



CASTLES[®] & CRUADES

Aymon Jymoon

The Haunted Highlands CHAPTER 4: Deities of the Karboskian Marches

By Casey Christofferson

Mandras River



Peter Bradley 2005

Upon the bloody northern marches lies a curious Roadhouse. Here are gathered the flotsam of the world: miscreants, mercenaries, soldiers of fortune, adventurers. Dirty Bowbe's they call it and its as rough and safe a sanctuary as any will find in those dark and bloody grounds! For once, long ago, a Kingdom thrived here and the wealth of its coffers flowed across the lands as honey from a jar. But those days are

Haunted Highlands

CHAPTER 4: DEITIES OF THE KARBOSKIAN MARCHES

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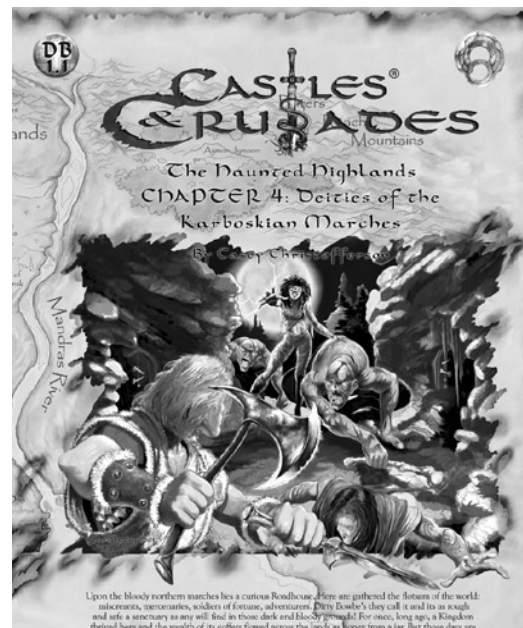
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CHAPTER 4: DEITIES OF THE KARBOSKIAN MARCHES

DEITIES

The deities of the Karboskian Marches and its environs have been known to take a semi-active roll in the lives of their followers, manifesting themselves in statues, storms, and natural events or speaking directly to their most faithful paladins, villains and high priests. Such manifestations are awe and often terror inspiring to the folk of the marches, so they should be kept to a minimum so as not to overthrow the order of a CK's campaign. Likewise nothing says "take this quest" more than the deity of a PCs faith visiting a vision or powerful sign upon them.

TAXUS THE PILLAR

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Symbol: Pillar of the Heavens

Garb: Grey Toga or Athletic Gear

Favored Weapons: Javelin

Form of Worship and Holidays: The Games of Taxus represent the best in sportsmanship and by the book play. They are held annually during summer months often marked with unusually calm weather. The games last two weeks and are held in nearly every country and every clime, though the variety of games and events changes to reflect the local flavor.

A winter holiday marking the worship of Taxus is referred to as the Writ of Judgement. This holiday begins on the winter solstice when many other deities hold their holidays. The Writ of Judgement is a time to reflect upon the mistakes of the past and to pray for the dead and the condemned that they find themselves on the right side of the law in their afterlife.

Typical Worshippers: Athletes, Lawyers, Judges, Monks, Guards and Nobles.

DESCRIPTION

Taxus is worshipped by many as the god of law. He is represented as the Pillar of the Heavens where his strength holds fast against the chaos and discord of the universe. The pillar actually spells out all known laws. As Taxus is the Pillar, he is also the Divine embodiment of Law itself. The priesthood of Taxus seeks to emulate their god through the use of Taxus's divine blessing and have erected temples throughout many lands which include incomplete copies of the Pillar of the Heavens. These copies may be found in town squares and in the center of temples to Taxus. Clerics of Taxus frequently make pilgrimages to various temples of Taxus, to learn new laws that help further their understanding of the nature of Taxus's divine wisdom. As Taxus is also the patron of athletics and fair play, his clerics work as hard on their bodies as they do on their ecclesiastical studies. Most clerics of Taxus choose Physical as one of their attributes.

