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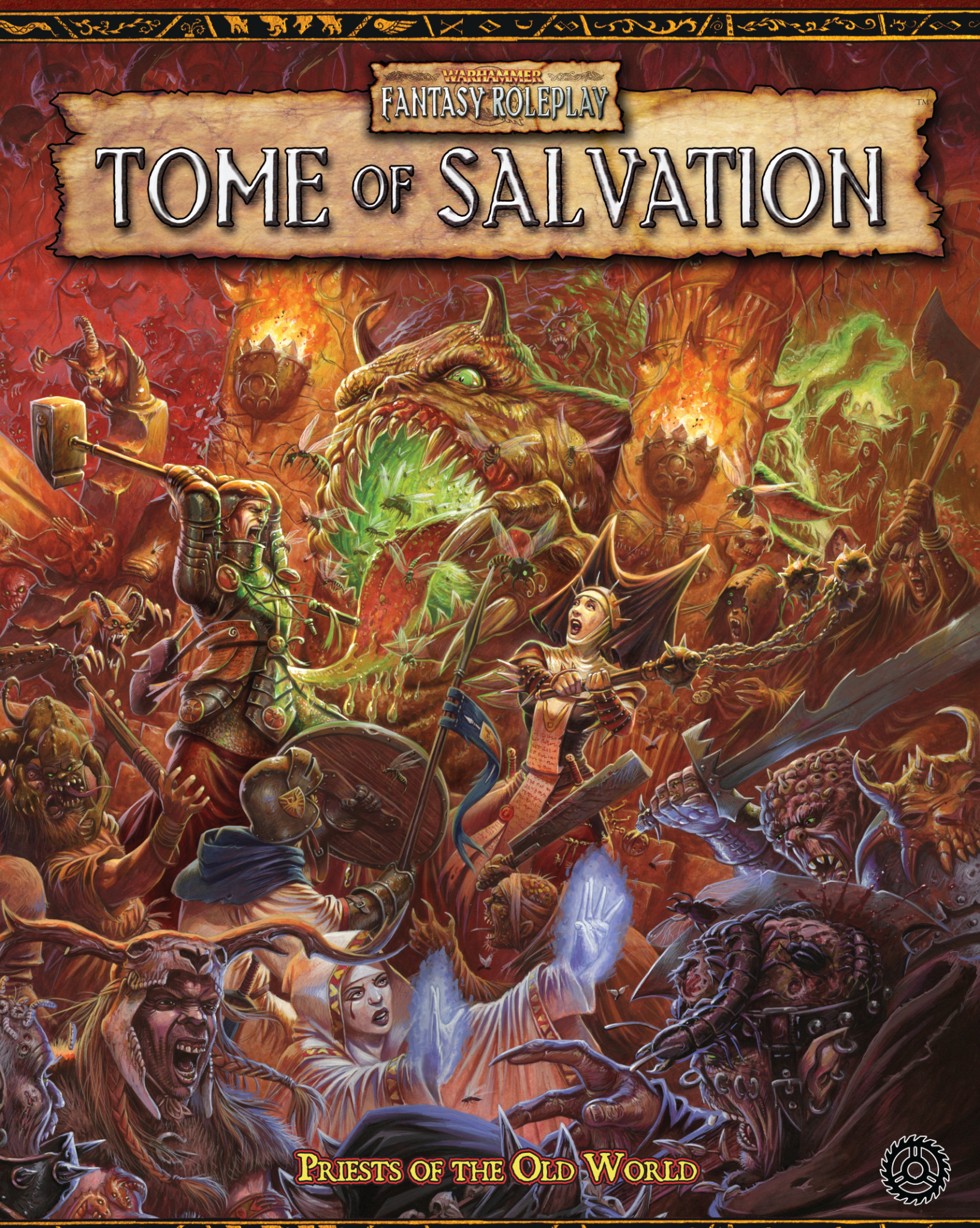
TOME OF SALVATION



PRIESTS OF THE OLD WORLD

Cubicle 7 Entertainment Limited
Suite D3 Unit 4 Gemini House
Groundwell Industrial Estate
Swindon, SN25 5AZ
UK

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Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
Tome of Salvation™

Design Team: *Eric Cagle, David Chart, Andrew Kenrick, and Andrew Law*

Additional Design: *Owen Barnes, Kate Flack, and Robert J. Schwalb*

Development: *Robert J. Schwalb* **Editing:** *Robert Clark and Rob Vaughn*

Graphic Design and Art Direction: *Hal Mangold* **Cover Art:** *Ralph Horsley*

WFRP Logo: *Darius Hinks*

Interior Art: *Scott Altmann, Alex Boyd, Tyshan Carey, Paul Dainton, Chris Dien, Vincent Dutrait, Carl Frank, Dave Gallagher, Paul "Prof" Herbert, Eric Lofgren, Pat Loboyko, Kenson Low, Andrew Murray, Torstein Nordstrand, William O'Connor, Eric Pollak, Scott Purdy, David Rabitte, Adrian Smith, Christophe Swal, Chris Trevas, Franz Vohwinkel, Ben Wootten*

Cartography: *Andrew Law*

WFRP Development Manager: *Owen Barnes* **WFRP Brand Manager:** *Kate Flack*

Head of Black Industries: *Marc Gascoinge*

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Games Workshop. Ltd
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"With the Gods, all things are possible."

I sit here at my desk, in the quiet of the night with heavy heart, for you see, my dear friend and colleague Hrodbert is dead. I shudder at the circumstances of what was clearly a murder, knowing in my heart of hearts that he was innocent of the crimes levelled against him posthumously. He was a scholar like myself, and at times, those in our profession must walk in the shadows of corruption to arrive at the truth. In doing so, we must remain firm in our convictions, leaning against the august power of the Gods to shelter us from the cloying allure of the Ruinous Powers. The accusations levelled against him have cast us all into question, regardless of our deeds and service to the Empire and Sigmar. I wonder at the time it will take for the Witch Hunters to come to my door, filled with suspicions and righteous fervour. I must take heart though, for Sigmar is my guide.

Is it possible, then, that my comrade faltered? Could he have stumbled in his ill-advised study of the Ruinous Powers? Long had we urged caution, adjuring him to abandon his foolish course and turn his keen mind toward salvation and succour in the arms of the great Gods of the Empire. Yet Hrodbert ignored our advice and plunged ever deeper into the mire of madness, plumbing the depths of heresy to explore the landscape where the Dark Gods hold sway. Whether he finished his life's work, I know not, for he is dead and his home and possessions were seized and burned by those opposed to Chaos.

I cannot conceive of what would tempt man to turn away from the glorious Gods, to whom devotion is rewarded with divine protection. Those who placate the Gods, who show them their due respect, can receive great reward, sheltered from the worst of the ravaging touches and the ruinous temptations of the fouler deities. I grieve for my lost friend, for the tragedy of his abrupt end, and for the loss to us all that his passing has brought. But I do not question the whys of his end, for those who dabble with the darkness have a tendency to take it into themselves, wallowing in its despair, ambition, rage, and twisted perversions.

In a sense, I feel a responsibility, a purpose, a holy invocation to expiate the crimes of my friend. Perhaps I should set to paper the purpose and cause of the right and true Gods in the Empire, cataloguing their glorious works to, if only in part, diminish those blasphemies recorded by my departed friend. Truly such a work would glorify our Gods and restore the good faith and devotion of mortals to their service and worship, and thereby ensure the continued patrimony given to us by great Sigmar.

If I were to author such a tome, where would I begin? In the beginning, I suppose. My library is full of dusty accounts and ancient writings that claim to tell the true origins of our Gods. Whilst such information is indeed fascinating, there are many conflicting tales, even among those that relate to Sigmar. Such works drip with half-truths and falsehoods, and so extracting the truth of these writings is a daunting task. Which to choose? I must let Sigmar guide my choice and accept that which is decreed by divine will.

It is obvious that once I establish the history of the nine primary Gods of the Empire, that of their cults would follow. There is an abundance of lore regarding these institutions, though they tend to conflict depending on the era in which they were written. Alas, the lens of history is smeared with lies and confusion.

Of course, no discussion of the great Gods would be complete without a look at the low beliefs of the common men of our nation. Peasants have such curious ideas when it comes to the Gods, and most venerate an array of spirits, ancestors, and lesser Gods. It is from their ignorance that fanaticism arises. I acknowledge the zeal of these servants, but I worry that some other spirit, some foul thing of darkness, may seize their souls in place of the God to whom they prostrate themselves. I suppose some mention of these lesser deities should be made, in addition to the misguided rituals of their followers. Yet I must have care when approaching this subject, lest I call down the wrath of those who guard against these powers.

Pious expression is another worthy subject. Our calendar is full of holy and sacred days set aside to honour the pantheon. Doubters believe these are just excuses to shirk honest labour, but those who have participated in these grand festivals know they are pleasing to the Gods.

Undoubtedly, the most worthwhile subject is the servants of the Gods themselves. Sadly, many good Empire folk have misperceptions about the function and purpose of our role, misunderstanding what we do and what impels us to give over our lives to the deities. Whilst I am an expert only on Sigmar and his cult, I have colleagues in many other cults whom I'm sure would be willing to donate a portion of their time to the completion of this work. By shedding light on our relationship with the Gods, perhaps some clarity could be achieved.

Is such fancy foolish? Few in our brave land can read, after all. I wonder at this urge to author such a book. Is this some divine impulse, some path that has been illuminated by the glory of our Gods, or am I motivated by some baser need? Certainly, I have no need of fame, wealth, or glory; these are the trappings of the mundane, and they serve only to disguise more sinister agencies. No, this drive must be divinely inspired. I must embrace this belief, and listen to the divine utterances as they come to me from my master. I cannot be sullied by baser needs, and must remain pure of heart and purpose lest these words be tainted.

The history, then. Where did I place that letter to the Emperor? Ah, here it is...

Chapter I: A Brief History of the Cults of the Empire

Being A Brief History of the Cults of the Empire as Told by the Venerable Hieronymous of Nuln

"Never have I encountered a supposedly civilised nation where religion and superstition directly control almost every level of thinking. The Empire is as much ruled by the representatives of its Gods as it is by its nobles, and that can make truth a dangerous commodity to own."

—Attributed to High Loremaster Teclis of Ulthuan

To his Imperial Majesty, the Prince of Reikland, the ruler of our glorious Empire, sovereign of the heights and depths, Karl Franz I of Altdorf.

Again, I am to work by your command, to craft a manuscript for your discernment. My commission is to compile the works of all the great philosophers, historians, and theists, and the extant works of the Gods themselves, into a tome describing the History of the Cults of the Empire.

Therefore, as Verena is my witness, I shall describe truthfully the formation of the religious institutions in this blessed land. I shall begin by discussing matters that fall into Imperial pre-history, and then guide you through time's corridors until we arrive at this night, where I put my pen to parchment beneath the twin light of Morrslieb and Mannslieb. Throughout this discourse, I shall provide historical context, and sections from other essays, papers, and even individuals, all to aid in understanding this complex subject, for it is evident from my studies that there are many competing truths when it comes to matters of faith.

> "And it began:
> Rhya, the beautiful, rose up; Taal, the powerful, rose up;
> Blossom-broad, hot with life. Spread of Horn, firm of will.
> Then, they did create all natural things."
>
> —The Book of Green

For although the holy cults are now sedulous powerhouses of the Empire's establishment, and all preach similar creation myths, it was not always so; once, long ago, the cults did not even exist, and neither did their beliefs.

Of the First Times

What little is known of the earliest Human population of the land that would become our glorious Empire comes from two primary sources. The first is the learned Dwarfs—the Elder Race with whom we share our longest allegiance—for they have relevant records that date back to our prehistory. The second is the primitive Humans themselves—for traces of their passing still exist, including ancient carvings, cave paintings, and old burial mounds.

Although the Elves undoubtedly hoard many relevant records of this time, securing the lore of this Elder Race has proven to be impossible. However, as they have little regard for our religious rites and practisesviewing our cults, as they view most of our great works, with little more than undisguised disdainI do not believe this to be a significant loss.

Concerning the Dwarf Chronicles

Unfortunately, the ancient Dwarfs have few extant records concerning the first Human tribes that lived in the Reik Basin. It is presumed that once there were more, but most of the Dwarf holds have since been destroyed, and those that remain have suffered repeated natural disasters and attacks over the centuries, all of which have resulted in the many great losses. However, some primeval lore has survived the ravages of time, and from it the occasional glimpse of our antecedents can be found.

The Chronicles of High King Nurn Shieldbreaker of Karaz-a-Karak, *dated by Dwarfs to 1347 KA (circa —1492 IC), boasts the first known historical record of a Human tribe in the forests of the future Empire. I was forbidden access to the ancient, golden volumes, so I cannot reliably quote from them, but I was granted an abridged copy of the relevant sections when I produced my Imperial Seal of Acquisition. The fascinating chronicles revealed the Dwarf Kingdoms of that era were under attack. Massive earthquakes rived the mountains, and from the resulting cracks the Greenskin foe poured, starting the conflict we now know as the Goblin Wars. Karak Ungor and Karak Varn had already fallen; and many other holds fell under attack.*

> "... the Moist Earth, the Mother of all life ſtwo obscure symbolsđ Dryad, Naiad, Nymph ſlist of unknown symbolsđ Gods ſtwo lines obscuredđ devastation ſcrack in stoneđ came from beyond the ſhalf a line worn awayđ silver ships ſseven unknown symbolsđ deep waters, fertile, and ſthree lines worn awayđ Worship Her ſtwo unknown symbolsđ nurture Her land ſone line worn awayđ we are Her children, we are the Belthani ..."
>
> —Extract translated from the Talastein Carvings, now held in the Royal Academy of Talabecland, translated by Teclis of Ulthuan

It was against this backdrop of desperate war that one of the first recorded contacts between Men and Dwarfs occurred. Whilst hunting Greenskins in the lowlands of the Worlds Edge Mountains, High King Shieldbreaker encountered a tribe of Humans. As far as the High King's scouts could ascertain, they were clearly scavengers, although they did employ primitive tools, presumably to hunt game and, perhaps, although unlikely, farm land.

When the High King and his retinue approached, the Humans immediately fled from the well-armed Dwarfs. The Humans' fear of strangers was so pronounced that Shieldbreaker took offence at their

frightened mien, presuming their xenophobia, or rather their cravenness, was an insult. After the abandoned, poorly constructed camp was investigated, the High King famously remarked in his personal Book of Grudges that the Humans were Umgal (which roughly translates as a band of people who make shoddy things), and "needed to be taught a swift lesson in respect." Although Dwarfs undoubtedly encountered Humans many times before in the south, Umgal was to be the name that stuck; and now, almost 4,000 years later, Humans, to the Dwarfs, are still known as Umgi, the race that makes shoddy things.

We are blessed by the Dwarfen forethought, as these Dwarfs recorded everything they found in the camp. Among the simple tools and fixtures that littered the camp were suggestively shaped objects, no doubt of ritual significance, which reveal a forthright attitude to the acts of Rhya. Time and civilisation have now replaced such direct depictions with the wheat sheaf and the antler—symbols that are much more suitable for public display, and less likely to excite the passions of the easily led. Unsurprisingly, the Dwarfs had little interest in these badly sculpted figures, and they abandoned them.

Later chronicles recount similar tales—Dwarfs spotting nomadic Humans; Humans fleeing—but very little is added concerning their possible religious practises.

For this, we need turn to the antiquarians.

Concerning the Antiquarian Discoveries

Fortunately for those enquiring into the foundations of our great nation, it has become increasingly fashionable to fund antiquarian projects. All over our enlightened Empire, one can see small groups of brave men and women sporting shovels and artists' tools, all ready to enthusiastically excavate ancient sites and diligently record what they find. This recent development has led to all manner of discoveries, but none more pertinent to this manuscript than the Talastein Carvings.

Uncovered in the Kölsa hills in Talabecland by a group of disreputable tomb robbers, the thirteen stone slabs of the Talastein Carvings are a wonder to behold. The pictograms are worn now, but fascinating clues can still be garnered by the educated scholar.

The Old Faith

"Most believe the Cult of the Mother died out long ago. They are wrong. Not only do the Great Families of my Order continue Her traditions, but the sickle is born by others, which most of whom hide far from prying eyes.

Before he formed our Order, Teclis came to our great groves. By channelling Ghyran he activated the Waystones we believed had been raised by our ancestors, and showed us what our "Oghams" truly were: a creation of the Elder Race, the Asur, the Elves. We watched wide-eyed as Teclis explained the nature of belief, magic, and of Hoeth, the God he especially revered.

Not all of us accepted his foreign ways. Indeed, a full third of the Druidic Families stubbornly spurned Teclis, refusing to believe his "truth", and fled into the dark forests, just like the prehistoric tribes of old.

But those who remained, listened, and then eventually understood.

Not long after, the Jade Order of Magic was formalised, and we were its numbers. We didn't change our beliefs—indeed, we practise the Old Faith still—but we understood them for what they were: a twisted reflection of the truth.

Since then, our role as Nature's Guardians has brought us into contact with many others who believe they are the Children of the Belthani. They are all, I am quite sure, just as wrong as we were."

—Erowin Grunfeld, Magister Druid of the Jade Order

The slabs depict a surprisingly complex society led by priests called "druids." The carvings tell of Human tribes that fled to the Reik Basin from a foreign evil, although what that evil was is unspecified. Of note, especially when one considers the tribe's primitive lifestyle, is how advanced their religion was. Seven of the thirteen slabs are dedicated to religious rites alone. It is clear they used, and probably erected, many of the Oghams and stone circles scattered around this fascinating Empire, and worshipped a deity now translated as "the Mother"—a fertility Goddess of Creation. They also appear to have understood the cycles of the passing seasons and celestial bodies, as many of their stone circles were aligned to mark them. Therefore, it seems likely they celebrated the same equinoxes that we do today. However, two of the slabs also hint at darker rituals, possibly involving Human sacrifice, nature spirits, and, some antiquarians claim, the slaves of the Dark Gods themselves: Daemons.

Thus, it is most fortunate that the descendants of the Great Tribes of Man were soon to arrive in the Reik Basin; peoples who were destined to change the face of religion in that great province forever.

Of the First Gods

The time, place, and circumstances of the arrival of the Great Tribes to our bountiful land are subjects of bitter debate amongst the intelligentsia of our erudite Empire. Where did the tribes come from? When did they come? Why did they come? Did they arrive all at once? All these questions and more are debated in the dusty halls of our greatest institutions of wisdom. The only matter that is sure is that the Tribes, in whatever form they took, brought with them knowledge of the Elder Gods.

Concerning the Tribes

The twelve Great Tribes that Holy Sigmar bound together to drive the Greenskin menace from the Old World are well known, and well documented; however, many centuries before our first Emperor was born, there were many more Human tribes within the Empire's future borders.

Although the Teutognens (or "Teutogens," as some less-informed peasants prefer) claim to be the first Great Tribe to cross the Worlds Edge Mountains, it seems likely that this was not the case. Dwarfen runes carved deep into Black Fire Pass suggest the Teutognens, along with several other tribes, including the Unberogens, Merogens, Bretonni, and Futones, moved through the pass as a confederacy. The runes claim they were hounded from their individual homelands by an unknown enemy, which most scholars now believe was the Greenskins. Although some of these tribes came from what is now known as the Badlands, the majority came from across the Worlds Edge Mountains, probably from the territory we now label the Wolf Lands.

However, these are not the only confirmed migrations of this time. The Norse Dwarf chronicle The Saga of Dread Yngvarr Iorvarrsson describes encounters with many savage tribes of Humans in the lands we now call Kislev, and across the territories of modern Ostland and Nordland. The chronicle is reliably dated to –1012 IC, and claims that Iorvarrsson encountered the ancestors of the tribes we now call the Ungols, Norsii,

"Wolkold's Teutognens fought through the hordes until they achieved the uplands. With Courage driving them onwards, they climbed. Countless weak souls fell in those mountains, all too pitiful to stand by Ulric's side.

After years unnumbered, Wolkold broke through to the other side, and Ulric's Chosen howled down the mountainside, irrepressible as blood from an open wound.

At last, Wolkold had found Ulric's Hunting Grounds.

He named the mountains 'The Worlds Edge,' for his people would never cross them again, and gathered the Teutognens to his side.

Now, they would conquer."

— *Teutognengeschichte*, "Jagdrevier"

Ropsmenn and Frikings. Further, the same chronicle also claims that the Teutognens were already in the vicinity, even though it predates the Black Fire Pass inscriptions by more than twenty years.

Such small contradictions are common when one studies these early times. The only certain thing is that approximately 1,000 years before the birth of Holy Sigmar, tribes of Humans migrated to, or were driven into, the Reik Basin. Most fled lands from across the Worlds Edge Mountains, although it seems likely some also came from the Badlands. These tribes were warlike by necessity, and conflicts between them were common. It also seems clear they spoke many different tongues, and had not mastered the art of written language.

What then happened to the Mother-worshipping tribes is unclear. But, it seems likely they were slaughtered by the more belligerent tribes, such as the Frikings, Unberogens, or the Teutognens, as all evidence of their culture vanishes at this point.

Concerning the First Gods

It is with the arrival of the Great Tribes that we uncover the first mention of the Gods that have come to be so important to our glorious Empire.

In those early times, many scholars believe each of the tribes had their own patron deity. They cite the confirmed associations between the Teutognens and Ulric, the Ropsmenn and Tor, the Ungols and Dazh, and the Taleutens and Taal. From these they extrapolate that other tribes must have had similar patrons. The most common associations are Manann with the Endals, Rhya with the Bretonni, Sóll with the Merogens, Ahalt with the Menogoths, Morr with the Ostagoths, and Lupus with the Cherusens. However, such propositions are guesswork at best.

What is certain is that many small pantheons were in existence at a very early time, with Gods selecting tribes according to their whims, or tribes turning to deities most relevant to their daily life. It seems likely that knowledge of these Gods transferred between the tribes as they mixed, warred, and gradually developed trade. Thus, the Gods worshipped by the most successful tribes, and the Gods most appropriate to the harsh, cruel lives that the tribes endured, gradually spread throughout the Reik Basin.

Although we know the tribes observed many Gods—most of whom are now long forgotten—five rose to prominence: Ulric, Morr, Manaan, Taal, and Rhya. These Gods represented concepts of core importance to tribal life: War, Death, Nature (marine and terrestrial), and Life, and soon came to be worshipped by many of the tribes, although they were often known by alternative names. Scholars of the Empire know these Gods by several collective names, such as the Elder Gods, nord Godt, or the quindeus, for they are the oldest deities still widely recognised by Sigmar's great Empire, and deserve special attention.

Worship of these Gods took a very different form to our modern observances. Not only were there no temples, but there were no cults, sacred texts, or even priests. Instead, tribal leaders, as representatives of their people, were deemed the closest to the Gods, and part of their duty included pleading with the mostly uncaring deities during disasters, and thanking them during periods of bounty. To do this, tribal leaders normally offered great, bloody sacrifices, often Human, upon sacred days important to the tribe or deity. Often these sacred days occurred upon a seasonal equinox—perhaps borrowing from the earlier Belthani—but this was not always the case.

Are the Old Ones Gods?

"I have spent all my adult life studying the great works of the Elder Races, and, without compare, the most mysterious aspects of their writings concern the "Old Ones."

For example: High Elf accounts of the Old Ones appear to directly compete with the creation myths concerning two of their Gods: Asuryan and Isha. In Loremaster Finreir's Book of Days, the Old Ones—who "came from beyond the heavens" —are attributed with forming the world as we know it, and creating the Elven race. However, contradicting this, Loremaster Beldryal's seminal work on Elven theology, The Flame Eternal, has the Elven "Emperor of the Heavens", Asuryan—whose plan all Elves are said to follow—being the prime creator, and Isha, a Goddess of Nature, as the mother—i.e. creator—of the Elven race. Further, the High Elves apparently do not believe that the two texts contradict each other.

The only sensible conclusion is that the Gods of the Elves must actually be Old Ones, and that the two books are simply telling two variations of the same tale.

However, when I proposed this hypothesis to Felanthian, an Elven scholar from Marienburg that I have communicated with for many years, his enigmatic reply simply confused me further:

'My friend, you are incorrect, the Old Ones are not the "Gods" of my people. However, to ease your mind, I can confirm the two Asur texts you cite in your illuminating missive do not contradict each other.'

Perhaps my translations are wrong?"

—Extracted from the journals of Father Igyori Rhyurvic of Brunmarl, Priest of Verena

The Ruinous Powers

"It is well known that the greatest danger the Empire faces is that posed by the Ruinous Powers. These Daemon Gods threaten to break the natural order of all things by mixing the Realm of Chaos—their ever-changing domain—with the mortal realm, allowing the Daemon Gods to rule both as one. Thus, they take any opportunity they can to directly influence the mortal realm, and mutations, as well as other unsavoury circumstances, are the result.

By comparison, it seems obvious that the Gods of the Empire only rarely touch the mortal realm. This may cause some to believe that the Gods of the Empire must then be weaker than the Daemon Gods, for they only rarely influence mortal affairs, but I propose such beliefs are unwise. Instead, I suggest that the Gods of the Empire can touch the mortal realm whenever they wish, and are just as puissant as the Chaos Gods, but they simply choose not to. Why this would be, I can only guess, but I have read one myth that may have the answer.

Wilhelm Brehnsson's Myths the Cities Forgot contains an oral tale that suggests the only reason the Dark Gods cannot destroy the mortal realm is because they are somehow trapped. Further, so the tale goes, every time any other God influences the mortal realm, the prison about the Ruinous Powers grows weaker."

—*A Speculative Enquiry Concerning the Nature of the Gods*, Dagmar Hümmel

As your Imperial Majesty will observe, the formation of the cults we know today was still far off, but travellers from the sun-drenched south were soon to bring them one step closer.

Of the Classical Gods

Gathering reliable information about the ages preceding our glorious Empire is difficult. The Dwarfs had, as yet, little interest in the belligerent tribes of the Reik, as they were still engaged in their centuries-long war with the Greenskins, which they were losing badly. Further, the Human tribes left little behind for antiquarians to study, as they were constantly on the move, and rarely settled in one place for any length of time.

However, some details, although suspect, can be found. Although the tribes of the north were illiterate, the tribes in the south of the Old World were not. It may be widely disputed in the Empire, but modern Tileans claim to be the primary civilisers of the Old World, for they not only spread the use of letters, but also organised religion and the Gods that I here title the "Classical Gods;" and, most importantly, they claim to have records proving it.

Concerning Tilea

It is well known that the founding of our glorious Empire was the starting point of Human civilisation in the Old World. However, the self-important and pointlessly stubborn scholars of the Tilean city-states persist with fictitious claims that it was their ancestors that were the true civilisers. Unfortunately, the obvious falsehood of their lies is all but impossible to prove, particularly as the dishonest Tileans have scrolls and records they claim date from this early time.

These academics of dubious veracity assert that, much like the fertile Reik Basin to the north, the drier lands to the south were also populated by tribes of Humans. However, unlike the northern tribes, who were invaders from foreign soil, the Tileans incredulously argue that their ancestors had long inhabited their lands, and cite unlikely myths of great Tilean cities supposedly founded during the occupation of the Old World by the Elves as proof of this—a claim I believe has no historical basis.

The legacy of this mythical civilisation was, according to the biased Tileans, the written word, which their ancient texts suggest was gifted to them by Verena, the Goddess of Wisdom. Whatever the origin of this ancient written language, we now call it Classical, and its modern equivalent is still used across the Old World as

"In the breast o' the sea I served me time.
'Eave away, me jolly boys,
'Eave away right now.
Then a right-pretty girl pardon'd me crime.
'Eave away, me jollies, or
The King will sink thee down;
'Eave away, me jolly boys,
'Eave away right now!
Said 'er name was Shallya; an' 'er 'ips were fine.
'Eave away, me jolly boys,
'Eave away right now.
So I tipp'd 'er a wink, said she'd be mine.
'Eave away, me jollies, or
The King will shake 'is crown;
'Eave away, me jolly boys,
'Eave away right now!"

—*Of Sea and Man*,
'The Twenty-Seventh Shanty'

the primary script of academic study, and as a common tongue between enlightened folk of all Old World nations.

Thus, long before the great city-states of Tilea had been wrought, it is claimed there was an intellectual elite that could read and write in the south of the Old World. However—as if this were not already enough!—the arrogant Tileans go even further. As most of their early settlements were built in and around the ruins abandoned many centuries ago by the Elves, the Tileans also reason their ancestors must have translated the impossibly complex runes of that race! From these translations the Tileans then claim to have learned the founding principles of modern philosophy, medicine, theology, astronomy, and, most importantly, they believe they uncovered many new Gods.

Whatever the truth, the Tileans, as well as being liars and tricksters, were an adventurous and curious folk, and soon organised expeditions to explore the surrounding lands. When they eventually encountered the northern tribes, they brought with them knowledge of their written language and Gods, and had a broad-reaching impact upon our ancestors.

Concerning the Classical Gods

To aid your Imperial Majesty's understanding, the Gods introduced by the Tileans to our tribal forefathers are here called the "Classical Gods," after the language the southerners introduced to our ancestors.

Where the Gods already worshipped in the Empire mirrored the harsh and brutal life in the northern Old World, the Classical Gods represented more refined concepts, such as Mercy (Shallya) and Wisdom (Verena). Indeed, Shallya and Verena are the most commonly cited Classical Gods, as they now have a great deal of influence in our glorious Empire. But, other less-well-known Gods should also be included, such as: Khaine, the Lord of Murder; Margileo, the Guardian of Honour (who may, disregarding his sex, actually be Myrmidia); and Scripsisti, the Patron of Scribes. Further, some scholars claim Ranald is also a Classical God, although some Ranaldan factions vociferously argue against this, for they believe their God was once mortal, and had not yet been born.

The Trustworthiness of Tileans

Your Imperial Highness, if you are unsure of my claims concerning the reliability of Tilean sources in regards of theological and historical matters, consider the following:

"The best way to win any debate is to have proof. If you don't have any, fake it; after all, you can always use the time your opponent spends trying to disprove your fake looking for real evidence."

—Attributed to Boetio Ardito, High Priest of Verena in Scorcio

"You wanna da olda manuscript? I makea... ah... finda you da real thing, huh? You know, how you say? ...da reala deala? You gotta da gold, I gotta da old. So, whatta you say?"

—Honest Giovanna, Nulner Antique Dealer

"The answer to all points made by scholars of the Empire is this: 'Yes, I understand what you are trying to say, but you do know that concept originated in Tilea?'. Not only is it probably true, but it invariably infuriates."

—Professor Morvalli Marmideo of Pavona University

As the Tilean traders spread word of their Gods, they, in turn, were influenced by our ancestors, and returned to their homelands with new myths and legends, some of which were incorporated into their existing traditions. Thus, many of the earliest surviving Tilean texts have tales including the northern names for the Gods, rather than the original Tilean names. For, although Morr was a name that originated in the south (the northern names for the God of Death have been lost to time), the Tileans used different names for Manann, Taal and Rhya (Mathann, Karnos and Ishea), and had no equivalent for Ulric at all (although some brave theists have dared to draw comparisons between Ulric and Khaine). The extant texts of the time have many myths of one God meeting another, typically a Classical God meeting an Elder God, mirroring the contact between the Old World tribes.

If the Tileans are to be believed, which I suggest they should not be, another important export from the south was the priest. Where the northern tribes relied upon temporal leaders—their chiefs and kings—to guard their spiritual welfare, Tileans like to believe the southern tribes had temporal and spiritual leaders.

Whatever the truth, at a similar time to the arrival of the southerners and their Classical Gods, it is generally accepted that priests soon spread throughout the north.

Of Organised Religion

Although Tilean scholars claim the arrival of traders from the south of the Old World brought priests and organised cults to the Reik Basin, this is easily disproved with just a modicum of careful research.

> *"Words vanquish the Sword."*
>
> *- The Third Opuscule of Verena's Teachings,*
> Proverb the Ninth

As a single example: It is well known that the Teutognens had long worshipped Ulric, their tribe's patron deity. Although the Ulricans freely admit they did not have any temples until 63 IC, when a high temple was completed around the Eternal Flame of Mitgard (modern-day Middenheim), the cult does guard many ancient records which prove the Winter God had long been served by a dedicated priesthood and organised cult for many centuries before their high temple was raised. Thus, are yet more Tilean "truths" exposed for the lies they are!

What is sure is that some time in the third century before the coronation of Sigmar, priests began to replace tribal chieftains as the sole vehicles to the divine. And not long after this, the priests began to organise themselves.

Concerning the Rise of the Priest

With the spread of so many religions through the Reik Basin, it became impractical for a single clan chief or king to deal with all divine matters for his people. No one man had the time to understand all of the Gods, minor deities, nature spirits and similar, and also organise his people. Further, many of the Gods did not favour the leader over all other men. For example: Morr favoured the dead, Shallya tended all, and Verena championed scholars. Thus, as already shown, the academic theories of Tilea are demonstrably untrue, for it seems likely that the rise of priests simply came from a need to appeal to, and understand, many Gods, which is something one man is incapable of doing. However, it is clear from Tilean texts that the southern tribes may have had an advanced concept of the priest long before our blessed land, so an influence from them should not be entirely discounted, but should be understood as a limited influence at most.

Soon, most clans and tribes sported an array of priests dedicated to the Gods that were important to their people. Almost all communities worshipped the five Elder Gods, and their priesthoods were joined by those of local nature spirits, and those of other now-long-forgotten Gods. Shallya's priestesses soon joined them, as the Goddess's influence quickly spread from the Tilean trading settlements that were established in the Reik Basin (with Nuln being the largest, which was then a fortified village built within Elf ruins). After Shallya came her holy mother, Verena. Verena's rare cultists had an immeasurable impact, for they brought the Blessed Art of Words, and for the first time, the myths, legends and fables of the Great Tribes were recorded.

Unfortunately, almost all of these early texts have been lost—and those few we have are almost impossible to translate, as the Classical language has developed much since that early era—but their influence is still felt, for many of the holy books we revere today are copies of copies of copies of those Verenan-recorded originals.

Concerning the Rise of the Cult

As the tribes met, traded, or conquered each other, their priests did the same, spreading their beliefs. Soon, there were many groups of priests respecting the same central tenets across our great land, and some even had access to primitive, holy texts, recorded for them at great cost by the priesthood of Verena.

Thus the cults did slowly form. However, methods of disseminating holy teachings varied, and some were far more effective than others. Where the wild-haired priests of the Teutognens put any cultist competing with Ulric to the axe—thus, by the time of Sigmar's birth, there were no cults openly claiming to represent winter, wolves or war—most other cults were less aggressive. Indeed, some cults did not even try to enforce their religious views, which resulted in some Gods being worshipped in many different ways, and by many different names. A good example of this is the many Earth Mother cults that can be found throughout our pious Empire, including the minor cults of Dyrath, Haleth, and Hyacinth, which, amongst scholastic circles, are all presumed to be revering Rhya under different guises.

Contrary to many expectations, one of the most warlike cult expansions came from the Taleuten cult of Taal, which attempted to draw all nature deities under its sway. To a certain extent, it succeeded, but as there were countless minor Gods dedicated to one form or another of nature, Taal was never going to replace them all in the minds of Men. Nevertheless, by Sigmar's time, Taal was seen as the King of Nature, and all animals, rivers, weather, plants and more were his domain, with any other nature deity automatically presumed to be beholden to him. Indeed, the Taleutens often went further, proclaiming that Taal was actually the King of all Gods, a message that was never accepted by the Teutognens.

As your Imperial Majesty will perceive, the formation of the cults was a very slow process, and would take many centuries before the organisations we recognise today can be identified. There were holy texts to write, temples to build, and traditions to formalise—and no two priests ever agreed. It was a difficult time, made no easier by influence from other tribes to the west, east and south, all of whom had their own opinions about how the Gods should be worshipped. During this time, the rise of the five Elder Gods became complete, and most of the competing Gods lost their influence on Humanity.

Examples of lost Gods are many. Some were lost as they were no longer relevant to tribal life—such as Beoforn, God of Fire Mountains—and others were subsumed into other cults—like Söll, a God of the Sun, whose cult was absorbed by the Taalites. Indeed, absorption often occurred against the will of the lesser cults, such as happened with Ahalt, a God of Fertility, whose priesthood was slaughtered by Taal's cult for not submitting to it. However, when an individual God slipped out of Human sight, it was rarely a permanent occurrence, as the God in question did not die with his followers, and some took measures to be known again. This can be seen in the current resurgence of Lupos worship in Hochland—where he is now seen as a God of Predators, not Wolves or Winter, his original domain—or in the pervasive worship of Söll in Wissenland. Lupos and Söll are of especial note, as they may once have been the patrons of the founding tribes of those Grand Provinces (the Cherusens for Hochland, and the Merogens for Wissenland), and may suggest all the original tribal patrons still watch over their people to this very day.

Old Wolf White Back
Old Wolf White Back prowls the hills,
Belly craving fresh new kills.
Bloody Blitzbeil wants him dead,
So, it slices off his head!
Old Wolf White Back howls out loud,
To the cheers of Ulric's crowd.

"Every morning, as I don robes in the vestry, I hear the Temple Wards singing their simple rhymes. As they are Middenheimers, their childhood songs are different to those I was brought up with; but they are no less interesting, and are certainly as brutal.

In particular, the rhyme 'Old Wolf White Back' fascinates me. I have read that it was once recited by children at public executions, and perhaps implies that in Middenheim's past, capital killings were accompanied by wolf howls, but I have come to my own conclusions.

Evina Klug, Verena's high priestess in Middenheim, allowed me access to her libraries, and there I uncovered the tale of Lupos, a Wolf God associated with Taal and Rhya, possibly as part of an ancient triumvirate. In particular, the White Wolf was of especial importance to that deity, and represented the long-dead religion's ferocity and passion.

Does it not seem likely that the early Teutogens may have absorbed the Cult of Lupos, probably at the end of an axe? Thus, Ulric's association with wolves may be stolen from another cult, and may have nothing to do with the original cult at all?

If my suspicions are true, they will bring many Ulrican religious texts into question, for wolf iconography is now associated with Ulric from the beginning of time—and I believe that may be a lie!"

—The 3rd Journal of Werner Stoltz, Sigmar's High Capitular in Middenheim

Of Sigmar

The many legends of Sigmar Heldenhammer, First Emperor, Forger of Empire, are known by all right-thinking men and women of our great nation, and rightly so, for he is the greatest mortal that has ever lived, and watches all of our actions to this very day.

As his Imperial Highness will already know, Sigmar was the son of Chief Björn of the Unberogen tribe, whom the Reiklander Princes claim as their revered ancestor. The future Emperor's birth was marked by the passing of a holy twin-tailed comet, and by an unprovoked assault by savage

Orcs from the forests. Famously, Griselda, Sigmar's mother, died in the attack, an event that would forever fill Sigmar with hatred of the Greenskin foe.

Of all the tales told of Holy Sigmar, one of the most famous comes from before he became chief of the Unberogens, and distinguished himself as a master of war and diplomacy. As we all know, Sigmar rescued the high king of the Dwarf peoples from marauding Greenskins, an enemy they both despised with deep passion, and gifted Sigmar the magical warhammer Ghal Maraz (Skull Splitter), and named him Dawongr (Dwarf Friend).

But the greatest tales of his life were yet to come. Not only would the Heldenhammer unite the twelve Great Tribes of Man, and forge an Empire vaster than any could possibly have imagined, but Sigmar would also transcend the Coil of Life. Sigmar would become a God.

> "And fell Nagash, Master of Undeath, bearing years ill-measured by mere centuries, looked to the sky above the Chaos Moon, and beheld: Lo, there was a Blazing Star in the night, and it had two tails of Holy Fire; then he cried with Exceeding Great Terror, for the Enemy had come."
>
> —*The Geistbuch*,
> 'The Sternschnuppe'

Concerning the Emperor Sigmar

Not only does the study of Sigmar's life aid in understanding the cult that would come to worship him, but it also comforts the pious soul, and is a worthy undertaking for any man of faith. Thus, even though I am aware your Imperial Majesty will already be fully conversant with the following legends, I will briefly retell them nonetheless.

After becoming chief of the Unberogens, Sigmar realised that his tribe alone was not enough to defeat the Greenskins that assailed his folk, and he knew that his people were doomed if he did not take action. Thus, Sigmar did what he had to, and planned to bind the tribes of Humanity together into a larger, more effective force. Eventually, after a string of heroic battles and tense negotiations, Sigmar united twelve of the tribes of Humanity into a single, mighty force. As well as personally leading the Unberogens and Teutognens (whom he had conquered by that time), the chiefs of the Endals, Thuringians, Cherusens, Taleutens, Asoborns, Brigundians, Menogoths, Merogens, Ostagoths, and Udoses all accepted his command.

The deciding confrontation between Greenskin and Man was the Battle for Black Fire Pass. There, Dwarfs, Sigmar's strong allies, joined the Humans, and together they scattered a Greenskin horde larger than any the world had seen before. The battle not only drove the Greenskins from the Reik Basin, but it also ended the Goblin Wars that had plagued the Dwarfs for centuries. As we all know, most of the Human tribal chiefs tragically died in the battle, and countless thousands more also lost their lives. But, even though the cost had been unthinkably high, every throat still cried Sigmar's name. He had not only saved all Humanity, but he had also saved the Dwarfs.

Soon, mirroring the Dwarfen model of a High King leading the Holds, Sigmar was crowned Emperor of the twelve Tribes by the high priest of Ulric in Reikdorf (modern-day Altdorf), and our glorious Empire was born. He formed twelve Grand Provinces from the ancient tribal lands, and the surviving tribal chiefs (or the descendants of those who had fallen) were installed to rule for Sigmar as Counts.

For the first time, Dwarfs, Sigmar's greatest allies, came to live alongside Humans, and some even sold their skills to the new Empire, raising stone buildings, aiding the laying of roads, and planning the first temples to the Human Gods. The Tilean settlement of Nuln, within the new Empire's borders, was quickly seized, and the Empire's first holy sites to Verena and Shallya were established. The language of the Unberogen tribe was formalised and a written form was created using Classical characters influenced by Dwarf runes, forming the language we now refer to as Old Reikspiel. An official calendar was created, with the first year dating from Sigmar's coronation. A frenzy of activity buzzed throughout the Human Empire, and even a concentrated assault by a mighty force of Undead in 15 IC, and various Beastman attacks, could do nothing to stop the rise of Sigmar's mighty nation.

Those tribes that did not join Sigmar were driven from his lands. The remaining Bretonni in the south fled across the Grey Mountains and settled the fertile lands they found on the other side. Thus, it is perhaps appropriate that they became either beaten peasants or arrogant fools obsessed with thick plate armour: somewhere in their backwards society lurks the primal memory of their early defeat at the hands of Sigmar. The Frikings had already been effectively wiped out by Sigmar, so were no longer a threat, and the remaining Roppsmen were driven deeper into Ungol territory, where they were eventually destroyed by that warlike folk. Similarly, the Norsii, the tribe that had long worshipped the Dark Gods, were also driven north into Ungol territory, but they fought through that difficult land, and continued north, there to settle the cold wastelands of Norsca and eternally regret their failure to join Holy Sigmar. Instead of warring with the Ungols, Sigmar named them allies, for they had occasionally aided his wars against the Greenskins, and agreed not to assault his Empire.

When Emperor Sigmar mysteriously abdicated 50 years after his coronation, he left behind a magnificent Empire that claimed lands so far-reaching that they could barely be imagined. But with Sigmar gone, the Counts of the Grand Provinces were in disarray, for he had left no heir.

After a great deal of argument which almost led to a bitter civil war, a high priest of Rhya suggested that the counts vote for a new emperor from amongst their own number. To avoid the horrible possibility of destroying Sigmar's Empire, the nobles agreed this was a suitable method to appoint Sigmar's replacement. Eventually, they appointed Count Siegrich of Averland to succeed Sigmar. His first act as Emperor was to enshrine the election of a new Emperor in Sigmar's Law, and he re-titled the Counts of the Grand Provinces as Elector Counts.

Concerning the Ascended Sigmar

What happened to Sigmar after his abdication is uncertain. Some say he headed east to Talabheim, turned south down the Old Forest Road to Black Fire Pass, then headed for Karaz-a-Karak to return Ghal Maraz. Other stories claim he went east, and then continued east, heading for the Worlds Edge Mountains. But, as the applicable texts contradict each other, any attempt to discern the truth amongst the myths is impossible.

What can be confirmed is what happened to the Empire Sigmar left behind.

Within twenty years of his disappearance, there was already a strong cult of personality growing around the memory of the first Emperor. He was well loved by his people, and statues had been erected, special anniversaries of important events had been set aside, and many children were named after him. Thus, when a wandering friar named Johann Helstrum arrived in Reikdorf claiming he had received a vision of Sigmar, the early folk of the Empire immediately believed him, for they were hungry for more tales of Sigmar. Holy Helstrum preached that he witnessed Ulric standing cold and proud, holding a magnificent, golden crown in his heavy hands. Surrounding the Winter God were the other divinities, looking on with pride and approval. Kneeling before Ulric was Emperor Sigmar, and Ulric slowly placed the crown on his head. Helstrum preached that Sigmar had ascended and become immortal, that Sigmar was a God.

As Helstrum taught that all Sigmar's laws were holy, thus enshrining the Elector Counts with divine authority, his message was immediately popular with the nobles. Indeed, Helstrum went even further, proclaiming the Emperor was Sigmar's divine representative, and thus should be obeyed in all matters.

By 73 IC, Johann Helstrum was accepted as the first high priest of Sigmar, a position we now call the Grand Theogonist.

Of course, some of the cults complained, claiming they had received no proof of divinity, but it was too late. The people wanted it, the nobles wanted it; Sigmar the God, and his new cult, were established in the Empire, and would forever play a significant part in its future.

Humanity's Only Hope

"Your 7th Objection:

Major: If multiple Gods were once mortal, then ascension from mortality to Godhood cannot be unique.
Minor: Sigmar, Ranald and Myrmidia were once mortal.
Conclusion: Ascension is not unique.

I deny the entire proposition.

I deny the major thus: If a God chose to be mortal, then became a God again, he would just be returning to his original state, not ascending. Thus, proof of a God's previous mortality does not prove an individual God began as a mortal. Only those that began as mortals can be described as ascending when achieving Godhood.

I deny the minor thus: Myrmidia was a God before she was a mortal. It is clear from verified Tilean and Estalian texts that Myrmidia chose to become mortal. Further, I offer evidence from the Universities of Altdorf and Nuln, where many old Oghams have been translated that refer to an Eagle Goddess known in the Reik before Sigmar was born, long before Myrmidia walked as a mortal. Lastly, I do not accept Ranald was ever mortal, and I would be interested if you have any proof that he was.

Therefore, I will continue with my assertion that Sigmar's divinity is unique, and that all Bretonnia must convert immediately for the safety of their souls. There is only one God that truly understands the Human condition. There is only one God that ascended from mortality. There is only one God fit for Humanity's worship, Sigmar."

—from the IIth Letter of Professor Hans Pfaff of Altdorf University to the Kingdom of Bretonnia

Of the First Millennium

The first millennium of our glorious Empire brought many developments for the cults: most of the well-known holy texts were recorded, and by the end of the millennium many were beautifully illuminated; the modern cult structures were formed, and many of the orders we know today were founded, such as the Order of the Anvil for the Sigmarites; many high temples were built, such as the High Temple of Ulric in 63 IC, and the High Temple of Sigmar in 246 IC; and an expanding network of lesser temples and shrines were established.

Indeed, by 1000 IC, the cults were very similar to their modern-day counterparts. Sigmar's cult had grown swiftly, and Ulric's had begun its steady decline. Taal had subsumed Rhya's cult into his, and Rhyans were becoming less common. Ranald had mysteriously appeared, although no records confirm when or where. Manann was worshipped in almost all coastal communities. Shallya was popular everywhere, although holy sites were almost non-existent outside the cities. Verena had forged forth from Nuln, and was worshipped in most cities, especially Talabheim. And Morr, as he always had been, was an ever-present God, looking on at life as it busied its way towards his portal.

However, as the cults became more organised and claimed more power, divisions began to form.

"We grieve for those who are inspired
Their genius stolen, or acquired
Who watch with hope, and risk their dreams
To see them born as dark regimes"

—*Songs of the Raven*,
'A Threnody for Hope'

Concerning the Expansion of Sigmar's Empire

Although almost all the Reik Basin had been claimed by Sigmar's Empire, little less than a third of it was under Imperial control. The resulting conquering of this land, now called the "Drive to the Frontiers," was a time of war and conflict, which the cults of Sigmar and Ulric supported with fervent passion.

The few extant chronicles from this period are fragmentary and obscure, making any hard facts of this important campaign, and the cult activities surrounding it, difficult to confirm. Some texts seem to imply that there were disagreements between Ulricans and Sigmarites involved with the Drive, which seems likely as some extremist Ulricans doubted Sigmar's divinity. However, this cannot be stated with any certainty, and some Sigmarite texts flatly contradict this interpretation. What is sure is that when the borders of the old tribal lands originally claimed by Sigmar were reached, disagreements between the nobles arose, and it seems likely that the cults were also involved.

Ostland and Talabecland wished to expand their eastern borders into Ungol territory, the land we now call Kislev. Westerland sought to expand into Futonsryk (the Wasteland). Middenland strived to quell the wild northern lands (modern-day Nordland). And many others agreed

with this expansionist view, including the Ulrican cult, which has always been aggressive. But Reikland and her allies, all entrenched Sigmarites, wanted none of it. Instead, they wished to build more fortified towns and connecting roads throughout the Empire, continuing Sigmar's civilising work and securing the land already conquered.

It was inevitable that with so many of the Elector Counts wishing to expand their lands that emperors with Ulrican sympathies were repeatedly elected. The most aggressive was Sigismund the Conqueror of Averland, who not only ordered a war on the Jutones, but also led armies across the Grey and Black Mountains to found new provinces outside the Reik Basin for the first time.

However, these provinces proved to be difficult to defend, and were constantly under attack from other tribes of Humans, as well as Greenskins, Beastmen, and other, darker, foes. Thus, by 900 IC, our glorious Empire had mostly quit its expansionist policies, and instead focused upon defending what it had already secured. By that time, the conquering Empire included all of the wide-reaching territories that your Imperial Majesty now guards, and also spanned most of what we now call Kislev, all of Parravon, a large part of the Border Princes, and, of course, the Wasteland.

As the borders were slowly consolidated, the Cult of Sigmar steadily secured more influence within them. As the centuries passed, it had gathered a great deal of support from both the nobility and the peasantry, and was easily eclipsing the once-all-powerful cult of Ulric. In 990 IC this was finally recognised in Imperial Law when the cult of Sigmar was granted an electoral vote by Emperor Ludwig the Fat, granting the Grand Theogonist the same voting powers as an Elector Count. The other cults howled at the injustice of this, and all manner of accusations of corruption and bribery were bandied about, mostly concerning the Emperor's love of great food and the massive banquets the Grand Theogonist was known to host. But the complaints were for naught; the Emperor had spoken.

Ten years later, the last stone of the massive rebuilding of the High Temple of Sigmar was laid. Exactly 1,000 years after Holy Sigmar's victory at Black Fire Pass, the cult of Sigmar had secured itself as the dominant cult of our glorious Empire, and openly demonstrated it with the completion of the largest temple in all the Grand Provinces.

However, the other cults did not approve, and some openly grumbled their dissatisfaction at the new developments. Amongst these, the passionate and angry Ulricans had the loudest voice. But, for the moment, their voices went mostly unheard.

Concerning the South

As our glorious Empire expanded to the north and Sigmar's cult grew in power, the disparate southern tribes were all bound together by a warrior-woman now called Myrmidia. Displaying remarkable ingenuity and strategic genius, she conquered all of modern-day Tilea and Estalia, but on the day she was to be crowned queen of a territory even larger than the Empire to the north, she was assassinated.

The resulting destabilisation and civil war marked the foundation point of the Tilean city-states and the Estalian kingdoms. And, much like Sigmar before her, Myrmidia's people, filled with anguish at the loss of the much-loved queen, deified her.

However, unlike the north, the southern folk claimed that Myrmidia had always been a God, and had chosen to walk as a mortal to better learn their ways. Not long after this, rumours spread through the Empire that Sigmar had actually been the son of Ulric, and had always been a God as well. The Sigmarites tried to quell this, as they preached their God was unique because of his ascension, but it proved to be a popular myth.

The Cult of Myrmidia grew rapidly in the south. But, it would be many centuries before it had any impact in the Empire.

Of the Civil Wars

I am sorry that I must discuss this dark period of our Empire's history, but to fulfil my commission to your Imperial Majesty, and to ensure that the mistakes of the past may never be repeated, I cannot shy from the truth. Although it may be hard to conceive how 1,000 years of successful

The Spear of Betrayal

"Today, I was taken by Señor Albarano to the High Temple of Myrmidia in Magritta. It is a sight that I shall never forget. In particular, it has impossibly large, unsupported domes. When I enquired as to the force that kept them from falling, the amused reply was simply: "Science." I remain unconvinced, and believe there must be some magical component to their construction.

I received a tour of the wondrous place, and the myths associated with each carving, frieze and window were explained to me. One story stood out as particularly unexpected, so I will recount it here.

Myrmidia once chose to walk the earth as a powerless mortal. At this point, she was, like her sister Shallya, a pacifist. When still a girl, her parents died, so Myrmidia went to live with her aunt and uncle, who were farmers, and very poor. They hated the girl, and took any opportunity to spite her, forcing her to work from dawn to dusk. Eventually, when she came of age, they gifted her to a local lord, hoping he would be grateful, and ease their taxes.

The lord was not a kind master, and the mortal Goddess was subjected to many indignities. Eventually, unwilling to accept the injustice any longer, Myrmidia, enraged, rose up and took a ceremonial spear from the lord's collection, thrusting it into his abdomen.

Myrmidia was changed forever. And from that day forward, she never walked again without a spear, a weapon that came to symbolise her future struggles."

—The Journals of Lord Karl-Rikard Goellner, 2nd Grand Master of the Knights Panther, 1556 IC

Empire could collapse without any strong external threats, collapse it did.

To begin, a string of disasters struck, many of the Empire's own making. The cults and Grand Provinces long harboured many hatreds and grudges, some reaching back before the time of Sigmar himself, and a millennium of new politics had only compounded these differences. Soon, the Grand Provinces and the major cults lashed out at each other whenever the opportunity arose. They meted out blame as suited their causes. They drew closer and closer to war.

In very little time, each of the Elector Counts had a faction in this growing turmoil, and the cults gifted or sold their support as they saw fit, often changing sides as the ebb and flow of politics changed.

And although it is true that the second millennium brought many advances, it was also riven with corruption, decadence, and arrogance. Eventually, the differences became irreconcilable, and civil war broke out.

Concerning the Cracking Empire

The spider-web of fractures that cracked the sheen of Imperial strength was as old as the Elder Gods, dating back to the hatred of Teutognen and Unberogen, of Taleuten and Ostagoth. New threads were spun as every noble passed a new unjust law, as every cult supported another corrupt official, as every soul slowly gave in to despair or excess. Rather than serving a united Empire, the cults and nobles began to serve themselves, all at the expense of the people.

It is generally accepted that the problems began at the end of the first millennium IC; the Bretonni tribes were forged together into a new nation by Gilles le Breton, and the Westermark province across the Grey Mountains was attacked then overrun. The Bretonnians then gathered forces to forge northwards, but fortifications along the Grey Mountains were soon populated with soldiers from across the Grand Provinces, and the Bretonnians' weak knights were repulsed.

This was followed by a thread of increasingly desperate problems that so compounded upon each other that a division was inevitable. To begin, a procession of incompetent, decadent, and thoroughly corrupt emperors

> "—The perfect crime, I say; for if we succeed, we cannot be caught, even if all know of our deeds. Only if we fail can we be punished.
>
> —But, how can this be? When we commit a crime, the law of the land always follows, especially if they know what we have done, and who we are.
>
> —Not for this crime, my friend. I can guarantee that success will bring us safety.
>
> —Please, do not taunt me so, what is this crime we must plan?
>
> —You tell me."
>
> —*The Riddles Ten*

significantly weakened the position. Perhaps the worst of these was Emperor Boris Hohenbach (1053-1115 IC), often called "Goldgather," or, less politely, "the Incompetent." He used his important position for nothing more than personal gain, and let the Elector Counts act as they pleased as long as they sent him frequent, expensive gifts. Imperial offices were invented and sold whenever his coffers got too low (which they reportedly did a great deal), and ludicrously grand titles were appointed to friends and lovers as the whim took him. Perhaps worse, rather than acting against such disreputable emperors, the cults mostly supported them, as this provided greater freedoms, and, sometimes, political advantages. Soon scandals including the clergy were just as common as those of the nobles. Several Altdorfer chronicles tell of priests whose mistresses and harems were paraded through the streets in shame, and monks whose criminal activities were uncovered by rivals. However, one must be careful with such reports, as many were recorded by political enemies, all designed to support their counter-positions.

As the Empire swayed in this crooked wind, the horrors of the Black Plague suddenly swept through the Reik Basin in 1111 IC, wiping out entire communities. The death-toll was appalling, and some provinces may have lost as many as nine in ten to disease. Unfortunately, the power vacuum that this created was soon filled by war. The Drakwald Province, already depopulated from many unwise attacks into the Elven-held Laurelorn Forest, was effectively destroyed, and was soon overrun by rampaging Greenskins and Beastmen. In the aftermath of disease and death, even weaker emperors were installed by selfish Electors, allowing them to wage internecine wars for now-uninhabited territory. Indeed, such conflicts were so common that we now call this time the Age of Wars.

By 1360 IC, one Grand Province could take no more, and finally declared its independence. Significantly, it had the support of two of the largest cults of the Empire: the Taalites and the Ulricans.

Concerning the Empress Ottilia

When the Grand Duke of Stirland, an obvious Sigmarite pawn and long-standing enemy of Talabecland, was appointed Emperor by the Electors, Grand Duchess Ottilia of Talabecland had finally had enough, and after consulting the Cult of Taal, began to make preparations.

In Middenheim, the Cult of Ulric had also had enough. The Grand Dukes of their city had long distrusted the influence that the cult had over the populace, and had been trying to force the Cult of Ulric to reorganise itself. Further, the Cult of Sigmar effectively controlled the elections of new Emperors, which was intolerable to the Ulricans. When Ottilia approached Ar-Ulric with claims that she had proof that all Sigmarites were heretics, and that Sigmar was no God after all, the High Priest happily accepted her invitation to move his cult to Talabheim.

Ottilia welcomed Ar-Ulric to the Eye of the Forest, and the Ulrican cult claimed all Sigmarites were heretics after viewing Ottilia's fallacious evidence. Ottilia then banned the cult in her lands.

When Talabecland then declared itself independent from the Empire, and Ottilia claimed the title of Empress without election, being crowned by Ar-Ulric just as Sigmar had been, the other Grand Provinces were stunned. They were even more stunned when Ottilia marched an army from her unassailable bastion of Talabheim and destroyed the numerically superior force the Stirlander Emperor had sent north to quell her rebellion at the Battle of the Talabec River.

Her statement made, she withdrew to impregnable Talabheim, and war raged all around her.

Although successive emperors tried, none could break the crater walls of the Taalbaston, and Talabheim never fell. The Ottilian Emperors (as they would come to be known) would rule Talabecland until Magnus of Nuln finally reunited them with the Empire in 2304 IC.

Concerning the Collapse of Empire

Chronicles from the Age of War are filled with bitter hatred and woe, and it is evident that not even the greatest threats to our glorious Empire were enough to force a resolution to the conflicts and hatreds.

Indeed, when Estalia was invaded by Sultan Jaffar of Araby in the fifteenth century with forces so irrepressible that the entire Old World seemed

The Shadow Blade

"This myth is not known to the cults, for it comes from the Asur, whom I have had the fortune of discussing these matters with.

When the Great Gates collapsed, and the mutating energies of the Aethyr were released, mourning Verena was approached by Taal to join the defence against the Dark Gods. He had become king after his father, Asuryan, had been struck down by the Blood God, and was rallying those who still lived. After much persuasion, Verena eventually agreed to join the survivors at the Great Pyramid.

