion of the Aldryami has undergone little change. Like most divinities Aldrya depends most firmly on the oldest friends. Events of history have only widened the gap between men and elves.

Even with the great human efforts made at The Gardens, this cult is not the usual farmer's crop cult.

All Aldryami believe in successive births and rebirths through many lives in a long organic growth process which will lead towards the glory and unification of

their consciousness with that of their goddess. They believe that adhering to the right worship will speed that process, and most rituals and magics of the race will intensify and prove these feelings. Simply said, most elves are believers.

As might be expected from a race which comes from the earth, the Aldryami bury

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their dead. They sing gentle songs, and then the priests accompany the newly dead to the Other Side.

The cult of Aldrya focuses primarily on the Rune of Plant, modified by the Elemental rune of Earth and the Power Rune of Fertility.

Other Notes

Rootless Elves and Renegades

Elves who, for any reason, reject or are rejected by their cult, are called Rootless Elves. This almost never happens to dryads or runners.

Rootless Elves are officially exiled from their religion, but most choose to remain within elvish society. They may still live in their community and come to

the aid of their woods, but they have no official part of the religion unless they join an acceptable cult and work their way to importance in it. This is an acceptable choice for Rootless Elves.

It is possible for Rootless Elves to remain content inhabitants of the forest. Many even glory in their foreign cults and set up small shrines where they can live and teach their new skills to their fellows. This way, Rootless Elves serve

their community and some elf leaders favor such cooperation. Enemy cults are forbidden, of course.

Renegade elves are those which have turned their backs on both Aldrya and their people. These elves sometimes form bands or colonies. Many turn to outright hatred of their kinsfolk, and tales are still told of Saw-Tooth Korvan, a meat-eating elf who terrorized the Stinking Forest by helping trolls during Dragon Pass's Inhuman Occupation between 1200 and 1250 S.T.

Elf Senses

Elf senses include all the human ones. Their night vision is better than human (especially in the case of green elves), but they lack true darksense and are blinded by total darkness. They possess an "Elfsense." This sense permits the elf, by touch, to detect the health and emotional state of the target and whether or not it is stressed or in pain. It also gives the elf details about soil -- the soil's nutrient, moisture, and overall quality.

See also:

The Travels of Biturian Varosh: The People of the Woods

Non-Human Races: Aldryami

Gods in Prax: Non-Human Deities

A Personal View of Elf Culture

Wisdom of the Woodwife

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Glorantha: Cult of Argan Argar
Cult of Argan Argar
originally published in Trollpak and Troll Gods

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Argan Argar is a god of Darkness and a son of Night. Long before anyone existed,

he figured prominently in an episode wherein he, Zorak Zoran, and Xiola Umbar witnessed the unveiling of Yelm.

When Yelm died and went to Hell, many deities fled to the surface. One of the leaders of those that fled was Xentha, Goddess of Night. Shortly after coming to

the surface, Xentha birthed Argan Argar -- first-born, natural leader of the dark gods on the surface of the world.

Argan Argar was active during the Darkness, aiding anyone who called upon him, whether elf, man, or beast-man. But he was always most friendly to trolls, who love the shadows.

During the Darkness, Argan Argar conquered Lodril, fire-god of the deep earth. He forced that steaming deity into humiliating chains of shadow, and had him build the immense Palace of Black Glass in Ernaldela.

The cult of Argan Argar was widespread after the dawn of Time. In his obsidian palace in Ernaldela lived the Only Old One, Argan Argar's son and regent. The cult dominated all Kethaela and neighboring lands and had powerful connections with the trolls of Halikiv and Shadow's Dance. Other large pockets of Argan Argar worship existed in Peloria, Fronela, and Ralios.

The civilized empires of the time influenced the cult and showed its amazing adaptability. When other peoples built nations and kingdoms, so did the Only Old

One. Thus was born the Kingdom of Night, which haunted the area for the whole of

the First Age, forming a barrier between Dragon Pass and the foreign sea. The kingdom was part of the First and Second Councils, and trolls dominated its politics. In most contemporary western documents, the Kingdom of Night is labelled the Shadowlands.

In the Second Age, the Only Old One became an ally of the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends, and the Argan Argar cult spread to Pamaltela.

The kingdom was destroyed by the arrival of the Pharaoh in 1258. In a series of epic battles, stratagems, magics, and rebirths, the Pharaoh managed personal conflict with the Only Old One at last. The fighting shattered the wonderful Palace of Black Glass, and at the end of the fight the Pharaoh crushed the body of the Only Old One into the earth. The dust from the castle now forms the treacherous black sandstorms of the Haunted Lands, and the Tarpit marks the site

where the Only Old One's crushed brains melted a hole to Hell.

The cult of Argan Argar was not suppressed by the Pharaoh, and lives on, popular

not only in Kethaela, but everywhere in Glorantha that darkness is friendly with

the rest of the world. The followers of Argan Argar are skillful in promoting such friendship, as befits the followers of the god of Surface Darkness.

Argan Argar promises his followers that they will become part of his mother's whispery train of immortal darkness which sweeps across the world each night and

moves magnificently through the netherworld each day.

Burial customs for the cult always follow those of the dominant local culture.

Argan Argar has the Runes of Communication and Darkness. Secondary Runes are Harmony and Mastery.

Other Notes

Holy Places and Centers of Worship

The largest single area of Argan Argar worship is now in Halikiv, a more-or-less

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intact civilized troll queendom in Ralios. Shadow's Dance is another center of power. The holiest place is Morbode, the site where Argan Argar destroyed Braznofstel, and important chaos demon. A less important holy site is the Tarpit, where the Only Old One was slain. The Troll Woods and the Holy Country constitute another center of power and include many non-troll worshipers.

Bolgs

Bolgs are a troll unit of exchange. The bolg was invented by Argan Argar and is the sole coinage used by the cult to pay trollkin mercenaries. The bolg is unique as a coin, for it is designed for use as a slingstone as well as handy cash.

The bolgs are used by trollkin and trolls by biting down on the mass of change and twisting it in the mouth while holding onto the money with the hand, thus forming the pellet. This feat is generally impossible for other races to duplicate.

Bolgs are nominally worth 1/5 of a clack each. Troll-hating people and races usually will not accept bolgs as money.

Spears and Trolls

Spears, the usual weapon for armies of trollkin, were first introduced by Argan Argar, fresh from his conquest of Lodril. Trollkin and worshipers of Argan Argar

are the only trolls likely to be found wielding spears. In some troll areas, the spear is the symbol for Argan Argar and his cult.

See also:

Tales of the Night Hag

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Glorantha: Cult of Bagog

Cult of Bagog

originally published in Cults of Terror and Lords of Terror

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Bagog was one of many creatures led by the Devil into the universe. Her stinging

tail was a fearsome weapon, and many races and deities fell to her. At first she

was content to enjoy the carnage of the Chaos Age, fighting and eating all who opposed her, but soon other urges shook her. She began to lay eggs which hatched

into smaller versions of herself. Her progeny varied with her provender, and so there were scorpion men, scorpion horses, scorpion dragonewts, and many other types. Some were unable to live, while others flourished in the Darkness.

The scorpion races ate as Bagog had, and their children gained knowledge and power from their foes. Soon they formed a rough social order, centered about the

might of Bagog and her daughters, the first Scorpion Queens. The Dorasta cult of

the land of Dorastor has a story of how the land goddess's son Tobros was stung by Bagog at the Seven Hills, and was laid to rest beneath the mountains which bear his name until a cure could be found for Bagog's deadly venom.

The tribes have survived since the Darkness because they live in places that other races dread, impassable mountains and unlivable deserts. They occasionally

surge and spread over nearby lands, or are exploited by broos or other beings for their own purposes. Among themselves, and among chaos creatures friendly to them, the scorpion races are known as Djurulgz, which can be translated as "the People." They have sometimes been hired as mercenaries by humans willing to overlook their chaotic nature in return for their military service.

Images and pictures are rarely used by Bagog's crude worshipers, since she is incarnate in the Queen of each tribe. In prehistoric troll and Orlanthi manuscripts she is drawn as a gigantic wrinkled scorpion woman. An ancient Pelorian mosaic shows the war god Shargash presenting a captured scorpion-thing to Murharzarm (Yelm Emperor), and this may also be a representation of Bagog. The cult assures its members eternal life in Bagog. The children of Bagog feast upon their dead, assuring the preservation of all knowledge within the tribe. Bagog is associated with the Runes of Chaos, Beast, and Man. There are minor associations with Darkness, although the mythic context of this relationship is unknown to humans.

Other Notes

Scorpion Men and Broos

The People and the broos have common grounds for alliance. The broos' superior intelligence and variety of useful magic make them natural leaders for the People in battle. In turn, the People provide a type of cavalry to the broos, their mobility and stinging tails greatly aiding the goatkin in battle.

Melding of the two species occurs whenever a broo undergoes the Ritual of Rebirth, or when a scorpion man accepts chaotic features and transforms into a broo. When the latter happens, only the upper torso (the non-scorpion body) is transformed. Such hybrids are not allowed to challenge the Scorpion Queen to take her place, but a Queen who transforms into a broo is not forced to step down. Her hybrid nature is not passed on to any children which she may lay.

See also:

Introduction to Glorantha: Chaos in Glorantha

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Glorantha: Cult of Cacodemon

Cult of Cacodemon

originally published in Different Worlds #2 and Elder Secrets

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Cacodemon is a remnant of the army of Wakboth, the Devil. When their master was crushed under the Spike during the War of the Gods Cacodemon and other demons remained alive and embodied. They traveled widely, sowing disorder and trouble wherever they went, proving to be useful additions to the forces of Chaos. Cacodemon gained the support of the ogre race, and others of chaos as well, and for a time ruled a wide area of Genertela. Trolls, aided by Waha in Prax and other heroes elsewhere, suppressed the ogres and drove the Cacodemon to the Hero

Plane with powerful spells.

Since that time Cacodemon has operated primarily through its race of servitors, the fiends. Cacodemon himself can only manifest in the material plane with difficulty, though when it does all havoc break loose. Cacodemon is cunning and intelligent far beyond human capacity, and never appears unless some opportunity

for great destruction with little risk presents itself.

The Cacodemon cult worships this creature. Communication is mainly through the fiends, chaos demons similar to the Cacodemon in appearance. The Cacodemon itself only appears on extraordinary occasions, and when it does is not under the control of its summoners.

The Cacodemon cult promises no life after death. Worshipers must take their chances in the primordial chaos to which all things return. Some ogres believe that they will be reincarnated as a fiend if they live a wicked enough life. The Runes associated with the Cacodemon cult are Chaos, Disorder, and Death.

Other Notes

Ogres

Cacodemon welcomes all to its cult (as much as it welcomes anyone), but it is especially interested in all ogres. The ogre species evidently originated during

the Great Darkness when a band of people chose this disorderly way as the guide to their survival. Since then, all ogres have had natural, automatic connections

with Cacodemon.

