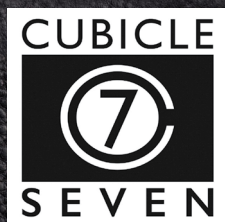


WARHAMMER
FANTASY
ROLE-PLAY

River Gods of the Empire

—By Graeme Davis



DEVELOPER
DIARY

GODS ON THE REIK

We can't pack everything we want into every book - there will always be more cool ideas than will fit. However, Graeme's pitch for some extra information on the regional river gods of the Empire and some of the miracles they grant was way too good to pass up. We may feature some of this content in a future publication, but for now they are yours alone to enjoy!

RIVER GODS OF THE EMPIRE

by Graeme Davis

As noted in the WRP rulebook, the people of the Old World recognise many deities, both great and small. River gods are typical of the local gods and spirits of place that may be encountered throughout the Empire and beyond. Anyone who lives near a river or travels by water will know the name and nature of the local river god.

Theologians debate whether these local gods are aspects of Taal or Mannan, or local names by which they are known, or minor deities in their own right. Those who live on the river do not concern themselves with such abstractions. They just know that it is sensible to keep the local river god happy.

River gods are minor deities, and normally do not have a fixed seat of power, a recognised leader of their cult, religious orders, or holy books. As the most powerful of the river deities, Grandfather Reik is a partial exception. The chief priest of the Reikgott Temple (see **Holy Sites** below) claims authority over all who pray to the Reikgott and all the riverside temples and shrines. While no one actively disputes these claims, many local priests ignore them. All of the Reikgott's priests are riverfolk — as are all of his followers — and the river life, they say, makes it hard for them to learn of new edicts and pronouncements.

MAJOR FESTIVALS

The followers of most river deities make offerings when the spring floods bring the year's first meltwater down from the mountains. This is both to avert floods and to celebrate the fertility brought to the river in the form of silt and mud. In rivers with an annual run of salmon or other edible fish, a festival is normally held to mark the bounty they bring.

SYMBOLS

Religious symbols worn by followers of the river deities vary widely, and in many cases it is hard to distinguish between a holy symbol and a lucky charm.

A common practice among all riverfolk is to mount the skull of a drowning victim on the prow of their boat. Explanations for this custom vary, but most riverfolk believe that the deity will recognise the skull as belonging to someone they had already punished, and leave the boat and its crew alone.

Other tokens include otter or duck skulls, pieces of coloured glass worn smooth by the water, crawfish claws, and the shells of freshwater snails.



Art by Scott Purdy

MAIN RIVER GODS OF THE EMPIRE

God	Spheres	Worshippers	Offerings	Notes
Altaver	River Aver	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Food, drink, coins	Cave Day (1 Brauzzeit) sacrifice of a wheel of aged cheese (Bernloch, Averland).
Aach	Aach River, Ostland	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Food, drink, coins	
Bögenauer	River Bögen	Boatmen, merchants, river folk	Coins, sheaves of reeds, rolled stones	A single temple in Bögenhafen with no full-time clerics; shrines line the river.
Gorol	Streams, Ostermark	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Food, drink, coins	—
Grandfather Reik	River Reik	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Beer, eels, silver	Shrines dot the length of the river Reik, but there is no formal cult.
Karog, aspect of Taal	Rivers (Talabecland), inc. R. Talabec	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Food, drink, coins	See <i>WFRP</i> , page 212
Manann	Rivers (tidal reaches, and where there is no local river god)	Boatmen, merchants, riverfolk	Food, drink, coins	See <i>WFRP</i> , page 205

WORSHIPPERS

All riverfolk pay their respects to the local river gods along their routes, and most farmers and others who live by a river make offerings and follow strictures in the hope of averting floods, fish famines, or worse. Many travellers make offerings before and after a journey, as well.

The worship of the river gods is not formally organised, and with a handful of exceptions (explained below) they do not usually have a dedicated priesthood. Almost all priests have at least one Career in the Riverfolk class, and many riverfolk are lay priests, following a Riverfolk class but gaining *Bless*, *Pray*, and other priestly Skills and Talents independently through the *Training* and *Unusual Learning* Endeavours (*WFRP*, pages 199–200).

Riverfolk and some travellers may wear small pendants bearing the stylised face of a river god or some other emblem such as an oar or a fish. Others, more superstitious, string bags around their necks holding fish bones, river pebbles, or other tokens.

HOLY SITES

It has been said that the river is a river god's temple, although small shrines dot the banks of most rivers and port towns may have small temples maintained by the community.

The Reikgott Temple

Reikgott (or, more commonly, 'the Reikgott') is one of the ancient names for the spirit-god of the river Reik. It is an ancient spirit with many names and has been worshipped in the Reikland for millennia. Nowadays it is generally indistinguishable from Manann. To the common supplicant, the Reikgott is just another name for Manann.

This temple is situated on a small rock island in the middle of the Reik, half a mile or so downstream from Altdorf. It can only be safely reached by boat. Fortunately, an initiate of Manann is always on hand to pick up any visitors from the bank and row them to the temple. Very little of the temple is built, as such — most of it seems to have been carved from the island itself by the force of the Reik, and the smooth walls are a spectacular site and stand testament to the power of Manann.

It is accepted practice that the occupants of any vessel passing the temple stop briefly to pay their respects or offer a sacrifice to Manann, or, if they are in a hurry, to simply throw their sacrifice overboard towards the temple as they pass. Because of the impressive natural architecture and its proximity to Altdorf, the temple is a very lucrative one.