Taxus is universally adopted by Judges, Magistrates, Lawyers and Athletes as their favored deity. In events where close attention to rules and law is concerned, clerics of Taxus are called upon to referee or arbitrate based on their lengthy study of the tenants put forth upon the Pillar.

Taxus appears to his followers as a man of perfect physical attributes with glowing blue eyes and short white hair, dressed in a short toga and

sandals. Taxus is the twin of Ataxus the Vortex, and is as different from his twisted brother as day is to night.

ATAXUS

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Symbol: Stylized Vortex or Tornado

Garb: Masks featuring faces with twisted or distorted features worn with a motley assortment of ill fitting clothing.

Favored Weapons: Cat o' Nine Tails

Form of Worship and

Holidays: Followers of Ataxus

have no set holidays, instead waiting for random astronomical or natural events to hold a spontaneous celebration in the honor of their deity. These spontaneous celebrations are referred to as Carnival's of Chaos. A Carnival of Chaos could feature any number of activities, from the typical carnival fare to things of more extreme natures. Such extreme activities may include public drunkenness, self mutilation, the release of dangerous beasts into crowded markets, brawls, riots, and other exercises in civil disobedience and public disturbance.

Typical Worshippers: Anarchists, madmen, rebels, prisoners, and others who find themselves at odds with authority.

DESCRIPTION

Where Taxus is the embodiment of law in the universe, his twisted twin Ataxus is the antithesis of such lofty ambitions as the rule of law. Ataxus has mutilated and scarred most of his body to resemble whatever mood suits him on any given day. Although highly intelligent his actions range from crude to dangerous and self destructive behavior suggesting some lingering madness that is beyond the abilities of mere mortals to comprehend.

Ataxus is as likely to ignore the pleas and prayers of his followers as he is to grant them a measure of his powers. Because of this there is 5% chance per rest period that he does not grant any spells.

Ataxus appears to his followers as a man of perfect build, marred with scarification and tattoos. A beautiful mask of fine porcelain covers his face which bears the exact visage of his twin brother Taxus. Not even the Gods may describe the horrors which hide behind the porcelain mask however, for all who have seen the true face of Ataxus have been driven to madness. In battles between men and Gods, Ataxus seeks out lawful enemies, be they good or evil. To thwart these opponents, he takes on the form of a vortex to incite storms, spontaneous volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. He makes no distinction between his foes, and often leaves the battlefield as quickly as he arrives.

BOWBE

(Pronounced Bowb)

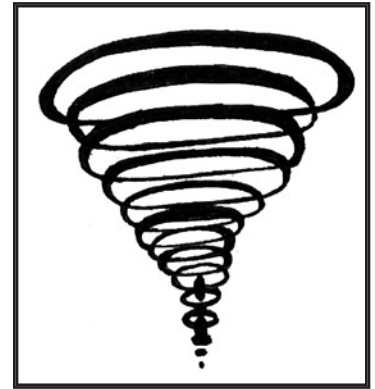
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Symbol: Crossed Sword and Hammer of Bowbe

Garb: Furs, skins and pelts over battle armor

Favored Weapons: Greatsword, Warhammer

Form of Worship and Holidays: Curses and vulgar language in the name of Bowbe, destruction of sworn foes.



Typical Worshippers: Barbarians, raiders, reavers and plunderers.

DESCRIPTION

Bowbe is the embodiment of a barbarians rage and wrath. Appearing to mortals as a seven foot tall barbarian dressed in the Pelt of Urson the Great Bear, whom he can summon to his side by tossing the pelt to the ground and calling forth its name. Bowbe bears the greatsword Bm'fob in one hand and warhammer Wytch-Killer in the other.

Bowbe revels in war and the slaughter of his foes. His battles against giants are as legendary as his outspoken hatred for the undead, arcanists, lawyers, guardsmen, and generally all civilized authority figures of any sort.

