

Glorantha: Wisdom of the Woodwife
Wisdom of the Woodwife
Facts for Young Elves

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Where did the world come from?

Can you tell me the truth about...?

Elf Deities

Where did the world come from?

First there lived Ga,

The formless and lifeless earth.

She begat the Four Corners of the Earth.

Gata, the broad-bosomed land, is the first corner.

Empress Earth, keeper of the life force, is the second corner.

Grandmother Witch, knower of the dark powers, is the third corner.

Earth King, the First Father, is the fourth corner.

This is where the world came from.

Where do we come from?

We begin life as a fertile seed

in the rich field of our mothers,

as our mothers were,

as our grandmothers were,

as were all of our ancestors.

There is no beginning to existence, and no ending. Ever since Aldrya, plants
have bred after their kind, and elves have bred after our kind. And so it shall
be forever more.

Why do we die?

Death fosters life.

Life ends in death.

Each is half of the same power.

In the forest, at every instant, dead logs and leaves can be seen. But living
plants can also be seen. So death, like life, is omnipresent.

What happens after we die?

Ty Kora Tek tends us.

We must learn to be unborn.

Then reborn.

Our souls go to the secret holes of Ty Kora Tek under the earth. We will stay
there many years, preparing for our reincarnation. Fearful Ty Kora Tek is, yet
all must visit her.

Why are we here?

The mind cannot fathom

what the heart knows.

Serve Aldrya.

Without obedience to the forest spirit, our souls and lives wither. We cannot
explain this to outsiders, the notchildren of Aldrya. But aid Aldrya we must. It

is part of us just as sap is part of a tree.

How do we do magic?

Listen to the priestesses

to discover the fruits of your life.

Guardians of knowledge, your friends,

plant true wisdom into your brain at night.

Secret plant spirits can teach us magic, and Aldrya herself gives us her power.

So our shamans and Wood Lords can make plants listen to their words and do their

will.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...Chaos?
Evil
Anti-Life
Always dying,
Never dead.

Chaos is the Last Enemy. It was brought against us by the forces of darkness and winter, and is the only foe which would destroy Aldrya forever.

...Kyger Litor?
Enemies in the dark,
born in Hell,
Sworn to kill us.

Trolls are fierce opponents. They hunt us in the winter and send armies against us in the summer. They eat our trees and poison our spirits with black magic. They are unnatural and do not belong here, on the world's green surface. We People of the Trees use our resources to kill them when possible, sending them back to their dark hells.

...The Lunar Goddess?
An abomination who kills us
Wantonly,
without respect,
without reason.
We shall never forget Rist and Erigia.

The Lunar people speak of friendship, of a time when all beings of the universe can live together in happiness, like that of the Green Age. But their deeds speak to us and we have long memories. Remember the burning of our forests. Remember Rist and Erigia. The Lunars may one day forget our enmity. Then they all will die.

...Magasta?
An ancient friend,
half dead
half alive.
His children remember our friendship.

The waters of the world are necessary to the survival of the forests of the world. There are submarine forests, just as there are terrestrial jungles. And there are elves of the oceans and lakes. We are their kin, and we know each other.

...Monotheists?
Deluded forever.
Doomed.

The wizards of the west are only humans. But they are often properly respectful to the People of the Trees. They have no knowledge of Aldrya or the spirit of the forest, but they also do not pretend to such knowledge.

...Mostal?
A dead god whose followers
never realized he was gone.
They are jealous
of Aldrya.

The dwarfs mindlessly continue their unceasing warfare against the forests. Their workshops poison the rivers and the air. Their foundries flame with the corpses of trees. If they all vanished, the world would be a happier place, and draw nearer to the Green Age.

...Orlanth?
The violent bring violence.

The Orlanth people are brutal and kill each other. They have no Tree Mother to organize them. When they are enemies, avoid them. When they are friends, do not trust them.

...Pamalt?
The Burner is our foe.
Bringer of war,
Destroyer of jungle.

In eons past, this monster god and his people brought about the end of the Green Age of Pamaltela. In the Second Age, he stopped the spread of the Elf Empire of Errinoru and his people cheered our loss. He does not send armies against us, but we can never be his ally.

...Primitive Spirits?
Helpless souls
who have lost their way,
never knowing their fate.
They might be our ancestors.

These spirits can be friends or enemies, but they are always useful. Our shamans use them, especially the Plant Brothers, who recognize us as their kin.

...Yelm?
Distant keeper
of the Cosmic Order.
His kin are our kin.
Friends in the Darkness.

The Sun God is the Flowerbringer. He is strict and pure. He is a good god for the humans, and teaches them humility and harmony. His son Yelmlio is our ally.
Elf Deities

Aldrya
Mother of all life,
the most splendid.
She rules all wooded domains,
and everything therein.

Without Aldrya, our lives would become formless and void. We would be no better than humans, who know not their destination. We would be no better than trolls or dwarfs, whose lives are filled with hate. But we have Aldrya, and our souls have purpose.
Babeester Gor
She does nothing,
save when the earth cries out in pain.
Then she is violent.

Sometimes are born elves who cannot be happy. Babeester Gor takes them under her shawl and gives them an outlet for their fury. Honor them, for their lives are short and grim, and their service to Aldrya is great.

Earth Witch
Old One,
Grandmother of Wisdom.
She can offer much,
but she demands much.

The Earth Witch knows all the secrets of the earth. There are many truths that are terrible. The Earth Witch knows them all and tends them for Aldrya.
Empress Earth
Stately queen,
Wielder of life.
She is the mind of Ga.

Empress Earth rights the wrongs of the earth with her gifts, and she rules the earth with an easy hand. Her wisdom arranges the bounty of the world.

Flamal
Father of all,
whose death caused
the Sleep.
Our King saved us.

Sometimes an elf is bom who cannot fight and struggle. These elves can find meaning in serving Flamal. Honor them, for Flamal is the Most Beloved of Aldrya and all the earth.
Gata

Beautiful mother,
the source,
fruitful and generous.
All love her -
even trolls.

Gata is the Six Earths. She has fled, sunk far beneath the earth. Only the elves
can reach her through worship. But her bounty floods all the land and sea. She
gives to all alike, elf, human, tree, and robber dwarf.
Genert
Gata's spouse.
Wise and strong.
We mourn his passing.

Genert is the father of all the goddesses of the land through his wife Gata. He
is dead now, killed by Chaos. His home land is blasted, shunned by all the Elder
Races. Aldrya now has taken his place as the ruler of the land's goddesses.
High King Elf
Guardian
of the forest.

He is the Defender who led a ragged band of survivors through the Great Winter.
We are honored to be able to help him today by defending the woods from insects,
fire, blight, or trolls.
Land Goddesses
Princesses under Aldrya,
Mothers of Bounty.
Daughters of Gata.

The goddesses of the land each bless their geography and the Great Trees know
the name of their Princess.
Ty Kora Tek
Tender of the dead.
Destroyer of the unfit.

All our souls go to Ty Kora Tek when we die. She tends dead spirits in her bleak
caverns. She is fearsome, but she is necessary. All of us have visited her many
times, and will visit her many more times. Only our enemies need fear her.
Voria
Young virgin of spring,
Keeper of youth
and new life.

We who sleep all winter are awakened each spring by Voria's light touch. Young
children sing and dance to her each spring. She is most harmless and innocent of
all the gods. No evil is in her.
Yelmalio
Unfailing light in the Darkness.
He preserves us
in winter.

Yelmalio and his Light Sons are our friends. In the Darkness, Yelmalio stood by
the side of High King Elf and made our enemies his enemies. His warriors guard
our sleeping groves in winter.

See also:
Pantheons of Glorantha: The Elf Pantheon
Non-Humans: Aldryami
Cult of Aldrya
A Personal View of Elf Culture

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Glorantha: Introduction to GloranthaIntroduction to Glorantha

Chaos in Glorantha

originally published in Runequest (3rd edition)

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Chaos in Glorantha

The Nature of Chaos

Glorantha represents a bubble in an infinity of chaos; order randomly formed. In

forming, the world came from disorder to a condition of order. But the Gods War weakened that order, and admitted chaos into the world, where it still exists. Chaos tends to reestablish itself. This tendency threatens the existence of Glorantha and its deities. Though chaos is in itself formless and structureless,

mutual corruption of chaos and order occurs at the weakened seams of the world where chaos leaks in. This corruption, like all of Glorantha, is personalized --

embedded and manifested in disgusting, cruel, and evil living things.

The living manifestations of chaos naturally parody the kinds of life of Glorantha, since they represent corruptions, perversions, or reorganizations of it.

Chaos comes therefore in many forms -- broos, gorps, disease spirits, walktapi, scorpion men, succubi, and so on. Some aspects of chaos steal life force, other aspects break down ways of organizing (such as government and religion), and yet

other aspects simply destroy everything possible.

Intelligent mortal beings naturally fear obvious forms of chaos. Atrocities against nature are easily recognized. But chaos also includes good, at least according to those who embrace the Lunar religion. Through Illumination they can

overcome fear and resist the soul-blasting temptations which their attitude risks. Most Gloranthans do not believe this, however.

The battle against chaos is integral to the mythology of Glorantha; without it, the world as it exists is not understandable.

For more information on human opinions of Chaos, see:

What is Chaos?

Creatures of Chaos

Broos: Broos are ubiquitous in Glorantha despite drastic efforts to eradicate them. They are a bruise upon the face of the cosmos: a rank chaos species, long since polluted by foul practices. Their parentage is often totally indistinct. Each may differ from his brother, though most which survive are vaguely humanoid. The great majority have horns.

Broos are a reliable enemy, never known to be trustworthy or good. It is their heritage to spread disease and to exult in vandalism and destruction. They are brutal beyond words. The less said about them the better off we are.

Ogres: Ogres look very human, generally passing for men in all walks of human civilization. They are thought to have originated as a human tribe which took the side of chaos during the Great Darkness. Their teeth are very sharp, and they are known to eat humans and other intelligent creatures. They are also very

strong, and often are handsome or beautiful.

Scorpion Men: More scorpion than man, they are similar to centaurs, with the chest, arms, and head of a human or other creature, but the abdomen, tail, and rear six legs of a scorpion. They are left over from the Great Darkness, and live in small villages in the high mountains, the Wastes, and chaos pits like Dorastor.

Scorpion Men are relatively unintelligent, and so their warbands show a consequent lack of organization. Often the grouping is no more than a dominant mother and her children. They make their living raiding and hiring out to optimistic employers who forget their essentially chaotic nature.

For more information on Broos and other Chaotic Creatures, see:

What Do You Want? Shut Up!

A Personal View of Ogre Culture

Some Chaotic and Evil Gods

These gods dominate only in smaller places wholly given over to chaos and evil -- Dorastor, the Forest of Disease (in Laskal), or the Acid Lakes of southern Zamokil. Not all the gods noted in this entry are chaotic, but all are usually recognized as evil. Some, like Thanatar and Thed, are wildly frightening and destructive, annihilating those unfortunate enough to meet them, while others (like Gbaji and Ompalam) subtly spread evil. Both continents have worshipers of Malia, Thed, Krarsht, and Thanatar, while Vivamort, Cacodemon, and Nysalor/Gbaji

are confined almost entirely to Genertela. Pocharngo, Ikadz, Seseine, Gark, and Ompalam primarily are found in Pamaltela.

An Array of Evil Gods

Malia: mother of disease

Thed: chaos source of the broos, goddess of rape

Thanatar: the Severed One, chaos god of headhunters

Vivamort: chaos vampire god

Krarsht: chaos god of hunger and intrigue

Ikadz: god of torture

Gbaji: the Deceiver

Pocharngo the Mutator: chaos god, the Cosmic Cancer

Gark the Calm: chaos god of eternal peace, eternal life, and zombies

Ompalam: god of coercion and slavery

Cacodemon: chaos god of anarchy and ogres

Seseine: chaos goddess of temptation

For more information on the Deities of Chaos, see:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Chaos Array

Secrets of the Chaos Gods

What the Broo Shaman Says

Cult of Thed

Cult of Malia

Eat Your Enemy in Secret

Cult of Cacodemon

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Glorantha: A Personal View of Broo Culture

What Do You Want? Shut Up!

A Personal View of Broo Culture

by Martin Crim

originally published in Shadows on the Borderlands

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What Do You Want? Shut Up!

Who are you?

I am Borqulk, King of the Tribe.

Who are we?

We are the tribe of Slow Death, a mighty band of broos.

What makes us great?

Chaos and me. Chaos gives us strengths, and my iron discipline wields the tribe like a spear.

Where do we live?

We live where I say we will live. Right now, we live in the desert of Prax.

That's all you need to know.

How do we live?

We live by hunting and herding. We keep goats, and take prey from the wilds and from the nomads. We eat everything we kill, whether beast or man.

What is important in my life?

To follow me and obey. To protect the goat herd so we will always have incubators and food. To hunt and kill. To rape and thus make more broos to strengthen the tribe.

Who rules us?

I rule you. Now shut up.

What makes a broo great?

I am great because I have three chaos features. You see my metallic skin, my third eye, and my extra arm. Well, I'm not going to tell you what they do for me.

What is the difference between males and females?

Most broos are males. We are the rapists, and father broo larvae on our victims.

Females birth broos, too, and care for larval broos. Hermaphrodites can take both roles.

What is evil?

To disobey me is evil. To show any weakness, such as mercy or fear, that is wrong. I thought I told you to shut up?

What is my lot in life?

You must obey me. Most of the time, you will guard my goat herds. You will hunt and fight and kill when I tell you to. If you please me, I will let you learn magic the shamans, or maybe even become an apprentice shaman. If you prove very useful, I may make you one of my lieutenants.

How do we deal with others?

Other chaotics are either masters or slaves. Stronger creatures are masters, like me. Weaker creatures are slaves, like you. Non-chaotic creatures are food, incubators, or enemies. We eat food, rape incubators, and kill or run away from enemies.

Who are our enemies?

All that are not chaotic are our enemies. Storm Bull is the worst enemy, because he trapped the Devil under the Block and his followers can sniff us out. Waha is another enemy.

What is there to do around here?

Shut up and get back to work.

See also:

Introduction to Glorantha: Chaos in Glorantha

What the Broo Shaman Says

Secrets of the Chaos Gods

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Glorantha: A Personal View of Ogre Culture

What My Father Taught Me

A Personal View of Ogre Culture

by Martin Crim

originally published in Shadows on the Borderlands

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Who are you?

My father gave me my first cover name, Einar. Now I usually answer to Talsta Greybeard. My have adopted many names and disguises. I have lived long and know all the ways of not being found out.

Who are we?

We are the hidden secret, the superior masters of the world. None can approach our greatness. We live among the food-men, our lawful prey, and fool them into thinking we are like them.

What makes us great?

We are the original human beings and keep the original gifts of chaos to the human race. Our bodies are stronger than the average food-man's. We call upon the greatest gods and have great magical powers. Thus, we can flout the laws of the food-men and draw power and nourishment from eating them.

Where do we live?

We live in the Zola Fel valley, now under the boot of the Lunar Empire. We travel around from place to place, and also travel to Sartar to our west and Tarsh to our northwest. Pavis holds a place of power for ogres, a place dedicated to Cacodemon: Ogre Isle.

How do we live?

We masquerade as merchants of the Etyries cult, which gives us a license to travel anywhere in Lunar-occupied territory. We can disappear from one place when the danger of discovery looms. Then we change our names and make new lies, and travel on to another city. We carry official Lunar papers showing names and backgrounds which we use only when we must.

What is important in my life?

To avoid being found out by jealous lawful folk. To hasten the Day of Chaos by breaking all laws and slaughtering the food-men. To make more children of our race, replacing the inferior food-men. To support our brethren. To undermine the

food-man society so that it will collapse on itself like a rotten vegetable.

Thus we hasten the Day of Chaos.

Who rules us?

I rule you. You will obey me, or I will rip your throat out. The Lunar army rules the occupied lands. We seek their protection when necessary.

What makes an ogre great?

Breaking the laws of the food-men, preying on them, and thus increasing our power. We always delight in killing our enemies and devouring their bodies. Rape

is another fun thing, because it is illegal and also because it increases our kind. We revel in arson, because it often pits the food-men against each other. Anything the law forbids, we wish to do. The more we break the laws, the more we

please Cacodemon and come closer to the Day of Chaos. But be careful lest you give yourself away.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men more easily create more of our kind. One reason we move from place to place is to avoid discovery through someone's recognition of an ogre child. If we cannot raise the child ourselves, it is better that he grows up among lawful folk and take his chances.

Ogre women are more tractable than men. Thus, I prefer to lead a group of women.

Our women are much larger and stronger than food-women, so they must be extra careful to avoid attention.

What is evil?

True evil is thwarting your own kind, or weakening the forces of chaos. The food-men say we are evil for breaking their laws and reveling in our power. They

are wrong. The lawful gods have deceived them because they fear the destruction of this vomit-world. It is the food men who do evil in trying to halt the glorious growth of chaos and the coming of the day we reunite in the Immolation of Primal Chaos. The greatest good lies in hastening the almighty paroxysm of

the last day.

What is my lot in life?

Your lot is to glorify Cacodemon, the Devil, and Chaos by sowing discord, unhappiness, and destruction among lawful folk. You can count on support from your family, if you follow obediently and lead boldly. All others are hostile to

you, except that other ogres may work with you.

How do we deal with others?

With chaotics, we must discover whether they are more powerful than us. If they are, we submit to their will until we can break free. If they are less powerful,

we seek to make them do our will.

With lawful beings, we must first deceive. Then we find out how best to victimize them. Perhaps we will cheat them in a sale of goods, which is a petty wickedness only. Perhaps we will father an ogre child upon an unsuspecting woman, or seduce a young girl.

What I like best is when we catch someone all alone, where none can see us. We slowly kill our victim and eat him. That is a real kick, and good for laughs. We

will do it again soon.

Who are our enemies?

All lawful folk are our enemies. Powerful chaotics who seek to dominate or destroy us are also enemies. Anyone, including the Lunars, who tries to stop our

great deeds is an enemy. Anyone who tries to blow our cover is an enemy, so Storm Bull cultists are special foes. We oppose anyone who opposes the Day of Chaos.

Who are our gods?

We worship Cacodemon, the true son of the devil, harbinger of the day of Chaos. He protects us from the gaze of enemies, and lets us move at will among the food-men.

Etyries is our cover goddess. She is part of the Lunar Goddess's pantheon, and thus accepts chaos in principle, though not in practice. We worship her as part of our disguise. She provides useful contacts and skills, and some serviceable spirit magics. We carefully avoid notice by remaining mediocre in wealth and cult rank.

We also know an ogre shaman, called Rat-Headed Blood-Licker, who teaches us any spirit magic we want. He demands money and live victims, however. He lives near Snakepipe Hollow, a place of chaos power.

What is there to do around here?

You can learn the trade of merchant so as to mingle in society and gull the foolish food-men. You can practice your weapons so you will be able to slaughter

our prey quickly and quietly. You will do what I tell you when we perform great deeds to honor Cacodemon. You can have fun on your own, but eat your enemy in secret or we will all be killed.

Note: Many ogres have a much less rational attitude, and have never wrestled with the seeming contradictions of their inner nature. Those ogres only know that illegal deeds make them powerful and give them pleasure. They believe in their innate superiority to non-ogres with never a question. They also accept on

faith the corollary that they should prey on non-ogres. This makes them amoral, but not evil inside - at least not in the light of Lunar philosophy. (Think of Alexander DeLarge, in the Anthony Burgess book and Stanley Kubrick movie A Clockwork Orange.)

A third ogre philosophy is alien to human minds: true evil. Few sane humans claim to be evil, and those who do are more banal than frightening. People who claim to be evil still must tell the truth sometimes, work with their families and friends, and do all the other lawful things good people do. Some ogres have a way around that.

Truly evil ogres believe that everything the food-men say about ogres is true. They believe themselves to be innately evil, driven by their inner natures to break the moral and legal rules of the food-men. They care little about Cacodemon, the Devil or the Day of Chaos. The gods only increase their power to do evil, and serve as exemplars of evil and destruction. These ogres follow the laws and do good things only to disguise themselves. They are the mirror-image of the normal person: they rationalize good acts as justified by an evil end. In any case, ogres never do selfless works. They always have a payoff in mind.

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This makes them hard to distinguish, morally, from the vast majority of their prey. They raise their children, which requires time, energy, and risk, but they expect their children to serve and aid them. They are kind and generous to their followers, at least to the extent of sustaining their followers' lives, but only because they expect a return on investment. They seem to lack a sense of honor, but so do most food-men. Ogres do have a sense of humor, however, and appreciate the irony in food-men's recurrent false accusations of ogre-hood directed at other food-men. Usually, these accusations fly against rude or antisocial persons. Thus, most ogres are unfailingly polite and friendly on the surface. Sometimes, ogres make the false accusations, but only to avoid being accused themselves. The only clues to an ogre's identity are observation of anthropophagy (human-eating) and detection through the Storm Bull Sense Chaos ability. Seeing the ogre eat human flesh does not rule out the possibility that he is a worshipper of the Hungry Ghosts. Sense Chaos never points out the source, and does not rule out the possibility that the chaotic being is a corrupted human. But few food-men quibble about such matters, being ready to slay the discovered being out of hand, whether or not he is an ogre.

See also:

Chaos in Glorantha
Eat Your Enemy in Secret
What Do You Want? Shut Up!
What the Broo Shaman Says
Secrets of the Chaos Gods

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Glorantha: Cult of Aldrya

Cult of Aldrya

originally published in Cults of Prax and Elder Secrets

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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.

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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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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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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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

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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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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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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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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 syrx.

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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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
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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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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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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 beget 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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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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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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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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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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Glorantha: Dwarf Senses Dwarf Senses

by Sandy Petersen

originally published in Different Worlds #24

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Dwarf Senses

Among the common races of Glorantha, only trolls and dwarfs are easily capable of getting around in the dark. Elves and humans both call this ability of their oft-times-enemies' "Darksense."

This is an oversimplification. The darksense of trolls and that of dwarfs is different in almost every detail. The troll darksense is based on sonar, like that of a bat or whale, and is described extensively in Trollpak.

Since dwarfs do not use sonar, how do they 'see' in the dark? Dwarfs are creatures of Earth, in a peculiarly grim and stern form. The sense most natural to, and innate in, the Earthly element is that of touch. It seems reasonable that the dwarfish darksense is somehow connected with the sense of touch, just as the troll darksense is connected with the sense of hearing. (Trolls are creatures of the night, and hearing is the sense most associated with Darkness.) Is there such a sense as a long-distance touch - one suitable for getting around

in the dark? Even fighting in the dark? Yes, surprisingly.

All fish have a sensory organ known as the Lateral Line. This structure consists

of rows of membranous sensory pits, which run down the animal's sides and are also located on the head. (Those pockmarks sometimes visible on a shark's face are actually components of this sensory organ, not symptoms of disease.) The function of the lateral line is to sense water pressure and currents. An average

fish is sensitive enough to these currents to evade enemies and remain schooled with others of its kind, even when blinded.

It is hard for us to imagine what such a sense is like, but we can try. Picture yourself in a swimming pool, floating calmly underwater with your eyes closed. As people swim past you, waves of current brush past your body, telling you that

someone has moved near to you. You can imagine that if you were sensitive enough, you could not only tell when someone nearby had moved, but you could sense someone far off, and tell the velocity and approximate size of any moving object within a certain radius from your body. This is exactly what a fish is capable of doing. A shark can feel an injured fish thrash (or a swimmer splash) from fifty yards away, in the murkiest water, just from the waves of pressure emanating from the creature.

Pressure is not the only component of the sense of touch. 'Touch' is actually composed of five different senses that we normally lump together into a single category. A second sense useful at a distance is that of heat-sense. All of us are familiar with the waves of heat proceeding from a stove or fire.