Their connections with Cacodemon are not always intentional. Ogres may attempt to join any cult, as long as they pass the worship requirements and can fool the

cult officials. But their primeval sympathies run deep, and whenever an ogre comes within eight kilometers of any Cacodemon holy place, the natural blood-thirst of the race asserts itself. This may occur without the ogre being aware that he is betraying himself. Of course, when a party members asks why he is eating his dead friend, even the ogre should realize that he blew his cover. Many of these ogre holy places are well-known and, more likely than not, heavily

populated by members of that race. Other spots, however, have been forgotten and lay dormant, secret even to ogres, and are hazards to those ogres who attempt to pass for human.

See also:

Eat Your Enemy in Secret

A Personal View of Ogre Culture

Introduction to Glorantha: Chaos in Glorantha

Links]

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Glorantha: Cult of Daka Fal
Cult of Daka Fal
Ancestor Worship in Glorantha
originally published in Cults of Prax and River of Cradles

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Mythos and History

There are no known tales of Daka Fal before the Great Darkness. Ancient philosophers connect him with the primeval being called Grandfather Mortal, who is the Rune-ancestor of the Man Rune, and thereby the common ancestor of all humanoid creatures.

The tales of Grandfather Mortal explain the current position of mankind in the cosmos through a series of legends and fables. Briefly told, they mention the origin of the first man, called Wanderer in those days, in the Court of Creation

of the Celestial Court. His origin was held in common by many gods so that he contained some of all the world within him, and so he could work for all of the gods.

Grandfather Mortal had many adventures, but most important was his encounter with Death. The destroying god was still an infant, a small sharp thing cradled in the palm of Humakt, when Grandfather Mortal was invited to test the newcomer's powers. When he agreed, he was the first to know Death. Since then all men have been destined to die, and follow in the path of their great Ancestor. Thus disappeared Grandfather Mortal from the tales of the gods.

When the Darkness came it was the time for all mortality to join in with their ancestor, but many resisted. They lived in hopeless fear amid the disintegrating

world where chaos seeped or howled in, unable to separate life from death anymore. It was then that Daka Fal appeared and taught them how to separate the living from the dead. He taught the living how to test a creature to see if it is truly alive or if it is a phantom spirit. He also taught the first burial rites to keep the deceased from harassing the living afterwards. He also taught the basic cult spells which allow communication to the Other Side. Thus, by aid from their ancestors some people survived the dark.

Daka Fal was named by the gods to be the Judge of the Dead, for it was he who first knew that power and who holds all of the secrets of Death. In Prax his worship has had no actual power in the face of the gods. In times of crisis, when the gods fail their worshippers, this cult gets very popular.

(Such was the situation in Prax, anyway. Other distant lands [such as Seshneg in the Dawn ages] developed this form of worship until they made their ancestors surpass the mighty gods in power, or else reduced the immortals into mere superhuman heroes or multi-national ancestors. Such developments are outside the immediate scope of this book.)

The cult assures its worshippers that they will continue to have a personalized existence after death. They cannot guarantee any quality, nor any future for that existence. All magics and functions of the cult prove those facts to worshippers.

The cult also insures that the living will never be bothered by the souls of the dead if they follow their priest's rituals and rules.

Funeral Rites are non-specific except that they must include some variation of this chant. It is a spell and prayer which must be spoken over the dead to separate them from the world of the living. It goes:

Go! Go! Don't be Slow, Flee! Flee! Flee from me.
To the place that Life don't know. Your kind here can never be.

Stay Away! Stay Away! I am free. Not thee.
Night is there, this is Day. Go, you can't touch me.

At the end of the ceremony the people place their hands over their faces so the

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spirit cannot recognize them, then turn their backs and run away from the funeral site, and must never look back under pain of death.
The cult is associated with the runes of Man and Spirit.

See also:

The Travels of Biturian Varosh: A Baboon Ritual

Gods in Prax: Nomad Gods

Tales of the Wastes

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Glorantha: Cult of Donandar
Cult of Donandar
originally published in White Wolf #18

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Donandar's Half-brothers

Other Notes

Mythos and History

In the beginning existed only those perfect forms of energy which we call the Celestial Court. These mighty forces combined and recombined to create new beings. Harana Ilor, goddess of harmony and Larnste, god of change, coupled and produced a pair of twins to delight the universe.

The pair were Silonia, goddess of Dance, and Ralforisus, god of Music. These siblings were close, and between them grew new creatures, like and unlike either

parent -- new beings in themselves.

Skovari was the first child of Dance and Music. He represents folk music. He lived in the Green Age, when everyone was equal and love was strong. He played among common folk, for everyone was common in those days. The world was young, sweet, and happy, like Skovari was, and people and gods sang and danced to his village tunes wherever he went.

Molamin is the second child of Dance and Music. He went to the Grand Imperial Palace of the Sun, and there he entertained all the nobles, including the Emperor of the Universe himself. Yelm played his harp with Molamin, but preferred the songs of the Celestial Choir. Molamin, though, became the favored musician among the aristocracy of the world. Skovari continued to play for the commoners, and Molamin became the god of courtly music and dance.

Drogarsi is the third child of Dance and Music. He was born in the Storm Age, and his favorite song is that of battle. He made songs and poems to stir men to courage, to brace them for battle, and to glorify their deeds afterwards. Thus he is the god of epic poetry, battle songs, military music, and war dances. After their third child was born the parents, Silonia and Ralforisus, were separated in the Darkness. Ralforisus found and stayed with Tylenea, goddess of Illusion. They bore the child Donandar. The young god left his parents to wander

the world with worshipers of his mother, the Puppeteers, and from them he learned the arts of entertaining and mastery of illusions, but with the fall of the Greater Darkness he left the traveling players to seek alone what part he could play in ending the cosmic disharmony of Chaos.

As he traveled, the mysterious force of the universe drew him toward his elder half-brothers. He came upon Skovari first, whose trust and love of the common people had caused him to be captured by a tribe that had turned to evil.

Donandar freed Skovari, and they traveled together.

The pair then came across Molamin, trapped and caged by the forces of Kyger Litor. Donandar intervened with a gift of hymns to Kyger Litor so enchanting and so flattering that she not only freed Molamin but granted Donandar her eternal friendship.

Traveling on, the three came upon the White Goddess, Chalana Arroy, struggling to save the life of a god who lay beside a broken sword and a shattered trumpet.

A horde of mindless things chewed away parts of the god even as Chalana Arroy tried to heal him. Donandar played entrancingly and the swarming monsters stopped eating to join in the solemn dance. Thus, he saved the life of the god, their last brother, Drogarsi, and won the gratitude of the White Goddess. Thus Donandar became leader, and the other music brothers lent him their songs and spells. When Donandar stood against chaos he hurled it back with songs and dances as earthy and moving as Skovari's, as elegant and gracious as Molamin's, and as stormy and rousing as Drogarsi's. Blending all, making harmony from cacophony, was Donandar's own secret power. When the sun returned Donandar greeted it with a song of triumph.

Minstrels have many different philosophies and many different beliefs about the afterlife. The cult of Donandar emphasizes no particular belief. Their funeral customs are either those of the area they travel in, or else the corpse is

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buried beneath a road.

Donandar possesses the three runes of Harmony, Mobility, and Illusion.

Donandar's Half-brothers

Donandar's brothers are each associated with a different widespread deity.

Donandar cultists can worship Donandar acceptably at shrines to any of his brother deities. This helps the small cult to spread itself over a wide area.

Skovari is the god of folk music and dance. Temples to Ernalda hold shrines to this deity.

Molamin is the embodiment of classic or courtly music and stately dance. Yelm temples have a small shrine to Molamin.

Drogarsi is the deity of war dancing and stirring martial music. Temples of Orlanth hold shrines to him.

Other Notes

Worship Services

Donandar's worship services are also performances, to which the public is invited for free. These services are used by the cultists to advertise the next days' performances and titillate the crowd's interest. The worship service may even be held during a parade, to attract attention for tomorrow's show.

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Glorantha: Cult of Dorasta
Cult of Dorasta
originally published in Dorastor: Land of Doom

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Subservient Cults

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Dorasta is the special goddess of the land of Dorastor, and is sometimes called the Grain Goddess of the land. Once she was powerful, but actions within Time have left her broken, worshiped only by a few loyal beings in a land of horror. Genert and Gata were children of the Primal Earth, and formed two corners of the

Earth Rune. Genert fathered many goddesses upon his sister, and they are the land goddesses found everywhere. They gave their names to the regions of Genertela. Hence Ralia is the goddess of Ralios, Frona is the goddess of Fronela, and so forth. In Peloria, the daughter of Genert and Gata was called Pela or Pelora.

Pelora was one of the most generous and beautiful of the land goddesses, and Genert took her, his sister-daughter, to wife. The children of this union were the land goddesses of Peloria, including Oraya in the northeast, Erigia in the northwest, Rigtaina in the southeast, and Dorasta in the southwest. In the Green

Age, Flamal found all the new grain goddesses and blessed them with his magic, so they produced many types of plants and covered the nakedness of the earth with greenery.

In times so remote they cannot be remembered, Dorasta took to husband a god whose name is lost. They created a race now unknown, but which were later called

the Feldichi. They thrived for an age of peace and plenty, but during the Great Darkness both husband and race disappeared. Even the identity of their slayers has been lost.

When Flamal was slain in the Darkness, the grain goddesses all went into hiding for shame and woe. The monsters of chaos dropped from the sky, Genert was killed, and Gata was cracked. Pelora's children followed the Earth-Mother into sleep, and the land of Dorastor slept until the return of the Sun. Deep in a cave a sacred animal, the Wolfbear, hibernated as well.

With the end of the Darkness, a new world awoke. Dorastor was an empty wilderness until the coming of Kalasmas the Settler. One of his granddaughters, Vyrope, discovered the Cleft of Dorasta, and became the first priestess of the goddess. Thus was she awakened, and the land flourished for years. When the Second Council moved to Dorastor, and began the project of the Perfect One, she gained even greater respect and love for her ability to feed all of the people and gods there, and she was revered by all. One common myth of the period calls her Nysalor's wetnurse, though this may be interpreted allegorically, since Nysalor was never an infant.

With the razing of Dorastor by Arkat, Dorasta's preeminence came to an end. She was brutalized by the invaders; Arkat poisoned her waters and salted the land, leaving her at the edge of extinction. She survived when the land was cursed, for she slipped back into the Cleft of Dorasta, into the safe womb of her mother. After the Curse of Cleansing the land was lifeless, though the people of

Skanthiland continued to speak to Dorasta through her shrine at the Cleft.

Dorasta is always pictured by her worshipers as a young woman holding a radiant baby or a basket of food. Her robes are dark green, edged in red, and her skin as brown as the soil. She is occasionally pictured as wounded or crippled, especially when depicted as the victim of Arkat's rape.