Worshippers of Bowbe are known for the irreverence in which they use their deities name, for Bowbe is a deity who only answers the prayers of those that use his name in vain. Thus it is not uncommon to hear berserkers cursing their God for his indifference as readily as they curse their foes for their existence. Bowbe only grants the raising of one of his followers 50% of the time and then only to complete a blood feud or sworn oath of vengeance. Bowbe grants no healing spells to his clerics beyond the 4th level of power.

FYTHELE THE FEY QUEEN (Pronounced Fi-Thee-Lee)

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Symbol: A Ring of Flowers

Garb: Diaphanous robes in the shades of flowers

Favored Weapons: No preference

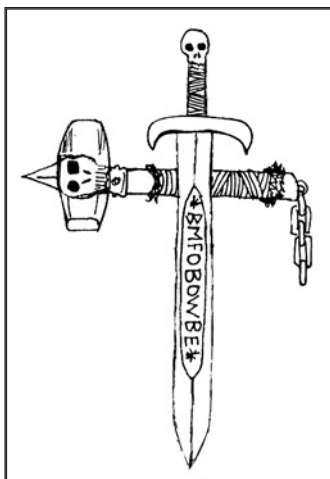
Form of Worship and Holidays: First Day of Spring, First Day of Autumn

Typical Worshippers: Fey Creatures, Elves, Some Gnomes

DESCRIPTION

Fythele is a radiant creature and co-reagent of the Realm of Fey with Prince Thayaleon. The Realm of Fey is a mirror realm to that of mortals, and is a place alive with natural magic, just as Queen Fythele herself is in touch with the very essence of nature and magical forces. She is the dire enemy of **Jokashka the Hag Queen**, who has ever persisted in twisting the beauty of the fey to her own bitter designs.

Fythele disdains physical combat, preferring to strike dead her foes by revealing her untamed beauty to them. Likewise she is a powerful wielder of magic, capable of casting any spell at will. Ultimately Fythele avoids such violence, preferring to escape away to her impregnable fey kingdom, and leave off the "rough stuff" to other more efficient guardians.



GATHAAK

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Symbol: Severed Head

Garb: Blood stained armor and weapons

Favored Weapons: Battleaxe, halberd

Form of Worship and Holidays: The inhuman worshippers of Gathaak celebrate his masses by the slaughter of prisoners, the devouring of their flesh and the drinking of their grog. Temples to Gathaak are usually hidden deep under the ground, where exercises in brutality are common and admired as a sign of strength.

Typical Worshippers: Goblins, Ogres, Orcs, Trolls, Hobgoblins, Bugbears

DESCRIPTION

Gathaak is an ancient god, a primal god who has no remorse for the slaughters his many children have wrought upon the world. Gathaak is the ultimate representation of mindless slaughter and destruction on a grand scale. His prodigious children spread quickly across most worlds raining fear and death into the hearts of all who oppose his might. Although Gathaak is not alone in his pantheon, it would take the combined might of each of his offspring to offer him even the slightest challenge. Gathaak is frequently tricked by other deities into doing their dirty work.

When manifested upon the field of battle or within his temples, Gathaak appears as a scarred orc the size of an ogre able to wield a halberd as if it were a battleaxe. A pair of great tusks rise from either side of his black toothed maw and his stench has been said to cause legions of knights to wretch into their helmets. Gathaak's blood soaked bone armor is made from the skulls of his various foes and anointed with the blood of the innocent.

JOKASHKA THE HAG QUEEN

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: Clawed hand engraved upon a stylized cauldron

Garb: Robes of ratty black.

Favored Weapons: Scythe

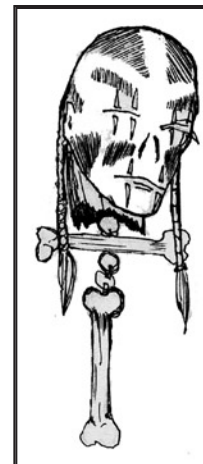
Form of Worship and Holidays: Full moons, All Hallows Eve

Typical Worshippers: Trolls, Witches, Hags, Harpies, Female Giants, Evil Fey, Some Dark Elves, Scorned Women.