The ability to sense heat delicately and efficiently has also been exploited by an earthly animal - the snake. Both pit vipers and boas (including the famous boa constrictor) are able to sense heat radiation at a distance with extreme precision. Pit vipers have a pair of pits (hence the name) between their eyes and nostrils. Boas have a whole row of smaller pits along their lower jaws. A rattler, hunting its prey in the forest or desert night, can sense a difference in temperature as small as a half of a degree or less. To say the least, this makes it hard for a warm-blooded animal to hide from the snake in any sort of camouflage, since his body heat will lead the rattler unerringly to him no matter what he does.

Now we have a possibility for the dwarfish darksense; a combination of highly-developed pressure- and heat-sensing abilities. Dwarfs don't seem to obviously possess sensory pits or lateral lines, but this is a minor cavil. Maybe such pits are hidden underneath their beards. Maybe their skin itself is capable of doing such sensing. Maybe their pits and lateral line-equivalents are

under the skin where we cannot see them. A distinct possibility as far as heat-sensing is concerned is that the dwarfs' eyes are sensitive to heat, and serve as an equivalent to the rattlesnake's paired pits. The dwarf could not

sense heat as a visual image of course (so-called infravision is impossibility), but he could both take in light with his eyes, and sense heat with their exteriors at the same time. Of course, such dual-purpose eyes would not be quite

as good for normal sight, but dwarfs have never been claimed to be especially keen in vision.

A dwarf can use this battery to senses to detect the presence and direction of a living thing via its heat. All living things (even cold-blooded ones) give off more heat than their surroundings, and warm-blooded ones give off vast amounts through their respiration. By feeling air currents as their enemies move, a dwarf can tell the velocity of a weapon swinging at him, and parry or dodge it. He can tell where his foe is and what their positions are, both friend and foe. A dwarf can parry and attack in the dark. If a foe quietly closes a door far down a hall from a band of guard dwarfs, the dwarfs will feel the difference in pressure, and immediately know something is wrong. If a door is opened, they will feel that, too.

These senses are perfectly designed for underground living. Underground, the temperature remains constant and the air is calm and still all the time. Any heat source or moving object will stand out like a beacon, and call attention to

itself against this background. A foe will broadcast his presence by every warm breath of air he takes, and by every motion he makes.

A person could try to make himself hidden from even dwarfish darksense by remaining absolutely immobile, so as to keep from generating air currents. Remember that the dwarfs can even feel your character's breathing! So hold your breath when the dwarf guard passes by, don't make a move, and pray to whatever gods there be that he doesn't pick up your body heat. If you are downwind of the

dwarf, then your body heat will take much longer to reach the dwarf, though he will still be able to sense pressure differences.

This power and great ability becomes much less impressive out-of-doors. There, the dwarfs are at a disadvantage. Amid the continually changing currents and breezes of air, the dwarf's pressure sense is only good at very close range (varying with the irregularity of the wind, but usually only twenty feet or less). The varied background of temperature in the hostile outer world helps to confuse a dwarf's heat sense, except at very close range (three feet or so). Experienced dwarfs, wise in the ways of the surface world, are less dissociated by the confusion of the upper earth, but they are still much worse off than when

they are in their static tunnels. Basically, the dwarf's senses are shorter-ranged than those of the troll, though they are more flexible. In the cloistered caverns and underground cities where dwarfs live and work, this shortened range makes little difference. In the outside world, a troll sees better in the dark, and can see further than a dwarf. In an underground cave or structure, dwarfs and trolls are approximately equal, though their senses are useful for different things. Even in the most chaotic, stormy night, a dwarf will sense things better than a human. In daylight, the human will sense much better than a dwarf, and at longer range than the notoriously nearsighted dwarf - of course, in the caves, there is no need for distance vision.

A dwarf's darksense is good for things besides moving about, sensing intruders, and fighting in the dark. A dwarf smith can tell with his heat sense just how hot a bar of iron is that he is forging, and when it has cooled to the point that he must quench it. He can tell how hot a fire is, and whether he should stoke it up more. A dwarf medic can tell precisely how much of a fever an individual has, and how heavily he is breathing. A dwarf standing almost anywhere in a cavern complex can tell when a door is opened somewhere, or any other change in air pressure takes place. An obvious corollary to this is that a

dwarf can always tell what altitude or depth he is at (within a range of a half-kilometer or so) simply by feeling the air pressure.

In the dark, on the surface, dwarfs must usually close to be able to fight effectively. Their vaunted missile weapons of repeating crossbows and firearms are not as valuable simply because the dwarfs can't sense their foes that far away. Even in their caverns, the dwarfs can't be too far from their enemies - certainly no more than 50 meters or so for precise aiming and firing. On the surface during a normally breezy time, they would be able to accurately aim and

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fire at targets no further away than 10 meters or so. If there is light available, they can, of course, sight normally. In their caverns, the dwarfs can sense intruders from distances by their movement, and prepare ambushes for them,

waiting stolidly for their signal to attack. Dwarfs are natural experts at remaining rock-still when needed.

Summing up, just like the stereotype, dwarfs are good in the dark (though not quite as good as trolls in the open), great in their caverns, and incapable of truly long-distance combat actions.

A properly-played dwarf assault is performed by having the dwarfs close to 10-20

meters, fire their crossbows and flintlocks to disorganize and slay their foes, then charge their enemy in a compact mass and hit them while they are still disrupted from the firing. This is the proven dwarf method of warfare, and has served them well against humans, trolls, elves, and other, more alien races. Dwarfs, with their ingrained conservatism, are unlikely to experiment or use untried tactics in war, and who can blame them? Their ancient techniques are still good and almost foolproof. The dwarf senses serve them well in battle, at work, and in leisure. They are ideally suited for dwarfish preferences and habits. The Gloranthan dwarf is truly a well-rounded individual by his own lights, and can bless his Maker for the senses he possesses, which complement his desires and abilities so well.

See also:

Non-Human Races: Dwarfs

A Personal View of Dwarf Culture

The Foreman's Words

Why I Dislike Mostali

Mostal-Dwarfs: Mythos, Heresies, and Lore

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Glorantha: History of the Race of Trolls

FAMOUS TROLLS OF THE GBAJI WARS

by Shannon Appel, Stephen Martin, Paul Reilly, and Eric Rowe

originally published in different form in The Broken Council Guidebook

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During the time of the Second Council, a number of trolls were important in the world. Many were members of the Council, leaders of the uz in times of peace, while others were war-leaders in the troubled times afterwards; some were both. A few non-trolls were famous allies of the uz, and are always listed among the Honored Ancestors whenever the uz tell of these ancient times.

CHARMILLA SOFTSPEAK

Daughter of Xiola Umbar, Uzuz Representative of Halikiv

Charmilla was born in blissful Wonderhome, and even now tells stories of that perfect age to young Uz. When Death came, however, she was forced to flee, and with Gore and Gash, she arrived on the Surface and created a new home in Dagori Inkarth. She was a great protector, and throughout the Darkness helped to defend

the Uz and other races from the forces of chaos, providing solace and healing as

only the eldest daughter of great Xiola Umbar could. After Dagori Inkarth found other defenders, Charmilla left to find other people to protect. It was she who

rediscovered the Uz of Halikiv, and nurtured them through the Darkness.

When the races of Genertela first gathered in the Unity Council, Charmilla spoke

for the Uz as the Only Old One's representative. She advised us for many years, but when the Council moved to Dorastor she decided to retire to Halikiv. Only recently has she returned to Dorastor.

Charmilla is one of the gentlest and strongest souls in the world, and none can deny her compassion. She always strives for peace and understanding, and it is in no small measure due to her actions and ideals that the High Council has been

able to continue its noble work throughout the centuries.

THORKTOR THON

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Night, Great Mother of Kyger Litor, Uzuz

Representative of the Dagori Inkarth Circle of Eight

Thorktor Thon is beloved of Kyger Litor. She is the Only Old One's ambassador, and brings his words to the Council. She is one of the Circle of Eight of Dagori

Inkarth, speaker for blessed Korasting, and so is the voice for all of the Uz of

Dagori Inkarth. We are doubly blessed by her presence.

Thorktor Thon is ancient in the way of darkness, for she was born in the paradise of Wonderhome before its darkness was pierced by light. She fled with her mistress to the Surface, and aided in the construction of the Castle of Lead. Though nought but a shadow when Uz first arrived in the Land of Dancing Shadows, her knowledge and loyalty quickly brought her the respect of the other mothers. She helped to resist the advance of chaos, and followed the Mother of the Uz when she returned to the Troll Paradise. She was the Uz who contacted the

dwarfs of Greatway, which led to the establishment of the World Council of Friends. She is strong and wise, and there can be no doubt that the Genesis of the Perfect One would be incomplete without her dark presence.

ERIALAIA OF THE VEIL

Uzuz Representative of the Blue Moon Plateau

Eriayalaia was born in the invisible bliss of Wonderhome, before the death of the Sun threw the world into disorder. She fought the Dead God, and was one of the few who survived that struggle. She left, and after many ages arrived at the

Blue Moon Plateau. She settled in that land and nurtured the fragments of the deity which she found there.

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Eriayalaia is one of the wisest Uz in the world, for she is privy to the secrets of the Blue Moon. She was reluctant to leave her home and her people, but the Genesis of the Perfect One has called out to many beings across the world, and none can deny the call of the God to Come. We are most fortunate that she has come to contribute her knowledge and secrets to Osentalka, for without her he would not be whole.

EZKANKEKKO, THE ONLY OLD ONE

Speaker for Darkness of the Inner Circle, Son of Argan Argar, King of Kethaela and Kerofinela

The Only Old One is one of the mightiest members of the High Council, for he is the son of two mighty deities: great Argan Argar and bountiful Esrola. From the Palace of Black Glass, atop the Shadow Plateau, he built a great civilization amidst the hardships of the Surface World, and named it the Kingdom of Night. When the Darkness grew, and chaos descended upon the world, the Only Old One was

one of those who led the fight. Together with the other races of the area, he helped to defeat chaos at the Unity Battle.

When the races began fighting amongst themselves again, already forgetting the horrors of chaos, he brought them together into the World Council of Friends, and so preserved peace through to the Dawn and the present. He has always held the seat of the Uz, though he usually sends his ambassador to speak for him, since the demands of his empire are too great to leave for long. He has helped to shape the Council through the years, molding it into the Second Council, the High Council of the Land of Genertela.

As might be expected, the Only Old One is one of the biggest proponents of the God Project. He has always supported the cause of unity, and is the first teacher of the doctrine "Harmony, Communication, Unity." We look forward to the great night when he again joins us in person.

CRAGSPIDER THE FIREWITCH

Mistress of the Spider Mountains, Weaver of Fate

This ancient being resides in Kerofinela with her uz followers. She controls many mighty and strange magics, and is more ancient than the uz settlement at Dagori Inkarth. Although Cragspider was never a part of the World Council of Friends, she often aided that august body, and was one of those who kept the Uz safe through the Darkness. She wove great webs of darkness to trap the monsters of chaos, and devoured them to make the world a better place. Her exact origins and nature remain a mystery, for she does not speak of them, but none can deny her great power, influence, and beauty.

Cragspider first came to Dorastor when the Council discovered the Feldichi Ruins, but she did not stay long. She has recently returned, and we thank all the gods that the Genesis of the Perfect One has brought her to us, for none is as wise in the ways of fate and the world as she.

HERKA THE BONE-GNASHER

Karrg's Son of Kyger Litor, Uzko Representative of the Elder Wilds

Herka the Bone-gnasher is widely travelled, for in his short life he has visited

almost every known Uz stronghold. He is a mighty warrior, famed for his prowess against uz, man, or dinosaur, and has been blessed by his people to speak for them here in Dorastor. Although Herka is new to the world of politics, we are sure that his strength, honor, and desire to serve his people will ensure his success.

Herka the Bone-gnasher is a mighty warrior, and has fought successfully in many lands, against many foes. He claims to have been defeated only once, when he ventured into Dara Happa before the Treaty of Lakrene, but we are certain that he bears no enmity against the just defenders of that land.

KWARATCH KANG

Warlord of the Council, Death Lord of Zorak Zoran

The current Warlord of the Council is the youngest in its history, yet he has carried himself and the directives of the Inner Circle with the skill of one twenty times his age. He was appointed at the recommendation of his lord, the Only Old One, and as always in the past, the counsel of the Son of Argan Argar was true. Kwaratch Kang bears the relic Ironsword, first gained by Kulebros from

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the gods, and given to the Council by his heir, Kulestan. With this mighty weapon, he has always led the armies of the Council to victory or honorable peace.

Kwaratch Kang is dedicated to his warrior god, but he does not allow his devotion to blind him to his duties. His loyalty to the Only Old One is unsurpassed in all the world, and he can be trusted to serve the Council for as long as he is with us. Let us all join in thanking Kwaratch Kang for his masterful protection and great restraint.

GONN ORTA

Representative of the Rockwood Mountain Giants

Gonn Orta arrived only recently, a companion of Golden Overseer Seventh Diamond,

the Observer from Nida. Though no giant has ever joined the Council before, Gonn

Orta requested of the Inner Circle that he be allowed to speak for his race, and

was unanimously given that right. We are grateful that his actions will allow his ancient people to be represented at last in Dorastor.

Gonn Orta was born in Fronela in the later part of the Greater Darkness. He was born into a time of troubles, and it is a measure of his strength that he survived and even thrived. He quickly became an ally of the Mostali of Nida, and

he aided that race throughout the Darkness and well into the Dawn, though he often travelled to other Mostali outposts, such as the Greatway. The Dawn found him in Fronela once again, though he has continued his travels. This is especially true since the problems between Nida and the Greatway, for it has always grieved Gonn Orta that his great friends have not gotten along in complete harmony.

VARONAL ZOR

Death Master of Zolan Zubar, Representative of the Kitori

Varonal Zor is Komor Gor, sacred king of the Kitori tribe. His people have strong ties with both the Heortlings and the Uz, and have served as a bridge between the two races for centuries.

Although the Kitori have traditions dating back to the Darkness, their existence

as a separate tribe began only recently, when their founder, Varzor Kitor, became the first Warlord of the Council in the year one hundred sixty-seven.

Varonal Zor is as proud and mighty as his glorious ancestor, and wields the Net and Flail masterfully, but he has come to the Council in search of peace for his

people, not war.

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Glorantha: Gods in Prax Gods in Prax: Lightbringers

originally published in Cults of Prax

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The Lightbringers' Quest

The Lightbringers

The pantheon of the Lightbringers is set apart from the previous groups by its organization and integration of several cults. The Invader Deities were individuals intruded into the plains. The Nomad Gods were organized to provide minimal cooperation between cults. The Lightbringers, by contrast, exhibit many more civilized relations. Even so, some of the more subtle aspects of Lightbringer worship are too fragile for Prax, and those cults do not appear here.

There are seven beings numbered as Lightbringers. They are: Orlanth, Chalana Arroy, Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Eurmal, Flesh Man, and Ginna Jar. The last two are

not worshipped deities, while Eurmal is not worshipped in Prax.

Flesh Man was a mortal being, a grandchild of Grandfather Mortal, who was the first-made Man and who lived on the slopes of The Spike. Save Humakt and Eurmal,

he was the only witness to the death of Grandfather Mortal. This sight made him prophetic, but all his outcries and anguish failed to warn the greater beings of

the cosmos. As the world slowly succumbed to the vices of Death the Flesh Man grew more and more crazed by the weight of his knowledge. He fled, but found only the future wherever he went. Even a major healing effort by Arroin did not cure him, though the meeting provided a valuable ally to him.

Chalana Arroy was a healing goddess who had sat by, passive save for her healing, while the world grew ill in the God War. She hoped to await the coming of the disease of the cosmos, but it did not come and she met Flesh Man instead.

She chose to follow the mortal who said he was heading for the Great Doom, and so set off on the Lightbringer's Quest.

Orlanth, skilled in battle and friend to adventure, was the slayer of the sun. When Yelm, the sun god, fell and went to the Underworld, it cast the world into the Lesser Darkness. After many other acts Orlanth decided to right this wrong he had done. His path crossed that of Flesh Man and Chalana Arroy and they all joined together.

Issaries was absent from his golden home on The Spike when the disaster struck and robbed him of home and kin. He traveled on through dangers, rootless, ever protective of his own place. He met Lhankor Mhy, who was the holder of many secrets, and the two became friends.

Lhankor Mhy, the grandson of the god Acos, was the holder of knowledge. When The

Spike exploded, he began collecting many pieces of the stone, keeping its secrets as his own. He could use these secrets himself but was loath to give them up even in exchange. Even so, he contributed to the Quest.

Eurmal was the Trickster god. He had been a mischievous imp at first but grew to

more dangerous proportions as the world aged. It was he who discovered the first

sword, Death, hidden deep in the recesses of the underworld and who guided Humakt to its place. He also helped Orlanth steal it from Humakt, then convinced

Orlanth to lend it to Zorak Zoran, and several more times aided in passing the lethal weapon among gods and men.

He spread destruction without hesitation, for his runes include Disorder. As the

world shook, he alone was at home. Flesh Man saw this, and chose to follow Trickster, but it was Orlanth who forced Eurmal to lead them on their chosen Path.

The Lightbringers' Quest

Thus the gods moved westward across the face of the earth, meeting and joining with the others along the way. The six were together when they reached the end

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of the world where the ocean seeped across the land. Beyond that place, the lap of cold chaos froze the very stuff of the world. There, upon the edge of the cosmos, they discovered the mysterious being called Ginna Jar. Throughout elder myths Ginna Jar remains enigma, occasionally personified as either male or female, occasionally reaching out to assist or interfere, but never taking form.

Its identity remained unknown, though many cults claimed its revelation through heroquests. The worship devoted to it was always desperate and usually ineffective.

Detailed research and speculation has indicated that Ginna Jar may have been the

ghost of Glorantha, the Great Goddess of the Cosmos who had once headed the Celestial Court. There is no mention of Glorantha after her death at the hands of the Devil. But there is a mysterious goddess in Hell who combats the Devil and, with the aid of the other gods, defeats it and devours it, shortly afterwards giving birth to the force called Time. This mysterious goddess is called Arachne Solara in myths and worship and she is generally the vague force of Nature in the world. It is our contention that Glorantha, Ginna Jar, and Arachne Solara are the same being. The many differences in their worship is a measure of the wrack and ruin wrought upon the world at the end of Godtime. This

is still speculation and further research will surely shed light on the matter. The Lightbringers at last reached Hell, though each suffered losses and learned much. On the journey Orlanth fought and fought well, but learned the lesson of defeat before he got to his ends. Eurmal tricked and joked his way through the falling cosmos but could not attain his goal until he was tricked and learned some logic and responsibility. Chalana Arroy received a wound which would not heal, Issaries lost his road, and Lhankor Mhy found a fact he could not know. But they all persevered and found their way.

The dead all fled the approach of the living Lightbringers, who nonetheless found their way to where Yelm ruled the end of the universe. There Orlanth and Yelm came to terms and contracted for harmony. Other deities agreed, so that when the Devil appeared, slain by Storm Bull in the physical plane, Arachne Solara trapped and devoured the chaos god.

Armed with Time the gods could reassert themselves in the cosmos. They fought their way back to Being, reassembling the shattered world as they went. At last Yelm, preceded by his daughter called Dawn, returned to the world of the Living and released Time upon the cosmos.

Thus began History.

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Glorantha: History of the Race of Trolls

History of the Race of Trolls

by Greg Stafford

originally published in Wyrms Footnotes #6. The section entitled "Famous Dark Trolls of the Hero Wars" was subsequently reprinted in Wyrms Footprints.

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The Age of Plenty

In the Godtime there were born many deities, and firstborn of all the races of gods were the deities of darkness, who rose to fight against the emptiness of Chaos, preparing the Void for the Creation.

Among those deities born was one called Kyger Litor, who is called the Mother of

Trolls. But even before she created that mortal race she was famous for her deeds in fighting Chaos with her cousin, Zorak Zoran, and in creation, with her cousin Xiola Umbar.

Grandfather Mortal, the first of all humans (and humanoids) was the result of all the deities working together under the tutelage of the Celestial Court.

Afterwards this original was copied by others, resulting in the many elementally-oriented beings commonly called the Old Races.

The Dark Trolls were just such an imitation, being the Men of Darkness. They were fashioned by the goddess called Kyger Litor. There are now many types of trolls who know her as Creatrix, but this diversity was not her creation but the

result of many mythical and magical battles which have wracked and ruined this once-proud people.

The original trolls were as large as great trolls, as smart as a genius dark troll, and as numerous as trollkin. Their magical abilities were akin to the deities, and they used them wisely to build great cities in their home world. They were common then, but rarer later, and it was later that they were called the Mistress Race. Their name in their Underworld birthplace is a secret.

In their ancestral home the Mistress Race lived during the timeless Godtime, occasionally being called upon to aid in the defense of their world as the War of the Gods grew more and more severe. It was during this time that Grandfather Mortal came to them with great tales and prophecies of woe, and the chilling tale of Death.

The Lesser Darkness

Shortly afterwards the Sun was slain by his rival, and the spirit of that great god followed the path set by Grandfather Mortal, the first creature to ever die.

Across the world to the Gates of the West, and then deep into the Underworld went the firegod. He was weak and bleeding, leaving an ember glow across the sky

and land where he traveled, but was still a bright and horrible thing when he reached the Lands of the Dead, where Grandfather Mortal was king of the Mistress

Race.

The glare of the Sungod and his accompanying host, which quickly grew in numbers

and power, overwhelmed the sensitivities of the Mistress Race, which hitherto for

had dwelt securely in unbroken blackness. Many were evaporated, most were severely burnt and mutated, but all turned and fled, using secret pathways to reach the surface world.

The death of the Sun and the appearance of the Trolls and other forces of Darkness is called the Lesser Dark of the Great Night. The race which crawled to

this world from below suffered the agonies of the alien environment of the world

and its gods at war, in addition to the torment caused by the Sun and the loss of their homes. Most of the creatures which survived this at all were changed horribly, and are the ancestors of those creatures which humans know as Cave Trolls.

In the Surface World Kyger Litor fashioned her race anew, to better fit the new place, and to provide armies for her fight against Chaos. This was the origin of

the first of the numerous Dark Trolls, who quickly populated the world where they could.

The Greater Darkness

The Greater Darkness began when the Spike, center of the universe and stronghold

of the Law of the Cosmos, exploded and sent its pieces rebounding about the worlds. At the center of the world there was, for a moment, nothing but the empty Void, from whence the legions of Chaos began pouring through.

The forms of the Chaos were many, and not important here except to note that evil demonic armies were called Krjalki. I have noted that in many ancient manuscripts this term is also used to (mistakenly) denote the various Forces of Darkness. This is one of those many cases where the mortal victims of the Greater Darkness confused the real enemy of Chaos with those People of Darkness,

who were not only allies but bearing the real brunt of the fight against the invading Krjalki, often unsupported or opposed by humans.

The Forces of Darkness were best suited, by experience and natural inclination, to oppose the forces of Chaos. Kyger Litor was a leader in that fight, and her troll armies were the occupying forces for her victories. Wherever she won a great magic against the mutating forces of Chaos the trolls erected great castles built of lead, which emanated a radiating darkness and comfort for those

who opposed Chaos.

Dark Trolls in History

There were many fortresses founded by Kyger Litor which survived into Time from the Great Darkness, but only one is of immediate interest. That one is near Dragon Pass, and the nation of trolls about the Castle of Lead is called Dagori Inkarth. It is in the land called Shadows Dance, which gets its name from the presence of the Castle of Lead. It is said that there are too many shadows in those mountains, and that sometimes they do not flee from the light before them.

Again, there are strange lights occasionally freed from the Eternal Torch which flare across the sky, making even the most physical darkness flee before it, dancing in frightened rout across the rocky crags.