When she arrived, she was shocked to see how few remained. Knowing they desperately needed an advantage, Verena studied the great tablets of the Old Ones, and uncovered the existence of Tlanxla's Sword of Judgement, a weapon of incredible power. So, without informing Taal, she travelled to the Southern Gate disguised as a servant of the Dark Gods. After hardships unnumbered, she eventually found it in the hands of a Daemon God.

Like many other artefacts of the Old Ones, the Sword was being used to further the schemes of the Dark Gods. The Daemon God in question was called Ulgu, who had been commanded by the Lord of Change to join with seven other Gods to flood the mortal realm with the Aethyr. Verena, using her intelligence and wit, tricked Ulgu into giving her the Sword, then fled back to the Pyramid, to join the last stand against the Dark Gods.

When she arrived, the forces of Chaos were already making their attack. She swooped down and joined the defence. Step-by-step the defenders were driven up the pyramid, until there were only a handful of Gods about the Diamond Throne at its top. Just as it seemed all was lost, a great, white fire erupted from the Throne, and Asuryan the Phoenix, wearing a bifurcated mask of white and black, strode forth. With a strength borne of fury, the resurrected King of the Gods drove back the confused forces of Chaos.

To this day, Elven servants of Verena, whom they call Hoeth, all bear swords, much like their God. In turn, we, the Wise Magisters of the Grey Order, also favour the weapon, all in memory of a myth that probably isn't even true."

—Markus Fischer, Magister of the Grey Order

to be threatened, the Grand Provinces did nothing to respond. Embarrassingly, it was King Louis of Bretonnia who put out a desperate call for all men of noble intent to rid the Old World of invaders. The resulting Crusades against Araby are noteworthy because neither the cults nor the Elector Counts openly supported it, but individual nobles and pious men from across the divided Empire responded nonetheless. After the Crusades, the veteran knights that returned formed some of the greatest secular knightly orders the Empire has even known, including the Knights Panther, Knights of the Golden Lion and the Knights Jaguar. This did not please the cults, for their templars had previously been the only formal orders of knights, but Arabyan gold bought the support of the Elector Counts, and the orders were formally recognised. Only the Knights of the Blazing Sun, a new order of Empire knights that had converted to Myrmidia during the Crusade, were not secular. But as they worshipped a foreign deity, they were no more welcome.

The Age of Wars came to an end when Ar-Ulric returned to Middenheim in 1547 IC. The Ulrican cult had fallen out with Ottilia's successors, and so reluctantly accepted celibacy for its priesthood (in order that rival dynasties to Middenheim's grand dukes could not be founded) in order to return to the cult's high temple. Within a month, Middenheim declared itself independent from Sigmar's Empire, and Ar-Ulric crowned Grand Duke Heinrich as emperor. The fact that Heinrich had just been spurned by the Sigmarite Cult, with the Grand Theogonist crowning a different emperor to the one voted (him), was claimed to be coincidental.

Now there were three Emperors, with each supported by a different cult: The Ottilian Emperor was supported by the Taalites, the Wolf Emperor by the Ulricans, and the Electorate Emperor by the Sigmarites. It is important to note that the elections supported by the Sigmarites were so corrupt by this time that they are now perceived by most scholars to have been mere formalities for approving the Grand Theogonist's choice.

This Age of Three Emperors was one of unending war, pain, and disaster. Necromancers and daemonologists were rife in the lands. The Gospodars, a then-unknown tribe of Humans, invaded across the Worlds Edge Mountains, defeating the Ungols, Ostlanders and Ostermarkers, pushing back the Empire's borders to forge a new nation: Kislev. Greenskins constantly attacked from the mountains and forests, and even managed to wipe out the Grand Province of Solland in 1707 IC. Norse tribesmen repeatedly harried the coastlines, and sacked Marienburg in 1850 IC. Cult persecutions became commonplace, especially from the Cult of Sigmar. And the final stone of Morr's Portal was laid when in 1979 IC when Magritta of Marienburg declared herself Empress, but the Cult of Sigmar refused to accept her, or indeed, any Elector Count. No coronation took place, leaving the Empire without a voted emperor.

As if to show Sigmar's displeasure at the mockery his Empire had become, a twin-tailed comet slammed into the capital of Ostermark in 1999 IC, flattening it.

This was seen as the final sign that Sigmar's dream was over, and his Empire was at an end. Soon, all of the Grand Provinces were effectively independent, and war amongst them, and the cults that supported them, became commonplace.

Of the Great War Against Chaos

With the Grand Provinces crippled by war and acrimonious hatreds, dark forces rose to claim the land that was once Sigmar's. In the east, the province of Sylvania fell under the sway of the Undead, and the terrible Wars of the Vampire Counts nearly brought the feuding Grand Provinces to their knees. To the north, the Norse made raid after raid into Westerland, Nordland and Ostland. From the mountains, the constant threat of Greenskins never died. And, from the forests, Beastmen sacked villages and razed fields.

However, all these conflicts did nothing but mask the true threat. Far to the north, tribes older than Sigmar's broken Empire were gathering in numbers unimaginable. They were mustering beneath the banner of one they believed had been chosen by the Dark Gods themselves: an evil by the name of Asavar Kul.

The time of the Great War Against Chaos had arrived; a war we now know the Elder Races had predicted, and dreaded, for millennia.

"And Blessed Myrmidia observed: When confronted by a vastly superior foe, the Good General must use her guile, and her enemy's hubris. The general of a vastly superior force expects to win, and through that expectation, victory can be plucked.

And Lagario exclaimed: But, general, they outnumber us by too much, we will be enveloped. I will not allow the slaughter of my people.

And Blessed Myrmidia said: Fortunate for us that we outnumber their southern force.

And Lagario goggled: They have a southern force?

And Blessed Myrmidia smiled: Not yet, but we can resolve that."

—*The Book of War*,
'The Battle for Four Tears Bridge'

Concerning Magnus the Pious

If your Imperial Majesty will allow, I believe this following extract from Jutte Sigmarzoon's Chronicle of Magnus explains the terror of the time far better than I could replicate. It is particularly relevant as it also mentions the actions of some of the cults. Unfortunately, much like the Crusades before, the cults did not initially support the cause we now know to be correct.

"From the Northern Wastes they came. The Kurgan. The Hung. The Norse. At their sides rode the mutant and the heretic. At their head rode Daemonic Servants of the Dark Gods. And leading them all was Asavar Kul, Champion of the Ruinous Powers, Damned, Indomitable.

The horde was unimaginably mighty. Countless thousands poured southwards, and the priests of Dark Gods urged them on, demanding blood and sacrifices for their fell masters.

When the gibbering horde reached the Kislevite city of Praag, it swiftly ravaged the stronghold. Soon, all that remained was a foul and profane wreck, fashioned from the twisted ruins of hate expressed. The shattered walls screamed with the trapped spirits of tormented defenders. Dreadful daemons haunted the insane streets, cavorting with unrestrained glee. Chaos reigned unchecked.

Kislev desperately called for help, but the Grand Provinces of the once-Empire were in dire straits themselves. For uncounted years, mutation had inundated their lands, and plague had followed, slicing through communities like a pus-coated blade. The once-great cities echoed with tear-stained mothers wailing for their dead and mutated children. The blasted fields were littered with shattered men, their backs broken by fields unwilling to yield crops. Famine, disease, misery, and hate were all that remained. Despair ruled Sigmar's heirs.

But then Magnus came.

He first preached in Nuln, and all who heard him listened. He spoke—keen as a sharpened blade, passionate as a wronged innocent, outraged as a father whose child had been murdered—and the eloquence of his words broke through every despair. He touched something long lost. He gifted hope.

But the hatred and mistrust of a thousand years of war were impossible to ignore, and many did not want to hear him, especially the embittered cults. However, where they damned Magnus, their Gods supported him. In Middenheim, the Cult of Ulric ridiculed the preacher; so Magnus walked through the Eternal Flame, proving the War God's favour. In Altdorf, the Grand Theogonist claimed he was a heretic. But when the Templars of Sigmar tied him to a stake for burning, the flames would not catch, even

The Dark Gods

"And then the Cataclysm came.

King Taal rose from His Forest, and with Dark Morr muttering dire portents in His ear, He banished all immortals from the world.

But the Cataclysm's architects refused His order.

The Crow, the Hound, the Serpent, and the Vulture were jealous of King Taal, and had tried to use the Great Gates to take what was His.

They had failed.

As the other immortals fled, the Four attacked, bitter and angry with their frustrations.

Many died.

After countless battles, King Taal was eventually surrounded. There were few still by his side.

Ulric the Wolf. Noble Margileo. Just Verena. Sotek the Snake. Manann of the Sea. And Gentle Shallya, tear-stained and afraid.

Even Smiling Ranald had fled, and now hid in the Places Between, fearful for the future.

Then, just as the Four and their allies arrived for the Final Battle, Flaming Phoenix, whom all had thought dead, returned from atop His Gleaming Pyramid, and He smote about Him.

Thus the rebels were pushed behind the Great Gates, and were sealed there forever.

But they were restless in their cage, and soon worked to escape."

—Translated from the Obernarn Stone, now held in the Imperial Museum, Altdorf

The Greatest Trick

"And I said: Can you tell me the tale of Ranald, and how he achieved Godhood?

And the child replied: Yes. The Greatest Trick. A well-known tale. Ranaldans claim that, when mortal, Ranald was a bandit; a gentle soul who robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. This so enchanted Shallya that she fell in love, ensnared by the romance of Ranald's deeds.

One night, when distributing supplies to victims of the Fly Lord, Ranald fell dreadfully ill, and was approached by Morr. Shallya could not bear the loss of her love, so she stole Ranald from her father's grasp in the only way she knew how: she let him drink from her holy Chalice, and granted him immortality.

Ranald, now a God, laughed at Shallya's naivety. He admitted to the crying Goddess that he had never been sick at all, and that he had manipulated her from the beginning.

And I said: So, the tale is true?

And the child replied: No. It is false. The greatest trick Ranald ever pulled was convincing Humanity that he had ever been one of them."

—*The Testament of Pergunda*,
'On Righting Wrongs'

when fuelled with oils. When Magnus arrived in Talabheim, the Taalites ordered him to leave. In response, the wolves of the Taalgrunhaar forest howled louder than thunder, and a Great Stag marked with a white hammer appeared in Taal's temple. When Magnus spoke in Marienburg, and the Manannites jeered at his foreign war, the sea came alive, and it is said Triton himself swam between the islands. Wherever he went, Magnus unflaggingly spoke of war, of the coming threat, of the necessity of relieving Kislev before it was too late. And the Gods responded.

A force larger than even Sigmar's gathered and marched north at Magnus's command. Plague surrounded them. Mutation was everywhere. But Magnus was pure. Magnus was strong. And so was his army.

At the Battle of Kislev's Gates in 2302 IC, Magnus met with the far-greater Chaos horde of Asavar Kul, and, against all odds, prevailed."

Concerning the Empire Reborn

Magnus's popularity was absolute, and quite impossible to relate in this simple manuscript. He had defeated an immeasurably powerful foe and personally slain the great enemy, Asavar Kul. More, he had united the Empire unlike any save Sigmar himself.

Some believed that Magnus must have been Sigmar reborn, and Sigmarite chronicles of the time feature countless accounts of miracles the great hero supposedly performed, all supporting this claim. Many more believed Magnus was certainly Sigmar's Chosen, which certainly seems to be the case. However, no matter what individuals believed, almost all claimed he must be crowned Emperor.

For the first time in almost a thousand years, the leaders of all the Great Provinces gathered in one place to elect an Emperor, and it was they chose Magnus to lead them.

Not all the nobles liked it, but they had little choice. They would have been lynched if they had refused Magnus. He was loved like no other—and this was something that Emperor Magnus of Nuln used to great effect when he implemented his many reforms.

In particular, two of his many decrees directly affected the cults.

In memory of the Cult of Sigmar's unflagging support of the Electoral Emperors, Magnus granted the cult three votes on the new Electoral Council to appoint Emperors. In recognition of the Cult of Ulric's unique position in the Empire's history, he granted them one vote. It is commonly believed that the Cult of Taal and Rhya was offered an Electoral position by Magnus, but it refused to accept it for unexplained reasons; however, this truth of this is impossible to verify. This split of the votes managed to infuriate most of the cults and the other Electors for different reasons, but Magnus ignored the complaints, for he had greater plans in mind.

Aware that the cults had been a primary reason for the original breakdown of the previous Empire, Magnus formed a council that all the important cults in his Empire had to attend by Imperial decree. The Grand Conclave (which is what Magnus called the council) would take place every five years at the Imperial capital, and would be chaired by the Emperor himself, who would ensure that any problems aired there were

dealt with. His choice of cults for inclusion was controversial. Beyond the five obvious cults of the Elder Gods, and those of the widely worshipped Sigmar, Shallya, and Verena, he also admitted Ranald and Myrmidia. The last was ostensibly included because the Knights of the Blazing Sun were the first knightly order to respond to his call to arms; but, it is widely believed that the real truth they were included is because of the cult's pervasive influence in Tilea and Estalia, which Magnus wished to both recognise and monitor.

> "I am Sigmar. I am Golden. I am God.
>
> Harken for my name, for it will echo redoubled through the ages. It will strike down my enemies wherever they may hide. It will be heard when the need is greatest."
>
> —*Deus Sigmar*

Of the Coming of Karl Franz

Magnus ruled for 65 long years. The lengthy, stable reign successfully erased many of the memories of the previous turmoil. Not one of the Electors that gathered to vote for Magnus's replacement bore enough years to recall the previous turmoils. All they had known was Magnus and Empire. They solemnly agreed to title their lost Emperor "the Pious" in recognition of the miracles he had instigated.

But, if your Imperial Majesty will permit me to be so bold, I believe the real miracle was how thoroughly Magnus had rebuilt our glorious Empire. He had carefully rebalanced the Grand Provinces, re-establishing twelve Elector Counts as Sigmar had done long before him. He had created the Colleges of Magic with the help of the High Elves, providing for the future defence of the Empire with mighty magic. He had dragged the cults together and forced them to gather before him every five years to air their differences, something they now happily accepted. He had even established tight diplomatic relations with all the surrounding nations, even though they were historical enemies.

All of this he did for one reason: to his dying day it is recorded that Magnus often claimed Chaos had not been defeated, just driven back. He believed that the Dark Gods would return, and that the Empire must build dams of faith, stone, and steel to defend against the returning tide.

As we all now know, Magnus's fears would prove to be accurate.

Concerning the Coming Storm

Over two hundred years of relative peace followed the Great War. Our glorious Empire endured attacks from Beastmen of the forest, from marauding Greenskins, and from greedy neighbours; it even survived several attempts to pull it apart—including brief bouts of civil war—and prevailed through the loss of the Wasteland, which bought its independence with its deep coffers; but it stood firm and strong.

However, slowly, the old hostilities between the cults began to resurface, and the streets became more dangerous. Beastmen again rose from the forests, and the Drakwald, in particular, became incredibly dangerous. Further, the cults of the Chaos Gods became more blatant, with witch burnings spreading to all corners of the Empire as prophets by the score lined the streets proclaiming the end was nigh. And, perhaps worst of all, mutation begun to spread again.

As your Imperial Highness will know, when he was voted by his illustrious peers to lead our glorious Empire, it was already clear that something was wrong. There was an impending sense of doom in all hearts, and none seemed capable of shifting it. Relations were worsening between Ulricans and Sigmarites, and also between Taalites and Sigmarites. And although much was done to quell this religious unrest, the engrained hostilities were too old, and riots soon sparked across the Empire, threatening to light the tinder of war.

It is fortunate for us all that your Imperial Majesty has proven to be not only a remarkable warleader and talented diplomat, but an important patron of the arts, and an undaunted foe of all that is impure and profane. Even though these last years have been plagued by the slow encroachment of Chaos, your Imperial Majesty has tirelessly worked to fight back this evil, and has worked closely with all the cults to guarantee this worthy fight is not in vain.

In 2522 IC, none of us could believe the foul slaves to the Dark Gods would return just as Magnus had prophesised, and in numbers unimaginable. But return they did, and this time they were unconcerned with Kislev. This time, Archaon the Everchosen, the new leader of the Chaos Hordes, headed straight for our glorious Empire.

Concerning the Storm of Chaos

We are blessed indeed to have had your Imperial Majesty lead us through the war that has now been dubbed "The Storm of Chaos." Without such leadership, and such diplomatic brilliance, there is no doubt that our glorious Empire would have fallen to the Ruinous Powers. Of particular brilliance was the Conclave of Light, a great council your Imperial Highness called to decide the future of all our people, for it drew the cults together with the great leaders of the Old World; and you guided them to work together, and eventually, the council formed a mutually agreed strategy to repel the incoming blasphemies.

The resulting war was devastating. Most of Kislev, Ostland, Hochland, Nordland and Middenland were ravaged by the merciless marauders descending from the north, while Ostermark and Stirland were assaulted by another horde from across the Worlds Edge Mountains. Greenskins also grasped the opportunity to attack, and ploughed through Averland, Stirland, Ostermark, and Talabecland. And, as if this was not enough, all the war and bloodshed stirred another ancient evil, and the Vampire Counts of old Sylvania rose again, wresting total control of their cursed land before also marching to war.

As your Imperial Majesty knows first-hand, it was the Siege of Middenheim that saw the end of the Storm of Chaos. The great City of the White Wolf held out against Archaon and his seemingly limitless armies, reinforced, as it was, by your tactical genius. Exalted Valten, a hero of the Empire rumoured to be Sigmar reborn, also gave his life in single combat against Archaon to guarantee the victory. It was a sacrifice that wounded the Empire to the core, but it won the day.

Our glorious Empire, though ravaged, had survived.

Of the Present

Today, the cults of our glorious Empire influence almost all matters. Temples to all the major Gods, and many minor, can be found in every town and city, and shrines of all shapes and sizes are scattered everywhere else.

Although the major cult schisms are in the past, the memory of them is persistent, and some cultists, including many Sigmarites and the Ulricans, still bear a deep, abiding suspicion of each other. However, full-scale and lasting civil war has not afflicted our Empire for over two centuries, and as long as we have our history books to learn from past mistakes, we can, Sigmar willing, ensure that we avoid such awfulness happening again.

And even though Sigmar Heldenhammer's Empire may have been half destroyed by the insane tribesmen of the Dark Gods, we have the enlightened leadership of your Imperial Highness to see us through these dark times. Averland, Mootland, Reikland and Wissenland may be the only Grand Provinces mostly unscathed, but that only means they are freer to aid the rebuilding that will ensure the name Karl Franz is as celebrated as Magnus, and echoes down through the ages of our descendants.

As is right in these difficult times, people will also turn to their priests; so, now more than ever, it is important that the cults preach the correct message. Yes, some may have ancient enmities dating to the Time of the Tribes; yes, some may feel justified in hating each other; but they are all men of the Empire, they are all your Imperial Majesty's subjects, they are all servants of the Gods. Be they Ulrican, Taalite, Sigmarite, or anything else, they will spend their last to deny the Ruinous Powers, and this is something they all share.

Thus it is to these brave folk, these cultists of the Gods, that we, the common people of the Empire, will always turn, for they never lose hope, they never despair.

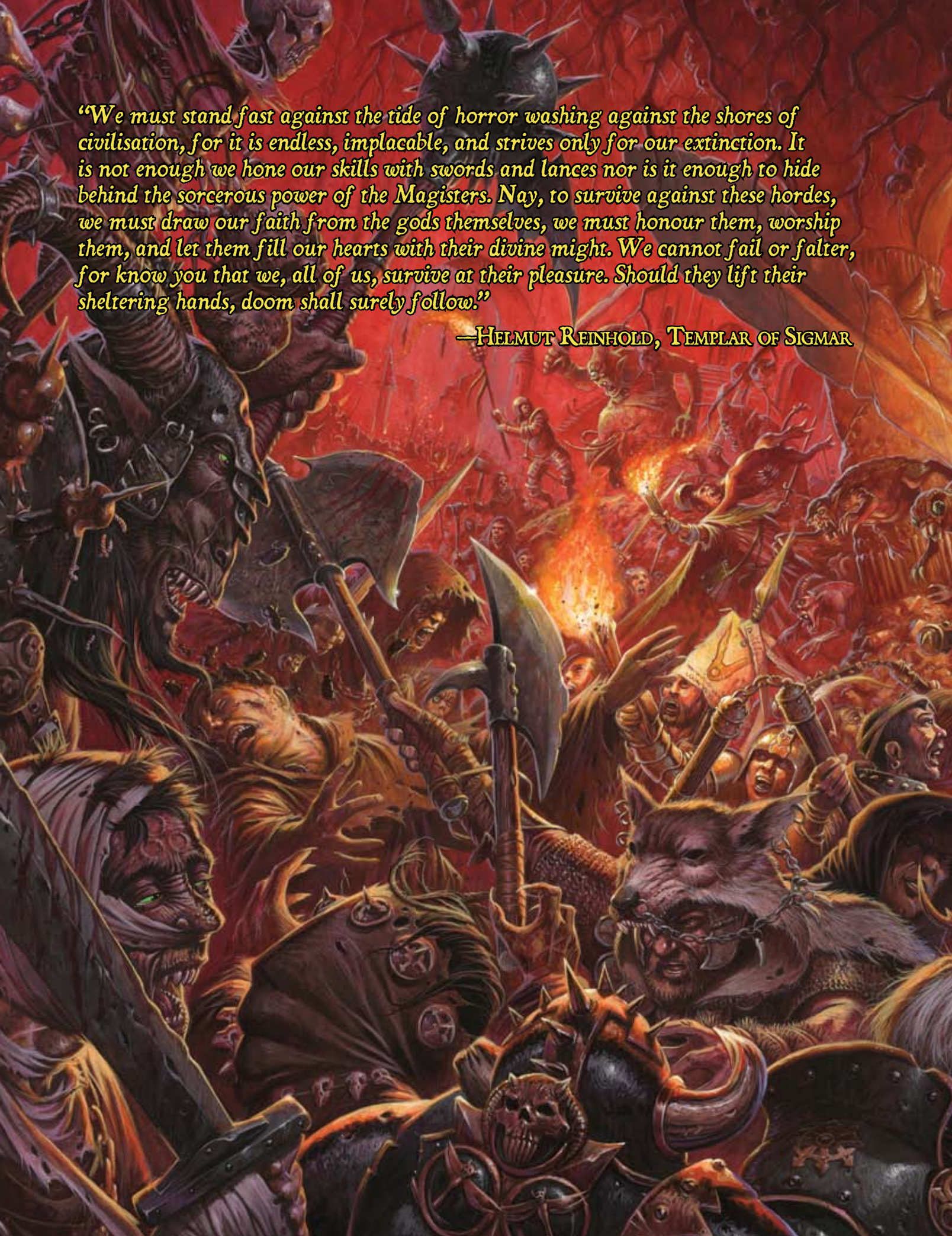
They are our salvation.

–Hieronymous of Nuln

Life After Death

"All lies. ALL LIES! There is no Afterlife. Morr ferries you to the gaping maws of hungry, uncaring Gods. We are naught but food for their insatiable hungers! Deny him! Deny them all! ALL IS CHAOS!"

—Found Anonymously Scrawled Across the Walls of the Talabheim Temple of Morr in 2522



"We must stand fast against the tide of horror washing against the shores of civilisation, for it is endless, implacable, and strives only for our extinction. It is not enough we hone our skills with swords and lances nor is it enough to hide behind the sorcerous power of the Magisters. Nay, to survive against these hordes, we must draw our faith from the gods themselves, we must honour them, worship them, and let them fill our hearts with their divine might. We cannot fail or falter, for know you that we, all of us, survive at their pleasure. Should they lift their sheltering hands, doom shall surely follow."

—Helmut Reinhold, Templar of Sigmar

Chapter II: Old World Cults

"The Gods of the Empire rule over all. Regardless of whether you are peasant or burgher, knight or priest, rat catcher of the Emperor himself, all must pay heed to the wisdom, rules, and decrees of the Gods. To ignore them, or worse, belittle them, is to invite disaster."

—Alfred Schumann, Priest of Verena

The citizens of the Empire are a deeply religious and superstitious people. There are a great many spirits and otherworldly creatures, but the greatest of these are the Gods. There are variations across the Empire, and more beyond its borders, but ten Gods are recognised as being the most powerful deities that demand offerings and sacrifice. It is the worship of these powers that binds the folk of the Empire together.

The most popular Gods have extensive cults of loyal worshippers that do the works of their divine patron, give them honour, and placate these elemental beings. The cults are important because they persuade the Gods to stay their hands. Life is anything but easy in the Empire, and like existence, the Gods can be cruel, vengeful, and even uncaring of mankind. It falls to the cults to help Humanity flatter and persuade the Gods for their help. Although there are always tensions and disagreements between cults, it must be remembered that the Empire is a society where everyone worships all the Gods to some degree or another. A priest of a given cult may be extremely tied to the service of their group, but still recognises the power, majesty, and importance of the other Gods.

While each cult operates independently from the others, and has its own goals, agendas, and methods, there is a great deal of unity between cults. A priest that understands this may politely and gently guide a wayward worshipper to the priest of another cult if the advice sought falls outside the realm of the priest's experience or sphere of influence. In theory, all priests must follow the festivals, rites, and practises of the other cults, and it's considered bad form to criticise the rites of other cults, although it's done on a daily basis. True schisms and conflict between cults are rare, but not unheard of. Indeed, some of the worst internal strife in the Empire occurred between the believers of one cult and another.

Although the main Gods are worshipped throughout the Empire, every province and town has their preferred, patron deity that receives more adoration than the rest. Taal and Rhya are beloved in the province of Talabecland, particularly the city-state of Talabheim. The great city of Middenheim is the holy site for worshippers of Ulric. As the father of the Empire, Sigmar is particularly popular in the capital of Altdorf. Other deities, such as Ranald, Shallya, and Morr, lack central points of power, and their influence is scattered throughout the villages and towns of the Empire. The God of the Sea, Manann, is most popular along the coastline, but his priests can be found along every major river and body of water as well.

The Grand Conclave

As described in **Chapter I: A Brief History of the Cults of the Empire**, the various cults have been anything but peaceful, and when they do agree, it is a tenuous alliance that almost always dissolves into heated debate, bickering, and outrage. Indeed, much of the Empire's history is fraught with the infighting and the machinations of the various cults, each jockeying for power and influence, even at the expense of their beloved Empire. However, at the close of the Great War Against Chaos, Magnus the Pious called a great convocation, summoning the high priests of all recognised cults, and decreeing that they would meet once every five years in Nuln to work out issues between them. Because this meeting would occur under the watchful eyes of the Emperor himself, it was believed that cool heads would prevail, lest his wrath come down. So was the Grand Conclave formed.

Since its inception, the Grand Conclave has changed seats, following in the steps of the Emperor as the capital moved over the intervening years. From Nuln, the Conclave has had a time in most of the Empire's greatest cities, but for now, it is firmly entrenched

in Altdorf. Each Conclave is a moment of great celebration, revelry, and excitement. Old Worlders from all around the capital come to the city to see the spectacle of the high priests and their fantastic entourages marching through the streets of Sigmar's beloved city. Wending their way down the labyrinthine corridors of this grand city are representatives of Manann, Morr, Myrmidia, Shallya, and Taal and Rhya, while those of Sigmar hold passion plays on the steps of the Great Cathedral. In recent years, cultists of Handrich have earnestly lobbied for formal recognition by the Conclave, though their bribes and impassioned speeches have made little progress. Despite their failures, most people of the Empire believe it is but a matter of time before the Conclave gives way to public demand.

Although the Grand Conclave is a meeting of religious orders, once the various elements arrive, and the pomp and ceremony has passed, the event acquires a sombre, formal air. For a week, the Grand Conclave meets. On the first day each high priest makes a big show of thanking their respective Gods and pleading for divine blessings on the Empire. This continues until the Grand Theogonist grants the final blessing. It is at this point that the Emperor addresses the gathered audience, asking for respect, understanding, and fellowship during the proceedings. The working of magic, regardless of its source or intent, is strictly forbidden while the Grand Conclave is in session.

During this time, there is much feasting, politicking, the arrival and departure of pilgrims, reports of miracles, bestowal of titles and promotions, and more. This is a period of much intrigue, of whispers in shadowed alcoves, of trysts and affairs, and a great deal more. During this time, the cults air their grievances, voice their concerns, and debate amongst themselves and against each other. These talks, though theoretically civil, often erupt into heated exchanges full of yelling and threats—though the presence of the Emperor and his ever-present guard keeps it from ever resulting in bloodshed. Interestingly, theological debates are not allowed at the Grand Conclave, only pressing matters affecting the day-to-day affairs of the cults and their impact on the Empire as a whole. Still, it's unavoidable for the high priests to avoid slipping in such language, although the Emperor has final say in keeping the debate steered towards ecumenical matters.

Common topics debated at the Grand Conclave include the rights of priests as they apply to Empire law, taxation of religious property

and institutions, ownership disputes between cults, and dealings between the cults and the secular powers. Also, the representative of a cult formally proclaims any edicts of their given group that are then included in the Imperial Registry—the announcement of new holidays, induction of new Venerated Souls, and the passing of esteemed members.

Needless to say, a tremendous amount of back-room brokering, intrigue, and skulduggery occur during the Grand Conclave. Each high priest typically brings along a large entourage of cultists to handle other matters and other interested parties come to Altdorf in order to sway opinion towards their own special interests.

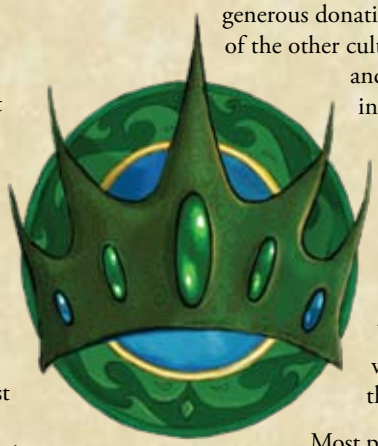
— The Cult of Manann —

Seat of Power: Marienburg
Head of the Cult: Matriarch Camille Dauphina
Primary Orders: Order of the Albatross
Major Festivals: Spring Equinox, Fall Equinox
Holy Books: *Of Sea and Man*, *Tales of the Albatross*, *Liber Manann*
Holy Symbols: Waves and wave patterns, albatrosses, five-tined crown

The Cult of Manann is most active along the western border of the Empire, where the waters of the Sea of Claws lap against the rocky shores or mingle with the powerful rivers that drain the realm. Manann's cult focuses on practical matters relating to the sea and its members are sought after as navigators, pilots, and able-bodied sailors, for having a priest of Manann on your vessel is considered very good luck.

Like the ocean, Manann is a fickle and touchy deity, who can turn on the faithful and non-believers alike with little to no warning. Because the Empire is so dependent on its navy and vital waterways, the cult enjoys enduring respect and tolerance, and many believe without it and the intercession by its priests on the behalf of the common people of the Empire, the waters of the world would swallow up the land to fill Manann's appetite. No-one loves Manann—they fear his wrath, and his worship is given to placate his volatile nature. However, his priests admire Manann's strength, ferocity, and independence.

The Cult



Although by no means an affectionate, benevolent or merciful God, Manann nevertheless inspires fervent devotion in his followers. He can best be described as both angry and capricious, appeased by worshippers rather than praised or adored. This is reflected in the behaviour of the faithful, who possess the duel responsibilities of receiving appeasement on behalf of others, and of doing the appeasing themselves.

Anyone who steps foot upon a boat, even a modest ferry, offers up a prayer to Manann—those who forget bring serious doom upon their heads. The priests of Manann play up this rite, making them indispensable in the minds of the people. They commonly offer words of grim portent as it involves the sea, terrifying non-priests who make generous donations to the cult to stay Manann's anger. The priests of the other cults sometimes mutter about the rising power and influence of the Cult of Manann, as it slowly intertwines with commerce and political power—a fact the Cult of Handrich mentions whenever and wherever it can.

The shores of the Empire are lined with shrines, altars, and temples, guaranteeing that a worshipper is not too far from one of Manann's holy sites. These shrines are always attended to by a priest or initiate, who offer insight into the weather and perform rites to see if a venture on the sea is risky or not.

Most priests, however, spend their time on boats and ships. Their services are in great demand, and owners of these vessels pay handsomely to have a priest on board to ensure a safe, speedy voyage. Priests rarely tie themselves to a single vessel—members of other cults decry this as a way for their cult to keep their numbers in short supply, thus increasing demand and the price to "hire" priests. This claim is vehemently denied by the cult, of course, which simply makes the argument that Manann's blessing cannot be concentrated on just a handful of ships and captains.

The Cult of Manann plays a vital role in the shipping and trade of the Old World, and many rulers who have held ambitions across the seas have found their ambition curtailed because they did not pay the proper respects to the cult. Enemies of the cult would say the cult abuses its position as custodian of the seas, holding access to the sea to ransom and putting a stranglehold on trade, but everybody pays the tithes asked—to not do so would to invite Manann's wrath.

The cult is an exceptionally powerful force in Marienburg, where the matriarch and the high temple wield a great amount of political power. In the Empire, the cult is altogether less powerful, for the Empire has less access to the sea trade that is the lifeblood of its wayward province. Nonetheless, in places the cult does command a great deal of respect and power—up the Reik, especially between Altdorf and the sea, where the people are heavily dependant on the trade the river brings, and along the storm lashed northern coast where the locals risk their lives on the Sea of Claws for their livelihood.

For all of Manann's capricious violence and tempestuous nature, when convinced to intercede on the behalf of mortals, the effects are spectacular. In recent days, during the last Chaos Incursion, the forces of the Ruinous Powers swept through Ostland, razing coastal temples and slaughtering worshippers and priests alike. Yet amidst this disaster, a miracle was said to have happened—the temple of Manann at Salkalten was miraculously spared the wrath of the bloodthirsty hordes, for Manann sent a tremendous storm to cover the city, and force the approaching armies to change course and move inland. The astounding intercession filled the temple of Salkalten with the faithful, newly converted worshippers mixing with refugee clergymen.

The cult has no strong allies amongst the other God-cults, but nor does it have any enemies except for cults of Stromfels, to whom the

"Manann is our blessing, our patron, the one that brings food to our table. He's also the one that drags our sons to the bottom of his watery home, the bringer of storms, and the crushing waves. He is the Sea and he is eternal."

—Ingrid Höelstaff,
Wife of Captain Höelstaff of the Redoubt

"Manann would rather be cursed at with the most horrible of words rather than not be spoken of at all."

—Gunter Sheidhaal, Stevedore of Marienburg

"He is greedy. Rapacious, even! Throwing sacrifices to him is like tossing gold and offerings into a bottomless pit. There is a reason that the sea is so vast—it is the belly of Manann, the ever-hungry."

—Ingrid Schumer, Priestess of Shallya

"I've said all my prayers, offered sacrifices and paid my tithes. My ship is in Manann's hands now."

—Walter van Hoik, Marienburger Captain

"In me experience, the Lord o' tha Tydes is as fickle as an Averheim matron. Ya haff ta court him, give him gifts, and speak sweetly. But one misstep and yer in fer a world of hurt. Yar!"

—Black Amos, Pirate

"You know the old superstition about not looking back at port? Well the same goes for Marienburg—so long as we stare out to sea and don't look back, Manann will protect us."

—Gunther van der Luip, Marienburger Fisherman

"It's not that Manann is evil. He is not of course, despite what the yokels might claim. No, Manann is fickle, capricious, and temperamental—much like the weather, in fact."

—Father Roubet Heinstern, Priest of Verena

cult extends no mercy. So long as priests of other faiths pay proper respect to the sea—and the appropriate tithes to the temple, of course—Manann has no quarrel with them.

Beliefs

The Cult of Manann believes that to set foot in his domain is to place oneself at his mercy. His priests know Manann to be capricious and unpredictable, and so they must constantly placate him lest his mood turn to violence, with potentially fatal consequences.

Manann's followers believe any one of a thousand things and more could anger their God, and as a result are highly superstitious, their worship reduced to a near-constant stream of seemingly irrelevant rituals, observations, and acts of attrition. This is doubly so when at sea, when worshippers are directly at the mercy of Manann—otherwise rational followers willingly submit to painful acts of penance or bay for the blood of those who have committed the slightest of sins. Common acts of attrition include flagellation with a cat o' nine tails, suspension from the mast or the bow of the ship, a ducking into the sea or, for the worst offences, keelhauling (see sidebar).

As well as taking great care not to anger the Sea God, followers also offer prayers and sacrifices to him to gain his favour. The most common way this is done is in the telling of the many mythic exploits of Manann, for such flattering tales are said to please him and appeal to his ego. There are countless such tales in existence, many of which are compiled in the eleven holy volumes known as the *Tales of the Albatross*.

Initiation

Those interested in becoming a priest of Manann almost always begin as a sailor, fisherman, or other vocation closely tied to water in some way. In rare cases, a "landlubber" may feel the distant, but overpowering, call of Manann and travel far to serve him. Those interested in becoming a Priest must seek out one willing to act as a mentor, and typically strict taskmaster. In addition to learning the wisdom, edicts, and will of Manann, the initiate must also prove his skills as a sailor, stevedore, pilot, or other vocation tied closely with the sea or river. In most cases, the acolyte "studies" for many years under the watchful eye of their mentor, performing various odd-jobs and tasks that seem to have nothing to do with the lore of Manann, and come to believe they are little more than an indentured servant. However, it's the usual case that when confronted with this situation, the mentor demands the initiate use these skills in the face of adversity, thus proving the value of what they have learned.

As the final act to prove one is ready to become a priest, the mentor ties the acolyte to the mast of a ship or to the edge of a pier prior to the coming of a massive storm. The would-be priest, lashed so he can do little more than move his head, must endure the full wrath of the storm, followed by another full day in the sun (or chill wind) of its aftermath. During the storm itself, initiates often wear copper crowns in imitation of Manann's own. Should the God deem these individuals unworthy of wearing the crown, and therefore unfit

Strictures

Manann is a notoriously fickle God, and an action which may have placated him yesterday might anger him today. Below are some commonly held strictures, although every priest is likely to follow a subtly different selection of them at any given time. A priest closely follows 1d10 of the strictures below, which should be agreed upon between the player and GM upon entering the cult. An especially cruel GM might generate these strictures in secret, and rule that a PC not following them, or following another stricture, attracts the wrath of Manann.

Whenever priests are subject to the Wrath of the Gods (see *WFRP*, page 144), it is a sign they have displeased Manann. In addition to the result on the Wrath of the Gods table, they must change 1d10 of their strictures. If this results in more strictures than they had originally, then they gain more to compensate. They continue to be affected by the Wrath of the Gods until they have done so, alongside any other penance required.

- Obey your captain.
- It is forbidden to kill an albatross.
- Do not whistle aboard a ship or within a temple.
- Whistle gently when sailing on a ship, for it ensures a good headwind.
- Do not embark on a voyage on the thirteenth day.
- Nails and hair must not be cut at sea—they are an offering unworthy of Manann.
- Do not look back to port once you have departed.
- Do not throw stones at a ship or into the sea.
- Do not say the word "drowned" whilst at sea.
- Should you fall overboard, give Manann gold and he will spare you.
- Wine poured over the deck of a ship will bring good luck, wine poured overboard will bring ill fortune.
- The first fish caught each day must be thrown back as an offering to Manann.
- A cat onboard a ship brings good luck.
- A cat onboard a ship brings bad luck.
- A woman onboard brings bad luck.
- A naked woman aboard a ship calms the sea (hence why so many ships have figureheads in the form of naked women).
- A silver coin placed under the mast ensures good luck.
- A silver coin thrown into the sea brings death.
- A gold coin thrown into the sea pleases Manann.
- A goat hung from the mast of a ship ensures a safe voyage.
- A beastman hung from the mast of a ship ensures a safe voyage.
- Do not tolerate the worship of the Shark God (this is the exception to the above rules–this stricture is followed by **all** worshippers of Manann).

Keelhauling

Keelhauling is a severe punishment or attrition reserved for the worst sins committed unto Manann. The sinner or penitent is tied to a rope that loops under the ship, and dropped into the sea. He is then pulled across the keel of the ship and up the other side, in the case of lesser offences, or pulled the length of the ship from the bow to the stern for the severest of sins or crimes. At the very least the barnacles covering the hull of the ship will rip his clothes and skin to shreds. At worst, the victim drowns, bleeds to death, or is ripped apart by ravenous sharks.

for his service, he will strike them down in a bright flash of anger. Those who survive know this rite as going before the mast, coming to understand the full wrath, capriciousness, cruelty, and majesty that is Manann. The absence of such a storm does not put off the priests. Instead, they strap the candidate to the front of the ship to serve as a figurehead. Even though hardened by the harsh training regimen, many acolytes perish in this final test, and many more, though they survive, abandon their course, turning their backs on the sea and its fickle God forever.

Cultists

Manann is not an affectionate, benevolent or even merciful God. He demands sacrifices, and in exchange, he stays his hand and reigns in the tempestuous seas. His violent nature is reflected in his cultists, who must constantly abase themselves to appease their angry God and keep his legendary temper at bay. Manann's priests act as intermediaries, appealing for calm waters, strong trade winds, and bountiful seas on behalf of worshippers.

Cultists of Manann are typically grizzled ex-sailors, marines, and the occasional reformed pirate—those that have not had some close tie to the sea or waters of the Empire are extremely rare, as this is not a religion that holds much appeal to others. They are practical people who give praise, honour, and worship to Manann as they go about their daily business, fixing rigging, catching fish, or plying the waters that surround the Empire. Cultists of Manann know their God is as unpredictable as the sea itself, often lending them a fatalistic attitude towards life.

Manann's devout usually do their worship while wearing common clothing. However, during holidays or times of prayer, they don blue-green, greenish-blue, or bluish-grey robes, sometimes trimmed with a wave pattern in blue and white. Talismans of waves, albatrosses, or Manann's five-tined crown are regular adornments. As befitting those used to living life on the sea, cultists are often covered in tattoos and piercings. High priests in particular are practically covered from head to toe in ink and jewellery.

When not at sea, cultists spend their days preparing for when they can go back out again—few venture far from large bodies of water, and most become irritable and twitchy if they can't smell the salt of the ocean or hear the cries of gulls in the wind. Most look down on those that have never ventured on water before, but know that their services are often required to provide safe passage for others. The ideal priest is well-suited to a life at sea, equipped with stout sea legs, an iron gut primed for rum. He is brave, practical, and fully aware of his place in the larger scheme of things, fully aware that the wrath of Manann could strike in a thunderous explosion at any time.

"Swimming with Manann" —Drowned

Structure

The Cult of Manann has little in the way of a formal hierarchy, all of its temples acting in semi-autonomous groups largely left to their own devices. The leader of the cult is known as the matriarch or patriarch—the current matriarch is Camille Dauphina. The matriarch is the sole high priestess of Manann, and all other priests in the cult owe her direct fealty. The seat of the cult is in Marienburg, and all other temples are subservient to the high temple there, paying it an annual portion of their tithes, and sending a small percentage of initiates there to receive greater training.

The matriarch leads the high temple directly, along with the Order of the Albatross and several of the lesser orders, but leaves the administration of all other temples to the consensus of the local priests. In times of internal or external crisis, the matriarch may take a firmer hand in the leadership of her cult, but this is very rare and most of the time the rest of the cult is left to run its own affairs, collecting tithes, training initiates, and interpreting stricture themselves. Only when a disagreement cannot be resolved locally is the matriarch called upon to adjudicate matters.

The cult is very wealthy as a result of tithes and dues offered to them by sailors and merchants, but this wealth is very unevenly distributed. A percentage of all tithes offered to the cult is given to the high temple, but little of the wealth accrued by the cult in Marienburg trickles down to the rest of the cult, creating a great disparity.

There are many orders within the cult, most of which are controlled directly by the matriarch. Foremost of these is the Order of the Albatross, an order that has played a significant role in making both the matriarch and the high temple very influential indeed.

Sects

The main divide within the Cult of Manann is between the high temple in Marienburg and the rest of the cult—although this is not a schism, it is not far from turning into one. Under the guidance of the matriarch, the cult in Marienburg has become heavily embroiled in the mercantile affairs of that great port, to the point where many in the cult see it as becoming little more than a trade guild. This view is fuelled by the unequal division of wealth within the cult, fostering feelings of resentment and distrust. Whispers of a schism are rife, especially in the north of the Empire and along the Reik, where distrust towards Marienburg has long been endemic, no doubt fuelled by mercantile and political factions eager to break the high temple's monopoly on trade.

Several small sects of Manann worship him in other guises which, unlike Manann, are usually benevolent deities. The sect of Manalt, Lord of the Bounty of the Sea, is popular with fishermen along the coasts of the Empire and up the Reik as far as Carroburg. The God of Tides, Manas, is commonly venerated by navigators who pray to him to help guide their journeys. One aspect of Manann local to the Wasteland is Olovald, Spirit of the Delta, whose cult claims that Manann is actually an aspect of Olovald—in response the Cult of Manann is rather heavy-handed in its dealings with the sect. Of all, Manhavok is perhaps the strangest, for he is worshipped in central Stirland, far from any large bodies of water.

Stromfels

The Shark God, God of the Dangers of the Seas, is the sworn enemy of Manann and his followers. Whereas Manann is at times a capricious and uncaring God, Stromfels is a far more malevolent deity who takes great delight as a predator who takes the lives of those who sail on the sea. Worship of Stromfels is outlawed throughout the Empire and the Wasteland, and is punishable by death.

Theologians often debate the nature of Stromfels, some claiming him to be a primeval Norscan God, whilst others see him as an aspect of the Blood God. Other scholars muse—never within earshot of a follower of Manann, of course—that the two Gods are one and the same, that Stromfels is merely an ancient aspect of Manann. Priests of Manann vociferously disagree.

"There'll be a feast for Manann this night"
—A nasty storm is coming

Followers of Stromfels see things differently, however, viewing their God neither as an aspect nor sect, but as Manann viewed as he truly is—Manann the Destroyer, the furious and unbridled wrath of the sea. Stromfels is worshipped by the raiders of the Sea of Claws, by wreckers along the coastal and river regions of the Empire, and by pirates throughout the Old World, especially in Sartosa where he is worshipped openly.

Lesser Orders

Among the various orders important to the Cult of Manann, the following four are the most significant.

Knights Mariner

The Knights Mariner is an order of templar-marines based in Marienburg, where they both guard the high temple, and protect the city and its fleets. The knights are controlled by the matriarch, through the grand master. The Knights Mariner are highly trained marines and sailors, and maintain their own sizeable fleet of warships which they use to keep the surrounding seas free from pirates and other raiders.

The knights are also hired out—for a tithe—to other vessels, either sailing onboard these ships or escorting them using their own. Although they do have a few chapterhouses elsewhere in the Old World—mainly used as harbours for their ships—other nations are somewhat reluctant to make use of

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Manann add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

All Orders: Swim

Priest

All Orders: Row, Sail, Trade (Shipwright)
Order of the Albatross: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Navigation, Orientation
Knight Mariner or Son of Manann: Swim

their services, for risk of becoming indebted or reliant on the knights, and by association, Marienburg.

The Order of the Albatross

The Order of the Albatross consists of priestly pilots and navigators tightly controlled by the high temple in Marienburg. For a tithe, the exact amount dependant on the length of the voyage, the destination and the value of the ship's cargo, a millstone (as they are known) serves aboard a vessel, navigating it to its destination and placating the temper of Manann as best they can. Sometimes these priests act as little more than good luck charms, other times they are experienced navigators upon whose skills the success or failure of an entire expedition hinges.

The order is directly controlled by the matriarch, and the high temple collects the tithes directly. It once was the case that the tithes were collected upon the safe arrival of a vessel at its destination, but under the shrewd leadership of the matriarch, the tithe is paid in advance—ostensibly this is an additional sacrifice to placate Manann for the voyage ahead, but in reality it ensures that regardless of the safe passage of the voyage, the temple never loses out.

Albatrosses, as the members of the order are known, are usually not only navigators, but also spellcasting priests, able to channel the will of Manann to aid the voyage.

Sons of Manann

The Sons of Manann are the most ubiquitous order of templars devoted to Manann, though they lack the wealth and prestige of the Knights Mariner. The Sons of Manann are based in the town of Salkalten, and have chapterhouses attached to many of the cult's temples along the northern coast.

The Sons of Manann wear distinctive turquoise and white armour, and go into battle armed with cutlass, spear and buckler, weapons that befit their naval heritage. The Sons of Manann guard ships from pirates and raiders, as well as hunting followers of Stromfels and wreckers.

The Stormguard

The Stormguard are an order of priests who are devoted to hunting the followers of Stromfels, rooting out his cults and stopping their machinations. Priests of the Stormguard wear hooded cloaks of dark blues and greys, embroidered with subtle wave motifs in white and silver, and often carry tridents and spears with which they are well versed in their use. The Stormguard are based in a secluded temple hidden in a rocky cove along the Nordland coast, and regularly enlist the aid of the Sons of Manann on their missions.

Temples

Temples of Manann vary widely in their appearance, though all have some common elements. Each temple contains at least one large statue of Manann, and most feature wide, spacious halls for worshippers to gather. Beyond that, however, temples can take many forms, from a shack built on a pier to a majestic building, covered in gold, pearls, and coral. When possible, these temples sit as close to water as possible, preferably even on a small island or peninsula. The temple of Manann in Marienburg is even designed in such a way as to allow the rising tide to flood the wide-open courtyard—many rites are performed in this sacred space, full of sea water.

More than a few temples of Manann are built within the decks of aging boats, some of which are permanently moored, while others serve as floating shrines for the faithful. The docking of one of these mobile temples is a source of great celebration for the cultists, who consider such times a holy day in and of itself.

Personalities

The Cult of Manann has several well-known figures in its ranks. Priests, especially those involved with the Order of the Albatross, are highly sought after, both for their immense skills on board a ship as well as their ability to appease their fickle God.

Elsa "Elmar" Udermar

Priestess Elsa Udermar began her career as a pirate, spending most of her youth among the scum and brigands of Sartosa. Elsa hid her gender from her comrades for nearly a decade under the assumed name of "Elmar." After a botched raid, her ship was boarded by the Imperial Navy and, during interrogation, her secret was revealed to all. Elsa's shipmates turned against her, proclaiming she was in fact a witch that had kept them under her thrall, forcing them into a life of piracy. The officer of the Imperial ship believed their tale and made her walk the plank.

Amazingly, Elsa survived her plunge into the sea, and held for life onto a floating piece of debris. For weeks, Elsa clung to the wood, receiving sustenance from a particular albatross that supplied her with fresh fish. Seeing this as a sign of Manann's favour, Elsa immediately made her way to the nearest temple of Manann when she finally washed ashore, demanding entry into the cult. Hearing the bedraggled woman's tale, the priests could not refuse her.

Years later, Elsa Udermar has become a mighty priestess of Manann, and captain of the ship *Vengeance of Manann*. The ship

serves as both a mobile shrine to the faithful and as a sleek hunter of pirate vessels. To this day, Elsa seeks the members of the crew that abandoned her, hoping to bring the full wrath of Manann down upon their heads, and those of all pirates.

Captain Aber Walblatt

Captain Walblatt is a well-known member of the Knights Mariner, and tales of his exploits are told throughout the coastal regions of the Old World. It is not prowess in battle or devotion that these legends tell of, but of the quest Walblatt has tirelessly devoted himself to for nigh on a decade. For the past nine years, since the last, ill-fated voyage of the templar warship, *Manann's Trident*, of which Walblatt is the only survivor, he has hunted the great red Chaos whale that wrecked his ship and killed his crewmates. Walblatt, now captain of his own warship, *Manann's Scales*, refuses to set foot ashore until he has enacted his revenge on *that* whale, his devotion commanding near-fanatical loyalty from his crew.

— The Cult of Morr —

Seat of Power: Luccini, Tilea
Head of the Cult: None
Primary Orders: The Augurs, The Order of the Shroud
Major Festivals: Hexensnacht, Geheimnisnacht
Popular Holy Books: *The Book of Doorways*, *Songs of the Raven*
Common Holy Symbols: Black rose, raven, portal

The Cult of Morr is one of the most widespread cults in the Old World. In a land filled with war, disease, and the horrors of Chaos, death is a constant companion, an inescapable end. Most Old Worlders reconcile their natural fears and come to accept death as a necessary part of life. In fact, some might say that Old Worlders, specifically people of the Empire, have an unhealthy fascination with it, incorporating symbols of death in all things. From the skulls that decorate their banners to the martial culture that infuses the Empire's society, death is everywhere, and its master is Morr.

However, Morr is the God of the Dead, not the God of death. One legend says that, at the beginning of time, Morr, Taal, and Ulric divided the world up between them. Taal and Ulric both demanded the living world, and fought for it, but Morr said he would settle for the empty realm of the dead. The other two Gods ignored him, until he passed through their realms, killing to populate his own. Then Taal and Ulric confronted the God of the Dead, and demanded that he confine his attentions to his own realm, and not trespass on theirs. Morr agreed, on the condition that Taal and Ulric ultimately send all the inhabitants of their realms to him. Another legend relates that Morr appeared after the first Human died, and defended his soul from the servants of the Dark Gods that sought to consume it. As more Humans died, Morr took them under his protection. Still others tell of the murder of Morr by Khaine, and of Morr's foundation of his realm among the dead.

Those who sleep approach death, and death is the future that awaits all. In this way, Morr is also the God of Dreams and Prophecy. Outside funerals, most people pray to Morr only in this capacity. Only the dead can seek his protection, and the dead do not pray.

> *"Father rests with Morr now. And we clubbed together enough to pay the Priests to make sure the bastard stays there."*
>
> —Ludmilla von Thieldorf, Reikland Noble

The Cult

The Cult of Morr does not worry about what the world thinks. Everyone comes to the cult eventually, and it has enough to do guarding those who are already in its care. This independence almost always extends to individual priests, as well; those who would start a career in the cult are generally not people who need the support of others for their decisions.

Cultists do worry about the world. Some know more of the future than most Humans, while all are surrounded by death, and thus by the newly dead who need to be cared for. Followers of Morr are far from uncaring, but they do not typically see the living as their responsibility. Soldiers tell stories of priests of Morr moving from corpse to corpse on a battlefield, performing the last rites, and ignoring those who are still breathing, until the moment they stop.

Morrians take their responsibilities to the dead very seriously, and martyrs within the cult are often those who stayed in a plague-ridden town to bury the corpses. This sense of responsibility sometimes extends to carrying out the last wishes of a dead person, or providing some comfort to the bereaved, but on the whole the Priests of Morr have little to do with the affairs of the living.

The outstanding exception is the cult's attitude toward necromancy. Necromancers are the ultimate enemies of Morr: they steal from his realm, violate his protection for their own profit, and circumvent his authority. Morrians also believe that Undead are outside Morr's protection, and thus vulnerable to the Dark Gods. Thus, even intelligent Undead who claim to be happy with their condition must be put to rest, with the proper rites. Most Morrians believe Morr accepts and protects even the souls of necromancers, once they have been sent to his realm with the proper rites.

Beliefs

"Saved by Morr" —Dead

The fundamental belief of the cult is that the dead face grave perils if they are not sent to Morr's protection with the proper rites. Most believe such souls would be seized and tortured by Khaine, Morr's jealous brother, or even devoured by the Ruinous Powers, and souls know this at an instinctive level. Thus, the spirits of the unburied dead cling to this world, remaining present as Ghosts. Burying the body, or performing the rituals over possessions, or even just a name, places the soul under Morr's protection and allows it to leave safely. Of course, active Undead often have to be driven out, but the burial rites are still important. No soul, not even that of the foulest follower of the Ruinous Powers, should be left without the protection of Morr, and Morr's care extends to all.

Dreams and portents are typically seen as Morr's way of warning the living of grave threats. Death itself, of course, is not such a threat; prophecies of one's own death merely provide the chance to get your affairs in order first. Portents are rarely absolutely clear, and Morr relies on the intelligence of Humans to unravel their mysteries.

Initiation

Although Morr's cultists abide by the fundamental beliefs that underpin their organisation, each group is independent, and over the generations each branch has developed its own set of initiation rites and procedures. Lay followers, though far less common than with other cults, tend to be servants of the priests, digging graves, helping to prepare corpses, or even just acting as guards for their temples—the sombre Gardens of Morr.

Acquiring new initiates is not something the cult actively pursues, since all come to Morr in their own ways—either in life or in death. For the most part, the signal event occurs in the realm of dreams, with a candidate experiencing a vivid, or even shocking nightmare involving the Lord of the Dead. Shaken, the candidate flees in all haste to a local temple, prostrating himself before the priests and begging for acceptance into the cult. Rarely, these dreams may be experienced by someone already ensconced within the cult, whereby the priest receives explicit instructions to recruit a particular candidate.

Initiates generally find themselves doing prolonged, boring tasks that require constant concentration. They are also subjected to lectures on the inviolability of the dead, and the duty of a Morrian priest. Initiates are allowed to quit; this is how the cult weeds out the unsuitable who make it this far. Most initiates do persist, however.

Strictures

- Observe all the rites of funeral and wake.
- Oppose necromancers and the Undead wherever and whenever they are encountered.
- Be respectful and considerate of the dead and their families.
- Pay heed to your dreams.

There are very few reasons to join the Cult of Morr other than sincere devotion, after all. As a result, the priesthood is perennially short of applicants, let alone recruits, and standards sometimes slip.

Cultists

Priests of Morr dress in unornamented black robes, which have no indication of rank. A few even train ravens to sit on their shoulders and peer at passers-by. They tend to wear their hair very short, and most are clean-shaven. Augurs are likely exceptions, and can be slightly wild.

Most people think that priests of Morr are all dour, solemn, quiet individuals. This is because they only meet them at funerals. Humour, hobbies, and even a select circle of friends are not uncommon among the priests. Interests that promote steady hands, good sewing skills, or produce plenty of sawdust are all encouraged by the cult. It is true that social butterflies, the frivolous, and hedonists tend not to join the cult of the God of the Dead, but priests of Morr are more likely than most to surprise those who get to know them well.

Structure

Temples of Morr are completely independent of one another in day-to-day matters. Once every ten years, the priesthood gather in conclave in Luccini to agree on burial rites and matters of doctrine. In theory all priests should attend, but leaving the temples unstaffed and unguarded is not to be countenanced. Every temple sends at least one representative, officially chosen by Morr in a dream. Generally, only the representative has the relevant dream, although sometimes the high priest dreams that a particularly irritating underling should go.

Within a temple, the high priest organises the ordinary activities. These depend on the order, and Morr's orders differ so much that they must be considered separately.

Temples of the Order of the Shroud are places of burial, so daily activities consist of taking in the dead, performing the necessary rites, interring the remains in the Garden of Morr, and guarding the dead from grave robbers and necromancers. Junior priests deal with most of this, although a larger donation presented with a corpse ensures the service of a higher-ranked cleric. Naturally, the corpses of local nobles are accepted by the high priest himself. Urban temples tend to be constantly busy, while rural temples may only have one burial per day, depending on how many villages they serve.

Temples of the Augurs are places where people come for guidance. Activities centre on the priest (or priests) with prophetic abilities, who may not, in fact, be the highest-ranked cleric. Other priests greet visitors, receive their donations, and conduct them to the prophet. The fame of the prophet determines the number of visitors to such places.

Very few temples are so busy that the priests have no free time at all. The cult permits simple relaxation, and priests of Morr often have a few friends outside the temple. However, the cult also

believes Morr sends dreams with instructions for his priests, and these often require actions out of the ordinary.

The cult teaches that Morr often sends messages telling his priests to comfort or help the bereaved, and priests, and even initiates, act on such dreams without question. Dreams enjoining other kinds of intervention are supposed to be discussed with the other priests at a temple, who study their own dreams for confirmation. *Songs of the Raven* does state that sometimes Morr sends a message to a single priest, to test the discernment of the other priests, so a dream might be from Morr even if none of the other priests have similar ones.

If the dream only requires action by the dreamer, then he is almost always permitted to act on it. Actions that threaten the temple, or require cooperation from other priests, are assessed much more rigorously. If the interests of the temple, or its resident priests, are threatened, almost all the priests have dreams requiring action to defend themselves. At least, they all *say* that they have had such dreams.