Dorasta's worshipers know that they will join her in Ty Kora Tek's Land of the Dead when they die. After a period of sleep and renewal, they will be reborn into the world, to live again. Funeral services are simple, with the priestesses

saying words of comfort and hope as the deceased is laid to eternal rest in the earth.

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As with other Grain Goddesses, Dorasta is associated with the runes of Earth, Plant, and Harmony.

Subservient Cults

Tobros

This child of Dorasta was born in the Golden Age. He rapidly grew to the size of

a mountain. He was stung by Bagog, and laid to sleep beneath the peaks which bear his name until a cure could be found for him. The load of rock he was carrying fell, and formed the Seven Hills. He provides the spell of Earthmight to Dorasta's priestesses, who may only cast it on a worshiper of one of Dorasta's protectors.

Other Notes

The Cleft of Dorasta

The Dorasta Shrine was built within the Cleft of Dorasta, first discovered by Vyrope, who became the first priestess. It is from here that Dorasta's spirit rises during worship services, and where she is easiest to contact. Sacred vapors

rise from the Cleft, and the priestess of the shrine is often an oracle as well.

Her foretellings are usually limited to birth prophecies, and the priestess (assisted by an acolyte and the child's mother) will sometimes receive a short phrase or vision of the child's future. It is common for children to be brought to her prior to their first birthday, for no prophecy has ever been given to a child older than that.

The villagers speak of the legend of the Wolfbear, a sacred beast and great enemy of chaos, who it is prophesied shall wake from its ages of slumber and emerge, driving the curse of chaos from the land. This Wolfbear is said to hibernate deep in the Cleft of Dorasta, in the caverns behind the shrine in the mouth of the Cleft. The villagers never enter the caverns, and forbid visitors to do so. They do not know why, only that it has always been forbidden: "Heed Ancient Wisdoms -- Entrance is Forbidden."

The Priestess of Dorasta

Dorasta has only one priestess at a time. She always assumes the name of Vyrope,

the first priestess. The current priestess is so old she has forgotten her original name, and she now believes she is the original Vyrope -- an implausible

notion immediately dismissed privately by the other inhabitants of the Dorasta Shrine, though in public they humor this delusion.

Vyrope is currently training her replacement, a young acolyte named Keirna, who was selected because of the miraculous appearance at her birth of the Three Women, one of whom named her Vyrope. Keirna is honored to have been chosen, but since she has known about her future status since childhood, she is over-confident and arrogant.

See also:

Cult of Ernalda

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Glorantha: Cult of Dormal the Sailor
Cult of Dormal the Sailor
originally published in Tales of the Reaching Moon #10

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Mythos and History

One of the greatest catastrophes at the end of the Second Age was the great curse, formed by the evil sorcerer Zzabur, which forced all ships off the sea's surface. This curse was called the Closing, and was an irresistible force which forcibly pushed all ships from the seas. For centuries, ships could only travel on interior seas, or closely hugging the coast.

The exact nature of the Closing is not known, nor is the reason for its ending. Even Dormal never claimed to have broken the curse, just to have sidestepped it.

Yet it was broken, and it has not returned, yet.

Dormal was a native of Kethaela, called the Holy Country. He was fostered on the

benevolence of that land. Using the researches of others, he finally braved the hostile seas. Others had tried often before him. Many methods had failed.

Dormal, with the guidance of friends and heart, succeeded.

In the spring of 1580, Dormal opened the oceans by sailing to Handra and Three Step Island and returning to Kethaela without mishap. This was a remarkable event, and the Pharaoh immediately ordered more ships built. Dormal took his original ships and some new ones and set off westward in a voyage of exploration

and liberation.

Dormal first returned to the city of Handra. The people there had wasted no time

in exploiting their enlightenment, and were already building ships. A fleet of boats was scuttled around the Mournsea befriending the native Triolini.

Dormal set off from Handra late in 1580, but the growing bluster of winter forced the fleet to take refuge in Alatan. The island's ruler, a hard and cruel man named Jobar, tried to kill Dormal and seize his ships. Instead, he was killed and another made king in his place.

In 1581 Dormal sailed to Pasos, through the Seshnegi Islands, and across the sea

to the Vadeli Isles. He spent the rest of the year seeking Brithos, home of First Sorcerer Zzabur, but found only howling mists and sea horrors. Instead, Dormal discovered the Red Vadeli Isles and their previously unknown inhabitants,

and wintered there.

In 1582, Dormal sailed back to Seshnela, mapping the new cities and ancient ruins of that land. In Laufol, wizards tried to detain him, but failed. Then he went northward to Fronela, where the Loskalm fleet (sheltered from the Closing in their bay) came to fight this foreign invasion. Dormal defended himself and proved the worth of his craft. He befriended the Loskalm king, and stayed the winter in Fronela.

In 1583, Dormal sailed northward to the glacier, and then moved west. His last known stop was Ygg's Isles, where one of his ships wrecked. On he sailed westward to find Luathela, despite warnings from the savages of Ygg's. From there, say his priests, he sailed to immortality and godhead, whence come his current powers.

Dormal's native land, the Holy Country, was the first nation to construct a deep-seas fleet. As Dormal sailed westward, teaching his craft, the Kethaelans traveled to the Mournsea, allying with the Triolini and trying to suppress the ships of that resourceful city of Handra. In 1582 the first naval battles of the

Third Age occurred.

Alatan's new ruler quickly made his own ships. He sent them, with soldiers, to the coast, where they seized cities, turning them into ports. He then began raiding all nearby lands. The Mournsea Triolini sent to Kethaela for aid, and in

the summer of 1582 fifty ships from Alatan destroyed forty-two Kethaelan ships. Many islanders paid tribute to Alatan after that.

A number of places built fleets for trade and defense. Those of major note

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include Kethaela, Alatan, Pasos, the Vadeli, Arolanit, and Loskalm. Each of these nations had a healthy number of ocean-going vessels afloat by 1583 and each dominated their region of the shore.

The Vadeli had few natural resources and immediately began carrying others' goods for profit. They prevented any shipping from crossing the Brown Sea to the

Jrusteli Isles. They themselves outfitted a magnificent fleet and went there claiming to be messengers of the god Dormal sent to rule the land and save the inhabitants from the sins of their ancestors. Thus they ruled for eight years before others reached the island and fomented rebellion.

The Vadeli sailors did not stop in the Jrusteli isles. They crossed the Dashomo to the remnants of the cities in Vralos and Enkloso. These people resisted stoutly, but fell to the warriors from the north.

The Vadeli coast wars in Enkloso gave time for the people of eastern Pamaltela to prepare themselves. A strong naval tradition remained in the enclosed Maslo Sea. The Dynast, Hoom Jhis, saw an opportunity for commercial splendor and sailed west, forcing the Marthino coasts to succumb to his rule. In 1594 Hoom Jhis fought the Vadeli. The Vadeli fleet was wrecked on reefs, but the Maslo fleet was shattered. Despite Hoom Jhis' efforts, most of the local ports gained independence. Hoom Jhis and his merchant navy still dominate the eastern coast for shipping and trading rights.

Kethaela continued in a difficult war with the Alatan pirates. In 1585 Pasos attacked Alatan, but the pirates sailed east and left their island to be sacked.

The Kethaelans combed the Mournsea and, with help from merman allies, found and destroyed the pirates. A treaty was made with Pasos to suppress ships from the Alatan area, and the pirate kingdom promptly broke into a number of small pirate communities.

In 1586 a formal expedition set sail eastward from Kethaela. When it reached Teshnos, the Kethaelan admiral established the port of Dosakayo. Treaties, force, and judicious evasion gained passage through both Fethlon and Trowjang, where many small-boat pirates dwelt, including yellow elves. Next year, the fleet sailed into Kralori waters, hoping for the best. Instead, they met the Kralori inner sea navy and were destroyed. Reports of this reached Kethaela in 1588. The Pharaoh consolidated trade with Dosakayo and left the Kralori alone. The Kralori built a deep-seas navy, but the Dragon Kings were content to patrol their own waters and ignore the outside world. However, intrepid Kralori merchants went forth, trading with Teshnos and exploring the fabled Eastern Isles. Trade from there began to trickle into Kralorela about 1589. Even during the Closing, it was possible to sail from one island to another in the Eastern Isles. One important island is Haragala. When Kralori merchants came

with their news that the seas were opened again, the Haragalan potentates fortified their nation and wrought a fleet to defend themselves.

Haragalan and Kralori ships reached Teleos about 1595. They made no attempt to cross the treacherous Togaro Current, but were pleased to meet sailors from Maslo who did so in 1598.

By 1598 all the seas of mankind had been opened. The curse of four centuries had been broken in less than 20 years. Trouble was everywhere, and old systems broke

down as local navies and leaders established themselves. Mermen, unused to ships, also caused problems, but by 1600 all the seas of the world were navigable.

Dormal worshipers are buried at sea, with prayers varying with the deceased's culture. Even those Dormal initiates who die landbound are frequently returned to the ocean in ceremony, if only by means of a friend's rowboat.

Dormal's runes are those of Communication and Ocean. He is also sometimes associated with Mobility.

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Glorantha: Cult of Lanbril

Cult of Lanbril

originally published in Pavis: Threshold to Danger

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Lanbril was a son of Grandfather Mortal. In Godtime, humans came late among the other gods. While he claimed to be equal to the other gods, they rejected him as

inferior because his father was killed by Death, the first sword.

Lanbril was enraged, and the rage warped his soul. If the other gods held him to

be inferior, let them so believe. He would excel, and the excellence would be his own, something to be cherished because of its very privacy. Lanbril studied the ways of deceit, and perfected the techniques of seeming not to be doing what

he was indeed doing. When other gods worked with magic and power, he rejected these in favour of physical skill and covert manipulation. He cultivated Disorder, and worked to, attain the illusion that all was right until repair was

impossible and he had made his escape. Through his mastery, he stole Rune spells

belonging to the other gods, but despised some powerful spells as of no use to him. (It is speculated that the higher magics were too powerful for one who was practically a mortal human.) Lanbril did invent a magic of his own, to confound the pursuit of his victims, and to confuse those suspecting his presence. After a while, Lanbril's mad influence permeated the world. Some devout cultists

go so far as to state that this influence inspired Eurmál to help Orlanth in stealing Death from Humakt. This story is rejected by most theologians. During the Darkness, Lanbril taught mortals to survive by skill and cunning, and by watching out for themselves first. In historical times, thieves and other self-seeking scum plague all communities, following Lanbril's path. Lanbril's gift is to help the guilty to avoid punishment, including death. Death

is the final escape punishment will not follow a Lanbril cultist past the grave,

and Lanbril will ensure that the soul gets back into circulation, someday. Lanbril encompasses the Runes of Mastery, as king of thieves and the exaltation of skill; of Disorder, practising his trade regardless of consequences for others; and of Illusion, masking facts which could lead to detection of crimes.

Other Notes

Thieve's Argot

This secret language is taught to all Lanbril worshipers. A distinctive language, Argot contains common sounds from many different tongues; mutually intelligible dialects, similar in parts to the dominant regional tongue, exist in different cities. A character speaking Argot usually will sound like a particularly unintelligible member of the lower classes. Argot has a limited vocabulary and range of expression. Argot is unknown to most Gloranthans, including many peace keepers.