During the Great Darkness the region of Dragon Pass was blessed by many occurrences which allowed it to survive the horrible times relatively intact. Important among those occurrences is the presence of the Dragons and their kin, and the proximity of a Castle of Lead with a very powerful and aggressive troll population. Just as important was the spirit of co-operation which all of the other local denizens exhibited when the time came to pit their souls against the

power of evil.

Thus, when the Dawn came and the Sungod was freed from the underworld (and shackled to Time) the people of Dragon Pass found themselves an island of civilization on a continent of broken peoples, shattered in intellect and consciousness, often bereft of their own active wills by the events of the Darkness and Compromise. They formed the Grand Council, and set out in missionary teams to educate the populations of savages in the lowlands.

A dark troll leader, High Priestess of Xiola Umbar, was a member of the Grand Council at this time, and the race was ruled by seven families of the Mistress Race from Dagori Inkarth. Xiola Umbar was Goddess of Solace Deep Within, who brought comfort and peace from fear, and protection from ignorance and inner darkness. The peace and wisdom of the Dragon Pass Grand Council spread quickly, cities were built, and worship of the regular pantheon was spread.

In Peloria, near Kostaddi, the Council met its first active opposition, and for the first time the hunters and herdsman from the uplands met the nomads of the flats. Between them lay the farmers, proud with their fields but helpless before

the rivalry between the Foster Brothers, Yelm and Orlanth. Yelm's Friends were the horse nomads, while Orlanth was friend to the fertile and stormy air, and

was one of the chief deities of Dragon Pass.

About the same time as the conflict with the nomads was beginning, the Council also moved its capital from Dragon Pass to the lands of Dorastor. A ruined civilization (including remnants of dwarf work left over from before the Darkness) had been found and resurrected, creating a brilliant leap in civilization through a few generations. A change in locale was accompanied by a change in worship, and in politics. The new leaders worshipped the new gods, and

the name of the Grand Council was changed to be the Second Council.

Among the Darkness Deities the cult of Xiola Umbar lost its predominant position. Instead, people loved her brother, Zorak Zoran, called Lord Master of the Legions of Death. Inspired by such a deity the trolls and humans who worshipped the god went to war against the northern nomads, pitting their spells

and infantry against the foe's cavalry and shaman-summoned spirits. The forces of the Second Council won the day at great loss to themselves, but there was victory at Argentium Thri'ile which was so decisive that the Nomads began a withdrawal from the whole Pelorian lowlands. Their departure revealed a thinly populated region thinly populated by indigenous tribes previously enslaved by the nomads.

The Battle of Argentium Thri'ile was won by the Praxian allies of the Second Council, whose unusual mounts, large numbers, and particularly adept shaman spirit-hunters carried one wing during the first day of battle, and then pursued

for a week, slaughtering as they went. This began the longstanding hatred between the horse-riding nomads and the beast-riding ones. It also instituted a period of Praxian overlordship, by certain nobles and families, over regions of Peloria. Even Dara Happa was, for a short time, ruled by outsiders from the Impala tribe, who also worshipped the Sun.

The advance of the Second Council continued, although its growth was sporadic at

time, and often encountered active resistance. During this time the trolls were forefront in the fighting, glad to praise their bloodthirsty deity this way, whatever the cost to themselves. And it cost them dear, for their population shrank even at home, and weakened their voice on the Council. Thus they were so weak that they could not prevent the plans which led to the Broken Council.

The Broken Council got its name when the dark trolls and dragonewts both deserted the impending magical rituals of the Council. The dragonewts left because the focus of the ritual was a 'pseudocosmic egg,' which they believed to

be a dragon egg, too sacred for others to use that way. The trolls left because Kyger Litor, their creatrix and implacable foe of chaos, correctly read a prophecy of the coming of a chaos god from the egg, and would have nothing to do

to aid such a venture.

The humans of Dragon Pass presumably followed the decisions of the Elder Races, although this is only a presumption.

There followed a period of warfare between the Broken Council and Dragon Pass. Parts of Peloria fought against the council as well, but early in the long war most foes were conquered or driven far away, and even Dragon Pass fell sometime around the year 420. This was after the peoples were harmed by the great and terrible magic of Dorastor and their new god, called Gbaji.

Gbaji, while still a mewling babe, gave his powers to the Two Curses of the council. One was directed against the dragonewts, but failed when its energies were devoured by dragons. The other was directed against Kyger Litor and the dark trolls, and succeeded.

The Troll's Curse is in their children, for the proud race began giving birth to

runts and weaklings. Fewer and fewer whole and healthy trolls were born, replaced instead by the deformed creatures called trollkin. A great effort at countering the curse resulted in the appearance of trollkin litters rather than single births, but did not heal the horrible wound. Warriors slain could not be replaced, and the powerful army was over half trollkin when it was defeated in battle by the Broken Council around 420. Dagori Inkarth, deep in Shadows Dance, was invaded by the council, but the citadel of the Castle of Lead was never sacked.

Afterwards the trolls were a hidden and outlaw race. The humans and dragonewts of the pass accepted shameful compromise, and served under the lords who

worshipped chaos.

The god Gbaji was more active in the West, where his cult spread quickly at first, until its evil was revealed. But even then it took generations to cleanse

a region. Nations worshipped the god, and it was a major task to annihilate the cult. This was accomplished by Arkat Humaktsson.

Arkat was a superhero by the end of his mighty tasks. He led a crusade for 75 years by the strength of his might and magic. In this he was aided by his sons, Gerlant Flamesword and Talor the Laughing Warrior, both famous in their own right as well and founders of many noble houses.

Sometime around 440 Arkat Humaktson landed in Esrolia with his professional army

of Gbaji-hunters. At the shore he gathered some available allies and, after a short fight, sent the army and allies of the Broken Council into rout.

But Arkat had been wounded previously, and the agony of this latest battle broke

the superhero's wounds again, and his life and Power flowed from him like blood.. Even so, Arkat led his army northward to answer a call from the dark trolls, to aid in their invasion of Dragon Pass. Arkat was near death when the armies met, but summoned a council with the leaders of the land. They came, they

thought, to watch him die, and to steal a portion of his soul. The spies of Gbaji went with them, and even the Inhuman King was guarded by these evil assassins rather than his usual bodyguard.

Garazaf Hyloric was a Mistress Race heroine after her healing of Arkat that day,

and the Goddess of Solace Deep Within stood guard over those who slew the foes of chaos. The Inhuman King, pragmatic as usual, joined the trolls first, but other leaders also changed sides after their enlightenment and experience of the Gbaji cult's evil.

Shortly afterwards the army of Arkat Humaktson and the Alliance of Dragon Pass marched into Dorastor and the legends of its glorious defense and terrifying fall. This marks the end of the Dawn Ages of the world.

To favor the trolls for their aid in the fight, Arkat Humaktsson gave them lordship over the lands of Esrolia, for the leaders of that land had all been killed in the war. The trolls that ruled there instituted, or continued, the worship of Argan Argar, whose cult both could find agreeable. The region was afterwards called Dark Esrolia, until the Pharaoh came.

The leaders of Dark Esrolia never became friends with the islanders off their shore. When foreigners, a distant race who also revered Arkat Humaktson, came from the sea seeking friends they were repulsed by the islanders, who were jealous of their own ocean ancestors, and did not wish to worship the other seas. Dark Esrolia was glad to befriend the foreigners, and helped conquer the islands. And so, for a time, the dark trolls ruled the isles and peeked into the

depths of the sea.

They were allies of the Empire of the Middle Sea, and the trolls of Esrolia became rich and famous for it. They had time for luxury and great magics, and raised their miraculous City of Black Glass, whose appearance was as a shadow rising from the ground, even in harshest sunlight.

The cult of Argan Argar was thrown down by the coming of the Pharaoh, and the trolls retreated to the stygian Troll Woods of the Storm Hills. In Shadows Dance

they continued in strength, but had little other than occasional trade to connect them with the Troll Woods nation. Thus they remained for much of the Second Age, except for periodic invasions due to population pressures of rapidly

breeding trollkin. They occasionally were victims of some magical plot as well, but captured the souls of heroes who failed.

During the madness of the Third Council the trolls were at the front fighting against Chaos. They braved the worst of the dragon powers and skills wielded by the Empire of the Wyrms Friends. The survivors among the trolls gloried in the final plunder of the decadent Third Council as did other peoples.

When humans turned against their alien allies and began invading Dragon Pass the

trolls remained aloof, save for their ever-present trollkin mercenaries, bought only by the dragonewts. Trolls from the Holy Country marched with the Pharaoh's contingent which aided the dragonewts, and healers saved the wings of a large

clutch of dream dragons who were wounded and hiding in Shadows Dance. Thus, when the region was cleansed of humans and cursed to their entry the dark trolls were excluded, and could enter the lands once held by men.

The Inhuman Occupation

Troll migration into Dragon Pass began in strength shortly after the Dragonkill War of 1100. There are no written records of the time, but legends from other races present in the pass give hints. These can be reconstructed to form this chronology.

There were two major bands of trolls, almost nations as we know them. Each included several tribes or troll clans, and worshipped several cults. There were

also several minor bands of important warriors or magicians.

Kajak-ab the Braineater was the Mistress Race noblewoman who ruled the nation which migrated from Dagori Inkarth. She worshipped Kyger Litor, who was her grandmother. In legends they are commonly called the Mountain Trolls, because they came from there.

Vamargic Eye-necklace was the leader of the nation from the south. He was a throwback, born a great troll but intelligent, though his parents were both cave

trolls. He worshipped Zorak Zoran. His nation were called the Wood Trolls, and among them were many Dark Elves.

Karastrand Halftroll was a leader from the Ivory Plinth. He claimed human ancestry and imperial inheritance over all of the Pass. He was a pawn for the others for a while, then killed. His people were mercenaries after that, but mostly fought against the Aldryami near them. This caused the region to be called the Stinking Forest.

Around 1180 outright war broke out between the troll nations, much to the misery

of the other inhabitants of the pass. After the dragonewts assassinated Karastrand both troll nations temporarily allied. By 1220 the pass was divided into trolls versus the rest. They met in battle a few years later, and the numerous trolls took the day. There followed a legendary feast upon the corpses which was the source of many troll eating songs. It was also a tragedy, because a relief army came upon the drunken, reveling trolls the next day and slaughtered them. The victors raised a huge funeral pyre over the mass of corpses, laying them upon the altars of a nearby ruin. Even since then the ruins

have smoked, and no one can use their altars unless they intend to call upon the dead from that battle.

Thwarted in one direction, but still pressed by overpopulation, the leaders of Dagori Inkarth sent part of the population southward downwards the extensive ruins of Pavis. In 1240 the trolls, led by Gerak Kag, defeated a Praxian army and entered the ancient city. With great magics the troll leader sealed off the cyclopean walls of Pavis, and kept all outsiders away for over a hundred years. Sometime during the Inhuman Occupation of Dragon Pass the dark troll later called Cragspider completed her impossible Heroquest and received her apotheosis

by and as Arachne Solara. Afterwards she was revered by trolls everywhere, and worshipped. Except when she was weak, at the early stages of the occupation, Cragspider did not take much part in the troll wars on either side, though she occasionally appeared to give minor help to both troll nations, and to non-trolls as well.

As human occupied the Pass the trolls retreated to the mountains, though their trollkin populations irregularly marched down to the valleys to plunder and eat.

The Tarsh kings were the first to hire the trollkin, and they soon had regular regiments of trained spearmen permanently employed in the Tarsh army.

After the downfall of Old Tarsh the trollkin regiments, usually led by a core of

dark trolls, could be hired by almost anyone. During the occupation of Dragon Pass by the Lunar Empire they most often worked for the Red Moon, who could tend

the trolls well in her Dark Phase. Lunar worship was accepted by some trolls at that time.

As the magical energies of the Hero Wars grew tighter and greater the troll

leaders in Dagori Inkarth grew more cautious with their resources. Trained mercenaries began teaching troll tribes in the hills, and masters of lore began checking prophecies and investigating long-hidden objects of power. It was clear

that the world would be torn again, and the trolls watched for a moment to remake it in their favor.

Famous Dark Trolls of the Hero Wars

A part of the reason for the weakening of the land of Sartar before the Lunar Invasion is due to the troll expansion in the Holy Country under the protection of the Pharaoh. Their expansion was at the expense of the land of Sartar, for that land was founded by a Holy Country nobleman, whose connections in the Holy Country were important to setting up his trade routes. When the leader abandoned

the cause of the Pharaoh and set his children to create a national cult, his lands were declared unprotected by the Pharaoh. The trolls cut off the trade route to the south, forcing merchants to use the river or, more simply, go over Grazeland country into the Lunar Empire. Sartar still controlled trade from Prax, but it was far less desirable or needed, and their cities withered. Once again, the lands of Dragon Pass were invaded by sly bands of dark trolls. But first they set up trade between them, and the kingdom found its roads filled

with shuffling convoys of trollkin-guarded and carried goods, officered by troll

merchants capable of protecting the sanctity and safety of their goods and route. This trade increased after Boldhome fell in 1602, and the Empire aided it

by closing all toll-stations run by Sartar tribes.

Obash Broos-Smasher was a Runelord dark troll from the south, whose spirit ally was an intelligent sylph. He was also of the cult of Argan Argar, and was a troll who did not degrade humans who also worshipped the god. He and his family held the roads to the south, and often raided north into the clans of Sartar, and against Lunar convoys as well.

Xarjarg Vash was from Shadows Dance, and was a Death Lord of Zorak Zoran. He made serious gestures of friendship to humans before Lunar perfidy turned him against all not of his kind. He always hated elves, who called him Tree Chopper.

He was noted as a poet among his kind as well.

Jarkanita Ab was High Priestess of Kyger Litor, whom she claimed as a direct ancestor, being of the Mistress Race. She led secret researches to break the curse which made trollkin, and also led a colony into Dragon Pass. She rarely showed herself, preferring to leave most matters to her commanders.

Bina Binag was from the Blue Moon Plateau, and introduced many to that cult. But

she herself left the main paths of the Lunar Way after her trip to the Castle of

Lead, where she conjured and took for a lover the Dehori spirit Lord Lurker in Shadows. Before she died her lover took her to his home in the underworld.

Pikat Yaraboom was called Lord of the Hand of Death. He was a son of Bina Binag and the Lord Lurker in Shadows. He had a power (small at first, though he trained it quickly) to stun, maim, kill, or rob whoever he laid his left hand on. He was also a terribly powerful shaman, called Hell Lord by his enemies, for

he could summon even his father's servants upon command. He had animal familiars

from beyond the world of known man. He hated all elves, dwarves, cults of light and their worshippers, priests, and canines, bestial or lycanthropic. He did have an odd affection for dragonewts and red-headed women.

Neep Troll-Killer was a trollkin of superior qualities, the only of his kind during this period. Such sports, with much higher health, intelligence, and power than usual, occasionally occurred but were generally slain while young, so

to prevent trouble when they got older. Neep evidently went unnoticed, and escaped to Dragon Pass where he was befriended by the cult of Geo. He grew up to

hate all trolls who misused their weaker kin, and trollkin everywhere often followed him rather than their own tribe. He was known for his skill at making trollbane weapons. He worshiped the god Humakt. He was fond of bright-colored clothes, and had a reputation among humans as being a seducer of dark troll

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women. He never drank liquor. He liked humans, but disliked elves, whom he thought were a bigoted lot.

Geras Shag was a near-hero at the start of the Hero Wars period, and originally came from Pavis. He was a leader of the Kyger Litor cult, and especially revered

his ancestor, the hero who had first conquered the ancient city. He carried a leaden axe, and could summon his ancestor at will. His intentions were to rule all of the Big Rubble, then move onward if he could. He hated all humans, and had bound a spirit inside a giant scorpion. All feared him.

Javis Gan was a bandit chief of Pavis, and a major foe of Geras Shag's. He was a

Death Lord of the Zorak Zoran cult, and a wily enough politician to stay friends

with many humans as well, especially if they were of the same cult.

Notes on Troll Breeding Patterns

The very few and rare members of the troll Mistress Race bred true with whatever

type of troll they mated, sometimes including spirits. But these survivors from primeval times were rare, and rarely bred. It must be noted that the Mistress Race never bred with trollkin, whom they considered cursed and unclean.

Dark trolls most often bred with each other, but even in these cases the mother would have a litter of trollkin 60% of the time. A year after birthing trollkin the mothers had to remain chaste to purify themselves for another attempt.

Slightly over half of dark trolls born were female.

Under magical conditions it was possible for dark trolls to wed the immortal dead who followed Zorak Zoran, and were known as the Warriors of Darkness. These

marriages bore great trolls, but were difficult and dangerous to perform.

Mistakes in the ritual meant death to the mothers.

Great trolls were all male. They were either sterile or, more likely, bred only trollkin for children.

Most interbreeding between troll types not already mentioned resulted in varying

numbers of trollkin. Cave trolls and dark trolls, for instance, sired trollkin.

Trollkin and trollkin also bred trollkin, at a ratio of about half of each gender. Their yearly incubations rarely had more than one young.

See also:

Non-Human Races: Trolls

A Personal View of Troll Culture

Cult of Kyger Litor

Cult of Zorak Zoran

Cult of Xiola Umbar

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Glorantha: Hunter Cults of Glorantha
Hunter Cults of Glorantha
originally published in Questlines 1

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Mythos and History

Hunter's Children

Mythos and History

The nameless Hunter came to mortality's aid during the Great Darkness. He seeded

beings across Glorantha which were either his children or incarnations of himself. Each was given a different name. Though many Hunter cultists recognize the existence of this higher, more primal deity, most prefer to worship his more

accessible children.

For instance, the being later called Foundchild was first discovered by Helpwoman during the Great Darkness. Though an infant when found, he rapidly grew to manhood. While doing so, he was nurtured and cherished by the woman, whose inner power had fostered a group that struggled together to survive. Upon reaching adulthood, he taught them the use of death as a tool to bring life. He also taught the songs to send slain beasts' spirits back to their ancestors. Similar stories are known over the world. Everywhere the Hunter is worshiped through his minions. After time, Hunter's worship developed into a fraternal society in which the strong are respected, and the weak are protected. True hunters believe that they go to a Happy Hunting Ground after death. Even folk believing in reincarnation believe they will stay there for many years before again entering the cycle of birth/rebirth. Hunters follow the burial customs of their tribe or else place their dead on raised platforms. Troll worshipers eat their dead.

The chief runes associated with Hunter are those of Death and Harmony. Though he

slays beasts, he does so in order to save life.

Hunter's Children

The different children of the Hunter God are geographically limited. The different subcults are in effect different religions, though all share certain beliefs. Each provides a different array of Command spells to cultists.

Foundchild

Foundchild is the hunting god of Pent and the Wastelands. He provides Command spells for Alticameli, Bison, Bolo Lizards, Herd Men, Impalas, Rhinos, Sable Antelopes, and Zebras, as well as for several extinct species.

Odayla the Hunter

Odayla is the favored hunting god of the Orlanthi. He is worshiped everywhere that Orlanthi hunt. He teaches Command spells for all species of wild cattle (including aurochs), deer, wild goats, rabbits, wild pigs, wild sheep (including

mountain sheep), and waterfowl.

Rasout

Rasout is the most widespread human hunting god. He is worshiped by humans across the entire Pamaltelan plains, from Tarien to Zamokil. He teaches Command spells for all four-footed, herbivorous, plains-dwelling mammals, and all herbivorous, plains-dwelling reptiles except for turtles.

Zong

Zong is the simple troll name for their hunting deity worshiped by trolls everywhere. He was born to a starving troll woman in her need and taught the trolls of Genertela to seek prey properly. He teaches Command spells for all rodents and herbivorous insects.

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Glorantha: Inner Knowledge of the Sea Gods

Inner Knowledge of the Sea Gods

The Merpriestess Speaks

originally published (in English) in Tales of the Reaching Moon #10

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Can you tell me the truth about...?

Where did the world come from?

The whole world was dark and empty, no fish swam there, no coral grew there, no hard krill drilled its depths.

In that place was born the Mystery, the Source of Waters, the dark and empty liquid from which flows all life. Outsider call her Styx, but initiates alone can hear her true name.

From that Secret Power Zaramaka created himself. Great Elder, Keeper of the Source, Father and Mother of the Elder Three. Those Three met and mingled, the way the waters of a river mingle with those of the sea, sometimes washing saltiness 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.

Triolina is the grand-daughter of Zaramaka. She is the Mother of Life, and from her stem all the creatures of the waters. She had five husbands, or more, and two of her children wed to make our race. Mirintha, Gentle Nymph Mother, and Phargon, Son of Man, were parents of the seven tribal Founders, who each had different mates.

The Last Growth is the most wonderful phase of life, after Sramak received the gentle gifts of Gata the Giver, and hordes of new life bloomed across the Surface World.

Where did I come from?

From the Mother and Father were born the Tritons, terrible and powerful gods and

goddesses of the deep. Their children were the Niiades, a race of magicians -- every one a shapeshifter or enchanter.

Among the Niiades some sought the depths of the sea, seeking wisdom through harmony and experimentation. Some of these are famous for their deeds, including

the ancestors of the Seven Tribes.

The Ancestors were gods who mated with native animal gods, thereby creating the tailed races who inhabit the seas. Those are mortal beings whose children begat your ancestors.

Why do we die?

Since the Enemy came all waters in Glorantha must die. The tides of eternity sweep our ranks forever, and the grace and wisdom of Magasta preserves us in the world.

Before the Death all grew until the world was stagnant -- even the depths were turgid with thick algae. Magasta, The Churner, was he who set us free, both to release us into the wonders of Life and then to rob us of our freedom and love. Fearful death is, yet it is the only choice set against the nothingness of stagnation.

What happens after we die?

After death your soul disappears into the depths of Magasta, drawn into the unknown universal soul of the waters. Some beings, whose descendants cling to them, remain afterwards as stale ghosts, but eventually fade away.

Why am I here?

Magasta has formed you for the Current of Life. You are like the rivers which wash the depths of the sea, always changing and moving, yet always there. The strongest currents go for a long distance, but even they begin and end. Both you

and the greatest oceans and gods come from nothing, and when the flow is over, end in nothing.

While you are here your duty is to make your own current, to shape the flow of your life to serve your community and world.

How do I do magic?

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All the world is an ebb and flow of energy and matter. Some forces are more apparent than others, but you can train yourself to harmonize with those around you. They can be known, called upon, and join themselves to you like a tributary.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...The Sky Gods?

These sterile entities of the Far Place are the source of bad living. Once these

were gentle forces, friendly to Life in providing warmth and light.

But they grew proud and arrogant, jealous of their gifts which they took away to

the Far Place. Their pride killed them, they suffered terrible dooms, and now that Life is renewed the worst among them are condemned forever to a waterless existence. Yet they have been tamed and give us again the pleasant gifts of old,

as intended.

...The Storm Gods?

These enemies brought Death to us, and although Magasta took its secrets and used them to save the world, the Storm Gods misused them to bring misery and trouble to all watery beings. These monstrous gods pounded seas into submission and imprisoned legions of life within ice. They carried off our gods as slaves. Always Magasta and Orlanth have been rivals, and only Brastalos and some of the Tribal Founders are worthy of respect at all.

...The Earth Goddesses?

These gentle goddesses are bountiful friends of the sea. Ga, the Earthess, is the magical child of Zaramaka, made as a servant and worker for Sramak, the least of the Elder Three. She provides rich sustenance to him, and to all the Last Growth bodies which require nourishment on the physical plane.

...The Darkness Gods?

The inner powers of the sea are ancient and forbidding. They loom and glower within everything, ever ready to seep or leap out. Within each person, and within each god, lurk those powers, and sometimes burst out unhindered. Many are

recognizable and controllable by the powers and intercession of Magasta. We do not revere them, or give them Power, though we know them.

...Lunar Gods?