Political struggles within a temple of Morr are often phrased in terms of dreams condemning the opposing priests. Temples whose priests are related to the nobility are also significantly more likely to be told to intervene in the affairs of the living, while those with friends among the merchants are more likely to be told to intervene in mercantile affairs. Officially, the cult holds that Morr sends messages to those best equipped to deal with them. Unofficially, other temples sometimes hire agents to make sure that the "dreams" have not been fabricated to cover up political corruption. Of course, sometimes other temples hire agents who are instructed to discover that the dreams are fake, generally on the excuse that a dream from Morr has told the hiring priest that the other temple is corrupt.

Sects

The primary division within the Cult of Morr is between the Order of the Shroud, who revere him as God of the Dead, and the Augurs, who revere him as God of Dreams and Prophecy. While the Order of the Shroud is much larger, there is almost no tension between these groups, as all followers acknowledge Morr's differing aspects.

There is another division within the cult, which does cause some tensions. Almost all priests of Morr remain at one temple, travelling very little. Others, however, travel across the Old World, often following their dreams. This group is small, but no temple has authority over these wandering priests, and, as travellers, they all attend the conclave in Luccini, meaning they have never been declared heretical. Still, most sedentary priests of Morr dislike them, and encourage them to move on quickly. The wanderers are generally happy to oblige.

The majority of wandering Augurs are members of the Doomsayers, a formal minor order within the cult. Wandering members of the Order of the Shroud are not organised into a formal order, but have a lot in common nevertheless. They wander to perform the last rites for those who would otherwise have no priest. This normally involves travelling to dangerous locations, looking for corpses.

Common View

"What do you grow in a garden? Food! Why do you think the priests of Morr are always so well-fed, even during famines? What's in their Gardens?"

—Gunther Jagerson, Nordland Labourer

"Merchants fight merchants, nobles fight nobles, thieves fight thieves, and the priests of Morr fight necromancers. I say no more than that."

—Magritta, Tilean Mercenary

"Reactionary fools who interfere with scientific progress and condemn any attempt to improve our ability to help the living."

—Master Augustus Limmerskind, Altdorf Doctor

Once they find the bodies, they perform funeral rites for the deceased, no matter how old the remains appear.

These priests are notable as being the only followers of Morr who would enter a tomb rumoured to be full of treasure; they would do so to perform funerals for the treasure hunters killed by the traps, and would leave the tomb's treasures inviolate. They also travel to battlefields, villages destroyed by Beastmen, and other such dangerous places. As most cannot attract the services of the Black Guard, they often travel with adventurers. Swift Wilhelm is the most renowned of these priests, famed for being able to perform a full funeral service in under a minute, while running away from a band of Orcs. Of course, one of Wilhelm's companions is a minstrel, so his prowess may be somewhat exaggerated.

Wanderers pay as much heed to their dreams as any other priest of Morr, but they also listen to rumours, and keep an eye open for unclaimed corpses. On the whole, they find themselves getting far more involved with the living than is normal for their cult, but their God clearly approves, as they have no problem with their spells.

Lesser Orders

Two lesser orders are important within the Cult of Morr: the Doomsayers and the Black Guard.

The Doomsayers

The Doomsayers are a subsidiary order within the Augurs, responsible for travelling to remote areas to perform Doomings and funerals when there is no local temple of Morr. Some Doomsayers are closely linked to a particular temple, which is as likely to be of the Order of the Shroud as of the Augurs, and travel a fixed route. Others wander apparently at random, visiting temples as they pass them. These Doomsayers always claim to be following their dreams.

Two kinds of Doomsayer really do seem to be guided by Morr. The first kind arrives in a settlement the day before a child's tenth birthday, or just as someone has died, precisely in time to perform the necessary rites. In some cases, this is due to a good network of contacts and a fast horse, but in others there seems to be no natural cause.

The second group is guided to places where many people are about to die, whether from battle, plague, or natural disaster. Members of this group claim to have dreams they cannot ignore, and argue about their meaning. Some, the majority, believe it is impious to try to prevent the deaths, as Morr has decided it is time for those people to enter his realm. They believe they are sent to perform funeral rites. Others believe Morr sometimes directs them to places where there is a danger of many people entering his realm before their time, so it is their duty to try to prevent, or at least mitigate, the disaster. A handful suggest Morr does both, choosing agents who act appropriately in each situation.

The Black Guard

The Black Guard are the templars of Morr. Their primary role is to guard the Gardens of Morr and watch over the priests. People normally join the Black Guard because of some significant event in their lives. Most often, this involved a loved one who was released from great suffering by death. The experience teaches the potential Guard the importance of Morr's role, and makes him sympathetic to the cult.

Other members join after an encounter with the Undead. They are a minority, and they are often discontent with merely guarding tombs. Some priests agree; these priests may join the Black Guard, and lead small groups of the more militant templars against the unquiet dead and necromancers.

An important funeral is generally attended by a guard of honour drawn from the Black Guard. The templars make no sound during

the rites, even seeming to move silently despite being in full armour. The importance of a funeral is generally determined by the amount of money spent on the rites, but the Black Guard have the right to decide which funerals they will attend. Most groups occasionally attend the funeral of a random pauper, just to keep people guessing, but for the most part they follow the direction of the priests.

Temples

Temples of Morr are almost always built of stone, and always feature a broad stone doorway, with no door, always open just as the gates to death and dreams are. Forming the door are a pair of pillars. One is always black and the other is white to reflect the dual nature of the God. Morrian temples are often underground, and are always quiet places, notable for their cool temperatures and excellent ventilation. Other details depend on the order.

Temples of the Order of the Shroud are normally rectangular in plan, with several side chambers in which bodies can be prepared for burial. The main altar is at the end of the hall opposite the door, and there is a bier in front of it where the deceased is placed during a funeral. Beyond the altar is a door leading into the Garden of Morr. Large temples have several altars, so more than one funeral can be conducted at a time, and each altar has its own door into the Garden. The doors to the Garden of Morr can be closed and locked.

The Garden itself is a black rose garden, tended by the priests, with stone monuments to the dead dotted about. In theory, these monuments are all small, but rich individuals can convince the high priest that "small" is entirely relative; relative to the temple of Sigmar in Altdorf, for example. The bereaved may visit the Garden in the company of a priest of Morr, but layfolk are not allowed into the Garden by themselves. To help enforce this, most Gardens are surrounded by high stone walls, and the only entrance is through the temple itself. Accommodation for the priests is normally built along one wall of the Garden.

Temples of the Augurs are typically round and domed, with an oculus at the peak of the dome. The prophetic Augurs sit at the centre of the dome, surrounded by clouds of incense smoke. Subsidiary rooms and accommodation are part of the main building, accessed directly from the main hall of the temple. Temples of the Augurs do not have a Garden of Morr attached, but it is not at all unusual for temples of both main orders to be found close together.

In some places, there are marked differences, such as in Talabheim. Most people opt to be buried in Taal's sacred wood—the Taalwelt. Their bodies are carried along a route sacred to Morr, and at the end of which, they rest for a time in the Garden of Morr. Eventually, when the corpse is properly prepared, it is transported through a gate dedicated to Rhya, called the Endstone.

Personalities

Because there are no real positions of authority within the Cult of Morr, prominent figures rely on their own accomplishments rather than their permission. The Augurs are over-represented among these figures, as prophecies draw attention. Paul van Soleck, in Talabheim, is a good example of this. Members of the Black Guard may also become famous after particular actions.

"Date the daughter, meet the father"
—Anyone who risks repeated injury (and thus visits temples of Shallya a lot) will die (and thus meet Morr)

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Morr add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

All Orders: Intimidation

Priest

No Order: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Menacing, Trade (Embalmer)
Augur: Academic Knowledge (Science), Blather, Charm
Doomsayer: Menacing, Navigation, Outdoor Survival
Black Guard (Priest, not Templar): Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Menacing, Perception

Anna Gregori

Anna is an elderly Doomsayer who has been drawn to the sites of some of the greatest atrocities in the recent history of the Old World. She is of the school that believes it is impious to intervene, so she has probably seen more people die than any other living individual. She performs funerals for the dead, taking a tooth as payment. Her black robes are almost invisible under strings of Human teeth, and her appearance anywhere in the Empire is greeted with utter terror. Those who have tried to attack her personally, however, have met horrible ends, so few dare to do more than run.

Leopold Hanslich

Leopold is a former vampire hunter and priest of the Black Guard, renowned for defeating Gustavus von Carstein and all his Undead minions, and then getting out of Sylvania alive to fight another day. Rumour has it that the von Carsteins have placed a massive price on his head. A few bounty hunters have moral scruples about taking money from the Undead; the vast majority are too frightened to enter Sylvania to collect.

Otto Schilker

Otto is high priest of the Order of the Shroud in Schramleben, in Stirland. He has convinced the people of the town that corpses will rise as Undead if not buried with a Karl on each eye and over the heart. He lives rather more comfortably than is typical for his order.

— The Cult of Myrmidia —

Seat of Power: Magritta, Estalia
Head of the Cult: La Aguila Ultima Isabella Giovanna Luccelli
Primary Orders: Order of the Blazing Sun, Order of the Eagle, Order of the Righteous Spear
Major Festivals: None in the Empire
Popular Holy Books: *Bellona Myrmidia, Bellum Strategia*, *The Book of War*
Common Holy Symbols: A spear behind a shield, an eagle

Bellona Myrmidia (The War Goddess Myrmidia) begins with the tale of the tragically flawed Tylos, the legendary father of the Tilean peoples. Tylos made a covenant with raven-haired Myrmidia, a Goddess of Civilisation, Beauty, and Honour, and with her help built a great city for his tribe. However, this city was not enough for Tylos, for he dreamed of surpassing the slender, white structures to the south. So, he ordered his people to build a tall tower, one to humble even the Elves. Myrmidia was appalled at this pointless toil, and, after many warnings, abandoned Tylos, claiming she would return when his people knew honour again. The fate of the city is unclear, but some scholars claim it fell to the Dark Gods, its corruption spreading outwards to form what is now known as the Blighted Marshes.

Centuries passed, and the shattered remnants of the people of Tylos spread through the other, southern tribes. After a great war with the Dwarfs, the Elves abandoned the Old World, and Humanity cautiously replaced them, slowly building new civilisations around the Elder Race's ruins. For reasons still hotly debated by her modern cult, Myrmidia then returned to the descendants of Tylos; however, she came not as a God, but as a mortal. It is said Myrmidia learned hard lessons in her early years, and was driven by her experiences to abandon her pacifist ways, and take up weapons of war to fight injustice. Over the years, and many battles, she gathered great heroes to her side, and within a decade had bound all Estalia and Tilea under her rule, staving off all manner of invasions and rebellions. But, just as Myrmidia was to be crowned queen, she was shot by a poisoned dart. As she lay dying, she ordered a great ship be built, and, it is said, sailed west upon it, there to return to her home amongst the Gods, known now, and forever after, as a Goddess of War.

Over two thousand years later, the Cult of Myrmidia is easily the largest organised cult in the Old World. In Estalia and Tilea, nearly everything is influenced by her, for beloved Myrmidia is not only appealed to in times of war and injustice, but in all matters, especially those concerning revenge, honour, and art, three aspects of her mortal life that have many legends attached to them. This almost universal adoration of Myrmidia in the south is something that northern folk find very hard to understand.

The Cult

In the Empire, the Cult of Myrmidia has very little influence. Myrmidia has none of the visceral appeal of Ulric's furious ways, nor does she invoke the loyalty and solidity of Sigmar. To some, specifically soldiers, Myrmidia is considered "an officer's God." Her emphasis on learning and thought is not the way of most soldiers—force and passion have carried the Empire through countless wars, not strategy or "strange foreign ways."

In truth, the Cult of Myrmidia only secured a position on the Grand Conclave because the Knights of the Blazing Sun were the first templars to support Magnus the Pious during the Great War. Indeed, the nature of Myrmidia's divinity is even called into question within the Empire's borders. Many of its scholars claim she cannot be the daughter of Verena and Morr, as is widely claimed in the south, but must instead be an ascended Human, much like Sigmar. However, these claims make many in the Cult of Sigmar uncomfortable, for many believe that Sigmar's rise to Godhood was unique.

Whatever individuals may believe, most cities within the Empire have a temple run by the Order of the Eagle. There, sharp-eyed priests run classes in strategy and warcraft, open to any who wish to attend. They also hold regular services for expatriate southerners (the specific day varies according to local customs, but is often every five days). These services—normally conducted in Classical, Estalian, or Tilean—are more interactive than most, with the priests actively encouraging others to get involved, asking questions of the congregation. This is too much for most Empire folk, who are used to being preached at, not asked questions, and rarely understand anything bar the Emperor's Reikspiel; so, most avoid these deeply odd sermons. Therefore, to most people of the Empire, Myrmidia is nothing more than a Goddess of Strategy and War.

The Order of the Righteous Spear has several chapterhouses in the Empire, and although many chapters use different names (such as the Knights of the Verdant Field in Talabheim), they are all part of the Righteous Spear order. Each chapter is typically tasked to protect one of the Eagle's temples, although they also respond to honourable causes as and when they see fit. Because of this, the templars of the order are rarely seen outside of the area they protect.

The Knights of the Order of the Blazing Sun are far more commonly encountered than the Righteous Spears, even though there are numerically

> *"I was going to study The History of War, but when I discovered that Myrmidia's Book of War had twenty-seven different translations, each with key annotations by different, well-respected generals, I lost the taste for it."*
>
> —Gebberd Pesche, Student of Imperial Literature, Nuln University

less of them in the Empire. This is because of a unique custom the order practises. After an initiate has finished his training, he is sent to wander the Old World for at least a year, which is symbolically supposed to represent the time Myrmidia spent as a mortal, learning of the world. Because of this, Blazing Suns can be encountered in all corners of the Empire, lending their swords to honourable campaigns and explaining the finer points of strategy to those in need. It is said that a single Blazing Sun does more to spread the awareness of Myrmidia in the Empire than all of the Eagle temples combined. Further, the Blazing Suns, the only Myrmidian knightly order to have been founded by the people of the Empire, is responsible for the cult's pilgrim routes from the Empire to Magritta. Working these important trade lanes has been extremely lucrative, and the order is rumoured to be one of the richest in the Old World, rivalled only by the crusading Knights Panther.

Beliefs

Myrmidia's twelve greatest battles, and her commentaries upon them, form the basis of *The Book of War*. It contains all of the cult's core beliefs, and is carried by many Myrmidians, who ponder long over their Goddess's words and deeds.

Honour is central to the cult, as it is the guiding principle behind all Myrmidia's actions. In life, the Goddess followed a strict code that she called the "Rites of War," and she offered all her opponents the fair treatment that it afforded, even when they had proven to be treacherous in the past (which they often had). In kind, Myrmidians treat their opponents with respect, especially when they surrender, which is seen as one of the goals of a battle. The command structure is also central to her teachings, but there are several legends where the Goddess or her Shieldmaidens chose to do what was right, not what they were ordered to. Because of this, although most Myrmidians stick rigidly to orders, they readily ignore them if it will result in a betrayal of their honour.

Foreign God

Myrmidia is not really a God of the Empire, no matter how many soldiers may have taken to worshipping her. Most folk of the Empire find worshipping a foreign God very suspicious, especially one as strange as Myrmidia. After all, many of her temples have statues that are, quite frankly, indecent, and bound to attract the Ruinous Powers!

As an optional rule, a character that is known to be part of the Cult of Myrmidia takes a –10% penalty to all Fellowship Tests when dealing with non-affiliated Old Worlders. This penalty is only suffered by those that are part of the cult, not those that wear Myrmidian symbols—after all, respecting a deity, no matter how odd, is something that folk of the Empire understand, and view as sensible.

Strictures

- Act with honour and dignity at all times.
- Respect prisoners of war.
- Show no mercy to the enemies of Humanity.
- Honour your master's commands.
- Disobey an order only if it is absolutely necessary (for example, if an order forced you to break another stricture).

Myrmidia also teaches her followers to master the *art* of war. As a woman, she was physically weaker than many of her opponents, so she learned how to best use her strengths, and cover her weaknesses. Unlike other war Gods, she focuses on avoiding unnecessary conflict through use of clever strategies. This is something that many soldiers favour, as few that have experienced the horror of war relish it. Ulricans and Sigmarites see this as cowardly. Myrmidians see it as prudent.

This said, Myrmidia is quite popular with women who have sons and husbands at war. They pray to the Goddess to guide the officers into making wise choices that will keep their loved ones alive. As they say, "Sigmar takes you to war, but Myrmidia brings you back." There is also a feeling that Myrmidia, as a woman, is more likely to understand their fear and heartache for their men—a belief the Cult of Sigmar frowns upon.

Initiation

In the Empire, most believe the Cult of Myrmidia is only open to those from military careers or expatriate Estalians and Tileans. However, almost anyone, if they show the proper interest in the Myrmidian cult and the honourable lifestyle it demands, will be accepted if the local temple priest is sufficiently impressed.

Once accepted, Initiates are given a white, hoodless robe, and are each attached to a priest, who may be training up to four other initiates at any one time. These initiates form a "Flight," and they do everything together, including eating, sleeping, listening to lectures, and physical training. If a temple has enough initiates to have several Flights, they will be pitched against each other in various wargames and tasks. Honing the mind is as important as honing the body, so lessons in meditation whilst inhaling sacred smoke, or periods of contemplation during prolonged isolation, often accompany the extensive lectures in Myrmidia's teachings. The best of any Flight will soon be elevated to become the "First Eagle," a Flight's leader. No initiate can be elevated to a priest until they have been a First Eagle and have done something to distinguish themselves. What this entails differs from temple to temple. It could be something seemingly simple, such as demonstrating insightful wisdom concerning a difficult trial, or showing strong leadership skills. Or, it could be something more challenging, such as bettering Myrmidia's successes in a battle recreation using painted figurines to represent opposing armies.

"Sailed into the sunset" or "Sailed west" —Died

Whatever it takes, eventually an initiate proves himself worthy of consideration to become a priest, or he will be taken aside and told to leave. Those that are worthy are given a task to complete by the temple priests, which varies according to the temple. It may involve navigating a puzzle-filled maze beneath the temple, or ritualistically evading a powerful creature from the myths of Myrmidia, such as a bull or wild boar. It may require that the initiate survives abandonment in a hostile environment, or quests to uncover the secrets of a distant holy site. Whatever it may be, once the task is completed, the initiate becomes a priest, and a temple sergeant takes command of his training.

Cultists

In the 'Book of Transformations' from the *Bellona Myrmidia*, the Goddess takes the form of a sharp-eyed Golden Eagle to scout enemy positions. The Order of the Eagle thus identifies itself with this majestic bird, and commonly pictures it with wings spread high above its head. This symbol is worn on the left breast, or as a clasp to hold a priest's white cloak in place. In the Empire, members of the order also wear blue cowls with red edging and white robes. Elsewhere in the Old World, cowls take different colours according to the regiment the priest belongs to (see more about this in the **Structure** section). Rank in the Eagles is shown with small claw pins worn at the neck.

The Order of the Righteous Spear wears well-polished plate armour, with white tabards marked with the spear and shield of Myrmidia, her favoured weapons. However, the order has splintered into many scores of lesser orders spread across the Old World, with each sporting its own unique uniform, style of fighting and weapon preference. The only thing all these disparate orders have in common is the shield-and-spear symbol, which is always worn somewhere.

In comparison, all Knights of the Blazing Sun wear highly polished, ornate plate armour of black and gold, often sporting the order's symbol—a stylised sun emitting sixteen rays of wavy light—as a head crest, or as part of their heraldry. The order's inner circle—an enormously rich group of men—sport their wealth ostentatiously, wearing stupendously expensive armour, detailed in gold, jet, obsidian and diamond. Many templars of the order bear polished, mirrored shields, which they use to reflect sunlight into the eyes of their enemies, dazzling them.

Structure

In Estalia and Tilea, the massive Cult of Myrmidia has seemingly countless positions of power spread through its myriad orders. However, in the Empire, where the cult has little representation, it is somewhat simpler.

Although the Order of the Eagle is organised like a vast army, where those below take orders from those above, wisdom and insight, the gifts of Myrmidia's mother and father, also command great respect. Superiors not only listen to the counsel of their lessers,

but they actively request it. The highest position in the Empire is the Eagle of the North, who is currently based in Nuln, and commands the Northern Regiment of the Order of the Eagle. This Regiment is split into ten Units—one per Human Imperial Province and one for Kislev—each of which is commanded by a high priest. A High Priest's Unit is split according to how many temples he controls, with each temple commanded by a temple priest. A temple priest is aided by one or more temple sergeants, who each order up to ten priests each. Lastly, each priest can direct up to five initiates.

"Eagles and Women" —The source of all conflict is religion and women. This is a common response to the question: "Why did the war break out?"

In the Empire, progress within the order is mostly dictated by the whim of an individual's superiors, and the availability of appropriate ranks, although most ranking priests meditate long upon their options to make sure they are making the best choices. However, to the south, appointments of most ranking positions require the support of the Order of True Insight (see page 44), which is believed to have a greater understanding of Myrmidia's strategy for the cult. The impartiality of the oracles is never openly questioned, but it is whispered that money and favours have more influence than any revelation of Myrmidia during a smoke-fuelled prophetic trance. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find different oracles supporting different candidates, with each claiming Myrmidia is guiding their choice.

The structure of the Order of the Eagle goes though minor changes almost every other year, as it believes in adapting to changing circumstances. Currently, the Eagle of the North is an equivalent position to the head of a province in Tilea or Estalia. He is commanded by the High Eagle of Miragliano (*L'Alta Aquila di Miragliano*), who also commands half the order's Regiments in Tilea.

The Order of the Righteous Spear is one of the largest orders of templars in the Old World. Most of their number is spread through Estalia and Tilea, but chapterhouses can be found in the Empire, Bretonnia, the Border Princes and even Araby. In the Empire, they have not spread any further than the temples that they protect and support, but the order is slowly gaining in popularity. The order is split into many minor orders, each of which has its own grand master and unique name, but they are all still answerable to the Glorious Leader (*El Lider Glorioso*), who leads the order from Magritta. Each grand master of the Empire can be commanded by the Eagle of the North, although the Glorious Leader can override these commands if he so wishes. Each Righteous Spear chapterhouse is led by a templar captain, who is always a knight of the inner circle.

The Order of the Blazing Sun is tiny when compared to the Righteous Spears. During the Crusades, sixty cornered Imperial knights swore to the service of Myrmidia after a violent tremor toppled a massive statue of the Goddess onto hundreds of charging Arabyans, saving the knights from certain destruction. When they returned to the Empire, they built a chapterhouse and temple to the foreign Goddess near Ravenstein in western Talabecland. With help from other crusading knightly orders, such as the Knights Panther and Knights of the Golden Lion, they worked hard to open trade and pilgrimage routes to Estalia and beyond. Today, the order, rich from its foreign dealings, now has most of its influence in Middenland, where the grand master orders his templars from the Carroburg chapterhouse. The order is only answerable to La Aguila Ultima in Estalia, to whom the original Empire Knights swore fealty, which is a source of great annoyance to the Eagle of the North, who covets their seemingly endless coffers of gold.

Sects

The Cult of Myrmidia has many divisions of belief. Fortunately, most of these manifest in the southern nations, and never reach as far as the Empire. However, one division is so fundamental, that every corner of the cult is affected by it.

East versus West

The Cult of Myrmidia is split. To the east, there are the Tileans. They believe Myrmidia was born in Remas, and was therefore a Tilean. Importantly, they believe that Myrmidia, as a Tilean, conquered Estalia. However, the Estalians to the west believe Myrmidia was born in Magritta, and was therefore an Estalian. Similarly, they believe Myrmidia, as an Estalian, conquered Tilea.

Common View

"You just don't understand. She isn't like the other Gods. She understands us. She walked as one of us! She experienced pain for us. She died for us. She isn't like your uncaring Gods. She's Myrmidia!"

—Iulius Innocenti Giovanelli, Tilean Merchant

"This little general—I forget his name, it sounded all foreign—sent me a letter offering to fight by 'Myrmidia's Rites of War.' I accepted, just in case there was an advantage to be gained, although I had no idea what the man was wittering on about. Two hours into the battle, von Borndorf spotted these little, white-robed men scurrying about the battlefield. They could have been getting up to all sorts of mischief. So, I had the little buggers shot! Afterwards, the prisoners we captured and tortured explained that the mischief-makers were there to count casualties and corral prisoners. Well, how was I to know that?"

—Siggricht von Wallenstein, Retired General

Both nations have their own versions of Myrmidia's holy texts to support their beliefs, and both are convinced they are correct. This fundamental difference has been the cause of, or the excuse for, much of the hostility between the Estalian kingdoms and the Tilean city-states down through the centuries. Indeed, the cult has almost broken in two over the issue on more than one occasion.

Currently, Magritta is considered to be the heart of the Myrmidian religion, although the high temple in Remas undermines this at every turn. *La Aguila Ultima* (or, as Tileans prefer, *L'ultima Aquila*), the Order of the Eagle's leader, is a Tilean woman; thus, the Tileans expected her to support Remas as the future centre of the cult. However, she controversially swore to accept the Estalian version of Myrmidia, and has moved to Magritta, where she is working hard to put this old division to rest.

This causes problems for the Empire branch of the Cult. The Order of the Eagle is sworn to obey a High Eagle from Tilea, thus they use the Tilean texts. However the templars receive their orders from Magritta, and, by default, accept the Estalian texts. To make matters a little more complex, the Eagle of the North has authority over the Order of the Righteous Spear in the Empire, and has been ordered to ensure the templars follow the Tilean texts, which, of course, they resist.

It is a massive divide, and one that, it seems, will inevitably tear the cult in two, which could plunge almost half of the Old World into an acrimonious and bitter war.

Lesser Orders

There are countless lesser orders of Myrmidia in Estalia and Tilea, where almost every isolated hill has a monastery or temple dedicated to a particular deed, battle, or proclamation of Myrmidia. Few of these orders have reached the Empire, but those that have are expanding their influence quickly.

The Blessed Order of True Insight

"Before the strategy is agreed, one should seek the advice of an Oracle. Morr's dark folk claim foresight as their God's domain, but as they little understand the vagaries of war, they may mistakenly speak false sooth. Seek an oracle knowledgeable in Myrmidia's way, only there can the honourable general find true insight."

—*Bellum Strategia*, 'Before Blades are Bared'

When mortal, Myrmidia often consulted the seers of Morr's cult, as she valued the prophetic advice of her distant father. Today, Myrmidia's faithful continue this practise, and Augers of Morr can often be found accompanying Tilean and Estalian armies. But Myrmidia's cult also has its own oracles. The Blessed Order of True Insight is comprised of those said to be blessed with their Goddess's revelation, and they gather in sparsely populated, secluded temples, there to speak prophecy to the honourable souls that seek their wisdom.

Access to the order is by invitation only, and the majority of its members are women in their twilight years. Most reside in isolated temples where they study Myrmidia's holy texts and meditate in smoke-filled rooms, contemplating problematic strategies and matters of Myrmidian faith. The order may have no temples in the Empire as of yet, but its presence is still felt, for many within the Order of the Eagle refuse to undertake any major campaigns without first consulting the Oracles of True Insight. Indeed, three Oracular Priestesses—one young, one middle-aged, and one old—recently arrived in Nuln to advise the Eagle of the North, although none are sure what manner of campaign he may be planning.

The Order of Fury

"And she did hear of what had happened, and she came unto Her, and she said, Because of what hath been done to thee: from this day forward I renounce my name, and I shall be called Fury."

—*Bellona Myrmidia*, 'Book of Fury'

When mortal, Myrmidia drew many heroes to her side, but none are more famous than the shieldmaiden Fury. Her tale is recorded in the *Bellona Myrmidia*, and is one full of horror, pain and betrayal. The events of the sad story result in a young girl renouncing her name and swearing to claim revenge for all the dark deeds of the world, a task she takes to with unparalleled passion and anger. Although it pained her, Myrmidia could not bring herself to stop the girl, for she intimately understood the source of Fury's rage. Instead, Myrmidia did what she had to: she used the girl on the battlefield. There, Fury slayed and slayed and slayed, until eventually, once all her enemies were gone, she collapsed, weeping. Fury's last stand was in the Abasko

Mountains. There, her body was found by Myrmidia, surrounded by piles of dead Orcs and Goblins. The site is now protected by the order's high temple.

Even though the Order of Fury is mostly comprised of women in Estalia and Tilea, in the Empire it is almost exclusively male. The order is gaining in popularity, and already has four temples in Reikland. A charismatic high priest of the order, Janos Enescu, has recently arrived in Delberz. The Stirlander survived some of the worst conflicts of the recent Chaos incursion. He is now gathering support to found a temple to Fury in the city, which is finding a great deal of resistance from local Ulricans.

Temples

The fortified Myrmidian Temples are normally built according to the architectural principles of Estalia and Tilea, both of which are strongly influenced by the extensive Elven ruins in those nations. Thus, spired roofs atop slender, tapering towers are common, as are domed central halls. White marble is preferred, but local building materials, especially granite, are more common in the Empire. Most temples are decorated with large bas-reliefs of weapons and shields, which often form a backdrop to the training grounds that surround Myrmidian holy sites.

Within, it is common to find cramped, circular lecturing theatres for lessons in warcraft and strategy. These are normally dwarfed by an airy, seated hall, which has a lowered, central area where priests (commonly working in groups, promoting concepts of teamwork) lead services to their Goddess. Surrounding this central hall are statues of Myrmidia alongside her shieldmaidens, companions, and local heroes. Often, these statues bear archaic weapons from the south, and are often only dressed in a single scarf of silk about the waist, something many Empire people find scandalous. Above the central hall, many temples also maintain small, isolated shrines to the Goddess, where her devout can retreat to ponder difficult questions and pray to Myrmidia for inspiration.

Most Eagle temples also have a chapterhouse for the Order of the Righteous Spear (under whatever local name it has chosen) within its walls, making assaults upon Myrmidia's holy sites a daunting task indeed.

Personalities

The most important members of the Cult of Myrmidia are far from the concern of most Myrmidians in the Empire. Luminaries such as the immensely influential La Aguila Ultima Isabella Giovanna Luccelli, the head of the Order of the Eagle, or El Lider Glorioso Juan Federico, the high grand master of the Order of the Righteous Spear, are nothing more than complicated names with little local relevance. It is the leaders within the Empire's borders that matter most, the people that will make the day to day decisions that affect others' lives.

Lorenzo di Marco, The Eagle of the North

For most Myrmidians, the posting of Eagle of the North is seen as a banishment. Living amongst the brutish and superstitious northerners in their cold and depressing country is not something most Tileans would ask for. However, Lorenzo di Marco is not most Tileans—for he does not see banishment, he sees potential.

The current Eagle of the North is an insanely ambitious man. He plans an expansion of Myrmidian worship unlike anything seen before. He looks to the Empire and sees a troubled people who need new guidance. Sigmar has proven too weak to keep Chaos at bay, and his cult is rife with divisions. Ulric has proven to be too brutal, and is unacceptable to the increasingly urbane middle classes. Myrmidia, di Marco knows, is the perfect answer to the Empire's problems.

Of course, the Ulricans and Sigmarites are already moving against this threat, but di Marco is a tactician, and this is a campaign he has planned for a long time. As far as he is concerned, there is a new war brewing amongst the cults, and it is a war he does not intend to lose.

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Myrmidia add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Strike to Injure

Priest

- **No Order:** Command, Specialist Weapon Group (any three)
- **Order of the Blazing Sun:** Common Knowledge (Estalia *or* Tilea), Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (any one). *Sigmar's Heirs* has a Knight of the Blazing Sun career on page 124. When in this career, the Advanced Cult Careers skills and talents mentioned above *may not* be purchased, as they are already included.
- **Order of the Eagle:** Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Command, Specialist Weapon Group (any one)
- **Order of the Righteous Spear:** Common Knowledge (Estalia *or* Tilea), Specialist Weapon Group (any one), Warrior Born. *Terror in Talabheim* has a Knight of the Verdant Field career on page 20. When in this career, the Advanced Cult Careers skills and talents mentioned above *may* be purchased, as they are not already included
- **Order of Fury:** Command, Frenzy, Specialist Weapon Group (any one)
- **Order of True Insight:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Common Knowledge (Estalia *or* Tilea), Luck

— The Cult of Ranald —

Seat of Power: None (tentatively Marienburg)
Head of the Cult: None
Primary Orders: The Brotherhood, The Givers of Coin, The Crooked Fingers
Major Festivals: The Day of Folly, Pilgrimage of Fingers
Popular Holy Books: *The Riddles Ten*, *Midnight and the Black Cat*
Common Holy Symbols: A hand with crossed fingers, an "X," crow, cat

A deity of the common people, the fickle God of Luck and Good Fortune, the quintessential rogue, Ranald is all these things and more. His is a curious cult, for it lacks the trappings, the pomp and majesty, even the structure of other cults. His priests are thieves, tricksters, and gamblers, rather than the educated effete elite so favoured by others. His temples are the gaming halls, the brothels, the taverns, and other dens of iniquity, not the gilt structures of gold and marble. Indeed, Ranald and his priests are unlike any others—a fact that is both distressing and delightful.

Part of Ranald's curious nature stems from the fact that this God has a several different aspects. To most, he is known as the Night Prowler, God of Thieves and patron of thieves and rogues. Venerated by the criminal elements in the Old World, his symbols and sayings serve as the foundation for much of the secret language used by thieves.

Ranald is also the Deceiver, watching over, or rather inspiring, charlatans and tricksters. In this way, Ranald is something of a force of nature, the personification of irony but also illusion—hence Ranald's appeal to Grey Wizards. As well, Ranald is the patron of gaming, gambling, and more than anything, luck. It is in this form that Ranald is upheld by the Empire folk and to curry favour with the God, Old Worlders employ a dizzying array of superstitious sayings and gestures to ensure they retain or acquire the God's attention.

Of all the forms Ranald assumes, though, none is more brutally oppressed than his role as the Protector. The symbol of freedom from tyranny, liberation from despots, and the symbol of revolution, this aspect of Ranald is embraced by agitators, demagogues, and even a few politicians. In fact, Ranald in this role is a rallying force for the democratic movement that persists in the Empire's largest cities.

The Cult

The Cult of Ranald views the rest of the world as the ebb and flow of fortune, from good to bad and back again. Because there is no "typical" cultist of Ranald, there's little in the way to describe the workings of the cult itself.

> *"I'd rather give my tenth coin to Ranald than risk losing the remaining nine."*
>
> —Eckhardt Reinschol, Wool Merchant from Grafenrich

Most trust only their own wits and abilities, taking what they can and praying to Ranald to keep them one step away from danger. Cultists laugh at limitations and boundaries placed upon them, and often break laws and enter into forbidden areas just for the sake of doing so, slipping back into the shadows and teeming, anonymous masses before getting caught.

The Cult of Ranald is viewed with suspicion by both the other cults and the ruling classes, even though he is still paid lip service by them all. Other cults afford the priests of this cult little respect, though this typically suits the followers of Ranald just fine, as they care little about the air of pomp put on by most other groups. Indeed, one of the tenants of the cult is to shine the light of hypocrisy on those with inflated egos or heightened status. Because of this, priests of Ranald stay out of sight, performing their works in back alleys, secret meeting places, and other dens of low character.

Although the cult has a deserved reputation as being filled with gamblers, thieves, and con artists, just as many priests are simple hedonists who grab life by the reins. Those that partake in illegal endeavours always give a healthy portion of their winnings back to the cult or, in some cases, to those in need. The cult abhors violence, seeing it as a "failure." Their best "crimes" are those that go undiscovered until months after they have done the deed. Those who rely on violence and cruelty find a better patron in Khaine, or other, darker Gods, than the free spirit that is Ranald.

Cultists of Ranald often have personalities that mimic the four main aspects of Ranald. Those who follow the Night Prowler are thieves and larcenists, who perform crimes just as much for the thrill of performing the perfect caper as they do for the loot. Those who follow Ranald the Deceiver are smooth con artists, who move easily through all strata of society, never laying down roots and constantly on the prowl for new targets to fleece through the use of clever thought and silver-tongued lies. Cultists of Ranald the Gamester are consummate gamblers and risk takers, spending their days playing games of chance and concocting schemes to gain more money so they can continue their passion. To them, money is not the ends, but the means, to happiness. Lastly, there are the cultists who believe in Ranald the Protector and take up the mantle as the guardian for those who cannot defend themselves. They are infamous for stealing from the well-to-do in order to assist the poor, exposing the hypocrisy and excesses of the powerful, and standing up for the rights of the common citizen from thuggery, senseless persecution, and exploitation. Most other cults consider members of this "sect" the worst of the lot, as they often attempt to disrupt the status quo in the name of freedom and justice, regardless of the cost to the rest of society.

Strictures

- One coin in ten belongs to Ranald.
- Ranald frowns upon unnecessary violence.
- Live by wits, not by your sword.
- A true devotee of Ranald uses the dagger and stiletto; only amateurs and the slow-witted need armour and long sword.
- It's better to live free and die, rather than suffer under oppression.
- There is no honour among thieves, yet trust in your brothers and sisters.

However, by their very nature, cultists of Ranald are highly individualistic, and it can be difficult to describe what makes a person become one in the first place. Most are experts at disguise and deception, keeping their true nature hidden from the rest of the world. The Cult of Ranald is ruthlessly persecuted in other parts of the Old World. Bretonnia in particular is notorious for its heavy-handed punishments for finding cultists merely travelling through their land.

Beliefs

Cultists of Ranald believe in individuality, freedom from oppression, and the rise and fall of fortune and luck. They adhere to the belief that whilst Ranald grants his blessing on those that call often enough, he's more inclined to help those that help themselves. Cultists attempt to balance practicality with an irreverent attitude, knowing that what's here today could disappear tomorrow—and vice versa. The most altruistic strive to better the lives of other, usually through the wealth and power of other, wealthier individuals.

Although theft, cheating, lying, and skulduggery are all acceptable in the eyes of Ranald, violence, and especially murder, should be avoided at all costs. A common thug that slits the throat and steals the purse of a wealthy merchant while invoking Ranald's name is more likely to lose his favour than most.

Cultists accept the fact that Ranald is known by many names and titles, and that he can appear in any guise.

Initiation

Although the cult itself is remarkably free of restrictions, becoming a priest of Ranald is much harder than one would think. Often, potential candidates have no real desire to become a cultist at all, but are approached by other priests after being observed from afar for at least several months. Individuals that show great zeal in becoming an initiate are often viewed with suspicion, as the cult has been infiltrated several times in the past by both other cultists and law-enforcement officials attempting to bring the cult down.

If a priest notices a potential initiate, he is approached under some sort of guise that has nothing to do with the cult. The priest offers his patronage and friendship, occasionally asking for "some help on little matters," which test the skill and mettle of the candidate in matters of lying, theft, charm, and stealth. If the candidate shows the proper attitude, skill, and cool under pressure, he is then informed of the patron's intentions. If he's interested, then formal instruction begins. If he's not, then the priest quietly slips away, never to return, although this "failure" is reported to other local priests so the same attempt isn't made twice.

The final initiation into the priesthood typically involves a daring theft, con, or other brazen, illegal act. Often, the initiate is trained and prepared for one sort of mission, but finds himself in a completely different set of events—success depends on how well he deals with this change of plans. If the initiate handles the altered mission successfully without getting caught (or dying) in the process, he's made into a full Priest, often culminating in an enormous party.

Cultists

Cultists of Ranald can be found in every strata of society, from the most powerful of nobles to the lowliest of gutter trash. However, most cultists are noted for rising above their original station in life, through sheer willpower, talent, and of course, luck.

Cultists of Ranald almost always wear a necklace with an "X" or a hand with crossed fingers. The "X" symbol is the most common,

and in fact, wildly popular, worn by untold numbers of citizens. These necklaces are so prevalent that they rarely cause suspicion, though everyone is sure to keep them hidden if a witch hunter or priest of another faith is about. It is widely believed that the symbols of Ranald lose their potency if displayed openly. The boldest (or most foolish) of cultists even get tattoos of these symbols on their body, though most have them done in such a way that only the initiated and savvy can understand them for what they truly are.

Structure

Of all the cults recognised in the Old World, the Cult of Ranald is the loosest and least organised. It's comprised mostly of individuals that give him honour and ask for favours in return, rather than a unified congregation of worshippers. Because of this, it's difficult to find much in the way of a single creed for cultists, other than "do what you want," with the unspoken addendum of "don't get caught in the process." The cult has no real structure and the majority of priests work independently, leading their own calling in life. This, of course, makes true representation at the Grand Conclave (see page 26) both difficult and infuriating for the other cults, who grow exasperated by the ever-changing rotation of high priests and agendas of the cult.

When cultists of Ranald band together, they usually do so in small cells of ten or less people, and keep their business secret. These groups are typically short-lived and self-serving, in the same way that a traditional group of expert criminals might band together for a single act of crime before dispersing to the winds with their riches and stories (of course, most cultists *are* expert criminals).

Other cells have a distinctly anarchic outlook and spend their time plotting ways to overthrow various organisations. They send out agitators among the general populace, sabotage infrastructure, and dig up incriminating evidence to blackmail and smear tyrannical rulers. These cells establish relations with other cells through carefully guarded connections. Typically a cell member is aware of a single member of another cell, but no-one else, in order to keep potential leaks and turncoats from disrupting the entire group.

For the most part, however, the priests of Ranald are loners by nature, whose deeds and tales are spread by word of mouth in the form of tall-tales, folk songs, and bawdy jokes. Priests of Ranald are typically content to stay within a given area, but roam their territory with remarkable fluidity, from wretched slums to the gilt-homes of the wealthy.

Although the cult has few temples and fewer recognised clergy, the cultists of Ranald still present themselves during the Conclave, often reminding the other, disapproving cults that they both exist and have an equal voice. The representatives that show up to these events are passionate, eloquent, and do their best to soothe the worries of the other cults, and explaining away the worst rumours and accusations as nothing more than intolerance and misunderstanding.

Sects

Most cultists of Ranald follow their own unique collection of beliefs, and as such, there are no main sects or orders that give him homage. If two or more cultists band together, it's usually for a very specific reason, parting ways when the task is complete. More so than the other Gods, cultists of Ranald find camaraderie in those who follow the primary aspects of Ranald.

The first, and easily the largest, is composed of merchants, hagglers, and those that make their living dealing with money. Known simply as "The Brotherhood," this sect forms something akin to a guild of businessmen, who meet together to sort out their differences, seek mutual opportunities, and plot to increase their wealth. Most are honest merchants who call upon Ranald for bounty and improved commerce, although there is a seedier lesser order that exists (see later in this section). The Brotherhood teaches the tenets of cooperation and competition—help your brother when he needs it—but through competition, the best elements rise to the top.

The second sect is informally known as the Givers of Coin. It is composed of altruistic, freedom-loving individuals with a strong sense of righting wrongs. They spend their time depriving the wealthy of their money to give to those that are lacking. Whilst the wealthy burghers and noble classes consider these cultists little more than brigands, they are beloved by the common folk. These cultists tend to live short lives, as the needs and plights of the downtrodden weigh heavier and heavier on their hearts, resorting in bolder actions that often lead to imprisonment or death. Most cultists of this sect desire to see the noble classes overthrown, replaced by collectives of people that treat each other with equality. The bulk of the Givers of Coin know this goal is mostly a dream, although it does create a few overly zealous individuals bent on the destruction of the very institutions that make up the Empire.

The last, and surprisingly least common, are the true thieves, cutpurses, and conmen that view Ranald almost exclusively as the God of Thieves and Liars. Calling themselves the Crooked Fingers, they focus on taking what they want, when they want. Their code of honour is similar to those of other thieves—everyone gets a portion from jobs, you don't rat out your partners, and, in the end, it's every man for himself.

Lesser Orders

Because the cult lacks any real structure, it doesn't have any lesser orders of note. Groups that band together for a short period of time rarely stick together to form a cohesive order, although history is replete with the names of "crews" who pulled of particularly impressive, almost suicidal acts of bravery and thievery.

Temples

Unlike the other sanctioned cults of the Empire, Ranald has no temples dedicated to him—at least, to the untrained eye. Cultists almost never erect buildings in his name, but instead hide his symbols, altars, and shrines out in the open. In a sense, every place of gambling is considered a shrine to Ranald, and his symbols can be found carved in walls, doors, and elsewhere, though always in a subtle, secret manner. Ironically, the larger the gambling house, racetrack, or gladiatorial pit, the harder it is to find these

Common View

"Everyone knows that those high and mighty folk that call Ranald a thief, an agitator, and a liar in person pray to him when the going gets rough."

—Fat Otto, Stirlander Farmer

"The hunter calls to Taal to bring game into his sights. The sailor asks Manann to keep the storm away from his ship. Soldiers plead to Sigmar to keep them alive on the battlefield. This is all just luck, which means that Ranald is the one that ultimately answers these prayers."

—Gustav Adelbrecht, Priest of Ranald

"The thieves, liars, and cutpurses of our land pay homage to Ranald in hopes that he'll keep them out of chains. Let them believe in his mercy, while I administer a hot brand to their temples for their crimes."

—Sigfried Ulmar, Roving Judge

"You'll be hearing the rattle of Ranald's dice" —Folk term of Reikland meaning "engaging in a risky endeavour"

"The surviving brigands that robbed the wagon train of foodstuffs on the road to Talabheim claimed to be doing so in Ranald's name. A local priest of that cult was made aware of the matter and apologised to the local sheriff who proved sympathetic to his cause. The crime is now entangled in the courts here, my lord, with no definitive outcome."

—Letter to Elector Count von Raukov of Ostland

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Ranald add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

All Orders: Sleight of Hand

Priest

No Orders: Concealment, Luck, Silent Move
The Brotherhood: Dealmaker, Evaluate, Haggle, Secret Language (Cult Tongue)
The Givers of Coin: Charm, Etiquette, Pick Lock, Streetwise
Crooked Fingers: Gamble, Intimidate, Shadowing, Strike to Stun

signs—Ranald does not like to advertise. It's common for a gambler who wins big to leave a small portion of his windfall on one of these semi-hidden altars. Otherwise, small shrines erected in the slums and shanties of large cities, or the occasional crossroad in the wilderness, are the only "permanent" places of worship for Ranald. These shrines are designed to be small and easily dismantled, so as to keep them hidden when the authorities come too close for comfort. Often, when a shrine is "discovered," it is taken down by the locals with mock disgust, only to be rebuilt once the coast is clear.

Personalities

The Cult of Ranald is odd in that most of its cultists do little to draw attention to their actions. Even the highest-ranking members of the cult live dual lives, first as a normal member of society and second as a cultist of Ranald, stealing, gambling, or lying as they see fit. The most notable priests of Ranald are truly famous (or infamous depending on your point of view) personalities whose daring deeds and extraordinary luck shine, especially if their exploits involve the embarrassment of the rich and powerful.

Hans von Kleptor

The most prominent member of the cult is a powerful priest named Hans von Kleptor. Von Kleptor began his career as a wandering priest of Ranald. At first, he was little more than a petty criminal, until he had a vision of Ranald, who told him to spread the word about his nobler deeds. He made his way to Marienburg, and worked to expand the size and grandeur of the city's main temple to Ranald, the Gilt House. Handsome, charismatic, and charming to the extreme, many of Ranald's cultists believe he is the mortal son of Ranald himself. He pledges to increase the status of the cult within the Empire, pulling it out of the shadows into the light. However, his proclamations of freedom from tyranny and release from the power of nobles have drawn the wrath of those in power.

White Raven

Another prominent cultist is an enigmatic figure known as White Raven. Known to the richest burghers and nobles as a brazen thief, she has pulled off some of the most daring highway robberies in recorded history, and is known as a saviour and generous patroness to the lower classes. White Raven wears a feathered mask that hides her features, and is known to be a crack shot with a pistol. Rumours about her true identity run the gamut, with the leading thought that she is the youngest daughter of one of the prominent noble houses in Middenheim. White Raven typically drops off the loot from her crimes at the doors of orphanages, backwater shrines, and the homes of war victims in and around the city of Altdorf, giving some idea of her sphere of influence.

Count Jäger

A priest of Ranald known as Count Jäger roams both the slums and places of high society of the grand city of Altdorf. Although elderly, and clearly insane, there are those that feel he is the living incarnation of Ranald himself, wandering the Empire on a constant search for wine, women, and song. Although he calls himself a count, it is unknown, and doubted, whether he actually has claims to noble lineage. Cultists of Ranald consider themselves extremely lucky to run into the count, as he seems to bring with him inordinate amounts of good luck.

— The Cult of Shallya —

Seat of Power: Couronne, in Bretonnia
Head of the Cult: The Most Holy Matriarch Lisegund (High Priestess of Couronne), High Priestess Anja Gustavson (High Priestess of Altdorf, Head of the Cult in the Empire)
Primary Orders: Order of the Bleeding Heart
Major Festivals: None. Shallya acts whenever there is need, and torment does not respect the calendar
Popular Holy Books: *The Book of Sufferings*, *The Testament of Pergunda*
Common Holy Symbols: A dove; a heart with a drop of blood

Shallya, the Goddess of Healing, Mercy, and Childbirth, is possibly the most loved deity in the Old World. Many Old Worlders enter it at a temple of Shallya, or at least attended by one of the priestesses, and almost all need the services of the priestesses at some point in their lives. The refusal of the cult to become involved in politics has made it a popular target of charity from wealthy nobles and merchants, and the success of the priestesses in channelling that wealth to the needy is notable. Most temples of Shallya are simply decorated, with the money received going to the relief of pain, and those temples are everywhere, from the smallest village to the largest city.

Shallya is said to be the daughter of Verena and Morr, tempering both death and justice with mercy. She feels the suffering of every living thing, and as a result is constantly in tears. Some legends say that her tears can even move her father, and that, as a result, he refuses to see her; he knows the danger inherent in yielding to pleas to return the dead. Other legends say that her father forbade Shallya from helping more than one person in a moment, lest no one die.

Individual temples of Shallya are exceptionally well organised, with clear responsibilities for all residents, and defined chains of authority. This enables them to respond to crises, and to deal with the dozens, if not hundreds, of supplicants who come every day. The cult as a whole, however, does not have policies or plans of action. Shallya is concerned with relieving the individual distresses of the people, not with grand schemes.

The Cult

> *"Don't cross the Shallyans. Sure, she won't hurt you; she's the Bleeding Heart. But you don't want her parents mad at you."*
>
> —Addelise Burgenkampf, Outlaw Chief

Shallya's primary concern is mercy: the relief of pain. Historically, the cult has focused on two main forms of mercy, healing and midwifery, because these are the most common, and the most blameless. Everyone is born, and the mother's agony at that time is suffering in a noble cause. Similarly, injury and sickness are rarely the victim's fault. A priestess who concentrates on these problems can easily fill her time with service to the Goddess, without offending anyone's sensibilities.

However, Shallya is concerned with relieving *all* pain, even that for which the victim can be blamed. Aid for the poor, whether food distribution, temporary accommodation, or even work in the temple itself, is a common feature of Shallyan temples. Some priestesses work with the insane, and others make a point of softening the lot of those in prison. Rulers tend to have their suspicions of such priestesses, but they argue that the followers of Shallya must soften the blows of both her parents.

> *"She has Shallya's hands"*
> *—She's a very kind person*

The good works of the Shallyans are not unlimited, however. The cult is concerned with relieving suffering, not with providing opportunities for growth and development, or for making an average life better. While few Shallyans would be upset if they made someone happy, that is not their goal; they seek rather to eliminate misery. Thus, Shallyans help those who are actively enduring torment, not those who are simply in need of help to improve their lot.

Shallyans tend not to think about the big picture. There is no way that they could relieve the agony of everyone in the world, and thinking about those they could not help merely makes it hard to go on. Most Shallyans relieve the misery they see, rather than looking for people who may be suffering more. They focus on solving the immediate problem, not on doing the greatest good for the greatest number.

Beliefs

The core belief of all Shallyans is that they should work to relieve the suffering of others. Casual adherents give more to charity than most, and are more likely to help somebody who has fallen in the street, but for initiates and priests this calling comes to dominate their whole lives.

There are two main groups within the priesthood: those who provide care directly, and those who organise other people to make sure that care is provided. The first group has an almost completely positive image. It is not uncommon for patients to fall in love with their nurses, a condition known as "dove fancying," and normally Shallyans cite the sacred priest-patient relationship as a reason to do nothing. Many Shallyans do, however, find their husbands this way. Old Shallyans are often generous with their advice, as well as their help, while those of middle years are typically very motherly. The younger ones have a popular mythology all of their own.

These young, pretty Shallyans are popular characters in ribald jokes and scurrilous chapbooks. The cult generally tolerates this, because the priestess is always portrayed positively, but all Shallyans are aware of, and quick to spot, a certain type of patient. Such men are never turned away, but find themselves treated by the oldest Shallyan available. A few *very* canny adventurers have noticed this also gets you the most experienced Shallyan available, and fake it.

The Shallyans who organise care have a more ambiguous reputation. Everyone respects them, but a lot of people prefer to stay out of their way, lest they be roped in to looking after the sick. Some are happy bustling types, who just sweep people (including their children, neighbours, and random passers-by) up into the process of helping the sick and helpless. Others are sterner, with a firm idea of discipline and a general disapproval of people wasting their time enjoying themselves when they should be getting on with work. The young, pretty, stern disciplinarian Shallyan seems to be particularly popular with the Empire's nobility; at any rate, they are often summoned for personal attendance and receive large gifts. A few have even married into the lower ranks.

Initiation

Most priestesses of Shallya are orphans, raised in a temple and destined for the priesthood almost from birth. Characters who wish to become initiates of Shallya must first demonstrate their continuing devotion to the Goddess. A single spectacular act of selfless mercy is almost never enough; rather, the character must pour much of her energy into helping others over a substantial period of time, typically at least a year, although temple wards spend their childhood at this stage. Different temples favour different kinds of service.

Initiates of Shallya are expected to spend all their time working with those in need, and to show, at least, a lack of concern for their own comfort. Those who do so may become priests, and continuing selfless work results in promotion within the temple.

Most Shallyans spend some time travelling the Old World early in their careers, relieving distress as they find it. Almost all temples

Strictures

- Avoid killing. (All followers of Shallya take this stricture extremely seriously.)
- Never refuse healing to a supplicant genuinely in need.
- Never halt a soul when it is time for it to depart.
- Go about your life unarmed. A stout walking staff is all you'll ever need.
- Abhor the Fly Lord in all his forms.
- Do not waste energy on your own pleasure.

encourage this, both because it grants a wider understanding of the world, and because travelling is generally a hardship and a sacrifice, and thus appropriate to followers of the Goddess. Some Shallyans also spend time at a temple in a particularly dangerous location; this is as respected as travel. A few priests spend their whole careers travelling, never becoming part of a temple, and while these individuals are revered, this is not considered normal.

Cultists

Initiates of Shallya normally wear simple long white robes, a style copied by the more devout lay members. The materials are normally hard-wearing and safe to wash by boiling, as the robes of Shallyan devotees often become spattered with deeply unpleasant substances. This means that they are often quite expensive (Good craftsmanship), but do not look it, a combination that suits the cult well.

Priests wear white robes, often with a hood, with a heart embroidered over the left breast. On daily robes, this is embroidered in yellow, but most priests also have ceremonial robes, made of expensive fabric and with the heart embroidered in gold (Best quality). Otherwise, Shallyans wear little in the way of ornamentation.

There are some regional variations. The most notable are in Bretonnia, where sumptuary laws mean that lay members and initiates cannot wear white, and so they wear yellow instead. Even noble lay members wear yellow, as a sign of humility. As foreign pilgrims are not, strictly speaking, peasants, they are not bound by the laws, but due to erratic awareness of this fact on the part of the nobility most pilgrims wear yellow until they get to the temple, where they change into white. All priests of Shallya in that country have an exemption allowing them to wear their vestments, but no other white cloth.

Priests of Shallya sell most valuable gifts to raise money for those in need, but do not sell gifts of vestments. Thus, some priests have extremely expensive vestments, gifts from the grateful or generous. Even such expensive gifts must be simple in appearance, or else they do not count as vestments; the standards for this vary from one temple to another.

Structure

The Cult of Shallya has a nominally feudal structure, with each shrine or temple owing tribute to a larger, local temple, and these large temples owing tribute to the chief temple of the nation. All the national temples owe fealty to the temple in Couronne, and all the chief priests and priestesses meet once every six years as the governing body of the cult.

The Matriarch in Couronne has authority over all Shallyans, in particular the authority to cast them out of the faith. This power is only used when a follower turns to the Dark Gods, as mercy is appropriate for anyone else.

Below the Matriarch, the chains of tribute are largely nominal, and do not carry much sense of power. Nevertheless, a number of

Shallyan Priests?

The overwhelming majority of Shallyan priests are actually priestesses; most Old Worlders would be reluctant to believe a man could actually be a priest of the Goddess. Nevertheless, the Goddess does accept men; they are relatively well represented among the wandering priests.

Young, male priests of Shallya almost always wander, as the heads of temples are generally reluctant to put handsome young men into environments where they are greatly outnumbered by impressionable young women. The wanderers are encouraged to stay for a while, and then move on, without breaking any hearts. Cult legends tell of priests who exploited their appeal to the priestesses, and were devoured by Slaanesh as punishment. (Unauthorised versions of these legends are quite explicit about the details of both the exploitation and the devouring, and are popular forbidden books.) As priests become old and unattractive, they often do take up residence in a temple.

temples do have particularly good reputations, and since the most promising priests spend time there, this is self-perpetuating. The temple in Altdorf is a good example of this; the high priestess there is traditionally chosen by the high priests of all Shallyan temples in the Empire, and she has a great deal of moral authority. Altdorf is also regarded as a very testing position for initiates or priests with potential; there are many who need their help, but so many temptations to do otherwise.

Shallyans, on the whole, are uncomfortable with wealth or valuable treasures, but their unstinting help to all means they receive many gifts. Most of these are used to help others, or sold to that end, but not all. The priests feel they cannot sell holy images of Shallya, or similar sacred goods. By tradition, then, such wealth is passed up the organisational hierarchy, to the temple to which the receiving temple owes tribute. If that temple is in an urban area, it keeps most of the goods, passing the finest on to the chief temple of the nation. The wealth on display in these places often shocks visitors, who assume that they are corrupt, at least compared to the austere rural shrines. As a result, the clergy of those temples have a strong tendency to asceticism.

Individual temples are very strictly organised, with the high priestess in absolute, but merciful, control. All temples and shrines, no matter how small, try to serve all needs, but most specialise to some extent. In larger temples, the different functions are administratively separate, with their own heads, reporting to the high priest, and their own staff.

The hospital is probably the most characteristic function, treating both injuries and disease. Areas for childbirth are always kept separate from, but close to, the hospital, as complications in childbirth often require medical attention. Madhouses are only found in temples large enough to have a separate area, or in shrines that specialise in confining and caring for the insane.

Many Shallyan temples have an orphanage, raising children, mainly girls, to be servants of the cult. Even among the temple wards, not all show the necessary aptitude for serving the Weeping Maiden, and some of these are married off to wealthy merchants, in return for substantial donations. Shallyan orphans have a reputation for making very obedient, solicitous wives, and devoted mothers.

Temples may also provide doles of food, and occasionally clothing, to the poor. Very few do this at the temple itself; the poor with the energy to come to the temple are not the ones most in need of food. Instead, initiates and low-ranking priests are sent out to deliver bread. The priests look favourably on large, intimidating warriors who go along "to help carry the food."

Sects

There are no formal sects within the Order of the Bleeding Heart, and no outright disagreements on doctrine. Different followers do place differing emphases on the various aspects of the Shallyan faith, and this does give rise to vigorous disputes within the temples. However, these disputes are generally private; the cult presents a remarkably united front.

Asceticism

The approach to asceticism is perhaps the locus of most variation in the cult. This revolves around the question of how far you should go in serving the Goddess.