DESCRIPTION

Jokashka the hag queen resembles nothing less than a loose leather sack stretched over twisted and knotted bones. Her face is a fright of hooked, warty nose, shark like teeth, and deep set glittering black eyes. At least that's the guise she most frequently presents herself in. She is also known to appear as a dark and beautiful twin of Fythele, known to seduce both men and women alike with her stygian radiance, only to reveal her true form at the moment she devours their soul.

Jokashka is the goddess of nightmares and bed time stories. Tales of her evil are whispered into the ears of children in order to make them mind, lest Jokashka come to steal them away and grind their bones for her bread. Jokashka resides in Darkalfheim and has a wriggling citadel of tortured flesh there, surrounded by a walls of poisonous thorns and gates made from the bones of children. At will she may make her fortress



appear as if it were made completely of candies, cakes and sweets. She is considered to be the mother of hags and patron of witches.

Jokashka assaults her foes through nightmarish dreams and magic, but is known to lay her coup de grace upon her enemies with her wickedly serrated scythe.

KHARZARN THE CRUEL (Pronounced Car-Zarn)

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Symbol: Shackles and Chains

Garb: Clerics of Kharzarn wear a slave's collar about their neck to show their subjugation to their wicked master.

Favored Weapons: Scourge, Kukri

Form of Worship and Holidays:

Kharzarn's un-holy days are twisted orgies of pain and suffering, usually administered by the worshipper of Kharzarn upon others. Kharzarn's greatest holidays are celebrated by the sacrifice of hundreds and thousands of slaves in highly stylized and organized rituals. The "Night of Blood" is held on evenings of a lunar eclipse, where the blood of slaves runs the gutters of Kharzarn's cities as slave after slave is slaughtered and butchered before the observance of the deity himself.

The other major holiday of Kharzarn is the Day of Dark Shadows, or a solar eclipse, when slaves of the faithful are crucified and turned to face the sun so that they are blinded by the coronal flare, then immolated as the moon crosses the sky.

Typical Worshippers: Slavers, Assassins, Evil Rogues and Fighters.

DESCRIPTION

Kharzarn is a foul Deity who takes a direct approach to harvesting souls to further his own power in the deific hierarchy. His followers constantly seek to ensnare and enslave great masses, in order that their sacrifice may fuel the power of the god. His more powerful worshippers are often granted the command of devils to help them commit their fell deeds. Evil mercenaries and ruthless tyrants often pay homage to Kharzarn even if it means wearing some form of chain to denote their allegiance to his deadly path.

Kharzarn appears as a large, stout man with short cropped hair. His eyes are black as pools of pitch and his ears are pointed and hung with many earrings so that his earlobes droop prominently. Kharzarn wears a shirt of bronzed colored chain, each link of which is made from the slaves collar of one who was sacrificed to his unholy being. Unlike most truly evil deities, Kharzarn has no fear whatsoever. He freely wades into conflict with any opponent, lashing out with his shocking scourge and dealing underhanded blows with his black bladed kukri.

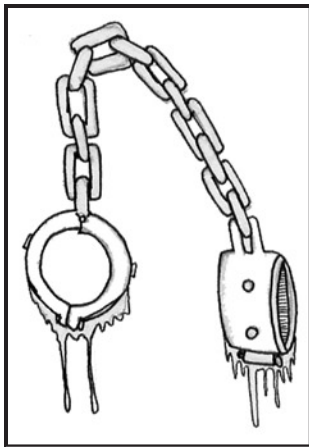
KRANNOGH, EVERLASTING LORD UNDER EARTH (Pronounced Cran-Ock)

Alignment: Neutral

Symbol: A Jagged Mountain Peak in the Center of a Steel Coin

Garb: Materials made from ore.

Favored Weapons: Warhammer



Form of Worship and Holidays: Followers of Krannogh celebrate his victories during earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and any time the earth proves its dominance over the creatures who dwell upon it or under it. Sacrifices are offered to Krannogh in the form of finely crafted items of metal and stone, destroyed under hammer or cast into lava.