The Rock at Split Waters

The Rock at Split Waters is the name of a sacred temple of Taal and Rhya in Talabecland. It is so named for the way in which two tributaries of the River Stir come together at a waterfall, punctuated by a jutting monolith of black granite at the junction of these streams. Over untold generations, worshippers of Taal and Rhya have come here, risking their lives to swim through the turbulent waters and scale the rock to carve words and pictures of praise to Taal and Rhya. Some of the carvings are ancient beyond compare, harkening back to the time when Ishneros ruled the land.

The Rock at Split Waters bolsters the power of Spells that deal with water in some way. Magisters who cast Spells of this nature within view of the Rock add an additional +1 SL to Casting Tests.

The Temple of Bögenauer

Bögenauer is the god of the River Bögen, which rises in the Grey Mountains and flows through Bögenhafen to join the Reik at Carroburg. His temple in Bögenhafen consists of a hall with two colonnaded wings enclosing a three-sided court, within which stands a statue depicting Bögenauer in the guise of a merchant-boatman.

Within the colonnades are several small shrines reflecting various aspects of the deity's influence over the town's fortunes. There is a chapel where prayers are offered for the safety of the town's boatmen, another dedicated to the prosperity of its merchants, a third dedicated to the security of its walls, and so on. The temple is maintained by the local guilds, each responsible for the upkeep of the shrine or shrines most relevant to their members. The rival guilds strive to outdo one another in the magnificence of their shrines.

There is no priest at the temple, but on festival days priests of Bögenauer come from Bögensee to conduct services.

Bögensee

The small town of Bögensee overlooks the lake from which it takes its name, at the source of the River Bögen in the Grey Mountains. A small monastery stands on the lake shore, and is home to the priesthood of the river-god Bögenauer. A dozen or so priests and initiates are in residence at any given time: the remainder travel the length of the river attending local festivals, overseeing sacrifices, and conducting services.

PENANCES

Penances made to river gods usually involve sacrifices, which are usually of two kinds. Sacrifices of food, drink, and sometimes live animals are dropped into the river, usually at the same spot where the penitent committed the transgression for which they are atoning. Gifts of coin or labour are delivered at shrines, helping to maintain and enhance them.

STRICTURES

It is almost impossible to distinguish between strictures imposed by a river deity and superstitions followed by riverfolk. Here are a few of the most common observances.

- ☠ When setting out on a journey, and when moving from one river to another, drop a copper penny in the water to show respect and as a prayer for a safe journey.
- ☠ Do not whistle aboard a boat, as this may summon up a dangerous wind.
- ☠ To locate something (or someone) lost in a river, speak the name of the item or person while driving a nail into a loaf of bread. Drop the bread into the river, and it will be drawn to the spot where the object of the search lies.
- ☠ Never blow out a lantern or candle aboard a boat; snuff it out instead. Blown flames anger the river gods, and your boat may catch fire.
- ☠ When stopping for the night, the first drop of everyone's first drink must be poured into the water. The deity has worked just as hard as you have, and deserves a drink just as much as you do.

BLESSINGS OF THE RIVER GODS

Characters who have the *Bless* Talent and follow one of the river deities above gain the Blessings of *Breath*, *Conscience*, *Courage*, *Fortune*, *Hardiness*, and *Healing*. See pages 220–1 of the **WFRP** rulebook for more information on Blessings.

MIRACLES

These miracles are common to the most favoured followers of many river gods. Replace the word 'Rivergod' with your Character's chosen deity.

Rivergod's Wisdom

Range: You

Target: You

Duration: 1 Hour

You implore the god to guide you, and your mind fills with an intimate knowledge of the river and its hazards. Every **Row** or **Sail** Test you make gains one additional SL while this Miracle is active.

Calm River

Range: Initiative Bonus Miles

Target: One boat on which you are embarked.

Duration: 1 Hour

Theologians disagree over this Miracle. Some claim it is *Fair Winds*, the Miracle of Manann (**WFRP**, page 222), while others maintain that it is a separate and unique Miracle granted only by river gods. While this Miracle is active, the boat has a tailwind (see **Death on the Reik Companion**) and the river's current is steady and free of debris.

Lower Flood

Range: Willpower Bonus Miles

Target: Area of Effect

Duration: 1 Day

You implore the river god to show mercy, and raging waters begin to subside. Within a few minutes the river is back within its banks, or does not rise above them. This Miracle is equally effective against natural and magically-created floods.

Rivergod's Protection

Range: You

Target: Area of Effect

Duration: 1 Hour

You claim protection in the name of the river god, and the creatures of the river take heed. While this Miracle is active, no aquatic creature can come within Willpower Bonus Yards of you or do anything to attack you.



Art by Scott Paine

Rivergod's Blessing**Range:** You**Target:** One boat on which you are embarked**Duration:** 1 Hour

You call on the river god to grant you passage through their domain. You can ignore the debilitating effect of wearing trappings while swimming in a river (within reason, as dictated by the GM). Furthermore, you gain a +20 bonus to Swim Tests, and instead of halving your Movement Characteristic to determine your swimming speed, you use your Strength Bonus.

Rivergod's Bounty**Range:** Willpower Yards**Target:** Area of Effect**Duration:** 1 Day

You implore the river god for generosity, and the river around you fills up with fish. Everyone within the area of effect gains the *Fisherman* Trait (**WFRP**, page 138) at maximum level (i.e. Initiative Bonus) while the Miracle is active. Anyone who already has the *Fisherman* Trait adds their Initiative Bonus to the level, ignoring the normal maximum.

LITTLE PRAYERS

Priests of the river gods are less numerous than those of many other deities, and although lay followers may acquire some of the Skills and Traits of priesthood as mentioned

above, they are most often invoked by those who are not Blessed. The box Little Prayers on page 204 of the WFRP rulebook offers some ideas for dealing with this eventuality.



Art by Scott Mistry