First, is it wrong for a Shallyan to enjoy things that come to her with no effort? If a noble offers her a glass of fine wine, is it wrong to accept? Should she sit in a comfortable chair if one is offered? Most Shallyans think this is obviously acceptable; it does not interfere with their work, and they cannot use the offered luxuries

Common View

"I think his leg's broken! Quick, get a Shallyan!"

—Ulricslieb Martinson, Middenheim Labourer

"As I ate your bread as a child, may you eat my bread now."

—Dietrich Ragnar, Merchant of Marienburg, giving a cart of bread to the temple of Shallya that fed him when he was a poor child. (Every day, just as the market opens, so that everyone can see and hear.)

"You" PUNCH "do not" KICK "steal from" STAMP "the temples of Shallya."

—A Talabheim thief, Explaining Professional Ethics to a Colleague

"They're just sneaky, manipulative politicians who steal business from honest folk. Someone should expose them for the frauds they are."

—Master Augustus Limmerskind, Altdorf Doctor

to help the poor. A radical minority of Shallyans believe it is wrong for a Shallyan to enjoy her work. She should serve the suffering out of duty, not because she gets satisfaction from helping people. A slightly smaller minority believe it is wrong for anyone to enjoy themselves; there should be no happiness in a world so full of misery. While a minority, this group is not tiny, and its members seem to be attracted to running the temple orphanages.

"She has Shallya's eyes" —She only sees the pain and suffering in life

The more general debate sees more disagreements, and these disagreements do not fall into easily defined camps; priests pick and mix from among the possible answers. The fundamental question is how much of a priest's time and resources should go on serving the Goddess. Radicals insist that a priest should spend every waking moment in a hospital or tending to the sick elsewhere, and should minimise the amount of time she spends asleep. Most Shallyans accept that it is bad policy to try to work all the time, as it leads to mistakes. Most accept that quiet prayer is an acceptable break, and a substantial minority believe that any refined pleasure (those not involving violence or large quantities of alcohol, primarily) is permissible. A few think that anything that does not harm others or impede a Shallyan's work is fine for relaxation. Of course, a lot of Shallyans do over-indulge in alcohol, at least in part to blot out the horrors they have seen, but hardly anyone in the cult thinks that such behaviour is right.

Shallyans with families face a deeper dilemma. Shallyan orthodoxy is that Shallyan parents should not privilege their children in any way; those who hold to this place their children in the temple orphanages, to be raised as any other foundling. Most Shallyans with children bend orthodoxy, but they have a reputation for being far less indulgent to their children than to just about anyone else.

Targeted Aid

Another debate is over the extent to which Shallyans should choose whom to help. A significant minority argue they should not choose at all, simply helping anyone who comes before them in pain. They believe the Goddess herself guides them to the right people. Most Shallyans, although not much more than half, believe it is acceptable to spend a short period of time assessing the needs of the people before you before deciding whom to help first. A fairly small minority believe that they should spend some time finding the people to help, help them, and then move on to another group.

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Shallya add the following skills and talents to their careers.

Initiate

Heal

Priest

Resistance to Disease, Trade (Apothecary), Trade (Herbalist)

No Shallyan, even in the last group, would ignore an injured person if he was the only person in sight, however.

A tiny minority of Shallyans believe they should try to change the structure of society. This group is close to being heretical, since most Shallyans think they waste too much time that could be spent helping people.

The Fly Lord

All Shallyans agree the Fly Lord is the foulest blot of all, and they would rejoice were it to be destroyed. Opinions over what to do about servants of the Dark God vary, however. A small minority believe even they deserve mercy, arguing they suffer at least as much as their victims. An equally small minority believe in seeking out and destroying such cults; these followers drift into more martial cults, particularly that of Myrmidia.

The mainstream debates the balance between simply treating the victims of the plagues, and trying to stop them at their source. Most Shallyans believe in just treating victims, until the Plague God visits their area. Then, they believe the plague should be stopped at the source, but are too busy treating victims to act to that end.

Lesser Orders

The Cult of Shallya has no formal lesser orders, just as it has no formal sects. However, the natural tendency to specialise means there are a number of recognised groups within the cult. The most notable are the healers and the midwives, but these groups are too large to have much of a sense of collective identity; they just feel like "typical Shallyans," even to themselves.

The priestesses who treat the insane do feel a sense of kinship, and eagerly take advantage of chances to meet and talk with someone who, while sane, understands life with lunatics. However, such chances are few and far between.

The wandering priests, however, have the opportunity to meet, and a common lifestyle that sets them apart from the main body of the cult. In recent years, some of these priests have even started talking about asking the Matriarch to recognise them as a formal order of the cult. The main reason that this has not got beyond talking is that few wandering priests see that it would make any difference.

Temples

Shallyan temples are built around a courtyard, with the main temple hall on one side, chapels on the other, and the infirmary at one end. In some cases, the other end of the courtyard is closed by accommodation for the priests. Large temples may have multiple courtyards, in which case the main temple hall is as close to the centre as possible.

Shallyans prefer white stone, and the interiors are normally decorated in white and gold, or yellow. Stone is an expensive building material, but most Shallyans avoid wood, enabling the structure to survive a fire and be able to provide succour in its aftermath. A fountain in the courtyard, representing the tears of Shallya, is the only common decoration. In some temples, the

fountain actually takes the form of a white marble maiden, with the water springing from her eyes.

Personalities

One of the cult's few true miracle-workers, Mother Elsbeth of Heiligerberg, has recently died, and Anja Gustavson, the high priestess of the Empire, is old and expected to die soon. Matriarch Lisegund, although more active, is also elderly.

Matriarch Lisegund

The Matriarch is highly respected for her personal work relieving the poor, and healing those afflicted by diseases causing weeping sores. Indeed, she spends so much time working with the sick that she has almost no time to administer the cult. Fortunately, this is not a major problem, as most temples run themselves perfectly well.

Sieglind Thorrison

Siegling is a wandering priestess active mostly within the Empire, although she has spent some time in the Border Princes and has made a pilgrimage to Couronne. She is renowned for her courage, and for surviving situations that should have been the death of her. She believes the Goddess guides her to people who need her help, so she always stops to aid those in need. She is also part of the small group who believe it is acceptable to take advantage of luxuries offered to you on the spot. She is so well respected that she can even defend that position in public without anyone casting aspersions on her personal piety.

— The Cult of Sigmar —

Seat of Power: Altdorf
Head of the Cult: Grand Theogonist Volkmar the Grim
Primary Orders: Order of the Anvil, Order of the Cleansing Flame, Order of the Silver Hammer, Order of the Torch
Major Festival: Sigmarday (28th Sigmar-Tide)
Popular Holy Books: *The Book of Sigmar*, *Deus Sigmar*, *The Geistbuch*
Common Holy Symbols: Ghal Maraz (Sigmar's Warhammer), the twin-tailed comet, a Griffon

Over 2,500 years ago, Sigmar Heldenhammer, whose birth had been heralded by the passing of a twin-tailed comet, was crowned Emperor in Altdorf (then known as Reikdorf), by the high priest of Ulric. He bore the magical warhammer Ghal Maraz by his side, a gift from the Dwarfs for saving King Kurgan of Karaz-a-Karak's life, and led his people for many decades of prosperity.

On his fiftieth year as emperor, Sigmar laid down his crown and left Reikdorf. History has done a poor job recording why he left, but legends claim he was spotted heading east towards the Worlds Edge Mountains, with heavy furs about his broad shoulders and his still-blond hair hanging in heavy braids. Other legends claim he walked with a great, grey wolf to his left, and a giant, black-tusked boar to his right, his face a mask of determination. Whatever the truth, the greatest man the Empire would ever know had gone.

A little over twenty years after Sigmar's departure, his people had already elevated Johann Helstrum—a wild-eyed friar who claimed Sigmar was crowned a God by Ulric himself—as Sigmar's first high priest. Soon, his fledgling cult—one that preached unity, and expected the people to unquestioningly obey the Emperor and his appointed Elector Counts—formed into a dominant religion fully supported by the state.

Now, the Cult of Sigmar dominates the Empire. It has temples and shrines in even the smallest of settlements, and countless millions now call upon Sigmar's name to guard their souls from corruption. As part of their duties to defend the Empire Sigmar created, priests often rally the people during times of trouble, and are thus often perceived to be worshipping a God of War by outsiders, although this is not strictly true.

The Cult

In the Empire, the Cult of Sigmar is well recognised. All levels of society gather in local temples each Holiday for the Festag Throng, where priests of the Order of the Torch preach unity from their pulpits and recite holy words from their lecterns. Sigmarite temples often act as a focus for local communities, with priests arranging seasonal rituals, advising folk, forming choirs, and organising locals into bands of militiaman to better defend the Empire. Temples with no local templars also train the cream of the youth to act as Hammer Bearers, black-robed men who guard the temple's holiest artefacts, and carry them during special parades and Sigmarday festivals. In some larger temples, the Hammer Bearers are greatly feared, elite warriors, who bear Great Swords upon their backs, scars upon their faces, and escort the priests wherever they may go.

In comparison to the priests of the Order of the Torch, who guard the minds of the Empire folk, the Order of the Silver Hammer wanders the Empire, guarding the borders by smiting threats and advising the authorities. Its members also help at temples when they pass, and can often be found talking to unsure initiates, training Hammer Bearers, or preaching at the Throng. The grim-faced warrior priests are well loved by the people, for they keep the Empire safe with their mighty warhammers and dauntless courage, bringing the holy Word of Sigmar to the few communities that have no temples.

The monastic Order of the Anvil guards the Word of Sigmar, which is the foundation-stone of all Sigmarite law. When there

Strictures

- Obey your orders.
- Aid Dwarf-folk.
- Work to promote the unity of the Empire, even at the cost of individual liberty.
- Bear true allegiance to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor.
- Root out and destroy Greenskins, the servants of Chaos, and those who use corrupt magic, wherever they may hide.

is a dispute within the cult, it is to these dour Sigmarite monks that the other orders turn, for they understand the minutiae of all the cult practises. Although the order's monks rarely leave their isolated monasteries, they do, sometimes, tour the Empire, acting as travelling judges, searching for lost tomes of Sigmarite lore, or acting upon the orders of their superiors.

The last of the major orders, the feared Order of the Flame, is not well known by the populace at large. It guards the Empire from corruption, charged to seek out and destroy the dark seeds of Chaos wherever they may lie. The flame-marked medallions worn by the order's inquisitor priests grant them access to all Sigmarite temples, monasteries, and chapterhouses in the Empire, and local cultists are expected to grant them any "reasonable" request. Although most Empire citizens have never heard of the order, without its protection, the Empire may have fallen to the Dark Powers centuries ago.

Alongside these, the four most-influential orders, are countless smaller orders, all filled with devout men and women ready to step forward and defend the Empire, no matter what the cost for doing so may be.

Beliefs

Like most Empire folk, Sigmarites are insular, superstitious, and suspicious, but they view this as a sensible reaction to the corrupt world in which they live. Their self-appointed duty as guardians of the Empire and its people has brought them into contact with all manner of evil, which they have dutifully recorded in a sealed library found deep within the cult's high temple. Thus, much like the Dwarfs, a race they revere as Sigmar's strongest allies, Sigmarites never forget, and fully trust none. This, they claim, is a paranoia not born of fear or ignorance, but of experience.

Mental fortitude and defensive tactics are of paramount importance to Sigmarites, who view open assault or loose thinking as open gates for corruption and heresy. However, nothing is more important that defending the Empire Sigmar created, and they are willing to go to almost any length, even open, blind assault, to ensure this.

The cult also prizes strength and strong leadership, qualities they associate with Sigmar himself. They use these traits to promote the same strength amongst the folk of the Empire, and strike at the heart of heresy, the influence of the Dark Gods, wherever it may lie.

Initiation

Although every temple has its own traditions for initiating new members into the cult, the general process varies little. First, the novitiates (the Sigmarite term for initiates) is accepted into an order by a priest, an event that is often marked with ritual shaving. Next, they are taught the ways of Sigmar. Finally, when the training is completed, the novitiate is tested by a ranking member of the cult.

Most temples only accept novitiates when young; but, theoretically, anyone called to Sigmar, regardless of age, can join the cult. Those temples that practise ritual shaving have many different traditions, but hammer or comet-shaped tonsures are common.

Novitiates rarely have any free time between the daily prayers and degrading chores they perform. What little they do have is often spent in contemplation of sacred texts. Many temples have a master of novitiates who leads weekly lessons in history, theology, literacy and Dwarf lore, but it is also common to attach novitiates to a priest who acts as their "Father," and teaches them what they need to know using whatever, often brutal, methods he prefers.

Eventually, when their superiors deem the time is right, novitiates are tested. Common tests included perfectly reciting the *Twelve Prayers of Righteousness,* or singing the *Canticles of Sigmar* without error, followed by intensive questioning by ranking members of the cult. However, there is no standard, and tests can take many forms. Some temples in southern Averland demand novitiates kill a Greenskin and carve the "Litany of Great Deeds" into its

Dwarfen Names

The Dwarfs play a vital role in the legend of Sigmar. Most importantly, they gifted Sigmar with his mighty, magical warhammer, Ghal Maraz. To honour the Dwarfs, it is customary for the Grand Theogonist, and the arch lectors, to assume a Dwarfen name or epithet. The name chosen is believed to say a great deal about the character of he that chooses it. Both the current arch lectors changed their names (Kasmir XI and Thorgad IV), where the Grand Theogonist, Volkmar von Hindenstern, chose the epithet "Grim," which means harsh and unyielding in Khazalid.

chest. And one Stirlander flagellant order subjects all novitiates to the "Rite of the Three Brothers" after a three-day fast, which is considerably more painful than it sounds.

Cultists

No two cultists of Sigmar are the same. The varying orders, individual temples, and widely divergent, local traditions demand Sigmar's representatives wear a broad array of different ceremonial outfits and cultivate some truly bizarre hairstyles.

The Order of the Silver Hammer's warrior priests are almost always found wearing yellow-detailed black robes over protective leathers. Sacred breastplates—emblazoned with griffons, comets or crosses—and wide, high-necked gorgets are the preferred choices for armour, but cheaper chainmail is often worn in their stead. Hair is commonly shaved when a novitiate is elevated to the order, although some priests allow patches to grow back, where they carefully shave holy symbols or solemn liturgies.

The different monasteries of the Order of the Anvil vary in their required garb and hair styles. Simple grey or black habits are common, although brown is known in the east of the Empire, and green or orange are worn in some isolated monasteries of Talabecland and Reikland. Hair is usually shaved, with novitiates tonsured, but this again varies, with some monasteries demanding that hair grow wild, have stripes shaved through it, or be caught in hundreds of tight braids. Wide, high-necked collars are also common, mirroring the gorgets of the warrior priests.

The massive Order of the Torch is even more diverse. Black robes may be the standard, with brown and grey also common, but some temples wear white, orange, red or even purple robes, as dictated by local traditions and superstitions—although each variance requires, at some point, permission from the Grand Theogonist. High, wide collars are again common, although far from universal, as are shaved heads. The typical hammers, comets, griffons, holy seals and prayer parchments are usually displayed in one fashion or another, although some temples teach that such open displays of faith idolise the objects rather than glorifying Sigmar. Another common tradition is to wear holy books, sometimes at the waist, sometimes upon the back, as a symbolic burden. This is taken to extremes by some priests, who wear miniature holy texts on their foreheads to protect their minds from heresy, tying them in place with strips of leather.

"A good anvil fears no hammer"
—Stick to the teachings of Sigmar, and you will be safe

The smaller Order of the Cleansing Flame tightly controls its ceremonial dress in the same way it carefully monitors its members. Robes are black, detailed in red, and hair is cropped close to the skull, with elaborate tonsures sported by ranking members of the order. Floor-length, hooded, black cloaks are also worn, although novitiates may not raise the hood. Unlike the other primary orders, this ceremonial garb is normally only worn on important occasions. When travelling, Cleansing Flames wear whatever clothes allow them to fulfil their order's purpose, which include dressing in the garb of other orders, or disguising themselves as peasants or travelling merchants. No matter what they wear, all members of the order own a holy amulet with a single flame in its centre; this is the badge of their order, used to prove they are on Sigmar's business.

Structure

The Grand Theogonist rules the monumentally complex hierarchy of the Cult of Sigmar. His is a stupendously powerful position. Not only does the Grand Theogonist have absolute authority over the largest, most-powerful cult in the Empire, appointing the leaders of all the major orders, he also has a great deal of secular influence.

The Grand Theogonist directly leads the cult's ruling order, the Order of the Torch, which is larger than all of the other Sigmarite orders combined. He appoints all of the order's upper hierarchy, which includes the two arch lectors, eighteen lectors, four high capitulars, twelve capitulars, various theogonists and countless high priests. There are many other positions—such as the high confessor, the scriptorium master, the keeper of the sacred bell, and the arch adjutant—but most of these are found in, or near, the enormous grand temple in Altdorf.

The Order of the Torch runs almost all of the temples and shrines dotted across the Empire. Most temples have a high priest who is appointed by the local lector or high capitular. The high priest is responsible for all Sigmarite worship in his local area, and appoints the priests that attend local temples and ensure the upkeep of important shrines.

In comparison to this broad-ranging influence, the warrior priests of the Order of the Silver Hammer have no temples they can call their own. Their few buildings are usually attached to the temples and chapterhouses of other orders. This is because the few high priests of the order are as itinerant as the priests, wandering from place to place as they see fit, directing local representatives of the order to wherever they are needed. They are the broadest ranging of the Sigmarite orders, and are often found under the command of the Order of the Torch's theogonists,

The Complicated Ranks of the Order of the Torch

"The Grand Theogonist leads the Cult of Sigmar. Along with the two arch lectors, he holds a vote on the Imperial Electoral Council, providing the cult with direct control of three of the fifteen votes to select a new Emperor. The two arch lectors each control one third of the lectors in the Empire, with the Grand Theogonist responsible for the last third, although he traditionally appoints a deputy, the Arch Adjutant, to perform these duties. Beneath the arch lectors and the Arch Adjutant are eighteen lectors, whom all form the College of Lectors, the body that advises the Grand Theogonist and selects his replacement. Six high capitulars join the eighteen lectors in ruling a Domain of Sigmar, sometimes called a lectoric, which is a division of the Empire based loosely upon the lands of the original twelve tribes that Sigmar bound together. Twelve capitulars, including the high capitulars, each head a small 'chapter' of priests who are tasked to tend a site of especial significance to the cult, and are answerable only to the Grand Theogonist himself in matters concerning their area of influence. Also only answerable to the Grand Theogonists are the theogonists, who control Sigmarite concerns in foreign lands. Finally, there are the countless high priests, who each rule one or more temples, all of which are populated by varying numbers of priests and novitiates.

Of course, many of these ranking positions are traditionally bound together into one impressive and influential title. The Grand Theogonist, for example, is also the Theogonist of the Empire, the Arch Lector of the West, and the High Priest of Altdorf, amongst many other titles. It is no surprise that many of his duties are across the multitude of important high priests in Altdorf."

—From *Meditations on the Cult of Sigmar* by High Chorister Sigo Benetele

spearheading cult missions in other countries. The order has no ruling body, and is supposedly directed by ranking members of the Order of the Torch, but few have any idea just how many Warrior Priests wander their domains at any one time. Successful high priests of the order are often promoted by the Grand Theogonist to an electoral position, an event that is never popular amongst the high priests of the Order of the Torch.

The monastic Order of the Anvil is more populous than many expect, and, as they are masters of cult and Empire law, they are also more influential than the other orders would like. The Keeper of the Word leads the order from the Helstrum Monastery in the Temple District of Altdorf. His position is for life, and he is the ultimate arbitrator of the Word of Sigmar, even though, in theory, the Grand Theogonist could overrule him. Each monastery of the order is lead by an abbot who is theoretically answerable to the Keeper of the Word, but in practise has almost unrestricted power over the monks and novitiates in his care. In many isolated monasteries, the abbot is not even appointed by the Keeper of the Word, but by the monks themselves.

Lastly, even though the secretive Order of the Cleansing Flame only has a single chapterhouse attached to Altdorf, their effective power outweighs almost every other order, as they can command almost any Sigmarite, within reason. The order is led by the Inquisitor General, who controls the order's high inquisitors, inquisitor priests and novitiates very tightly, aware that all power can corrupt, especially the power of the Order of the Cleansing Flame itself. Many of their number are recruited from the other orders, especially the Order of the Silver Hammer and the Templars of Sigmar. Although particularly devout, secular Witch Hunters and torturers are often accepted as well.

Common View

"Arr, well, wit'out our Sigmar, whar would we be? It were 'im that did make this 'ere Empire, and it's 'im that does protect it. Y'see, 'is priests do guard our minds, and 'is warrior priests do guard our lands. Arr, 'ee may not look after t'crops or whatnot, but we wouldn't have no crops iffin it weren't fer Sigmar! So, it's t'temple every week fer me. Besides, it be a good way to catch up wit' friends."

—Stoffan Kleinbauer, Peasant Farmer

"The templars took my Grelda. They tortured her. They burned her. She wasn't bad. She was good. She read books. She knew things. She always said they were dangerous. She... she was right."

—Gaspar Sollander, New Cultist of the Purple Hand

"They are so concerned with defending their precious Empire that they've forgotten what formed it. Conquest! Da, conquest! The successes in Albion show what we can do! Now is our time! The Empire should not hide within these meaningless borders so loved by the Sigmarites. My friends, this is the time for war! Kislev is weak! Who is with me?"

—Lazlo Argermann, Bechafener Agitator

Sects

It is no surprise that the immense Cult of Sigmar is rife with divisions of all kinds. Most are small, and simply result in debates between the faithful. But, some are fundamental, and the large factions that form around these divisions can form powerful blocs within the cult. The following are a tiny example of the greater divides within the cult.

The Schism

The Cult of Sigmar has narrowly avoided the largest schism it has ever faced. The Storm of Chaos left it with two very different Grand Theogonists. Fortunately, one stepped down before the issue could split the cult, but his supporters have not given up so easily.

The first Grand Theogonist, hard-eyed Volkmar the Grim, is a devout, iron-haired old man, who has dedicated his life to destroying Chaos. He is a great war-leader and strategist, and, when younger, was at the forefront of many Empire campaigns. When he led an army to end the Storm of Chaos before it began, and was reportedly slain by Archaon, the cult was forced to appoint a new Grand Theogonist quickly, as it desperately needed leadership. But, rumours of Volkmar's death were apparently exaggerated, for he was spotted less than a month later, pinned to a Chaos banner, bloody and barely conscious. During the Siege of Middenheim, Volkmar somehow managed to break free, and after his body had healed, Volkmar travelled to Altdorf to reclaim his position.

"To the east" —I have no idea where

Volkmar's replacement was Esmer III, a careful, shrewd, and ambitious man, who had risen swiftly through the ranks of the Order of the Torch. He secured Volkmar's position with his skill as a politician and rhetorician, and his active support of traditionalist Sigmarite values. Once appointed, he immediately broadened the powers of the Templars of Sigmar, the cult's Witch Hunters, to openly hunt the Chaos threat. He also unrelentingly attacked Ar-Ulric Valgeir's aggressive plans during the Conclave of Light, counselling proper, Sigmarite defence, not the waste of precious Empire lives on pointless assaults upon an obviously superior foe. Both these moves, and many other traditionalist edicts, were very popular with the cult. But, when Volkmar was confirmed to be marching for the capital, Esmer was strongly advised by templars sent by the arch lectors to step down. He fled to Marienburg, and is said to be there still.

Thus, the problems were averted, at least for the short term. Volkmar has returned, but none can deny that he has changed. He has become darker, more insular, and even his supporters avoid his haunted eyes. Already there are movements in the cult to recall Esmer, although the ramifications of this are too terrible for most Sigmarites to even contemplate.

The Ascetics

Most Sigmarites embrace the community aspects of Sigmar worship, and strongly support shared expressions of faith. Ascetics, however, reject this, believing that an Empire citizen's relationship with Sigmar should be personal, and not controlled by others. Many monks of the Order of the Anvil subscribe to this view, and some monasteries only allow prayers to be conducted in seclusion, with some extremists frowning upon any communal activities, such as singing, preaching, or religious debate.

Not only do Ascetics believe that worshipping Sigmar should be conducted without outside intervention, but they also extend this belief to intervention upon the cult by others. They teach that non-Sigmarite influence upon the cult is dangerous, and needs to be curtailed. In particular, they are very concerned by state influence, which they believe has far too much power over the upper hierarchy of the cult. This view is very popular amongst the priests of the Order of the Torch, many of whom jealously guard any power and influence they can acquire. Therefore, even though the central individualistic beliefs of the Ascetics may not be very popular outside the Order of the Anvil, their isolationist stance for the cult as a whole has wide-spread support.

The Malleuns

The Malleuns, a very recent sect, believe Sigmar should not be remembered as a God, for they claim it was Ghal Maraz, not he, that was the true source of Godhood. The sect follows the teachings of Artur Malleus, a charismatic warrior priest who claimed to have received a vision from the True Hammer, which he said had never been recovered after Sigmar's death. He toured the Empire, followed by an incense-choked band of fanatical zealots and flagellants. He preached that Karl Franz bore a False Hammer, and that all true Sigmarites should join him for the impeding End Times, where the True Hammer would return as a mortal man.

Malleus died four years before the Storm of Chaos, but his followers lived on, and many Sigmarites secretly endorsed his teachings. Unsurprisingly, Valten was seen by many Malleuns as the True Hammer personified, and the sect swelled as the End Times drew closer. But, Valten's recent disappearance has sown confusion amongst their ranks, for Malleus taught that the True Hammer would lead his people to the resting place of the real Ghal Maraz, which Valten can no longer do. However, as Malleus also claimed that the True Hammer would return as a "mortal," some shocked Malleuns have concluded that Valten, their True Hammer, could not have just "disappeared," but must have been murdered!

The Unifiers

The Unifiers are a potentially explosive sect that believes Ulric did not crown Sigmar as a God, but crowned him as the Divine Emperor, as God of all Gods. They tirelessly work towards promoting the Sigmarite cult to its true position of supremacy over all others. Indeed, some extremists of the sect believe the Cult of Sigmar should not just rule the other cults, but should replace them entirely.

The followers of Sigmar the Divine Emperor have infiltrated almost all levels of the cult, and whispers circulate that at least two lectors, one high capitular, an entire order of templars, and maybe the old Grand Theogonist, Esmer, are secret members. Whatever the truth, it is certain that many fanatical individuals of the Sigmarite cult secretly believe that the only God the Empire needs is Sigmar, and that worshipping other deities is simply a mistake.

Lesser Orders

It is said that the convoluted hierarchy of the Cult of Sigmar hides more lesser orders than Sigmar killed Greenskins. Whilst not strictly true, it could as well be, for there are a seemingly countless number of cult-sponsored orders found in all corners of the Empire, many of whom have been all-but forgotten by the ruling Order of the Torch in Altdorf. The well-known examples are mostly templars—such as the Order of the Knights of the Fiery Heart, the Grand Theogonist's personal bodyguard; or the Order of the Knights Griffon, the sworn protectors of the High Temple in Altdorf—but the majority are isolated orders of priests, each promoting the worship of Sigmar in their own unique way.

Although most of these lesser orders could easily be absorbed into one of the four primary orders, tradition, politics, ignorance, superstition, and the edicts of previous Grand Theogonists make streamlining the cult in this way extremely unlikely.

Sisters of Faith and Chastity

The temple of the once-reclusive Sisters of Faith and Chastity squats on the south bank of the Reik in the east-end of Altdorf. Every Sun Still, the entire order marches forth to parade through the city's hot, summer streets. The matriarch leads the sweaty pageant, repeatedly intoning the "Dirge of Brutal Truth" as she suspiciously eyes onlookers. The sisters wear black, embroidered cloaks and ancient, engraved plate armour, all decorated with sharp thorns to ward off the advances of the unrighteous. As the order relies upon charity for its survival, its young novitiates gather donations from the gathered crowds who turn up to watch the spectacle.

The order once espoused the virtue of isolation as preached by their founder, Esther the Intemerate. But, when Sister Griselda von Velten was visited by Morr in 2515, that changed forever. She was marching down Volker Weg during the heat of the Sonnstill Parade when she suddenly screamed and fell to her knees. Shaking, she whispered to the stunned crowd that the End was coming and that her life had been wasted, then died. A year later, after months of heated communication with Grand Theogonist Volkmar, the Matriarch reluctantly agreed that her order had been sent a sign that must be obeyed, and ordered her sisters to prepare for war.

The Storm of Chaos was the order's first major campaign, with half their number marching from Altdorf at Valten's side. The Sisters that survived now range across the Empire, pursuing what remains of the Chaos forces, returning yearly to Altdorf to pass on their experience to the Novitiates and march out for the Sonnstill Parade.

Ancient Initiatic and Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar

The Templars of Sigmar are tasked by the Grand Theogonist to protect the lives and souls of Sigmar's people by hunting down those who draw the attention of the Ruinous Powers. Heretics, once captured, are forced to repent their crimes before their taint is purged by fire. The Order of Sigmar has well-guarded chapterhouses in almost every city of the Empire. Although they are officially templars, and certainly not affiliated to their state-sponsored equivalents, they are still universally known and feared as the Witch Hunters of Sigmar.

The Templars of Sigmar have poor relations with the Order of the Flame, whom they view as overly secretive and suspicious by nature, especially when they requisition templar resources or, worse, investigate members of their order.

More about the Templars of Sigmar can be found in *Realms of Sorcery*, pages 133-135.

Temples

Temples to Sigmar are as varied as the folk that worship within them. Local traditions, benefactor whim, and the desires of the priests themselves have all contributed towards the construction of some truly unique buildings.

The only thing temples of Sigmar share is a lack of seating for the congregation, and prominent displays of stylised warhammers and comets. Some other common features include: aligning the temple to the site of Sigmar's ascension (although the exact position of this is hotly debated); a bell-tower, to summon worshippers to the Throng; a twelve-sided apse or chancel, representing the original tribes that formed the Empire; a hammer-shaped layout; an empty throne, ready for Sigmar's return; and great, painted frescoes, or stained-glass windows, depicting the great deeds of the Man-God and his holiest followers.

Personalities

The Cult of Sigmar has many very important, highly influential members. During these troubled times, letters constantly speed through the forests between them, as each tries to uncover the plans of the other. Volkmar the Grim, the Grand Theogonist everyone thought was dead, has returned. Exalted Valten, Sigmar Reborn, has vanished, and is perhaps even dead—but, who can trust that? Esmer III, the ousted Grand Theogonist, is maybe drawing together his supporters in Marienburg. All these and so many more are manoeuvring themselves into position, and it seems that if they are not careful, the worst horror of all may descend: civil war– something the cult surely cannot, will not, allow to happen.

Theogonist Gregori Sorgher of Kislev

Calm-faced Gregori Sorgher, the high priest responsible for cult affairs in Kislev, is panicked. Recently, a letter from his unknown benefactor arrived at his offices in the high temple of Altdorf. It claimed that the sender had proof that Volkmar, the man Gregori had once believed to be the prophesied Champion of Light, was now Undead, reinvigorated by profane Daemons. Appalled at the thought, Gregori does not want to believe it, but he has received many letters from the same source in the past, and they have always proved to be correct. Indeed, he may not have achieved his current position if it were not for the secrets his benefactor had let slip his way.

Gregori has no intention to meet with the mysterious man to secure the proof, he is not that stupid; instead, he plans to send a low-ranking, and easily disposed, member of the cult, someone faithful and reliable, someone used to getting into difficult situations and surviving.

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Sigmar add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate (called Novitiates by Sigmarites)

All Orders: Common Knowledge (Dwarfs)

Priest

Order of the Anvil: Academic Knowledge (Law), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Speak Language (Khazalid)
Order of the Cleansing Flame: Intimidate, Speak Language (Khazalid), Torture
Order of the Silver Hammer: Command, Speak Language (Khazalid), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-Handed)
Order of the Templars of Sigmar: Speak Language (Khazalid), Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Torture
Order of the Torch: Command, Etiquette, Speak Language (Khazalid)
Sisters of Faith and Charity: Intimidate, Speak Language (Khazalid), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-Handed)

— The Cult of Taal and Rhya —

Seat of Power: The Taalgrunhaar Forest, Talabheim
Head of the Cult: Niav—Hierarch of Taal, Katrinelya—Hierarch of Rhya
Primary Orders: The Longshanks, The Horned Hunters
Major Festivals: Start Growth (Spring Equinox), Less Growth (Fall Equinox), Sun Still (Summer Solstice), World Still (Winter Solstice)
Holy Books: *Rites of the Ancient Grove, The Book of Green, Tome of Summer's Path*
Holy Symbols: Taal—antlers, deer skulls, stone axe. Rhya—sheaf of wheat, bow and arrow, dart, flowers.

The Cult of Taal and Rhya is among the most ancient and pervasive in the Old World, tracing a direct line to the primal Gods from the deepest of history. The cult grew organically, as early Humans tried to explain natural phenomenon, such as thunder, the turning of the seasons, and the rise and ebb of the seas. Over time, the Gods Taal and Rhya came into being, beginning as a single entity, known as Ishnernos. This split occurred many thousands of years ago, and the Cult of Ishnernos faded into distant memory. Taal rules nature and is considered "King of the Gods." He claims the wild places as his domain and is primarily worshipped by hardy woodsmen, trackers, and rangers. Rhya's worshippers are found in the cultivated fields and orchards of the Empire, and are found among farmers, fishermen, and young lovers everywhere.

The Cult of Taal and Rhya is the sanctioned cult of Talabecland, and is wildly popular in the eastern and northern parts of the Empire. Of the two, Taal receives most recognition, and Rhya's role is much diminished. The grand city of Talabheim is particularly

fervent in its worship of both Taal and Rhya.

> *"Before all the other Gods, there are Taal and Rhya, the Father and the Mother. Without their blessing and union, there would be no world for us to live in."*
>
> —Carlott Edelbrecht,
> Priestess of the Cult of Taal and Rhya

Taal represents the power and majesty of nature, both the physical world of stone and wood, but also the primal urge of life within all creatures. Taal makes the rain fall from the sky, the rivers flow, the animals breed and multiply, and the plants grow. He is not only the physical heart of a person, but also the spark that makes the heart pump. Taal represents vigour and growth in all its forms—especially the transitions from childhood and adulthood, when life is at its peak.

Rhya, Taal's wife, is the nurturer of people and the land. Where Taal makes the wild lands develop unchecked, Rhya looks after the fields, orchards, and livestock of Humans, instilling growth for healthy crops and meat for all. Rhya cools and tames the wildness inspired by her husband, transforming it into maturity and wisdom. She is also the patroness of love and thus is fervently worshipped by young lovers or those hoping to bring love into their lives. Rhya also governs carnal acts, though few worship her openly in such a manner—indeed such thoughts are considered scandalous and rude among most people. Lovers may utter her name during passionate moments, which priestesses of Rhya claim is sufficient respect for the Goddess.

The Cult

Those dedicated to Taal and Rhya respect people that are capable of taking care of themselves, but know the community works best if it works together, like a pack of wolves or herd of elk. Cultists often spend most of their time out in the wilderness, often alone or in small groups, living off the land like their ancestors did. They pay close attention to the seasons, the weather, and the cycle of life and death among the plants and animals that they hold dear to their heart.

The cult is a major influence in remote locations, isolated hamlets, and tiny farming communities, mainly because they are often the only priests in a given area. These priests are highly coveted by farmers and hunters for their knowledge of plants and animals. Priests of Taal and Rhya are in great demand to perform initiation rites for young folk and lead the faithful in prayers, rituals, and festivals. Average cultists pay close attention to the seasons, timing their festivals and rites around major transitions of the years, particularly the equinoxes and solstices. They incorporate their daily chores of hunting, farming, and the like with reverence to Tall and Rhya in mind.

The Cult of Taal and Rhya steers clear of most of the politics and jockeying for power that is so prevalent in the other cults. This is not to say that they aren't involved in the decision-making process, but rather their credo runs counter to the idea of institutions running the lives of people. They prefer to follow the cycles of nature to determine the next best course, and accept the fact that good and bad things all happen for a reason.

Strictures

- Taal's children gladly give themselves for food and sacrifice. Respect and honour this gift to you.
- A sacrifice, of an animal or grain, must be made to Taal and Rhya once per month, at the dark of the moon.
- Each year, all Priests must spend seven solitary days and nights away from civilisation, communing with nature and living on what they catch. The time for each priest's retreat is determined by the hierarchs of the region.
- Do not clad yourself in metal. Rather wear the hides of your animal kin.
- Take pride in your strength and natural skill. Avoid firearms and other works of science.

Beliefs

Cultists of Taal and Rhya are noted for their practical, no-nonsense attitude towards life, tempered with a sense of awe for the power and majesty of nature. They accept the fact that death is just as important as life, but only if it works in harmony with nature as a whole. Cultists despise anything "unnatural," the most egregious being Mutants and Chaos, although extremists something take this to mean cities, money, and other trappings of civilisation.

Cultists believe in the sanctity of nature, the turning of the seasons, and the majesty of the wilderness. They revere animals and plants, predator and prey, and the struggle of life and death. Cultists live their life to the fullest, knowing that Taal, Rhya, and the willing earth might aid them in their passage into a blessed state in Morr's realm.

Initiation

Individuals drawn to the Cult of Taal and Rhya are typically hardy outdoorsmen, capable of surviving on their own in the wilderness, or those that toil in the fields and orchards. Potential initiates are paired up with a priest for mentoring and to assess both the skills and faith of the individual. Those that pass muster undergo an intense, immersive initiation process, although what this initiation entails depends on whether the person is drawn to Taal or Rhya.

Initiates of Taal are tested on their strength of character, ability to survive in the wilds, hunting prowess, and connection with the wilds. With the onset of puberty, many young men and women are taken by priests to learn the mysteries of the wilderness and the wisdom of Taal. This rite, known as the Quickening, is extremely difficult and not everyone survives—those that do are sworn never to reveal what occurs during this time. However, secrets do slip out, and it is suspected that in addition to learning crucial hunting and survival skills, initiates also undergo intense sweat lodges, often under the influence of powerful alcohol and hallucinogenic herbs and fungi.

Initiates of Rhya have a far more subtle training, and have no time for the drunkenness and sweat lodges of a Taalite initiation. They learn the skills of taking care of others—planting and raising healthy crops, learning to council people with their problems, and assisting in childbirth and rearing. Actual initiation is a simple matter of the mentoring priestess (never a priest) deciding that the initiate is ready to move on, culminating in a small feast, complete with dancing and song. The initiation is shrouded in mystery, particularly among men, whose fathers whisper lurid rumours of blood sacrifices, moon worship, and stranger events. Men are strictly forbidden from witnessing these rites and most go out of their way to avoid doing out of abject fear—it is believed that a man who stumbles into this initiation loses his potency. Others believe the man loses much more than that…

Cultists

Cultists of Taal and Rhya dress in simple robes of grey, brown, and green during festivals or rituals, but just as often go about in their regular garb as they conduct their rites. It's common for cultists to adorn their hair and dress with leaves, flowers, sticks, and sheaves of wheat. Jewellery and tokens crafted from natural, organic materials, such as bone, twisted twigs, and uncut stones are common, augmented with flowers and feathers. Cultists drawn more to Taal tend to wear the garb of a hunter.

Cultists spend their days both communing with nature and being good stewards to the land while they go about their business. Although some cultists raise crops and livestock, most live off what they find through hunting, fishing, and foraging. They protect wild places from poachers, excessive logging, and other transgressions, although they know that people need to eat, require fresh water, and must gather resources to survive. Cultists of Rhya are much more attuned to communities, helping in matters of childbirth, healing, and raising crops.

Although there are those cultists that remain in the city (particularly in places like Talabheim and Talabecland), most live in the wilderness, as far away from civilisation as possible, preferring to be on their own or staying in small communal groups of like-minded individuals.

Structure

The Cult of Taal and Rhya is a curious blend of loners who wander the wilderness and those closely tied with a community's well-being. Regardless of their movements, all cultists are intimately familiar with the shrines and other sacred places dedicated to Taal and Rhya, and coordinate their routine with visiting and protecting them.

The cult is surprisingly structured, with a clear delineation between duties. Two hierarchs rule in each of the provinces. They are considered equal in rank and status, although who leads at a given time depends on the season—the Hierarch of Rhya rules during the spring and autumn and the Hierarch of Taal takes over during the summer and winter. When not in charge, each hierarch defers to the authority and edicts of the other, although they can (though rarely do) reverse any previous rulings. The pairing of hierarchs is done in such a way that friction is kept to a minimum, although priests do understand and accept that competition is natural, and indeed healthy, for the cult to survive.

Beneath the hierarchs are the high priests, who are responsible for the welfare and duties of the priests beneath them. High priests care for shrines, groves, stone circles, and other sacred places and are responsible for several priests and initiates. Priests perform the grunt work, conducting rituals and maintaining the grounds of their sacred spots. In some cases, a lone priest is charged with the caretaking of some holy ground far from civilisation—this solitary life does not guarantee that he is named high priest, however.

Priests are, for the most part, left to their own devices, and have tremendous latitude in how they get things done. Because of the cult's structure, individual priests also have a greater say in what is done and can even contradict the orders of their high priest if they can make their case in front of the rest of their peers. Those that

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Taal and Rhya add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiates

All Orders: Outdoor Survival

Priests

No Orders: Charm Animal, Navigation, Orientation
Longshanks: Consume Alcohol, Follow Trail, Perception, Hardy
Horned Hunters: Frenzy, Hardy, Fleet Footed *or* Very Resilient
Daughter of Rhya: Heal, Perception, Coolheaded

Common View

"I respect the worshippers of Taal, but the next time one stops me from hunting deer in the Hallow Woods, I'm sticking him with the arrow!"

—Ralt of Nuln, Farmer

"The male priests took my eldest son, Franz, for his Quickening ceremony a year ago. When he left, he was skinny, pale, and unsure of himself. On his return, I didn't recognize him at first. He's a warrior now, with the eyes of a cold-hearted hunter."

—Gustav Avermeyer, Trapper from Ostermark.

"A kiss from Rhya" —To fall in love

"Sure I give my respects to Taal and Rhya. But, the way I hear it; there are some of their followers that wear skins and live like animals in the woods. We're people, not beasts—someone should remind them of that."

—Siegfried Kant, Burgher of Marienburg

disagree too much, however, are cast out from their group and must either join up with another or find solace alone in the wilderness. Although there is no particular head to the cult, most followers heed the advice and wisdom of high priests deemed the wisest and most experienced.

Sects

Divisions within the Cult of Taal and Rhya are present, but subdued, especially compared to the fiery schisms in the other cults. Those who disagree with the main tenets of the cult are more likely to just pick up and depart deeper into the wilds rather than cause strife. However, there are a few distinct viewpoints that dominate aspects of the cult, divided by how mankind and nature are to interrelate.

The first, and easily the largest contingent, is the Kin of Taal. Comprised mostly of men, this sect embodies the aspects of masculinity at its basest level. Priests of this sect are charged with protecting the "Men's Secrets" and mysteries of the wilds. They help communities initiate their young men into adulthood in a rite called the Quickening (see page 63), as well as teaching them how to hunt, fish, and generally survive in the wilderness. The Kin of Taal spend a great deal of their time building and sitting in sweat lodges, consuming alcohol, and using hallucinogenic substances to induce powerful altered states of mind. They lead men into the deep forest, where they dance, drink, and drum for days or weeks on end, or host wild hunting parties where the game is cooked and eaten in honour of Taal, along with gallons of powerful moonshine.

The second group call themselves the Wardens. They are the stalwart defenders of Taal and Rhya's sacred locations, protecting them from the incursions of Beastmen, Greenskins, and ignorant citizens of the Empire who may not know what they are doing. Wardens keep out a close eye for those that despoil or besmirch the name and gifts of Taal and Rhya, with poachers being among their most hated enemies. Wardens are known for their quiet, serious, and often mysterious behaviour, and are rightly feared for the passion they have in defending Taal and Rhya's sacred locations. Wardens also act as enforcers of the secret rites, hunting down and blinding anyone not of the faith that bears witness to these rituals. They believe nature laughs at the industry of Humans—nature remains forever whilst the works of mankind rust, rot, and turn to dust.

The last sect, called the Bringers of Bounty, is the most respected and accepted among the citizens of the Empire. Its members live in and among communities, granting the blessings of Taal and Rhya to ordinary people. The Bringers of Bounty perform rituals on crops and livestock, asking their Gods for growth and fecundity. Most are well versed in farming and animal husbandry, and are sought by commoners for their practical knowledge as much as their blessing. They organise local festivals and rituals to celebrate the equinoxes and solstices, guard the spirits of corn and wheat fields, and aid women in childbirth. Priestesses of this sect are sought for their advice on matters of love and physical acts, and are admired for their frank wisdom.

Lesser Orders

Among the various orders important to the Cult of Taal and Rhya, the following are the most significant.

The Longshanks

The Longshanks are hardy outdoorsmen that fill the same niche as templars in other cults. They vow to never remain in one place for longer than a week at a time, and wander the thick woods of the Empire ensuring that the shrines, temples, and glens dedicated to Taal and Rhya are in good repair and working order. They bring swift death and retribution to anyone they find desecrating these sacred places. Longshanks protect pilgrims making their holy rounds from the predations of Mutants, Greenskins, bandits, and other threats. When the Storm of Chaos swept through the

Empire, the Longshanks served the Emperor as outriders, scouts, and raiders.

The Horned Hunters

The Horned Hunters are the zealots of the cult. They eschew the trappings of civilisation in almost all its forms and strive to live in harmony with nature. They shun settlements larger than individual family farms or tiny hamlets, and most even forgo the wearing of clothing. The Horned Hunters are ferocious in combat, focusing their attentions on anyone that violates the sanctity of the wilderness—up to and including simple travellers that get lost in Taal's sacred forest. Most of the cultists of Taal and Rhya look up to, and fear, the Horned Hunters, seeing them as a bit more "touched" by the Gods than most, and closer to the simple hunter-gatherer lifestyle that mankind is supposed to have originated from.

The Daughters of Rhya

The Daughters of Rhya is a lesser order comprised solely of women—specifically those who have given birth at least once in their life. Members of this tiny order work as midwives, healers, and counsellors for mothers and mothers-to-be. Also, unbeknownst to most men, the Daughters secretly teach women methods to avoid pregnancy, ways to deal with difficult or abusive husbands, and because of ignorance, the activities of this lesser order are often viewed with suspicion by other, less tolerant cults, particular those primarily dominated by males. Thanks to ignorance and superstition, detractors often accuse some members of the Daughters of Rhya of consorting with the powers of Chaos, and teaching sinister curses to women that "steal a man's potency." It is said that Rhya whispers in the ears of the women of this order, letting them know when the birth of an extraordinarily important child is imminent. Indeed, if it were possible to find such things, a Daughter of Rhya has been present as a midwife for a very long list of nobles, Venerated Souls, warriors, and even heretics through the ages.

Temples

The priests of Taal and Rhya avoid constructing large buildings for the faithful to worship—their "temples" are typically open glens, ancient forests, waterfalls, and other places of natural beauty, unspoiled by the hands of man. Untold ages ago, the priests of Taal and Rhya's earlier form, the God Ishnernos, erected huge stone monoliths that served as the focal point for worship. The few stones that remain are visited by the faithful, although tales persists of these places being haunted by wild, untamed spirits and fearsome animals. Wells and springs are considered sacred to Rhya, as are gigantic earth mounds that represent the fecundity, bounty, and the mystery of nature.

Most peasants, woodsmen, and others that live in the deepest forests of the Old Word erect small shrines beside their fields and orchards, dedicating them to Rhya. They also build small shrines in the trees, glades, or nearby glens that are dedicated to Taal. These shrines are simple affairs, where offerings of recent harvests or successful hunts are placed to curry favour. The shrines of Rhya are typically adorned with small, ceremonial bows and quivers of

arrows, along with flowers, healing balms, berries, and other foods. The shrines of Taal often boast a rack of antlers or the deer skulls, and pelts from deer, elk, and other large herbivores. Worship to both of the Gods is performed on threshing floors, fields, village greens, and other places that provide bounty to the people.

Personalities

The Cult of Taal and Rhya avoids the limelight that many of the other cults seem to covet, and as a result, has fewer numbers of notable personages. The largest number of esteemed personages within the Cult can be found in Talabecland or within the mighty walls of the Taalbaston, the walls of the titanic crater that surround the sacred city of Talabheim.

Niav, Hierarch of Taal, and Katrinelya, Hierarch of Rhya

Niav and Katrinelya are the current hierarchs of the Cult of Taal and Rhya in the far southern portions of the Reikwald Forest. Although the Cult does not recognise a single (or in this case, paired) leadership position, few can dispute the wisdom, power, and influence of these two. Both appear to be extremely old, yet move with the speed and grace of youngsters in their prime—it is rumoured they are actually Elves in disguise, spreading the beliefs of Taal and Rhya in forms Humans can understand.

Katrinelya, the Hierarch of Rhya, possesses a thin form and kind face, and is by far the most outspoken and down-to-earth of the two. She spends her time wandering between the tiny hamlets, farming communities, and Orchards of the Reikwald, lending

aid to those in need. Those that meet her usually walk away with a renewed outlook on life and fierce desire to preserve the Old Ways and ancient woods of the Empire. Although she claims little interest in matters of politics and secular life, Katrinelya is a persuasive speaker and can easily hold her own even in debate with a learned priest of Verena.

Wise Niav is withdrawn, almost distant, and pays little heed to the affairs of man and Empire. His immensely full beard hides eyes that glimmer with both wisdom and some deep insight into the mysteries of the wilds. His days are spent moving from sacred stone circle to holy glen, listening to the winds for whispers of the future and words from Taal. When he actually does speak, it is with firm, absolute conviction and belief—otherwise Niav remains as silent as a deer.

Johann Overmar

Johann Overmar is a member of the esteemed Horned Hunters. When the Storm of Chaos ploughed its way through the Empire, Overmar rallied his brethren to take up arms against this onslaught. He is a staggeringly huge and powerful man—some whisper Taal fathered him with a mortal woman. Johann is extremely introverted and shy in times of peace, but is passionate and almost feral in combat or when he feels that the woods that he holds sacred are in jeopardy. He carries an immense spear whose blade is permanently stained by the blood of the Orcs and Mutants he has gutted over the years.

— The Cult of Ulric —

Seat of Power: Middenheim
Head of the Cult: Ar-Ulric Emil Valgeir
Primary Orders: Order of the Howling Wolf, Order of the Knights of the White Wolf
Major Festivals: Campaign's End (Less Growth), Hochwinter (World Still), Campaigning Start (Start Growth)
Popular Holy Books: *Liber Lupus*, *Teutognengeschichte*, *The Ulric Creed*
Common Holy Symbols: The White Wolf

According to the *Liber Lupus* (Book of the Wolf), the Cult of Ulric is one of the oldest Human religions in the world. Millennia ago, Ulric is said to have led a tribe of Humans to a boundless, forested land. The tribe, called the Teutogens by most modern scholars, was wild and savage, and took to slaughtering the indigenous forest people to prove their worth. These bloody tribesmen quickly spread through the forests, butchering for many generations, exalting their God with every kill.

After uncounted years of war and conquest, Ulric led his folk to a great, flat-topped mountain, hidden deep in the darkest recesses of the frigid north. To light their way, the God struck the mountain with his fist and a roaring, silvery flame sprung forth. The Teutogens followed this unearthly glow, until, in the heart of winter, they arrived at the base of the holy mountain. Hungry White Wolves hunted there and let loose blood-curdling howls as the Humans invaded their territory. The cold, weary tribesmen hefted their weapons and howled in return, unwilling to back away, no matter how tired or sore they were. Ulric, pleased with this, bathed them all in bright, white light, which panicked the wolves, and caused them to flee. The Teutogens, in awe of the hallowed place, immediately swore to build the greatest of temples, and to forever worship Ulric, their God of Winter, War and Wolves.

> *"My friends, let me explain what I mean: Sigmar was an Ulrican. Sigmar founded this Empire. Thus, the Empire is Ulric's nation. We are all Ulricans! This slavish devotion to Sigmar must end!"*
>
> —Johann von Schattenlas, Carroburg Politician

Tens of centuries later the cold fire on the mountain still blazes with blue-white rage, but it is now hidden from sight by the massive Ulrican temple built so long ago. Called the Eternal Flame, it is of extreme importance to the cult, and pilgrims arrive from far and wide to witness it. Many believe Middenheim, the great capital that surrounds the temple, can never fall while the hoary fire still burns, and the recent failed siege during the Storm of Chaos has only strengthened this belief. After all, where Valten, Sigmar Reborn, disappeared when the war ended, the Eternal Flame burns on, and always will.

The Cult

The Cult of Ulric has been in retreat for centuries. Only in Middenland, ancestral home of the Teutogens, has Ulric maintained his dominance, although most northern communities still favour the deity. The cult was once the most powerful in the Empire, but it has grown increasingly less popular in the civilised world. Other warlike Gods, such as defensive Sigmar or refined Myrmidia, have taken his place. Much of the original network of Ulrican holy sites now lies in ruins, abandoned as locals turned to other deities.

Although the cult has lost much of its influence, the Order of the Howling Wolf, the cult's priests, still bellows Ulric's name in every corner the Empire. *The Ulric Creed* teaches that when the Dark Gods grew fat in the north, Ulric pleaded with his brothers and sisters to strike before they grew too powerful. However no help came. So Ulric marched north by himself, there to survive by his own wits against the might of all the profane Gods of the north. Thus, the Howling Wolves teach that self-reliance is of paramount importance, for their God prefers his followers to fend for themselves, just as he did. The best teacher, they claim, is the mistake you survive.

Such harsh language is not popular with many in the Empire, especially not amongst the swelling middle classes. However, most soldiers still call upon Ulric and wear wolf-head charms, but even this is growing increasingly less common in the south of the Empire. Indeed, in the far south of the Old World, in hotter Estalia and Tilea, Ulricans are barely welcome, and certainly sneered at. Those nations have always loved bright Myrmidia, and are deeply scornful of Ulric's barbaric ways.

Far more popular, and certainly more famous, is the Order of the Knights of the White Wolf, the wild templars of Ulric. In comparison to the waning priesthood, The White Wolves are the largest Knightly Order in the Empire, and the oldest order of templars in the world. A company of the hammer-wielding knights can be found attached to almost every Ulrican Temple. They are universally loved, for almost every campaign in the Empire's history is littered with tales of their heroism and courage. However, they are also universally feared, for their great skill at arms and heroism is rivalled by their quick tempers and aggressive natures.

Beliefs

The Ulric Creed contains most of the great sagas of Ulric's deeds. It teaches, through metaphor and analogy, how he expects all his worshippers to act. In all the tales, Ulric takes the direct route, and the God clearly relishes the inevitable confrontation this causes. Much like their God, Ulricans are aggressive, argumentative, and confrontational, and, some would say, stubbornly single-minded with it. However, Ulric is also an honourable God, and, as he hates trickery and deception, he always keeps his word. Similarly, his followers seek to demonstrate their honourable hearts, and never resort to deceit.

Ulric also despises cowardice. *The Ulric Creed* is full of those he punishes for succumbing to fear, so Ulricans always stand brave and true, only retreating when ordered to by a recognised superior. However, this can cause problems when two Ulricans of equal rank disagree, as both invariably refuse to back down. Because of this, brawls and heated arguments to establish dominance are common. Once a winner is established, the loser is expected to obey his better as if he were a superior within the cult. Might, for Ulric and his cult, is right.

Indeed, belligerent social rules of this kind are common amongst Ulricans. To outsiders, this seems to conflict with their desire to working in groups, rather than as loners. However, Ulricans simply see arguments, fist-fights and flaring passions as part of the order of things, and most harbour no ill-will from defeat to another Ulrican (the best teacher, after all, is the defeat you survive); indeed, for many, conflict forms tighter bonds of friendship.

Strictures

- Obey your betters.
- Defend your honour whenever it is challenged.
- Stand honest and true. Deception and trickery is not Ulric's way.
- Wolfskin may only be worn if you have killed the wolf yourself with weapons you have hand-crafted from nature.
- Black-powder weapons, crossbows and helmets are not favoured by Ulric. Use of them shows a lack of courage.
- The sacred fires in the holy places of Ulric must never be allowed to go out.

Initiation

The Cult of Ulric is theoretically open to all. However, as the cult's training is physically demanding and dangerous, and corporal punishment is common, the motivation to serve Ulric must be strong to outweigh the fear. Unsurprisingly, most initiates are fiery-tempered young Middenlanders with bad attitudes. Some temples only accept those who have already proven themselves in battle, and will only consider soldiers, mercenaries, militiamen and similar, or those of pure Teutogen blood.

"He fought a wolf" —A common response to "What happened to him?" in reference to a wounded man. It means the injured party beat someone else up, and that someone summoned his friends (his "pack") to return the favour.

Initiates are provided with an austere cell and simple robes, and must immediately join the temple's strict training regime. The daily life of initiates is largely controlled by their temples, but there are no cult-wide laws saying what must, or must not, be done. As long as initiates do not disobey orders, all is well. Martial training and theological teachings are common activities, but many temples demand other subjects be mastered, such as winter-survival techniques, wrestling, and lessons in history or rhetoric. Some temples restrict the movements of their initiates, but this is not universal, and some initiates can go where they please as long as they complete their training as ordered. Dismissal from the cult is very rare, as Ulricans can beat discipline into even the most stubborn rebel. It is far more common for initiates to flee.

When their superiors deem them worthy, initiates are sent many miles into the wilds with nothing but their robes, and left to fend for themselves. This ritual often takes place during the Hochwinter festival, which celebrates the discovery of the Eternal Flame. Some temples have the initiates find their way back to the temple, others stage attacks on the "abandoned" souls to test them. Whatever happens, this final rite is often harrowing, but rarely fatal.
Upon their return, if the initiates have proven themselves before Ulric, they take their vows of celibacy and join the ranks of the priesthood. It is common for a great party to be held before these vows are sworn, offering the initiate one last chance to let loose before he eternally swears to chastity and dons the priestly robes.

Cultists

Initiates wear simple, floor-length, black robes with high-necked collars. The rare female initiates have robes with scooped necklines and wear a plain, high-necked grey or white blouse underneath. When

training, it is common to strip to underclothes, as an initiate's skin is considered less valuable than his robes. Because of this, most initiates are scored with a lattice-work of minor scars. They also wear a silver wolf's-head medallion around their necks.

Priests wear the same style of robes as the initiates, but the cloth is generally more expensive, better cut, trimmed with fur, and decorated with a large, white wolf's head in the centre of the chest. Wolf pelts are also very common, and high-ranking priests often embellish these with silk linings, and use jewels for eyes.

"If you show your teeth, bite" —Stick with the conviction of your words; anything else is weakness

Knights of the White Wolf are equipped with full-plate armour, often lacquered black or treated with dark oils. Tradition claims this is to represent Blitzbeil, Ulric's black war axe. Similarly, their warhorses are protected by red, lacquered barding, representing the quick flow of blood from Ulric's enemies. White Wolves always wear a wolf pelt across their shoulders, and it is a point of pride to be wearing the largest skin in the company.

Most Ulricans, no matter their order, never cut their hair, letting it grow wild like Ulric's, whose bushy beard and wild, black hair are famous. As this can be a disadvantage in war, braids are common.

Structure

The Cult of Ulric is controlled from the high temple in Middenheim. Ar-Ulric, the High Priest of Middenheim, is the cult's leader, and is chosen for life from the ranks of the Howling Wolf's high priests by those high priests. Almost all the cult's high priests are from Middenland, but representatives from as far as southern Wissenland journey to the high temple when Ar-Ulric dies. Ar-Ulric is a very important figure, for he directly controls the entire cult, which includes the largest knightly order in the Old World. Further, he is also an Elector of the Empire, a position of great secular power, and the spiritual advisor to the Elector Count of Middenland. So, choosing the correct man is essential.

Beneath Ar-Ulric is the Grandmaster of the White Wolves and the high priests. Each major temple has one high priest, who has a single deputy high priest (sometimes called a denfather) to aid them. Beneath these are the various priests (often bearing a variety of titles), who will be given different local duties as the high priest and their deputy demand. Lastly, there are the initiates, the most experienced of which are generally promoted to commander, who lead groups of the trainee priests. All positions within a temple are appointed by the high priest, although he often delegates this responsibility. High priests and the grandmaster can only be appointed by Ar-Ulric.