Argot is taught at the cult temples for free. Each Holy Day that a character worships Lanbril at a regular temple service (once per season), he may learn 05%

knowledge of Argot. Argot higher than this must be paid for by learning from a fellow cultist at the normal prices for learning a new language. It is not improvable by experience.

Argot is used in most cult services, and for communication between cult members.

It is used both as a universal language and to preserve secrecy. It is also used

to write the occasional training texts and temple records.

Alchemical Skills and Products

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Lanbril alchemists know some alchemical potions and substances (the exact ones varying by ring). These substances are often prepared as dusts and packed in parchment spills for hurling or in small tubes from which the dust is blown. Sometimes the compounds are liquids giving off potent vapours or acting through skin contact. A standard cloud of dust or vapour will fill 3 cubic meters before

dissipating. The range will be no more than 3m. Some of the substances known are

Thunder Lung Dust, Dust of Death, Visibility Dust, Scent-Stop Dust, Stink Dust, Sleep Powder/Sleep Venom, Smoke Bombs, and Flares.

Non-Lanbril Thieves

Not all thieves are Lanbril cult members. Many gods of Sartar and Prax have thieving abilities. Orlanth thieves follow the tradition of their god the Adventurer and often try especially daring malfeasances. Eural the trickster made the first theft, and many of his followers are also thieves. Eural thieves

try to turn their crimes into exercises in the grotesque, and concentrate as much upon embarrassing their victim as on gaining wealth.

Many thieves worship no gods at all on levels higher than lay member, depending on their own skill to prevent capture. But the Lanbril cult ignores fictional conflict, allowing the criminal to practice his trade with great objectivity.

Also, the cult of Lanbril protects its thieves from cursory community detection. Other lands in the world claim similar gods to Lanbril under strange and exotic names. There are many thief gods, but perhaps all are disguises of Lanbril, King

of Thieves!

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Glorantha: Cult of Magasta

Cult of Magasta

originally published in Tales of the Reaching Moon #10

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Mythos and History

One of the hundreds of beings in the formless dark said to herself, "I am Me, and everyone should know that I differ." She sent that fact to everyone, and afterwards everyone oriented themselves by her location. She became known as the

Last Silence, and all her descendants were different from others in the Shadow Times.

From the Last Silence came the First Drop, the inky underworld ocean called Styx

which was both motionless and ever changing at once. From her, Ever-flowing Mother of Water, sprang all wells and streams.

Mighty rivers roared from her womb, swirling and expanding to fill the void. From that Secret Power Zaramaka created himself, Great Elder, Keeper of the Source, Father and Mother of the Elder Three.

From the deep three rivers sprang separate and clear. Those Three met and mingled, the way the waters of a river mingle with those of the sea, sometimes washing salty far up the river mouth, other times sending dark brown mud far to sea. Within the surge and turbulence, that never-ending ebb and flow, the gods who made the seas we know, grew up and dwelt in fluid life.

The seas spread outward across the broad bosom of the Dark, flowing outward from

the center, the unknown Deep.

The Three Children of Zaramaka are Daliath, Framanthe, and Sramak. They represent, respectively, Mind, Soul, and Body. Each had children by both siblings, and all were different. Magasta was a child of Daliath and Framanthe. Magasta is a mighty and terrible god, born of eminent divine parents and imbued with great power. When he was born he disappeared from his nurses for three days, and became visible again only when lured by the music of the liquid syrinx.

One day, after the world was made, Daliath, Keeper of the Deep, divided the known world among the heirs of Zaramaka. He gave great things to his own children, but ignored the idiot brood of Framanthe and Sramak. Framanthe then ordered her own children (by Daliath) to tend the safety and well-being of her other children (by Sramak), whom she loved no less because Daliath did not understand them. But Daliath countermanded her, decreeing that Magasta would remain separate, to wait for the "Waters to Come." Some saw this as a curse upon

the head of Magasta, for the Manthie, Magasta's siblings, became regal lords of the oceans and seas.

Magasta became the messenger for Daliath, carrying the deep tales of wisdom from

the ancient god to the lesser races of Triolini. Magasta became well known to the peoples then, and the god moved through the secrets of all the worlds. He met and befriended Mastakos Mover in those days.

When the War of the Gods began Magasta became a mighty protector of the Triolini. Some early Brithini records state that an army was destroyed by "a hideous monster rising from the sea, whose glance destroyed ranks of soldiers, and whose maw's tentacles dragged the solid earth into its wicked toothed abyss." This monster was probably Magasta manifest on the physical plane. Magasta confronted many powerful enemy gods. The awesome Storm Gods time and again destroyed the powers of the sea, and kidnapped the best as slaves, including even Mastakos Mover. Only Magasta could withstand them. In an epic struggle which caused the Raging Sea to climb and flood the Spike, the Terror of

the Deep drove off the storm gods, and held Vadrus underwater so long that he gave up his niece in tribute. When the Storm Gods sought to break Brastalos free

Magasta again defeated them, and subdued Brastalos to be his obedient wife. Another time a worse monster, invisible even to most creatures of the Deep, stalked the worlds, wrenching beings from their lives into painful confusion.

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Like stagnant pools they stood, bewildered and unhappy.

Magasta took those lost souls of the sea, and sent, led, and carried them through the Hidden Stream back into the First Drop, a mystery beyond the understanding of all but those gods who have drunk of Daliath's Well.

Magasta then sought and confronted a terrible creature which wielded Death. He defeated it, and made the thing his slave. It became Magasta's invisible Net of the Sea which drags all eventually into death. The new slave was renamed Robber,

and rules over the lost souls which live in the sea but are not in its flow.

The powers of death and darkness were inherited by the son of Robber and Magasta. When Wachaza first came to his father to claim a share of the world Magasta asked proof of worthiness. Wachaza sent Magasta to visit Daliath, and ruled in the Throne of the Deep until Magasta returned. Magasta recognized his son's rights and placed him in his household. Wachaza lives in a hidden ocean called Eat-Shark, with Varchulanga, Mother of Monsters, and Drospoly, the Cold Death.

A greater foe came when Chaos marched and slithered through it, moving inexorably towards the Spike, Sea-Heart. The forces of the Celestial Court did not muster to meet them, and the Spike collapsed, leaving an empty void where before had stood the Center of the World.

Magasta feared nothing. He armed with his best weapons and called his trusty allies. The armies of the seas marshaled behind the gods. Roaring out their death chant, all conscious life of the sea launched itself against Nothing. The Nothing, the Void, was manifest as Stagnation, absorbing all the seas and energies, stilling its movement, leaving it lifeless. Magasta saw this, and leapt forward into the midst of the dead meaninglessness whence had flowed his armies and heroes.

"Come, triumphant, into the Arms of Magasta!" he cried, "Flow, ever changing, into my Arms. The Times cannot have you, the Stagnation cannot touch you, if you

hold to me, and follow me."

Then Magasta displayed his inside-out dance, the secret way to find the First Drop. The seas followed suit and washed the Nothingness along with them, inside out and back through into the realm of Time. The emptiness remained, but not at all times and not at all places, thanks to Magasta. The sea was saved from stagnation, and he and his minions remained to show the ancient way which fills the World's Center.

Magasta has remained the most important sea deity since the dawn of Time. All tribes of mermen worship him, as do a few sailor-folk. In the first and second ages, the mightiest sailors of the oceans were the Waertagi, half-breeds who tended physically toward their human part, and mentally toward their merman part.

The Waertagi dragonships dominated all overseas shipping for centuries. They met

their doom in the Second Age, at the hands of the Middle Sea Empire. In a mighty

battle, the God-Learners caused the water itself to burn and destroyed the Waertagi in the Battle of Tanian's Victory in 718. The Waertagi remained an obscure pirate race until 947, when they returned with gathered strength and managed to defeat the God-Learners and sink their island of Jrustela beneath the

waves of death.

At the beginning of the Second Age, Zzabur, the First Wizard, wrought great curses and by many simultaneous means cleared the oceans of all surface traffic.

This wrought the ruin of the Waertagi, but mermen in general were unharmed by the sudden cessation of ship travel.

Now the Closing has ended, and humans once more sail the seas. The mermen, unused to such activity, have caused trouble in some areas. In other areas, they

have eagerly allied with humans. Violent underwater battles have been fought between rival merman tribes, and the water flows red. In some areas, the mermen have realized their own potential and begun to raid, compete with, or tax surface traffic.

Magasta teaches that only the sea is eternal. After death, all personality and knowledge is lost and the individual becomes part of the oceans. Each person is like a current in the ever-flowing mass of the sea. Some are large and strong, some weak, but all have a beginning, and all ultimately end. Through death, new

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life is brought about. The seas themselves continually die, swept through Magasta's Pool to the underworld. But new seas always return from the edge of the world.

Merman dead are taken to the deep sea and allowed to drop softly into an abyss. Weights are sometimes attached, and these may be made of gold, seametal, or other precious substances in the case of the important dead.

Magasta is the Source of the Ocean Rune. His other Runes are those of Change and Death.

See also:

Inner Knowledge of the Sea Gods

Non-Human Races: Merfolk

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Glorantha: Cult of Malia

Cult of Malia

originally published in Cults of Terror and Lords of Terror

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Propitiatory Worship

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Malia was born a child of the Darkness, a spirit of healing with great properties to aid growth and birth. Like all shadows she grew in the Darkness, but she soon grew jealous of those greater than herself. When death came she discovered nourishment within the wreckage and destruction of the Gods War. Thus

Malia became a corruption of Death itself, a spiritual engine of destruction, tainted and degraded from the swift brightness which Orlanth and Humakt used. The more she ate, the faster she grew, and the faster she grew, the more she ate. After a time, however, she feared that her food would completely fail, so she altered the style of her feeding, from lightning plagues that depopulated entire nations to the slow spread of death by disease, so that the misery of the

world would last forever, eternally celebrating the goddess's glory.

But the ancestral diseases, each the source of new disease, were gradually defeated by Malia's foes. Each culture has its own hero who it claims defeated Malia: among the Orlanthi it was Chalana Arroy, among the Dara Happans it was Yelm or one of his sons, among the elves it was Arroin, among the Kralori it was

the emperor Shavaya, but a vengeful Malia recalls each of these defeats. Because

of her enemies' actions, the ancestral diseases have been destroyed, and all diseases now breed true, rather than spawning new diseases each time they feed. When Thed and Ragnaglar combined to create chaos, Malia joined them, though whether willingly or under compulsion varies with the tale and the teller. She was thereafter known as one of the Unholy Trio, and served as midwife to the birth of Wakboth the Devil. Ragnaglar's children, the Broos, gave her worship, and she in turn aided them and provided immunity to her spirits so that they could further the spread of her diseased dominion. She blessed them with her gifts, both as a sign of her favor and to ensure that she would always have slaves to do her bidding. She finally parted company with Ragnaglar and Thed, but may never be freed from the stain of that association.