Secret powers move the universe, and the cyclic powers of the Lunar world were ours until revealed by the upstart goddess called the Red Moon. Stealing and revealing our ancient lore is not bad enough, for this goddess also abuses the power to control chaos. Thus she tempts the return of the chaotic stagnation which could destroy the world.

...Spirits?

All the world is full of lost, meaningless spirits who do not know their place in the order of the spiritual oceans. Until all are cleansed by Magasta, and the

ebb of the deep reaches all turgid recesses, the world will have these detached lonely entities mindlessly clinging to lost ways of life.

...Chaos gods?

The gods of evil must not be tolerated in any form, especially the insidious mental and spiritual gyrations performed by persons far removed from their own inner selves.

...Monotheists?

These arrogant people claim knowledge which is similar to Magasta's, but which is founded on baseless claims.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Merman Pantheon

Introduction to Glorantha: The Elder Races

Cult of Magasta

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Glorantha: Introduction to Glorantha

The World of Glorantha

originally published in Runequest (3rd edition)

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The World of Glorantha

World Structure

The world of men is shaped like a huge lozenge floating upon an unlimited sea. Waters wash parts of the lands. Most humans live near the center of this lozenge.

The sun rises from the east each morning, then passes over the air, and across the sky to set each evening in the west. It then travels beneath the seas and earth through the underworld, and finally again up to the eastern lands of the dawn. While the sun is in the underworld, the goddess of night rules the sky. The sky world lies beyond the dome of the sky. At night, the stars show where the magical denizens of the sky world peep through to guard their followers below. Similarly, the underworld is populated by immortal creatures, as well as by evil dreams and by the souls of the dead and unborn.

The world is everywhere populated by magical entities who are personifications of things, who represent life essences, or who are spiritual truths. Many of these beings are alive in every sense, but many are not. Most people live only in the mundane world, content to let the priests and shamans protect them. But the influence of the magical world is always there.

The Planes

There is a mystical as well as a physical cosmography. In the mystical view there are three planes of existence: the mundane plane (the physical world), the

spirit plane, and the god plane. Interactions between ordinary men and magical creatures and places are minimal within normal realms. Remember, though, that great magic is always possible, that it works, and that it has done terrible things before.

Time in Glorantha

Most dating systems in Glorantha begin with the Dawn, when the Sun rose into the

sky and inaugurated the age of history. Created by the Theyalans of Dragon Pass,

this system is called Solar Time (abbreviated S.T.) and is the most common time-measurement system used in the world.

A Gloranthan day is the time needed for the sun to traverse the sky from east to

west. A night is the time needed for the sun to traverse the underworld from west to east. Seven days make up one week. Eight weeks (56 days) make up one Season. Five Seasons (plus a 14-day interim period called Sacred Time) make up one year. Thus, a year is 294 days long.

Variant Calendars

The Lunar Empire (Genertela) measures time from the moment their Red Goddess was

born (during Sacred Time, 1220 ST). They also use a larger measure of time called the Wane, which is 54 years long.

The Kralori culture (Genertela) persists in using six seasons of 7 weeks each. This method is widely popular throughout the eastern lands of Kralorela and the Eastern Isles, including Vormain.

Most Pamaltelans (with the exception of many coastal cities) use a four season period. Each season consists of 72 days (12 weeks with 6 days each). The extra six days, called Holy Week, resembles the Sacred Time of the Theyalan calendar. For more information on Time in Glorantha, see:

The Gloranthan Calendar

Geography and Weather

Genertela, the northern continent: this continent is temperate in climate; its winds generally blow west to east, and often from the north during Dark Season (winter). The continent is 5000 km long east to west and 1700 km wide north to south.

North of the continent are the uninhabitable wintery wastes of Valind. East lies

the sea of Kahar, which is covered by unending fog and empties into the limitless Eastern ocean. South lie the waters of the homeward ocean. West lies the freezing Neleomi sea, and beyond that the limitless Western ocean.

Genertela is the land most heavily inhabited by humans. Here the elder races have been reduced to powerful pockets of resistance surrounding ancient holy places. A variety of human cultures dominate the better lands.

This continent was badly damaged in the Greater Darkness, most badly when its ruling god, Genert, was destroyed by chaos. The Wastes astride the continent testify to the physical losses suffered. The magical damage was comparable. Genert embodied some powers of unity and harmony never yet recovered by the residents of the land.

Pamaltela, the southern continent: This continent is about 6700 km long east to west and 3300 km wide north to south. Winds blow east to west, and occasionally from the hot south. Pamaltela is tropical in climate.

North lie the central seas. East lies the hot Togaro Sea, eldest of the great waters. South past the Nargan desert lies a land and a sea of unending fire impossible for mortals to approach. West past the lands of men rolls the chill Western Sea, which has no bounds.

This continent also was ravaged by chaos, but recovered better than the northlands because Pamalt, the ruling god of the surface world, survived.

Relative peace and plenty continue in the land, so that even humans live a lush pastoral life. Many Elder Races are still powerful here -- dwarfs, innumerable elves, and a variety of isolated and obscure creatures. Human cities dot the northern coasts.

The Central Seas: the oceans of Glorantha center on the Homeward ocean. At its center is the tremendous whirlpool called Magasta's Pool, whose bottom is in the

underworld. Down this place rush all the waters of the world.

From the northwest comes the Banthe Sea, which is frigid. A current continues southward, to become the Brown Sea, which splits into other lesser seas. The Neliomi current rips great icebergs from Valind's Glacier and sends them south. The main Banthe current enters the homeward swirl of Magasta's Pool.

From the southeast comes the warm-watered Togaro Sea, also called the Sea of Terror. Its main current enters into the whirlpool of the Homeward ocean. The eastern Sshorg current runs northward, warming the lands it washes, and runs into the Eastern ocean.

For more information on the oceans and seas of Glorantha, see: The Oceans of Glorantha

See the map of The Continents of Glorantha (72k) for a depiction of these main regions.

Major Land Regions

These are the major land regions of Glorantha; they are summarized in alphabetical order.

Dinal (Pamaltela): called the Peaceful Woods by elves. The Council of Seventeen rules it, and many Yellow elves consider it to be their heaven on earth.

Dragon Pass (Genertela): a strategic land, the crossroads of the continent. It is the prehistoric mating and nesting ground for dragons, and the sacred homeland of the dragonewts. Many acts of the gods occurred here, making this region very powerful and special.

East Isles (Sshorg Sea): often referred to by their ancient name, the Ten

Thousand Islands of Wonder. Many nations and tribes inhabit this region; all claim to be subjects of the Emperor of Vithela, who is otherwise unknown. The natives also claim to know all the islands, but outsiders have never seen more than the westernmost (which are fabulous enough). Famous among them are Golden Mokato, once capital of a sea empire; and Haragala, a modern naval power.

Elamle (Pamaltela): a region ruled by the Novarooolia tribe of Yellow elves. They tax and take tribute from the human cities which dot their coast, and are friendly with those humans whom they know.

Enkloso (Pamaltela): A temperate land, where snow sometimes comes creeping from down the mountains and frost rasps inland with the Brown Sea fogs. The people here are Green elves, with a long and proud history. The many humans in the lowlands and along the shore have Genertelan cultures.

Fonrit (Pamaltela): a region semitropical in climate and life. Its poor are all blue-skinned; as slaves, they are among the worst-treated in the world. The overlords, the Confederates of Fonrit, rule a hodgepodge of conquered duchies, satraps, principalities, and theocracies, and make common cause only against invading elves. The northern state of Kareeshtu is a great naval power.

Fronela (Genertela): a cold temperate land, Fronela is dominated by the great lanube river, which cuts it from the Sweet sea in the east to the Neliomi Sea in

the west. In the north are pine forests shared by barbarians and elves. The western lowlands are ruled by the kingdom of Loskalm. The southern highlands, and most of the valley of the Janube, hold many different people.

Hornilio (Pamaltela): here are only marshes and swamps, so low and level that tides wash far inland, and the rivers rush far to sea. Huge monsters from earlier ages haunt this place. All is dominated by the Red elves of cruel Queen Karan llargor, legendary ruler who led in the Gods War.

Jolar (Pamaltela): nomadic Agimori and other peoples roam these wide grasslands,

herding cattle and hunting. The Kresh invasion from the east prompted the organization of the Arbennan kingdom, a confederation of tribes.

Jrusteli Isles (West Homeward Ocean): once a single land, partially-sunken Jrustela is now a smaller archipelago. Its residents are mostly elder races, grown strong without men. The Dawn Age natives, the Timinits, are numerous. There are some cities with recent human immigrants. Several haunted ruins of the

dead and accursed God Learners linger here.

Kimos (Pamaltela): humans live on this peninsula, maintaining an ancient war so old that no one recalls its origins. Their foes are called Gorgers, and both sides worship the volcano god, among others. "War-torn Kimos, ragged land of fire."

Kothar (Pamaltela): the Kresh nomads, who ride upon wagons of colossal size, originally came from here. With cities on wheels, they rumble about exacting food as tribute and granting access to their temples and other facilities.

Kralorela (Genertela): here live the Dragon Kings, and here ancient, forbidden magic is used. Kralorela is rich, fertile, and boasts many great cities. In the hills huddle primitive subject peoples.

Laskal (Pamaltela): tropical forests cover this land. Yellow elves of many tribes, with no central rule, live here. Many tribes of humans wander among the woods, paying token tribute to the elves as fellow creatures of the wild.

Maniria (Genertela): The southern coasts are warmed by sea currents, and are subtropical. Inland roll rich forest lands where humans war with elves. Eastward

glimmers the enchanted Holy Country, where many different folk live in harmony.

Mari (Pamaltela): These lands are broken by hot, harsh mountains. The northern side is humid, tangled with encroaching jungle; the southern side is dry and rutted with canyons. Only violent raiders, savages, and monsters live here.

Mirelos (Pamaltela): the Gaskallian empire, ruled by ancients of the Yellow elves, holds sway here. Few other intelligent creatures, including humans, lead free lives in Mirelos. The land is dense rain forest, with rivers famous for their richness.

Nargan Desert (Pamaltela): a dry and lifeless place, a playground for firespirits and their great lord, Father Pamalt, and his chosen immortals called

the Agitorani. No mortals tread this realm. To the south, live flames dance upon sand and stone.

North Pent (Genertela): this bleak tundra is wracked by violent storms, buried

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by snow from the north, or flooded by warm rain from the south. Ice trolls, desperate horse and cattle nomads, and refugees from the Kingdom of Ignorance live here.

Onalaks (Pamaltela): rain forests cover Onalaks, and the Gargualia tribe of Yellow elves rules it. Human cities line the coasts; their peoples hate elves and war with them.

Palarkri (Pamaltela): a highland pierced by five great stands of jagged mountains. Among the peaks live the exotic inhuman Jelmre, who trade with the elves in the north, and the Empire of Kresh in the south.

Peloria (Genertela): This wide grassland is ruled by the Lunar empire. The land is temperate, and since the ascension of the Red Goddess has had increasingly mild winters. It is drained by the mighty Oslir river, whose head is in Dragon Pass and whose mouth is in the White Sea.

Pent (Genertela): the wild Pent nomads, who ride horses and who herd cattle, sheep, and goats, live on this fair plateau. Winters are severe, their summers usually are rich and peaceful.

Porlaso (Pamaltela): also called the Island of Swamps. Some people claim Porlaso

soon will sink beneath the tides, though it has survived for centuries. This island is full of terrible dinosaurs and angry Red Elves.

Ralios (Genertela): the twin kingdoms of Tanisor and Sentanos rule the lowlands,

but the highlands have been wild since the Dawn. This is a fine temperate area with few severe winters and many pleasant summers.

Seshnela (Genertela): this wild land is full of exotic creatures like centaurs, satyrs, and dragonewts. Here also live the immortal Luatha, who destroyed ancient Seshnela, and whose tall raiders still sally forth from their stronghold.

Slon (Pamaltela): a race of dwarfs inhabit this temperate land. They also rule many human cities, whose inhabitants pretend to be dwarfs. The dwarfs treat as animals the backcountry aboriginal peoples of Slon.

Sozganjio (Pamaltela): also known as the Endless Marsh. This is a steaming marsh

inhabited by dinosaurs and Red Elves. So vast is this area that here three savage kings, each a descendant of the same hero, claim huge empires, yet none has ever heard of the other two.

Tarien (Pamaltela): a wide grassland with relatively few humans, but sometimes thick with lizard men and their great beasts.

Tarmo (Pamaltela): a high and rugged wilderness, with a spine of mountains whose

great peaks are icy all year. Mostly nightriders, frights, and gigantic man-eating trolls inhabit this land.

Teleos (East Homeward Ocean): southerners who used small boats to follow the Barankoom current settled this island. For centuries Teleos was called the Pirate Kingdom, until destroyed by the God Learners.

Trowjang (Genertela): the southeast corner of the continent is subtropic throughout, warmed by southern sea currents. It is quite wild, even in Teshnos whose rivers are well-populated by Yelm-worshiping tribes. Primitive natives inhabit the interior, warring with the elder races. Fishers and pirates populate

the coasts.

Valind's Glacier (North Genertela): endless ice covering sea and land. Only ice demons live here.

Vormain (Kahar's Sea): an ancient seat of empire and naval powers, this is a complex land of intricate customs, ferocious warriors, and exotic magics.

Vralos (Pamaltela): several city-states thrive here, dominated by the merchant king, the Patriarch of Nikosdros. The poor speak a Genertelan dialect and are notably paler than the rulers, but there is much mixed blood here.

Wastes (Genertela): These are the deadlands of the god, Genert, who was killed by chaos in the Gods Age. Ungodly storms rage over it, leaving only the hardest

of life. There, protected by those terrible storms, live the animal nomads, who worship Waha the Butcher and believe Prax to be their Holy Land.

Zamokil (Pamaltela): A wide grassland inhabited by Agimori in the north, and by blue-skinned folk who are famous for their endurance and songs. Many now are ruled by the Kresh, who entered from the north many generations ago.

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Glorantha: Secrets of the Chaos Gods

Secrets of the Chaos Gods

What the Sword Broo Says

originally published in Lords of Terror

an earlier version was published in Tales of the Reaching Moon #8

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Can you tell me the truth about...?

The Lords of Terror

Where did the world come from?

The world was ripped from the Void of Chaos to torment each of us forever. One day Chaos will devour the world, and we will all be at peace again, forever.

Where did I come from?

The gods of this world tore you from chaos because they hate you and want to make you suffer. You were born from the suffering of your host-mother, and you in turn will make others suffer, through your life and the lives of the children

you spawn.

What happens after we die?

There is nothing after you die, if you are lucky. If you are trapped by life you

may be forced to return here again and again, or -- worse yet -- have an afterlife and remain there forever. Better to live for the present, and hope that the future holds nothing for you. Until that day, you must give your service to Ralzakark, or he will make the pain of your life last an eternity, as

his does.

Why am I here?

There is no meaning or purpose to life. It just is. You must take what you can.

You must live and suffer, and make the world please you, if you are strong enough. If you are not you will die. You are here to spread death and destruction through the world, hastening its inevitable end in chaos and entropy. Hate and anger are the only comforts which exist, and vengeance against

the world your only hope. Fill your soul with them, as I have mine.

How do we do magic?

All magic requires the enslavement or annihilation of lesser entities to prolong

your own life and existence. Slave spirits provide small magics. If you are strong enough, you will rip power directly from one of the gods of chaos, who have great power. Learn all the magic you can, for to do otherwise is folly.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Lunar Gods?

It is hard to tell whether the Lunar Way is favorable or not. Many broo think so, and have given their allegiance to the Red Goddess, helping her destroy the world. Others do not, and plot to destroy the Lunar Empire. Some say one thing but do another, as everyone always does who serves their own interests.

Ralzakark allows the Lunars to go enter his domain, but he is only using them for his own purposes. You should do as he and I do, and take what power you can from them while they are here.

...Monotheists?

These men from the West use a kind of magic called sorcery, which does not rely on spirits or gods, but takes from both. It is very powerful, and you should learn some if you are lucky enough to find someone to teach you. Then you will be able to Tap power from anyone or anything you want. Some of the sorcerers think they can understand the powers of chaos, and even use them for their own ends, but they only hasten their own destruction. This is proven by their actions, for it is they who awakened Ralzakark and Dorastor so long ago, and who

are now our lord's abused slaves.

...Other Gods?

All of the gods are prey to the secret powers of chaos, even the gods of chaos themselves. If they were all destroyed, it would be to our profit. Some chaotics, like the ogres, can pretend to be like one of these gods, and even

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gain magic from worshipping them, but it is very dangerous, and you should not try it. Take what you can from these gods and their followers, and work with me to bring about their doom.

...Primitive Spirits?

Even as the beings of the mundane world are the prey of our spears and stones, these spirits are the prey of our spells and shamans. They are weak and unprotected, and so are easy to conquer and steal from. When you are ready I will allow you to fight one, and keep it as a slave if you defeat it.

The Lords of Terror

Bagog, Poison

This goddess devours any living thing, and the magicians among her scorpion people can give birth to monsters by eating intelligent creatures. The Scorpion Folk are our allies, but would take all that we have from us if they had the chance. You should do the same to them, for your first duty is to yourself.

Cacodemon, Anarchy

The Cacodemon is the embodiment of anarchy and destruction. It is the strongest piece of Wakboth left in the world, and is well-suited for its purpose. Beware of its ogre followers, for they are mindless and disorganized like their master,

and cannot be trusted. Encourage them in their self-destructive violence, for everything they destroy is one less thing that you will have to.

Gbaji, Liberator

Gbaji was the child of Jotimam, and he tried to destroy this part of the world, which the humans call Genertela. He was defeated in the Darkness, but hid within

the fabric of the world, and came again centuries ago to release us all from the

agony of empty existence.

Gbaji's reappearance should have signaled an end to our wretched existence.

Instead, the gods of life resisted their preordained end, and cast Gbaji out of this world back into the Void, where he awaits his next rebirth. The foe Arkat led this fight, but was doomed and destroyed in the process, as are all of our enemies.

Humakt, Death

Humakt is the human name for Death. They call him a servant of life, but we know

that he is the greatest of the Lords of Terror, for he is the Harbinger of Chaos, and brings death wherever he goes. His sword made the great wounds in the

world through which chaos oozed, and it liberated Gbaji in the Chaos Wars, so that now he is present in all of the world. We gladly use the powers he grants us, to slay the foes of our lord Ralzakark.

Jraktal, Tap

Jraktal led the invasion of the southern part of the world, which humans call Pamaltela. He did not return to us. Humans say that he was defeated, but he survives, as the use of Tapping among the Men of the West proves to us. Each time they call on him, all unknowingly, they hasten the end of the world.

Kajabor, Entropy

Kajabor is the God-Killer, who destroys all vestiges of matter and energy, annihilating every possibility of individual or united existence. Entities slain

by Kajabor have never returned, and even their names have been lost after being pulled from the universe. He was the strongest of the chaos gods.

Kajabor was enslaved by the gods, and his powers bound forever into the world.

Thus, his destruction is part of the world even though he can no longer act, and

entropy will eventually destroy all of it, matter and energy, beyond even memory. Then we will be free.

Malia, Disease

Malia is Queen of the World. No place is free of her touch -- she goes where she

pleases, spreading her diseases and plagues across all lands. She is the embodiment and source of the world's illness, the Cosmic Disease, and she provides her gifts freely to all who ask. She is as natural as water, yet if the

gods of the world were ever all in harmony she would disappear. But this will never happen.

Pocharngo, Mutation

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Life futilely resists being destroyed by Chaos, but Pocharngo does not destroy -- he changes. When the old world rebelled he turned it into a vast sludge of protoplasm, and sent out lesser monsters to hasten this change, which survived. You can gain great power from worshipping Pocharngo, but you will be changed, warped and twisted in body, mind, and soul. Such is the price of power.

Primal Chaos, the Chaos Ooze

True chaos is impersonal: less than mindless, naught but a primal force. To know

it is to be it. Each of us can easily touch it, and take a piece of it into us forever, and all glory in the experience. You will have the chance when you are ready, since you were not born so blessed, as I was. If you are lucky you will gain great power from the contact. If you are cursed, you will probably die, although it might make you stronger instead.

Ragnaglar, the Mad God

Ragnaglar sought to destroy the world, and he enlisted the forces of chaos and brought them into the world. He made us live -- curse his dead soul. Malia and Thed joined him in the Unholy Trio, cursed by him and cursing us in return. He was destroyed by the Bull, who allowed us to live so that he could punish us forever. We bless him more than any other god, for he alone caused more destruction and death than everything else in the world together.

Ralzakark, Lord

Ralzakark is our lord, and we worship and serve him faithfully. His requirements

may seem unnatural to you, but you must obey him without question, or you will feel his anger for all eternity. Just be glad that he has not required you to prove your loyalty by becoming one of the castrati. Ralzakark has come to prepare the world for its destruction, and everything he does is for that goal, though it take another thousand years to complete.

Thed, Rape

Our accursed mother was a slave of Ragnaglar, and inflicted our pain on us when she brought us into the world. She teaches us her ways, to inflict more pain on the creatures of the world. She curses us and so is a part of each of us, even as we are all parts of her. She blesses us with her fertility, to bring more destruction to life. She hates us as we hate her.

Wakboth, the Devil

Wakboth is the senseless, terrifying, and wanton disregard for life, continuous brutal destruction. Twisted and foul, Wakboth is the force which defiles the world and makes the gods suffer for our troubles. He is the greatest example we can take, and you should seek to become more like him with every thought or action. He is our brother, for his parents were cursed Thed and hated Ragnaglar. Wakboth was dismembered by the Uroxi, but his pieces are still here, infecting the world, and we know where they are. One day we will put him back together, and then he will complete the destruction he started in the Darkness.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Chaos Array

Chaos in Glorantha

What Do You Want? Shut Up!

What the Broo Shaman Says

Cult of Malia

Cult of Thed

Eat Your Enemy in Secret

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Glorantha: Spirit Cults in Glorantha

Spirit Cults in Glorantha

by Greg Stafford

originally published in Tales of the Reaching Moon #14

Drifting about the spirit plane of Glorantha are lost spirits of great power: exiled gods, the ghosts of heroes, and similar beings. A shaman can sometimes contact one of these spirits, and form an alliance of mutual benefit. Such alliances are called spirit cults.

Spirit cults are not an uncommon Gloranthan phenomenon. Though spirit cults have

similarities to ordinary cults, temporary membership in most spirit cults is rarely frowned on by any religion. Thus, the storm-worshippers of Enkloso frequently call upon the darkness demon Revillo without offending Orlanth. Everywhere that spirit magic is popular, people can contact one or more special spirits and provide it with worship in return for knowledge of special magic. Spirit cults are less common in civilized areas, for the spirits themselves are weaker here. Many spirits, especially malignant ones, have been driven into the wilderness. Magic lands such as Kimos or Prax have many powerful spirit cults. The shaman must first contact the spirit. Usually a shaman must cast a special summon spell specific to the spirit (hence Summon Frog Woman, Summon Snake-Eater, etc.). These spirits are usually local, and can only be contacted in their own native area. The spirit of Raven, for instance, may only be summoned in the Wastelands and Pent. The Traveling Stone must be contacted at the stone itself in Dragon Pass. The Snake-Eater's minions can only be obtained at the Wheeled Tower in Kimos. Sometimes a focus of power (an idol, relic, or holy object) is also required. In most lands, such holy objects are often held by long-established pseudo-cults or shamanic traditions. Thus, it is rare that an independent shaman in Prax can contact Oakfed, for the pieces of charred wood

required to contact him are monopolized by the shamans who run his semi-permanent cult.

Once the spirit is contacted, it manifests itself at the site, where the shaman should have assembled his followers. All present now participate in a special worship ceremony, which sets up a link between the spirit and its new worshipers. Some spirits may require additional restrictions of its worshipers -- for instance, Frog Woman requires her worshipers to follow special rituals when killing amphibians!