The grandmaster is responsible for the Great Companies, the massive, sprawling units of White Wolves spread across the Empire and beyond. Each company is led by a Company Commander, who is normally attached to a temple and thus answerable to its high priest (although the Grandmaster can overrule a high priest's commands). The commander appoints templar sergeants to lead units of men, typically numbering from five to twenty brother templars.

Every year, during the Campaigning festival, the very best White Wolves are hand-picked by the Grandmaster and Ar-Ulric to join the Teutogen Guard. The Teutogen Guard is Ar-Ulric's personal Company of White Wolves, who act as his bodyguard in his role as Elector of the Empire, and accompany him everywhere. Being selected for a tour of duty in the Teutogen Guard is one of the highest accolades a Knight of the White Wolf can receive, and is often the first step towards being inducted into the order's inner circle.

Sects

The Cult of Ulric is almost unique in its lack of organised factionalism within its ranks. Politics are sneered upon by Ulricans, who believe in strict, formal hierarchy and, importantly, obeying orders. However, Ulricans are a hot-blooded lot who often disagree, and arguments break out about an array of subjects.

The only groups that could be called sects in any real sense are the Sons of Ulric and the Wolf Kin. However, as the first are extremists and outlawed by the cult, and the second are little more than lunatics, the cult has no formal relationship with either. For more information on these two groups, refer to **Chapter IV: Extremes of Faith**.

Celibacy

In 1547, Graf Heinrich of Middenheim forced the cult into vows of celibacy. Ar-Ulric agreed to this to gain access to Middenheim's high temple after almost two hundred years of exile in Talabheim. The Graf was afraid the cult would sire a rival dynasty in Middenheim, and used the importance of the high temple and the Eternal Flame to manipulate the cult into accepting his demands.

Now, almost 1,000 years later, the vows of celibacy are still sworn by new priests. The vows may be ancient, but the cult has a long memory, and knows their origin: petty politics. Few Ulricans happily accept this. To make matters worse, they are a passionate folk, and some find celibacy a hard promise to keep. Many priests, during drunken moments, are rumoured to slip. Frequently.

Recently, there has been a furore in the Middenland capital, for Heinrich Todbringer, the Graf's bastard son, is said to have got Sigrid Köhler, a young noblewoman from Nordland, with child; unfortunately, she is also a recently sworn priestess of Ulric. Some priests are using this as another excuse to bring the celibacy vows into the spotlight, for if the creators of the vows, the nobles, are willing to ignore them, then why should they exist at all? The implications of the union are far reaching, so it is no surprise that the priestess has vanished.

Women

Before the enforced celibacy, the Order of the Howling Wolf had a significant minority of women. In those days, marriage between priests and priestesses wasn't unknown, and children from such unions were often chosen to replace their parents in the temples. Today, the cult is very different. After a millennium of celibacy, male dominance is almost complete, and only the oldest temples have quarters for women.

Female priests are the source of many problems within the cult. Most men believe women should have nothing to do with Ulric and his religion, and are rarely happy to be led by them. Others see women as little more than a temptation to their vows, and useless on the battlefield. Unsurprisingly, female Ulricans disagree, but that does nothing to break down the endemic bigotry.

It is likely that there would be no women left within the cult if not for the isolated Sudfast Temple in Nordland, which has been solely maintained by female priests for over 2,000 years. The temple aggressively exports its highly opinionated, strong-minded priestesses across Nordland, who are viewed as little better than troublemakers by Middenlander Ulricans. The temple's current high priestess is Katherine von Siert. A stubborn, blonde-haired noblewoman from Altdorf, her understanding of politics is not typical for the cult, and makes her doubly unpopular. Nevertheless, she maintains close relations with her peers, and shares the high priest of Salzenmund's ambitions for Nordland.

Teutogens

Thousands of years ago, the Teutogen tribe arrived in the Old World from across the World's Edge Mountains. Their chief God was Ulric, and he led them to bloody victory after bloody victory. As the centuries passed, worship of the War God spread throughout the other Human tribes, but as far as the Teutogens were concerned, Ulric was still *their* God. Unfortunately for non-Teutogens, things have changed little over time.

Although Ulric is worshipped across the Old World, the descendants of the Teutogens—almost all in the north of Middenland and south of Nordland—have a firm grip of the cult, and intend to keep it. Teutogens tend to succeed where others are overlooked, ignored, or even shunned; indeed, all Ar-Ulrics have been pure-blood Teutogens. For non-Teutogens, this is intolerable, but they have yet to impact upon these tribalist views.

One of the most famous groups of Teutogens is the Brotherhood of the Axe. Selected from pure-blooded and devout Ulricans in the ranks of the Teutogen Guard, most suspect the Brotherhood works to return tribal purity to the Ulrican cult. No-one outside the mysterious Brotherhood is sure who controls it, but it is rumoured that Ar-Ulric himself may take orders from them. More about the Brotherhood of the Axe can be found on *Ashes of Middenheim*, page 59.

Sigmar

Before the ascension of Sigmar, Ulric was the most powerful deity of the Old World; indeed, it was Ar-Ulric that crowned Sigmar as the first Emperor. For centuries afterwards, the Cult of Ulric refused to acknowledge Sigmar's divinity, even though some of the cult's own seers had received visions of Ulric crowning Sigmar as a God. Now, most Ulricans believe Sigmar is as much a God as any other, but some, including the secretive Brotherhood of the Axe, firmly believe Sigmar was nothing more than a mighty mortal hero and thus never ascended.

Over the centuries, these differences between the cults have been the source of distrust and hatred, and have even resulted in civil war. Unfortunately for the Ulricans, such wars rarely end well. Now, they have just one vote to the Sigmarite three in Imperial elections, and all corners of the Empire, including Middenland, are full of devout and untrusting Sigmarites. Many Ulricans believe that something must be done about this, and soon.

Common View

"Aye. Ulric's by me side. I carry this wolf's tail, y'see, made o' rabbit, and this wolf's-head medallion. I also bought this skull here from a priest. Blessed it is. Belonged to a White Wolf, he said. I had it carved with holy words in Old Reikspiel by me mate, Anseich—he's a scrimshaw—that'll fill me with courage when the orders come to charge. Full of courage, me. Ulric's by me side."

—Ralfurt 'Ulli' Becker, Talabeclander Soldier

"Ah, Ulricans... they are little better than beasts when it comes to war. Lay a bear trap or two and they always get their feet trapped. Personally, I'd like more of my opponents to have such directed characters, it would make my life far simpler."

—Lorenzo di Marco, the Eagle of the North

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Ulric add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many sects or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

All Orders: Strike Mighty Blow

Priest

No Order: Intimidate, Frenzy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed)
Order of the Howling Wolf: Intimidate, Frenzy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed)
Order of the Knights of the White Wolf: Intimidate, Frenzy, Menacing
Order of the Winter Throne: Frenzy, Outdoor Survival, Very Resilient

Lesser Orders

The Cult of Ulric has historically had little need of lesser orders, which are broadly viewed to be complications to an effective and simple organisation. Chapterhouses of knights dedicated to Ulric have been founded—including the Knights of the Bloody Fist and the Order of the Knights of the Northern Cross—but these are never officially beholden to the Al-Ulric, who only directly controls the Knights of the White Wolf.

One lesser order that has managed to secure acceptance by the cult is the Order of the Winter Throne. Founded by a White Wolf named Brother-Templar Ragnar Franzsson almost 600 years ago, the isolated order was controversially taken into the Cult of Ulric in 1975 IC by Ar-Ulric Franzsson, Ragnar Franzsson's grandson. Since then, the Ragnarites, as they are commonly known, have spread across the north of the Old World.

Order of the Winter Throne

The Order of the Winter Throne has secluded monasteries of ascetics scattered throughout the colder regions of Nordland, Ostland, Kislev and southern Norsca. Ragnarites, named after their founder Ragnar Franzsson, call Ulric the 'Snow King' and teach that winter is a training ground for "Evernacht," an eternal winter that will choke the life from Ulric's greatest enemies, the Ruinous Powers. Some extremists of the order believe it is their duty to prepare the world for this imminent cleansing. To do this, they sacrifice food across the north in the name of Ulric, burning silos and stores in night-time raids. This may force people to survive through winter with negligible supplies, which is perfect preparation for Evernacht. But few are appreciative, especially those whose friends and family go to Morr in the freezing nights.

The Ragnarite leader is titled Ulricsson, and he controls the cult from Ulric's Throat, a cave system in Norsca discovered by the order's founder. It is rumoured that the caves hide the mysterious Throne of the Snow King, although its nature is unclear. Ulricsson rarely issues decrees, traditionally preferring individual monasteries to fend for themselves, much as they will do when Evernacht arrives. Ulricsson Haargald, the order's current leader, is a greying giant of a Norseman who, it is said, has not spoken for over thirty years, and consumes only melted snow.

Temples

No matter where Ulric's temples are erected, almost all follow the same template: a square wall protecting a fortified inner-sanctum.

The outer walls are normally undecorated, although isolated temples proudly boast any scars of war they have sustained. A single, reinforced gatehouse pierces the defences, and often hosts an array of anti-siege measures. Above the gate, a wolf's head is carved—the sole sign that a visitor actually approaches a temple, not a well-defended keep.

Within, everything is austere, utilitarian, and grey. Functional temple buildings—including workshops, cells, barracks, refectories, stables and animal pens—cling close to the high walls, overlooking wide courtyards and training squares. The temple itself rises in the centre, its manned battlements surrounding a high dome.

The temple interior is usually dominated by a single windowless chamber, lit only by small apertures in the dome above and by a great, central, ever-burning fire that represents the Eternal Flame in

Middenheim. Opposite the entrance, and behind the sacred flame, is a raised sacristy. Here, a grim statue of Ulric, sometimes sitting, often flanked by wolves, silently challenges those who dare enter his sacred hall.

Personalities

Archaon's drive into the heart of the Empire, and the resulting siege at Middenheim, felled countless brave Ulricans. From the ranks of the survivors, the darlings of raconteurs across the Empire were born, and within a few months were legendary. Al-Ulric Emil Valgeir, Commander Ulric von Kelp of the White Company, Standard Bearer Vorn Thugenheim, High Priest Hrolfgar, Denfather Claus Liebnitz, Brother Templar Erik Boksson, the list goes on and on, all heroes of the Empire, their names redolent with glory.

Every one of these men and more have guaranteed the future of the cult, at least for the short term. But they are not the only names echoing through the courts of the Empire.

High Priest Wolfmar von Krutz

Until recently, the aggressively intelligent Wolfmar von Krutz did not believe in the divinity of Sigmar. When an Initiate, he furiously studied every holy tome and stubbornly argued with every tutor until he arrived at his conclusion that Sigmar was not a God. To further his understanding he discussed theology with many of the Empire's most learned minds, including Hieronymus of Nuln, Zavant Konniger and even Verspasian Kant, the Patriarch of the Light Order. But the debates, oft-times heated, still led him to the same conclusion: Sigmar was *not* a God!

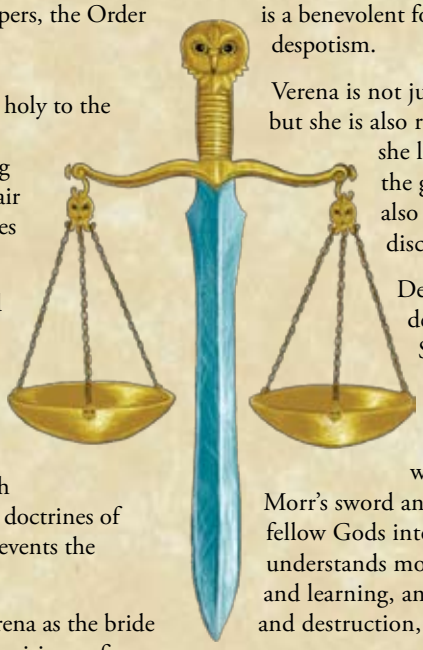
On his 53rd Birthday, von Krutz, who was, by that time, the high priest of Talabheim, waited for the blacksmith Valten, the supposed "Exalted of Sigmar," to march into his city. Valten arrived that evening mounted upon a great warhorse. The Emperor rode at his side, and a great host trailed far behind them. Sigmar's holy warhammer, Ghal Maraz, was held aloft in Valten's right hand. His left hand was held aloft in salute, the fading light shimmering down his ancient armour. The sight was magnificent. Awe-inspiring. Fighting back tears, von Krutz knew doubt for the first time in his life.

That night, the high priest is said to have met with Valten. No-one knows what passed between the two men, but von Krutz chose not to ride north to Middenheim to relieve the siege, which had been his original plan. Instead, he returned to his temple, feverishly claiming that Sigmar had been reborn, and that all Ulricans should watch for the "Mark of Unification."

Months later, when news reached Talabheim of Valten's "miraculous departure," von Krutz shook his head in disbelief. He could not believe it. He would not believe Valten could abandon his people. Thus, he is now convinced something is deeply wrong, and is using all of his resources to send agents north to uncover the truth. If this fails, he plans to travel to Middenheim himself, there to unearth exactly what happened to Valten, no matter the consequences.

— The Cult of Verena —

Seat of Power: None
Head of the Cult: None, although both High Priest Manfred Archibald and High Priestess Marieke van der Perssen are prominent, and somewhat dominant, authority figures in the cult
Primary Orders: The Scalebearers, the Lorekeepers, the Order of Mysteries
Major Festivals: Year Blessing
Popular Holy Books: All books are considered holy to the Cult of Verena
Common Holy Symbols: The owl, representing wisdom, is Verena's primary symbol. A pair of scales, representing justice, is sometimes used, as is a sword pointing downwards



Although the Empire and the rest of the Old World face the war, plague, and calamity with disturbing regularity, it is the rule of law and ordered society that enables the Empire and other nations to not only survive, but thrive. Indeed, those who venerate Ulric, and to a lesser extent Sigmar, may be concerned with violence and warfare, but it is the philosophical doctrines of justice espoused by the priests of Verena that prevents the Empire from sliding into a complete tyranny.

In the pantheon of Gods, some myths place Verena as the bride of Morr. Although this might seem an unlikely pairing at first thought, they are united by the common themes of judgement. They simply oversee different aspects of the concept. Where Morr judges the dead, it falls to Verena to judge the living. Verena is also thought to be the mother of Shallya, and in some parts of the Old World, of Myrmidia as well. A stoic and serious Goddess, she is a benevolent force to whom many appeal for freedom from despotism.

Verena is not just the patron of just decisions and balance, but she is also regarded as a wise teacher, for it is said that she lifted mankind from its barbarous roots with the giving of writing. It is for this act that she is also held as the mother of learning, reason, and discourse.

Despite her benevolence and civility, Verena has a definite martial streak as the Goddess of Justice. Some theologians claim this was not always the case, but when Chaos was unleashed upon the world and Ulric tried to rally the Gods against the threat, Verena was the only one who took his warning seriously. She took up Morr's sword and rode to battle behind Ulric, shaming her fellow Gods into action in the process. Her priests claim she understands more than any other the importance of wisdom and learning, and the need to defend them from ignorance and destruction, with force of arms if necessary.

The Cult

Although it is predisposed to order, law, and justice, there is little formal hierarchy within the cult. Instead, it operates in small cells, scattered throughout the centres of civilisation, being prevalent in districts that are given over to scholarly pursuits, where they run or fund universities to promote learning and education. Verena's cults have great influence in the Empire, with individual cultists serving as advisors in nobles' courts, and in some places, such as Nuln, they function as judiciaries, working ceaselessly to ensure the rule of law holds sway.

Particular cells within Verena's cult might have differing motivations, but one thing unites them all: the preservation of knowledge. They commit themselves to the acquisition of writings on any subject, gathering such lore in their sprawling libraries, where they can give back a portion of this knowledge to the communities they support. Since the cult is so committed to the preservation of learning, the Chaos incursions are especially dreadful to Verenans. Each war brings destruction, wiping out repositories of knowledge, depriving future generations of Humanity's accumulated knowledge. Therefore, when such threats loom, the Verenans are quick to aid the Empire in its defence, moving to the front lines to remove the scrolls and tomes to places of safety, even stepping over the screaming injured to do so.

Common Views

"I once saw a library on fire in Marienburg—those foolish Verenans were so busy scurrying in and out to save the books they didn't notice their own robes were on fire! All brains and no common sense."

—Yevgeny Pavovic, Kislevite Merchant

"His only chance is if Verena goes blind" —Common saying, meaning that someone is as good as guilty

"That may all be true, but no man or woman, not even Lady Verena, can judge until the other side has told their story. Then, once both parties have made their case, a judgement will be made."

—Judge Wilhelm Manfred

"When Wolfenburg was sacked, the Verenans wept more than the Shallyans. But their tears were for the books, not for the people."

—Albert Finnch, Ostland Gravedigger

"I'll tell you now, if you're looking for a quick answer, you're going to be disappointed."

—Herta Reinbad, a Patient Priestess of Verena

"Heretics! Chaos cultists! Every temple of Verena should be burnt to the ground for harbouring forbidden and dangerous writings!"

—Bernhard Loebstein, Sigmarite Fanatic and Rabble-Rouser

As a direct result of its obsession with knowledge, the Cult of Verena tends to find itself in the centre of controversy more often than not—far more than other rival cults. Among some of the more radical members of the cult's clergy, there is a belief that all writing, no matter its contents, is worth protecting. Such views put the cult at odds with Witch Hunters, and specifically, the Cult of Sigmar, who would see such heretical texts consigned to purifying pyres. This is a point of serious contention within the cult, but it is also a disagreement the Verenans are willing to set aside to protect the overarching interests of the cult.

To make matters worse, the Verenan cult often courts controversy amongst other religions, for some of the more radical interpretations of its scriptures are viewed as heretical by other faiths. It often ends up in conflict with other cults as a result, and can end up forming unlikely alliances also as a result. The cult is prepared to put its beliefs above traditions and friendships, regardless of short-term consequences, just as its cultists are expected to be unbiased and not unfairly favour friends and allies above enemies. As a result, outsiders sometimes view Verenans as being unreliable and fickle.

Relations are most strained between the cults of Verena and Sigmar, each vying for control of the Empire's legal system, and each taking opposed stances when it comes to the control of dubious literature. The Cult of Verena in Altdorf has taken advantage of the recent turmoil within the Cult of Sigmar to gain more of a foothold, finding the city's leaders to be better disposed to their less doctrinal ways.

Individual Verenans exhibit the characteristics of their Goddess more completely than other priests—excepting those of Ranald, of course. Verenans are almost universally wise, and every one has studied extensively, so they can be called upon to discuss a variety of subjects. They never hesitate to dispense advice or engage in debate, a fact that leads many to opine that Verenans are all arrogant. Still, Verenans are diplomatic and despite popular belief are rarely judgemental, preferring to consider all sides of an argument before forming their own opinions. They are often poked fun at because of their highly considered nature, jokingly said to be a slow and indecisive folk. This can get Verenans into difficulty, as they endlessly consider opposing arguments, unable to act until they have assessed all sides of a situation.

Verenans hold justice above all other values. No Verenan would allow a crime to go unpunished, to allow a criminal to go without payment for their misdeeds. A rare few Verenans take this beyond simply dispensing justice; these fanatics act as judge, jury and executioner, meting punishment to any who cross their paths. For the most part though, Verenans would sooner turn the accused over to the local authorities so the proper criminal process can take place. In places where the local authorities are corrupt or biased, Verenans have been known to organise their own underground courts and oversee the proceedings themselves.

Verenan Missionaries

As part of the cult's mandate to spread the ideas of learning and justice, there are some Verenan priests who take to wandering the Old World as missionaries. These missionaries travel to lands where

tyrants rule—Kislev, Bretonnia and the Border Princes, for example—where the ideas of justice and learning are either ignored or set aside in favour of despotism. This does not make the missionaries popular with the rulers of such lands, and many actively persecute priests of Verena as a result, whether missionaries or not. Three missionaries were recently executed in Brionne, where they were accused of working as anarchists and dangerous dissidents. Their executors were not the local nobility but the peasants themselves, who did not want the rabble-rousing priests to bring any unwanted attention from the nobility. This accusation is not without precedence, however; more than one tyrant has been brought down by trouble inspired by Verenan rhetoric, and many would sooner act pre-emptively and risk the wrath of the Cult of Verena than that of their people.

"The family business" —Trial and execution

"Kiss the Owl" —To swear an oath to Verena, usually accompanied by kissing the holy symbol of a Priest. Also used as a curse.

Beliefs

The Cult of Verena considers two things to be the founding principles of civilisation: learning and justice. It believes Mankind can only be bettered by embracing wisdom, truth and justice, but that Man must also learn to better itself, rather than have such concepts forced upon it.

Verenans preach the importance of knowledge and learning, and consider all knowledge to be equal, no matter how insignificant it may seem, or how dangerous others consider it to be. They believe in the truth as a concept and an ideal, but acknowledge that the truth itself is subjective and ultimately unknowable.

Verenans also uphold the sanctity of justice. They do not believe in the *letter* of the law, as that suggests that the words and ideals of one Man are greater than another, but do believe in the *spirit* of the law. Justice is blind, and so too all Verenans must be above prejudice and friendship, judging a case on the facts and evidence alone. In the eyes of the Cult of Verena, justice must be seen to be done, and to many the process is more important than the outcome. Verenans oppose tyranny and oppression, as well as injustice.

The greatest crimes to a Verenan are to wilfully allow injustice to be done, or to allow knowledge to be lost.

Some Verenans believe in the concept of enlightenment through the pursuit of knowledge and truth, although this is not a mainstream belief.

Initiation

As with other cults in the Old World, the path of becoming a servant of Verena is not an easy one. In fact, it requires a great deal of patience and study, for the cult does not suffer fools. From the moment a candidate comes to a temple to partake of the accumulated lore, he becomes ensconced in a rigorous regimen of lectures, research, and learning. His existence, henceforth, is committed to gaining wisdom.

Clever candidates take the time to study at a university prior to seeking admittance to the Cult of Verena, since doing so expedites the process of acceptance. Many study at the University of Nuln, but some seek other, more avant garde, institutions such as those found in Altdorf. Those who train to become scholars and lawyers find the most success once they join the Cult of Verena.

Once the high priest decides initiates have received sufficient training, they must face a panel drawn from the wisest of the priests. The panel ask them questions on a variety of topics, from common knowledge to more specialised subjects, to judge their wisdom, and engage them in debate and discourse to judge their oratory and reasoning skills. Candidates that satisfy the panel are ordained as new priests.

Cultists

Verena's cultists are an eclectic bunch, comprising a huge variety of academics, scholars, lawyers, and priests, all devoted to the worship of learning and justice. Verenan cultists dress in a wealth of different manners, from hole-ridden sackcloth robes to scholarly gowns, and expensively tailored jackets and breeches. The most common garb for Verenan priests are flowing scholarly robes and gowns of white fabric, to represent the light of knowledge and reason. All cultists show their devotion by wearing amulets depicting owls, sets of scales, or swords. Verenan judges and high priests often wear rather heavier and more ornate robes than their contemporaries, to show their status, often accompanied by powdered wigs. Most cultists carry swords, especially on formal occasions, to symbolise the sword of justice. Priests rarely use these swords, except to make a point during a debate, but for more militant members of the cult they are far from decorative.

The more devout members of the cult take to decorating their costumes with fragments of lore, copying extracts from scrolls and books onto strips of parchment that they pin to their robes, painting their armour with quotations or even tattooing scripture onto their flesh.

Strictures

- Safeguard knowledge, for it is the foundation stone for civilisation.
- All knowledge is equally important.
- Preserve your judgement from fear or favour.
- Arbitrate disputes whenever you can.
- Do not allow yourself to become a tool of injustice or heresy.
- Combat is a last resort, but do not fear to wield the sword of justice.

Structure

The Cult of Verena is unusual in that it is organised in a very loose and almost ad-hoc manner. There is no central authority, nor a single leader or even an established hierarchy. Instead the cult is organised along local lines, with the cult in each city—or even in each temple—managing its own affairs as a miniature cult. It is only when you consider Verena espouses wisdom over bureaucracy and justice over tyranny that the logic behind this organisation (or lack of it) becomes clear.

The view of the cult—although there are always arrogant and autocratic figures who disagree—is that it would be unjust and unwise for one temple or High Priest to arbitrarily impose their opinions on every other temple. In practise, it is more a case that an entire cult full of opinionated, often arrogant, intellectuals is unlikely to ever agree on a single point, reducing the activities of the cult to continuous bickering and arguments.

Each temple comprises initiates and priests, all controlled by a single high priest. The high priest oversees the day-to-day running of the temple, supervising holy rites and controlling the temple library. The high priest is chosen from amongst the ranks of the temple's priests, who come to a consensus as to who is the wisest and most learned of them all. A high priest remains in position so long as the consensus of the priests remain in his favour—a high priest outdebated too frequently or who repeatedly makes foolish decisions quickly loses respect and authority and can be stripped of their rank.

Verena's cult is divided into several vague philosophical and ideological schools—no closer to established organisations than the cult itself—sharing similar ideologies. These schools are by no means mutually exclusive, with some priests belonging to several, and many belonging to none. The two foremost schools are the Scalebearers and the Lorekeepers.

The Scalebearers focus on the aspect of Verena as the judge and arbiter. They believe justice is more important than learning, and they act as mediators. Scalebearers are sometimes assisted in their duties by templars from the Order of the Scale and Sword.

The Lorekeepers focus on the aspect of Verena as the guardian of knowledge. They believe learning is more important than justice, and are usually found in the role of librarians and scholars. The Lorekeepers are closely allied with the Order of Mysteries and the rarer Knights of the Scroll.

The cult does have several formal orders in addition to its schools of thought, foremost of which are the Order of Mysteries and the Order of Everlasting Light. These orders have usually begun as a Verenan cult that has outgrown its founding temple or assimilated several similarly thinking temples. To all intents and purposes, these orders are treated as any other temple of Verena, with a single High Priest overseeing lesser priests and initiates.

The Order of Mysteries

The Order of Mysteries is one of the few formal organisations within the Cult of Verena. The order is dedicated to the recovery

of lost and forgotten lore, and uncovering suppressed knowledge. Sometimes this search takes place in the depths of musty libraries, other times in distant ruins or haunted tombs. The danger posed by its quest leads the order to frequently ally with Light Wizards and adventuring parties. The majority of adventuring Verenan priests are members of the order, or at the very least in its employ.

The Order of Mysteries publishes an infrequent journal detailing its expeditions and findings, called *The Mysterious Volumes*. Although the journal was intended to help spread knowledge amongst Verenans, and other interested scholars, it is often used by adventurers looking for danger and riches, as the order is renowned for leaving obvious treasures behind in favour of highly prized tomes.

The order acknowledges that it does not publish *all* of its findings, as not all knowledge is suitable for public consumption. However, in accordance with the strictures of Verena, such knowledge is always made available in the order's libraries for trusted and diligent scholars to find it.

The high priest and founder of the order is Manfred Archibald, who is also the high priest of the temple of Verena in Altdorf.

The Order of Everlasting Light

The Order of Everlasting Light is the most widely known of Verena's knightly orders, not for their legendary exploits but for their infamous reputation. The knights of the order are drawn mainly from the noble classes and are devoted to the pursuit of justice, although more often than not this is justice as viewed by a noble, which is sometimes very different from justice as viewed by a peasant. Nonetheless, the order is there to defend people when nobody else will.

Yet these deeds are not what mark the Order of Everlasting Light out from fellow knightly orders. Instead it is the curse that inflicts the whole order that has made them exceptionally well known throughout the Empire. Their horses rear and bolt, their weapons break and their armour rusts prematurely, all at the most inopportune moments.

Sects

It could be said that every temple of Verena represents a separate sect within the Cult of Verena. Due to the fact that every temple is under its own jurisdiction, the manner in which Verena is worshipped and her are strictures interpreted varies greatly throughout the Empire, even varying between temples within a single city. In any other religion this would rip the cult apart in countless schisms, but Verenans embrace, nay even revel in these differences.

The cult does have its rather more fanatical members and orders that the more mainstream followers would rather ignore. Such hardliners are less tolerant of differing views and actively try to enforce their own viewpoint on others, be they Verenan or not. Verenan fanatics are tolerated by the cult, in the spirit of understanding, if not actively endorsed.

Verenan zealots cause trouble for local authorities, as they travel the roads of the Empire in the guise of travelling judges. These cultists stir up the local populace, rousing them to drag those they feel have wronged them in front of the zealots where they preside over ad-hoc courts and dispensing their own particular brand of justice. More moderate Verenans do their best to rein in such priests, for they see it as a perversion of the judicial system.

One such group of fanatics is the Scrollbearers. The Scrollbearers fervently believe knowledge is power, and actively crave this power. They do this by collecting and hoarding as many scrolls, tomes and books as they can get their hands on, by whatever means they can, even going as far as stealing books they cannot buy. Scrollbearers are far from altruistic, and jealously guard their collections from others. For this reason they are viewed with disdain by most Verenans, who believe in making knowledge available to all. There are some Verenans, however, who look upon the secretive wealth of knowledge in the hands of the Scrollbearers with more than a little envy.

Several minor sects of Verena worship her in various other aspects. The sect of Clio is popular with historians and explorers, worshipping her as Delver Into the Past. Verena has a male aspect, Renbaeth, who embodies the Perfect Lawyer, ceaselessly pursuing the truth. Scripsisti is Goddess of Calligraphers and Writing, and has taken on a more antagonistic role of late, railing against the spread of the printing press.

Lesser Orders

In addition to its schools and sects, the Cult of Verena does have a few distinct orders, though all but the Order of Mysteries are considered lesser orders.

Foremost of the lesser orders are the templars of Verena. The Goddess espouses the use of arms only as a last resort when rhetoric and wisdom have failed, but her strictures do include the provision that the sword of justice must be used when needed. There are two other templar orders in addition to the infamous Order of Everlasting Light, the Order of the Sword and Scale and the Knights of the Scroll.

The Order of the Sword and Scale

The largest of Verena's martial orders, members of the Order of the Sword and Scale see themselves as agents of justice. The order's most common duty is to guard Verenan temples and dignitaries. Members are sometimes used to guard prisoners before a trial, or to provide additional security at a courthouse during particularly tense proceedings.

Members of the order are not merely guards, and can be called upon to actively wield the sword of justice. In this role they help enforce the judgments of Verenan priests, enacting justice at the end of a sword or battling against the agents of tyranny. In times of war or crusade they march along with the other knightly orders.

The Knights of the Scroll

Much less common than the Sword and Scale, the Knights of the Scroll are closely tied to the Lorekeepers. The knights' mandate is to safeguard knowledge, and they do this by acting as guards

Cult Skills and Talents

Members of the Cult of Verena add the following skills and talents to their careers. Note that priests may only add one set of skills and talents, regardless of how many schools or orders they belong to. They must decide when they enter the career or the order, whichever comes first.

Initiate

Perception

Priest

No Order: Academic Knowledge (any two), Hypnotism, Secret Language (any one)

Scalebearer: Academic Knowledge (law), Charm, Public Speaking, Secret Language (any one)

Lorekeeper: Academic Knowledge (any two), Speak Language (Classical), Secret Language (any one)

Order of Mysteries: Seasoned Traveller, Speak Language (any one), Strong-Minded, Secret Language (any one)

Templar of Verena: Perception, Secret Language (any one), Speak Language (any one), Strong-Minded

at libraries, universities and Verenan temples. When word of a temple's controversial tome or forbidden grimoire becomes known, the knights are there, preventing fanatics or Witch Hunters from seizing the books.

They may also be dispatched to recover lost knowledge from dangerous locations, such as in the midst of wars. The knights are often enlisted by the Order of Mysteries to act as bodyguards on their expeditions, protecting the priests from danger.

A Knight of the Scroll is instantly recognisable—every inch of their armour is covered in fluttering fragments of scroll or parchment, or quotes painted on their weapons and armour.

Temples

Temples of Verena are generally large, stone buildings with colonnaded facades and light, airy interiors. They typically comprise a main hall lit from many high windows. The hall is decorated with great statues of the Goddess seated on a throne, surrounded by her symbols. Leading off from the hall are many smaller rooms used for meetings and trials, or serving as libraries and archives.

All are free to use the facilities of the temple. Anyone can make use of a temple's libraries, although only cultists may borrow the books, and Verenan priests are always willing to help visitors with their research or answer any questions.

Meetings and negotiations may take place within a temple's meeting rooms, under the gaze of Verena, and priests are often in attendance to help arbitrate disputes, or negotiate on behalf of one of the parties. Everything that takes place within a temple of Verena is treated with the utmost confidence. In smaller towns and villages that do not have their own law courts, a temple of Verena may act as the local court, with priests sitting in judgement over a trial.

Shrines are usually smaller versions of the temples in design, with a roof supported by columns sheltering a small statue of Verena.

Personalities

The Cult of Verena's notable personalities are usually famous academics, often more famous for their activities within these spheres than for their association with the temple. Many priests are noted scholarly experts in their specialist areas, for example. Several members of the Order of Mysteries are renowned for particularly exciting historical discoveries. The high priests of the larger temples, especially those in Altdorf, Marienburg and Nuln, are widely regarded as pre-eminent thinkers.

High Priestess Marieka Van der Perssen

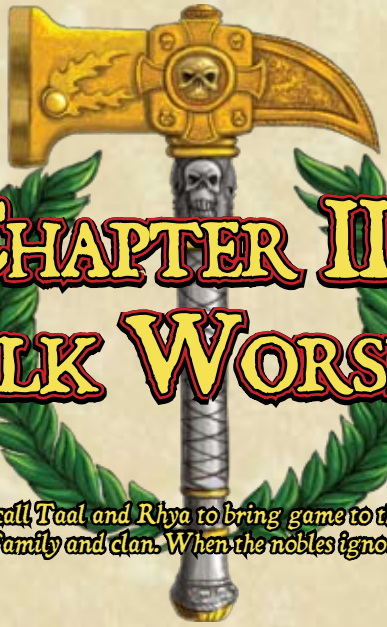
Marieka van der Perssen is high priestess of the Grand Temple at Nuln, and one of the most powerful and influential members of the cult. Marieka has been high priestess of the temple for nearly ten years, during which time she has helped forge greater ties between the temple and Countess Emmanuelle, to whom she acted as a tutor in the countess's youth. This friendship has allowed the high priestess to court rather more controversy than might be tolerated elsewhere, such as exhibiting the cult's collection of allegedly heretical books.

Marieka is also a professor of philosophy at the University of Nuln, and is one of the few female members of the faculty there. She possesses a fearsome intellect, and is an expert orator. When not teaching or conducting her religious duties, she can be found debating science and philosophy on the steps of the temple with whoever dares match wits with her.

Despite Marieka's friendship with the Countess, she has many enemies within the city, both from amongst Nuln's criminal fraternity, many of whom have been on the receiving end of Verenan justice, and from the city's more conservative elements, especially amongst the Cult of Sigmar, who fear and despise her dangerous and immoral stance with regard to heresy.

Oliver Kampf

An unlikely looking priest at first glance, Oliver Kampf looks more like a battle-hardened mercenary than a scholar. Oliver is a prominent member of the Order of Mysteries, and has been on more expeditions than most adventurers. He is most famous for his part in the mysterious expedition deep into the Land of the Dead, where he recovered one of the only surviving copies of the infamous *Book of Dust*. None of the expedition but Oliver returned from Khemri. The expedition changed him and he returned a more pious, if less stable, individual. He has promised that on his death bed he will consign all that he knows to paper, but until then remains silent as to what happened on the expedition.



Chapter III: Folk Worship

"Though times are always hard, 'least I can call Taal and Rhya to bring game to the table, Manann for rain to water my crops, and Shallya to stay the Green Pox from my family and clan. When the nobles ignore our cries, at least the Gods are always there to listen."

—Johann of Stirland, Shepherd

Although sages, scholars, and philosophers debate the nature of the Gods while sitting comfortably in their universities, and nobles pray to them from the luxury of their castles and manors, it is the common folk that breathe life into the cults. Almost all the rites practised have had their genesis in some simple act done by common folk, slowly transforming into the practises upheld today. Some of these rites have metamorphosed into truly baroque practises that have little or nothing to do with the reason they were created long ago, yet they persist, due in part to the tradition-minded people of the Empire who let nothing fall to the wayside.

Most villages and hamlets of the Empire employ the same rituals their ancestors did, and it's a rare settlement indeed that doesn't have some unique twist on the rites practised throughout the realm. A traveller entering a new province, however, is sure to find the same major holidays in these places, just as they would find back home. The difference could surprise them. The high priests of the major religions accept these differences as subtle "flavours" to the worship of the Gods—as long as the rites are performed in roughly the same manner, then all is good. Despite this, some places eschew the accepted holidays, replacing them with rituals that smack of blasphemy and heretical thought. This is but one reason why Witch Hunters continue to patrol places considered "safe"—the threat of deviation from accepted thought that heads down the path to Chaos.

The Empire is full of people holding vastly differing beliefs. Many of the "Old Gods" still hold sway in the little-travelled portions of this realm. Minor Gods are dominant in some places, with their own demands of worship and respect. In addition, the relatively new concept of paying homage to Venerated Souls has come into being, which may throw the fragile balance of the Gods into disarray. After all, Sigmar himself was a mortal man who became a God. Who is to say that it may not happen again in the future?

Worship within the Empire can be seen as two-fold—the ways of the poor, humble masses and those of the elite, wealthy, and powerful. While, in theory, the rituals are the same, regardless of who is performing them, money and status factor heavily into the rites of the people. The commoners of the Empire stick to more base forms of worship to affect their daily struggle. They pray for rain, for good crops, for many children, and to have war stay far away from their home and family. On the other hand, nobles ask the Gods for political power, strength over their enemies, and the continued fealty of those they lord over.

Noble vs. Folk Worship

Whilst almost all religious belief in the Empire emerged organically from the common people, there is now a rather strict division between the way that the upper, noble classes worship the deities, and the way in which the peasants and other commoners venerate them. Although most temples are open for everyone, given the hierarchy and stratified class structures of the Empire, few commoners really know how the nobles show their respects to the Gods, and vice versa.

The rites of commoners are base, ribald, and more in touch with the basic needs of humanity—prayers for better crops, more children, and safety from the beasts of the wild. Even the "loftier" Gods, such as Verena, are called up for relatively simple, cut-and-dry matters. Nobles, on the other hand, often ask for considerably more complex and esoteric matters, such as expanding the extent of their domain, elimination of a political rival, or aspiration of attaining a higher title. Nobles often look down their noses at the vulgar worship of the common folk, while peasants often shake their heads at the way the nobles go about their rites with so much

expense and extremely pompous attitudes, although often in awe of some of the spectacles that they put on.

However, this is not to say that the noble and common classes do not get a chance to interact during their worship. Indeed, festivals and other religious observances are often the only time in which those of noble blood mingle with the lower classes—ostensibly, as is said by the priests, because all people are considered equal in the eyes of the Gods.

Pomp and Circumstance

In complete contrast with the rites of the common folk, the nobles of the Old World take their worship of the Gods to extravagant ends. For the average nobleman or wealthy burgher, spending money on glorious temples, expensive incense or sacrifices, and putting on lavish ceremonies not only shows their piety, but also proves their wealth, status, and power to their peers and the people they lord over. For most nobles, the more one spends to express their faith, the greater the favours of the Gods.

Nobles typically spend a large portion of their wealth in building shrines as large as possible in their homes, adorning them with gold-gilt statues, paintings, and marble columns. Even the poorest of nobility do their best to make their family shrines and places of worship as grand as possible. Though some priests frown upon such "frivolous" displays (particularly among the simple Cult of Taal and Rhya, or the ascetically natured cultists of Verena), the majority approve of such behaviour, seeing it as just another way to praise the Gods in all their glory.

The numerous festivals on the calendar allow nobles many opportunities to throw lavish events, with huge feasts, grand effigies crafted from rare materials, and expensive gifts and offerings to those who attend. Almost without question, the peasants and other lower classes are barred from participating in the rites of the nobility, but occasionally, a particularly pious lord may host a festival for the benefit of the people—in rare cases, they are even sincere about their generosity.

Some of the rites put on by the rich and powerful can reach truly staggering proportions. For example, in Altdorf, it's traditional on the day of Sigmar's birth for the noble class to host a lavish, public festival, complete with treats and gifts. While the common folk are content to receive a loaf of bread or tankard of ale during this time, it's not unheard of for nobles to present each other with tokens of gold, jewels, and other expensive items.

— Minor Deities —

Although the citizens of the Empire pay homage to nine primary cults, there are dozens, if not hundreds of minor Gods still venerated throughout the realm. Every province boasts its own unique Gods, some of which are not even known beyond a few miles away from the places where they are recognised. Most minor deities are fervently worshipped by a small handful of cultists, often in secret, especially with deities of a bloody or questionable demeanour. Otherwise, minor deities are given honour at specific holidays and ignored the rest of the time by the bulk of the populace.

The priests of the nine main cults acknowledge the existence of these minor deities, although how they are accepted depends on several circumstances. If a new God is encountered in some unexplored backwater, priests do their best to classify a minor deity as an aspect of one of the nine primary Gods. Depending on the area and the temperament of the locals, this "inclusion" of their deity into the recognised pantheon may be wholly accepted, or decried as heresy and rejected. Most of the minor deities, however, are mere aspects of the main pantheon, although they are treated by most as separate entities altogether. There is, for instance, Ranald the Dealer and Ranald the Night Prowler. Burghers and merchants almost always give offerings to Ranald the Dealer, but would do so in order to keep Ranald the Night Prowler away from their businesses. Amazingly, most citizens of the Empire accept these types of contradiction without concern.

Other minor deities include foreign deities imported into the Empire. Immigrants coming in continue to worship their old Gods, and in some cases, this veneration spreads to others, potentially elevating the deity to a much higher status. A prime example of this is Myrmidia, who clearly came from the southern Old World (though debate rages to this day whether she originated from Estalia or Tilea), yet has become extremely popular among the citizens of the Empire. It is certain this could happen again in the future, with new deities gaining favour and the ways of the older Gods being forgotten or relegated to minor status—to say openly, however, is heresy.

Localised and Nature Deities

The Empire is full of a huge number of disparate people with only a vague sense of unity. The place is full of Gods, spirits, and entities that all demand worship. Beyond the scope of the nine "accepted"

Provincial Religions

Province	Most Popular Deities	Sample of Local Deities
Averland	Myrmidia, Sigmar, Shallya, Taal	Altaver (River Aver), Dehagli (Tailors), Margileo (Honour), Forsagh (Divination), Gunndred (Rustling), Sheirrich (Wind)
Hochland	Sigmar, Shallya, Taal and Rhya, Ulric	Ahltler (Woodworking), Lupos (Predators), Oboroch (Middle Mountains), Shrowl (Hunting), Tahrveg (Archery)
Middenland	Ulric, Taal	Artho (Tradition), Dark Helgis (Widows), Haleth (Fertility), Karnos (Beasts), Ktharta (Lake Delb), Rudric (Glory)
Mootland	Sigmar	Esmerelda (Home and Hearth), Gaffey (Building), Hyacinth (Fertility), Josias (Tobacco), Phineas (Farming), Quinsberry (Ancestry)
Nordland	Manann, Sigmar, Ulric	The Azure Man (Sky), Karog (Forests), Loerk (Dancing), Manalt (Fishermen), Stovarok (Storytelling), Vallich (Smithing and Ship Building)
Ostermark	Morr, Sigmar, Taal and Rhya, Ulric	Arvala (Carpentry), Eldal (The Veldt), Gid (Peak Pass), Kavarich (Horses), Millavog (Dancing), Urvijak (Morning Frost)
Ostland	Sigmar	Aach (Aach River and Aachen), Guvaur (Bulls), Kakarol (Horses), Narlog (Inevitability), Skalor (Bartering), Wulfor (Lake Wolfen)
Reikland	Sigmar, Shallya	Dyrath (Fertility), Borchband (Agitating), Fury (Righteous Anger), Grandfather Reik (River Reik), Handrich (Commerce), Katya (Disarming Beauty)
Stirland	Morr, Sigmar, Shallya, Taal	Albaulea (Farming), Bylorak (Bylorhof Marsh), Ishernos (Father Earth), Manhavok (Floods), Narvorga (Fertility), Seppel (Vengeance)
Talabecland	Taal and Rhya, Ulric	Karnos (Beasts), Koppalt (the Koppens), Renbaeth (Lawyers), Scripsisti (Scribes), Shadreth (Tracking), Toar (Lightning)
Wissenland	Sigmar, Taal and Rhya	Ahalt (Hunt, Fertility and Sacrifice), Khirreth (Oberstein Wood), Gargali (Mining), Mittlmund (Guardian of Restless Spirits), Söll (the Sun), Wendred (Duty)

Gods, there exists an entire spectrum of minor Gods, some of which hearken to a bygone era, some of which are new, and a few are relatively new to the collective worship of locals. Most of the minor Gods can be summed up as either local deities specific to a particular town, burg, or province, or deities tied to rivers, forests, and other natural places. The difference between the two often depends on whom you ask.

Localised deities are just that—deities whose influence or reputation are rarely found beyond a few tens of miles, although some are recognised over greater distances. This is typical for certain types of deities associated with roads or trails, with small shrines scattered along their length. The line is often blurry between what is a true deity and what is some Venerated Soul from long ago, although the power and respect accorded is the same. The people that worship these local powers are typically extreme in their faith, and balk at the idea that they may be performing some form of heresy by their veneration, and often must fight long and hard in convincing travelling Witch Hunters that what they do is an act of devotion, rather than heresy.

Nature deities are far more common. Depending on who is asked, these deities are either minor aspects of Taal, Rhya, or Manann, some form of spirit that is mistakenly treated as a deity, or even a holdover deity whose roots lie with the Elves or Dwarfs. Nature deities are often associated with a sacred grove (or even an individual tree), cave, stream, or other place of natural beauty, might, and majesty. Others are actually nymphs, dryads, naiads, and other fey creatures mistakenly treated as if they were actual Gods. If a person believes in a particular nature deity, he's likely to leave an offering to both the God in question and also to Taal and Rhya, giving all of them honour. The rites demanded by these deities can seem ludicrous and anachronistic for the non-believer, but carry immense weight for those that believe in their power. For example, a local river God may demand an offering of a virginal sow, the cut hair of three maidens, and the blood of a black rooster once a year, lest it rises from its bank and flood the surrounding landscape.

Regardless of whether you're dealing with local or nature deities, outsiders may believe these demands have little weight, but for locals, performing the necessary rites and sacrifices carry great importance. It's not unheard of for a normal, unassuming citizen of the Empire to run afoul of the demands and edicts of one of these Gods, often without their knowledge, to which the locals set things straight. Thus, a stranger who visits some far-flung province may become a sacrifice to these Gods, mainly due to ignorance rather than outright intent in committing some grave offence.

Sample Minor Gods

There are hundreds, if not thousands of minor Gods in the Empire, some with as few as a few dozen worshippers. In addition, some Old Worlders venerate non-human deities, borrowing Gods from the Dwarfs, Elves, and even the Halflings, including them in their prayers and ceremonies. The following entries are but a sample of the kinds of minor Gods worshipped in the Old World. For more minor Gods with which you can build your own traditions, see **Table 3–1: Other Minor Gods**.

Artho the Unmoving

Celebrating tradition and the old ways, a few crusty old men and women keep stone idols of Artho on their person. This way, whenever they confront some development or change that they perceive threatens the moral fibre of Middenland, they yank out the idol to remind others of the values and customs Middenlanders ought to abide by—and if their protests fall on deaf ears, the idol serves as a useful club.

Borchband, the Voice

Politicians and other lawmakers in Reikland and Altdorf keep amulets of Borchband submerged in goblets of wine in the hopes of distracting the God from sending out agitators to thwart their plans.

Dark Helgis, Matron of Widows

To avert the attention of Dark Helgis, some women slay an animal and dress it in the clothes of their husbands. They then drag the corpse into the woods as an offering to the hated witch who steals their loves.

Forsagh, God of Auguries

Averland shepherds smitten by love sometimes make invocations to Forsagh in the hope of learning if their affection will be

Table 3–1: Other Minor Gods

This table describes a few of these deities, along with their sphere of influence, and the province or country where they are most popular. Also included are a few non-human Gods that are acknowledged (and in rare cases, respected) by the Human inhabitants of the Empire.

Name*	Sphere of Influence	Location
Aach	Aach River and Aachen	Ostland
Affairiche	Merchants	Bretonnia
Ahalt	Hunting, Fertility, Sacrifice	Wissenland
Ahltler	Woodworking	Hochland
Albaulea	Farming	Stirland
Altaver	River Aver	Averland
Arvala	Carpentry	Ostermark
Bögenauer	Bögenhafen	Bögenhafen
Bylorak	Bylorhof Marsh	Stirland
Clio	History	Reikland
Dazh	Fire and the Sun	Kislev
Dehagli	Tailors	Averland
Dyrath	Fertility	Reikland
Eldal	The Veldt	Ostermark
Esmerelda (H)	Home and Hearth	Mootland
Father Raven	Ravens and crows	Averland
Fury	Righteous Anger	Reikland
Gadd	World's Edge Mountains	Stirland
Gaffey (H)	Building	Mootland
Gazul (D)	Protector of Dead	Eastern Empire
Gid	Peak Pass	Ostermark
Gorol	Streams	Ostermark
Grandfather Reik	River Reik	Reikland
Grungni (D)	The Forge	Stirland
Gunndred	Rustling	Averland
Guvaur	Bulls	Ostland
Haendryk	Merchants	Wasteland
Haleth	Fertility	Middenland
Haleth	Lady of the Hunt	Northern Empire
Handrich	Commerce	Reikland
Hyacinth (H)	Fertility	Mootland
Hyssron	Sacred knolls	Averland
Ishnernos	Earth Spirit	Talabecland
Josias (H)	Tobacco	Mootland
Kakarol	Horses	Ostland
Kalita	Merchants	Kislev
Karnos	Beasts	Talabecland
Karog	Forests	Nordland
Kavarich	Horses	Ostermark
Khirreth	Oberstein Wood	Wissenland
Koppalt	The Koppens	Talabecland
Ktharta	Lake Delb	Middenland
Lady of the Lake	Bretonnia	Bretonnia
Lucan	Founder of Luccini	Tilea
Luccina	Founder of Luccini	Tilea
Lupos	Predators	Hochland
Manalt	Fishermen	Nordland
Manhavok	Floods	Stirland
Margileo	Honour	Averland
Mathlann (E)	Sea	Laurelorn Forest
Mercopio	Merchants	Tilea
Mermedus	Sea of Claws	Norsca
Millavog	Dancing	Wissenland
Mittlmund	Guardian of Restless Spirits	Wissenland
Narvorga	Fertility	Stirland
O Prospero	Merchants	Estalia
Oboroch	Middle Mountains	Hochland
Phineas (H)	Farming	Mootland
Quinsberry (H)	Ancestry	Mootland
Rudric	Glory	Middenland
Salyak	Charity	Kislev
Sarriel (E)	Dreams	Laurelorn Forest
Scripsisti	Scribes	Talabecland
Seppel	Vengeance	Stirland
Shadreth	Tracking	Talabecland
Shrowl	Hunting	Hochland
Skalor	Bartering	Ostland
Snow King	Snow	North Empire
Söll	The Sun	Wissenland
Stovarok	Storytelling	Nordland
Stromfels	Storms	Nordland
Styriss	Poachers	Ostermark
The Azure Man	Sky	Nordland
Toar	Lightning	Talabecland
Tor	Thunder and Lightning	Kislev
Torothal (E)	Rain and Rivers	Laurelorn Forest
Ursash	Bear Hunters	Ostland
Ursun	Bears	Kislev
Urvijak	Morning Frost	Ostermark
Uutann	Oak trees	Middenland
Vallich	Smithing and Ship Building	Nordland
Wulfor	Lake Wolfen	Ostland

*(D) = Dwarf deity, (E) = Elf deity, (H) = Halfling Deity

reciprocated. After saying a quick prayer, they examine the consistency of the next pile of droppings they find. Soft and squishy leavings suggest that the paramour will return his love, while dry, hard droppings warn the shepherd to seek elsewhere for passion.

Gargali, God of the Hidden Ore

Wissenland miners, before entering a new mine, tie a small piece of paper bearing the symbol of Gargali onto a sparrow's leg. They then keep the sparrow in a cage. If the bird dies, the miners believe they are close to a new vein of ore. Sadly, there are few folks who can confirm if this trick actually works.

Katya, Deity of Disarming Beauty

Worship of Katya is extremely regional, almost unknown outside of the Reikland. Young maidens sometimes hide small symbols of Katya in their beloved's belongings to make them powerless against their charms.

Loerk, Lord of the Dance

Nordlanders who develop warts on their feet are said to have received the Lord of the Dance's disfavour. Those opposed to dancing on general principle encourage these unsightly growths to expand by rubbing them with toads, and during big festivals, these men and women proudly sit with their shoeless feet propped up to show their disdain. Some whisper that these folks are in fact Artho-following Middenlanders.

Narlog the Inevitable

When something is said to be in "Narlog's gift," Ostlanders usually are referring to death, taxes, the scorn of a woman, and what happens when you leave an Averlander alone with a sheep.

Renbaeth the Shrewd, Patron of Lawyers

There's a saying in Talabecland whenever someone is about to enter a costly bargain or receive the short shrift in a deal. Such people are said to be paying "Renbaeth's fee," after the exorbitant prices charged by Talabheim's esteemed legal force.

Shaback, God of the Fens and Swamps

Venerated by the natives of the Cursed Swamp, though beyond its borders the name Shaback is more of a curse than it is a God. People in neighbouring lands often mutter the word "Shaback" when they stand in something unpleasant.

Sheirrich, The Lost Wind

In Averland, whenever someone scents a foul odour in the air, they are quick to exclaim "Sheirrich's Broken Wind!" The last person in the group to say it is believed to have created the stink whether they have or not, resulting in gales of laughter from their fellows.

Tahrveg, The Keen Arrow

In olden days, Tahrveg was a popular God and most archers gave a finger to the God to help their aim. In the last Chaos Incursion, so great was the fear that archers cut off so many fingers they couldn't hold their bows. Since then, dogma has been changed so that the gift is symbolic and each archer tends to soak his finger in his own urine to ensure that his aim is true. Some maidens giggle and claim it helps their aim when firing their other bow.

Wendred, God of Duty and Service

Worshipped in places throughout Wissenland, whenever a person is given an important task, he is said to "carry the weight of Wendred."

— Ancestor Spirits —

Family and lineage are extremely important in the Old World. The proud members of the various tribes that formed the Empire take their genealogy very seriously and most hold their ancestors in high regard. To show them honour, almost every home in the Old World has a small shrine or sacred space where mementos, small statues, and other keepsakes are displayed. These ancestors are called upon along with the deities, to bring good fortune, bountiful crops, and other positive effects to a family. While most call simply on the collective force of the entire familial line, those families that are blessed with a particularly famous ancestor consider themselves extremely lucky and speak their name often during their prayers. Nobles in particular hold their ancestors in high regard. The wealthiest build shrines and temples that can even rival those of the deities, which is often viewed with suspicion by cultists who feel that this hubris is unwise and disrespectful.

Human communities living close to Dwarf settlements take this practise to an extreme. The citizens of Wissenland, eastern Averland, and Ostermark have often been accused of paying more homage to their departed kin rather than the living Gods. Dwarfs view this practise with a nodding sort of respect, and it's one of the reasons they and Humans can get along. However, Dwarfs often pity the short-lived Humans, who have so many more ancestors to pay homage to—one wonders how they can keep track!

The Halflings of the Empire also revere their families and ancestors, although they rarely erect shrines to honour those that have passed on—they would rather show respect for their departed kin through songs and hyperbolic stories. Indeed one method for sharpening one's memory (and a vital, if boring, lesson taught to all Halfling children) is reciting family members back as far as possible.

Elves hold their ancestors in high regard, but in no way do they venerate them in the same way that Humans or Dwarfs do. Because of their incredibly long lives, Elves are often in contact with their great or great-great grandparents long into their adulthood. When an Elf passes away, songs are sung and poetry is read, and the spirit of the departed is allowed to move on with little remorse. Humans often look askance at the blasé manner in which Elves speak of their ancestors, and Dwarfs find this attitude both rude and contemptible—this is just another reason why these two races find it so hard to get along.

Ancestor Spirit

Roll	Result
01–05	*You have stained your family name!* The spirit is so appalled by your actions, it leaves you. Before you can call upon your ancestor spirit, you must first spend an hour each day for 1d5 days beseeching the spirit to return, and apologising for your poor and shameful behaviour. Offering a bowl of fresh blood for each invocation reduces this time by half.
06–15	*No, do this!* The ancestor spirit sees your dire need and confers a +20% bonus to your next Characteristic or Skill Test.
16–20	*You need to learn!* The spirit believes you need to be humbled. Every time you make a Characteristic or Skill Test in the next 24 hours, there's a 10% chance that the spirit imposes a –10% penalty on the Test.
21–30	*Yes, very good, just like I would have done!* The spirit is pleased by your actions and rewards you with a boon. You gain a floating +10% bonus to any one Characteristic or Skill Test of your choosing.
31–35	*Idiot!* The spirit spits vitriol and venom into your head. On your next turn you may only use one half action.
36–45	*There, there, it will be ok.* The spirit soothes your discomfort. Heal 1 Wound.
46–50	*You cannot be related to me!* The spirit angrily denies your existence. Lose access to this talent for 24 hours.
51–60	*Well done!* On your next successful Test, you gain an extra degree of success.
61–65	*Evidently, you haven't been paying attention.* On your next successful Test, you reduce your degrees of success by one to a minimum of zero degrees of success.
66–75	*Allow me to help.* You may immediately take another half action.
76–80	*You're making your poor mother weep.* All Tests for the next hour are made at a –10% penalty due to the sounds of weeping that fills your mind.
81–90	*You do us all proud.* Recover 1d5 Wounds regardless of your level of injury.
91–95	*Madness!* The spirit starts to scream and moan in your head. Make a Will Power Test to avoid gaining 1 Insanity Point.
96–00	*Not bad, but try harder.* No additional effect.

Ancestor Spirits and Characters

Due to the fact that family carries so much weight within the Empire, it seems right that a Player may want their Character to extol the virtues of their family line during a game. On the other hand, a Character may carry the weight of some ancestor's grievous act from long ago, burdening the entire family with a shame that can never be completely erased.

Whilst all families have ancestors that are said to figuratively haunt the living, in some extreme cases, this is literally true, with Spirits, Ghosts, and other Undead visiting the living members. It's rare, though possible, that a character may have to contend with the spirit of an ancestor making an appearance. For the GM, this can come in many forms. The most blatant is to have the ancestors appear in the form of a Ghost, although even a simple voice on the wind (or in the head of the Character) could also suffice.

Ancestor Spirit (Talent)

Description: You gain the attention of one of your ancestors, and you're now haunted by their spirit. Whilst this entity does its best to help you on your adventures, it's quick to chastise and berate you should you act in a matter that shames the family. Whenever you would spend a Fortune Point, you gain the normal benefits, but you also must roll percentile dice on the table above.

— Superstitions and Folk Customs —

In a world full of wizards casting spells, Daemons of Chaos tempting the faithful, and bizarre Mutants roaming the wild lands, the inhabitants of the Old World are, by intent or in defence, incredibly superstitious. There is rarely a moment that goes by when the average person doesn't take into account some superstitious ritual, such as muttering a prayer after crossing the shadow of a plague victim, or tossing a bit of spilt salt over one's shoulder. Superstitions run the gamut, from the fate of a person, curses, and even the occasional boon.

Most of the superstitions in the Empire are ancient beyond compare, and few people can remember exactly what the reasoning for it may have been. Still, traditions in the Empire die hard, and regardless of whether these superstitions continue to have any power or purpose is meaningless to the majority of its inhabitants.