From fear and respect other chaos creatures came to worship her. As her powers increased, men, trolls, and elves came to her out of fear alone, praying to her to spare their tribes. Many endured the scourge of disease through their propitiation of Malia, and she continued to grow in power from such devotions. Malia is pictured by most humans as an old woman, pockmarked and dripping with diseases; she often pushes a cart loaded with the dead. Broos see her as a powerful female broo, surrounded by spirits of disease, standing over the corrupt forms of her many victims. Praxian sand drawings and Lodrili wall paintings depict her as a headless body with a single huge maw in its belly, two

stout legs, and many arms sprouting from her torso. Trolls picture her similarly, chewing her image out of flint or basalt, then smashing it to the ground, usually under the feet of Kyger Litor or Zorak Zoran. The elves see her as a diseased dryad, eating her way out of her tree, from which spirits of disease hang like fruit.

Malia's faithful know that there will be no reincarnation for their spirits, and

that all they can hope for is a safe eternity serving the goddess. Some of them may return to the world as Spirits of Disease, to spread her blessings, though only the greatest may be so blessed. Some humans who worship Malia believe that they will be reborn as broos if faithful, and thus immune to her diseases forever.

Funeral rites are simple. The body is infected with at least one Spirit of Disease, then placed in the earth so that Darkness and Death become one in the

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worshippers. Only the ignorant or foolish will disturb such unmarked graves. Malia is associated with the runes of Death and Darkness. Where she is worshiped

by broos and other horrors, she is associated with Chaos as well.

Propitiatory Worship

Malia accepts worship from anyone. Her worship is ingrained in the broos, who are members at birth, and automatically unaffected by Spirits of Disease, although they can be possessed by them. A creature of any other race can become a member, gaining increased resistance to disease. Worshipers of Malia gain protection from disease by sacrificing to her on seasonal holy days. For each sacrifice, the person gains increasing resistance when defending against disease, until the next holy day. Sacrifices are disease-specific: if a person sacrifices to protect against Soul Waste, Creeping

Chills, and the Shakes, he will still lack protection from other diseases. If there is a lapse in sacrificing on a holy day, the person is no longer a worshiper, and must sacrifice again on the next holy day to rejoin. There are no

other benefits gained by propitiatory worship of Malia, and a person must become an initiate to gain any further training or benefits.

Other Notes

Insects

Malia is associated with certain insects, notably flies and a few types of beetles. Malia defeated some of Gorakiki's children in the Darkness, and she gains power from this association. Such insects are the preferred hosts for cult spirits, especially Spirits of Disease, which can possess such insects even

thou" most diseases (except for certain insect-specific diseases) do not affect them; this is an exception to the normal disease rules. While possessing these insects a Spirit of Disease does not harm the host, and may linger for an indefinite length of time. A Spirit of Disease cannot infect other individuals while bound to an insect, but can be Commanded to leave the insect host at any time.

Plague

Although the ancestral diseases were defeated in the Godtime by various deities, one escaped – the Spirit of Plague. It is still the source of unique diseases capable of depopulating whole nations. Such plagues were common in the Darkness,

but have been rare since the Dawn. The most famous case of Plague during human memory was in Fronela before the Dawn, where Xemela, holy mother of Saint Hrestol, sacrificed her life and soul to end the Black Swelling which afflicted her people.

The Spirit of Plague is difficult to find, but a Disease Master who locates it can become infected by it. Such pieces of the spirit are immensely powerful, and almost assuredly will multiply and spread throughout a populace very quickly.

Pestilence

Malia is the source of Pestilence, and she has specific diseases which affect only plants. They are similar to normal diseases, but affect plant vitality instead of human organs and tissue. Thus, a Pestilence Spirit might affect a plant's ability to grow straight, or to extract water through its roots. Pestilence spirits can possess an area of plantlife instead of a single plant, and so one might possess an entire field of grain, though initially it would possess a single stalk of wheat, gradually spreading to other plants until the entire crop was afflicted. Very powerful spirits have been known to destroy entire forests, as the Dead Wood of Dagori Inkarth proves. Such diseases, while mostly harmless to humans, are deadly to elves and other aldryami, and their shamans spend much of their time defending their charges against such spirits.

See also:

Chaos in Glorantha: Some Chaotic and Evil Gods

What Do You Want? Shut Up!

What the Broo Shaman Says

Secrets of the Chaos Gods

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Glorantha: Cult of Maran Gor, the Earthshaker
Cult of Maran Gor, the Earthshaker
originally published in Tales of the Reaching Moon #6

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Mythos and History

In the sunshine of Myth, when all was still peaceful, the goddess Asrelia gave birth to two daughters. One was named Ernalda and the other was called Maran. Both were generous and kind, and both had many friends in Godtime. They were widely courted by many gods, but Maran took no husband or lover, preferring a chaste path. When the troubles of the Godwar came upon her family, she used mighty oaths and promises and took the geas to trading her mating for more terrible abilities. The title of Gor was added to her name after that.

Thus, Ernalda became the much loved and fertile goddess who was fought over by the Rival Brothers (Orlanth and Yelm), while Maran Gor became a figure of fear and awe. Throughout time and legends these sisters have maintained a close relationship.

The cult of the Earth Shaker has waned considerably since the Dawning, but in certain isolated spots she is still highly revered.

After death, the faithful go to the Paradise under the earth where Ty Kora Tek tends them until rebirth. Their corpses are buried or hidden in natural caverns or cracks.

Maran Gor's Runes are those of Earth and Death.

Other Notes

The Tarsh Exiles

In Dragon Pass, Maran Gor's cult is highly revered because of an ancient holy place found there. The Shaker's Temple is where Maran Gor stood to shake down the armies of the Devil when he invaded against her sister, Ernalda, and that place is always safe for any of her worshipers. The High Priestess of the earthquake goddess here is so ponderous that she travels only in a cart drawn by six oxen.

See also:

Cult of Ernalda

Glorantha: Cult of Pamalt

Cult of Pamalt

by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen

originally published in Wyrms Footnotes #11

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Chieftain Membership

Variations on the Theme: Different Cultures' Ways of Worshiping the God

Mythos and History

In elder days the world was inhabited by many gigantic and potent beings. Pamalt

was one, a son of Ancient Grandmother. He took to wife Faranar the earth mother and they had many children. They lived among the other immortals.

In those days everyone had plenty of free time to do whatever they wanted.

Pamalt wandered around, making friends and learning about the world, while everyone else practiced new magics or studied hard. Artmal, a pompous god, condemned Pamalt as no more useful than Trickster, and the people of Artmal shunned Pamalt afterwards. Pamalt instead turned his attention to a new race of mortals, called Agimori.

The old trees were jealous that the Agimori could walk and talk. One day Pamalt found some bad trees trying to break the heads of the oldest Agimori grandparents. Pamalt rubbed his fingers together and showed the grandparents how

to make a fire which punished the trees. The Agimori were pleased with the place

they had made to live, and Pamalt became known as the Land Clearer. Pamalt gave his secret to Firebearer and that friend created the great wide plains for the Agimori to live and hunt in. In vengeance, the trees created their own people, called elves, to fight the Agimori and replant the hated jungle.

In those days the world was divided into two parts. Lodril, the good god, ruled the south, while Yelm ruled the north. When Yelm was killed, his realm was conquered by fierce and wild gods. Ever since then only bad has come from the north.

One time many invaders came from the north -- trolls, elves, dwarfs, and pale humans in an unholy alliance against the Peace of the South. Pamalt told his friend Assegai to make weapons for the Agimori, and ordered his friend Lodril to

protect the land. Lodril raised a barrier mountain against the foes, which held them back until the Agimori gained strength enough to defend themselves. Since that time the world becomes ever less calm as one travels north, and even the coastal fringe of Pamaltela is partly hostile or disbelieving of Pamalt's powers.

The Meeting Contest was popular then, just as it is now. When two great men meet

they introduce themselves and offer a challenge to each other to use some skill or another. If one man is notably better at his skill, he wins and the other loses. To refuse a challenge is acceptable only if the foe refuses as well, for then both opponents lose nothing. Refusing a challenge when yours was accepted is an insult. In those early days, unlike our decadent times, there was never any guile or ill-will involved in these contests.

Pamalt always lost the first contest of each pair, because he was the oldest god

and could not offer the first challenge. But every opponent lost to Pamalt in the second contest, and so no one lost any honor. This also showed that, though every god excelled Pamalt in some way, Pamalt excelled over everyone in another way.

One day a new challenger came to the land, and his challenge was for all skills against all skills as the initial challenge. Worse, no one could think of what they might do to challenge the newcomer back. The stranger called himself Surprise-From-The-North.

One courageous god, who is remembered now only as First Lost, went to meet the challenge. He was so badly beaten that no one remembers anything about him now, except that when the women of Pamaltela heard of his doom, half of them died of

grief. Second Lost was no luckier. When he disappeared all the food of the world changed to an inferior flavor. Third Lost left no trace at all. Some wise men say others also opposed the newcomer, all of whom perished forever. None of them

went to the Land of Death, none became ghosts, no corpses were found. All the gods gathered in their meeting grounds to discuss the problem coming their way. "Who will meet this one?" asked Mouse.

"I am the One," spake Pamalt, "I am He to take this task." He stamped his spear thrice on the field, shook his shield, and called the name of his grandmother and his tools to help.

He tried everything against his foe, and sometimes he lost and sometimes the monster lost. Pamalt was aided by his friends and neighbors. Kolat helped him hear a secret. Slor helped him douse a fire. The outsider was helped by his monster cronies, too. In the end, both were equal in wins and losses.

"My challenge to you, Filth-Which-Walks, is this: make something new, as I can."

And Pamalt made a living necklace, and each shell, stone, and bead in it was one of his assistants. That is why his council of gods is called the Necklace of Pamalt.

The invader could make no such thing, but he and his minions exposed fearful weapons and attacked. All of Pamalt's friends were slain in that treachery, and only the god escaped alive to his home. Ever since that time anyone who attacks at a Meeting Challenge is also called Vovisibor, Filth-Which-Walks.

Pamalt took his newly made necklace and called out the powers which he had hidden there. The spirits of his friends came alive again, and together they plotted the downfall of his enemies. Ever since that time the gods of the south have followed Pamalt as king.

Two armies of foes left from the Ground of Evil Challenge. One of them absorbed the life from the dirt and rock, and so when they left the whole land disappeared from the world. The main army, under Vovisibor, went south, seeking Pamalt. They met and fought at the Field of Jaranpor, where all the friends and allies of Pamalt worked under his command, and fought the foes to a standstill. Then, Pamalt made the sky break and vomit endless eternal flame upon the enemy army, whose enormous capacity for absorption was cancelled out with a terrible thunderclap which ignited the whole land and left behind the Scorched Earth, which separates the realm of Pamalt from that of mortals.