Typical Worshippers: Dwarves, Gnomes, some Elementals

Krannogh is the chief deity of the dwarves, and is frequently worshipped by gnomes and other beings with an affinity to earth, stone and metal. He is known to manifest himself in perfectly carved statues within his subterranean temples. Krannogh is a harsh deity, known for his stubbornness and greed. For at the coming of the gods, he saw that all the wealth which would fill the hearts of others with desire, be buried in his realm.

As overlord of the earthly elements, he has dominion over things brought out of it and crafted from it, thus he has a special interest in all things made from metal and stone. His dominion is constantly challenged by the creatures which dwell in the dark deep places, and his folk wage constant warfare against the spoor of Gathaak.

DESCRIPTION

Krannogh appears to his followers as a stone skinned dwarf of exceptional breadth and might, cased in a coat of the hardest mail. Krannogh can take no damage while his feet touch the ground. His hammer is known to strike great fissures into the earth opening new ore deposits for his progeny to plunder. Entire cities of humans and monsters have been buried under the volcanic ash of Krannogh's fury.

KYULASHEDRAC (Pronounced Koola-she-Drack)

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: Dragon

Garb: Robes of silk embroidered with dragons.

Favored Weapons: Halberd with a blade fashioned after a stylized dragon head.



Form of Worship and Holidays: Dragon cults worship the dragon queen on the hottest day of the year (Mid August) and coldest day of the year (Mid January) with festivals including fireworks, burnt offerings and virgin sacrifice.

Typical Worshippers: Evil Dragons, Evil Reptilians, Kobolds

DESCRIPTION

Kyulashedrac appears as a gargantuan dragon with a long snakelike neck and a back and tail covered in wicked barbs. Her eyes glitter like molten gold and her mouth is a furnace powerful enough to melt even the hardest of metals. Known to be the grandmother of dragons, her hellish abode is a deep pit in the nether world guarded by several of the most ancient and evil of her brood. Her scales are harder than any known substance and are said to reflect in them the colors of each of her spawn depending on the light they are viewed in. Greedy beyond the reckoning of even the other gods, they say that Kyulashedrac's treasure trove defies belief.

In combat Kyulashedrac may use the breath weapon of any dragon at will, this breath weapon deals maximum damage and has four times the standard range and size. Kyulashedrac's claws slash lesser beings to ribbons and her mammoth maw devours lesser creatures whole.

NARTARUS, DEMI-GOD OF THE WALKING DEAD

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: A Rod of Bones

Garb: Basic Black

Favored Weapons: Mace or Staff

Form of Worship and Holidays: Funerals, Internment of the Dead

Typical Worshippers: Necromancers, evil priests



DESCRIPTION

Natarus is a pale demi-god. He appears to his followers most frequently in the guise of a cruel faced angel made of fluid molten lead whose long feathered wings drip a poisonous ichor. There are some that claim he is no deity at all but truly is one of the Fiends of Hell or the Abyss itself. He bears the Sceptre of Death in his left hand. This rod is made from the bones of the first fallen mortal to be claimed by the underworld. Natarus is in league with both Arch Devils and Demon Lords, seeing that souls are delivered to them intact. His priests are known to haunt graveyards and charnel houses, seeking to re-animate the dead to go forth and collect more souls for the nether-realms.

Natarus may cast any necromantic spell at will and may summon 100 Hd worth of undead to his side at a moments notice. Any being struck with the Sceptre of Death rises in the following round as a vampire, ghost, or in the case of spell casters of sufficient power... a lich cursed to do the bidding of their cruel slayer.

RAICHEE THE RAT KING (Pronounced Ray-I-Key)

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: Rat

Garb: Any

Favored Weapons: Shortsword, Whip



Form of Worship and Holidays:

Raichee is worshipped on moonless nights and during plagues caused by his billions of progeny, when even non worshippers offer him sacrifice to remove his blight upon the land. The only known holiday is called the Ides of the Rat King, when rat trappers take a day off from their job and folk keep their cats indoors. The holiday always takes place during the first floods of spring when the waters chase rats from sewer and cave.