The spirit can grant no benefits to its followers until it has been worshiped. At least once a season, a worship service must be held in which each of the spirit's vowed worshipers dedicate themselves to it. Otherwise, the link with the spirit is broken, and the whole process must be begun again.

As long as the spirit is being successfully worshiped once a season, the shaman and worshipers can sacrifice for the spirit's single spell, thus gaining divine magic. The spell learned is specific to the spirit. It is sometimes unique such as Frog Woman's Leap spell, but sometimes is a more common spell, such as the Ruby Tree's Warding.

A rare spirit knows more than one Rune spell. Even these spirits can normally grant only their main Rune spell to worshipers. During some seasons, the worshipers can sacrifice for the spirit's other special spells. In Prax, these Great Spirits include only Malia, Oakfed, Wild Hunter, and Zola Fel. Sometimes a shaman can contact an actual minor deity, who possesses the common Rune spells. During rare seasons, the worshipers will be able to sacrifice for the spirit's common Rune spells. Such spirits are minor gods, and probably worshiped as true deities somewhere on Glorantha. Almost all such spirits require special actions on the part of their worshipers.

When a shaman contacts a god using this method, the god acts as does any other spirit. Such worship is usually considered false and heretical by the god's "true" initiates.

In Prax most shamans are members of the Waha cult. Thus, most shamans who contact the spirits will have access to the common Divine spells of Extension and Spellteaching (for Waha spells), in addition to some special Waha magics.

Glorantha: Staves from the Storm Priest

Staves from the Storm Priest

The Barbarian Priest Speaks

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Gods of the Wind

Where did the world come from?

Dead the word 'til Umath the Free,

Broke the sun's curse and moved the world.

Umathsons and stalwart liegemen set the world in its present ways.

Now all feel the world's winds at their backs.

Where did I come from?

Humans are wind-born, freest of free.

Orlanth Breath-giver gives you first lungful.

Follow the winds, like Orlanth before you.

Yours is the path-choice, make it and live.

Why do we die?

Stale the world was, unchanging and solid.

No one could die, so no one could live.

Orlanth and Humakt, brothers in bravery.

Brought Death to the world and gave life an edge.

Slew they the monsters who undying plagued us.

First of them unchange, who binds us to sloth.

Now there is Death, who prompts us to live life,

Slayer of foes who brings respite to friends.

What happens after we die?

Death is a comrade, a tool for our needs.

Orlanth found it, and fought it in turn,

Defeated Death fully, and brought the Sun out,

Fulfilled is Quest, the Lightbringers' glory.

Death is the boatman, guide to last journey,

Carries you safe to the gods' brazen hall.

There presides Orlanth, his table for heroes,

Tell him your stories, take your right place.

Why am I here?

Life is for living, feel to your fullest.

Challenge the challengers, carve out your place.

Faithful to friends, relentless to foes

Loving to kith, fulfilling your wyrd.

How do I do magic?

Great among gifters, storm gods gave magic,

Taught runes to priests, first among followers.

Priests teach wind spells, wise men learn them.

Magic lets all men work with the world.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...Aldrya?

Great among goddesses, Aldrya gave forests.

Bulwark of old world, preserver of trees,

She holds her counsel, favors not good or evil,

Friend or foe at the change of a season.

...Chaos?

Foulest of slime, curse of existence,

Twisted the god gifts, bred many foul monsters.

Only the Lightbringers, conquerors of Chaos,

Could right the wronged world, restore the Law.

...Kyger Litor?

Mother of the trolls saw the world born.

Crawler in darkness, eater of dead.

Hungry and cruel, like the dark days of winter,

Lurking at gates, waits for men to grow slothful.

...Lunar Goddess?

Lover of Chaos, mocks the gods' blessings,

Tangles the wind in her secret shackles.
Gives blasphemous secrets to lure the unwary,
Destroy her now or the world is enslaved.
...Magasta?
Mover of Seas, changing forever.
Unlike other old gods, this god can change.
Orlanth fought him five times, and conquered,
Freed him again to rule his deep realm,
...Monotheists?
Barren-souled truthseekers, boast of great magic,
Work tawdry wonders in Malkion's name.
Woe to the atheists, they die without gods,
Spirits sink slowly, fall empty to hell.
...Mostal?
Deep in the earth, stone god sits rocklike,
Frozen like elder, wracked with age.
No winds for Mostal, no challenges met,
Pity the dwarf god, pity his people.
...Pamalt?
Ruler of plainsfolk, southland's green glory,
Wise is Pamalt, though he knows honor not.
No call to glory rings in his ear,
No hero's path calls him, his thoughts are too small.
...Spirits?
Great were the gods who fought Orlanth's gifts,
Many were broken or made to be small.
Now the survivors are spirits for bushmen,
Shamans coerce their small magic spells.
Notice and praise those spirits sundered,
Some can be helpful, perform useful deeds.
Do not give them worship, keep from them your soulforce,
That is for King Orlanth, their conqueror and liege.
...Yelm?
Yelm ruled a world that was stale and changeless.
Orlanth, his enemy, released freedom for all.
Yelm met Death, he fled down the dark path,
Only Orlanth and Lightbringers walk that path alive.
Orlanth the liberator, freed his foe Yelm,
Brought him to life into a slave's station.
Yelm follows his path, unable to break it,
But Orlanth is free to follow the winds.
Gods of the Wind
Chalana Arroy, the healer
Her touch heals all, Lightbringers' white lady,
No hurt can withstand her soft ministrations,
She healed our chieftain when pain made him mad.
She healed the world, made life come again.
Daga, drought and famine
Traitor sister Molanni, Umath's daughter,
Bore deadly Daga, sparer of none.
Orlanth confronted him, fought his grim nephew,
Beat down the foe, drove out the enemy.
Daga is sealed, trapped in the Jar.
But vile enemies conspire, open the jar,
Daga swims out, to face Orlanth once more.
Death to the friends of pain and despair.
The Earth Goddesses
Three are the bounteous goddesses of earth,
Three the number of their dark sisters.
All are our allies, friends of the storm,
Orlanth claims all earth as his kin.

The giving goddesses; grandmother, mother, and daughter.
Asrelia the crone, keeper of good things.
Ernalda the mother, bride to great Orlanth.
Voria, spring's daughter, herald of youth.

The grasping goddesses; sisters to the kindly ones.

Ty Kora Tek, hag-lurker in darkness.
Maran Gor, violent sister to kindly Ernalda.
Babeester Gor, vengeful guardian, jealous of the earth's rights.
Ernalda, earth mother
Mother of all, wise spouse to King Orlanth,
All hail and protect fair mistress of earth,
Every man must revere the arts of all women,
Mother and lover, her needs are our wants.
Eurmal
No jape nor trick too hard for the Trickster,
Stole fire from Yelm to warm all mankind,
Was both boon and trouble to his traveling companions,
Stands loyally by Orlanth his lord.
Gagarth, the wild hunter
Gagarth the foul wind, hot and fetid,
The Hunt seeking lost and lonely spirits,
Drives the devout off their path to eternity,
No one is safe if Gagarth learns their name.
Heler, god of rain
Orlanth took Heler from Magasta's dull lair,
Used him as weapon in wars against Daga,
Heler the staunch, his name is a by-word,
Sheep to him sacred, Daga his foe.
Humakt, god of death and war
Orlanth's fell brother, noble Death-Finder,
Humakt is guardian, protector from foes.
Humakt brought Death to ennoble and free us
Gave us struggle to make our lives full.
Inora, the white princess
When mountains extend their cold to the lowlands,
Inora, white princess, dances amongst us.
Issaries, god of trade and communication
Issaries found the way of the dead,
Broke Darkness of Silence which covered the world.
Issaries chose trails, was scout for the Lightbringers,
Now merchants and heralds worship his name.
Kolath, father of winds
Kolath's great progeny, Seven Winds of Glorantha,
Four names are known, North, East, South, and West.
Three names are secret, Upper, Lower, and None.
Honor them all, their life is your breath.
Lhankor Mhy, god of knowledge
Finder of riddles, he knows the world's secrets,
Rescued all wisdom from ignorance's gloom.
Helped save the world during the Gods War,
Now lawspeakers and elders call for his praise.
Mastakos, charioteer of Orlanth
Mastakos Mover, the God with No Home,
Vigorous god, drives immortal storm chariot.
He alone handles Orlanth's mighty steeds.
Servant of Storm God, mover of men.
Orlanth, King of the Gods, Storm God
Orlanth Adventurous makes change in the world,
Rescued us all from stagnation and death.
Orlanth Thunderous brings life-giving rains,
Blesses the plowman, blesses his herds.
Orlanth Lightbringer led the Seven,
Rescued all life, all earth lauds his name.
Orlanth Rex, King of the Gods,
Rules in the Heaven and takes tribute from all.
Umath, father of the storm gods
He was born with great noise, deafening, disabling,
Like thunder in a cavern,
Like living in a horn.
His visage rolled over the earth with anger,
Rumbled across the sky with greed,
Filled the space with his gray brows and thunders.
Umath's five sons ruled the world after him.

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But he made the place for his sons and us to live.
Urox the Storm Bull, berserker god, chaos-killer
Untamed beast, god of savage passion,
His mad berserk fury can even beat chaos.
So doth wild Storm Bull lead the war against Chaos.
He holds the vile Devil under mountains of stone.
Valind, god of winter
Savage Valind, god of winter,
Sweeps the earth with ice from the north.
Ally to Orlanth, sometimes wayward and willful,
Each year takes the earth in his grip.

See also:
Pantheons of Glorantha: The Orlanth Pantheon
A Personal View of Orlanthi Culture

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Glorantha: Tales of the Night Hag

Tales of the Night Hag

Secrets Of The Kingdom Of The Trolls

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Troll Deities

Where did the world come from?

The dark has always existed. Once, it spawned seas, the cursed heavens, and the harsh surface where we now live. Someday it will swallow everything back into itself. And we and the dark will go on forever.

Where do we come from?

Once we all lived in the harmony of Wonderhome, Kyger Litor's wombplace.

The burning horror of death drove us forth to the Komor [Hurtplace], the surface

world. Now we struggle in agony to survive.

Why do we die?

Death is the natural state of the universe. Our gods are alive, and keep us alive. We must be grateful to have a chance at all. But we know that all life must end someday.

What happens after we die?

Fearsome death is, yet it is the only return to the underworld. When we die, our

spirits meet with Kyger Litor in Hell.

Why are we here?

We are here to serve our masters, to be served by our slaves, and to feast upon our enemies.

How do we do magic?

All magic ultimately comes from the shadows. Our gods know all the secrets of night, and so we have the most powerful magic in the world. Our priestesses know

secrets that would send members of other races screaming into madness. Our gods do deeds that would blast the souls of lesser deities. And our home, the darkness, has secrets of ultimate power that have never been revealed.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...Aldrya?

This is a good food goddess. Her children can be annoying to the point of death,

but they are well worth the killing and eating.

...Chaos?

When we were forced out of Wonderhome to grim Komor, Chaos came to rob us of even the miserable lands we had left. But we fought it, killed it, and ate it. Now chaos is driven into the hinterland.

...the Lunar Goddess?

New gods are being born all the time. This one consorts with vile gods who blasted our race with curses. She brings light where no light should be. Yet she

tempers the harsh light of the sun. And she controls and subdues the monsters of

chaos. We cannot yet say whether her rise has been for ill or well.

...Magasta?

The gods of the oceans are old, and they hide many mysteries. But their greatest

mysteries are from the darkness, the oldest of all.

...Monotheists?

This is a burdensome human religion from a land near the setting sun.

They are troubled with castes, strange rituals, and a plethora of confusing saints. Yet their worthless god gives no rune spells. Arkat came from their land

and pillaged their religion's secrets for us to use.

...Mostal?

This is another good food god. Some of his children are immobile stone, and others, called dwarfs, can move around. They are often clad in poison metal and

rarely come aboveground, but they are the tastiest of all. The sweetest meats are the dearest.

...Orlanth?

This human war god battled us when we came to the Komor. When he could not win, he fled to the Underworld, seeking Death to wield against us.

When he returned with the Enemy, we were stronger and could endure its weakened light. He and his worshipers fight us still. We have faced far grimmer foes than

he and we still survive.

...Pamalt?

Pamalt and his legions of servant gods and peoples killed our warriors and maimed the hero troll Moorgarki. Now Moorgarki's children are the mutant jungle trolls, who cannot bear the clean cold of the mountains and glaciers. Someday all trolls shall take vengeance upon pitiless Pamalt for this misdeed.

...Spirits?

Some spirits are broken pieces of dead gods. The most powerful and useful of them come from the source of all magic -- the Darkness. Other spirits are the souls of those that have died -- our ancestors. Our shamans know how to deal with all types of spirits.

...Yelm?

This bad god forced us out of the primeval Wonderhome. He crippled our gods. When we fled to the Komor, he followed us here to persecute us.

But now he must flee around the universe, eternally pursued by Xentha, goddess of night. His sons have been eaten and broken by our gods. And Subere has shown us secret parts of Hell untouched by Yelm's burning presence.

Troll Deities

Argan Argar, god of surface darkness

The burning death destroyed Wonderhome, broke our gods, made us flee. When we came to the Komor, everything was strange. We made many mistakes.

Then came Argan Argar. He showed us the correct ways of surface life. He taught us our enemies' languages and ways. And he conquered fire gods and enslaved them

for our benefit.

Arkat Kingtroll, killer of Gbaji, knower of sorcery

This is the cleverest of all trolls. He fooled humans, elves, and dwarfs, and stole their most precious secrets for our use. They are still being fooled by him.

Dehore, father of shades

There are many types of darkness spirits, shadows, and shades. All owe allegiance to Dehore. Our shamans know Dehore well, and so we can command all the beings of darkness, too.

Himile, god of cold

Winter is our friend. We may walk openly, for there are none that dare hurt us or make us afraid. Himile's cold rushes down from his palace in the north. The weak gods of summer flee him and the hollri -- his ice demons.

Our enemies and our food hide away, paralyzed with fear of us and Himile.

Kyger Litor, troll ancestress

Kyger Litor, our mother, has given us much. Her secret magic protects us, gives us power, and cripples our enemies. Her divine family teaches us how to live, how to work, how to fight, and how to kill. We are her children, and we love her.

Kyger Litor, our mother, has suffered much. The dead sun burned her and drove her from Wonderhome. Chaos gods like Gbaji maimed her and crippled her children.

Here in Komor, enemies battle us desperately and persistently.

We are strong, and feast on our foes. Gbaji is dead, and we have killed much chaos. The sun hides from us each night and each winter, when we roam the earth in might. We bless Kyger Litor for this.

We give our troll children Kyger Litor's blessing. We kill, fight, work, and live for her and our other gods, her servants. We give her our worship and power, precious gifts. She is our mistress, and we must do her deeds all our lives.

Subere, goddess of hell darkness

When the sun came long ago, its unendurable brightness drove our gods and us from Wonderhome. Its fiery rays burnt and slew many inhabitants of the Underworld. But many creatures sought and found refuge in Subere. She still dwells in Hell, the only god never tainted or blasted by the Enemy's unholy light.

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Xentha, goddess of night

Half the universe is ruled by Kyger Litor, and Xentha is her steward to blanket the world with night. Her shadows and children, such as Argan Argar, cover the world and make it safe for us. She brings us darkness, ever-chasing the sun around the world.

Xiola Umbar, goddess of protection darkness, mistress of the dark deep within.

Xiola Umbar is the weakest of our gods. The most inferior and helpless entities seek refuge in her. But she has healing powers that can help even the mightiest Zorak Zoran berserk, and which we all value. She is precious to us.

Zorak Zoran, war god

Zorak Zoran is the strongest of our gods. Only the mightiest warriors worship him and can survive the battle frenzy he grants. But, though he kills chaos and our enemies, he also sometimes kills trolls. He is dangerous to both us and our foes.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Troll Pantheon

Introduction to Glorantha: The Elder Races

A Personal View of Troll Culture

Cult of Kyger Litor

Cult of Zorak Zoran

Cult of Xiola Umbar

Cult of Argan Argar

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Glorantha: Tales of the Wastes

Tales of the Wastes

Wisdom From The Tribal Shaman

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Nomad Gods

Where did the world come from?

The Dead Gods made the world so long back no one remembers. They were strong and

made the golden age. Rabbits came freely to the eating. If you dropped a seed you had to jump back when the tree sprang up with much fruit. But the Dead Gods failed at last-they tried to deal fairly with Chaos. Then the Great Darkness came. Chaos monsters melted the trees and turned the earth to stone. Only Storm Bull and his friends fought

Waha is Storm Bull's son. He came out of the soil into a world of darkness and chaos haunts. People still walked the blasted land, dazed and dying of stupidity. But Waha the Tracker gathered us and showed new ways to live. Waha Khan-of-khans freed the Daughters of Eiritha from evil spirits so we could have herds. Waha Father-of-khans founded many families of his own blood. Waha Killer-of-chaos cleansed the land to make it safe.

Where did I come from?

At first, everything starved alike: bison, impala, high llama, and human. There was too little food. Then Waha made the Survival Covenant. Some became animals able to eat thornbushes, weeds, and roots of the earth. Others, who became people, ate the plant-eaters. We drew lots to see who would eat and who would be

eaten. In every case but the morocanth, who cheated, we humans won and became people. That is why we ride and eat the herd animals, and why morocanth are people also.

Why am I here?

You are a relic from the Golden Age -- you hold the holy life force. Your fathers and mothers lived through the Great Darkness and so, through them, did you. They lived, and you live, to fight chaos and to spread life.

Why do we die?

Before Waha came, everything was dead or dying, and that is the way of the world. Waha taught us death's secrets; how to use it for life. He taught us the Peaceful Cut to return our sister-animals to bliss within the womb of Eiritha, supplying our tribe with food from the goddess. And Waha taught us the warlike blows, whereby we send our foes to dark hells.

What happens after we die?

Our souls go to the gloomy, silent Land of the Dead. Eiritha is there, with endless ghost herds, and Waha is there, too.

How do I do magic?

The Horned Man came many years ago and taught our shamans how to talk to spirits

from lost ages. These spirits do mighty magic, but the mightiest magic is done by our khan, who can call the Founder of our tribe to war.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...Aldrya?

Once the world was covered with lush plants, all of which stemmed from this goddess. She failed her people because she did not see what chaos would do to her.

...Chaos?

Everything bad, painful, and ugly in this world came because of Chaos. Chaos is evil and should be killed by every living soul. Bless Storm Bull who fights so ferociously.

...Ernalda?

Once this goddess was everything's mother. She did not fight chaos, thinking her peace would save her. It did not. Now only Eiritha, her best daughter, stays to aid us.

...Kyger Litor?

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The Mother of Darkness is our friend and our foe. She helps us against chaos, for she hates it as we do. But she also wields the forces of shadow which plunder our herds and make our women barren.

...the Lunar Goddess

The Red Goddess is evil, brought by bad men to destroy us and our kind. She was born at the edge of the world, but reaches everywhere, even into our hearts, with temptation, lies, and fear.

...Magasta?

The sea khan was a mighty god before the Great Darkness. He tried to fight chaos

through cunning and tricks but, like everyone else, failed. Now he is a shadow, pierced forever by the invisible spear of the evil gods.

...Monotheists?

These dupes are under the full sway of chaos, for their god teaches them no true

god magic. They curse the name of Storm Bull who scourges the world of chaos. They

are fools and are without souls.

...Mostal?

This old god lost because he tried to fight chaos with tools instead of with his

whole soul and body. Like the other gods of old, he is now dead and an empty hulk.

...Orlanth?

This god is dangerous. His tricks allowed evil into the world. He did great wrongs, but when he tried to fix them he made more mistakes which made the world

even worse.

...Spirits?

All the world was hurt by the darkness of chaos. We escaped because of Storm Bull and his son. Others were unlucky and now only exist as bodiless spirits, neither living nor dead. Some are old companions, and some our ancient foes.

...Yelm?

This old god tried to fight chaos with high rules and distant powers. Like all the rest who did not fight the evil with their whole selves, he died and is now but a hollow glowing shell.

Nomad Gods

Daka Fal, guide to the ancestors

When the world was cursed by chaos, the people who survived were hard-pressed.

They were beset by spirits and demons, and the living and dead mingled in a

communal horror of confusion and fear. Then Daka Fal walked the world and

separated the living from the dead, setting each in his place, telling all their

duties and affairs. This established order in the world, and was the first successful worship.

Eiritha, herd mother

Eiritha is our cow-mother. She sends us calves and helps cows and women make rich milk for our tribe. All of the people and herd beasts of Prax are her children. We love her and spend our lives to protect her.

Foundchild, the huntsman

Waha brought Foundchild when we were all starving and fighting each other.

Foundchild taught us how to use the tools of war-spears, bows, and throwing sticks -- to kill food animals instead of each other.

Gagarth, the wild hunter

The fierce winds which follow Gagarth sting like red-hot hail. He rides a devil steed which gallops upon air, land, or smoke, and he holds a long-reaching barbed spear. His friends are drooling spirit wolves and a howling horde of the dead. Gagarth rides in all the worlds, seeking food for his hunt. No one is safe

from him.

Genert, the dead god

Genert ruled in the golden age, when our lands were a moist garden. Food was everywhere and chaos had not yet come. When chaos came, Genert mustered his clans: the golden people, the copper warriors, the sky-spears, the white elves, and our ancestors. And he fought as hard as he could and as well as he could. But he and his armies were destroyed and his garden turned into an acid bog. Now

the old ways are gone forever.

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Storm Bull, chaos-killer

Storm Bull is the best god of the universe, for he alone stopped chaos when he killed the bad devil. When everything else was dead and sick unto death, he bellowed his war-cry and charged across the universe to meet chaos with his strength. Now he rules the sky, and his storms forever scour the world. He lives

in the ruins of the Dead Gods' palace and sends his winds in all directions, seeking chaos.

Waha the Butcher, Founder

Waha is the son of Eiritha and the Storm Bull, and all life must be grateful and

give him respect. He saved us and made the world livable. His deeds are many - every one in our tribe knows them. Waha Flamebringer tamed Oakfed, the corrupt god of wildfire, and turned him into the friendly campfire. Waha the Wise taught

us our sign language, and he taught us our knot language. Waha Father-of-khans is the father of all our chieftains. Waha the Restrainer made the earth be still. Waha Khan-of-khans freed the herd beasts' Protectresses and liberated the

Founders of our tribes. Waha the Provider taught men the Peaceful Cut, which sends our beasts' souls back to the Mother of Beasts when they are butchered. Waha the Warrior taught us weapons work, so we can protect our herds. Waha the Protector dug a great canal and he ordered it to digest the foul body of the Devil which lay there. Waha the Teacher taught us to ride our animals.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Praxian Pantheon

A Personal View of Praxian Culture

Cult of Waha

Cult of Eiritha

Cult of the Storm Bull

Cult of Daka Fal

Spirit Cults in Glorantha

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Glorantha: Talking to the Moon Woman

Talking to the Moon Woman

What The Lunar Priestess Says

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Can you tell me the truth about...?

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Where did the world come from?

The Creator made the world and everything in it. He made the two races of gods first, the Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos. Neither understood the other,

but each tried to imitate the Creator and so made the imperfect world we live in.

Where did I come from?

The Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos fought each other to destruction, and

where they died lay a heap of ashes and slag. From that matter Glorantha, goddess of compassion, created First Woman. She bore the ancestors of mankind, whether they came from stone, dirt, wood, animals, or some human demigod. The races of people grew healthy and numerous, and you are of their descent.

Why do we die?

The disharmony of the Celestial Court and the Tribe of Chaos created an illness which sickened the Creator unto death. As a result all the world must now die too.

What happens after we die?

All souls, living and dead, move within the compassionate harmony of the world.