The other army from the Ground of Evil Challenge were defeated by the dark warriors of Qualyorni, the Cold One. The remnants from that defeat were then crushed again at the battle of Sporebore, whose chaotic survivors fled into the Scorched Earth. But the fight was not over. Chaos armies crossed to Pamalt's land over a bridge of slime and broke upon the land like waves of acid. In the midst of destruction, Pamalt held true. Though realms of beauty perished forever, he fought valiantly to protect their dead shells. His persistence and refusal to admit the defeat bore fruit. All the wretched inhabitants of the land

girded themselves and flung themselves into the face of the fearsome Enemy. With

the variegated armies of Pamaltela behind him, he exposed the hollow horror of Seseine, healed the suppurating wounds caused by Krjalk, burnt out the impurities of Pocharngo, and slew the undead hordes of Gark.

When the carnage ended, Pamalt discovered that most of his powerful allies survived, and so did many of his mortal followers. Through the long gray age which followed Pamalt guided his peoples to survive and prosper, and personally conducts the annual Dance of Twenty-Seven which limits the growth and curse of the Scorched Earth.

The only threat which followed the defeat of chaos was Usurper Qualyorni, the Cold One. In Qualyorni's wake came a long train of ice-demons and other frigid beings. Qualyorni claimed that he was rightful ruler of the South because he, too, had conquered chaos and saved the land. He came to bring winter to Pamaltela.

King Artmal said, "I will beat him alone," and went to meet the Usurper. Qualyorni gave Artmal seven unhealable wounds and threw him off the top of the Tarmo Mountains.

Then Pamalt said, "I will beat him," and went with his friends to meet the Cold One. He took the spear of Stingray, the club of Ankylosaur, the shield of Tortoise, the armor of Pangolin, the magic drink of the Earth Witch, and the

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stomach of Molandro. Thus prepared, amalt struck down the troll god, wounding him and making him a weak shell of what he had been. But the ice demons which Qualyorni had brought with him were able to live on in the lands where Artmal had been conquered. This is why Enkloso and Vralos are cold in the winter. Pamalt has survived intact since then, relatively unchanged. His strength, and interest, lies with the vast grasslands and the common free man of Pamalt. The northern coast, while rich and diverse, is far from the heart of his realm. Upon death, Pamalt grants loyal worshippers a choice: either to join him as an Earth Dancer to care for the land, or (when one's body has rotted away) to be reborn in one's tribe under the same conception totem. This is dependent in part

on the rituals performed in one's present or past lifetimes. If a worshipper is reborn, usually Pamalt takes away their memories, but leaves the knowledge of their Song of Power.

Pamalt's Runes are Earth and Mastery.

Chieftain Membership

Not just anyone can be a chieftain. Almost all Doraddi follow the rule that only

folk from very specific lineages can be chief. The exact lineage varies from tribe to tribe, and sometimes other requirements are in order. When a tribe's chieftain is killed or deposed, the Women's Circle gathers together to decide upon his replacement. No woman who belongs to a chieftain lineage may vote, nor may any woman who has married anyone in a chieftain lineage (however, such women

can speak in the Circle). The Women's Circle can summarily remove a cruel or incompetent chieftain and replace him at any time.

Sometimes the voting and negotiating for a chieftain takes weeks, and haggling can be very crass, to the point that one woman promises blankets or other goods to other women to buy their vote for her candidate. If one (or two) woman proves

recalcitrant about a chieftain which the rest of the women agree on, she can be kicked out of the tribe on a temporary or permanent basis, so the others can get

the chieftain elected. On very rare occasions, it proves impossible for the women to agree on a chieftain, in which case the tribe may split, following two chieftains, or part or all of the tribe may merge with some other tribe.

In some tribes, chieftain lineages are few. A few tribes have been forced to merge with others because all qualified chieftains actually died out. But in other tribes, the bulk of the tribe qualifies for chieftainhood. Some tribes, such as the Neckring clan of southern Jolar, have as many as 90% of the tribe qualified for chieftainhood. In these tribes, the voting women (those few belonging to non-chieftain lineages) have great power, and sell their votes accordingly.

Variations on the Theme: Different Cultures' Ways of Worshiping the God

Arbennan

The Arbennan people of the Pamaltelan savanna worship Pamalt pretty much as described above. The Pamalt pantheon has a large variety of different gods with highly useful spells -- yet most individuals are nomad hunters, with only a limited access to great temples. This problem is resolved by the existence of oases. When an Arbennan becomes too old or too crippled to continue in the hunter-gatherer life, he or she retires to one of these oases. Most oasis-dwellers are at least acolytes in one or more cults, and they hold large or even great temples services for the benefit of any tribe that passes by. In this way, relatively imposing temples to even the most minor gods are generally available to worshipers at the price of one or two week's walk.

For those familiar with Genertelan customs, the contrast between the oasis-dwellers of Prax and those of Pamaltela savanna is striking -- in both cases, nomad life would be nearly impossible without the oasis-dwellers, but in Genertela, the oasis folk are oppressed slaves, while in Pamaltela, they are highly honored members of all tribes.

Kresh

The Kresh are a nomadic Agimori people. They ride in gigantic wagons across Kothar and northern Zamokil and rule a savanna empire which is based on trust and custom rather than conquest and domination.

The Kresh social structure is different from that of the Arbennan, but they, too, worship Pamalt. Their enemies claim that Pamalt is not truly worshiped and this claim probably has some truth to it, at least insofar as the wagonmasters appear to be required to worship a secret deity, though Pamalt is often

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worshiped, too.

The Kresh are not the only people in Kothar -- the bulk of the inhabitants are typical Doraddi folk, who belong to the Kresh Empire and fulfill their responsibilities to them.

Coastal

Along the jungle coasts of Pamaltela, the worship of Pamalt has taken many strange routes. The city folk of Elamle and Flanch almost all recognize Pamalt's supremacy, but he is rarely the dominant religion in any city. Each city is very individualistic, approaching the worship of Pamalt in its own way.

See also:

The Chieftain Speaks

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Glorantha: Cult of Pavis

Cult of Pavis

originally published in Cults of Prax
presented as an example of a City God

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Pavis was a Hero who appeared approximately 800 years after Time Began, during the expansion of the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. Half man and half elf, he grew up in his human father's family. As a man he moved from Shadows Dance to Dragon Pass, and studied under the tutoring dragons then present in the empire. There he met the Dwarf and gained a mastery of Stone.

By animating the great Faceless Statue of Shadows Dance and bringing it to Prax to defeat Waha in a wrestling match, he gained sovereignty over the area around the River of Cradles which took his name. Later, when Waha was grievously wounded during an invasion of Dragon Pass, Pavis taught Aldryami Healing to the Priestesses of the Paps, and the god was cured. This cemented bonds with the nomads of Prax and made the city of Pavis safe for the time.

Though it was considered strange for a half-breed elf, Pavis had many connections with the dwarves, particularly with one Mostali named Hardeye Flintnail. Records are unclear, but it is thought that Flintnail may be the famous "Dwarf" of Dragon Pass. Flintnail gave many gifts to Pavis, and constructed great works. One of the most permanent was the son he begot on one of Pavis's daughters. This son began the Flintnail cult, a cult of masons and metalworkers.

With the aid of Flintnail, Pavis created an immense city from the body of the Faceless Statue, then departed and never was seen again. His daughters began the

cult of Pavis, and the rule of the city passed to the Arrowsmith dynasty, a noble family of the Pure Horse nomads.

After some battles with trolls and the Giants of Shadows Dance, the introduction

of the Sun Dome Temple (see the Cult of Yelmadio) into the area provided a firm fighting force for the city. Pavis and its city cult flourished.

The prosperity did not last. In a hundred years the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends

was destroyed, and Jaldon Toothmaker, the hero of Prax barbarians everywhere, had ravished the city. The Arrowsmith dynasty was wiped out and the city lived on among ruin. The cult suffered accordingly.

Finally, a great warrior Kahn of the Sable tribe managed to crack the crystalline walls of the Temple and the city was truly open for conquest.

Conquest came in the form of Gerak Kag, dark troll priest from Shadows Dance.

The trolls and trollkin fought their way through the nomads of the plains and

set up shop in the city, sealing it against intrusion. The last Rune Lord of Pavis, Balastor, died during the final defense of the city, as the last of the Pure Horse people abandoned the walls to dwell on the plains of Prax.

Troll magic closed the city for 400 years, and constant struggles occurred between the trolls and the last remnants of humans, elves, and dwarves. The Pavis cult held to its rituals, and their intimate knowledge of the city aided worshippers in every crisis. The cult kept non-troll dwellers alive in the ruins

until the city was reopened during the time of strange magics and phantoms from the past known as the Dragonewt's Dream.

After the second procession of unborn dragonewts opened the gates to reopen their temple in the Rubble, the kingdom of Sartar sent colonists to start a city

outside the old Truestone walls. New Pavis (or Pavis Outside the Walls, in the Sartar tongue) made a refuge for the Rubble survivors. Even the Pavis Survivors,

the zebra-riding mercenary remainder of the old Pure Horse people of Prax, returned to their ancestral city.

With this resurgence of human society, the Pavis cult has come back from the

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basements and cellars of the Rubble and has set up in New Pavis. The High Priest

of Pavis and the Sartar colonists' High Priest of Orlanth negotiated a settlement effectively giving ground and buildings to Pavis, and the air to Orlanth. An exchange was made, giving the Orlanth locals use of a Pavis special spell, and the Spirits of Pavis were joined by a Sylph (see Rune Magic descriptions).

Even under the Lunar occupation, the Pavis Cult grew, for the Goddess wanted to "marry" Pavis to add him to her ever-growing Pantheon, and he played very hard-to-get. With the support of the invaders, open worship of Pavis was increased, especially among those Orlanth worshippers needing somewhere to go after the closing of the Orlanth Temple by the Empire.

As of this writing, the Pavis Temple may even be accepting its first Rune Lord since the death of Balastor.

Pavis cannot guarantee his worshippers an existence after death, save those who become cult spirits.

Funeral customs for the cult are non-specific, and the priests will use whatever

other religion they believe in when they determine funeral arrangements. For instance, the old Arrowsmith Dynasty cremated their dead atop the city gates, while during the closed period of the city the cult was run by a family who buried their dead in several plots about the Rubble. The Flintnail cult, which attracts many priests, believes in entombing their dead in stone. Some of this latter cult dead have been entombed in mortuaries cut into the True-stones slabs

making up the old city walls.

Pavis had ties to both Aldryami and Mostali, and also had glory as a builder. The Runes most closely associated with him are Earth, Stasis, Harmony, and Man.

Other Notes

Lunar Friendship

At the time of the beginning of the Lunar Occupation, there were five priests of Pavis. All were old men. The High Priest was very leery of any connection with the Lunar Empire, but kept up a facade of cooperation for years.