Typical Worshippers: Were-rats, evil wizards, madmen, those who live amongst filth and vermin.

DESCRIPTION

Raichee appears as an enormous thin, vaguely humanoid rat with mangy hair crawling with fleas and a thick rubbery pink tail. Raichee's eyes are glittering black but glow red in the presence of light. His teeth are razor sharp and easily the size of a steel shield and glisten a sickly bone white from his constant gnawing on the bones of sacrifices.

Temples to Raichee are commonly well hidden deep within the sewers of cities great and small.

SHAMBERE (Pronounced Sham-beer)

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: Crossed Daggers Over a Black Gemstone

Garb: Facemask

Favored Weapons: Dagger, Shortsword

Form of Worship and Holidays: Drunken feasts following a successful heist or murder.

Typical Worshippers: Assassins, Rogues, Evil Illusionists



DESCRIPTION

Shambere is the god of thieves and professional contract killers. Greedy and selfish, Shambere is distrusted by most of the gods, but used by few who need his skills in order to achieve their own goals. Shambere appears as a slight man or woman dressed all in black bearing wickedly curved knives and shortswords. Shambere can shape any shadow and step through shadows as if they were doorways.

Rogues and assassins who venerate Shambere are known to sacrifice 5-10% of their ill gotten gains to the deity in order to retain his favor. Shambere is known to break the luck of followers who refuse such sacrifice, causing important tasks to automatically fail.

Shambere never faces foes in open combat, preferring to ambush them and slay them instantly through stealth and careful planning.

SOAGOTH (Pronounced So-A-Goth)

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

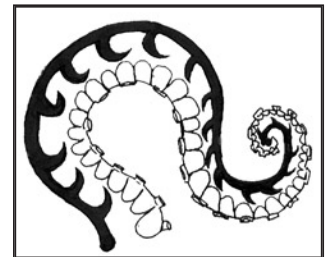
Symbol: Waving Tentacle

Garb: Any

Favored Weapons: Flail

Form of Worship and Holidays: Random acts of madness and terror.

Typical Worshippers: Madmen, Evil Wizards or Illusionists, Clerics, and Aberrations



DESCRIPTION

Soagoth has two guises to which it appears to its worshippers. Its first guise is that of a screaming mass of tentacles, and razor toothed mouths. It's second guise is that of a lordly prince with coppery skin and a shaved head. When Soagoth treads upon the earth in this guise, nightmares, fear, and madness break loose within twenty miles of his location. Soagoth may cast any spell at will, preferring the most destructive and insane spells which its twisted mind can muster. Soagoth may give birth to 100 Hd worth of aberrations per day. Its realm is a twisted place of creation and destruction far beyond the stars on the very edge of the universe, where all planes are born and cease to exist in a mind shattering entropic frenzy.

Soagoth attacks with spells, flailing tentacles, and by enveloping its foes into its rubbery, fleshy mass.

THE GREEN MAN

Alignment: Neutral

Symbol: Elk Horned Headband

Garb: Clothing and gear made from naturally found materials

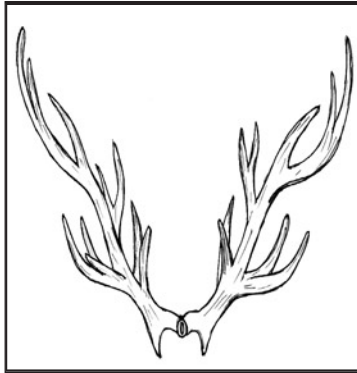
Favored Weapon: Cudgel

Form or Worship and Holidays: Equinoxes, solstices and weather.

Typical Worshippers: Druids, Farmers

DESCRIPTION

The green man is an embodiment of nature whose teachings are followed by druids. His name is known only to druidic Hierophants and is thus not reprinted here. To all others he is merely the green man. The green man appears as a green skinned hill giant sized man of perfect build and stature with a flowing green beard and a mane of forest green hair knotted with thistles and thorns. His eyes shimmer like a summer storm and he may control any weather within 100 miles of his manifestation. The green man concerns himself only with the natural order and balance of things and is dismissed by most of the more territorial deities who see him as an impediment to their conquests of terrestrial and planar domain.