The hard, harsh life of most citizens of the Empire makes them view almost every event with a superstitious eye—most of it with a cynical, paranoid bent. Players should remember this trait and play it up. Educated characters are almost worse, pointing out these falsities to the ignorant masses, often at importune times. However, regardless of a person's learning or status, superstitions manage to creep into the daily routine.

A person believing they are under the effects of a curse caused by a superstition can usually be "cured" through some other superstitious act. Entire industries exist of quack doctors and ineffectual "hedge wizards" (not to be mistaken with the Career of the same name) offering advice and ingredients to reverse the effects of a superstition gone wrong. Naturally, none of these efforts actually work, but a GM can and probably should emphasise the more bizarre methods of "curse" removal.

Magic and Superstition

There is a fine line between what is considered actual magic and what is nothing more than pure superstition. Sages, scholars, and

Sample Superstitions

Described here is a sample of some of the superstitious beliefs Characters may encounter during their adventures in the Empire. While most are harmless in nature, anyone that willingly violates some of these strange customs may find themselves viewed as a heretic or potential witch by the people around them. Ignorant people hold these beliefs in the core of their being, while more cosmopolitan folk laugh them off—replacing them with other superstitions of their own.

A crow landing on the grave of the newly dead means that the soul has passed on safely to Morr's realm.

Passing through the shadow of someone suffering the plague is horribly unlucky.

A found coin should be spent on risky ventures.

It is foolish to sit on the blind side of a person with one eye.

A pledge made to Sigmar while striking a hammer on metal ensures its solid bond.

Bells, gongs, and banging on metal repel the forces of Chaos.

If you take a dead man's shoes, keep the laces loose till the next full moon, lest his spirit comes back to haunt you.

A cat crossing your path means Ranald is watching. If a pair crosses your path, doom is sure to follow.

Goblins cannot attack you during a full moon.

If you're sick, an apple carried in your pocket, and allowed to rot, draws the disease from your body.

Cows mooing in the darkness heralds dark times the following day.

A promise made at a crossroads carries great weight and a terrible burden.

To say a person's name three times in a sitting is to call them to you.

Bury or burn your cut hair and nail clippings, lest a witch use them for devious ends.

Rubbing a drunken Halfling's belly brings luck the next day.

If you ask a man about his scars, you must listen to the whole tale, or the same fate may befall you.

Curdled milk scattered about property stays away the Pox.

If dirt or soot lands in newly milled flour, death is sure to follow.

Witches hide in abandoned wells.

If you kill a drunken man, spill a tankard of ale on the ground for his soul, or else he'll come back from the grave to get it from you.

If you are struck on the head by a falling pinecone, you are destined to marry in the coming year.

Old or broken oars should be cast adrift. Burning them angers Manann, who'll ensure you get lost the next time you're at sea.

Drinking ale containing hairs from a Dwarf's beard makes you resistant to disease (Humans only).

It's lucky to have the horse drawing a funeral carriage eat an apple from your hand.

Gold rubbed against a snakebite pulls the venom out from the body.

Burning bread invites fire to consume your home.

wizards all debate the nature of superstition as it applies to magical technique. They often ask themselves: does magic work because of the superstitious nature of people, or are people superstitious because of the works of magic? The wisest agree that it's a little bit of both.

Although Magisters tend to look down on the backwards practises of the masses, most recognise the fact that such behaviour exists for a reason. More than a few beliefs have sprung up simply thanks to the idle words spoken by a wizard who then see the Winds of Magic twist and bend due to the reactions of others reacting to their comments.

The typical citizen of the Empire sees little difference between superstition and magic, which causes no end to problems to those that practise magic for a living. For most people, the world is a dangerous and mysterious place, with the evil powers kept at bay only because of the mutterings of certain phrases or performing certain acts, regardless of whether they make sense or not.

Ultimately, it is up to the GM to determine whether performing a superstitious act has the desired effect or not. Similar to Blessings (see *WFRP*), performing the correct superstitious act at the appropriate time could grant a Character a small bonus to one Test, keep a particular person at bay, or incur a minor curse of some type. While most superstitions are dire in their outcome, they should never result in some immediate death, horrible disfigurement, or dread curse—this is the point where magic supersedes mere superstition. Instead, superstitions should be used primarily with roleplaying in mind, perhaps linked to a person in a similar way to Doomings (see page 150). At worst, a curse inflicted by a superstitious act should inflict nothing worse than a –5% penalty to a single Test. Make no mistake, as mild as these minor curses are, they reflect the vastly more dangerous curses that sometimes protect old tombs and ruins. For more information on these potent curses, see *Lure of the Liche Lord*.

Strangely, Magisters are incapable of using superstitions for this effect. It's possible that their ties to the Aethyric winds prevent them from performing these feeble acts. Because most superstitions exist to keep magic from affecting a person, the converse is not true—superstitious behaviour, when allowed, does apply to Magisters, witches, and other persons capable of wielding magic.

The Evil Eye

Most Old Worlders know to fear the power of the Evil Eye, and just about any downturn of luck is blamed on this foul curse. Most folks who suffer from the Evil Eye are not certain about how they picked it up or who gave them the sinister glare, but they are sure they have it. Finding insects in one's food, ale tasting of dirt, botched efforts to sneak about, or a poor swing of a sword (and bad dice rolls) are all sure signs of the Evil Eye working its wickedness.

The Evil Eye as a curse can appear anywhere, on any surface, or from anyone. A crone levelling her blind white eye at a person is sure to carry some malevolence, and a hate-filled stare of a wronged woman is always bad luck. Some Evil Eyes are not given by people, but are instead scratched onto doorframes, drawn in the mud or dirt, or carved in clay and then placed in the offending person's

pocket—and in every case the effects are the same. The victim is cursed and only desperate measures can lift the burden.

Getting rid of the curse is an exercise of the ridiculous. Old Worlders level the full might of their superstitious fantasies on such ailments. One of the most extreme examples is in stripping off the clothes, slathering oneself in dung, and running around with your hands over your head. This is bound to attract some stares and therefore transfer to the Evil Eye onto some other hapless fool. Another technique is eating the eyes of nine pigs and forcing yourself to vomit the contents of your gut once down—an act that's never too difficult. Most folks, though, simply go to the person who laid the curse and make restitution for their bad behaviour. Old Worlders find this utterly foolish because doing so could mean that you get two Evil Eyes!

In truth, the best defence against this wretched curse is to prevent being struck in the first place. The truly superstitious keep the company of chickens since these fowl can outstare anyone. Paranoid men with chickens under their arms are all too common sights in backwater places in the Empire. A few people simply blindfold themselves, since if you can't see the curse then it can't affect you.

Variations in Folk Customs

Just as the Empire is really a collection of semi-unified peoples under the banner of a single Emperor, so are the beliefs of its inhabitants. Customs of worship vary from place to place. Old Worlders are notoriously insular by nature, and most rarely venture more than a few miles from their homes. As a result, beliefs and religious customs have slight variations even among settlements relatively close to one another. Those people that travel more extensively usually accept this fact for what it is, as long as the customs they encounter do not come across as blasphemous or too far from what is considered acceptable.

Most of the variations in worship are minor. For example, a town celebrating the coming of spring may require revellers to wear flowers in their hair, while those in the village down the road wear wreathes of flowers about their necks. However, there are times in which these variations can be jarring for a foreigner travelling to a different region. Depending on their beliefs, and how rigid their mindset is, some of these variations may even come across as heretical or blasphemous. Witch hunters, always on the prowl for heresy, begrudgingly accept the fact that the Empire is large, and unified practise of a cult's customs is impossible. Still, if an isolated community takes these differences too far, the gossip and shock generated is sure to reach a witch hunter's ears.

Prayers and Holy Sayings

Prayers and sacred phrases are important aspects of being a cultist. Throughout a typical day, an average citizen utters dozens of small prayers, thanks, and blessings, while a devout cultist says hundreds. Most people are only vaguely aware that they are saying them, and these phrases form a healthy portion of the vernacular.

Of course, these phrases and holy sayings change from province to province, and even within an individual city, each with their own subtle meanings. A person in disguise may inadvertently reveal his upbringing, social status, or education by uttering the incorrect phrase to the wrong people.

Players should be highly encouraged to come up with their own holy sayings and use them often during play.

Sacred Names

Most people in the Empire gain several names throughout their lifetime—nicknames, pet names, secret names of certain orders, and the like. Both priests and Magisters alike agree that names carry power, and that knowing a person's name is to hold some degree of control over them. Many divine and magical rituals and spells require the name of the person to be effective.

In nearly all the cults, a cultist receives some form of new name upon reaching the status of initiate, priest, and high priest (if applicable). The Cult of Ranald is unique in that a person often receives two or more names at each point, one for use among other cultists and another, private name that they call themselves when speaking to Ranald during prayer—it's not uncommon for at least one of these names to be extremely bawdy or rude. Verenans, on the other hand, eschew these extra names in favour of titles alone.

If a player chooses his Character to take a religious career, such as initiate, anointed priest, priest, or any of the new careers in this book, you should provide her with a suitable new sacred name used

by the cult. Depending on the cult, this new name may be virtually unused, or practically replace her old name, at least when among other like-minded cultists.

Sacred Signs and Gestures of the Cults

Cultists have various ways of showing their faith, both to the uninitiated and among their own kindred. The showing of signs, hand gestures, and other sacred salutes is one way of expressing respect, both to other cultists and to the Gods. These salutes are commonly used when cultists meet for the first time during the day, repeating the sign when they depart. Each cult has its own array of secret signs known only to trusted cultists, which can indicate distress, great admiration, or some other thing that can only be understood by those loyal to the faith.

Signs of Manann

The signs of Manann are intricately tied with the same gestures used by sailors. The sailor's salute of a flat hand held to the temple, then quickly moved away is used as a sign of respect by sailors towards their officers—this works as well when offering veneration to Manann. When a cultist faces bad luck, he does this with both hands, sweeping them down in a curl, and ending with his palms face up by his waist and his face cast down at the ground. Cultists in deep prayer sometimes hold an arm above their head with the index finger extended, feeling the wind in hopes of divining Manann's will—it is also considered a test of strength and will to see how long the cultist can keep his arm elevated. Cultists of Manann often clap to show disapproval of something, slapping their hands together to reflect the tumultuous seas.

Signs of Morr

Cultists of Morr greet each other with a strange salute that involves moving the hand from the top of his face down with an open palm. This salute is known as "Morr's Shroud," representing darkness and the symbolic gesture when a corpse's eyes are shut for the last time. Common citizens use this gesture when referring to beloved departed family and friends, in the hope that Morr has taken them safely to his realm. It is considered extremely bad luck to use this salute at any other time, as it is believed to draw Morr's attention to that person. A cultist that walks with his hands clasped behind his back indicates that he wishes to be left alone, in order to contemplate the nature of life and death. Morrian cultists also place both hands face down, as if pushing downward. This is done to urge his fellows to leave a matter alone as it is moot, dead, or best left alone.

Signs of Myrmidia

Myrmidia has a salute with the fingers on the hand spread wide, representing the rays of the sun, a common symbol of the cult. The salute starts with the palms open in front of the chest, then splayed out to the side. Cultists in deep meditation often hold their open palms in this way upon their foreheads with the eyes closed, in hopes of attaining spiritual understanding. In Estalia, cultists of Myrmidia may slap their necks when they feel betrayed, while in

Sample Holy Sayings

Here is a small sample of common holy sayings uttered by untold thousands of people every day. Players may wish to include some of these phrases in their Characters' vocabulary for roleplaying effect.

"By earth, tree, and bone." —Common oath given by cultists of Taal and Rhya.

"You have Taal's rigid horns!" —A term used to suggest a person is behaving badly.

"May you drink deeply of Rhya's nectar." —A blessing given to hopeful mothers.

"I am the metal. Sigmar is the hammer." —To show a person's supplication to Sigmar's will.

"By the light of the star." —Used by Sigmarites to suggest some ominous or portentous event.

"Walk the road east." —A Sigmarite invocation of courage

"May ravens alight upon you." —Morrian phrase meaning "may your death be easy."

"He took the black rose." —A Morrian saying that means a person died recently.

"Attend to your Garden." —A Morrian admonition used to tell someone that they risk their lives.

"Follow the eagle not the Tower." —Myrmidian urging to use common sense.

"The dart strikes truly." —A Myrmidian response to a dreadful revelation.

"I shall weep for your burdens forever more." —Shallyan term showing sympathy, typically to sufferers of disease.

"Her heart is empty." —A Shallyan phrase to reflect scenes of tremendous suffering.

"With dry eyes." —A Shallyan term for a person without mercy.

"Go cut off a black cat's paw!" —Common Ranaldan phrase meaning "good luck."

"With fingers crossed." —A Ranaldan phrase that signifies an untrustworthy person.

"May Ranald favour you." —A Ranaldan curse.

"The baying you hear be not mere curs." —Ulrican curse implying a grave threat is approaching.

"The cold fire reveals all." —Ulrican invocation for people to speak the truth.

"The word of a Sigmarite." —A rarely used Ulrican phrase used to describe a falsehood.

"Speak truth." *"Be truth."* —Common farewell between cultists of Verena. The first phrase is said by one person and the last phrase by the other.

"A heavy matter." —A Verenan saying warning of an unbalanced approach.

Tilea, they bow to the west when they feel hopeless.

Also, the militaristic cult of Myrmidia utilises salutes found among the armies of the Empire. The most common involves holding a clenched fist over one's heart with the arm held parallel to the ground. As a way of showing great approval, cultists hold their arms straight along their belly, while making a clenched fist—this sign is also seen among comrades-in-arms as a respectful, but casual, almost familiar way of showing respect. Among cultists, placing the back of the hand on one's sword pommel is a private, subtle way of disapproving of a given situation.

Signs of Ranald

Every person of the Empire knows the salute of Ranald—crossing the index and middle fingers on the right hand. It is used daily by everyone as a way to garner luck or to avoid a particularly bad fate. Holding crossed fingers behind the back is said to "hide" a lie that is told, while doing so openly for all to see is to express the fact that a person is telling the absolute truth. Cultists secretly show their allegiance to Ranald to each other by performing this salute with their left hand. This act is considered unlucky by the rest of the populace, but true cultists know better. Holding crossed fingers directly in someone's face is a grave insult and a sure way of starting a fight. Cultists make oaths to each other while both parties hook their index fingers together. When cultists of Ranald are in dire need of luck, they may cross the fingers on both hands and the toes of both feet. It's felt that the more crossed digits, the more you ward off bad luck. Other cultists may walk their forefinger and index finger on the palm of their left hand as a sign of strange things afoot. Finally, when cultists of Ranald feel they have had a particularly bad spout of luck, they'll run the back of their hand under their chin, to alert the God that they've learned from their errors and would like their luck to change.

Signs of Shallya

The cultists of Shallya use a salute that involves making a crossing symbol over one's heart, typically with their head bowed. Another common sign is the touching of lips with the first and second fingers, then presenting those fingers towards a person—this is used to show great respect and admiration. Cultists tending to a person in their last moments of life hold one hand to the dying victim's heart while pressing the other hand onto their own as a way of showing sympathy and hope that Shallya shows mercy on their body and spirit. A rare few Shallyans actually slap each other in greeting to reflect their Goddess's suffering. Known as slappers, to many, they simply seem ridiculous.

Signs of Sigmar

Cultists of Sigmar have two primary salutes. The first is the "V" finger salute, representing the twin-tailed comet. The cultists hold their left hand on their chest, right arm thrust to the front, hand raised to head level with the fist clenched, and the first and second fingers extended. This sign is reversed (palm facing the face, rather than facing the person saluted) to be used as a taunt and insult to Sigmar's enemies. This salute is very popular with insolent children.

Sigmar's second sign is a ward, and involves making a hammer shape on the trunk. The cultist's forefinger touches the navel, the "V" of the collarbone, the right chest, and the left chest. It is commonly employed as a shield against the forces of Chaos.

When seeking the guidance of Sigmar, the cultist will take the same "V" finger salute and run it across his eyes in the hopes of seeing something he missed the first time around. When a Sigmarite slaps his fist, it's an invocation of anger, but when he pounds his fist in his palm, he's urging restraint.

Signs of Taal and Rhya

Taalites have their "Root, Trunk, and Branches" sign, which is used to bring good fortune when travelling through his domain, or under any circumstance where his aid may be of use. It involves touching or slapping the thighs, chest, and then arms in quick succession. Slapping one's thighs is also a lowbrow way of expressing the desire for intimacy, and is used by almost everyone in the Empire. It is employed by both men and women, but is considered extremely rude when used among people of fine breeding and stature.

Cultists of Rhya greet each other with a kiss to their hand, which is then placed on the cheek of the other person. It is an intimate salute, used only among trusted friends or those of the faith.

Another profoundly rude gesture outside of Taalite circles is to enclose the forefinger on one hand with the palm of another. Amongst these priests it is a sign of deep understanding and sympathy, but elsewhere, it is usually intended to suggest some other naughty activity.

Signs of Ulric

Cultists of Ulric make use of the "U" salute. It is formed with the thumb holding the middle and ring fingers to the palm, and the index and pinkie finger sticking up. This salute is used before battles and to greet other Ulricans. When reversed, it serves as a dire insult to the cultist's enemies. Scholars of the various cults see great similarity between this symbol and that used by Sigmarites, and it's possible that both salutes originated from the same tribes long ago.

Among the more primitive members of the cult, holding open your mouth, with your teeth not quite closed, is a sign of disrespect—much in the way a wolf would bare its teeth towards an enemy. This is often coupled with a feral growl, so the intent is rarely misconstrued.

Wagging the finger or tapping the foot is a sign of favour, shown to those who have made a good suggestion. Closing one's eyes is construed as a sign of great trust. Finally, a rare few Ulricans make pacts by biting each other's hands until they draw blood. They then mingle the fluid to form a pact.

Signs of Verena

Cultists of Verena greet each other with both hands held and cupped by their waist, then extended out to the sides, representing the scales of Justice. Cultists use many signs and salutes during their debates and when they stand in for someone in a court of law. In order to show disapproval, cultists hold their left hand straight out, palm turned in and down. The right hand, held out straight, palm in and up, shows approval. Tapping one's throat is a silent, polite way of expressing a desire to speak, while stroking an ear is a sign that another person should remain silent.

When Verenans believe someone is lying, they'll stroke their chin. Many Verenans also close their eyes before making a decision, to suggest the blindness of justice.

Showing Faith

Having faith in the Old World isn't merely a task of attending the various temples to the Gods. In order to be a pious believer of the Gods, a person should strive to wear the appropriate garb, utter the proper sayings, and intone the correct prayers. Some cultists erroneously believe simply wearing the trappings and adorning their home with altars is what makes them one of the faithful. However, the converse is true—cultists wear their order's garb and arrange altars to their deities because they are faithful.

Although there are untold numbers of variations in clothing, talismans, and altars for each cult, there are enough similarities worth noting. Even pious citizens that do not belong to any particular cult still follow some rules when it comes to displaying signs of devotion. Tradition holds sway in the Empire, and it's only the rare individual that flaunts convention and follows their own path.

This section looks in a general manner at the various ritual clothing, talismans, and altars that cultists can possess—for specific information of each cult's peculiar manners of dress, see **Chapter II: Old World Cults**.

Ritual Tattoos, Brands, and Scarification

Marking of the body is extremely common within the Empire. Most everyone—sailors, priests, soldiers, Magisters, and even nobles—adorn their bodies with tattoos, brands, scars, piercings, or other markings. Cultists prefer marking their body with symbols of their faith, for although a talisman can be taken away or an altar smashed, nothing short of death can remove a tattoo from the faithful's skin.

Ritual markings can be hidden from view and revealed only to other cultists, or be brazenly open, showing the cultist's zeal to the masses or to terrorise their enemies in battle. Cultists of Manann, Sigmar, Taal and Rhya, and Ulric are the most likely to adorn their body in places that are visible, while cultists of Morr, Ranald, Shallya, and Verena prefer to keep theirs hidden from view or have far fewer than normal. Cultists of Myrmidia straddle the middle ground, with some eschewing markings altogether, whilst others cover themselves from head to toe in tattoos, brands, and scars. Tattoo artists can be found in every large city and many smaller towns—some consider this marking an aspect of their faith, and charge nothing for their services or merely the cost of materials.

For many cultists, the act of getting one of these markings is considered a rite of passage by itself (see **Rites of Passage**). Although people can and do get these adornments just because they enjoy both the process and the way they look, many cultists combine receiving a new tattoo, brand, or scar along with a ritual in honour of the Gods.

Branding is a much more intense and barbaric custom, most commonly found in the far north of the Empire. Warriors, soldiers, mercenaries, and particularly cultists of Ulric apply searing hot brands to their arms, legs, or chests, both to permanently mark their body, and to show their bravery and ability to let pain pass through them. Scarification is similar in its level of pain and the dedication required by the person receiving it. Like tattoos, scars created in this

Table 3–2: Ritual Marking Locations

Roll	Result
1	Face
2	Leg (1–5) or Legs (6–10)
3	Back
4	Hand (1–5) or Hands (6–10)
5	Chest
6	Arm (1–5) or Arms (6–10)
7	Neck
8	Foot (1–5) or Feet (6–10)
9	Waist
10	Entire body

way can be crude and simple, or intricate works of art. Once the cuts are made, herbs, ink, or ashes are rubbed into the wounds so they heal in a way that keeps the scars fresh and vivid.

Table 3–2 can be used to determine the location and extent of tattoos or brandings on a given cultist's body—roll 1d10 to determine the number. The exact image of the tattoo, brand, or marking is left up to the GM, determined by the cult the character belongs to and the like. Re-roll any inappropriate results.

Ritual Clothing

Because of the lack of mass-produced clothing in the Empire, the clothes a person wears reveals everything about a person. Members of the various cults are expected to wear robes, jewellery, and other accoutrements that display their chosen deity. Depending on the deity, this clothing can be simple and unadorned, or rich and elaborate.

For most cultists, the most simple and practical attire is the robe. Most strive to find the best material for their vestments, but even a modest robe crafted from sackcloth still presents a respectable front. Because dyes and bleaching are expensive, only the wealthiest of cultists can afford robes with the lightest of hues. Priests of certain cults, notably Shallya and Verena, who have little need of money, spend their precious coin to ensure that they can wear robes of the most pure white to show their faith.

Other earthier cults, such as that of Taal and Rhya, and Ulric, wear more practical garb, befitting those who toil or are not afraid to get dirty. Most of these cultists wear their day-to-day clothing during their rites, pulling out special robes of green, brown, and rust only for special occasions. A few rituals even require the cultist to shun clothing altogether so as to be one with the ground and sky of the world.

Cultists of the warrior faiths—Sigmar and Ulric in particular—often combine their ritual clothing with armour. Although styles can be outlandish, they are designed in such a way so as not to restrict one's movement and freedom in combat. Even off the battlefield, these cultists dress to be prepared to take up arms at a moment's notice.

Ritual clothing includes garb other than mere robes. During several holidays, worshippers don costumes, wear bright and festive ribbons, or put on masks, depending on what is being celebrated. Nobles delight in being able to show off their wealth with extravagant costumes made from expensive fabrics and exotic decorations. In fact, this rite of costume making has the dual purpose of both religious observation and setting the tone for next season's fashions. Commoners save up all year long to make the best costumes that they can afford, but most make do with the materials they have available on hand, augmented with flowers, leaves, and scraps of discarded cloth.

Although a great many cultists choose apparel suited to their station and role within their cult, the limitless variations, differences of dogma, and even ideas prompt many to dress themselves in items that reflect their deep devotion in the hope of achieving a greater connection to their God. Priestesses of Verena, for instance, may strap a dozen or more weighty tomes to their backs to make them accustomed to bringing their eyes closer to the manuscripts they examine. More broadly, many cultists take to wearing animals sacred to their Gods—priests of Manann can be found all over the north wearing fish on their heads, while others may hang the carcass of other animals that may have symbolic representation, which in most cases is known only to the priest. The famous friar of Ubersreik, in a moment of divine inspiration, plucked a pig from the sty and placed the poor beast on his head. As if by some miracle, the creature did not leave or struggle to let go, though it was later discovered the priest had applied a heavy streak of glue on his bald pate.

A great many priests, especially those with a flair for the dramatic, are known to keep puppets so they can put on a performance whenever they are in areas that are troublesome. The priest may feel an impulse to remind Old Worlders why it is important to show the proper respect to the Gods. Such demonstrations have success with the peasants and the uneducated, but in lands where Chaos and wickedness hold sway, there is rarely anything left after the show except for a few pieces of cloth and chunks of quivering flesh.

Other cultists may preach on street-corners, wearing sandwich boards that may contain extracts of holy texts, nailed body parts, feathers, or chunks of flesh (ham being a popular choice in Wissenland, where swine are preferred over sheep). Frothing in religious fervour, the priest finds a high place and beseeches the Gods for their mercy, while offering rude punishments to those whom the priest finds lacking.

For more information on the ritual clothing of each specific cult, see **Chapter II: Old World Cults**.

Table 3–3: Random Cultist Clothing

Clothing makes the person. The following table can be used to individualise a cultist's ritual garb. Not every result is appropriate for every cult, or even climate, and you should re-roll results that are counter to the cultist's status, lifestyle, or the climate in which they live.

Roll	Result
01–05	*Ritual Tattoos Only:* The cultist shuns clothing and goes about naked. Instead, his body is covered with tattoos proclaiming his faith.
06–10	*Loincloth:* The cultist wears only the barest of clothing—essentially a loincloth (and top, for women).
11–15	*Heavy Footwear:* The cultist wears huge, heavy boots or shoes to symbolise their burden. The cultist's Movement Characteristic is reduced by 1.
16–20	*Furs:* Furs of bear, wolf, lynx, or some other animal. This could be fashionably cut, or shaggy and barbaric.
21–25	*Extremely Tight Clothing:* The cultist wears his clothing very tight around his body. On male cultists this is sometimes referred to as wearing sparrow smugglers.
26–30	*Hair Shirt:* As a sign of devout piety and poverty, the cultist wears a shirt made from human hair.
31–35	*Excessive Robes:* The cultist wears several layers of robes, undershirts, and vests, regardless of the heat or weather.
36–40	*Normal:* The cultist wears a simple, normal robe adorned with the symbols of his faith.
41–45	*Fashionable:* The cultist's ritual clothing is on the cutting edge of fashion. The garb need not be of superior quality, however.
46–50	*Normal:* The cultist wears a simple, normal robe adorned with the symbols of his faith.
51–55	*Worker's Garb:* The cultist's clothing is tailored more in the manner of a blacksmith, carpenter, or other practical trade, though it is still decorated with the symbols and colours of his cult.
56–60	*Outrageous Headwear:* The cultist sports some form of huge, and/or gaudy hat, cap, or other piece of headwear.
61–65	*Foreigner's Garb:* For whatever reason, the cultist wears clothing with styles from Bretonnia, Tilea, Araby, or some other distant land. Most people view this with suspicion, resulting in a –5% penalty to Fellowship rolls during first encounters.
66–70	*Cilice:* The Cultist wears a cilice, a metal strap that goes about his leg, and is tightened in a painful manner to teach him about pain and penance. When the cilice is tightened, the cultist has his Movement Characteristic reduced by 1.
71–75	*Out of Style:* Although it's hard to go wrong with a simple robe, the choice of style, cut, colour, or manner of wearing his clothes, the cultist wears clothing that is horribly out of style.
76–80	*Suggestive Cut:* The cultist's robes are meant to show off his physique. In some circles, this can be considered scandalous.
81–85	*Outlandish Footwear:* The cultist wears huge, ornate shoes or boots with curled toes, exceedingly long points, or other interesting, but impractical aspect.
86–90	*Very Short:* The cultist's robes are very short and light, meant for much warmer climates.
91–95	*Fake Armour:* The cultist wears clothing made to look like armour, but actually provides no Armour Points.
96–97	*Reversed Gender:* The cultist wears the clothing of the opposite gender, perhaps as a way to make some obscure theological point.
98	*Silk:* The cultist wears robes or clothing made from the precious silk imported from far-flung Cathay. The clothing could be in pristine condition, or soiled and ripped.
99	*Relic:* An article of the cultist's clothing is actually a relic (see page 247). The cultist may or may not be aware of the value of this item.
00	*Blasphemy!:* The Cultist wears some clothing covered in the words and pictures of a forbidden cult or Ruinous Power. She keeps it hidden beneath her respectable garb.

Talismans

Most Old Worlders wear talismans of various kinds to show their faith, garner the goodwill of the Gods, or hope to generate some positive effect in their life. Talismans come in many forms, from simple necklaces to large, unwieldy objects that are dragged about behind the cultist as a sign of their faith. Cultists are extremely protective of their talismans, and never willingly part with them unless they deem it necessary by their God. However, many cultists, especially those of the more martial Gods, like Sigmar and Ulric, take their talismans into battle with them, thus exposing them to damage, loss, or complete ruin.

A good rule of thumb to remember is that the larger, bulkier, or even painful the talisman, the more zealous the cultist (for more

3–4: Random Talismans

Roll on the following to determine one or more talismans carried by a cultist. Re-roll any result that comes up with an inappropriate talisman for the individual in question.

Roll	Result
01—05	*Head Cage:* The cultist wears a cage that fits about his head, to show his piety and sacrifice. The cage provides 2 AP to the cultist's head, although its bulky design imposes a –5% penalty to the Agility Characteristic when worn.
06–10	*Phylactery:* A small box containing tiny parchments covered in sacred scripture. It is tied extremely tightly to the forehead of the cultist.
11–15	*Back Torches:* The cultist wears a special harness that allows two or more iron torches to be worn on his back. This assembly adds 10 points of encumbrance. It is meant to illuminate the truth of the cultist's God.
16–20	*Statue:* A bulky statue of the cultist's patron God. It stands roughly a foot tall and weighs at least 10 pounds—the material depends on the wealth of the cultist.
21–25	*Extensive Jewellery:* The cultist wears an inordinate amount of jewellery, proclaiming his faith. The actual value of this adornment depends on the wealth of the cultist.
26–30	*Urn:* This urn contains the ashes of a loved one, ancestor, or beloved mentor. It is covered with holy scripture and weighs at least five pounds.
31–35	*Rune Covered Skull:* A human skull, possibly of an ancestor, revered teacher, or fallen enemy, covered with runes and holy scriptures.
36–40	*Back Banners:* The cultist wears a harness that holds one or more banners covered in the symbols and holy words of his God. This assembly adds 10 points of encumbrance.
41–45	*Massive Headdress:* The cultist wears an enormous hat, crown, or other imposing headdress, covered in the symbols of his God.
46–50	*Simple Necklace:* In a surprising show of restraint, the cultist's talisman is a modest necklace, bearing the image of her patron God.
51–55	*Censor:* This large censor continually wafts pungent incense. If used in combat, the censor is treated as a Poor crafted flail, and has a 10% chance of shattering on a successful hit.
56–60	*Parchments of Faith:* The cultist's clothing or armour is covered with pieces of parchment bearing sacred words, scriptures, and proclamations. Most are affixed with wax.
61–65	*Torch:* The Cultist carries an immense metal torch that stands at least six feet tall. Lighting or extinguishing the torch is considered a deeply sacred act and should take at least one hour to do so.
66–70	*Large Holy Symbol:* The cultist owns a holy symbol of his God that is much larger than necessary. It adds 10 points of encumbrance, and the material it is made of depends on the wealth of the cultist.
71–75	*Massive Tome:* An incredibly large holy book of the cultist's faith. It adds 10 points of encumbrance, and must be hauled on the shoulder or strapped to the back for easy carrying.
76–80	*Prayer Box:* This foot-tall box contains sacred objects, parchments, and small paintings revering the God. It is carried on a large pole standing at least six feet tall.
81–85	*Chains:* The cultist wears several heavy chains, adding at least 10 points of encumbrance, to indicate his spiritual burden.
86–90	*Rune Covered Rock:* The Cultist carries an oddly shaped stone, which bears runes and words of faith.
91–95	*Jar of Soil:* A large jar that contains the dirt from the cultist's homeland, the ashes of a Venerated Soul, or a sacred site.
96–97	*Massive Scroll:* An enormous scroll, which when unfurled, stretches at least 20 by 4 feet. The scroll contains every word of a famous tome, poem, or other venerated work.
98	*Magic Item:* The cultist's talisman is actually a functioning magic item (see *WFRP*, or page 248). The cultist may or may not be aware of the power it contains.
99	*Relic:* The cultist's talisman is actually a relic (see page 247). The cultist may or may not be aware of the value of this item.
00	*Blasphemy!:* The cultist carries a symbol of one of the Ruinous Power and is in league with their cult. Alternatively, roll again on this table—the cultist is unaware that the talisman he carries is actually tainted by Chaos.

information on zealots, see **Chapter IV**). While impractical, carrying a large or obvious talisman is a sign to both their God and to the world at large. Despite these odd sights, most citizens view this bizarre behaviour not with derision, but respect, although most people wisely steer clear in case the cultist in question is actually insane.

Unless otherwise indicated by the GM, talismans have no intrinsic ability or power, other than to demonstrate a firm conviction by the wielder. Alternatively, a talisman may function as a Lucky Charm (see *Old World Armoury: Miscellania and Militaria*, page 74) or even a relic (see page 247). These should be exceedingly rare, however.

Talismans and Damage

There may be times in which it's important to know if a talisman becomes damaged in combat. Talismans that are worn, such as phylacteries, necklaces, and other tiny objects, are exempt from this problem. However, for big idols, tomes mounted on poles, and other large items, you may want to assign a number of Wound and Armour Points to them. Remember, however, that talismans are rarely designed with combat in mind, so GMs should use their judgement in whether an object, even if it is made of a certain type of material, warrants AP or high Wound Points.

Table 3–5: Talismans, Armour Points, and Wound Points

Armour Material	Points	Wound Points
Paper	0	1
Leather	0	2
Wood	1	3
Stone	2	5–6
Book/Tome	1	2–3
Iron or Steel	2	5–6
Silver	1	3–4
Gold	0	2–3

Altars

Almost everyone in the Empire has an altar of some kind in or near their homes. For the poorest of citizens, these altars are modest—little more than a tiny, handcrafted icon sitting on a shelf or small pedestal adorned with objects pleasing to the God in question. Nobles, high priests, and other wealthy individuals often have altars crafted from precious metal, rare woods, and adorned with masterful paintings, statues, and mosaics of the Gods.

Altars are places for either the family to gather in prayer, or for solitary contemplation. As a result, altars are highly individualised and often adorned with precious objects—typically the finest and most expensive objects in a household. Cultists, who lavish them

Table 3–6: Random Altar Aspects

The following can be used to ascribe some particular aspect to a given cultist's altar. Re-roll any result that comes up with an inappropriate altar aspect for the individual in question.

Roll	Result
01–05	*Rare Tome:* The altar bears a tome long thought lost or coveted by members of the owner's cult. A Challenging (–10%) Academic Knowledge (Religion) or Academic Knowledge (Theology) Test reveals the book for what it is.
06–10	*Shoddy:* The altar is poorly crafted and threatens to fall apart with rough handling or if bumped.
11–15	*Tidy:* The altar is extremely neat, with everything lined up to exact measurements, and is devoid of dust. Metal objects shine from frequent polishing, and the colours of paintings stand out.
16–20	*Seals of Faith:* The altar (and its surrounding) is covered with seals and parchments of the cultist's faith. These seals are filled with religious sayings, prayers, and extracts from holy texts.
21–25	*Gemstones:* The altar is fitted with several fine gemstones, worth 2d10 *gc*.
26–30	*Multiple Gods:* The symbols of several Gods crowd this altar. This arrangement could be neat or haphazard.
31–35	*Blood Offering:* A bowl of human blood sits on the altar, or the altar is covered with spilt blood. This blood could be fresh or dried.
36–40	*Cluttered:* The altar overflows with icons, pictures, offerings, and other bric-a-brac.
41–45	*Generous Offerings:* The altar is covered with all manner of fine or expensive offerings. About 2d10 *gc* worth of coins, gems, and fine art lie in offering to the divinity.
46–50	*Exquisite Craftsmanship:* The altar is of superior craftsmanship, with gold filigree, exquisite carvings, and rich fabrics draping its surface. If looted, the altar yields 2d10 *gc* worth of objects, scraped gold, and the like.
51–55	*Strange Objects*: The altar has some odd items that do not seem to have relevance to its theme. For example, a broken astrolabe, a mummified elf hand, or a glass sphere with a curious internal crack.
56–60	*Secret Cache:* The altar has a secret compartment that can be spotted with a Challenging (–10%) Perception Test. The opening may have a lock, and may be trapped.
61–65	*Animal Offerings:* Dead rabbits, birds, squirrels, or even larger animals lie across the altar as a sacrifice. They could be fresh or beginning to decompose, filling the room with their stench.
66–70	*Rare Herbs:* Offerings of rare and expensive herbs lie upon the altar. These herbs are worth 1d10 *gc* to an apothecary, healer, Jade Wizard, or other person interested in herbs.
71–75	*Spartan:* The altar is nearly bare, and severe in its presentation.
76–80	*Weapons:* One or more weapons adorn the altar. These are typically hand weapons, but could be any type.
81–85	*Skulls:* The altar bears several humanoid skulls. These skulls could have belonged to family members, mentors, children who perished, and the like. Many of these skulls are adorned with sacred words and symbols.
86–90	*Neglected:* The altar has been long neglected, and is covered in dust and cobwebs. Objects are dirty, tarnished, have been knocked over, or some combination of the three.
91–95	*Defaced:* The altar has been defaced in some manner—paintings are scratched, idols broken, and profane words spelled out on its surface with paint or blood.
96–97	*Odd Idol:* The owner of the altar has placed a strange idol of their God of unknown origin. This unique item could be worth a great deal of money, or be a mere curio.
98	*Rare Icon:* The altar bears a famous icon that has been considered lost or has some great history about it. Priests of the cult would be very interested in obtaining the icon for their temple.
99	*Relic:* The altar is actually a relic (see page 247). The cultist may or may not be aware of the value of this item.
00	*Blasphemy!:* The altar has some aspect to it that is blasphemous in some way. This could be as blatant as an idol to one of the Ruinous Powers, or its items are arranged in such a way that it spells out a profane or unholy word when viewed from a distance. It's likely that the cultist worships some forbidden God.

with offerings in order to appease the Gods, prize their altars. It's considered both unlucky and unwise to keep a slovenly altar, as it reflects on how the cultist views the deities. Considering how most people keep altars to many of the Gods in and about their home, it's natural for some to receive more attention than others.

Cults encourage their followers to keep and maintain altars, and sometimes provide basic materials and simple idols, statues, or paintings (for a small or reduced rate) for those that cannot afford such things. Still, even the poorest citizen keeps at least one altar, adorning it with both homemade and found objects. A simple spray of flowers to Rhya, or a worn hammer retrieved from a blacksmith's scrap pile dedicated to Sigmar, are often all it takes to make an altar.

Venerated Souls of the Empire

Just as Sigmar began his existence as a mortal man who elevated his status to that of a God, so too are there other people that are held in extremely high esteem by the citizens of the Empire. Although no other person in "recent" memory has achieved the same status as Sigmar, those individuals that show unparalleled piety, belief, and force of will are treated as demi-Gods by many Old Worlders.

Although they go by many other titles, the most common moniker attached to these esteemed individuals is "Venerated Soul." Another popular title is "Pious" and the two can be used interchangeably. While Venerated Souls are obviously held in the highest regard within the cult they belong to, they are almost universally respected among all the people of the Old World, due to their vigilance, deep faith, and sacrifices in the name of their God. However, there are times when one person's Venerated Soul is another person's heretic.

Each cult has its own methods of determining what makes cultists venerated members. Regardless, prospective individuals must show unswerving faith, strength in the face of adversity, and typically some traits of martyrdom. The more martial cults, such as those of Sigmar and Ulric, pull their Venerated Souls from warrior-priests, mighty generals, and dedicated cultists who perished in battle against unspeakable odds. The Cult of Shallya chooses those who put the lives of others far before their own, curing ills despite the odds, or bringing solace to the worst cases. Verenans choose their Venerated Souls from the most respected scholars and orators, while the Cult of Manann picks the hardiest of seadogs who have survived innumerable hardships on the waters.

Venerated Souls form minor pantheons beneath the banner of their patron deity, representing some historic event or narrow focus. There are Venerated Souls for the protection of children, martyrdom in battle, hearth fires, the prosperity of scriveners, and thousands of other things, some of which that are so obscure as to be almost ludicrous. Needless to say, the vast majority of these Venerated Souls are known or recognised by others of their faith, although there is usually only a handful called on with great frequency.

Sample Venerated Souls

Described here is a small sample of some of the Venerated Souls found throughout the Empire. As mentioned before, not all of them are well known or worshipped by all cultists all the time. However, it's a safe bet that almost every act or situation has a patron Venerated Soul tied to it by one of the cults.

Brother Shawl

The man remembered as Brother Shawl was a simple initiate who served in Nuln's Gardens of Morr some three hundred years ago. He led a rather unremarkable life, and perhaps would have been overlooked had it not been for his unusual talent for fashioning gravestones. He could take ordinary pieces of marble and sculpt them into the most fascinating shapes. In his early years, he spent most of his time chiselling lifelike ravens from chunks of obsidian. When he finished, he would place them on the headstones of particularly worthy guests, and it wasn't long before the Gardens were full of these exquisite pieces.

As he aged, he spoke less and less, and whenever a new guest was brought to the vaults for preparation, he would spend hours on a stool watching his fellow priests work. When the sun set, he would retreat to his shop, where the sounds of his labour would echo until dawn. When the priests awoke, they found a sculpture of the recently deceased, fashioned in such a way as to reveal the how person appeared at the moment of death. Disturbing, but also believed to be created by divine inspiration, the Morrians allowed Brother Shawl to continue his work, and soon a number of macabre pieces joined the black ravens.

Brother Shawl's life came to an abrupt and startling end when he happened to sculpt a young woman who was fished out of the river.

No-one knows what the piece was to look like, because when the priests came to see the latest work, they found the statue shattered and Brother Shawl crumpled on the floor, his head crushed by one of his treasured ravens. The cultists filed out, arguing amongst themselves about the implications of the murder, when one looked out onto the Gardens. There, all of the obsidian ravens came to life and took wing, cawing a name over and over. The name turned out to be Rudolf, a fellow priest. It turned out that Rudolf made nightly ventures into the streets to murder young women of the Shantytown. With such damning evidence, Rudolf confessed to everything, claiming that Brother Shawl had carved his name in the statue's head for all to see.

Given this miracle, Brother Shawl was elevated to the status of a Venerated Soul and a small icon of him stands in the centre of the Gardens. Each month, an unkindness of ravens alights on his head and arms, shrilly calling the name of Rudolf to remind all of the dastardly deed committed on holy ground.

Old Worlders who inter a wrongly slain loved one in the Gardens of Morr sometimes stop at the icon of Brother Shawl to pray for him to reveal the identity of the deceased's killer. In most cases, the statue offers no clues, but every decade or so, a raven appears and whispers the name once, before falling to the cobbled ground and shattering into pieces of obsidian.

Adventure Hook: A Missing Head

Whilst the Player Characters are in Nuln, word spreads through the city that the Morrians promise to pay a hefty reward for the missing head of one of their statues. Soon after, there's a long line to the Gardens of Morr as everyone in the city has something they believe (or hope to pass off) as the head of the statue. Eager peasants hold wooden blocks, gourds, stone animal heads, street signs, sides of beef, stone skulls, stone heads, stone hands, and whatever else they could find. Naturally, the priests grow extremely frustrated and soon after, they turn everyone away.

A few days later, the Kaufman District is plunged into fear as some madman goes on a killing spree. The bodies start piling up and the watch doesn't have a clue about what's going on. A few shrill madmen claim that the culprits are actually the Skaven—all to the derisive laughter of the locals, while others suggest that it's the work of a necromancer, or maybe even the Ruinous Powers.

In truth, the murderer is nothing more than a Nulner psychopath who was fired from his job as a foreman in the forges across the river. Born in the city, and a devout follower of Morr, he knew all about the supposed powers of the statue's head. He wanted revenge on all the people he blamed for the loss of his job—people that include shopkeepers, old loves, old friends, and family members, but he feared to act whilst the statue was intact. So, he snuck into the Gardens, broke off the head, and hid it in the Maze. Since the first few murders, he's acquired a taste for killing and he has no intention of stopping.

Gisela Saaur

According to local legend, there was a healer in the small town of Ferlangen in the province of Ostland. A devout follower of Shallya, Gisela Saaur gave her life to easing the suffering of the afflicted, injured, and dying. In those days, there was much suffering to go around, since the world lay under the pall cast by the Black Plague, and the dead filled the streets. So many were the corpses that the living were outnumbered, and it was simply easier to burn the dead in their homes rather than to brave the dangerous vapours. Unfortunately, the fires claimed as many dying as they did dead, and some whispered that the living and healthy were also killed by the cleansing fires.

What made Gisela stand out from the other selfless clerics was her willingness to treat the sick directly. She helped many victims, venturing into the worst-hit neighbourhoods even though the risk to her own life was great. Her treatments were unusual and met mixed success. Though remembered for her work lancing buboes with her sharp pins, she also experimented by rubbing rats against the afflicted victims, feeding them lye to cleanse their insides, and other bizarre treatments.

The healer never realised that despite her self-sacrifice and good intentions, she was actually spreading the disease. She was part of a small sect of Shallyans who believed it was wrong to remove one's clothes, since their attire ensured that contagion could never come in contact with naked flesh. Since she wore the same garb, she never knew that her own body was covered in boils, weeping wounds, and corruption. Each time she pierced the victim's flesh with one of her needles, she infected him with any number of ailments. The locals had no idea, and if someone told them, they would have refused to believe it anyway.

And so Gisela worked as the town died around her. It wasn't until a witch hunter of Sigmar passed through the village and sensed something wrong in the kindly priestess that the truth was

revealed. He clapped her in manacles and imprisoned her, while his interrogators inspected her body for signs of corruption. To the templar's surprise, the woman was profoundly ill. To save the town, he had her burned at the stake rather than let the plague spread.

Unfortunately for him, he never related his findings to the people, and they, in their despair and outrage over their healer's execution, pulled the man from his saddle and tore him limb from limb. A few months later, when the plague ran its course, an educated noble happened upon the witch hunter's journal and discovered the truth. When he spread word of what he had found, the townspeople refused to believe that the woman was actually the cause of their suffering, and suggested that it was her sacrifice to the purifying fires that saved them. To commemorate this act, they petitioned the Cult of Shallya to name her a Venerated Soul, claiming that her death spared the town—a true miracle. The noble argued against this but was silenced. Since there were no other voices of dissent, the Cult of Shallya named the temple in the community after her, and installed a small shrine near the door. Gisela's most ardent followers have left a number of long needles so they can prick themselves to invoke the blessing of their Venerated Soul.

Adventure Hook: Boils, Buboes, Oh My!

A band of pilgrims make ready to leave Ferlangen for Couronne in Bretonnia. Since the journey is perilous, requiring the pilgrims to pass through the Forest of Shadows, the local priestess of Shallya hires the PCs to accompany the group to ensure their safe passage to the distant bastion of the Bleeding Heart. The pay is good and there are a few lookers in the bunch, and everyone knows about the devout of Shallya… needless to say, it shouldn't take much convincing.

What the PCs don't know is that some of the pilgrims are followers of the Venerated Soul Gisela Saaur, and the more dedicated followers wrap themselves from head to toe in the white cloth of their particular order. Who knows what lurks beneath all those clothes?

In any event, the PCs and the pilgrims set off on their dangerous journey, following the Middle Mountains until the band crosses over into Nordland. Aside from a few encounters with Beastmen and errant Mutants, the trip is more or less uneventful, until people start disappearing. A few missing members might go unnoticed, but after several days and the loss of an equal number of pilgrims, even the most oblivious Character should note that something is wrong. However, there aren't any clues, and no one seems to know anything.

In truth, one of the pilgrims is extremely sick with the plague. She believes the suppurating wounds are actually signs of the Venerated Cultist's blessings, and she, in her delirium, thinks she has the handprint of the Soul on her thigh. She makes the journey to seek guidance from the Most Holy Matriarch Lisegund, but her efforts at discretion have failed. A few of her fellow pilgrims have caught wind of her stench and confronted her. Rather than exposing her blessing, she's clubbed the pilgrims and left them tied up in the forest behind the party.

The Characters might also notice that their supplies of rope are diminishing as well, and there may be a connection with the vanishing pilgrims. It's just a matter of connecting the dots to figure out who is in fact behind the trouble. Once they reveal the plague-ridden woman for what she is, the remaining followers of the Gisela rise up in her defence, exclaiming that she has been chosen by the Venerated Soul. The rest of the pilgrims are not as impressed. This puts the PCs in a difficult spot since the woman's allies refuse to travel without her, the diseased woman refuses treatment, and the rest of the pilgrims refuse to go on with her. And then there's the matter of the missing pilgrims….

Other Venerated Souls

The following Venerated Souls offer further examples for you to develop as you wish.

Adelbrecht Prock (Taal and Rhya)

The Cult of Taal and Rhya claims he fed 1,000 peasants with his clever foraging talent. He died shortly after he became ensnared by a bear trap. He gnawed his own leg off and bled to death as he crawled a few dozen yards away. He's most popular in Küsel, but shrines to him are scattered throughout north-eastern Talabecland.

Angus the Black (Manann)

As patron of lost sailors, Angus the Black is particularly popular in Salkalten, where it's said that when a ship went down just off the coast, he swam out to sea and recovered the whole crew. He died three weeks later from consumption.

Dieter the Just (Verena)

Dieter was elevated as a Venerated Soul after his daring efforts to expose and destroy the Huyderman crime ring in Nuln. Ignoring the death threats and scorning the other prosecutors who abandoned him as the case began to fall apart, he was eventually found murdered in his chambers, his tongue pulled out of his face and nailed to the top of his head. He ascended 20 years later.

Eckhardt the Brave (Sigmar)

The town of Ubersreik pays homage to their personal Venerated Soul each year by publicly executing a criminal in their town square. The victim is branded with the twin-tailed comet and placed in a small box with an angry swarm of bees. Whilst considered cruel, and certainly unusual by other Reiklanders, the townsfolk do this to commemorate Eckhardt, a travelling judge, who died in the same way when he tried to pass judgement on a well-known outlaw that prowled the Reikwald.

Gretchen of Woe (Morr)

Only two people survived a Greenskin attack on a now-forgotten village somewhere in Averland. Gretchen, one of the survivors, knew her duty, and rather than flee, she urged the other survivor to aid her in burying the dead and giving them the proper observances. For three weeks the two laboured to put the bodies in the ground, but neither had any food since the foul Orcs took what they wanted and burned the rest. To give them strength, Gretchen carved pieces of her flesh from her body to give to her companion. At the very end, when the last person was buried, she gave the last of her flesh to her companion so the world would know what true sorrow was.

Guntar the Swift (Ranald)

A particularly famous thief in Altdorf, in life Guntar the Swift claimed he could break in anywhere he chose. A priest of Ranald bet the arrogant youth that he could not break into the Emperor's palace and steal a kiss from the Empress. The youth agreed, and he departed. Hours later, the priest saw the burglar fleeing down a street, but on his cheek he bore the rosy mark of the Empress's kiss. He was drawn and quartered at dawn.

Sigmund Zweiger (Verena)

Those striving to enter the legal profession often keep amulets bearing the mark of Sigmund Zweiger. He is the patron of law clerks, having been one himself. Though he died before he was raised to a full litigator, he was instrumental in exposing a cell of Chaos cultists amidst the local cult of Verena. Some whisper that the Verenans actually executed the hero, and then raised him to the status of Venerated Soul out of guilt.

Ranalt Waldhauss (Taal and Rhya)

During the Great War Against Chaos, a scout and hunter managed to track down and kill thirty Beastmen ravaging the town of Bechafen. Upheld by trackers and lone hunters, the locals have since forgotten that he was slain ten years after his heroic deed, branded as a Mutant.

Minor God or Venerated Soul?

The diversity of Gods, minor Gods, and Venerated Souls of the Gods in the Empire can sometimes get confusing. What is considered a minor God in one province of the Empire may be considered "merely" a Venerated Soul, or less, in other places, or even an aspect of one of the main Gods in another. For travellers, this difference between how an entity or person is revered can cause a tremendous amount of confusion. Asking the priests of various cults rarely helps, either.

If a Character is serious about settling the debate, one option that they have is to go to the Temple of Verena in Altdorf. Within its massive library of tomes and scrolls, there is a complete list of all the Venerated Souls recognized by the Empire. These are the "official" personages recognised by the Empire, (see **A Champion of the Gods**), and may not include those individuals worshipped and respected by the common folk, but still not yet recognised by the Grand Conclave of Cultists. To be able to view these official records, however, requires both good connections and a **Hard (–20%) Fellowship Test**—the priests are wary of letting just anyone sift through the sacred texts.

For the most part, it is up to the GM to determine if a particular deity falls into the categories of minor God, Venerated Soul, or aspect of the main Gods. In practise, this has little impact on how people pray to these entities or the benefits they receive, although whom a person prays to may have a great impact on how others around them perceive their beliefs and faith.

A Champion of the Gods

Characters may strive to embrace the teachings of their patron deity in the hopes that they, one day, join the ranks of the Venerated Souls. Ironically, however, those that actively try to become one rarely do. This is because gaining the status of a Venerated Soul is exceedingly difficult, and invariably involves the martyrdom of the person involved.

One of the purposes of the Grand Conclave (see page 29) is debating and choosing new Venerated Souls to be officially recognised by the cults, and thus, the Empire. To be included in this list, a contender must have performed either some single, notable act or lived a life of impeccable devotion to his or her deity. Martyrdom factors heavily into this decision, as it proves that the Cultist died while sticking to his faith and principles. Also, there must be irrefutable proof that the person in question performed some form of miracle—there must be witnesses, written accounts, or physical evidence of some kind. Verifying the proof of these miracles can take years, even decades, and as a result, most Venerated Souls are named long after their death. There are extremely few instances in which a living person is so named and usually this happens while they lie on their deathbed. In addition, the Grand Conclave must be unanimous in their decision to name a new Venerated Soul. Considering the numerous political and religious implications of naming someone without full support, members of the Grand Conclave are very careful in their voting.

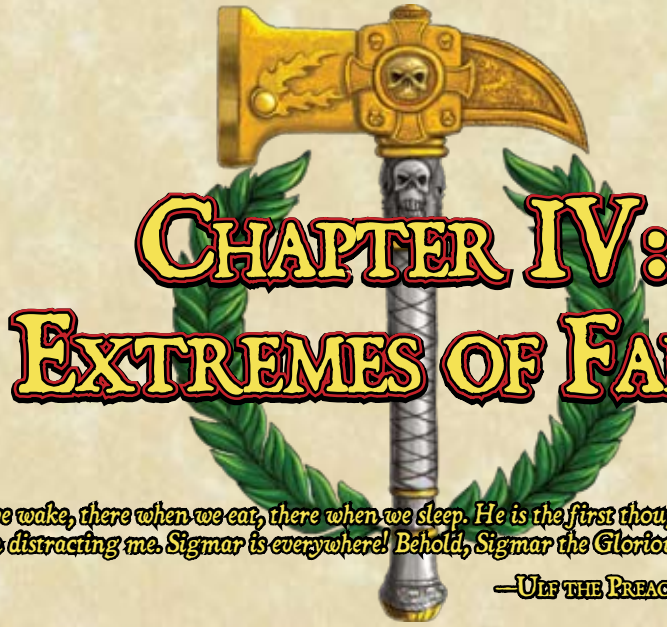
A contender is usually chosen for a vote due to overwhelming public pressure and reverence. If priests are constantly invoking the name of some cultist that exemplify their God's tenants, then the superiors of the cult are bound to listen eventually and bring the name up at the next Grand Conclave. Again, this petitioning may take years to come to fruition, and given the fickle nature of the citizens of the Empire, someone popular today may not last the test of time for them to be chosen as a Venerated Soul.

Praying to Venerated Souls

There may be times in which a cultist prays to a Venerated Soul rather than their specific deity, such as praying to Thea Disl (see **Venerated Souls** sidebar) when protecting his home from the predations of Greenskins. In most cases, praying to a Venerated Soul has the same results as praying to a deity, as the Venerated Soul gains her power from the deity in the first place.

If the GM feels that the prayer is directed to the correct Venerated Soul and for the right reasons, that prayer could be answered in the form of a Blessing (see *WFRP*, page 171). Alternatively, praying to the appropriate Venerated Soul fulfils the same requirements of an Ingredient in a Divine Spell.

Because the power of the Gods is fickle, and the power of the Venerated Souls is tied to them, there is no guarantee that any blessing or bonus will be awarded.



Chapter IV: Extremes of Faith

"Sigmar is there when we wake, there when we eat, there when we sleep. He is the first thought in my mind at all times. The pain in my body stops it from distracting me. Sigmar is everywhere! Behold, Sigmar the Glorious!"

—Ulf the Preacher, on a Street Corner in Altdorf

In the Warhammer world, the Gods are not moral pillars, beacons that guide mortals towards a particular path of behaviour, but rather are beings of incredible power, who if not placated can bring ruin and destruction to the lives of ordinary people. When something goes awry, when unfortunate events occur, most Old Worlders believe the Gods are somehow angry, and therefore visit their displeasure on the mortals that somehow displeased them. Since the Gods are fickle and inexplicable, mortals turn to priests for guidance on how they can best appease their divine patrons, and to ensure their fortunes remain good. However, some take their faith further. Some believe, for one reason or another, that they have the true story, have some inspiration or revelation into a God's motivations. It is from this often misguided view that fanaticism arises.

There are two general expressions of religious extremism, though most arise from an unhealthy obsession with a single God. The first are the flagellants, individuals that scourge themselves to achieve clarity about their deity as well as to prove their devotion and worth, so as to gain divine revelation and to gain the boon that ultimately brings them closer to the object of their obsession. The second are zealots, who are those who elevate their patron above other Gods and set out to spread their beliefs and devotion, often at the business end of a flail. Perhaps surprisingly, these two kinds are about equally common.

— The Reasons Why —

People become extremely pious for a reason. They may claim it is the only possible response to the state of the world, but that can't be right, because most people are far more moderate; "lukewarm," some might say. All the reasons are individual, but they fall into a few broad types.

Trauma

The most common reason for a sudden increase in piety is a major, life-changing event. This almost always has negative aspects, but there are exceptions. A burgher lost in the wilderness might survive on berries and stream water, and come to a deep realisation of the holiness of Taal, for example, whilst someone who survived a blizzard without injury might feel Ulric had called them to some particular purpose.

Even when the experience is negative, the piety can focus on a positive aspect. For example, someone who nearly died of disease but was healed by the priestesses of Shallya might well become a fanatical follower of the Bleeding Heart, while someone who was sure they were going to drown at sea but, instead, was cast up on the shore could turn to Manann.

Most people, however, become completely devoted to a God because of a wholly negative event; their family were all killed by Orcs, a plague destroyed their village, or famine led to starvation. By fastening onto a deity, they find some meaning in their lives.

Trauma can lead to either kind of fanaticism. Those who believe a God has chosen them are very likely to become zealots, while those who believe that they were somehow to blame for the disaster that struck them are more likely to become flagellants. This depends on the personal reaction to the event, rather than on the nature of the event itself. A man whose family was slaughtered by Orcs might decide Sigmar spared him to kill all the Orcs, or that the Orcs were allowed to attack as punishment for his crimes. In the first case he would become a zealot, in the second a flagellant.

Table 4–1: Causes of Extremism

Roll	Reason
01–10	The God appeared in a vision.
11–20	Entire family wiped out by Orcs; survived by hiding in a cupboard.
21–30	Entire family wiped out by Orcs; survived because the Orcs assumed she was dead under the pile of Orcs she had killed.
31–40	Raised within the Temple, and has never spoken to anyone who isn't a devout follower of the God.
41–50	Raised by a humourlessly devout family who beat him every time he failed in his religious duty.
51–60	Saved from near-certain death by a coincidence he calls "divine intervention".
61–70	Heard a charismatic preacher on market day, and it changed his whole life.
71–80	Believes the Storm of Chaos was a sign of the Gods' wrath.
81–90	Was briefly a member of a cult of Slaanesh, and now seeks both to purge her crimes and to be above suspicion.
91–00	A fanatic on a street corner told him he had a special mission from the God, and he believed her.