See also:

The Travels of Biturian Varosh: Harmony in the City

Gods in Prax: Invader Deities

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Glorantha: Cult of the Crimson Bat

Cult of the Crimson Bat

originally published in Cults of Terror and Tales of the Reaching Moon #8

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

The Crimson Bat was once a natural animal, but was horribly mutated by the flood of chaos which infected the world in the Great Darkness. It grew to a tremendous

size, and glowed with chaotic forces. To feed these energies, the Bat consumed enormous amounts of food and magical power. It became one of the myriad horrors which made up the legions of chaos. It survived the destruction of the armies of

chaos in the last battles of the Gods War and haunted the hero plane, a nightmare of chaos might.

During the First Age, the Crimson Bat roamed the world without restraint. It descended upon towns and cities without warning, devouring the people. The early

hero Arkat met the monster in battle, withstood its chaotic powers, and managed to banish it from the mundane plane.

In the Third Age, the Red Goddess left her people to visit the elder gods, forging her place among their pantheons, to earn her apotheosis. While she was on this heroquest, powerful enemy lords took the opportunity to strike. Their armies converged on her capital. At the climax of the siege, the Goddess returned, riding the Bat. The battle, a Lunar triumph, was ever after known as the First Battle of Chaos. Since then, the Bat has been the symbol of Lunar chaos, hated by the Empire's foes, and distrusted even by many Lunar faithfuls. The cult of the Crimson Bat concerns itself little with any afterlife. Common folk believe that the souls of the Bat's worshipers are forfeit after death. Everyone knows that anyone or anything eaten alive by the Bat is utterly lost, body and soul. Death in the Bat's maw means annihilation, not just death. This is a major reason for the terror inspired by the Bat.

This cult's Runes are those of Moon and Chaos.

Other Notes

Killing the Bat

If the Bat's physical form is destroyed or it is not fed, the Bat is driven it back to the hero plane, whence it must be summoned by difficult rituals performed by the Red Emperor himself. The current high priest of the Crimson Bat

cult is fed to the Bat as part of the resummoning ritual, after which a new high priest is chosen.

The Surrounding Population

The Crimson Bat roams the frontier, stopping every week or so in a new area. It has not entered the Lunar Heartland for many years. When the Bat enters an area,

the people react in one of four ways:

They flee immediately with as many of their domestic animals as they can, returning when the Bat has departed; they often return to find their property confiscated or destroyed.

They hide, but the cult is expert at tracking down and finding people.

If captured, they join the cult as lay members, and betray non-cultists; since

the Bat eats lay members when needed, this tactic is of uncertain benefit if the population is small or if everyone joins.

Some fight the cult; unfortunately, the cult is very strong compared to its usual foes, and always has with it the awesome trump of the Crimson Bat itself.

Most people are convinced that assisting the cult causes the least damage. They round up undesirables, traders from other countries, minor cultists, sick cattle, and the like, hoping that the offering is adequate.

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The Glowspot

The Bat exudes a force, the power of the Red Moon. All Lunar magicians within its glow can use all magic as if the Moon were full. This glow extends in a radius around the bat of some 20 kilometers.

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Glorantha: Cult of the Seven Mothers
originally published in Cults of Prax

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Lunar Cults

Other Notes

Mythos and History

These deities were not alive during the Gods Age in their present form, but rather were all human beings born since History began. This section will, instead, be used to explain the circumstances of their lives before their conception of the Red Goddess.

Before the coming of the Goddess, the lands of her birth were a dangerous frontier between the Carmanian Empire and the plains tribes of mounted nomads in

Pent and the Redlands. A group of dissenters, exiles, and priests secretly met and prepared the most incredible ritual of all time, and in 1220 they achieved their goal despite Carmanian interference. In searching the planes and worlds of

the spirits, they had located the shattered pieces of an obscure, long-broken goddess. Inside the wall of time they managed to reconstruct her into a living entity. This was the birth of the Red Goddess. Those who wove the spell are called the Seven Mothers, and are worshipped together in a cult.

In the year 1247 S.T. the Red Goddess attained her own immortality and proved it

to the rest of the cosmos. Those who had aided in her creation were honored by her presence, and found their own way to divinity as well. Within 30 years of the Apotheosis of the Red Moon, they all had left the earth and joined the goddess in immortality.

Queen Dee'zola was a ruler of lands on the Arcos River, and a priestess of Arachne Solara. She is called the "Binder Within" in the Lunar pantheon, and she

is the source of the cult healing spell.

Jakaleel the Witch is called "Spindle Hag" and was once a priestess of Zorak Zoran in the mountains of Jord. She is the source of the Lunes of the pantheon.

Teelo Norroi was called "Young Life" and she was drawn apparently at random from

the streets of Torang for the ritual. In the pantheon she is cupbearer to the Red Goddess, and also the source of the Fund for the Poor movement.

Irrippi Ontor was called the "Brown Man" in the old texts, and is known to have been an outlawed priest of Lhankor Mhy. He came from Yuthuppa and was a friend of Duke Yanafal.

Yanafal Tarnils was called "Ram and Warrior" in the old rituals. He was an exiled nobleman from Yuthuppa who still ruled his lands. He later defeated his master, Humakt, in battle and became wargod for the Lunar pantheon.

Danfiv Xaron was a bloodthirsty outlaw who volunteered for the most dangerous task in the ritual and was called "Bridge for the Seeker." His partial success earned him the position of Gatekeeper, Porter, and Night Watchman for the pantheon.

"She Who Waits" is a mysterious, unnamed personage in the myths whose identity was unknown to outsiders. She probably was a priestess of the Blue Moon.

Throughout the rises and declines of the Empire in the 300+ years since it was founded, these deities together have performed the same function as they did while alive. During their own lives they were responsible for lighting the spark

of the Lunar spirit in the world, and now in their immortality they are responsible for lighting the Lunar spark in all persons who enter the cult.

Their popularity has risen and fallen with the fortunes of the Empire, but in times of strength it is often this cult which is found at the fore.

The cult is specially powerful at the edges of the Empire where they form instructive temples to serve as bases of Lunar operation. Thus they are ever at the beginning of the Empire just as they were at the beginning of the goddess.

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Even within the Empire there are many who are content with knowing this superficiality of the Red Goddess and worship only the Seven Mothers, without exploring the potentials or ramifications of the individuals.

The Seven Mothers will not promise anything except that there is certainly a Life after Death, and that they can teach a worshipper the gateway to the Red Moon, wherein lie all of the keys to the secrets of Life and Death. They point proudly to their own goddess' death, dismemberment, rebirth, disappearance, and subsequent return as proof of this.

Resurrection is a regular cult function and High Priests will bring back devout worshippers if possible.

For persons beyond resurrection, local preference always is given to burial functions. Rune Priests and Rune Lords will have their bodies preserved until the full moon, but others will be taken care of right away. Both will have songs

of creation sung during the rites, and have their souls commanded to the "Circles of the Moon, of Time, and of Being."

This cult contains an unusual mixture of runes. The central point consists of the Lunar rune, while to either side are the runes of Life/Fertility and Death. Like many Lunar cults, this one also has limited access to other elements without being directly connected with the runes.

Other Lunar Cults

The Seven Mothers cult is an introduction to the extensive and sometimes bewildering Lunar religion. Initiates and priests from this cult have many opportunities to transfer to associated cults which may, in turn, allow transfer

to still other cults, each specializing in some deity or aspect to bring the worshipper closer to unity with the Red Goddess. This list makes no attempt to be complete, referring only to those cults likely to have been known in Prax and

Pavis.

Note that these associated cults already have their appropriate skills and spells listed in the descriptions of the cult. This list's associated cults are those which an Initiate, priest, or lord could transfer to, thereby continuing their education by specializing in their favorite cult. These brief notes are to

indicate the potentials of the expanded cults outside the Seven Mothers group cult.

Jakaleel the Witch: This cult explores the diverse horrors and solaces contained

in the secrets of darkness in its many forms, and some close associations with the Blue Moon are present. Most trolls who join the Lunar faith gravitate toward

this cult.

Teelo Norri: There is little real development of this cult, save for the people interested in simple protection and innocence, though she is revered as the Lunar goddess of youth.

Deezola: The cult of Deezola includes large healing interests and is the favorite of nobles and poets. It also includes earth magics.

Yanafal Tarnils: This cult resembles Humakt's cult in most respects (including spells), but excludes Humakt's hatred of chaos. High honor and bravery are upheld here. This is the major war cult of the Empire, though others are nearly as popular.

Irrippi Ontor: Irrippi Ontor fulfills the same cult functions as the Lhankor Mhy

cult outside the Empire. The spells and general rules of conduct are the same, except that the priests need not wear beards.

Danfiv Xaron: This cult is actually very gloomy and presents a last chance for society's most desperate dregs to rehabilitate themselves. Criminals of any sort

get refuge, but the cult has harsh standards (looking at the opposite sex in the

first year merits blinding and dismissal). Remaining in the cult pays off only after many years of hard effort if a member becomes a priest of the Lunar religion. This cult has some connections with the Ferryman of the Dead.

Etyries: This goddess is called a daughter of Issaries, and she is the Lunar goddess of trade. The main cult is very similar to that of her father, the Lightbringer, and shares its magic. Like Issaries she has many mystical

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associations connected with her duties as Messenger of the Goddess.

Yara Aranis: This savage, six-armed goddess, the daughter of the Red Emperor and

a barbarian demon, was conceived with the intent to terrorize the horse nomads and slay them if need be. The cult is more popular in the north, where the barbarians still fear the mother as well as the daughter, but a shrine is usually included in all borderland temples.

The Young Elementals: These are the major spirits of the Elements, born when the world ended but imprisoned outside of Time until the coming of the Red Goddess. They control appropriate elementals of each type and serve to focus such spells.

But these cults generally are unsophisticated and simple, fulfilling more mystical than religious interests.

Other Notes

Lunars and Chaotic Balance

The world hates the Empire because it includes chaos within its worship. This is a clear and necessary stand for the old gods to have, for their very existence is based upon the fighting of chaos.

But the Red Goddess, born inside Time, has other options available, and wisely uses them to maintain her power among the gods of the cosmos. Her secrets are woven into Balance and Time, resulting in the Lunar cycles laid upon the surface

of the world.

The Lunar religion is one of unendurable freedom compared to most of the religions and societies of its time. Inner secrets reveal the immense dangers of

such freedom, and Lunar disasters of over-experimentation sometimes are noted.

But to attain such cosmic freedom it is necessary to include a worshipful understanding of the chaotic bondage of mindlessness and the Void. Such concepts, though, are alien to most trained minds of the world, and proven ways of life and religion do not bend easily in the face of novelty. The Lunars, of course, consider this rigidity to be ignorance and imbalance.

It is unnecessary for Lunars to be exposed to the gruesome chaotic things of the

cosmos, and warnings spread throughout their teachings admonish the unprepared to stay off those dismal paths. The more awful manifestations of chaos, such as the Crimson Bat, are no more loved by loyal Lunar citizens than they are by the Empire's enemies. But chaotic elements are tolerated officially, and rather than

knowing nothing but fear toward such monsters, Lunar citizens have the questionable surety of the words of government and religion that such horrors can be controlled.