When you die you shed the gross matter of your life and ascend to a more pure plane of existence for peace and joy. When you are again purged and whole you are reborn into a new body for a new life.

Why am I here?

The races of mankind were created to restore health to the Creator and his works. We live to purify ourselves and, thereby, purify the wretched parts of the world and reunite them with the Creator. Our duty is to restore unity, harmony, and joy to the world of the living and the dead, heal the Creator, and attain the bliss of immortality.

How do I do magic?

The world is filled with invisible powers. The Red Goddess places all those powers within your grasp, and you can integrate them in many ways: spirits may aid you, gods can help you, or you can manipulate energy with your own force of will. All the best magic can be used to heal the world.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All the gods who came before the Lunar Goddess are obsolete. These obsolete gods

include the sky gods, earth goddesses, sea gods, darkness gods, and primitive spirits. They are stuck in their old ways, which once hurt the Creator unto death. The Red Goddess is the part of the Creator which has already been healed.

We worship her and the New Gods.

...Aldrya?

Aldrya is the wild goddess, untouched by civilization, untamed by any human. She

is all which is wild -- both the dancing light and the sinister dark. Her children are innocent people, simple servants to the spirit, born of wood.

Aldrya and her subject spirits adorn the metaphysical Body of the Goddess. They are the Goddess' hair and clothing.

...Chaos?

The Life/Death duality of the mortal world is mirrored in the Chaos/Divine duality of the immortal world. The gods of Glorantha fear Chaos in the way that living mortals fear death. But even chaos can be conquered and harnessed, as proved by the Red Goddess. Each thing, monstrous or metaphysical, has its place for those who understand the entirety of the cosmos, even if its place is only to be a precautionary tale.

...Kyger Litor?

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Within us all lurks a frightening shadow, hiding and ready to pounce upon us in a moment of fear. The Red Goddess has conquered those inner secrets, so no longer fears. Kyger Litor herself must be cured to no longer fear the world, so that the world will no longer fear her. In the metaphysical Body of the Goddess the trolls represent the stomach and bowels -- digestion.

...Magasta?

The sea gods have always been secret initiates of the lunar way, for their erratic tides are caused by the ancient Blue Moon. The sea heals, and the fear that mankind feels of the sea is the fear of a health unknown to their mortal bodies. The sea is the blood of the goddess.

...Monotheists?

The god of the monotheists is visible to the Red Goddess. She alone has mastered his identity and secrets, and can use those natural powers called sorcery as her own. He is the unhealed Creator, weakened and abused by his worshipers.

...Mostal?

Just as some parts of your body are soft, like muscle and organs, so are some part of the goddess. Yet others are hard and unyielding, like your bone or the stone of the earth. That is Mostal, the bones of our Goddess.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth is the breath of the Creator, stale and wheezing out a troubled existence. His creed is change and freedom, yet he is unfree and unchangeable. He resists the Goddess' liberation and suffers because of it, but with compassion the Red Goddess reaches out to him and will prevail. He shall be freed.

...Primitive Spirits?

The multitude of minor spirits of the world are like the other organs inside your body. Do not degrade them. When healed each, like you, will be a god. Some are important now, but all are equal before Eternity. Nurturing them brings equal healing and friendship to you. Help them.

...Yelm?

This proud god of emperors is regaining his divine strength and freedom through the liberation of his worshipers here in Peloria. Support him, praise him. The bright and shining fire of the universe is the keen mind and sharp eyes of the goddess.

Gods of the Lunar Pantheon

Annilla, the Blue Moon

Annilla is the secretive goddess of the Blue Moon, an unseen heavenly body which is responsible for the secret powers of Glorantha. She preserves the mysteries which empower the Red Moon.

Arkat, the western hero, the cleanser

We praise this misguided man who came from the western lands to destroy Gbaji the Deceiver, an evil spirit whom his allies called the Inward Shadow. Arkat destroyed that monster and scattered its fragments, liberating the pure light of

Nysalor which had been imprisoned and locked away. Arkat, a god now, suffers terribly for his secrets.

Creator

This entity, now crippled and stunted, is the spirit of the cosmos. The Red Goddess, bless her, has taken up the task of his healing. When she has succeeded, she will be his bride and queen.

Etyries, messenger

The goddess of communication and merchants was once a mortal being. She attained her status through the Red Goddess' magics. She is called the Tongue of the Goddess because of her eloquence.

Hon-eel the Dancer, Third Inspiration of Moonson, goddess of maize

Hon-eel is the goddess of maize. She discovered that wonderful plant and taught us how to use it. She is also important because, when still a mortal woman, she conquered enemies of the Empire who came from three directions.

Hwarin Dalthippa, the Conquering Daughter

This warrior woman led mighty armies and conquered the southern provinces for the Empire. She established a city of culture and beauty, made magic roads, and became the war goddess of her region.

Nysalor, the bright one, god of illumination

All humanity seeks to regain the immortality lost during the Gods War. The Red

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Goddess can show the way to it, thanks partly to the liberation offered by this bright god. Nysalor was created at the end of the Dawn Age and prepared the way for the birth of the Red Goddess.

Red Emperor

Our Red Emperor is one in a long line of wizard-kings, responsible only to their

mother, the Goddess of the Red Moon. Our emperors are immortal in that no natural death can claim them, though they can be slain in combat. Because of our

emperors' dedication and courage, many have been slain in defending and expanding the Empire. Each emperor maintains the policies of his predecessor, so

that our empire prospers as if ruled by a single mind, which indeed is true.

Red Goddess, goddess of the Red Moon

Our ruling goddess exemplifies all which our religion teaches. She began as a lost soul, unknowing her own power. Once initiated by the Seven Mothers she undertook hazardous tasks to awaken and assert herself. She grew, changed, and blazed the path which she has since taught to many. Now she is the heart of the new universe.

Seven Mothers, the recreators of the Red Goddess

The goddess prepared all the world for her coming, and these seven individuals came together to bring about her rebirth. In return the goddess taught them all her secrets, and they have achieved immortality. The seven may either be worshipped individually, or altogether. The seven branches of the cult act in harmony to familiarize outsiders with the stories of the Red Goddess. Just as the original mothers taught the Goddess, so do their holy folk teach people about her.

Yara Aranis, Second Inspiration of Moonson, Goddess of the Reaching Moon

This savage daughter of the Red Emperor was conceived with the intent to terrorize the horse nomads, and slay them if need be. The cult is more popular in the northern empire, but a shrine is included in all borderland temples.

Young Elementals

The Young Elementals are the servants of the Goddess. They are the raw material for the new world to be formed when the Creator is restored and the Red Goddess is accepted by all.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Lunar Pantheon

Cult of the Seven Mothers

Cult of the Crimson Bat

A Timeline of the History of the Lunar Empire

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Glorantha: The Chieftain Speaks

The Chieftain Speaks

Learning The Right Footpath

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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The Gods of Pamaltela

Where did the world come from?

The children of Yanmorla and Cronisper were the Old Gods: Lodril, Yelm, Bolongo,

and the others. When their children fought, the elders fled into the sky and earth. Then the children each made their own parts of the world.

That is where the world came from. From the family of the gods.

Where did I come from?

The Old Gods had great might and more free time than we do. Like us, they were amused by making beautiful and useful things. Sometimes they failed, and made things like jelmre or elves. One important thing they made was the first people:

the fathers and mothers of we Agimori. When Pamalt was chieftain, those people learned to have children, and you are their descendant.

That is where you come from. From your ancestors' success.

Why do we die?

When Pamalt was chieftain, the world was worse off than now. Sorcerers and evil gods invaded and everything was sick and dying. All the prophets prophesied only

a lifeless universe. The Old Gods were helpless and lost all their powers. Only Pamalt was strong. He led the Agimori on the Right Footpath to our new world.

Together we fought, and we wrestled Life back from the evil gods. So now everyone dies, just like in the old times, but we also come back to life again some day.

That is why we die. Because the world was changed.

What happens after we die?

Everyone, like you, has four parts: your body, breath, spirit, and mind. As long

as your spirit is on the Right Footpath, it is with Pamalt. Death is when your mind leaves your body, which is buried to sprout your lineage medicine plant. Your mind then rests with your breath in the Breath World. When you are ready, your breath dies too, and you go to sit on Pamalts council, mind and spirit together. If Pamalt's council needs to, they may send you back to earth as a child again.

That is what happens after you die. You visit the land of the gods and spirits.

Why am I here?

We are the Keepers. Pamalt gives us wonderful gifts and powers on the Right Footpath. We need to be born, live together, bear children, work in harmony with

the world, and die.

That is why you are here. To be happy.

How do I do magic?

We learn magic from the breath of the Right Footpath. The most wise among us can

sometimes even contact the Old Gods this way. To learn magic, you must send your

mind to the Breath World. There you meet a challenge to learn the magic. Bigger magics are protected by harder challenges.

That is how you get magic. By struggle and courage, just as you get everything good.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me truly about ...

...Aldrya?

The jungle goddess is our enemy. Her green hell is a lair for demons. Her minions always plot against Pamalt, and try to blanket our beautiful plains with

steaming jungle.

That is who Aldrya is. The enemy who mindlessly tries to kill beauty to replace

your type of life with her own.

...Chaos?

These evil gods are our permanent enemies. If we tread the Right Footpath we can

kill them, and make sure Vovisibor never rises again. But when we are lax and lazy, chaos returns, stronger than before.

That is what chaos is. The thing that always returns.

...Kyger Litor?

When Pamalt was chieftain, monsters roamed the world. Kyger Litor was one, but she ran away when Pamalt killed her champion, Qualyorni. Finally, Pamalt gave her the north half of the world and she gave him the south.

That is who Kyger Litor is. The bad enemy who is too far away to hurt you.

...Magasta?

He tried once to invade our land. But he failed, because Pamalt and his council were vigilant and brave. Now he is far away, and can only slay those foolish enough to cross his poison waters.

That is who Magasta is. The enemy that has been beaten.

...Monotheists?

When we relaxed our watch against chaos, wicked men troubled us with an evil trick: religion without piety. Soulless sorcerers again crossed our land, and we

have not rid ourselves of them yet.

That is who the wizards are. People who care nothing for the Right Footpath and the Breath World.

...Mostal?

Mostal is one of the Old Gods. Like the others his time is over. His weird dwarf

people still survive underground, and he rules them with a metal hand.

That is who Mostal is. The chieftain who rules hard, but with no heart.

...Orlanth?

When the Old Gods quarreled this god shouted the loudest and used his fists and knives against his own family. He fought so hard that he was exhausted, and his heir, Keraun, joined Pamalt's Council. Orlanth's other child, evil Sikkanos, is just like his father.

That is who Orlanth is. The bully who thinks strength is all that matters.

...Spirits?

When the Old Gods made beautiful things they made plants and animals and other spirits. Some of the spirits did not join Pamalt's Council, but they are still our friends and part of our trust as the Keepers of Nature.

That is what the spirits are. The life of the Breath World.

...Yelm?

When the Old Gods ruled, everyone enjoyed the sun god's wealth. But pride led to

his downfall: he thought he could live without the help of everyone else in the world. He lost his powers, and now he is a slave, a bright orb of fire chained to an unyielding path, trapped by duty to his task.

That is who Yelm is. You can always depend on him because he has no choice.

The Gods of Pamaltela

Aleshmara, old woman

Aleshmara is Pamalt's sister and mother-in-law. She leads a pack of sisters who must approve the actions of Pamalt's Council. She holds the Basket of Life, a gift from Earth Mother when she left the world. She names those who sit on Pamalt's Council. Aleshmara owns all wealth, knows all lineages, keeps all women's secrets, and rules her daughter Faranar, who lives in Aleshmara's tent with husband Pamalt.

That is who Aleshmara is. The woman who gives you everything.

Artmal, god of the Veldang

Artmal fell from the sky in the days of the Old Gods. He set up the infamous Artmali Empire in the middle of Pamaltela. All beings that were deemed inferior,

including our ancestors, were expelled or enslaved. Only the blue-skinned natives were free and happy.

But when trouble came from the north Artmal, with the other Old Gods, fell to ruin. His empire became the Nargan Desert. His people became the Veldang.

That is who Artmal is. An old man, once strong, but now crippled and blind.

Bolongo, trickster

Bolongo is one of the old gods. He helped make the world. Sometimes his help was

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bad, like when he got Vangono drunk and took his place in the wedding to Enisoyo. Sometimes his help was good, like when he helped make the Necklace of Pamalt. Sometimes his help was just silly, like when he turned his head into an ant's, and could not turn back.

That is who Bolongo is. The fool who cannot tell between right and wrong.

Cronisper, sky father

Cronisper is one of the two elders of the Gods Council. Like all deserving grandfathers, he sits in the back of the tent and smokes his pipe. He mostly speaks only in vague grunts and nods, but when he speaks clearly he should be heard. He lives in the sky, where the constellations are his dwellings, the planets are his servants, and the stars are his treasures. He is Grandfather Sky.

That is who Cronisper is. The old man whose limbs are weak but whose wisdom is strong.

Jmijie, traveler

He is the Wanderer, for he cannot stay in one place. Sometimes people are hit by

his invisible stick, and they get an unreasonable urge to travel. Jmijie created

a system of invisible roads which crosses the world, and which magicians can travel on.

That is who Jmijie is. The wayfarer, half-vagrant, half-pilgrim.

Keraun, wind and rain

Keraun is the ruler of the winds. She brings the rain and winds to blow upon us,

and she rules the cloud spirits. Her home is in the northeast. Thunder and lightning are her brothers.

This is who Keraun is. The strong bad person who has seen her wrong and is now your friend.

Lodril, fire

This god of fire is one of the Old Gods. Pamalt made him raise the mountains of the north, which separate the realm of Pamalt from the rest of the world. His children include Gustbran and Vangono.

This is who Lodril is. The man who is strong of thew, but not of brain.

Noruma, shaman

This god is the chieftain of magic. He is brother to the Horned Man. Noruma knows the strongest spells, even how to contact the Old Gods. He comes in dreams

to call people to his path, and he communicates with the Breath World.

That is who Noruma is. The medicine man.

Nyanka, good water, childbirth

Before the Agimori met Nyanka they were not able to have children. Nyanka gave of herself, and taught them the wisdom they needed. The clear, permanent oases are her favored spots, but the winter streams are hers too.

That is who Nyanka is. The woman who gives without need of receiving.

Pamalt, Chieftain

Pamalt is headman of the gods' council. He is the only Old God to stay strong in

the new world. He shows us the Right Footpath, and helps us on our way. He protects chieftains, and he also protects the helpless, orphans, hunchbacks, lepers, and even albinos, whom he created one day while drunk.

That is who Pamalt is. The wise, good, and clever chieftain.

Rasout, hunter, god of men

It has always been the duty of men to hunt the beasts of the plains. Rasout teaches reverence for the kill, love of the hunt, and the arts of stalking, trapping, and the chase.

That is who Rasout is. The hunter working hard to bring the best food.

Sikkanos, the bad wind

Far south, at the edge of the world, sits the Nargan, a parched land where evil lurks. The earth there burns your skin, the water there rots your innards, and the air there decays your mind. Filthy chaos things live there, and they send the bad god Sikkanos against us from the south.

That is who Sikkanos is. The enemy you can never forget.

Vangono, god of war

Vangono found the first spear, shield, and bow, and he used them to destroy his enemies. He is fierce and bloodthirsty, and he sometimes even gets Pamalt, his chieftain, in trouble. He can breathe three kinds of fire and is terrible in battle.

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That is who Vangono is. The loyal warrior whom you love in war but who makes trouble when it is peace.

Vovisibor, Filth-Which-Walks

Vovisibor brings ignorance, cruelty, greed, and selfishness to us. He came from the hole left by the ruin of the World Mountain. He makes men be utterly alone; without lineage, family, or tribe. Only Pamalt can stop him. Vovisibor is like an evil counterpart to Pamalt; he, too, is a chieftain, but he rules the gods and peoples of hate. His councilors are Thed, Pocharngo, Malia, Ompalam, and other bad gods.

That is who Vovisibor is. The bad man who has no good in him.

Yanmorla, Grandmother Earth

Yanmorla is one of the two elders of the Gods Council. She is usually too distant to bother with us. Her tent is deep inside the earth, and on the way to it you must pass the Earth Witch. All the breaths of dead animals go to her. She

is called Grandmother Earth.

That is who Yanmorla is. The wealthy old woman who has no use for her goods except to bestow them on her worthy children.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Pamalt Pantheon

Cult of Pamalt

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Glorantha: The Dragon PantheonThe Dragon Pantheon
by Greg Stafford
originally published in Wyrms Footnotes #14

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Author's Note

The dragonewt race is unusual and mysterious to most people in Glorantha. In my own campaign I have always treated them as odd beings who are never understood by outsiders (player-characters) who meet them. Even the same dragonewt met twice is likely to appear as two different creatures. Their behavior is unpredictable and often seems irrational.

I enjoy having them for this role, and have tried to use it constructively as a persistent and non-understandable source of some of the mysteries in life. I generally don't allow players to have dragonewts as characters, insisting that they don't really understand how to play them properly. On those occasions where

I have allowed player-character dragonewts it is always with the understanding that the player is playing non-normal, aberrant dragonewts who are attracted to non-draconic ways and are considered perverse by their peers. I also insist that

such player character dragonewts have, by their actions, outlawed themselves from their natural way of life and have, thereby, broken the cycle of natural resurrection into a new body grown by their eggs. Thus player-character dragonewts have usually been played as if they were humans with the same motivations as a normal player character.

A Dragon Poem

.....Silence, The Infinite.
OZero, or an exclamation.
OUA cry of pain; Ego.
OURCollectiveness, plurality.
OUROCollective emptiness.
OUROBCreation (Collective with an end-stop 'b').
OUROBOClosed Infinity, or Being.
OUROBORBirth.
OUROBORONothing, emptiness.
OUROBOROSS = 'Voice' (i.e. the sound a serpent makes).

This immortal poem is a dragonewt chant and prayer which relates the creation of the world. The right-hand explanation are glosses to a human version of the poem made by a western scholar (probably a god-learner, hence a worshipper of Lankhor

Mhy). They contain hints and explanations to elucidate the symbolic imagery of the inhuman magic. They are, of course, incapable of containing all the nuances and secrets of the poem in the dragontongue, but are helpful in indicating the lofty realms which the dragonewt philosophy begins in. In general, the poem shows a gradual internalization of something to bring about the formation of the

concept of 'self.'

This poem was also repeated backwards at dragonewt rituals and transported the chanters and the universe into mystical bliss which was ordinarily impossible to

reach.

The Dragon Pantheon

Ouroboros and the Cosmic Dragon

Ouroboros has no personality or character, nor even interacts with anything other than itself. It is a philosophical concept which is occasionally personalized in a symbolic manner. Because of the general disability of perception this symbol is often mistaken for a living being.

The image is the shape of a dragon devouring its own tail. This is intended to make someone wonder what will happen when it reaches the end and swallows its own head. There are no answers for this, only a realization. It is also sometimes shown as a shape.

Popular interpretation says that the Cosmic Dragon is the 'S' shape and the end of the Ouroboros poem. This is both a sound and the shape of the broken infinity

symbol. Thus, instead of the Infinite, our perceptions are confronted with some other image which we are capable of comprehending: the Cosmic Dragon.

The Cosmic Dragon is hardly more understandable than its mystical predecessor, but at least it is often clothed in understandable imagery. It interacts with other things and is accorded its own beliefs and actions, though not much personality. Yet, its actions are the reasons for creation and it is also the philosophical model towards which all dragonewts strive.

In the degenerate forms of the Kralori and Empire of the Wyrms Friends worship, the Cosmic Dragon is held to be the greatest of all immortal deities, solely responsible for the creations of the worlds. The god-learners gave it a more masculine bent to complement the world-wide goddess Glorantha who was, quite unmysteriously, without consort or mate in her own realm. These comparisons are interesting and useful but they modify and demean the original image significantly.

The primary action of the Cosmic Dragon is his conflict with the monster called Orxili. Later generations associated Orxili with chaos, or perhaps as the philosophy of the many forms of chaos and how they all fit together. If you have

ever tried to reason why all of the forms of chaos work as one or are thought of

as one thing then you will understand this better.

In the ancient myth the monster had six limbs but no head. These limbs each had varying numbers of hands, fingers, or appendages. It attacked and grappled with the Cosmic Dragon as it meditated, trying to interfere with its composure. For a

moment the Cosmic Dragon was disturbed, but the dragon power is as unchangeable as the Void and Orxili was doomed. The Cosmic Dragon set forth the Six Principles and with each recitation one of the monster's limbs was torn off and cast into emptiness. These limbs later returned but were countered by other defenders.

The body of Orxili was placed in the center of the world and the Cosmic Dragon set it spinning and wrapped itself about the body, cutting it off from the outer, more mystical realms. The body inside changed and grew, and was called the Cosmic Egg.

The Ancestral Dragons

The Cosmic Egg hatched and from it came the Grand Ancestral Dragon. It sat and meditated in the Silent Void, treasuring the secrets of the universe. The halves

of the eggshell were made into the servants of the Grand Ancestral Dragon and were called the Inside and the Outside.

The Grand Ancestral Dragon is invisible and omnipresent, as are all the dragons greater than him. He is responsible for the created world, and he is the first who shows character and actual, rather than philosophical, interaction. He represents the wholeness of Being. He is shown as hostile or benevolent, when personalized, though his worshippers claim that his acts are totally neutral no matter how they appear to the observers caught within the effect.

The Grand Ancestral Dragon was committed to six actions which it voluntarily undertook. Each of these resulted in the creation of one of the Ancestral Dragons. The Ancestral Dragons were born of the entanglements which their creator committed itself to, and the entanglements, in turn, were created from the birth of the Ancestral Dragons. This paradoxical creation is typical of dragonewt explanations. Whatever the understanding of it may be, this brought about the creation of a recognizable pantheon of Dragon Gods. The six Ancestral Dragons are: Guardian of Silence, Guardian of Secrets, Guardian of Being,

Guardian of Experience, Guardian of Thought, and Guardian of Spirit.

Either during or shortly after this time the Grand Ancestral Dragon was assailed

by powerful enemies. Some of the limbs torn from Orxili had returned. The mild waves of Disorder lapped back from the Void and the Oozing Chaos was born, returning now to thwart creation and reclaim its own to the void. The first sluggish waves of chaos bubbled at the feet of the meditating dragon, interrupting perfect plans. To combat the distraction the Grand Ancestral Dragon

took the Disorder power and used it upon the chaos which in turn made a new power which drove off the chaos and held it at bay, This was the race of Darkness, formed from the feet of the Dragon.

When the meditations were complete the Grand Ancestral Dragon cut open its loins

and from the blood that ran forth was born the power of the Oceans, seas, and all liquid things.

From its belly the Dragon created the power of the Earth and all things which lay within it.

From the head of the Dragon came the fiery beings which are the Sky and the Aetheric powers, and each of the Dragon's eyes became a noble god of that realm. The brains of the Grand Ancestral Dragon, hidden deep inside and outside the worlds, hatched secretly among the fledgling races of immortals. These were the Ancestral Dragons, wise teachers of deities, who met once for a mating dance in the place now called Dragon Pass. They completed their mysterious dance, laid the first dragon eggs, and disappeared from the world.

This dismemberment, called utuma in dragonewt philosophy, is the result of the Grand Ancestral Dragon's willingness to accept the duty of entanglements which his actions had brought about and resulted in his full integration into the world. By dying he re-entered the world to fulfil his duties. To have done otherwise would have resulted in a fatal weakness which would have destroyed the

basis for draconic existence. This is often equated, or confused, with the dragonewt sense of 'honor.'

The Ancestral Dragons are believed to have form and essence, and also complete control over any part of the world. Each of them is alike and has access to the others' secrets. They are not elementally oriented, and they are acceptable as objects of worship since they are both real and reachable. Dragonewt worship consists of meditation upon the pure principles of these entities in an attempt to reach, merge, and thereby experience and understand them.