Upbringing

Some people are raised to be fanatics. This is perhaps most common among Temple Wards, who are raised by the priests of the God, but it is also found among those with very pious parents. The true believer's outlook is strongly shaped by his upbringing, and that determines whether he becomes a zealot or a flagellant. A girl raised by an obsessive scholar and devoted Verenan, for example, might become a zealot devoted to protecting books from those who would harm them, or a flagellant constantly punishing herself for the failings of her memory.

Reaction

Reaction can be the opposite of upbringing. A child raised in a noticeably impious household might react by going to the opposite extreme. Such people are more likely to become zealots, focusing their righteous wrath on their own family to start with.

Alternatively, someone who came very close to corruption, without actually falling, might become a fanatic both to cleanse his own soul and to distract the attention of the witch hunters. These people are most likely to become flagellants, as they feel that they should be punished. Those who actually did fall, and now want to escape the consequences, are more likely to become zealots, as no one could suspect the zealous witch hunter of collusion with the Ruinous Powers. While some Chaos cultists fake zeal, the genuinely repentant often display passion as genuine as anyone else's.

Preaching

Some preachers are very persuasive, and can convince people to renounce their previous life for one spent touring the cities of the Empire while flogging themselves. Others just say something that speaks so strongly to a member of the audience that it changes their life forever. A few preachers are even somewhat uncomfortable with the effects that their words have, but saying as much to the faithful can result in accusations of heresy.

Divine Revelation

Some people believe a particular God has called them, personally, to live a life of asceticism, or to cleanse the world of some taint or other. The Gods of the Old World do occasionally speak directly to their followers, so people are a little cautious about labelling these people insane right away—but only a little cautious. The odds are in favor of the fanatic in question being raving mad, after all.

Scholarship

Scholarship is the least common route to fanaticism in the Old World, as it requires the ability to read. The student becomes wrapped up in a particular interpretation of the God's teachings, and finally decides to devote his entire life to following them. This can lead to absolutely any form of fanaticism. The stunted literacy rate of the Empire probably keeps a lid on many heresies.

— Motivations of the Truly Pious —

The reason why someone becomes a true believer does not necessarily bear much relation to their motivations once they believe. The differences between devotees of different Gods are obvious (and discussed in detail below), but there are also broad classes of fanaticism that cut across the choice of God to follow.

It is important to remember that torturing someone to death for having inaccurate beliefs about your God is not fanatical behaviour. That is entirely proper and respectable, as long as you have the backing of your whole cult.

The Proper Believer

The proper believer is utterly convinced that they exist under the constant scrutiny of their God. As such, they believe they face punishment if they ever fail at following every stricture imposed by their cult, and so they follow the cult and its precepts absolutely. They believe that by properly doing so, they will please their God, or at least avert his anger.

As a result of this fanaticism, proper believers have difficulty interacting with others who do not subscribe to their extreme positions of faith. For one, they are extremely critical of others who do not abide by the same strictures as they do. As well, since they are utterly consumed by one God—they do believe that their God is watching after all—they devote nearly all of their energy into serving their patron. Finally, religious observance takes precedence over everything else. That includes obeying the law, getting out of the way of attacking Beastmen, and even earning money to eat. It is common for such characters to end up as mendicants or martyrs.

The cult authorities often encourage these fanatics, because most believe in obeying priests, and they set a good example. They are particularly common among followers of Manann, Shallya, Taal, and Verena.

True and Faithful Servant

Another aspect of religious extremism is the true and faith servant. This individual is utterly convinced of a God's power, believing the deity is somehow greater, more powerful, and far more important than the other Gods. Since the God has chosen the priests of the cult to act on his behalf, the priests have some of the God's power. Therefore, these priests must be obeyed as if they were the God himself.

On the whole, the cult authorities like these kinds of fanatics. They make useful servants, and dupes for more dubious activities. They are particularly common in the cults of Myrmidia and Sigmar, and are basically unheard of among the followers of Ranald and Verena.

I'm Not Worthy

This kind of fanatic is convinced that they somehow offended or dishonoured their God. If they don't find some means to expiate themselves from their crimes, they will face some horrible turn of events, some grievous misfortune that manifests the God's displeasure. Flagellants are often driven by this motivation, but they are not the only ones.

These fanatics are driven by two desires. First, they want to avoid angering their God further. This often leads them to focus on religious activities, as the God could surely not object to that.

Second, they want to atone for their previous misdeeds and avert disaster. True flagellants seek to atone by beating themselves, whilst followers of a martial God might throw themselves into battle. Followers of Shallya might go to plague zones to treat the suffering, and die of the plague in expiation of their wrong.

The cult authorities are very ambivalent about these people. On the one hand, they serve as examples to remind the rest of the flock of the dangers of displeasing the Gods. On the other, they are very disruptive, with their constant cries of repentance, and they neglect parts of the faith that are also very important. Many high priests try to channel and limit these people, but few actually forbid the practises.

Such conviction is particularly common among followers of Sigmar, with Manann and Shallya not far behind.

Enemies of God

Some fanatics focus on destroying the enemies of their God. Most often, this zeal translates into military activities, but some seek out

more subtle enemies, the enemy within, to destroy. These zealots see their mission as divinely ordained, and believe anyone who obstructs them, or tries to protect their targets, is clearly an enemy of their God, and thus deserving of death.

In general, these groups of fanatics are the most dangerous to those around them. Some are genuinely insane, and pick out enemies of their God based on signs visible to them alone. Most, however, are just stable enough to count as sane, and many cults value such people as potential templars. If their zeal can be directed, their single-mindedness and dedication are extremely valuable.

On the other hand, those who look for enemies within are generally accidents waiting to happen. They are capable of slaughtering entire villages, or mounting an assassination campaign against the cult authorities. The Cult of Sigmar has most experience of controlling such fanatics, as many, perhaps most, of the witch hunters follow this brand of zealotry. Even the Sigmarites are vigilant for signs of this fanaticism in the Order of the Cleansing Flame, however. There have been a number of unfortunate incidents in which whole temples were wiped out for "heresy."

Myrmidia, Sigmar, and Ulric are most often worshipped by fanatics of this sort, but Morr is probably the next most popular deity. Morr's fanatics focus on the Undead and necromancers, and the cult controls them by making sure that they can tell the difference between Undead and simply not dead.

Deeper Understanding

Fanatics with a deeper understanding believe they have discovered something important about their God that is not generally understood. They combine this with the belief that they need to tell people about their discovery, to reform religion or to prepare people for the coming disaster. A priest who believed he has found the incarnation of Sigmar would fall into this category.

These zealots vary a great deal depending on what they think they have discovered, and the attitude of the cult hierarchy varies accordingly. All are seen as dangerous madmen, so their tolerance for such individuals affects they way they are handled. Those who preach that the hierarchy should be overthrown are always persecuted with great vigour, while those who want to establish a new festival might be adopted by a high priest who can see the potential for collecting a whole new set of offerings.

Some of these zealots believe they received a revelation from their God, while others claim to have found secrets in ancient writings, or in an abandoned temple. They do not, on the whole, claim to be receiving ongoing revelations.

This type of fanaticism is most common in the Cult of Verena. Indeed, some outside observers suggest that every Verenan is a fanatic of this sort. It is also common among followers of Ranald and Taal. Sigmarites tend to deal with such madmen very quickly, so there are few in that faith.

Close, Personal Friend

It is a commonly held belief that the Gods sometimes descend to the Old World to take a direct hand in mortal affairs. Whether they appear as depicted in paintings and statues, or assume another form, such as a stag, shower of fish, or even an oddly shaped mushroom, there are those who claim to have met them, or, in the case of pretty farm wenches across the Empire, be carrying their children. These individuals believe they have a direct line to their God, and await the next manifestation with great eagerness.

Since they believe they are somehow chosen, they do what their God commands, no matter what priests or nobles might say. This makes them highly varied, and most are clearly insane, and quickly dealt with by the local authorities.

However, those who show signs of power are treated much more cautiously. The authorities are all well aware that it is just possible that the God in question really is talking to this individual, and in that case they do not want to put themselves in the firing line. Cults occasionally officially endorse these people as prophets, although most high priests wait until the prophet in question is safely dead; there are recorded instances of approved prophets going on to condemn the very high priest who recognised them.

These fanatics tend to survive longest in the Cult of Ranald, because they do not draw attention to themselves. They are also common among followers of Morr, as that cult believes in direct communication from the God to individual followers.

One-True-Goddity

Finally, some fanatics come to believe their God is the king of all other Gods. The rest of the deities are servants, lesser beings who bow and scrape before the august majesty of their chosen deity. In almost all cases, this fanaticism results in swift persecution if it comes to light, so most of these zealots must work in secret, harbouring their beliefs in remote locations, far from the watchful eyes of rival cults.

— Major Fanatical Sects —

Most fanatics are isolated individuals with their own brand of religious commitment. There are, however, groups of extremists within all the major cults. Most of these groups are more-or-less secret; while the authorities can tolerate individuals, organised fanatics are always a threat. The degree of secrecy, however, varies a great deal from sect to sect, and from place to place. There are towns where a fanatical sect is in control, and everyone knows who holds the real power, but no one says it openly. In other cases, the fanatics are perfectly open about their fanaticism; it is only the existence of an organisation that is secret. In still others, any hint of a fanatic's beliefs is a death sentence.

In this section, the groups of fanatics devoted to each God are considered in turn. These are certainly not the only fanatical sects, and others may even rival them in importance. They are, however, clearly among the most significant groups of fanatics within each cult.

Manann

There are three notable fanatic sects of Manann.

The Dyke

The Dyke began forty years ago when Frieda Coopers had a vision of Manann overwhelming the whole Old World with a great tide. She took this to be a warning from the God that he was angry with Humans, and with her in particular, and threw herself into repentance and to warning others of the wrath to come.

Frieda's acts of contrition took two main forms. First, she would spend hours standing in the sea, praying to Manann, and frequently ducking under the water, staying under until she could hold her breath no longer. Second, she tended to injured or sick sailors and fishermen, reasoning that she should help those who were most closely associated with Manann. As she gathered followers, these remained at the core of the sect, and so the priests of Manann and the mundane authorities have not investigated too closely.

Frieda's followers have taken the sect in slightly different directions, especially since her death five years ago. Some are deeply involved in building flood defences, believing the great flood is a test rather than a punishment. Others have come to believe the flood is necessary, and see their watery devotions as praying for the flood to come, rather than repentance to forestall it. One follower, Nathander, has gathered a few immediate followers and is building a large ship in the Middle Mountains, in the belief it will be carried up by the flood, and thus the chosen of Manann will survive to repopulate the world. Nathander's branch of the sect believes Manann is the only true God, and are more militant than the others.

Holders of the Shore

The Holders of the Shore believe the sea is sacred to Manann, and for Humans to enter it or travel upon it is the greatest sacrilege. As a result, they work, secretly, to prevent ships from going forth. This generally takes the form of sabotage of ships in port, ranging from opening small holes below the waterline to setting the whole structure on fire. The more ambitious destroy piers and port facilities, while the more brutal try to intimidate sailors into staying at home, and kill them if they do not take the hint.

The Holders believe most so-called priests of Manann are enemies of the God, as they positively encourage people to desecrate

New Talent: Sea-Born

Description: If the GM wants the story to be true, Characters born at sea, and who swear a vow to Manann never to set foot on land, may take the Sea-Born Talent (for the normal 100 XP cost), which allows them to drink sea water safely, and grants a +5% bonus to all Swim and Sail Tests on salt water. If the Character leaves the sea, they lose the Talent, but they may buy it again if they swear the vow again.

his holy waters. Thus, they often take action against temples of Manann, and Camille Dauphina is a particular object of hatred. The feeling is mutual; most orthodox priests of Manann would be delighted to see this sect wiped out. The established punishment for members is drowning at sea.

The sect is found exclusively in coastal settlements, as other places are too far from the desecrators for effective action. However, many members are from inland, and survivors of shipwrecks are common recruits; they have seen Manann's wrath first-hand. The fanatics are organised into cells, with no contact with other groups. When a cell becomes too large for a location, it sends some of its members out to found new cells elsewhere. These recruiters do not tell their original cell where they have gone, and change their names to avoid leaving a trail.

The Holders never act against ships at sea, as they feel that merely compounds the sacrilege. As a result, they are just as opposed to Stromfels as any orthodox follower of Manann.

The Sea-Born

All members of the Sea-Born were literally born at sea, on a ship cast off from its moorings. They believe this means they are specially favoured by Manann, and somehow bound to his service. A new member of the sect must swear never to set foot on land, and from that day they live on board a ship.

There are a few ships crewed entirely by Sea-Born, and these ships are often dedicated as roving temples of Manann. Children are born on the ships, and raised as Sea-Born; there are now some members of the sect who have never set foot on dry land, and, rumours say, some who have never even set eyes on it.

This sect is generally regarded as harmless by the cult as a whole, as most members are not militant about their superiority. Some say Manann grants special miracles to his followers in this sect, allowing them to repair their ships while still at sea. A common tavern tale is that the Sea-Born can drink seawater as if it were fresh.

Morr

Morr has a pair of fanatical sects that claim allegiance to him.

The Doorkeepers

The Doorkeepers were originally a group within the Cult of Morr that militantly opposed necromancers and the Undead. However, a century ago Ingrund the Grim rose to prominence in the group, due to her courage and determination in fighting the abominations, and turned it into a dangerous group of fanatics.

Ingrund argued Undead were not blasphemous because they had been dead, but because they had been snatched from Morr's realm. Similarly, necromancers were evil not because they dealt with the dead—priests of Morr also dealt with the dead—but because they drew people from Morr's realm. Ingrund pointed out that doctors and Shallyan healers also drew people back from Morr's realm, healing those who would otherwise have died. She argued this made them as evil as necromancers, and those they had healed as blasphemous as Undead.

The Doorkeepers (so-called because they believe they guard the doors to Morr's realm) thus started a campaign of murder against doctors and Shallyans who healed those with dangerous wounds, and against the healed. Within a year they were discovered by the cult authorities, denounced as followers of Khaine, and hunted down. Ingrund escaped, convinced that the reaction of the cult proved it had been suborned by the Dark Gods. The sect survives, scattered across the Empire, and continues to work against those who blaspheme against Morr. That includes necromancers and the Undead, although as doctors are easier to find, and less well defended, they still make up the greater part of the sect's victims.

The Blessed of Morr

The Blessed of Morr believe Morr's realm is a place of peace, plenty, and pleasure. They look forward to death, both as a release from the sufferings of this life, and as the time at which they enter the paradise of their God. This general belief appears spontaneously, and those who hold it often commit suicide in a holy place of Morr, in the hope this will speed their entry to his realm. Priests of Morr discourage this as far as possible, as cleaning up afterwards is very annoying.

The Blessed of Morr survive as a sect because they believe killing yourself is deeply impious. Instead, they believe all souls must undergo a certain amount of suffering before they are worthy to enter Morr's realm. Those within the sect debate the question of whether that amount is the same for all souls, but it makes little practical difference. All agree that when a soul has suffered enough,

Morr gathers it to his realm, to eternal bliss. Thus, they believe if you increase the amount of pain and suffering in your life, you will go to Morr sooner.

Surprisingly enough, people who torture themselves do have shorter life expectancies than those who do not.

Members of this sect tend to be less public than many flagellants, although they do not keep their beliefs secret. They prefer to inflict constant pain on themselves during daily life, rather than to scourge themselves in public. Thus, shoes and belts with spikes on the inside are popular, as are abrasive clothes designed to rub the skin raw. They also take jobs that involve hard, ideally painful, work, or take on very dangerous jobs, in the hope this will make Morr take them sooner. The cult hierarchy clearly states the Blessed are heretics, but very few priests waste any effort on persecuting them.

Myrmidia

Of all the fanatical groups that proclaim their service to Myrmidia, two stand at the forefront.

Myrmidia Perfecta

The Imperial Cult of Myrmidia portrays her as the Goddess of the Art of War, a strategic warrior willing to use whatever tactics it takes to triumph over evil foes. This is an image that has a great deal of appeal to people recovering from the effects of war. It is also a major simplification of the cult as it is found in Tilea and Estalia. There, Myrmidia is the Goddess of Civilisation, and patroness of the arts.

Most southerners who see the Imperial style of worship simply shrug, and ask what can you expect from such barbarous people? A few, the fanatics of Myrmidia Perfecta, see it as a gross insult to their Goddess. They regard the Imperial priests of Myrmidia as blasphemers, enemies of Myrmidia to be destroyed with all the skill and cunning at their disposal.

Needless to say, La Aguila Ultima has strongly condemned this sect, and commanded they be hunted down as dangerous heretics. Most southern priests agree, feeling the other aspects of Myrmidia can be introduced later, once the military aspect has won a foothold. There are, however, enough southerners who are in sympathy with Myrmidia Perfecta, some in positions of influence that the sect has been able to grow, and actually take some action within the Empire.

Remeans/Magrittans

The debate over the site of Myrmidia's birth as a mortal splits the whole cult along cultural lines. For most, it is merely a matter of honour and status. There are extremists on both sides, however, who take things much further.

These groups believe the Tileans or Estalians (as appropriate) actually opposed Myrmidia, and she led an invasion of their lands to bring the heretics under control. As a consequence, the conquered race should, even now, be the slaves of the conquerors. Each group manoeuvres to put natives of its own country into all positions of authority in the cult, and even in secular positions in the other country. They use politics, bribery, slander, treachery, and murder to achieve these aims, believing these tactics are justified by the circumstances. Each side tries to incite all-out war against the other.

Fortunately, both groups are rather small, and thus have not been able to do much more than fuel a rather chauvinistic climate. The expansion of Myrmidia into the Empire, however, provides them with an opportunity. Imperial citizens are not already committed to one side or the other, and thus could be recruited to support one side. As the cult grows in the Empire, this has the potential to finally tip the balance. As a result, these two sects have recently transferred much of their effort to the Empire, seeking to win over Imperial priests, and to disgrace and remove priests of the other faction. Thus far, the efforts of the two groups are cancelling one another out, and things remain balanced.

Ranald

The following sects represent two extreme groups within the God's cult.

Fortune's Favoured

Fortune's Favoured believe Ranald punishes those who violate his strictures with financial misfortune. They also believe any financial misfortune is a sign that someone has been found guilty by Ranald. The only way to appease Ranald is to throw oneself entirely on his mercy. When the penance is over, Ranald, they believe, will change your luck.

These fanatics throw themselves on Ranald's mercy by relying on luck for everything. They do not look for food or clothing, and simply pick up things that come into their path. They don't worry about whether someone else might own that thing, nor do they take any precautions to avoid getting caught. That is something down to Ranald, and to luck. Fortune's Favoured are a variety of flagellant, although the beatings are generally administered by the officers of the law.

Fortune's Favoured do not have a long life expectancy, as they are supposed to avoid taking any steps to avoid danger or preserve their lives. Those who wander out of cities tend to die quickly in the wilderness, while those who stay in cities get in trouble with the law. Many Fortune's Favoured bend the rules a bit, staying in areas where they are more likely to be 'lucky,' or staying near worshippers of Ranald who might look the other way. The truly fanatical believe this renders the whole penance futile, but as the truly fanatical tend to die quickly, this position is not influential.

Orthodox followers of Ranald tend to think Fortune's Favoured are a bit mad, but not actively dangerous; they may even help them occasionally, as a pious act. In return, the flagellants explain their beliefs, helping to perpetuate the sect. Although there is no central organisation of Fortune's Favoured, the simplicity of their core belief means they are identifiable wherever Ranald is worshipped.

The Humble Ones

All of Ranald's followers believe the rich and proud deserve to be brought down a peg or two. The Humble Ones believe they deserve

to be brought down all the pegs, and then lowered into a pit full of farmyard waste.

The Humble Ones typically work in small groups, with between three and six members. They choose a wealthy and prominent figure in a town, and plot to destroy his life. As followers of Ranald, they never use direct violence, preferring stealing, slander, swindles, and set-ups. In some cases, the target is finally executed for crimes he did not commit, but it is never a Humble One's hand on the haft of the axe.

Simply destroying someone's property is rarely enough to utterly ruin them, as they have friends and contacts remaining. The Humble Ones instead work to ruin their reputation first, faking contact with prostitutes, gamblers, and Chaos cultists, or switching shipments of goods so it looks like they are trying to cheat their partners. They often disguise one of their number as the target, so that they can be seen engaging in dubious practises. The Humble Ones are willing to set up the appearance of almost anything to ruin their target.

The Cult of Ranald is not organised enough to officially condemn them, but most followers regard the Humble Ones as obsessive fanatics who get far too much pleasure out of someone else's misery. A group that crossed the lines set by Ranald's strictures would be quickly eliminated by other cultists, but most Humble Ones are very careful to keep to the strictures. They do, after all, regard themselves as entirely orthodox followers of the Trickster God.

Shallya

The following sects reflect the extreme positions held by those working to promote the interests of Shallya.

Plague Wardens

Plague Wardens believe the central duty of a Shallyan is to protect as many people as possible from the plagues and pestilences pervading the Old World. Rather than treating the victims, they aim to stop the plagues from spreading and creating victims in the first place. Their goal is noble; it is their methods that make them fanatics.

The only way to stop a plague is to destroy the source of the infection. That may mean killing someone with the plague, and then burning the body and boiling the ashes. It might also mean razing a whole section of a town, burning it down while trapping the doomed inhabitants inside. Plague Wardens recognise these acts are unpleasant, but feel they are justified by the greater good.

As Plague Wardens kill people, it goes without saying they are considered dangerous, and worse, by most members of Shallya's cult. Shallyan priestesses who join the cult almost always have difficulty casting spells, due to repeatedly breaking the central stricture of the faith. Plague Wardens see this as a test imposed by their Goddess, to ensure their faith is strong.

While Plague Wardens are violent zealots, they do believe they are acting to save people's lives. Thus, they do not kill on mere suspicion of infection, and all groups of Plague Wardens include at least one person with diagnostic abilities. These abilities are not always very good, but Plague Wardens only kill when they are fairly sure plague is present. They are also among the most implacable adversaries of the Fly Lord, and if they uncover evidence of a group of his cultists, they ignore all their other plans to concentrate on eliminating the greater threat.

Ironically, it is quite likely that the Plague Wardens actually have saved thousands more lives than they have ended. While their membership is very secret, their existence is well known to the educated, and they are a favourite example when priests of Verena discuss ethical dilemmas.

The Suffering Hearts

Shallyan doctrine is suspicious of personal pleasure in a world filled with so much suffering. The Suffering Hearts take this suspicion to an extreme. They are followers of Karin the Pure, a priestess who lived in Nuln a little over two centuries ago, and believed Priestesses of Shallya had to purify themselves of the taint of pleasure and luxury before they could properly minister to the suffering. Attempting to do so while impure was, she claimed, blasphemous.

While Karin was, eventually, cast out by the cult for denouncing the entire hierarchy as blasphemers against Shallya, her followers remain in mainstream temples, and keep their places by moderating their strictures against others. This also gives them more time to inflict suffering on themselves. Minimal food, little sleep, and inadequate protection from the elements are the basic elements of the life of a Suffering Heart. Most believe deliberately inflicting injuries on oneself is an affront to Shallya, so instead they take on hard and dangerous tasks, such as carrying heavy stones up to the top of the temple buildings, and then back down again.

The Suffering Hearts do nothing to relieve the pain of others, because they follow Karin's belief that it would be blasphemous to do so before they have been purified. Some Suffering Hearts do see visions that they take to be signs from the Goddess that they have been purified, and these individuals start to help. The proportion of miracle-workers among them, while not high, is higher than among other priestesses. Others, however, never feel pure enough, and as a result the cult hierarchy tries to discourage these beliefs. The Goddess of Mercy, however, cannot condone harsh measures against people who are merely misguided followers.

The Suffering Hearts are not a sect, as they have no internal organisation, and their interpretations of Karin's beliefs can vary a great deal. Indeed, this sort of belief has been present in the Shallyan faith for centuries, and Karin's particular version has little sway outside the Empire.

Sigmar

The Cult of Sigmar has many, many sects and divisions. It is important to remember, however, that not all of them are fanatics, even if the cult officials would describe them as such. The Malleuns, for example, are clearly heretics, and might be described as fanatics, but many of them pursue their faith with no more fervour than the typical witch hunter. This section describes some groups who are clearly extremists.

Those Left Behind

Those Left Behind is a female order of warriors, dedicated to wiping Greenskins from the face of the world. Its members are

all women who have lost menfolk (husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons) to Orcs or Goblins, and who have turned to Sigmar as a protector. They go out, under his banner, to seek revenge.

These widows grimly commit themselves to their task, accepting the insurmountable nature of their enemies. The Orcs are endless, without mercy, and breed like roaches, and so every member knows that by joining the sect, they sign their own death sentences. This does not discourage them in the slightest. They live for the satisfaction that comes from the moment when a group of Orcs has been destroyed, and the arrival of another group simply provides another opportunity.

The death rate of new recruits is very high, as the sect does not believe in preliminary training. New recruits are given weapons and armour that belonged to past members, if it is available, and then sent out to fight Orcs. If no weapons or armour are at hand, the recruit is sent out armed with a broom, or some other sort of stick. Those who survive tend to become competent fighters very quickly, with a vicious and chaotic style. The group is also notorious for its tendency to drink a lot and become rowdy both before and after expeditions against its enemies.

All members take Sigmar in place of the relative they have lost, and so describe themselves as daughters, brides, sisters, or even mothers of Sigmar. These titles, particularly the latter ones, draw the suspicion of the Order of the Torch, as they seem heretical. However, the group as a whole holds few beliefs other than "kill Greenskins," so it is tolerated by most priests.

The Flagellant Orders

The flagellant orders are a highly conspicuous phenomenon in the contemporary Cult of Sigmar. They are not, however, a single group. Each order of flagellants has its own unique beliefs, and may be strongly opposed to all other orders. What unites them is the misguided belief that by offering up their pain, they somehow please their Gods. Since the world is such a grim place, full of suffering, grief, and bloodshed, they have no doubt that this is the preferred way of things to the Gods.

Some groups take only men, others only women, and some both, while other groups only take people of a certain age, from children to the elderly. Some take anyone, others require a probationary period. A few take temporary members, others require a lifelong commitment. Many require some specific mutilation of new members, but others trust the constant self-torture to produce mutilations pleasing to Sigmar.

Despite all these differences, the groups do have a lot in common. The most important thing is their emphasis on flagellation; or, more generally, on the infliction of pain on members of the group. A true flagellant group only tortures members of the group, although a few will beat volunteers who do not wish to join permanently. Flagellation is the most popular form of this, as it can be continued indefinitely if used in moderation, but every form of torture used in the Empire is used by some group somewhere.

The overwhelming majority of flagellants perform their torture publicly, often processing through towns while each member scourges the person in front. While doing this, the leader generally preaches the group's unique doctrine.

Most groups form around a charismatic leader, who generally believes the recent horrific events, particularly the Storm of Chaos, are punishments sent from Sigmar because they have dishonoured the Empire. Unless the people do penance for their ways, these preachers claim, Sigmar will destroy the whole world, or let the Ruinous Powers do so. A few groups form around leaders who believe that the group can take the wrath of the Gods on itself, and then do penance for everyone. Others think that the torture will make them worthy of great gifts from Sigmar. A few groups even survive the death of the leader that brought them together, but most fall apart at that point, the members finding other groups to join.

Flagellants are generally tolerated, not least because the general population feels that they might be right, and would resist any attempt to suppress them. Individual groups that cross the line into politics or dangerous heresy are ruthlessly suppressed, but many flagellants are allowed to operate openly. A few priests even endorse their actions, and lead flagellant groups themselves.

Sigmar's Anvils

Among the many fanatics who purport to understand the true nature of Sigmar, there are those who shoulder the burden of wickedness that the Empire allows to flourish. They believe that each Mutant born, each calamity, each new incursion, each war is just another sign of Sigmar's displeasure. Having witnessed the results of these conflicts, the tattered lives of those who survive these atrocities, they can no longer tolerate the horror of the world, and they commit themselves to purifying it.

Sigmar's Anvils is a freakish collection of fanatics who put themselves through awful trials in a desperate attempt to redirect Sigmar's wrath from the innocents to themselves. Much of their time is spent finding new ways to cause themselves pain, but pain without killing themselves. Most Anvils scourge themselves and pack the wounds with salt, whilst others may cut ribbons of skin from their flesh and dust the bleeding rents with ground glass, sand, or in some cases lime. They subject themselves to fire, beatings, and just about any other horrific act they can to ensure the Empire remains safely under the protective hand of their chosen God.

Generally, the Anvils collect in small groups of a dozen men and women. They rarely remain in one place for long since locals can scarcely tolerate the sounds of their cries and moans. But really, they move to make certain the blisters on their feet are fresh and weeping. These groups never take the easy routes; they travel through the wilderness and never on roads or paths, but rather seek out areas rich with thorns and brambles to ensure their flesh is torn and oozing. Unsurprisingly, the Anvils are few in numbers.

Truth of Sigmar

The Unifiers, who believe Sigmar is the Emperor of the Gods, are not generally extremists. Members of the Truth of Sigmar are; they believe Sigmar is the only true God remaining. They say that after Ulric crowned Sigmar as a God, the Gods went to war against the Ruinous Powers, and all save Sigmar were killed. The Dark Gods continued to support the priests of other faiths, while slowly perverting them into following dreadful rites. Sigmar, although he stood alone, was able to beat the Dark Powers back into the Wastes, but even for Sigmar, the fight is a difficult one.

Members of the Truth of Sigmar thus believe anyone who pays any respect to another deity is, in truth, a Chaos cultist. Such worship helps the Ruinous Powers, and most take the Storm of Chaos as a sign that Sigmar is finding it harder to hold back the forces of darkness. This is, of course, also a call to action: eliminate the worshippers of all other deities.

The zealots of this group stay as secret as possible, because they do not want to draw the attention of their enemies. They focus their attacks on temples and priests of other deities, aiming to destroy without mercy. They do include open worshippers of the Ruinous Powers among their enemies, and have destroyed genuine chaotic cults. They have, however, killed far more relatively innocent priests of other deities, and damaged or destroyed a large number of temples and shrines.

The Order of the Cleansing Flame is aware of the existence of this group, and hunts it down mercilessly. Not only are they heretics, but by fighting against the enemies of Chaos, they weaken the Cult of Sigmar in the long battle against corruption. A few priests are members of the group, but no one in a true position of authority is believed to be affiliated with them.

Taal and Rhya

Given the great age of these cults, there are a great number of strange sects that venerate Taal and Rhya.

Celebrants

These fanatics seek out remote stretches of wilderness to better commune with their deities. It's not that they dislike cities, or other communities, but rather they believe they are closest to their patrons when in the heart of unspoilt wilderness… or so they claim.

The real reason for their isolationist tendencies is their desire to perform the ceremonies and rituals that celebrate the wild nature of Taal and Rhya. They regularly ingest strange herbs and chemicals to enter trances and experience bizarre visions they believe hold the kernel of divine lore. In some extreme groups, they go so far as to pierce their flesh with wooden hooks and suspend themselves from trees to transcend the bounds of mortal flesh and enter the spiritual domain of the Gods.

Celebrants, as they call themselves, have little concern for their appearance or cleanliness, and so they are repellent to more refined societies. Infested with lice, ticks, and other parasites, they stink beyond belief, reeking of the unusual tinctures they ingest and the herbs they smoke. As well, most have open sores from exposure and their disturbing rituals, giving them the appearance of plague victims, or among the truly ignorant, Beastmen.

As a result, once a person joins the Celebrants, they rarely return to their former lives. Divorced from their family and friends, they seek succour from each other and the harsh and unforgiving wilds. Since many vile denizens haunt these same lands, most Celebrant sects end abruptly as food for the ravenous beasts of Chaos.

Wild Men

All followers of Taal and Rhya avoid excessively modern technology, such as firearms and the printing press, and most are wary of metal armour. The Wild Men, however, think that even this is a betrayal

of the true principles of the Gods. Humans should survive with only the tools that the Gods gave them. That is, they should run naked in the forests, killing with their bare hands, gathering fruits and nuts, drinking from streams, and sleeping covered by earth.

The climate of the Empire is not particularly well-suited to this kind of activity, and a lone, unarmed Human is easy prey for many animals, never mind the more dangerous monsters lurking in the Empire's forests. Thus, the Wild Men tend to gather in small groups, the more experienced teaching the less, and all looking out for one another.

Despite the name, there are Wild Women, and some groups are even rumoured to have children, whom they raise in the wilderness. Recently, Durrbein & Sons of Talabheim have made a lot of money from a series of cheap printed sheets describing the adventures of Talima, a remarkably attractive Wild Woman with the ability to stay miraculously clean. The stories are formulaic and repetitive, so the success of the series can be largely attributed to its illustrations, which are far better than usual for such a cheap medium.

Ulric

Ulric's fanatics are wild and barbaric, scarcely indistinguishable from the bloodthirsty Norsemen.

Sons of Ulric

The Sons of Ulric believe they are literally blood descendants of the God himself, and thus should control the cult. Beyond that, most think that they should also rule the world, but the Cult of Ulric is their first priority.

If the group were unified, it would have a good chance of succeeding. However, while all members agree that a descendant of Ulric should lead the cult, they tend to disagree over which descendant of Ulric is worthy of the honour; most think it should be them, personally. A charismatic and experienced leader might be able to unite them, promising all the Sons positions of power within the cult, but no such individual has arisen. Instead, the group is fractured into dozens of splinter groups, each competing against the other as much as with the cult's central organisation.

That said, the Sons do work to undermine the orthodox cult. Direct manifestations of Ulric's power are treated with respect, so miracle-working priests are safe, but others are seen as obstacles to the Sons' rightful rule, and thus targets for removal. Most try to avoid killing followers of their deity, and settle for discrediting or crippling them, to force them into retirement.

The Sons are most popular in Middenland, where they are strictly illegal, but they are found elsewhere. Some of the groups in other regions are not of pure Teutogen blood. Logically, this makes perfect sense: Ulric's descendants could marry people from other tribes. The Middenland Sons of Ulric, however, see it as the deepest and darkest heresy, and persecute non-Teutogen Sons of Ulric as enthusiastically as the orthodox cult persecutes them.

Wolf-Kin

While the followers of Sigmar might wander around cities bleating about their offences and hitting each other with sticks, the followers of Ulric take a different path. Those who become convinced of their own, or the world's, sinfulness take the path of the Wolf-Kin, berserk warriors who travel the northern Empire looking for trouble and then fighting it head-on.

The Wolf-Kin are among the most-admired fanatics in the Empire. They fight bravely against the enemies of the Empire, and many give their lives protecting small villages, or breaking an assault so an army can make an orderly retreat and fight another day. Almost all Wolf-Kin live in the northern Empire, wandering around looking for groups of Beastmen, warriors of Chaos and other enemies. As is the way of the Old World, there are always plenty of such adversaries for them to fight.

Wolf-Kin are single-minded in their search for enemies to kill, and attack directly and head-on when they find some. Subtle strategy, or, indeed, any strategy, is not their concern; they rely on their fighting strength, faith in Ulric, and sheer energy to grant them triumph. Because a lot of them had military training before joining the Wolf-Kin, it often does.

At present, the Wolf-Kin devote most of their attention to defeating the remaining Beastmen and Mutants from the armies of Chaos, although in normal times Orcs, and even Human bandits, become their targets. Indeed, in the past Wolf-Kin have been known to attack Imperial tax collectors as representatives of evil, but such incidents are glossed over these days.

The Wolf-Kin are loosely organised, and anyone can join, or even simply declare themselves to be one. If they act the part, and stay alive, they are a Wolf-Kin. Female members are also known, but are substantially less common. Because Wolf-Kin are prone to sudden violence, particularly when drunk, the respect most feel for them does not extend to warm hospitality. No village would throw a group of Wolf-Kin out, but they would host them in a barn, rather than in people's homes. As a result, there is little benefit in pretending to be Wolf-Kin, and the majority of those wandering the roads of the north are genuine.

Verena

Verena counts a number of fanatical sects in her ranks of clerics. The two that follow are prime examples of how such fanaticism manifests.

Defenders of Truth

The Defenders of Truth are the zealots of Verena. They are passionate advocates of the right to freedom of speech, the right to possess books on any subject, and the academic freedom to pursue research into any field. Witch hunters think they are Chaos cultists in waiting, guilds see them as serious threats, and most lords think of them as dangerous agitators.

The Cult of Verena, as a whole, does not condemn the Defenders too strongly. Most priests agree with them in principle, but think the Defenders take things a bit too far. As a result, many Verenans are inclined to protect a Defender against peremptory arrest, something that can get them into a lot of trouble.

Defenders act first to prevent the destruction of knowledge, of any kind. They try to save at least one copy of any book condemned to be burned, and get it to a Verenan temple where

it can be stored in safety. Something that exists in only one copy is very vulnerable, so some less-active Defenders spend much of their time making copies of saved tomes, for distribution to other temples. In some cases, reading the forbidden texts has a dreadful effect on the mind of the scribe, and the sect finds itself with a Mutant lunatic on its hands.

Some Defenders also believe those accused of heresy and other such offences of thought should be rescued. These people organise daring raids to save people from the pyre, or break them out of prison. Sometimes they find they have rescued Mutants, necromancers, or daemonologists, and then have to kill the criminal, but that is a risk they are willing to take. A few Defenders believe in taking a more active stand against those who would restrict freedom of thought; some of these people kill every witch hunter they can find. The cult does condemn such activities, as both unjust and likely to bring a world of trouble down on the cult as a whole.

Scholastics

Scholastics believe they are deeply unworthy of Verena's gifts of learning and civilisation, and struggle to become worthy. They do this through attempting to learn large amounts of information, and remember it perfectly. A typical Scholastic might set himself a chapter of a book of law to learn one day, and then try to write it out from memory the following day. For every mistake in the writing, they give themselves one blow with a whip.

While lone Scholastics exist, they are more common in groups, as that makes it easier to test learning that goes beyond the simple memorisation of texts. One member of the group sets texts and a test for the others, and then flogs those who make mistakes on the test, the severity of the punishment depending on the level of the mistakes. In many groups, the member who did least badly on the test becomes the examiner for the next cycle.

A few fanatics feel the artificial situation of the classroom is insufficiently testing. They prefer to study everything known about locations known to be dangerous, and then go to deal with the danger based on their knowledge. These people sometimes work in concert with the Order of Mysteries, but not always; a Scholastic wants to suffer if his study falls short, and so chooses a dangerous location without regard for the presence of ancient wisdom. Most of these Scholastics die horribly early on their first expedition. A few are lucky, and defeat the peril, or at least escape, thanks to their learning. These people generally try again, often behaving something like troll slayers (although the similarities are not extensive).

Schoolteachers often profess admiration for the Scholastics, pointing to them as a shining example as they beat their students. A few Scholastics have taken to visiting such schools, testing teachers in front of their students, and beating them for their mistakes. They explain this is the true way to honour Verena, and these visits are extremely popular with the pupils.

— Acts of Faith —

Most fanatics do more than just rant on street corners; as mentioned earlier, they also act to serve their God. In almost all cases, these actions are more extreme versions of things done by normal worshippers, although heretics often create their own rites. These acts fall into four main categories—penance, punishment, sacrifice, and service—that are common to all cults, although they differ in the precise things demanded of the faithful.

Penance

Acts of penance serve to express a believer's remorse for the affront against their God, and serve as evidence that their repentance is genuine. They must be done voluntarily, as part of a consciousness of sin. Many fanatics have a deep consciousness of sin, and thus engage in many acts of penance, finding them necessary after deeds that most would regard as part of everyday life.

Penance is distinguished by being voluntary, directed purely at the relationship between the worshipper and the deity, and involving actions. Sacrifice and service can both be performed as penance, but they are not the main forms. Similarly, a person cannot be compelled to perform penance, something most fanatics recognise. Of course, a person can be punished for their crimes even if they do not repent, and most fanatics are equally insistent on this.

Starting from the gentle end of the spectrum, prayers are a popular form of penance. Normal people might visit a shrine or temple to say a prayer; fanatics are more likely to spend a whole night kneeling in front of the altar intoning their prayers of repentance in a loud voice. They are, however, equally likely to hide in a corner, say their prayers silently, but still remain in the temple all night. Shallyans and Verenans particularly like prayerful penance, and it is also a popular form among followers of Myrmidia and Ranald. Indeed, official Myrmidian penances heavily emphasise prayer, as the priesthood feel this further distinguishes their Goddess of Civilisation from the more barbarian deities found further north.

Closely related to prayers are readings from holy books. These penances are extremely popular in the Cult of Verena, where a worshipper might choose to read a particularly difficult work of philosophy multiple times as a penance. This is also popular in the Cult of Morr, which places some emphasis on not disturbing the God or drawing his attention to the living.

Abstinence is, perhaps, the most popular form of penance overall, embraced by all the cults. This can mean going without food (fasting), going without sleep (watching), or giving up a particular pleasure for a period of time. Watching is particularly popular in the Cult of Morr, as it means the penitent stays out of Morr's realm. Fasting, on the other hand, is popular among followers of Shallya and Myrmidia; Shallyans see it as expressing sympathy with the starving, Myrmidians as representing a soldier on campaign. Followers of Ulric give up protection against the cold, spending a night in the snow without clothes. Many fanatics give up washing, but it is unclear whether they see this as a penance.

Self-flagellation is a form of penance, and one that is very popular with fanatics, but much less popular with everyone else. Indeed, anyone who performs a flagellant penance is likely to be labelled a fanatic by

their acquaintances. That said, it is particularly popular in the Cult of Sigmar, and someone who does it very occasionally, after grave offences, might be seen as merely pious. The Cult of Manann also strongly encourages flagellant penances for certain offences at sea, although anyone committing such a crime can hardly be pious. A pious follower of Manann who engages in flagellation is probably a fanatic; an impious individual who does so is probably just scared of the God's wrath.

Punishment

Punishments are inflicted on people who commit religious crimes, whether they repent or not. Zealots are often very enthusiastic about punishing others for their offences, and this can get them in trouble with the authorities—unless, of course, they are the authorities. This is not uncommon, particularly for zealous Sigmarites in the Empire.

In principle, anything that can be a penance can also be a punishment, but in practise the cult authorities normally prefer things that can be easily monitored, and do not take up too much of their time. Fines are a great favourite of almost all cults, as the money benefits the cult as well as punishing the criminal, but fanatics tend to disapprove of such punishments, preferring something more physical. The examples given below add to the punishments listed on *WFRP*, page 175, and in the sections on individual cults earlier in this book.

Zealots of Manann favour the tide post. The individual is chained to a post which is fixed in the ground on a tidal beach, and left there for a number of tides determined by the severity of the crime. The form of binding and the precise position of the post also depend on the crime; a deep position can be a death sentence, unless Manann chooses to send a particularly low tide to save the victim.

Morrians sometimes bury those who offend Morr alive, in coffins, to remind them of their proximity to the dead. This requires a Will Power Test to avoid gaining an Insanity Point; if the interment is prolonged, multiple tests may be needed. The difficulty of the test depends on the size of the coffin, and whether there is a corpse in with the victim.

Myrmidians like the gauntlet, in which the offender must run between two rows of armed warriors who strike them as they go past. For minor acts, they use clubs, but swords can be used to punish serious crimes. In some cases, the victim is not expected to survive, but at least they have a chance, if they are quick and dexterous.

Ranald's followers may set up elaborate con games to punish those who anger their God. That takes a lot of time and effort, however, so many settle for kidnapping the malefactor and dumping them somewhere far from home without any money or, in some cases, clothes. If they can get back on their wits, Ranald forgives them.

Shallyans do not believe in punishment. Instead, they give the offender the opportunity to work their way to reconciliation (see **Service**). Those who refuse this mercy may be handed over to other cults.

In addition to The Anvil (see *WFRP* page 175), Sigmarites brand criminals. The brand itself deals a Damage 1 hit, causes a great deal of pain, and leaves a permanent scar identifying the crime committed. The location of the brand varies depending on the

crime; brands for most offences are made on the hand, but some are made on the forehead, dealing a Damage 3 hit, while brands for perversions of the flesh deal Damage 4 hits, but are easy to conceal.

The followers of Taal and Rhya prefer to let the wilderness punish those who offend the cult, rather than taking a hand themselves. This can be done in several ways, such as tying the offenders up and dropping them in a river, or tying their wrists and ankles together and then rolling them down a hill. Staking a person to the ground and putting bait of some form on them is used in extreme cases.

Ulricans believe punishment is best suffered at the teeth of wolves. The individual is put in a fighting pit with one or more wolves, and left there either for a fixed length of time, or until one side or the other has won. The severity of the action determines the number of wolves and the equipment. Many Ulricans believe if the offender can defeat all the wolves despite having no weapons, then it is proof that the initial accusation was false, and so some zealots facing dire allegations volunteer for this punishment.

Finally, Verenans put their trust in writing. Some must simply write a long account of how sorry they are for offending the God, while others are required to write their offences, and apologies, into their own flesh with a sharp steel-tipped pen. In the most serious cases, an area of skin is flayed from the offenders, tanned into parchment, and then given to them so that they can write an account of their crimes in their own blood. If the individual is illiterate, they are imprisoned until they learn to write. The Verenans do provide tutors, but they are not gentle people.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice means giving something to the God, something that will be a definite loss to the person giving it. It does require a definite thing (see **Service** for offerings of time and effort), but beyond that there are many forms it can take.

First, the sacrifice may be destroyed, or it may be given to the cult to further the work of the God. Most priests prefer the latter form in most cases, and anyone trying to sacrifice a book to Verena by burning it risks being lynched by the faithful. However, destruction is a common form for animal sacrifices, and sacrifices to Manann are almost invariably cast into the sea.

Second, the item to be sacrificed must be chosen. Sigmar is said to favour the sacrifice, by destruction, of Orc heads, while Verena prefers the sacrifice, by offering, of books. Manann looks favourably upon the sacrifice of ships; an old one that has been successful might be burned while at sea, or a new one might be given to a temple.

The difference between a sacrifice and a gift is that a sacrifice is a major expense for the sacrificing character. Many fanatics sacrifice everything they have to the cult, but ordinarily pious individuals may make at least one sacrifice in their lifetimes.

Service

Service is doing things for the cult. The Cult of Shallya is particularly keen on service, as it is always looking for volunteers to work in its hospitals. Verenans favour the service of the literate, to copy books or otherwise care for them. Morrians can always use volunteer grave diggers, and every cult needs people to clean the temples and shrines.

A particular form of service is the quest, where the believer promises to carry out some great deed on the God's behalf. Quests are most popular among the followers of Sigmar and Myrmidia, and thus often involve martial activities. A Verenan might go on a quest to find a rare book, however, or a follower of Manann might search for a lost sea route.

— A Temple of Flesh —

Fanatics starve, freeze, and beat themselves in the hope of pleasing, or at least appeasing, their God. They do it because it hurts. This section deals with the effects that the practises of fanatics have on their health, and, accordingly, their game statistics. For the most part, they impose penalties.

Abstinence

Fanatics enjoy two kinds of abstinence. The first is a short period of intense deprivation, showing their contrition for some offence, or as a period of preparation for some particularly holy deed. The other is abstinence sustained over the long term, to keep the flesh constantly in check. Most fanatics do both.

Short-Term Abstinence

There are many kinds of short-term abstinence. A few fanatics even try going without air, but most feel that holding your breath until you turn blue is more the province of three-year-olds than the most devoted servants of the Gods.

Going without sleep is popular. For the first day, this has no effect beyond making the fanatic even more irritable and intolerant than normal. For each day after that, they take a temporary –10% penalty to Agility, Intelligence, Will Power, and Fellowship. Once one of these statistics has fallen below 10%, further days without sleep grant 1 Insanity Point each. Many hear their God talking to them at this point, and so eagerly seek out the state.

Once ascetics have a chance to sleep, they sleep for twelve hours plus one hour for every day of wakefulness. When they wake up, the penalty to their profile reduces by 10%, and reduces by a further 10% for every full night's sleep thereafter. The Insanity Points are permanent, however.

Another popular asceticism, often combined with eschewing sleep, is exposing oneself to cold. Cold weather can inflict damage on unprotected characters, and inflicts its damage every hour. A really cold day is Damage 1 if the character is completely unprotected, while a freezing windstorm on a mountain peak might be Damage 5 or more. Fanatics who are also avoiding sleep have a tendency to misjudge the weather and freeze to death.

By far the most popular short-term abstinence is the fast, wherein the fanatic eats nothing and drinks only light liquids, such as watered wine. A few drink water, but that almost always involves an attack of the Galloping Trots or Bloody Flux. The first three days without food merely make the ascetic irritable; anyone fasting for three days or fewer is despised as a poseur by true ascetics, and as a fanatic by more normal contacts.

For every three days, or part thereof, after the first three, the ascetic takes a –10% penalty to each of Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, Toughness, and Agility. Once one of these statistics has fallen below 10%, the ascetic loses 1 Wound every day. Once he has no Wounds left, every further Wound lost exposes him to a Sudden Death Critical. These Wounds can only heal if the ascetic eats normally, but if he does they heal as usual. The penalty to the Profile reduces by 10% for each day of normal eating, disappearing much more quickly than it developed.

Fasting to the point of losing Wounds, or going without sleep to just before gaining Insanity Points, is sufficient penance to clear a character's Disfavour Pool (see **Chapter X**), as long as he is adventuring, and thus suffering from the penalties, at the same time. In addition, these abstinences are often part of the process of casting rituals that rely on Divine magic.

Long-Term Abstinence

Fasting is really the only asceticism suitable for long-term abstinence, as the others are too difficult to control. The ascetic can also choose the amount he eats, to properly express his devotion. In game terms, the player chooses a penalty to apply to each of

Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, Toughness, and Agility. This penalty may not take any of the statistics below 5%, and must be the same penalty to each statistic. Otherwise, it can be chosen freely. Penalties of below 10% mean the character looks thin and pale; at higher penalties he looks definitely emaciated, and probably has an insane fire burning in his eyes. It is also possible to fast at a level that imposes no penalty, but that merely has the same effects as fasting intensively for three days or fewer.

The main benefit is a closer link to their God. Miracle-working priests experience a concrete manifestation of this. For every full 10% of penalty imposed by their fasting, they may roll an extra die when invoking miracles. These dice do not count for the score, but they do count for doubles and triples. Unless the extra dice also all show the same number, the double or triple on the casting dice is ignored. If the Priest has Disfavour Pool dice, they are offset one for one by the fasting dice.

Mortification

While abstinence involves hurting yourself by not doing something, mortification involves active infliction of pain. Flagellation is the most common version of this. Normal self-flagellation is painful, but does not cause loss of Wounds, or inflict any game rule penalties. It does take a half action, but does not count as an attack. That is, a character may strike himself once and take a standard attack action in the same round.

Most flagellants soon graduate to more serious mortification.

Flagellation

It is possible to inflict more damage by using a weighted scourge, or simply by hitting harder. A normal whip does SB–4 Damage, but the fanatic must actually succeed at a Weapon Skill Test to hit himself, as the angles are all wrong. Most avoid the whip for this reason.

A weighted scourge does SB–3 Damage if used for self-flagellation or against a motionless opponent, and SB–5 against someone who is dodging. A flagellant cannot miss himself with a scourge, but may well fail to do any damage. Unweighted scourges are painful but do no actual damage; fanatics often switch between the two as they feel the need.

It is also possible to beat oneself with a melee weapon. This does its normal damage but, as for a whip, a Weapon Skill Test is required to hit. Unlike with the whip, a character waving a sword at himself is unlikely to miss completely, but on a failed test he fails to do any actual damage.

A miracle-working priest may gain a real benefit from flagellation. If he spends a half action to strike himself immediately before casting a spell, he may add a bonus to his Casting Roll equal to the number of Wounds he lost to the flagellation, as long as his Disfavour Pool is empty. If he has black marks weighing against him, the mortification has no positive effect, although he still takes the damage.

Ulric's Fury does apply to self-flagellation. It is quite possible for a fanatic to inadvertently decapitate himself. This may even please the Gods….

Mutilation

Flagellants do sometimes deliberately cut off their extremities (admittedly, not often the head) as a sign of their devotion. A flagellant with a sharp implement may deliberately inflict any of the permanent effects described in *WFRP,* page 134 on himself. This puts him immediately at zero Wounds, and extreme bleeding means he has a 20% chance of dying each round until medical attention is received. Sensible fanatics make sure someone with basic medical skill is available before doing it. Most trust in the protection of their God, and bleed to death.

Self-mutilation imposes 1 Insanity Point, just as taking a Critical Wound from someone else does.

Miracle-working priests who mutilate themselves in this way gets a permanent extra die to roll when casting miracles, as described under long-term fasting, above.

Brands, Scars, and Tattoos

Many zealots like to mark their devotion on their bodies, burning, cutting, or drawing the sign of their God onto their flesh. The preferred medium varies by cult; Manann's followers prefer tattoos, Sigmar's brands, and Ulric's scars. Taal's followers use all three almost equally, while Shallyans find the whole idea repellent. The other cults do not use them much, but also do not have strong preferences. Verenans and Ranald's cultists lean towards tattoos, Morrians towards scars, and Myrmidians towards brands.

Most fanatics make the mark as obvious as possible, often over their whole face. This involves the loss of 1d5 Wounds when the mark is applied, but they heal normally. The fanatic also permanently loses 10% from Fellowship, and any ability to pretend to be a follower of another deity. At the GM's option, the mark may give fanatics a +20% bonus to Fellowship-based Tests when dealing with equally fanatical followers of their God.

— New Careers —

The truly devoted follow a number of paths in their fervent service to their God. This section presents two new options for them

Penitent (Basic)

Penitents wander the streets of the Old World, crying out that they are heretics and unworthy while beating themselves, or each other, to purge their wickedness. Groups of penitents practise the Torture Skill on each other, which gives members of this career a particularly good understanding of how it works.

As noted above, penitents are particularly common among followers of Sigmar, but they are found among the more committed of the followers of all Gods.

— Penitent Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+10%	+10%	—	—	+5%	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+3	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Blather, Gossip, Heal, Intimidate, Torture

Talents: Hardy, Strike to Stun, Very Resilient

Trappings: Religious Symbol, Scourge

Career Entries: Flagellant, Initiate, Outlaw, Student, Zealot

Career Exits: Charlatan, Flagellant, Initiate, Vagabond

Scourge of God (Advanced)

Those who serve their Gods as flagellants sometimes survive throwing themselves into danger to smite the forces of Chaos and darkness. Those who survive long enough become scourges of God, mighty warriors for their deity, blessed with a degree of divine protection.

Scourges of God are often highly charismatic, and gather other fanatics around them. In times of war, they are highly praised by the cult hierarchy, but when peace comes the priests prefer to move them along as quickly as possible, lest they find too many "enemies of God" within the towns of cities.

Most scourges of God die bravely in battle, but some do move on, often to other ways of discovering and punishing the corrupt. Scourges of God almost always substitute the name of their God when describing themselves: scourge of Sigmar, scourge of Ulric, and so on.

— Scourge of God Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+25%	—	+25%	+25%	+10%	—	+30%	+20%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+8	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Charm, Heal, Intimidate

Talents: Luck, Menacing, Public Speaking, Resistance to Chaos, Sixth Sense, Very Resilient, Very Strong

Trappings: Flail *or* Great Weapon, Religious Symbol, Religious Relic, Remains of a Heretic

Career Entries: Flagellant

Career Exits: Champion, Initiate, Interrogator, Witch Hunter

Note: You may enter this career even if the insanity you had as a Flagellant has been cured.

— Tensions Between the Cults —

Almost all citizens of the Empire admit it is important to pay your respects to all of the Gods. After all, they watch over different aspects of life, and all those aspects are necessary to a full existence. This is even true of the majority of priests; fanatics who believe only their God should be worshipped are rare, and universally condemned by their own cult. Most priests promote a 'live and let live' attitude.

The level of tension and outright conflict between the cults might thus be somewhat surprising. This is because priests support 'live and let live', except on very important and central religious issues, such as the correct way to deal with the insane, the treatment of scholars suspected of heresy, and seating positions at civic feasts. On such vital matters, they feel that they must take a stand, and their opposite numbers often feel the same.

Theological Differences

Theological differences are the most fundamental, but least common, causes of tensions between cults. They arise when two cults have different doctrines on the nature of reality and the Gods, and when members of those cults decide that the differences matter. These dissensions are rare because very few people understand the details of theology well enough to know the differences even exist, and thus find it difficult to care. Those that do become important have normally been translated into simple terms, for the simple minds of the layfolk.

Adventure Hook: Land Over Sea

A priest of Taal has found a way to make the primacy of his deity clear; he points out that the sea is fed by the rivers, and thus that rivers create the sea. As rivers create the sea, Taal is clearly superior to Manann, and the temples of Manann should be brought under the authority of those of Taal; specifically, his. The priests of Manann do not agree, and have started arguing that the sea swallows and destroys rivers. Some extreme followers take this to mean that followers of Manann should kill priests of Taal.

Sigmar and Ulric

The most famous theological difference is that between the cults of Sigmar and Ulric. Ulricans believe that, as Sigmar himself was an Ulrican, the Cult of Ulric is clearly primary, and deserves more honour than the Cult of Sigmar. Sigmarites believe Sigmar has become a God at least the equal of Ulric. In purely practical terms, the Sigmarites are winning within the Empire.

Adventure Hook: A Blasphemous Hierarchy

Temples of Ulric outside the Empire start including shrines to Sigmar. These shrines portray Sigmar as a servant of Ulric, acting entirely at the command of the God of Winter. The Ar-Ulric refuses to see this as anything other than honouring Sigmar, but the Grand Theogonist and Arch-Lectors want it stopped. The PCs are approached, independently, by high-ranking representatives of both cults. Both want the practise stopped, without stirring up any further conflict between the two cults. Of course, not all followers of the two Gods agree, and some intend to take more direct action.

Behaviour

Although matters of theological conflict do arise from time to time, they are far less common than individual disputes between priests, either within a cult or between priests of different faiths. Priests work to behave in ways pleasing to their God, to exhibit qualities preferred by their patron deity. As such, when they encounter priests who adhere to different values, who act in manners that are at odds with their own outlooks, conflict can arise.

To minimise the potential conflicts between priests in an area, an informal consensus is made amongst the members of an area as to which God takes priority in which areas. This minimises the contact between members of different cults and also reduces the number of disputes concerning matters of theological differences.

Adventure Hook: Spare the Rod...

A new priestess takes over at the Shallyan shrine, and starts preaching, vigorously, against such basic punishments as flogging, branding, mutilation, and rolling down a hill in a barrel of broken glass. The local priest of Sigmar cannot allow her to undermine respect for authority, but he's very reluctant to simply arrest a Shallyan who has done nothing but preach. Could the Player Characters arrange something?

Myrmidia, Sigmar, and Ulric

The three martial deities have very different approaches to battle. In broad terms, Myrmidia values individual skill and cunning, Sigmar values obedience and strength, and Ulric values courage and wild savagery. Members of one cult are thus prone to condemning the actions of members of another cult as military failings. Most commanders know devout followers of one God do not work well with followers of another, and keep their troops segregated.

Adventure Hook: Wolves & Spears

A commander, concerned that the troops under his command are forming into religious factions, mixes the cults in each division. The Myrmidian captain starts punishing the Ulricans for negligence, the Ulrican captain starts punishing the Myrmidians for cowardice. The PCs arrive at the fortress just as things are about to boil over. Beastmen are approaching, and while reinforcements are on the way, many of the troops simply expect them to help resolve the religious disputes.

Ranald, Sigmar, and Verena

The disagreements between Ranald, on the one hand, and Sigmar and Verena, on the other, are basic. Ranald believes in freedom, larceny, risk-taking, and conning the gullible. Verena feels these actions are unjust, while Sigmar takes a dim view of anyone who breaks the established rules. Most of the time, the authorities try to

arrest Ranald's cultists and treat them as common criminals, while Ranald's followers seek to embarrass the powers that be.