Lunars, Chaos, and Enemies

It has been stated that most of the cults dislike, hate, or fear chaos, but that

the Lunar religion includes the unthinkable things within its worship and thereby earns the enmity of the world. The effect of this needs consideration. Practicality is a major determinant in the resolution of all vague disputes unless instinct or emotion provides an override, and this is true in Glorantha whenever a person finds himself in a situation not made clear by his religion. Further factors, such as social demand, personal feeling, manipulative spirits or gods, and so on also will affect any decision.

It is impractical for living beings to carry hatred too far, especially if the object of hatred has proved its battle prowess, is dangerous only when provoked,

and is nearby: so the rest of the world sees the Lunars. Disliked everywhere, they are everyone's official scapegoat. The Lunars accept this abuse and make their way despite it. Prepared for the worst at all times, they also are prepared to accept almost anyone who wishes to sample the Lunar Way.

Some circumstances, though, always will provoke recognition of the Lunars as chaos' agents by certain non-Lunar cults, and this is likely to force some action. Not all Lunars will be so recognized. Only members who have voluntarily used chaos or related powers will provoke the reaction. This includes priests who know a chaos-spell, anyone who has had it cast on them while Initiates of the cult, or those who have worshipped some chaotic thing.

Moon and Air

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The strife between the Lunar goddess and the air gods is deep and permanent. Philosophical and mythic reasons explain this.

The turbulent air gods represent a driving force in the cosmos, and their erratic natures are integral to their force. They value the surprise effects they can create, and are willing to suffer the misfortunes which their instabilities may make.

The Lunar Goddess has tamed this seething conflict and turned it into a predictable servant for herself and her worshippers. They have imposed an order upon the formative and destructive powers of the world.

So far the Lunar way has proven dominant in Peloria, and the older hierarchies of the storm gods have given way to the Goddess. This has included mundane world

effects, for since the coming of the Red Goddess the weather in Peloria has warmed noticeably. The ice storms which once roared southward from the Wastes of

Valind still bring snow, but the snow lasts only a couple of months. Lunar priests regularly challenge the Ice Demons to combat, and often defeat them. This way the cold armies are reduced, and the dark destructive storms of ice have not pelted the Empire since the barbarians were driven out over 150 years ago.

Lunar domination seems halted at Dragon Pass. Perhaps it is because the storm gods of that area and nearby are so powerful. Perhaps the light of the Red Moon cannot reach so far. Perhaps it is only a matter of Time, as the Lunars always say.

The Temple of the Reaching Moon

This large temple complex is a small town in fact, a loosely-organized center of provincial religion. From this center (both fort and school) the priestesses, armies, and scholars can go forth to grip and convert the region to the Lunar way.

As conversion proceeds, different lengthy rituals are performed which will, after several years firmly establish the Lunar presence by allowing the light of

the Red Moon to creep forward and engulf the region. This forward line of red light is called the Glowline, and it establishes the edge of Lunar domination. The Glowline

The Red Moon sits in the sky and views all the lands for whom her son has conquered. She sees the whole empire, and so it also is possible to see the Red Moon from anywhere within her realm.

Beyond Peloria the Lunar Source cannot be seen directly, though her effects certainly can. As travelers near her borders, she becomes more and more visible.

The Jonstown Chronicles contain an anonymous description:

As I journeyed north through Dragon Pass there did appear a thin pinkish hue in the distance, laid like a thread on the horizon. When I had reached Glasswall, overlooking Dwarf Run. that light in the north was a sunset of blood.

Once across the Bush Range, the glow becomes full and rich and warm, rising higher and higher into the sky. Bagnot marks the end of the Glowline. and there appears a thin arching sliver of crimson above the horizon. The glow surrounding it is less, as if the light gathered to become the moon itself. Riding further north causes the moon to seem to rise into the air, also significantly reducing the actual size which it appears to be upon the horizon. Thus the closer one goes to the orb, the smaller it grows, and the higher and higher it appears in the sky. It is a most remarkable sight, and surely would alarm anyone not prepared for it beforehand.

See also:

Gods in Prax: Invader Deities

The Travels of Biturian Varosh: The Market at Moonbroth

The Redline History: Zero Wane

Talking to the Moon Woman

Cult of the Crimson Bat

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Glorantha: Cult of Xiola Umbar
Cult of Xiola Umbar
originally published in Troll Gods

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

The goddess Xiola Umbar is of unnamed parentage, though she is definitely a deity of darkness. She is always referred to as the sister of Zorak Zoran. Their

association has been long and constant, and early (pre-Lesser Dark) prayers mention them together if they are mentioned at all.

The earliest tales of her healing and life-giving aspect occurred even before Death entered the world. At this ancient time, Zorak Zoran was labelled her "shadow" -- even in the lightless underworld. She aided Dehore, the Dark One, to

become the Dehori, the many shades. She aided at the birth of Styx and Zaramaka,

becoming midwife to the waters of the world.

In the Gods War, Zorak Zoran grew in strength, personality, and power, and Xiola

Umbar followed in his footsteps, undoing some of the troubles that Zorak Zoran created. She opposed him only once, when she saved the goblin race, but she never helped any true foe of the troll wargod.

When chaos came, Xiola Umbar stood by her brother, healing and aiding him to keep him fit, even at her own expense. No sacrifice was too great to save the world from chaos, and with her aid the wargod prevailed.

During the Greater Darkness, only the mighty or the lucky survived. Among creatures of darkness, the mighty followed Zorak Zoran; the lucky chose Xiola Umbar. She became protectress of the weak and friend to the helpless.

When the Great Compromise was made, the gods of darkness were powerful and controlled much of the world. In Dragon Pass, Charmilla, eldest daughter of Xiola Umbar, sat upon the First Council and helped lead the scattered peoples from panic back into the world. Xiola Umbar was popular then, but when troubles began anew, her savage brother more suited the needs of the people at that time.

Her worship persists in the world, and she is even worshiped by some people who normally favor gods of storm or light, but who still want divine aid and comfort

when the storm falls quiet and the sun goes into hiding.

Xiola Umbar has always been most popular among trolls. Her midwifery skills make

her a favorite of Kyger Litor, and her talents in healing make her a friend to fighters. When the trollkin curse swept the race, the Xiola Umbar extended her protection of weaklings by helping the misbegotten kin to survive the anger and embarrassment of their parents, preserving that puny race.

The cult of Xiola Umbar teaches that all things have a soul which lives on after

death. The cult promises that priests will have a favored place in the cycle of rebirth when they are reborn, and that initiates will be born again with little pain.

The cult of Xiola Umbar has no special burial requirements, usually eating their

dead, like all trolls.

Xiola Umbar is associated with the Runes of Darkness, Harmony, and Fertility.

Other Notes

Troll Attitudes

Trolls in general despise Xiola Umbar for her protective attitude towards the weak and toward trollkin, but all love her healing abilities and respect her defensive spells. A priestess must always be present at any game of Trollball, but the cult never sponsors teams.

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See also:

Tales of the Night Hag

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Glorantha: Cult of Yelmalio

Cult of Yelmalio

originally published in Cults of Prax and Sun County

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Table of Contents

Mythos and History

Other Notes

Mythos and History

Legend states that Yelmalio is the son of Yelm, the Sun. During the fighting between mortals who supported their gods he led his people from the warm lowlands, carrying high the magic and power of his father.

Yelmalio was a commander and leader. He met and fought many beings for the cause

of his father in the Gods War. But at the Hill of Gold he was disarmed by Orlanth, and then he was ambushed by Zorak Zoran, who stole his fire powers. The

Son of the Sun fell and bled out his life-giving heat. His favored weapons of bow and sword fell also, and were absorbed into the knowledge of the whole world.

During the Darkness Yelmalio's wounds did not deter his struggle. He joined with

the Lord Elf and others to fight against the relentless approach of chaos. He survived, and greeted the rise of his father, the Sun, at the start of Time. Since that time, Yelmalio has lived in the mountains and hills, and even the staunchest Orlanth worshipper admits the presence of the Sun.

The cult of Yelmalio is also called the Sun Dome Temple because it popularly includes worship of both Sun and sky (the "dome") in one. It is, in fact, the sun cult as worshipped by mountain people where the fiery orb is praised more for light than for heat. In lowland cultures it is normally the sky which is a source of light without heat, thus this god of light without heat is the "sky-sun", or Sun Dome.

At the Dawning, the cult survived in elven strongholds and in Dragon Pass. A minor cult even then, it did not have a representative on the First Council, which guided the descent from the mountains to civilize Peloria. The cult came to the fore in fighting the horse barbarians of the lowlands, and the cult of the Son of the Sun became very popular as one of the many Light-oriented cults of Dara Happa during the Dawn Ages.

In the Second Age, the cult fought dwarves everywhere, and spearheaded armies invading the mountain regions (reliving the enmity between Yelm and Orlanth). At

the end of the Second Age, when all the lowlands united against the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, Yelmalio again led the fight. Many cult heroes were slain by the dragons in the Dragonkill War of 1100. Though its Dragon Pass temples were destroyed, the cult lived on among elves, and in Prax and Peloria.

In the Third Age, the cult moved back into Dragon Pass at the request of the House of Sartar. There it restored some of the cosmic balance of the area and stabilized the kingdom for the ruling house. Both the Dragon Pass and Prax temples have proved relatively minor, though they have always been well-supported by their worshippers.

The worshippers of Yelmalio anticipate descending to the mansions of Yelm, where

the sun god stayed in Hell after his death at the hands of Orlanth. There, in the halls of eternal Light, they will find their final contentment. This is accomplished through many lifetimes of work, and true worshippers are willing to

return many times to attain this. They will, in fact, even return to the same body, and in this way the cult practice allows resurrection.

The dead of this cult are burned at dusk with smokeless fires if they have not risen after seven days. Services begin with a great mourning and the burning, then wine or beer follow, as do victory paeans and the call for the soul to join

with the Sun. At dawn the sunrise is read for omens, and the ceremony concludes. The cult is connected with the Runes of Light and Truth (the torch of light and knowledge).

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Other Notes

The Sun Dome Temples

Throughout the entire region of southern Peloria in the Third Age, there are only fifteen operative Sun Dome temples.

These temples are uniformly shaped, though they vary somewhat in size. They are always square-based with slightly tapering walls, and with a single huge staircase rising from the western side and going to the roof. Atop the roof is an immense dome sheathed with gold. Worshippers inside the temple can see through the gold and look upon Yelm during worship.

The congregational priest leads the inside services, but the majority of the priesthood assembles atop the temple around the dome. Non-worshippers inside the temple or anyone who climbed the staircase to the top of the temple with unholy intent would be blinded for life, if not killed.

See also:

The Travels of Biturian Varosh: Three Blows of Anger

Gods in Prax: Invader Deities

A Personal View of Yelmalion Culture

Wisdom of the Woodwife

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