These universal creatures are inaccessible to most beings. When they intrude into the mythology of other races they are always objects of respect and fear.

The dragonslaying myths of those religions do not ever reach these immortals.

Even so, they are believed to have favored homes upon the world, some staying in

one element or another as a note of personal preference rather than any obligation.

The True Dragons

The Ancestral Dragons are known to have laid eggs of their own, just as the Cosmic Dragon had laid the Cosmic Egg. The favored nesting place for them was the place of their mystic mating dance, Dragon Pass, although some came from other parts of the world.

The True Dragons are immensely powerful beings in their own right, and they often appear in the mythologies of other races. Sometimes they are benevolent helpers, sometimes hostile enemies who are either slain or are victorious. There

are True Dragons who are primarily associated with the elements (thus there is Helldragon, also called Nightdragon; and the Earth Dragon, who protected the goddess Asrelia and was called her friend). Sometimes True Dragons were given titles instead of descriptive names. Thus one dragon is known only as the Emperor of Wisdom, another as the Imperial Fountain of Peace. Some do have true names, like Sh'kaharzeel (also called the Mover of Heavens) who was slain by Orlanth.

The True Dragons were said to be capable of actions and magics which could be duplicated by none of the gods, whether from the Celestial Court, the Elemental Council, or the Burtæ Renegades.

The True Dragons are also recorded as having had many epic struggles in the dawn

of creation. Their foes are sometimes called chaos things, but most mythical

hints indicate some sort of titanic struggle between the True Dragons and one or

more races of giants. Though no one knows for sure, and the dragons aren't talking, popular belief is that the dragons were the victors in all their battles.

These True Dragons were, then, creatures of immense power from myth, generally most active in the era before Time. However, they are still capable of participating in the world of History. The best-known case was the massive intervention of the dragons, including the True Dragons, during the Dragonkill War of 1120.

The True Dragons are the ancestors of the dragons which are more common and better known throughout Gloranthan history. They were apparently hermaphroditic but required mates for fertilization. They were, in varying pairs, the ancestors

of other dragons and of the dragonewt race. If mythology is to be believed they are also occasionally mated with other gods and beings and brought about new entities, such as Hykim and/or Mikyh.

The True Dragons are believed to have been unaffected by the coming of Time, nor

were they overwhelmed by it. In any case, they rarely stir in these ages, even at the promptings of devout worshippers. They are said to be asleep and sometimes ranges of hills are pointed out as their resting places, covered by earth, trees, and time. An entire range of mountains was proven to be thus during the Dragonkill Wars, and ever since that time the geography of Dragon Pass has been different.

There is always a difficulty in separating dragons from their philosophies and magics. This is true even in history, for although the True Dragons sleep they still dream, and their dreams are almost as terrible as themselves. Fortunately many dreams are whimsical or fanciful rather than greedy and vicious, and some dragons dream of teaching mortals their secrets or of things which do not harm men.

Thus are born the Dream Dragons, a handicapped and limited species of creature which is grossly incomplete in its being, and whose whole existence caused by the sleeping mind of another being. These are the dragons most often seen by men.

Hykim - King of Animals

One world-wide myth refers to the First Animal, or the Beast Rune, being a dragon or at least having the form of a dragon. Some people claim that this is the result of a True Dragon either mating with a fertility deity; that the soul of the Grand Ancestral Dragon went into the essence of the world as the races of

animals; or that it was the whim of creation when so many deities collectively made something to serve them. Others claim that it was created by two creatures,

one of which was masculine (called Hykim) and the other feminine (called Mikyh).

The god-learners of Jrustela pointed out that these two never appear together and are likely to be one hermaphroditic creature in the normal draconic manner. The genealogy of this deity represents a taxonomic classification of many animals of Glorantha. There is, for instance, a Mammal Mother whose child are the cat-god, bear-god, deer-god, sheep-god, elephant-god, and so on. Then the cat-god is the father of the lion-spirit, the tiger-spirit, the lynx-spirit, and

so on. This pseudo-scientific explanation is called an Aetological Myth, and explains how things came into being and how they are related.

Some animals are either missing from the generalized taxonomy of Hykim or are accounted another origin elsewhere. An example of this is the parentage of Vrimak, who is said to be the paramount bird-ancestor but is also said to have been created by Dayzatar, the sky god.

Some animals are shared jointly by another god and use Hykim or Mikyh as a convenient explanation. For instance, Mikyh is the mother of King Griffin by Yelm, and of Storm Bull by Umath. Hykim was the father of the Terrible Lizards by the Earth, and of sea animals by Triolina.

Origins of the Dragonewts

The origins of the dragonewt race lies in the childhood of the True Dragons. This was before the coming of plants, animals, or humans; and some say even before the coming of mountains, rivers, and sky. They lived and grew in innocence for different lengths of time, and during that time they were

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immature. Sometimes these immature dragons clutched in innocent bliss and left behind them eggs which were, like the parents, immature. In that era when there was no limit to the creativity of the world, the eggs hatched and brought forth the race of dragonewts. Because there were several matings, there were several 'tribes' of dragonewts. Several of these tribes were joined by common parentage through the dragon known

as the Wonderous Mother of Many.

The dragonewts which hatched from those eggs were young and innocent too and many of them simply grew from hatchling to dragonhood, setting an example for their slower kin to follow. However, each of the dragonewts followed its own pace, working together in instruction and inspiration. They grew and flourished during the times when the world was overgrown and called the Green Age. They watched and taught animals during the Age of Beasts. They helped arrange the mysterious and powerful stones across the world during the Golden Age of the gods, and they waxed in power across the War of the gods, often benefiting greatly from the errors of the other races. Through all these ages other immature dragons, including some which had been dragonewts, mated and produced new tribes. In this way the dragonewts produced a widespread and populous civilization across Glorantha. They built elaborate cities and created sophisticated magics which brought many beings, both mortal and divine, to study

at their feet. It is said that Genert, ruler of the northern continent, was advised by a True Dragon, called All Eyes Open But One, who had once been a dragonewt. The many legends and tales of dragons or their kin teaching human-kind are from this period.

When the gods of Disorder and Chaos began infringing upon the world the dragons and their kin did nothing. They were populous and powerful but did not move when

their friends and surroundings were destroyed, nor did they seem to be affected when vast portions of their own, lesser kin were wiped out by the invasions of Chaos. In fact, it seemed as if the entire dragonewt race was willing to let itself be passively slain.

Two places did resist, one in strength and one in weakness. The stronger was eastern Genertelan area known as the Kralori Lands. There were many powerful people there who all believed in the same ideals and who were aided by neighbors

who were willing to lay themselves at the mercy and control of leaders capable of rescuing their existence. Most of them were simpler creatures related only to

animal gods. The Inner Circle of Wisdom in the Kralori Lands was able to withstand the universal changes by maintaining their particular net of existence

which held their world relatively intact. Thus the Hykimi civilization survived the Darkness but at a cost of its later activity in Time.

The Resistance in Weakness came from Dragon Pass, and its legends focus upon a being called Heart of Weakness, a dragonewt from that region. He was aware of the destruction of the world about him and strove to brave the entanglements of aiding his friends, many of whom had helped him or his kin earlier. The dragonewts were only one of many races in the region and Heart of Weakness was attempting to maintain himself as a part of the whole. This made the dragonewts one of the races represented in the I Fought We Won battle, granting them equality with the other races there when the Dawn came. Thus did the Age of History begin.

Dragonewt Motivations

Before attempting to understand what motivates a dragonewt it is necessary to first clear your mind of all previous notions you may have. Try to accept apparent paradoxes in their philosophy. Begin your understanding of them anew. Dragonewt thinkers consider their species to be an accident of creation, but a fortunate one which was inevitable. Both the strength and weakness of the dragonewt race is their fragile bodies and the finite experiences they can learn

each lifetime.

Dragonewt existence consists of a many-life struggle to acquire and then master a number of physical, emotional, and magical characteristics. Doing so will make

the individual one with a dragon or, in more mundane terms, into a dragon itself. A side effect of this spiritual growth is the accumulation of magical

powers. These can be viewed as being Rune spells, though they are acquired differently.

The progression of dragonewts through each body stage is gained by allowing the consciousness and experiences of the spirit to pass from body to body. When the mind and current body have acquired sufficient development the next hatching will be of the next body stage.

There are often minor body changes in each lifetime. This occurs because the unhatched, and soulless, body developing in the egg will adjust itself to house the powers being developed by the body living elsewhere. Thus all dragonewts of a single type may present different characteristics within their subtype.

The dragonewts believe that the object of this life series is for them to pass on to become great and infinite dragons (as hinted in the Dragon Myths section of this writeup). This fact is undeniable to them and proven every passing day. As they pass from stage to stage they become increasingly more powerful.

A seeming irony of their life is that the dragonewt regresses, become weaker and

less suited for advancement every time that they use their powers. Each use of their immense magics gets the dragonewt more and more enmeshed in the problems of existence by creating debts which must be paid before passing onto perfect draconic being.

The dragonewt concept of honor is critical to understanding them. Honor to a dragonewt implies the right way to live, as determined by his personal understanding of the universe at that time. Each stage of dragonewt existence is

expected to experience and participate in certain thought modes and thereby gain

responsibility for their actions in that realm. When certain categories have been fulfilled the individual passes on to the next plateau of development.

If a dragonewt dies dishonorably then he will remain dead a number of days before rebirth. When he is reborn, his physical and magical abilities will have diminished. Shamed dragonewts are thus stuck with stunted personalities and abilities which mark their failures until worked out over several lifetimes. Dragonewt honor is determined by whether or not the dragonewt is responsible for

his actions in that range of emotional experience and whether or not he failed to control himself. If he did control himself (i.e. thought and decided properly

on the right action) then it was an honorable thing. However, if he reacted emotionally then his actions were not honorable even if the results of his actions were correct. Dishonorable (emotional) reactions are likely to result in

more entanglements, so lifetimes are spent in clearing up the mistakes of a century ago.

Dragonewt Code of Ethics

Dragonewts strive to purify their mundane bodies and souls through Right Action and thereby reunite themselves with the limitless spirit of Ouroboros, the Infinite Dragon, who is ever devouring his own tail and who is the origin of all

the universe. Right Action is defined by several simple requirements, Interpretations of these vary and are still open to redefinition.

Duty to the Ancestors: Since all dragonewts are descendants of Dragons this is really the worship of Dragons: their religion. However, during the Golden Age there were actual families and tribes of dragonewts. Most of those ancestors are

long dead but may be sought as spirits upon occasion.

Duty to One's Lord: Lordship is dependent upon certain physical and personal traits being present in an individual. When these shapes manifest themselves mature has proven the person's qualifications and thus that person is obviously worthy of respect and obedience. To differentiate between persons of equal rank the dragonewts also have temporal lords who they report directly to and whose orders take precedence over others.

Duty to Repay Favors: If someone does a favor for a dragonewt then the dragonewt

will owe some return favor of equal or greater value. These owed favors are considered to be a great burden on a dragonewt's development since he must attempt to fulfil them through lifetimes, if possible. These are not relevant in

terms of friendship or agreement but must be returned even if it impedes their

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own development. The dragon religion urges that dragonewts avoid these owed favors but their duties and orders often prevent it, thus entanglements enter into their lives.

Personality Traits and Advancement to Dragonhood

The life of a dragonewt consists of always bettering himself, mastering his emotions and reactions to events so that he may advance to the next stage of being. Each stage of dragonewt development requires that the dragonewt constantly strive to master specific emotions and personality traits. The goal of every dragonewt is to react with conscious deliberation at all times.

Crested Dragonewts: The crested dragonewt must master his Aggressive-Passive, Brave-Cowardly, Energetic-Lazy, Stubborn-Docile, and Unreliable-Dependable personality traits. These are the most primitive traits and emotions that the dragonewts must master.

Beaked Dragonewts: To advance to the tailed priest stage the beaked dragonewt must have mastered his Curious-Apathetic, Leader-Follower, Impulsive-Cautious, Nervous-Calm, and Suspicious-Trusting traits.

Tailed Priest: The goal of the tailed priest is to become a full priest of the dragon religion. To do this he must be able to take the form of a dragon, and have mastered these personality traits that allow him to deal with the outside world: Honorable-Dishonorable, Greedy-Generous, Impatient-Patient, and

Extrovert-Introvert.

Full Priest: The full priest strives to complete the mastering of his personality traits so that he may begin to learn to master the world around him.

The traits that he must master include: Clever-Dull, Innovative-Conservative, Optimist-Pessimist, and Constructive-Destructive.

The Dragon Religion

The dragon religion preaches and proves that existence is a web of illusion. The

illusion is maintained by immersion into the five elements, each of which is associated with one of the five perceptions. Through practise of Right Action the dragonewts can cleanse themselves of the webs of illusion which restrict their spiritual growth and eventually liberate their psyches to join the eternal

Dance of Pure Being which is the thought of Ouroboros.

Because they shun the elements they do not use any magics which are elementally oriented, including the worship of gods which have such connections. They do not

deny the existence or power of such gods, but they do not support them even through propitiatory worship. Instead, the dragonewts may choose to purify their

minds through the discipline of thought and deed. They perform spiritual exercises practised in the mundane world which free them from opposite powers. A

by-product of this is that they gain certain magics which are comparable to Rune magics.

See also:

Non-Human Races: Dragonewts

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Glorantha: The Foreman's Words

The Foreman's Words

Instructions to New Workers

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Where did the world come from?

What is the truth about...?

Dwarf Ancestors

Where did the world come from?

We made the world. We and the World Machine. Elves, trolls, Umath the Destroyer,

all broke the Machine. They ended the world. Now is the time of the Gods War. We

must work till the Machine is repaired. Then the old world shall be restored.

Where do we come from?

You were made like other tools. Like the World Machine itself. All true life comes thus.

Why do we die?

You do not have to die. Only bad dwarfs die. While you and I fulfill our appointed tasks, we shall live.

What happens after we die?

Non-dwarfs and broken dwarfs die. Their bodies recycle in the cosmic currents of

the World Machine. Their personalities disintegrate. Their souls' force dissolves into the energy fields of Ty Kora Tek.

Why are we here?

We repair the World Machine. All our tasks, all our spells, all our tools, are for this task.

How do we do magic?

The old world was made well. Laws were forged for its operation. We know the world and its workings. We use that wisdom to create sorcery. All dwarfs learn the sorcery they need. You shall learn the sorcery you need.

What is the truth about ...

...Aldrya?

Elves are tools of the evil principle of Growth. They fight us and they hate us.

They can only have a part in the Machine when it is completed.

Till then they must be kept under control. Or they must be exterminated.

...Chaos?

Chaos is a force of cosmic destruction. It comes from outside the Machine.

So we must defend against it, not attempt to repair it.

...Kyger Litor?

These foul monsters come from Hell. They kill our laborers. They spill vats of potions. They shatter our Machines. They destroy creations which took eons of toil to make. One day the Machine shall be repaired. Then trolls shall be imprisoned in Hell or made extinct.

...the Lunar Goddess?

The rise of the Red Moon was prophesied long ago. It proves that the World Machine is being repaired according to schedule.

...Magasta?

The god of the deep waters has little to do with us. His mermen do not assist us. Neither are they important. Their god's purpose is to maintain the great ocean currents of the Machine. He does this admirably.

...Monotheists?

These humans scientifically examine the universe. They know some of our magic. But they delude themselves with lies about an afterlife. Like all beings, they find only oblivion after death.

...Orlanth?

This brute being and his minions led the attack on the World Machine.

They broke it once. They would break it again. We shall never give them that chance. When the machine is finished Orlanth shall be kept firmly under control.

...Pamalt?

This is just another human god. He does not interfere in our affairs. So we can ignore him and his worshipers.

...Primitive Spirits?

There are many fragments of the old world left behind. Most are broken pieces of the World Machine, still mindlessly trying to fulfill their purpose. They are best ignored. When the Machine is completed they shall be recycled.

...Yelm?

The Sun's rise at the Dawn proves that the World Machine is coming together despite our enemies and the ravages of Time. The Sun is one part of the world which still works properly and obediently.

Dwarf Ancestors

Ancestral Mostali

The Mostali were made to assist in the world's care and building. Each of the eight original Mostali has special abilities. Diamond dwarfs contact them on the

Godplane.

Glorantha

Glorantha was the guiding spirit of the World Machine before its breaking.

Now the name is misused to refer to the world structure itself.

Grower

In the old world, Grower made raw material for Maker to refine. But Grower's warped descendants have forgotten their true purpose. Now Growth is evil. Would a plate of food be improved if something grew in it? When the World Machine is repaired, the now-cancerous principle of Growth shall be restored to its original purpose.

Individualism

Some dwarfs say that each must seek his own salvation, his own path. They are wrong. Would a hammer be useful if it changed itself, if it grew a pulsating brain? These heretics destroy their own usefulness. They harm the Plan thereby.

Maker

Maker is the name of those laws of the ancient universe which formed the World Machine. Once the World Machine was finished, Maker was subsumed by its operation.

Mostal

Mostal is the World Machine, now dead. One day it shall live again.

Ignorant outsiders personalize Mostal and equate him with their own simple-minded religions. It is well that our foes do not understand us.

Octamonism

Some conservatives believe the invention of Iron and Diamond Dwarfs was evil. They deny their own creation. They seek to halt our progress on the World Machine.

Openhandism

This heresy is one of the most dangerous. These dwarfs claim that outsiders can be allowed access to our treasures. They say the benefit of such dealing outweighs the danger. They are fools. What can the surface world offer to surpass our secrets?

Stone

Stone is Mostal's brother. He is the matter of which the World Machine is made. In the old world, all stone was alive and magical. Foul elves slew Stone and made him cold forever. Only the rare truestone hints at what the original Stone was like. When the Machine is fixed, the rock shall return to life.

Vegetarianism

This belief is so far confined to Pamaltela. These dwarfs are infected by the cancerous principle of Growth. They actually produce food by breeding plants. This vile heresy brings its own destruction upon itself.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Dwarf Array

Non-Human Races: Dwarfs

A Personal View of Dwarf Culture

Why I Dislike Mostali

Mostal-Dwarfs: Mythos, Heresies, and Lore

Dwarf Senses

Creating Jolanti

Glorantha: The Hsunchen Religions

The Hsunchen Religions

originally presented as "The Cult of Hykim & Mikyh" in Heroes #4

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Sample Hsunchen Religions

Mythos and History

Hykim and Mikyh are the ancestors of all beasts. They are usually said to be dragons. Hykim is male and Mikyh female, though they never appear together in tales, and the God-Learners hypothesized that they represent a single hermaphroditic being, in normal draconic fashion.

The genealogy of these deities resembles a taxonomic classification of Gloranthan animals. There is, for instance, a Mammal Mother whose children are the cat-god, bear-god, sheep-god, and so on. Then the cat-god is parent to the lion-spirit, the lynx-spirit, the tiger-spirit, and so forth. Some animals are also accounted another origin elsewhere. One example is Vrimak -- the paramount bird-ancestor, but who is said to have been created by Dayzatar, the sky god. Most animals are closely associated with another deity, and Hykim or Mikyh are used as explanatory links. For instance, Mikyh is the mother of King Griffin by Yelm, and of Storm Bull by Umath.

The primitive but widespread Hsunchen folk are divided into many different tribes, each devoting worship to its own beast-totem. Intelligent animals, such as the magical baboons of the Wastelands, may also worship their own favored animal-god.

The Hsunchen believe that after death their souls are reborn into their own tribe, failing to distinguish between the human and animal members. Death rituals reflect this belief, but vary greatly from tribe to tribe.

Hsunchen worship always includes the Beast Rune. Particular animals include other Runes, modifying the basic Hykimi stock. Gorakiki (the insect god), for instance, has the Runes of Beast and Darkness.

Sample Hsunchen Religions

The following are three typical Hsunchen cultures/religions, each based on a distinct type of animal. Use these as models for the fashioning of additional Hsunchen cults.

The Basmoli Berserkers (Basmol, the Lion God)

The Basmoli Berserkers live in the Wastelands as well as on the Pamaltelan veldt. Their lion god was defeated by the natives of the Wastelands, and the Basmoli there hire themselves out as mercenaries, always glad to fight the folk who slew their god. In Pamaltela, the Basmoli only know that their god marched northward with a horde of followers, and they still await a triumphant return.

The Sofals (Sofal, Grandfather Turtle)

The Sofals eke out an existence along the coasts of Dinal and northern Sozganjio. Sea turtle eggs are a major part of their diet, though they guard and

protect the adults and never eat all the eggs in any single batch. They are peaceful, but are often raided by fierce swamp humans.

The Wolfrunners (Telmor, the Father of Wolves)

The Wolfrunners are a tribe of nomadic hunters who worship Telmor, Father of Wolves. Each Wolfrunner has his own companion wolf, and wolves and men fight together. Werewolves are often born into Telmori families. They sided with Gbaji

in the Chaos Wars, and so were cursed. Their transformation spells vary with the

Moon's phases.

They live in Ralios and western and southern Peloria.

See also:

A Personal View of Hsunchen Culture

Cult of Gorakiki

Cult of Telmor

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Glorantha: The Trickster

The Trickster

by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen

originally published in Questlines #1

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Mythos and History

Trickster Aspects

Mythos and History

Trickster has been born many times. No one knows how many. Most people say it has been too many.

Trickster goes by many names and many shapes. He is a liar, a shapeshifter, a joker, a murderer, an innocent victim, a ravenous glutton, usually insatiably selfish but occasionally touchingly generous. He is a paradox and a mystery, or else too shallow to be real. His life and stories are jumbled, though the God Learners discerned or imposed an order upon them.

At first Trickster was mischievous, but harmless. He pulled pranks, such as letting a tangle of boggles loose at Yelm's feast, but there was no harm in him.

Since Death had not yet come even the worst devastation was only a temporary annoyance to the gods and First People, who reformed themselves and continued their lives.

The growing confusion of the Gods Wars made Trickster's impact more widespread. His jokes changed on the world, and many fearful gods blamed their problems upon

him. He became the scapegoat for the problems of the world, and from that time everyone began to hate, fear, and despise him. One time Vadrus chopped him up and fed him to chickens, hoping that he would be reborn as a harmless bird.

Trickster became disgusted with the hypocrisy of the world and vowed that it deserved to be destroyed. He became Eurmal the Destroyer, and set upon a deliberate path to assist the demise of the universe. His most critical actions were to facilitate the discovery, use, and continued reuse of Death.

Despite his former success at destruction, or maybe because of it, Trickster sought to halt the process. The Theyalans say Orlanth forced him to do this. In company with other friends of the storm god, Trickster trekked through the Underworld and succeeded in the famous Lightbringer's Quest.

Since the Dawn the Trickster has achieved no great success. Everyone remembers his inconsistency, his infidelity, and his gross social habits. Even his friends

only grudgingly acknowledge his actions to save the world. He is given enough worship to maintain his many shrines.

The Second Age saw the realization of a great dream. Hofhados the Nonwise, a God Learner, privately financed the construction of The Temple of United Eurmal.

This was a collection of all known Trickster shrine types, so trickster priests could obtain all Trickster rune spells at one place. The experiment worked, though no new spells came to light from the massed worship of thousands of initiates. But it was judged a failure by Hofhados's peers, because of the overwhelming influence of the disorderly god and his minions, each of whom performed one or two catastrophic actions for their favorite city, movement, or friend before being caught and condemned by local authorities. Hofhados himself was trapped into an inescapable feast, where all other guests were boggles and madmen. He is still there. Without his support the temple went bankrupt and was condemned to be razed. However, the land of Slontos sank beneath the sea before the demolition. Some tricksters claim that their cult did

it. Since the defending tricksters also went beneath the waves, many people doubt their claim, or counterclaim that they got their own justice.