The green man is of the earth, and as such is the only deity who actually dwells upon it, having no plane or demi-plane of his own. The green man considers all planes where natural things grow as his home, the very earth itself is his wife, and he is merely her guardian and protector.

In combat the green man calls down storms and earthquakes, or assaults his enemies with his mighty cudgel, known to slay any non-earthbound creature in a single skull splitting blow. The green man may cast any druidic spell at will and may summon 100hd worth of living creatures (Plant or Animal) per day.

THAYALEON PRINCE OF ELVES (Pronounced Thay-A-Leon)

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Symbol: Leaf Shaped Arrowhead

Garb: Varies from stately robes to forest greens.

Favored Weapons: Longsword, Longbow

Form of Worship and Holidays: Thayaleon is worshipped through carols and dancing during midsummer nights when the air is cool and the moon is full. Elven life span is so long and filled with rituals, ceremonies and commemorations of deed and battle, of victory and heartbreak too numerous to name here.

Typical Worshippers: Elves, Half Elves, some Halflings and Fey.

A progenator of the elven race, Thayaleon rules as a living god, sometimes dwelling amongst his beloved children and other times ruling affairs from his mahogany palace in the heart of the Realm of Fey.

DESCRIPTION

Thayaleon appears as a lordly elf with skin that gleams with many shades of gold, dressed in the softest of silks and leathers. Thayaleon bears a

great bow which only he can draw, made from the antlers of a white stag and a bough from the tree of life which may strike unerringly any target which he can see with his divine sight. Thayaleon is no coward however, and wields his gleaming longsword and the forces of magic as skillfully as his deadly accurate bow.

TOKALIDIN THE ALL KNOWING, GOD OF MAGIC

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Symbol: Staff affixed with a golden pyramid.

Garb: Sage or scholarly robes

Favored Weapons: Staff

Form of Worship and Holidays: Astrological phenomenon, such as comets, meteor showers or the alignment of celestial bodies.

Typical Worshippers: Sages, Scribes, Wizards and Illusionists.

DESCRIPTION

It is said that Tokalidin is the master of all spells and keeper of all knowledge. Tokalidin appears as a stately looking elderly gentleman with a bald head and long beard of black shot with silver. Worship of Tokalidin takes place in Towers of Maji and anywhere where folk seek arcane knowledge.

Tokalidin concerns himself with little other than the laws of magic and the bending it to his uses and designs. He may cast any spell at will. His staff, Harngragle acts as a staff of the magi and may break any enchantment and reflect any magic cast against him back upon its caster.



VANIUM THE FEARLESS

Alignment: Lawful Good

Symbol: Crowned Helm

Garb: Military or martial clothing, arms and armor.

Favored Weapons: Lance, Spear, Longsword

Form of Worship and Holidays: Vanium's holidays are marked with observances throughout the year of famous battles where the forces of good overcame the forces of evil. His key holiday is in mid spring where offerings are made to fallen soldiers and those who were willing to sacrifice their own life for the greater good of the many.

Typical Worshippers: Knights, Paladins, goodly clerics, healers, and any who observe the tenants of justice, truth, love, and honor above all else.

DESCRIPTION

Vanium is a universally loved and despised deity, known for his righteousness and compassion. Many of his followers are known for their willingness to give to the poor, heal the sick and care for the weak. As thus many paladins are devoted to the path of justice which Vanium's prepares for them. Vanium is the enemy of all that is evil and the foe of injustice. His sincerity in demanding justice often puts him at odds with Taxus, for justice is not served when a law has no heart behind it.

Vanium appears as a very tall man encased in archaic armor whose hand may hold any weapon he calls forth into it. Vanium is inclined to manifest himself in his statues and temples before the faithful to impart wisdom and advice to his most loyal of worshippers.