No one openly acknowledges himself to be a hero of Trickster, though some are suspected of such.

Funeral rites are not important for any Trickster cult. They openly put forth that life and death are both illusions, that they will undoubtedly change after either experience, and embrace wildly variant life-after-death creeds.

Most scholars agree that Trickster's Runes include Illusion, Disorder, and

Change.

Trickster Aspects

A single fact unites the many subcults which collectively comprise this religion: they all disagree. In fact, they cannot even agree what rune he has (Illusion, Change, or Disorder). The idea of a world-wide "Cult of Trickster" is

laughable, and is the imposition of God Learner thinking, not internal organization.

The Trickster religion is an illusion. It does not exist in any formalized sense. Those who worship Trickster in his many forms each belongs to a separate subcult which has, at most, two divine spells. Each shrine operates completely independently.

Each Trickster subcult is separate from all others, each with its own divine spell. His temples are only shrines. Paradoxically, these many shrines work in unofficial harmony, for a worshiper can get rune spells from any shrine. However, the wide distance between shrines permits only well-traveled tricksters

to carry a wide array of spells.

Spirits of the Trickster can be summoned and worshiped as spirit cults by shamans. Hence, the Trickster is one of the most common and widespread spirit cults in existence.

Some shrines provide identical spells, though they worship different aspects of the god. By categorizing them by spells we can discern several "types" which act

as subcults.

Destroyer

Trickster often got angry, and depending on the story told he killed off a family (Peloria's Holdbright dynasty, after Yelm died), a type of animal (the three-horns of Pamaltela), or the whole world (in Theyalan myth).

Dismemberer

At various times Trickster takes parts of his body off, and then restores them. Among the Theyalans he passed his body parts through a hole in a wall, and reassembled himself on the far side. A story told on Pamaltelan grasslands is of

his five years as a head, seeking the rest of his body which he'd lost.

Firebringer

Many people agree that Trickster, in one form or another, stole fire from the darkness. Among the Pentans he was Raven, in Pamaltela he was Hare, and for the Theyalans he was a Lightbringer.

Fool

Sometimes the god saves himself by making everyone laugh, or otherwise amuses others. In Tarien the badger brothers planned to eat him, but he caused them to laugh so hard they died. In Theyalan mythology Eurmal's amusements include puns,

prancing, and pratfalls before Orlanth lets him off the hook.

Fright

Trickster finds it amusing to frighten others. Elves hate him, because his terror lurks in the depths of their woods. In Ralios he got food by frightening children to death. In Peloria he began a reign of terror among dying empires, frightened off even trolls for a while, then succumbed to his own fears.

Glutton

Never-ending capacity marks the hungry trickster. In Kralorela he punished his enemies by eating everything edible in the land, but burst because he could not hold it all. He once out-ate Kyger Litor, saving his own life but impoverishing the troll community. Along the Pamaltelan coast he is the Catsup Slob because he

puts the local spicy sauce on everything.

Imp

A playful, but essentially harmless, character. In Pamaltela he burned off Pamalt's hair once, another time fooled everyone into putting their clothes on backwards, and a third time made the Artmali oversleep when Pamalt was coming to

visit. In Ralios he taught everyone a dance which they could not stop until they

made him laugh.

Mask

Trickster knows many ways to cheat others. Sometimes he does it for profit, and sometimes just to harm others. His disguise as The Mask creates false reasons

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and worship which seem useful to those who join but proves always to be empty and meaningless.

Murderer

Trickster has dispatched many other beings. Some were by accident, as when he made the House of Horvanglos collapse. Sometimes it was necessary, as when he ate all of the red headed women of the Pamaltela grasslands. Sometimes it was for vengeance, as when he slew Little Zoragos who insulted Trickster's mother. Sometimes it was for fun, as when he burnt the trade fleets of Moskatall and Sigtrigor.

Rogue

Trickster often lived by his wits, and occasionally was successful. In Fronela he tricked the ancient kings into feeding him for seven years before they discovered he never fulfilled his promises, and in Kralorela he sold imaginary armies in return for sleeping with the imperial harem.

Seducer

Trickster has incredible skills to seduce the opposite sex. In one story of the East Isles, Trickster lives seventy eight years, sleeping each night with a different married woman. Sometimes his skills prove his undoing. In Peloria an idle boast causes the local king to test Trickster, who successfully seduces almost every female sent to him including a century-old virgin priestess, one hundred leper women, and a grizzly bear. He is halted only by Gorgorma, a goddess with teeth in a bad place. In Theyalan mythology he even seduces Sinjota, the demon of darkness guarding the gates to the underworld, who eats her lovers. (She ate Trickster, too.)

Shapechanger

Trickster often changes his shape. The various shrines are all dedicated to one or another change, and so the spells are usually Become Something-or-other, often an animal, but sometimes a type of tree, a rock, or even (in Naskorion, a city of Ralios) a dirty shirt or (in Pent) a pile of dung.

Thief

Trickster's favorite form of thievery is stealing from friends or companions. In

Tanisor Trickster took the stirrups and saddles from the steeds of Basmol, so none of the Basmoli could ever ride animals. In Ralios he took away Orlanth's flying boots, so the chieftain of the gods had to walk through the Dead Forests.

In Enkloso he stole Artmal's Diamond of Command and Protection, which marked the god's doom. In the East Isles, Trickster, called Invisible Jayoran, stole his father's magic cattle, weapons, and ship, then departed uncaring of the doom he left behind.

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Glorantha: What the Broo Shaman Says

What the Broo Shaman Says

by Martin Crim

originally published in Shadows on the Borderlands

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Can You Tell Me the Truth About ...?

Gods of the Broo Pantheon

Where did the world come from?

The world was born in violence, tumbling out of chaos. Everything came from chaos and will go back to chaos.

Where did I come from?

From the look of you, I'd say probably a cow. We found you squirming along in the underbrush when you were a few days old. I have no idea who your father was. Why do we die?

After the Turning, when our ancestors discovered the joys of chaos, our enemies cursed us. Humakt and Storm Bull and Yelm ganged up on us and made it so we all die. We return the favor on those gods' puny followers.

What happens after we die?

Our souls fall down to hell, to join the ranks of the chaos host. When Thed wished more broos on the surface, she sends our souls back.

Why am I here?

To kill our enemies. To bring glory to Malia and Thed through destruction and rape. To prepare for the final victory of chaos, when the world will disintegrate in violence and we will be swept up in a burning surge of joy.

How do I do magic?

I will teach you what magic you need and can earn from me. I have magics from Thed and Malia. I will teach them to you if you are useful to me.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about them?

All the non-chaotic gods are the same. The only ones you need to watch out for are the followers of Storm Bull, because they can find out your hiding places. The Lunar Goddess is a newcomer who befriended our old master Nysalor and sometimes welcome us.

Gods of the Broo Pantheon

Cacodemon

This god is more popular among ogres than among us. Nevertheless, some of our kin worship him where he has centers of power.

the Devil

This god was our supreme leader, who was going to destroy the world. He is trapped now under the Block, but parts of him escaped. These parts of him include dragonsnails and Cacodemon.

Nysalor

This god tricked the humans long ago. We followed his banner in war, and lived well under him. Then bad Arkat came from the West and destroyed him. A few of us

keep his secrets even now. They can fool the humans, but they have some strange ideas, and are sometimes cowardly.

Krarsht

A small number of our kin follow this dread underground goddess. She teaches potent combat magics, and demands obedience.

Malia

This is a very popular goddess among us. She teaches the secrets of the slow deaths that affect non-broos. She was the lover of Ragnaglar, our ancestor who summoned the Devil.

Primal Chaos

The well of power outside the universe seeps in to aid us. It gives us great powers to slay non-chaotic things. However, it may also curse us with disabilities.

Than

The severed god attracts a small number of our kin. He teaches magic to trap beings' souls inside their heads. The other half of him is called Atyar, but hardly any broos worship him.

Thed

Our mother, the goddess of rape. We love her best of all, and do her commands.

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See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Chaos Array

Chaos in Glorantha

Cult of Thed

Cult of Malia

What Do You Want? Shut Up!

Secrets of the Chaos Gods

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Glorantha: What the Dragon Lord Whispers

What the Dragon Lord Whispers

Immortal Wisdom From the Sun King

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Gods of Kralorela

Where did the world come from?

The venerable Cosmic Dragon was the sole inhabitant of the former universe. In its inerrability, it comprehended that the many is superior to the one, and it dismembered its sacred form. From Cosmic Dragon's awesome breath came the First Ocean. From Cosmic Dragon's consecrated bones came the First Mountain. From Cosmic Dragon's exalted scales and hairs came animals and plants. From Cosmic Dragon's ineffable soul came Aether, holy spirit. First Ocean properly apportioned itself into many oceans, seas, lakes, and sky waters. First Mountain

broke into ranges of peaks and hills. The first creatures obediently bred to cover Cosmic Dragon's world. Aether formed the sky gods from his sacrosanct spirit.

Where did I come from?

From Cosmic Dragon's numinous heart came Wild Man. At first Wild Man knew no restraint. Plunging through the world, he basely mated with trees, rocks, and beasts. These miscegenations produced the Four Hundred Sacred Races. Finally, Empress Earth pitied Wild Man, and created Allgiver, first woman. Wild Man was tamed to live in quietude with Allgiver. Their child is the venerable Aptanace the Sage, and we descend from his divine children. Aptanace's children each took his rightful place in society: one was the first potter, one the first

builder, the first astrologer, tailor, herbalist, farmer, and so on. Thus arose the seven hundred Divine Arts of civilization.

Why do we die?

Death is the natural state of the universe. Wild Man was the first of all to die. Correct Thought teaches us that death is a transition, a change. Just as the Dragon Emperor retires his luminous crown to progress to the sixteenth stage

of existence, we must discard our bodies to reach our ultimate goals. The hallowed Sun Emperor shows us his path to the superior afterlife.

What happens after we die?

Most folk travel to the Excellent Palace of Pleasant Reward to await the Passing

On of His Supereminence the Dragon Emperor. At that blessed time, their souls accompany him to the auspicious next stage of existence. Hence we must perform Right Action and support the Dragon Emperor, lest our souls be left behind when he Passes On.

Why am I here?

Unrelenting service to Holy Ones is the secret for happiness. We exist to serve the Emperor, and he exists to serve us. Foreign lands are trapped in ignorance, knowing only inferior or false gods. The duty of all the Children of Heaven in our Kingdom of Splendor is to serve and emulate the superior man.

How do I do magic?

All life knows its own proper magic. Like eating and sleeping, it is part of existence. Our Exarchs know powerful dragon magic. City officials have strong and true magic from the Gods of Light. Farmers in their fields know potent secrets of the Rice Mother which I shall never know. Talk with me and I shall tell you what magic is meant for your life.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

...Aldrya?

She and her kind adore the Sun above all other gods, and are close to his presence always. So they are strong in summer and pitiful in winter, as is Yelm.

So elves are tied to barren cyclicism, and can never be released to enjoy true spiritual progression.

...Chaos?

When the egregious Rebel Gods sought to overthrow the Divine Order they uncovered dreadful allies too powerful to control. Many gods struggled, but only

the wisdom and sacrifice of our commendable land regenerated the pure universe.

...Kyger Litor?

The foul and bitter smoke which preceded true creation could have become transparent and sweet, but the deplorable Rebel Gods prevented perfect completion. This corrupt residue, fearful shadows upon the face of reality, still haunts the living and rules in the squalid lands of ignorance.

...Lunar Goddess?

Those unfortunates dwelling in sordid lands beyond our own certainly feel their lack. The Red Moon is an unconscious attempt by the inhabitants of Peloria to emulate our Divine System and to parallel our ever-virtuous Dragon Emperor. But the imitation is ever inferior to the reality.

...Magasta?

These monster gods are enemies of both sky and earth and ever seek to quench life with their liquid powers. Baneful secrets are hid within the lethal depths of the ocean and behind its blind banks of fog.

...Monotheists?

The refractory sorcerers of the West have failed to find the superior path. They

witness the infinite truths of the Children of Heaven, but truncate these truths

- cutting themselves off from divine sources. They are left with a parody of true religion. Their faith defies the truth of divinity and immortality, and replace true devotion with empty philosophy.

...Mostal?

This strange god is both friend and foe. As a friend he upholds cosmic order. But he woefully enslaves those who serve him and he mocks true life. Mostal is like an undead god.

...Orlanth?

Orlanth the Rebel is the fearsome usurper who once sought to tear down our benign Dragon Empire. He rules wild places and is the leader of foes. He destroyed the Golden Age with pernicious wars. Yet he was conquered through the purity of our celestial truth and is now tamed by compromise.

...Primitive Spirits?

These are broken bits of the old universe, cut off from contact with higher planes. These inferior entities are meaningless to us.

Gods of Kralorela

Aether, Keeper of the Whole

Aether is the immutable unity of all existence. When he dwelt in our Kingdom of Splendor, nothing else was here. He thought several sons and peoples into existence, then retired behind the sky.

Dendara, Good Goddess

Dendara is the Mother of Life. She serves her husband, Emperor Yelm, as the superior wife should serve her husband. She provides us with raiment, drink, and

her daughter the Rice Mother.

The Dragon Emperors

Before a Dragon Emperor is permitted to Pass On, he must bless all subsequent posterity. Thus did Daruda bring about the wondrous dragon magics, thus did Mikaday teach correct laws and ordinances, and thus did Vashanti create the Web of Righteous Knowledge to unite our nation under one government.

Even as we worship our present Dragon Emperor, Godunya, to attain spiritual progression, so do we worship past Dragon Emperors to use their magic and skills

to exalt our lives while we yet live. Their names tingle the tongue: Metsyla, Shavaya, Daruda, Thalurzni, Mikaday, Vayobi, and all the multitude of our Celestial Rulers, save for Shang-hsa May-his-name-be-cursed.

East Isles Gods

When the original puissant empire of Yelm was beset by vulgar and putrid hordes of barbarian gods, we maintained ourselves by the rigorous authority of our divine Emperors. But the heavenly land of Vithela was inevitably obliged to withdraw its perfection from the sordid wastes of the Gods War. As it withdrew, corpuscles or fragments were torn from it by savage, blind-hearted monsters. We now call these corpuscles the East Isles. Separated from the holy land of Vithela as well as from our own divine precepts, the unfortunate inhabitants thereof are forced to worship a multitude of interior beings and demons.

Godunya and the Exarchs

We Children of Heaven are most fortunate. Even as we dwell in the pleasantest of

lands, we are served by the wisest of rulers. In our Kingdom of Splendor are many Exarchs whom we are blessed to worship. Through them, our souls touch the unattainable majesty of Godunya, our sacred Dragon Emperor. Through him, our souls attain progression to higher planes of reality in the afterlife.

Gorgorma, sister of Dendara

Gorgorma is a frightening mirage, a loathsome horror, noisome, squalid, and evil-shaped. She lurches through the nightmares of the Children of Heaven and besmirches the lovely robes of beauteous Dendara. Yet gladly would we embrace a thousand such lamentable horrors to retain Dendara's delightful presence.

Hykim and Mikyh

These are the sinister gods of the Beast People. These depraved races dwell in our mountains and their ways have plagued the Children of Heaven ever since holy

Yelm's downfall at the hands of the terrible Rebel Gods.

The Path of Immanent Mastery

The thoughts of certain among the Children of Heaven are clumsy and untutored.

They foolishly believe that true inspiration and pure dragon powers can be attained through a hasty and crude approximation. The superior man comprehends their system's vanity. Our divine Emperor permits them to persist as a lesson in

the folly of impatience.

Rice Mother

Her neverending bounty blesses the basest of peasants and her generosity extends

even to the scabrous and unclean. All the Children of Heaven are gifted with our

lives by her kindly nature. Other lands are cursed by her absence, forced to consume abominable provender.

Vormain Gods

When the Rebel Gods assaulted the Divine Order, the isolated islands of Vormain were compelled to stern discipline and the worship of austere and cruel gods, led by their emperor Valzain. In this way, they inhibited the destruction of the

Gods War and were preserved from utter ruin. They yet maintain their harsh regimentation. We are happy indeed that our Dragon Emperor and our Imperial Armies and Fleets have freed us from the necessity of such a grim existence.

Yelm, Emperor of the Cosmos and God of All Fire

Second ruler of Kralorela, his rule was the Golden Age of the world when all was

perfect and grand. All of existence was his realm, and he organized the world into its parts.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Eastern Pantheons

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Glorantha: What the Wizard Says

What the Wizard Says

Teachings From The Wise Ones

originally published in Gods of Glorantha

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Where did the world come from?

Can you tell me the truth about...?

Holies of the Invisible God

Where did the world come from?

The world is the result of interactions between impersonal natural powers. Many forces of nature exist, working in extremely complex patterns. We collectively name these forces the Invisible God, or Creator. These energies have always existed and always will exist, as we can demonstrate through methodical experimentation.

Where did I come from?

Your mother bore you as a result of natural reproduction processes. Everything in the world has a natural origin. What makes you different from an inanimate object is your spirit -- that measurable part of you which gives you life.

Why do we die?

All natural mechanisms eventually break down. While our bodies can be maintained

for many years, ultimately everything and everyone dies, even if only through happenstance.

What happens after we die?

Paths of knowledge have been discovered whereby we can earn identity and consciousness after death. This is why we worship the Invisible God and keep the

laws of Malkion.

Why am I here?

This is not a meaningful question. Each man has only one life, and it is his responsibility to live as well as he can. Only thus can we come to appreciate the works of the Creator and earn the right to eternal fulfillment.

How do I do magic?

Magic is the process of manipulating natural energies through skill and the authority of the soul. This requires natural aptitude and many hours of study on

the part of the would-be sorcerer. In any formal society the services of professional wizards are available to all, for appropriate fees.

Lesser cultures derive magic power from other-planar entities such as spirits or

false gods. These alternate methods of magic impose limitations upon their practitioners - priests and shamans are slaves to their magic, even as we are masters of ours.

I have heard of other powers. Can you tell me the truth about ...

During the period of time now referred to as the Great Darkness, people were lost and frightened. In an effort to understand their world they imagined gods in their own image. By personifying their social desires, the forces of nature, or their emotional needs, they withstood the turmoil of the Darkness.

These gods are always carefully represented as benevolent forces, but each possesses a dark side which is revealed only when it is too late. The catastrophe of Gbaji's creation is the ultimate modern example of this god-making folly.

We are free of the self-imposed limitations induced by the personification of natural forces. We try to understand nature as it is. All other gods are, at best, lesser beings subject to the laws of nature and to worship any of them is folly, ignorance, and blasphemy.

...Aldrya?

This forest spirit is like a living soul of the woods and jungles. Elves are her

children, enslaved within the vegetal cycles of her existence. They can never know the Invisible God.

...Chaos?

When grouped together the truly evil gods are called by this name. They are the product of the raw chaos from which Glorantha originally formed. Followers of

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these monstrous entities are evil and worthy only of destruction.

...Kyger Litor?

Trolls are a race of dangerous, brutal creatures who understand only strength. They feed the spirit Kyger Litor to gain divine spells. Trolls know about Arkat,

from whom they stole the knowledge of sorcery.

...Lunar Goddess?

This goddess is a modern example of misplaced belief in artificial gods. Like the belief in Gbaji, belief in this manufactured goddess will drive her worshipers into suffering, degradation, and death.

...Magasta?

The deep and ominous sea holds a history a hundred times greater than the human world. The ignorant have personified their fears and emotionally feed monstrous entities, which are thus empowered to make real those fears.

...Mostal?

Dwarfs have no delusions about the reality of the universe, and have uncovered the same natural laws which we know. However, they lack the key truths of Solace

in the afterlife, and so are doomed to senseless existence and meaningless death.

...Orlanth?

Another personification of natural forces, this time those of an aerial nature. This god's worshipers are like the wind: first blowing hot and hard, then wavering, and finally fading when needed most.

...Primitive Spirits?

The ignorance of savages is proverbial. Study of the petty beings they worship shows why. At best these creatures are minor in ability, of local importance, or

are so vague and distant that they provide only pitiful magic.

...Yelm?

The shining orb of the sun has been an object of adoration since it rose into the sky. Primitive peoples seized upon the visible sun as the most obvious sign for the ruling power of their universe, and anthropomorphized it.

Holies of the Invisible God

Arkat, destroyer of chaos

In 374 S.T., a terribly misguided conspiracy of rulers created Gbaji the Deceiver to stop the spread of Malkionism. They would have obliterated our civilization but for the efforts of this man. Arkat's battle with Gbaji involved

an epic, 75-year-long struggle. During this war he revealed and then reversed the spread of Gbaji's great evil.

Though he did kill Gbaji, Arkat's fanatical purpose eclipsed his reason. He suffered, and to escape his pain he underwent voluntary subjugation to false gods so that, though he succeeded in his task, he was a failure afterwards and condemned by all. His story is tragic, and a warning to everyone.

Creator

This is the title we give the Invisible God when we refer specifically to his role as the designer of the natural universe.

Hrestol, Knight

Initiator Hrestol is the second prophet of the Invisible God. In the year 2 S.T.

Hrestol revealed crucial knowledge and rituals which enabled the followers of the Invisible God to maintain their contact with him in the new age. He taught the Joy of the Heart, even as Malkion taught the Solace of the Body. All modern Malkioni sects stem from Hrestol's teachings.

Invisible God, The Creator

The Invisible God is, was, and shall be. He is the force of nature, greater than

all other forces. In the time since the world was formed, two great men have discovered secret truths of the Invisible God, and have tried to show other men the path to happiness.

Malkion, First Prophet

Sometimes, mankind has fallen away from union and understanding with the Invisible God. He then sent prophets to visit us to teach us again how to find God through body and heart. Malkion was the first prophet of the Invisible God. During the Great Darkness Malkion discovered the ways of the Creator, spreading his knowledge among other men to help them survive amidst the evil of the era. Malkion's proofs are essential to intelligent action. He showed men the proper

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social classes and taught them to be happy with their lot in life. He taught us Solace.

Saints

Though there is but one true god, there are numerous individuals who have discovered certain truths about physical cycles, allowing them to intercede in worldly affairs to ensure the well being of the righteous who follow their ways.

We term these individuals Saints.

There are many saints; Arkat, Hrestol, and Malkion are the most important.

We Malkioni belong to many different castes and sects, but all of us recognize the divinity of a saint, no matter what sect he attained his sainthood through. It is notable that the Brithini, who profess no contact with the Invisible God, have produced no saints.

Dormal the Mariner came from afar to break the evil Closing, which vindictive Zzabur of the Brithini had brought upon the seas. He taught us the procedure we can use to send our ships again across the ocean depths.

Gerlant Flamesword is the famous comrade and liege lord of Arkat. He was forced to make the impossible choice between his people and his best friend, and he chose rightly.

Paslac the Ruler is the example of perfect rule, whom all kings and lords should attempt to emulate.

Talor, the Laughing Warrior, cleansed his own northern homeland and Fronela, even as Arkat cleansed the south. But when Talor was finished he left behind joy

and light, where Arkat's gloom left only massacre and waste.

Valkaro the Good Wizard was father, king, defender, and nourisher of his people.

But he never went outside his proper sphere. His land in the far east survives to this day.

Waertag, Father of the Sea People, was sacred to a hybrid branch of humanity who

called themselves the Waertagi. These people lived entirely at sea aboard their great ships and so were nearly driven into extinction by Zzabur's great curse of

the Closing. The Waertagi were indifferent worshipers of the Invisible God at best, and treacherous enemies at worst.

Xemela, mother of Hrestol, sacrificed her soul to save her people. One of Hrestol's first acts to prove his superiority and virtue was to free his mother from her soul's imprisonment and thus permit her to attain true sainthood, from whence she can bless all of us.

See also:

Pantheons of Glorantha: The Malkioni Array

A Personal View of Western Culture

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