Adventure Hook: Sowing Discord

The cultists of Ranald in a town mount a particularly spectacular campaign against the prominent Sigmarite and Verenan temples. This pushes the other two faiths together, and they mount a counter-attack, searching for Ranaldans. Soon, however, the Verenans are repelled by the Sigmarites' methods, and start trying to rein in both sides. The town is split three ways, and more and more of the population are aligning with one faction or another.

Sigmar and Verena

The cults of Sigmar and Verena differ most strongly over the correct attitude to people who question the assertions of authority. Verenans regard this as a religious duty, something essential to the flourishing of civilisation. Sigmarites regard it as the first sign of blackest heresy, to be punished severely, possibly by burning at the stake. The two cults also disagree over the value of studying books on the Ruinous Powers, the balance to be struck between punishing the guilty and sparing the innocent, and the kinds of evidence that should be acceptable in a trial.

It is not the occasional tensions between the cults that are surprising, but the fact that, most of the time, they get along fairly well. This is largely because they agree on the proper treatment for actual worshippers of the Dark Gods, and Verenan investigators are at least as good at ferreting them out as witch hunters are. Still, more than a few witch hunters decide that Verenan temples are hives of heresy.

Adventure Hook: The Smell of Corruption

A Verenan priest finds evidence of corruption, and passes it on to the PCs, who have resources he doesn't. His information is generally good, albeit incomplete. Then he passes on evidence suggesting that a notable witch hunter has fallen to the Skull Lord. The next day, that witch hunter accuses the whole Verenan temple of heresy, and the worship of the Despoiler. Who is right?

Taal and the Civilised Gods

Taal and Rhya are primal nature Gods and they encourage earthy practises. Their holy sites are fashioned with suggestions and symbols of fertility, fecundity, and of course nature. Those who venerate these Gods are much more likely to embrace their primitive natures, dwelling in the remote places, drinking, debauching, and embracing the natural world. Given their unconventional methods of worship, conflict regarding decorum and behaviour is bound to arise between priests of these and other faiths. This is especially true of city folk and priests who follow Verena and Myrmidia, since Taal and Rhya are so clearly at odds with refinement, philosophy, and the sciences.

Adventure Hook: Caught in the Crossfire

A priestess of Verena travels to a remote village in Wissenland only to find she is not welcomed. Intent on spreading the value of learning and culture, she finds the locals embrace the shocking rituals and practises of Taal and Rhya. Horrified by the initiation rites that usher lads into manhood, and the coarse rituals that women undertake as part of their worship of Rhya, the priestess flees back to Nuln, claiming the village is overtaken by cultists of the Ruinous Powers. This prompts the authorities to send an expedition to the village to cleanse out the infestation, of which the PCs are a part.

Personal Differences

Whereas the previous conflicts were driven by a difference in character and personal qualities, these conflicts are driven by some specific course of actions. Arguments over theology or behaviour may have the ability to tear any community apart and leave the streets knee-deep in blood, but at least they have dignity. Personal differences, the most common cause of disputes between cults, do not even have that.

Personal differences can arise from almost anything. A priest might resent the leader of another cult being given precedence at a civic feast, or feel that a sermon insulted his cult, or him personally. It may be competition for a woman, or worries over reduced donation revenue as another cult grows in popularity.

These disputes are often dressed up in ethical and theological terms, but they can only be resolved if the personal resentments and rivalries involved can be defused.

Adventure Hook: Lust in the Heart

A priest of Morr decides his God has told him, in a dream, that the local high priestess of Shallya is turning her temple into a brothel, attracting donations by offering the favours of the priestesses. While a lot of the citizens of the town would like it to be true, the high priestess swears there is nothing to it, and the priest of Morr is just upset because she rebuffed his advances. She wants the Player Characters to stop the campaign against her, so that the temple can get on with healing the sick.

Chapter V: Other Gods

"The world is full of Gods. You can hardly turn your head without bumping into one or more. But who are they? Mere masks. False idols. And who is the King of Fake Faces? Ranald, of course! All these other deities are but mere costumes worn by the God of Liars. Let the rubes believe what they want."

—Red Jack, Priest of Ranald, Nuln

Although the majority of the citizens of the Empire worship the nine Gods condoned by the Emperor, there are many, many Gods revered by citizens, foreigners, and heretics alike. Some of these are aspects of the main Gods, minor deities, nature spirits, and abstract concepts venerated nonetheless. Also, there is a vast swathe of forbidden Gods—deities that have either fallen out of the favour of the citizens of the Empire, or are affiliated with one of the Ruinous Powers.

With few exceptions, none of these other Gods are worshipped on a scale resembling that of the primary nine. Most have simple shrines or a lone temple dedicated to their name and that's all. Worshippers are either concentrated in one location or scattered widely, but thinly, throughout the Empire.

The Gods described here are neither sanctioned by the main cults of the Empire nor widespread, and in some cases, are outright forbidden. These include the deities of the other Imperial races—Dwarfs, Elves, and Halflings—cults on the rise in popularity, and even the vile Gods of Chaos themselves.

Creating New Cults

New cults spring into existence every day, just as old ones die out from a lack of worshippers or are purged by witch hunters and other authority figures. Most citizens of the Empire readily accept the fact that people can and do belong to multiple cults at the same time. Cults most clearly differ from secret societies, guilds, or other organisations, in the following ways:

- The group pays allegiance to a God or spirit.
- Members of the group spend a portion of their day in prayer or contemplation of their deity.
- Sacrifices and offerings are presented to the God on a regular basis.

The GM should feel free to create new cults as needed. These can follow the similar traits of the forbidden cults described in **Chapter VIII: Religion & Belief** in *WFRP*, although they can be legitimate and need not ascribe to any of the Ruinous Powers—for example, some cults are created for the worship of Venerated Souls (see page 95), both living and dead. Most new cults are very small, focused in their numbers and goals, and keep their activities either entirely secret or vague enough so as not to draw the attention of witch hunters or others that may disagree with their dealings.

Gunndred

Gunndred is the God of Rustlers and Blackmail. He stands for taking what you want by force and fear, leaving frightened victims behind you. His cult is currently rather localised, but it does seem to be spreading. He is generally portrayed as a large, brutal man wearing travel clothes, but some worshippers depict him as an extremely fat man dressed in rich clothes and covered with jewellery, with at least half a dozen large thugs standing behind him.

Unlike Ranald, who concentrates on the luck and skill of the thief, Gunndred emphasises brutality and intimidation. A follower of Ranald might sneak into a house and steal all the money without waking a soul. A follower of Gunndred would turn up with allies, wake everyone, beat and torture them all, take all the money, and promise to return in six months to take all their money again, while threatening to kill them, slowly, if they tell anyone what happened. He would not expect them to abide by the last threat; indeed, followers of Gunndred want to gain a fearsome reputation, so he would hope they did not. Most followers would kill only one member of the family on the next visit, generally one who was not earning a living.

Gunndred and Ranald

Many people believe Gunndred is an aspect of Ranald, as both appeal to criminals. Both cults deny this vociferously. Followers of Ranald are repulsed by the wanton violence of Gunndred's followers, while Gunndred's worshippers see the Cult of Ranald as a group of effete sissies. There are many merchants in Tilea and the Border Princes who pray to Ranald for protection from Gunndred.

Cult Skills and Talents

Initiates: Intimidate
Priests: Animal Care, Menacing, Torture

Strictures

Priests of Gunndred abide by the following strictures:

- Be feared, not loved.
- Live by what you have taken from others.
- Leave no victim unmarked.
- Leave survivors to spread the fear of your name.

Areas of Worship

Gunndred's largest cult is based in the Border Princes, and is detailed below. He is also worshipped by some of the more brutal racketeering groups in the Empire, particularly in the south, and he is popular in northern Tilea, near the Vaults, where he is known as Sconduino. Tilean worshippers often pursue brutal feuds and vendettas over slights to their "honour;" other worshippers claim they need no excuse for violence, and look down somewhat on the Tileans. Both groups do recognise they serve the same God, however.

Symbol

Gunndred's primary symbol is the lasso, which coincidentally looks a good deal like a noose. He is also symbolised by the cosh, or a set of brass knuckles.

The Cult of Gunndred

In the past, there have been few large groups of Gunndred cultists. This is because the cultists are all brutal criminals who believe in drawing attention to themselves; most cults are crushed by the authorities before they can grow to any size. Some cults have been crushed by organised crime before they provoke the authorities into interfering with business.

In recent years, however, a group based in the Border Princes has managed to grow to a substantial size. This has always been a fertile area for Gunndred, as the absence of central authority makes life easier for his followers. Indeed, some of the Border Princes themselves have been followers of the God of Rustlers and Blackmail. On the whole, however, these groups have stayed small due to infighting, and the lack of prosperous people to intimidate.

The new group changed that by concentrating on rustling—stealing cattle. This has always been a part of Gunndred's portfolio, as there is no way to subtly and elegantly steal a few dozen living cows; intimidating the cowherds has always mattered. Emphasising this area has allowed the cult to grow within the Border Princes, and its spreading reputation has led to many people in the Empire thinking of Gunndred as *primarily* a God of cattle thieves.

Activities

The members of the cult have a distinctive style of cattle theft. All members wear bright red cloaks and carry shields painted (badly) with a cow skull and lasso. The leader of a raiding group carries a standard composed of a cow skull on a pole, with a lasso hanging from a cross-piece below.

Any guards with the cattle are tortured and then killed in front of the cowherds. The cultists often kill the guards by staking them to the ground and then driving the cattle over them. Cowherds who resist the group are mutilated or murdered. A common practise is to tie ropes to the cowherd's arms and legs and attach the cords to the cattle, who slowly wander apart until the victim's limbs are torn from their body. Other techniques include inciting a bull to gore the victim, and in some rare cases, such individuals are disembowelled and left for dead. Anyone who runs away quickly enough is allowed to escape unharmed, and with any valuables they might have been carrying, as long as they leave all the cattle behind.

As the cultists are competent fighters, and travel in groups of at least a dozen, most cowherds run as soon as they see the cloaks and standard. Groups who pretend to be members of the cult are offered membership; refusal is unwise.

As it has grown, the cult has diversified into protection rackets and highway robbery, but these remain relatively minor, at least for now. While it remains based in the Border Princes, it has spread to Averland, which has a thriving cattle trade.

Organisation

The cult is divided into bands, each led by a chief, who is also a priest of Gunndred. Members of the bands are often outlaws, mercenaries, or similar violent types, although a few will be initiates. The cult as a whole is led by Master Gunnslieb, and he makes sure that every member fears him.

Recruits need only find a band and ask to join. Two or three of the members beat them up, and then they are members. They are given the worst, most dangerous jobs until a newer member joins. Anyone trying to flee the group is caught, beaten, and then taken to Master Gunnslieb for slow execution.

Every band meets with Master Gunnslieb and his band four times per year. The band must divide its spoils into two lots, and Master Gunnslieb takes one lot. Most bands thus divide in half as carefully as they are able. Concealing loot warrants death for the entire

band, although the members who revealed the deception are merely beaten, and then allowed to live and remain in the cult.

Master Gunnslieb himself is a cattle thief, but he has shown no prejudice against groups that choose to concentrate on racketeering or highway robbery, as long as they produce large amounts of loot. Failure to steal enough is grounds for Master Gunnslieb to execute a random member of the band.

Each band is expected to find its own way to fence its share of its loot. It is acceptable to fence cattle first, and then pass the cash on to Master Gunnslieb, but he is also happy to receive loot that is still on the hoof.

Personalities

Gunndred's emphasis on reputation means that many of the members of cult try to stand out. Only a couple have reputations that have spread far, however.

Master Gunnslieb

Master Gunnslieb (his name means "Beloved of Gunndred") is the founder and leader of the cult. He was born in the south of the Empire, but he has made contradictory claims as to where, and as to why he fled. No one doubts that he committed a brutal crime and fled justice, and most assume that people are still after him. Of course, anyone trying to bring Master Gunnslieb to justice needs to join the queue.

Master Gunnslieb is famous for his brutality, even to members of his own band. Most members of the cult would assassinate him and take his place, if they dared. One reason they do not is that Master Gunnslieb has truly miraculous powers.

Master Gunnslieb is now in his late thirties, and fears that he is slowing down. He has also realised the cult is growing beyond his ability to personally control it, and is not sure what to do about this. He cannot bring himself to trust any underlings, but also does not want to reduce the amount of loot he gets by making the cult smaller. He is considering the option of becoming one of the Border Princes, and letting parts of the cult go their own way.

Chief Bloodjaw

Chief Bloodjaw's real name is Lucilla Tavertanien, but she is famous under a name she earned by biting chunks from the cheeks of captured cowherds before hamstringing them. She does not clean the blood from her mouth, so her teeth are rotten and her breath stinks. Her band is extremely effective, and rumours say she has recently displayed miraculous powers similar to those displayed by Master Gunnslieb.

Adventure Hook: Perilous Rebellion

A group of young nobles has decided to set up as a band of Gunndred, dressing themselves appropriately and robbing stagecoaches. They are much more polite and much less brutal than typical Gunndred worshippers, but the cult is still after them. Some of the youngsters are known to the PCs or their friends, and the PCs get asked to protect a bunch of thieves from a far worse bunch.

Handrich

"Money, power, and influence—these are my Gods. And Handrich represents all that is money, power, and influence."

—Bianka Grutzner, Heiress to the Grutzner Dry Goods Consortium, Altdorf

Seat of Power: Marienburg, with small chapels across the Empire
Head of the Cult: High Priest Goudenkruin in Marienburg
Primary Orders: None
Major Festivals: Marktag (Market Day)
Holy Books: None
Holy Symbols: Gold disc, crossed fingers

Description

Handrich (also known as Haendryk) is a minor God popular with traders, merchants, burghers, and others involved in making a profit through business dealings. Although most peasants consider all business folk to be swindlers, cultists of Handrich are more concerned with prosperity for all through commerce—what benefits the merchant often benefits those around him as well.

Outside of Marienburg, where the cult is based and is the strongest, many people confuse Handrich with an aspect of Ranald known as "The Dealer." For those in the know, however, the distinction is clear—Handrich is the God of legitimate business, while thieves, smugglers, and conmen worship Ranald, though there are many

examples on both sides of this not necessarily being true. The two cults have created a healthy sense of competition between them, and, so far, it has not erupted into violence, though theft, backroom dealings, and other dirty tricks are considered fair game between the two.

The Cult of Handrich organises itself into fraternal groups and secret societies, composed of merchants and wealthy burghers. These groups' goals include fostering a spirit of competition, forcing competitors to capitulate in business, and the spiritual enlightenment that comes from communing with both comrades and the deity. These groups are extremely hierarchical, with many initiations that must be passed before moving closer to the inner circle. Many members believe they are simply joining some form of guild, oblivious to the machinations occurring behind the scenes. The inner circle, however, works to set prices, lower taxes, and raise more money for the building of temples, and expanding the word and influence of Handrich. It is rumoured that high-level members dabble in ritual magic to increase their fortunes.

Common View

"Nothing more than a face for those money-grubbing merchants out to pick your pockets clean for a loaf of bread or new pair of boots. They call this God Handrich. I call him "greed," nothing more."

—Rudiger Stalrott, Rag Picker

"Our cult has brought nothing but fortune and goodwill to the people. Through Handrich's blessing the money that we bring in trickles down to the people in need. Why, it's the perfect system!"

—Johann Meyers, Landlord and Cultist of Handrich

"This upstart cult is nothing more than a ruse and a sham. They claim to be 'legitimate' businessmen, but honestly, is there such a thing? Maybe Handrich is some big joke by Ranald, designed to test our faith and patience."

—Helmut Neuber, Conman

Symbol

The primary symbol of Handrich is a gold disc, commonly interpreted as a coin. Cultists often carry a blank coin in their pocket or worn about their neck to show their devotion to their God.

Another symbol of Handrich is a hand with its fingers crossed—the same symbol commonly associated with Ranald. This has proven a serious bone of contention between cultists of Handrich and those of Ranald the Dealer, for each lay claim to the symbol. In Marienburg, cultists of Handrich show this secret symbol to fellow cultists by using their right hand, while cultists of Ranald use their left. Confusion abounds, however, and more than a few altercations have occurred when opposing cultists use this sign, assuming the other person belongs to their particular cult, only to be mistaken.

Areas of Worship

Handrich is found primarily in the city-state of Marienburg, where he has proven wildly popular, sometimes eclipsing Manann's stature there. No self-respecting merchant in that city would pass up the chance to give offerings to the God of Trade.

Outside of Marienburg, Handrich is primarily found within the largest cities of the Empire. There is a small temple in Altdorf, although plans exist to expand on the building or create a new, larger structure in the future. In other cities, shrines to Handrich are found around public markets and within the homes of merchants. Devout cultists of Handrich are happy to spread his word while they go about their daily business of buying and selling for profit.

Handrich is also popular in Estalia, Tilea, and some of the city-states of the Border Princes, and this popularity is increasing steadily. Those towns and cities that distrust or persecute members of Ranald's cult are far more likely to allow cultists of Handrich into their gates. For this reason, cultists of Ranald sometimes steal the pendants from Handrich worshippers, in an effort to pass themselves off as "legitimate."

Temperament

Handrich is depicted as a contented and jovial figure who delights in both the acquisition of wealth and the spending of it. He is the consummate seller—charismatic, smooth, and likable, and seems to view his cultists not so much as mere worshippers, but as business partners. Handrich is shrewd in his dealings and expects his cultists to be smarter and faster than the people they deal with. Cultists believe Handrich watches every transaction and business dealing. Building charitable works is also highly encouraged, though often with some secondary purpose, such as a tax shelter or means of avoiding inspection of goods.

On the negative side, Handrich is both greedy and manipulative, exhorting the belief that the ends justify the means. In Handrich's eyes, if you make a profit from someone else's stupidity or ignorance, than that's coin better spent on better ventures. Cultists are encouraged to put up this double standard of presenting a respectable face to the public, while fleecing them with fixed prices and false shortages.

Using the Cult

The Cult of Handrich can be used as a good distraction for those expecting to deal with cultists of Ranald. Although their beliefs are similar, cultists of Handrich are much more public and open about their activities. For more suggestions on using Handrich, be sure to check out *WFRP Companion*.

Adventure Hook: Imminent Domain

Thanks to generous donations and wise investment by its priests, the Temple of Handrich in Marienburg is being refurbished and expanded. While the new south wing of the temple is being built into a previously vacant space, the planned north wing has been delayed due to the fact that the owner of the building, a dealer

Handrich: Aspect of Ranald?

Although Handrich is a relatively new deity, the question begs to be answered: is he really just an aspect of Ranald under a different name? Throughout much of the Empire, Handrich and Ranald are considered the same, though worshipped under both names without much thought. Those that travel into the far reaches of the Empire strive to show the differences between these two Gods and, over time, the split between the two Gods is being accepted. In fact, with the rise of the middle class, composed of merchants and burghers, the cult of Handrich is probably the fastest-growing cult throughout the whole Empire.

In Marienburg, however, the division between the Gods is very distinct. The two have their own temples, which are constantly trying to outdo each other in terms of size and extravagance of wealth displayed. Cultists of Handrich openly display their symbol, while cultists of Ranald keep them hidden. Both have roughly the same level of influence on local politics, but the Cult of Handrich is far more transparent in its dealings.

The common people favour Ranald far more than Handrich, seeing the latter as just one more authority figure out to get their coin—at least Ranald is up front about his greed for gold, while Handrich simply wants to raise prices in order to get it. Some people see the wisdom in worshipping both deities, hoping to garner the support of these Gods, regardless of the fact that they may be the same thing. After all, the Empire is full of Gods who all deserve recognition, they claim, so what harm in there in recognising both?

Cult Skills and Talents

Initiates: Evaluate
Priests: Dealmaker, Haggle, Savvy

Strictures

Devout worshippers of Handrich are almost invariably merchants or involved in some form of profit-making business. As a result, many of their strictures would not sound out of place in a merchants' guild, although cultists take their duties much more seriously.

- Make a profit every day.
- If you form a partnership in trade with a person, an oath must be sworn.
- Give charitably, but within reason.
- Never use violence for gain.
- Do not get caught in a lie until you have left town.

in antiquities named Leopold von Sturrbon, has refused to sell the building, despite the massive amounts of money offered. Von Sturrbon does not seem to agree with the cult's beliefs, making the situation all that more tense.

The PCs are approached by the cult to apply outside pressure on von Sturrbon. The priests provide money for the PCs to make a deal, either through bribes, blackmail, or whatever means. However, the priests make it perfectly clear they do not want their names involved in any manner, and do not want to know the full details of how the PCs get the job done.

When the PCs talk to von Sturrbon, they find him to be a very unpleasant person, although his concerns for his property and business are sound and heartfelt—with a catch. He claims that when he passes away, the property is intended for the local Sigmarites to build a new temple of their own; any investigation into this proves it to be true.

The PCs must decide which side they are to take: go with the cultists of Handrich in removing von Sturrbon from his property, or side with von Sturrbon in revealing the underhand methods of the Handrich worshippers. If the PCs choose to skip town entirely, the cult sends "minders" after them to ensure they never speak of the deal again, and that they never come back to the city.

— Foreign Gods in the Empire —

Most folk of the Empire are scornful of foreign Gods and can't understand why anyone would stray from the worship of Sigmar. While the worship of such deities as Shallya and Morr is widespread, other nations also have their own distinctive Gods, and these Gods have some followers in the Empire itself.

By far the most important of these is Myrmidia. She is originally the Goddess of Tilea and Estalia, but the growth in popularity and influence of her cult means that, in some parts of the southern Empire, she is no longer regarded as a foreign God. In the north, however, people still remember, and suspect, her southern origins.

Other foreign Gods have few worshippers, and are regarded as aspects or servants of the Empire Gods, or of the Ruinous Powers. These opinions are shaped by the relationships between nations. Thus, the violent Gods of the Norse raiders are often seen as aspects of the Dark Gods, particularly the Lord of Battles. Norse berserkers in the Empire typically give public allegiance, at least, to Ulric, and many claim to worship that God under the name Ursash.

The Lady of the Lake, the patron Goddess of Bretonnia, is worshipped very little outside that country, and is entirely confined to Bretonnian expatriates. The most common belief in the Empire is that she is a servant of Myrmidia, or an aspect of that Goddess. Myrmidians tend to the belief that the Lady serves their Goddess, while most other faiths believe the Lady is just another name for Myrmidia.

The Gods of Kislev are typically seen as aspects of the main Gods of the Empire. Ursun, the Bear God, is linked to Taal, and Tor, the Storm God, generally to Ulric, or to Taal again. Dazh, God of Fire and the Sun, used to be linked to Taal, but recently an identification between him and Myrmidia has become increasingly popular. However, a significant number of northern Empire folk see the Gods of Kislev as separate deities, worthy of worship and respect in their own right. The three Gods are typically enshrined

The Common View

"All foreigners worship the Dark Gods. I went there, and there wasn't a single temple of Sigmar. Why else would they fear Sigmar? They are clearly cultists."

—Alberich "Three Shields," Mercenary

"The so-called 'Lady of the Lake' is served by harlots and warriors. That sounds like the Ruinous Powers to me."

—Demona of Brasthof

"The Gods show different faces to different people, but we all worship the same powers in the end."

—Gawin Godtgraf, Before his Encounter with Templars of Sigmar

"Any foreign God could be a deception of the Ruinous Powers. Only by relying on Sigmar can we remain safe."

—Gawin Godtgraf, After his Encounter

"Judge a God by his deeds, not his name. The Ruinous Powers would even call themselves "Sigmar" if that would snare a few more souls. The followers of Ursun stand against the hordes, and their God is no Daemon."

—Semund the Unswerving, Investigator for the Order of the Cleansing Flame

"When in Luccini, pay homage to Luccina. It's foolish to risk offending a God just because we don't worship her back home."

—Lorna of Wurstheim, Merchant

Table 5–1: Foreign Gods

Nation	Deity	Sphere of Influence
Bretonnia	Lady of the Lake	Bretonnia, Chivalry and Nobility
Estalia	O Prospero	Merchants
Kislev	Dazh	Fire, the Sun, Guests
	Tor	Storms, Battle
	Ursun	Bears
Norsca	Mermedus	The Sea of Claws
	Ursash	Bear Hunting
Tilea	Lucan	Luccini (Twin of Luccina)
	Luccina	Luccini (Twin of Lucan)
	Mercopio	Merchants

together, as their cult is tiny within the Empire, but such shrines are as common as shrines to, for example, Morr or Verena in the parts of the Empire near the Kislevite border.

Attitudes to Kislevite deities are generally positive, as Kislev has been an important ally against the forces of Chaos for centuries. The cults of Taal and Ursun, for example, get on very well, as they have very similar attitudes. Taal's worshippers think the focus on bears is a little strange, while Ursun's cannot understand how Taal's followers manage to miss the true superiority of ursine existence. On the other hand, cultists of Ulric tend to see Ursun's worshippers as rivals, but not enemies, and the feeling is mutual. Each cult wants to prove itself superior, but recognises that the other has many fine qualities.

Minor Gods are often identified with foreign deities. There are, for example, many Gods of merchants: Handrich in the Empire, Haendryk in the Wasteland, O Prospero in Estalia, and Mercopio in Tilean. Most people, both inside and outside the cults, tend to think that these are all different names for the same God. If one branch prospers and starts trying to impose its will on the others, this can change.

— Dwarf, Elf and Halfling Gods —

The following deities are venerated by the other races that call the Empire their home.

The Dwarf Gods

Dwarf religion revolves around the worship of their ancestors, celebrating their deeds and giving thanks to their legacy. Although Dwarfs seem to worship a pantheon of Gods, these deities are really the most important of their ancestors, those founding fathers of the Dwarf race whom all clans have in common.

Dwarfs are stoic and private, and their religion reflects this. Dwarfs rarely speak of their religion, and do not seem to pray. Their temples are only found in the deeps of their holds. Worship is a personal matter between a Dwarf and his God, and religious rites and services are unheard of. Instead of prayer, Dwarfs worship their Gods by telling stories and singing songs, celebrating the heroic deeds of their ancestors.

Amongst Empire Dwarfs and other Dwarfs living amongst men this holds doubly true, for it is a way to maintain a connection with their homeland. Temples to the ancestor Gods do not exist, although larger shrines usable by Dwarfs exist within the larger cities of the Empire that have a sizeable Dwarf community.

Humans tend to treat the faith of their closest allies with respect, if not ultimately with understanding. Sigmarites in particular have a great deal of respect and honour for the faith of Dwarfs, seeing a great deal of similarity between Sigmar and the Dwarf Gods. In return, most Dwarfs respect Sigmar for his achievements as a man, although they do not worship him.

There are those Humans who come to identify strongly with a Dwarf God, especially those living in towns and cities with a strong community of Dwarfs, worshipping them much as they would a Human God, to the bemusement of Dwarfs. Of these Gods, Grungni has the highest number of Human worshippers, especially amongst artisans, and there is even a Human-built temple to Grungni in Nuln.

There are countless ancestor Gods—each clan, hold and Dwarf family have their own ancestors whom they worship. But there are three ancestor Gods whom all Dwarfs pray to.

Dwarfen Invocations

Dwarfs are famous for their oaths and curses, and the most common of these are the invocations to their Gods. Examples include: *Grimnir's Beard!*, *By the Orbs of Valaya!*, or the ever popular *Grungni's Trunnion!* Rarely do these invocations have an effect on the situation at hand, other than to express shock, dismay, or rage, but every once in a while, a God may show favour to the Dwarf, particularly when the need is dire and the Dwarf acts in a manner honouring his race. As an optional rule, the GM can grant a 1% chance for a Dwarf character invoking his God to gain a +5% bonus to his next Test.

Grungni

The God of Mines and Artisans, Grungni is the father of the Dwarf race. He taught the first Dwarfs how to dig deep into the earth, and how to mine ore and smith metal. Grungni is the one God of Dwarfs most identifiable to men, and the one with the most Human worshippers throughout the Empire.

Grimnir

A warrior God, Grimnir the Fearless personifies the courageous nature of the Dwarfs. He is especially popular amongst the Cult of the Slayer, who revere him as the Slayer God. Although the concept of a warrior God is a familiar one to men, the concept of slayers—and therefore the Slayer God—is utterly unfathomable.

Valaya

As the protector and mother Goddess of the Dwarfs, Valaya is the founder of some of the greatest holds, and guards both the concept of the homeland and the clan, concepts with which men have little empathy or understanding. As a result, there are few Human worshippers of Valaya.

The Elven Gods

Ask most men about the Gods of the Elves and though they might be able to tell you wild stories they have heard, there would be little in the way of facts to their tales, for Elven religion is shrouded in mystery, much like the Elven race. Elves worship a pantheon of Gods, much as do Dwarfs and men, but not in any way recognisable to the other races.

Elven culture is suffused in mysticism and magic, and Elves believe their Gods surround them and are a part of them. An Elf considers his every action, his every thought, to be mystical in some respect, and therefore everything they do is somehow connected to the Gods, every action is a devotion in its own right. It is unclear how the Elves worship their Gods or what rituals and ceremonies they might undertake. Some speculate that given the Elves live such a long time any way, how they regard these beings in necessarily different from the ways Humans and other short-lived races might perceive them. A few whisper that perhaps the Elves are even Gods themselves!

Men would never profess to understand the faith of the Elves, most believing either the Elves do not believe in Gods, or those that they do worship are but different aspects of the Human pantheon. Of course Elves believe the reverse, claiming all Human Gods are merely a distorted reflection of the Elven pantheon. The truth, in all likelihood, is probably somewhere in between.

Due to this lack of understanding, there are very few Humans who worship the Gods of the Elves—the culture of the Elves is too alien to grasp, their faith too oblique and impenetrable.

Elves living within the Empire continue to worship their Gods in the same manner they would anywhere, for they have no formalised religions, and conduct all worship on a personal and intimate level. In some of the larger cities

Common Views

"Look, it's really quite simple. The Gods are fundamentally a reflection of the psyches of all sentient creatures. Which means the Gods are all one and the same—Elven, Dwarf, Human and, yes, even Halfling."

—Karl Jurgens, a Scholar arguing his Controversial Theory (rather unsuccessfully)

"Elves don't pray, except to themselves. They're so high and mighty they probably consider themselves to be Gods."

—Albert Heinz, Disaffected Dockworker

"Ever seen a Dwarf pray, sonny? It's all drinkin' and singin' and laffin'! Much more fun than ol' Father Magnus' sermons, I'm tellin' ya."

—Hans Jeimes, Fatigued Worshipper

"You wouldn't have thought a Halfling would be very righteous, but I've seen the looks on their faces during Pie Week. They're giving thanks to Mother Esmerelda alright, and having tasted their pies, I'd be giving thanks if I was them, too!"

—Bertram Stanheim, Hungry Peasant

"I've spent a lot of time around Elves, and I was surprised by how religious they are. Sure, they dress it up in mystical mumbo jumbo, but I've seen them before battle or when preparing for a trip. They pray just as much as you or I, if not more, and not to one or t'other god, but to the whole lot, every last one of 'em."

—Magda van Dyke, Wasteland Mercenary

"It's not right, worshipping the dead. Saying a prayer to keep Ol' Pappy Morr at bay is one thing, but worshipping the ghosts of Ma and Pa and the rest of yer dearly departeds? That's just wrong."

—Hilda Brandt, Wolfenburg Bonepicker

frequented by Elves, in particular Marienburg, small shrines to the Elven Gods can be found.

Although Wood Elves venerate the entire pantheon, they worship Kurnous, God of the Hunt and father of Elves, and Isha, Goddess of Fertility and mother of Elves, more than any other. In Wood Elf society these Gods are elevated in status, perhaps due to the presence of their king and queen—Orion and Ariel—taking on the role of their avatars.

Asuryan

Asuryan is the ancestor of all living things and guardian of the Elven race, in the form of the Phoenix King whom the Elves believe is chosen directly by Asuryan. Elves pray to Asuryan to grant them leadership and bravery.

Hoeth

Hoeth is the God of Knowledge, Learning and Wisdom, and is the patron of Elven wizards and scholars. Hoeth is prayed to when an Elf faces a difficult quandary or confusing problem, for his wisdom can help see the truth of the matter. Elven wizards also pray to Hoeth when preparing for a powerful magical ritual.

Isha

Isha the Mother is Goddess of Fertility, protector of the natural order and mother of the Elven race. She is worshipped by the Wood Elves of the Old World as one of their dominant deities, although other Elves pray to her to aid farming, for protection during childbirth, or for help when abroad in the wild.

Khaine

Bloody-handed Khaine is the God of War and Murder, and is very much a double-edged sword, for he is both the saviour and the doom of the Elven race. Although he aided Aenarion defeat Chaos and fought against Slaanesh, he also wars against his kin and is the patron God of the Dark Elves. Elves pray to Khaine when going to battle or when dark sins need to be committed for the greater good.

Kurnous

Kurnous is the father of the Elven race and God of the Hunt, but unlike Isha worship of him is waning, except amongst the Wood Elves of the Old World who venerate him as their principal deity. Elves pray to Kurnous when hunting, when abroad in the wilderness, and for tenacity and doggedness.

Lileath

Lileath the Maiden is the Goddess of Dreams and Fortune, worshipped as part of a triumvirate along with Isha and Morai-heg. She is the patron of seers and prophets, and is prayed to for clarity, prophecy, and foresight, especially by an Elf facing a great challenge or difficult decision, or in need of some good luck.

Loec

The patron of the Wood Elf wardancers, Loec is the God of Trickery, Music, and Revelry. Loec is a mysterious figure because

his followers guard the secrets of his rites and purpose behind a veil of secrecy. His servants are occasionally called Feastmasters for their part in the great festivals, where they lead the celebration and perform intricate dances that recount the history of Athel Loren.

Mathlann

As the lord of the sea and God of Storms, Mathlann is patron to sailors and explorers, and is prayed to by Elves about to embark on a voyage or seeking new lands. He is also prayed to by the loved ones of those Elves who are abroad so he will bring them home safe and sound. Mathlann is one of the main Gods worshipped by the Elves in Marienburg.

Morai-heg

The Crone is the Goddess of Fate and Death, holding the fate of all mortals within her rune pouch. Elves pray to Morai-heg when pursuing or fleeing from their destinies, and by those who seek to forestall death and the inevitable.

Vaul

The Elven God of Smiths, Vaul is the creator of the legendary artefacts wielded by the Gods and heroes, including the infamous Sword of Khaine. Vaul fought Khaine but lost, and was horribly crippled. Elves pray to Vaul for creativity and the willpower to withstand great hardship, pleading to him when making an impressive item or forced to endure great pain.

Table 5–2: Gods of the Non-Human Races

Name	Sphere of Influence	Area of Worship	Worshipped by
Dwarfen Gods			
Grungni	Artisans, Mines	Dwarf Holds, Nuln	Dwarfs, Craftsmen, Miners, Smiths
Valaya	Dwarf Holds, Dwarfs	Holds	Dwarfs
Grimnir	Warriors, Slayers	Holds	Dwarfs, Warriors, Slayers
Elven Gods			
Asuryan	The Elven People, the Phoenix King	Ulthuan	Elves
Hoeth	Knowledge, Learning, Wisdom	Ulthuan (especially Saphery)	Elves, Scholars, Mages
Isha	Nature, Fertility, Childbirth, the Elven Race	Ulthuan (especially Avelorn), the Loren Forest, the Laurelorn Forest	Elves, Wood Elves, Mothers, Farmers, Scouts
Khaine	Murder and War	Ulthuan, Naggaroth	Elves, Dark Elves, Murderers
Kurnous	The Hunt	the Loren Forest, the Laurelorn Forest	Wood Elves, Hunters, Scouts
Lileath	Dreams, Fortune, Prophecy	Ulthuan	Elves, Seers, Prophets
Loec	Joy, Music, Trickery	Athel Loren	Wood Elves
Mathlann	The Sea, Storms, Exploration, Sailors	Ulthuan, Marienburg	Elves, Sailors, Explorers, Merchants
Morai-Heg	Fate, Death	Ulthuan	Elves, Seers
Vaul	Smithing, Artificers	Ulthuan	Elves, Smiths, Artificers
Halfling Gods			
Esmerelda	Hearth and Home	The Moot	Halflings, Mothers, Bakers
Gaffey	Building, Villages	The Moot	Halflings, Builders, Village Elders
Hyacinth	Fertility, Childbirth	The Moot	Halflings, Mothers, Midwives
Josias	Farming, Agriculture	The Moot	Halflings, Farmers
Phineas	Tobacco	The Moot	Halflings, Smokers
Quinsberry	Ancestry, Tradition	The Moot	Halflings, Village Elders

The Halfling Gods

Of all the races within the Empire, Halflings could be said to be the least obviously religious. Halflings prefer to celebrate the here and now rather than the heroes and deeds of the forgotten past, worshipping their Gods when circumstances require it, but not giving themselves over to piety. Most Empire folk—especially those in Stirland—would say that the only thing a Halfling worships is the drink in his flagon and the food in his belly.

It is true that Halflings are a comparatively irreligious folk, their somewhat happy-go-lucky nature at odds with serious, organised religion. When practised, the Halfling faiths are more often used as a thinly veiled excuse to feast (much as many Humans do, if truth be told—Halflings are just more honest in their motivations).

Esmerelda

The most popular Halfling deity is Esmerelda, Goddess of Hearth and Home. Worship of Esmerelda is free of strictures and demands for worship, and her only rite of note is Pie Week, (in)famous throughout the Empire for its gluttonous excesses. During Pie Week, if at no other time of the year, Halflings can be said to be devout to the core of their being.

Other Halfling Gods

Although worshipped on a somewhat haphazard basis as circumstance dictates—even more so than Esmerelda—Halflings do have a few other deities. Amongst these lesser Gods is Josias, the God of Farmers, to whom prayers are spoken in both the spring and the summer, at the start and end of the agricultural season. Hyacinth, Goddess of Fertility and Childbirth, to whom many mothers and midwives offer prayers during labour; Phineas, God of Smoking, known for his ever-full pouch of smoking herbs; Gaffey, God of Building and Villages; and Quinsberry, God of Ancestry and Tradition. In more rural parts of the Empire, especially those areas close to the Moot—with the notable exception of Stirland, where Halfling Gods are treated with great disdain—some men and women give thanks to the Halfling Gods as well as their own.

On Priests of the Non-Humans

There are differences enough between the Humans, who claim mastery of the Old World, and the other races with whom they share it. There's the issue of physiology (no one would ever confuse a Dwarf for a Human), culture (has anyone met a Halfling who was not obsessed with pies?), and personalities. These are minor differences, trifles really. And, all differences aside, the four great peoples of the Empire are all united against common enemies: the Greenskin menace, the hordes of Chaos, and of course the vile Skaven. But between conflicts, these differences can be exacerbated. Naturally, the one difference that none of the Old World races seem to be able to reconcile is their differing views on the Gods.

Whilst Humans are content to leave matters of faith to the wise and the blessed, the other races have no need of such intermediaries. The role of religion as Humans view it is utterly foreign to the Elves, Dwarfs, and Halflings, even though in many respects the deities can and do overlap. Take the Elves for example. Many of the beings that make up their pantheon are direct antecedents to those still venerated in the Empire today. However, the Elves claim they are in direct communication with their divine patrons, sharing a constant mystical link with their Gods. In a sense, all Elves act as priests, directly communing with the spirit that binds their society and race.

Dwarfs, of course, have their own perspective on the matter of religion. As they cannot work magic of any kind, excepting their mastery of runes of course, Dwarfs do not become priests in the conventional sense. Certainly, there are plenty of Dwarfs, called Lorekeepers, who bless the babies, recount the tales of their ancestors, and advise their leaders in times of war, but the very idea that Dwarfs can channel the power of the Gods directly is utter nonsense (despite heretical claims to the contrary). It is important to remember that the Dwarfs view their ancestors as divine entities. They receive insight from the deeds and actions of those who came before, which is why it is so vital to Dwarfs to record the heroic acts that bring them glory and the treacherous betrayals that lay them low, for it is in these events that the divine speaks.

Of the four major races, Halflings are the most irreverent. Setting aside the fact that Halflings have no talent for magic, the small folk are so completely unsuited to the idea of venerating anything that to even broach the topic to them would result in endless gales of laughter, perhaps followed by a proper robbery to teach the uncultured fool a good lesson. The Halflings do have their Gods, certainly, but no Halfling could be bothered to commit himself to daily and nightly prostration in the name of anyone, let alone some invisible presence that does nothing but sit around and eat and have dalliances with its siblings. When a pious mood does settle on Halflings, a festival results, and a few locals are selected to officiate the affair, being bribed heavily not to get overly drunk so that they may maintain at least the appearance of ceremony.

Adventure Hook: Missing Gods!

Whilst travelling through Nuln, the PCs are invited to join in the festivities surrounding a Dwarf holy day, celebrating the ancestor of the local Clan. The festival is more like a raucous party, and much ale is consumed and great stories told in the ancestor's honour, and the PCs are rewarded by horrendous hangovers the next morning.

The celebrations come to an abrupt halt in the morning, and not just because of hangovers all around. The local Dwarfs don't just revere their ancestors in a spiritual sense, but also in a physical sense: they pay homage to the bones of their forefathers, which they keep in a reliquary maintained by their Clan leader. When the festivities are over, it becomes clear that the bones of the ancestor in whose name everyone was celebrating has been stolen during the night!

But who would want to steal some mouldy old bones? Perhaps the ornate gold, gem-encrusted reliquary had something to do with it…

— Gods and Monsters —

Many of the monsters of the Old World have their own Gods. Whether they can truly be said to "worship" them is a matter of some debate; the Greenskins set up stinking piles of excrement in honour of their deities, a practise that can hardly be dignified with a name, let alone such an honourable label as "worship."

Some of the more powerful monsters are worshipped as Gods themselves, whether by other monsters or by misguided Humans. This is particularly the case for Daemons, who may seize worship by putting a more acceptable mask over the faces of the Ruinous Powers. Powerful Undead, particularly incorporeal ones, as well as powerful and intelligent monsters of other types, may also claim worship. Bands of Beastmen may not seem to worship the Dark Gods directly, but their allegiance can always be traced back to the foul four.

5–3: Monstrous Gods

Race	Gods	Sphere of Influence
Chaos Dwarfs	Hashut	Chaos Dwarfs, sorcery, dark engineers, Chaos
Greenskins	Mork and Gork	Greenskins, violence, dung
Ogres	The Great Maw	Ogres, hunger, power
Skaven	The Horned Rat	Skaven, desecration, ruin, despair

Empire scholars have learned the names, and some details of the worship, of the more important monstrous Gods, but few care to pry too much lest the Witch Hunters see it as evidence of heresy. Outside the temples of Verena, there are very few who know even as much as is written here.

The Greenskins worship brothers, Mork and Gork, who are Orcs writ large. They fight each other, and any other Gods, for dominance, and may even challenge living Orcs who draw their attention. As noted earlier, the worship of these deities appears to involve idols formed from excrement, as well as violence and the sacrifice of prisoners, cowards, and rivals who do not get out of the way quickly enough.

Common View

"Greenskins worship the Blood God. I saw it in their eyes. Delight, that's what it was. Delight as they spilled the blood of my family. I say kill them all."

—Heimar Orcreaver, Mercenary Captain

"Any Human who would worship the Gods of the Greenskins would also worship the Ruinous Powers. Worshippers of either should meet the same fate."

—Semund the Unswerving, Investigator for the Order of the Cleansing Flame

"It is possible that Mork and Gork are not Daemons, or names for the Blood God. It is certain that they are just as much of a threat to civilisation as the hordes of the North. I concern myself with consequences, not with semantics."

—Kristena of Rechtlicht, Priestess of Verena

"The Horned Rat will give all his servants dominion over the world. The Skaven may be the rulers, but we will be their agents... not slaves or food, like other Humans."

—Ella Durrbein, Horned Rat Cultist

Ogres have a God whom they call the Great Maw, and whom they believe can eat anything, stealing its strength. Religious festivals revolve around competitive eating, but since most of the rest of Ogre life also revolves around competitive eating, it is hard to tell when they are being religious.

Beastmen and Mutants, as well as Chaos Warriors and Chaos Sorcerers, are normally quite zealous about their worship of the Ruinous Powers, although they may do so under unusual names. It is not unheard of for a band of Mutants to worship a Chaos God under the name of one of the common Gods; the God whose name is being used often inspires his followers to deal with such blasphemy. (*Tome of Corruption* offers extensive detail on the Ruinous Powers and their servants.)

Only a small number of scholars admit that the Skaven even exist; of those who do, most believe that they simply worship the Ruinous Powers, probably preferring the Lord of Decay. A few, however, hold that the Skaven have their own God, whom they call the Horned Rat. This being supposedly seeks to elevate the Skaven to rulership, rather than simply encouraging them to destroy it. These scholars speak of their beliefs only to their most trusted friends and allies in their continuing battle with the rat-men. (*Children of the Horned Rat* further details the malevolent nature of the foul Skaven God.)

Finally, Humans who turn to the worship of these Gods are treated with the same revulsion and violence as that dispensed to their normal, monstrous, worshippers. The monsters' Gods are generally believed to be merely aspects of the Ruinous Powers, and a Human who worships such beings, knowingly or not, is irrevocably tainted by their corruption.

Adventure Hook: Unpleasent Journey

The characters have been hired to guard a wealthy noble as he and his entourage undertake a pilgrimage to a shrine of Sigmar far away. The entire trip is plagued by difficulties—torrential rains, stinging insects, and the predations of larger and larger bands of Orcs and Goblins. Eventually, the nobleman grows disgusted at what he considers "incompetence" by the Characters and orders his remaining bodyguards to take the caravan and leave them behind.

If the Characters turn back, they go for several days until they are ambushed by another band of Orcs—this time bearing trophies of the nobleman's caravan. If they don't turn back, they discover that the shrine of Sigmar has been toppled and a large, grotesque statue has been erected by the Orcs in honour of their twin gods, Gork and Mork. In either case, the characters also find the nobleman and a few of his entourage, still alive and awaiting sacrifice to the Orc's blasphemous Gods.

— Outlawed Gods —

Despite the very best efforts of the witch hunters to root out the heretics and Daemon-worshippers, sects of forbidden Gods continue to thrive in the Lands of Sigmar. Like cockroaches, they infest the dark places, breeding with alarming speed, luring unsuspecting fools to embrace whatever brand of wickedness they peddle. Whilst a good many of these shadowy groups pay homage to the Ruinous Powers, this is not always the case. Gods and their cults find themselves outlawed for any number of reasons, from distasteful practises and archaic or barbaric beliefs to the taint of Chaos, or even just undesirable political leanings. Many honest and forthright cultists have been branded heretics because they crossed the dogma or interfered with the political machinations of a ranking priest.

The practise of forbidden worship is an act punishable by death by burning at the stake. Those who strive to cleanse the Empire of heretics make no distinction between cultists participating in harmless but forbidden rites to minor gods and zealots who sacrifice innocents upon the altars of the Ruinous Powers. In the eyes of the witch hunters, one is no better than the other. Despite the repercussions, there seems to be no shortage of heretical cultists. The world of the forbidden holds a strong appeal, offering excitement, a taste of the exotic, and more than anything, an escape from the drudgery of existence.

Outlawed or Chaos?

There's a fine line between the run-of-the-mill forbidden cults and those that serve the Dreadful Gods. For most adherents of these outlawed faiths, the idea that they serve one or more Dark Gods is utter nonsense. Each one of these groups believes it has the "true story," the insight into how everything works. The fact that they don't subscribe to the orthodox beliefs of the common sheep does not make them Chaos cultists, they proclaim. However, witch hunters cling to a simple argument. They state that the Empire's cults define what are and what are not the proper methods of showing reverence to the Gods. And because these institutions are the mortal representations of divine will, it follows that the truth has been revealed unto them. Those who do not agree with the truth upheld by the sanctioned cults are corruptions, and therefore, like any mutation, they must be excised.

While this is clearly an oversimplification, likely used to appease the underused sense that witch hunters have in place of consciences, there is some validity and benevolent purpose to the argument. Chaos Gods are many-headed beasts, and they may take on countless guises, each of which is worshipped in a drastically different manner. Some aspects are obvious masks, whereas others are far subtler. Some of these fiends even masquerade as true Gods of the Empire to lure worshippers in or to mask their rites. This is why the priests must shepherd mortals onto the proper course, and why those who would deceive or diminish the authority of the rightful cults must be stopped.

Common Views

"Some Witch Hunters found a cult in town just last week, over 'cross the street there. I saw 'em draggin' the cultists out, one by one, screamin' it was an injustice and they wasn't no Chaos worshippers. The Witch Hunters din't care; they burnt them all the same."

—Alfred, Peasant

"No sir, you misunderstand, this is not a medallion of Chaos. 'Tis a symbol of Vylmar. That's a legitimate religion, you know, not some crackpot cult. What do you mean you don't believe me? Hey! Wait! Let go of me!"

—The late Johann Borges, Cultist of Vylmar

"All of the old Gods are the same! Their priests peddle the same old lies and hope we don't notice that they're struggling to prop up a corpse! Well, we have noticed the stench coming from the high temple of Sigmar, and from the palace in Altdorf, and it's up to us to stand up against them! There is another way! Join me, ladies and gentlemen, join me in the worship of the Horned Rat! And together we can topple Sigmar and his puppet Karl Franz into the Reik once and for all!"

—Dagmar Rutgerbrot, Demagogue and Cultist

"No matter who or what filth they claim to pray to, they all burn in the end."

—Count Wilbur von Rottenheim, Witch Hunter

Khaine

The Lord of Murder is a curious case in the Empire. Whilst regarded as a legitimate deity, a member of the pantheon of Gods that make up the various faiths practised in the Old World, worship of Khaine is nonetheless outlawed, and with good reason. As a land of laws, there is no place for the rites and ceremonies demanded by the Bloody-Handed One. And so Khaine is shunned, his followers immolated, and what few temples the God has are razed to dissuade others from championing his filthy cause.

Despite his status as a forbidden God, Khaine has many followers in the Old World. Secret cults operate throughout the large communities and settlements, meeting in darkness and isolation to pay homage to their appalling master and to hatch murderous plots in the hopes of gaining his blessings. Although these cultists are undeterred from their efforts by the threat of the witch hunters' pyres, they rarely act in the open, content to manoeuvre in the shadows. Those who oppose them tend to be found in their beds, their throats slit, or perhaps strangled or disembowelled, while their unsuspecting spouses sleep on undisturbed.

Given the opposition to this cult, the followers of Khaine do not have a formal hierarchy. They exist in small isolated cells scattered throughout the

Empire. Whilst they all share the same love of murder, there are a great number of differences between each group, with issues of dogma, purpose, and even practise being some of the most hotly debated subjects. When participating in religious ceremonies, cultists often adorn themselves in black robes trimmed in red. These symbolise the Lord of Murder's associations with his brother Morr, and also the blood that flows from a well-delivered killing.

Symbol

Khaine's symbols, though never brazenly displayed, are of the scorpion and the serpentine dagger. Dedicated followers may have a tattoo of a scorpion's stinger on the flesh between their thumbs and forefingers, while others bear the mark beneath their left eyes. Higher ranking cultists may also have more extensive tattooing on their backs, forearms, or on their loins. All cultists carry special daggers, noted for their wavy blades, and where possible they incorporate the image of the scorpion into their accessories, jewellery, or even clothing.

Area of Worship

Cultists of Khaine can be found throughout the Old World, despite the fact that his worship is forbidden and punishable by death. His followers are drawn to places of depravity and suffering more than any others, for their activities are all the more easy there. Still, places of upright morals and devout worship of the righteous Gods of the Old World are by no means safe from their predations. Khaine is an almost exclusive Human God (although, one should not mistake the Khaine venerated in the Empire for the Khaine among the Elves and Dark Elves), and his worship is predominantly restricted to large towns and cities—his cults thrive on human contact and quickly tear themselves apart if they find themselves without a steady source of victims.

There have always been cults of murder in the eastern Empire—dark forests breed dark minds, or so the saying goes. The closed nature of communities in the east, coupled with an intolerance and mistrust of strangers, makes it all the easier for a local cult to take root amongst native folk and operate without drawing too much attention. Although the dead rest uneasily in the eastern Empire, and supernatural horrors abound, not all unexplained murders can be pinned at the door of the Undead.

Temperament

Cultists of Khaine are secretive and clandestine, and take all possible precautions to avoid being identified as members of the cult. Yet their practises make their presence all too obvious, over time.

Whenever possible—and at least once a month, if not more—victims are snatched from the streets of towns or from country roads and ritually sacrificed. This foul act is preceded by the carving of holy symbols upon the body of the victim, and concluded with the slitting of his throat. Victims are then dumped in a nearby body of water, ditch, or back alley. Variations on this procedure exist, naturally, but the regularity with which it must be performed is almost universal. Only those who will not be missed any time soon, or those who can be taken without witnesses, are kidnapped. Once a body is found, assuming that the elements or scavengers have not destroyed the

Strictures

- All death is sacred, but only murder is sacred to Khaine.
- Murder is an act of devotion—do not rush it.
- Murder is its own reward.
- Do not let an opportunity to kill pass you by. Each such moment is a blessing given by Khaine.
- Murder by the hand of another is good, murder by your own hand is better.
- Do not betray the cult, even in death.
- Do not conceal the work of Khaine, even if it leads to your discovery.

evidence, a knowledgeable investigator could easily recognise the hallmarks of the cultists' work…for all the good it does him. The method and motive become clear to the officer in question, but of the true identities of the perpetrators, few clues are left.

Not all victims of the cult are killed in a ritualised manner, however, for the cult preaches that a chance to commit murder should not be passed up. The truly devout relish these murders of opportunity, performed in the alleys behind houses of ill repute and on lonely roads at night.

Several of the cult's priests act as its leaders, but beyond their positions it is organised fairly haphazardly. Most of the cultists are lay members, the only requirement being that they have a "bloodied hand." Prospective cultists who have second thoughts about committing the deed invariably wind up as the group's next victim.

Using the Cult

Given the cults of Khaine's haphazard distribution through the Empire, they make for great antagonists, giving you the ability to customise their locations, membership, and power to fit the needs of your campaign. They can be used as the focus of a good, simple murder mystery over the course of a single adventure, or as a far more ingrained conspiracy forming an entire campaign.

Plot Hook

Morrslieb is dark in the sky and the people of Wurtbad hope that as it wanes, so too will the spate of murders that have dogged the nights over the past month. At first, the victims were refugees from the north and strangers from out of town, and nobody gave it much heed—after all, deaths amongst outsiders is outsiders' business. But in the past week locals have begun to fall victim to the murderer, and people are getting more worried.

Every murder victim has been killed in the same way: his throat slit, a crude symbol of a hand carved into his chest, and his hands covered in his own blood. Yet, each witness describes a completely different suspect. The cult has been busy, ensuring that a different cultist makes the killing each time. This makes their patterns harder to fathom, but the cult is growing clumsy with the relative ease it is having in obtaining fresh meat.

Khaela Mensha Khaine

Many might dismiss Khaine as just another aspect of the Blood God, but the Lord of Murder has far more interesting roots than those granted by diseased imaginations. In truth, Khaine comes to the Old World by way of the High Elves of Ulthuan.

The Human rites and practises involving Khaine are crude and barbaric, and are in many ways an abomination of the God's complex spheres of influence. To the Elves, Khaine is indeed the God of Murder, but he is also the God of War. As such, he plays an important part in their myth cycle and culture, having battled against Slaanesh and helped Aenarion drive back the hordes of Chaos. Before High Elf soldiers march to war, they are sure to whisper an invocation to the Bloody-Handed God to guide their swords and spears.

There are similarities, though, between the brutish practises of men who follow Khaine and the abhorrent Dark Elves of distant Naggaroth. These exiled Elves certainly frown at the primitive and clumsy manner in which their chosen God is venerated in the Old World, but their own are merely those same acts of murder, perfected. Their rituals are spectacularly bloody, involving living sacrifices. To the Dark Elves, murder, pain, and death are virtues to be extolled, key components in what makes their society what it is, perfected as an art form and way of life.

The local watch has enough trouble dealing with the influx of refugees and outlanders, and is in over its head. Local Morrians have whispered the name of Khaine, and a witch hunter has been seen sniffing around. The party may be potential victims, or are recruited by the authorities to track down the serial killer, or perhaps are even fingered as suspects by suspicious locals and must clear their names before the mob's torches are lit.

Other Outlawed Gods

Khaine may be the most famous of them, but he is certainly not the only outlawed God. Within Marienburg and along much of the Empire's northern coast, authorities regularly tangle with worshippers of Stromfels, God of the dangers of the sea. Stromfels' cultists carry out sacrifices and try to wreck ships on dark nights. See page 33 for more about Stromfels and his relationship with the cult of Manann.

Additionally, there are countless lesser cults to outlawed gods scattered throughout the Empire. All of these cults are independent from one another—they have neither the resources nor the capability to become anything more, and a scattered structure helps them remain undiscovered.

Two other forbidden cults are described in *Sigmar's Heirs*, on page 99: Ahalt the Drinker, an ancient god of the hunt who is long forgotten by all but a few and who seeks revenge on Taal and Rhya; and the Yellow Fang, who worship the god of the Skaven, the Horned Rat, and seek to bring about an end to civilisation in his name.

5–4: Outlawed Gods

Outlawed God	Sphere of Influence	Common Worshippers
Khaine	Murder	Murderers, assassins, Dark Elves
Solden	Tyranny and oppression	Politicians, critics, and soldiers
Stromfels	Marine predators, dangers of the seas, fatal storms	Wreckers, pirates, sea raiders
Vylmar	Decadence, drinking, debauchery	Nobles, drunks, prostitutes

The Yellow Fang is merely one of many cults that worship the Horned Rat, and there are an alarming number of folk who would damn their civilisation and willingly sell their countrymen into slavery. Worship of the Horned Rat is not officially forbidden, but only because the existence of the Skaven (and therefore their God) is never publicly recognised by the authorities. Unofficially, his worship is viciously clamped down upon by witch hunters and Skaven hunters alike, who mask their efforts under the guise of purging Chaos cults.

Another religion that the Empire viciously suppresses is the worship of Solden, the God of Tyranny. The cultists of Solden are organised into independent cells, each of which is completely subservient to a single leader, and their gatherings always involve the humiliation and denigration of one of the members. The selected cultist endures a series of painful beatings, is forced to perform degrading acts, and may be treated as an object for the pleasure of the rest of the cult. In most cases, the experience is fatal. Never a popular God to begin with, Solden appeals to the ambitious and power-hungry, to those who would conquer and oppress others beneath the iron fist of their laws. A few theologians believe that Solden is the antithesis of the Ruinous Powers, but others suspect this name as being just another mask worn by the Chaos Gods.

Some Gods are outlawed because the values they preach are too similar to the Dark Powers, or due to their association with another forbidden god, such as Vylmar, the god of drinking and debauchery. Centuries ago, worship of Vylmar was very fashionable amongst the Imperial elite, and the parties thrown in his honour were wild and raucous affairs that lasted for days. However, the somewhat prudish cult of Sigmar objected to such behaviour, deeming Vylmar's worship to be inappropriate for upstanding Empire citizens, so it applied pressure on the Emperor to ban the cult. The similarities between Vylmar and Slaanesh hardly helped matters, despite the fact that the two Gods are unrelated; many of Vylmar's priests found themselves burnt at the stake. Today Vylmar is worshipped by only a handful of cults, and always discretely at that. It is not unheard of for cults of Slaanesh to masquerade as cults of Vylmar as a way of gaining more credence amongst otherwise wary worshippers.

False Beliefs

In the paranoid and closed-minded world of the Empire, the number of practises labelled as "false beliefs" are quite large. What is considered normal and accepted in some part of the Empire (or even within one branch of the same cult) can be deemed deviant in another.

Schisms and sub-cults pop up every few hundred years or so in every mainstream cult, and each possesses its own ways of determining what constitutes a dangerous belief, the punishment for such deviations, and how to prevent their like from cropping up again. Described here are the unique views that each of the main cults have towards those who stray from the canonical teachings within their own ranks.

The Cult of Manann

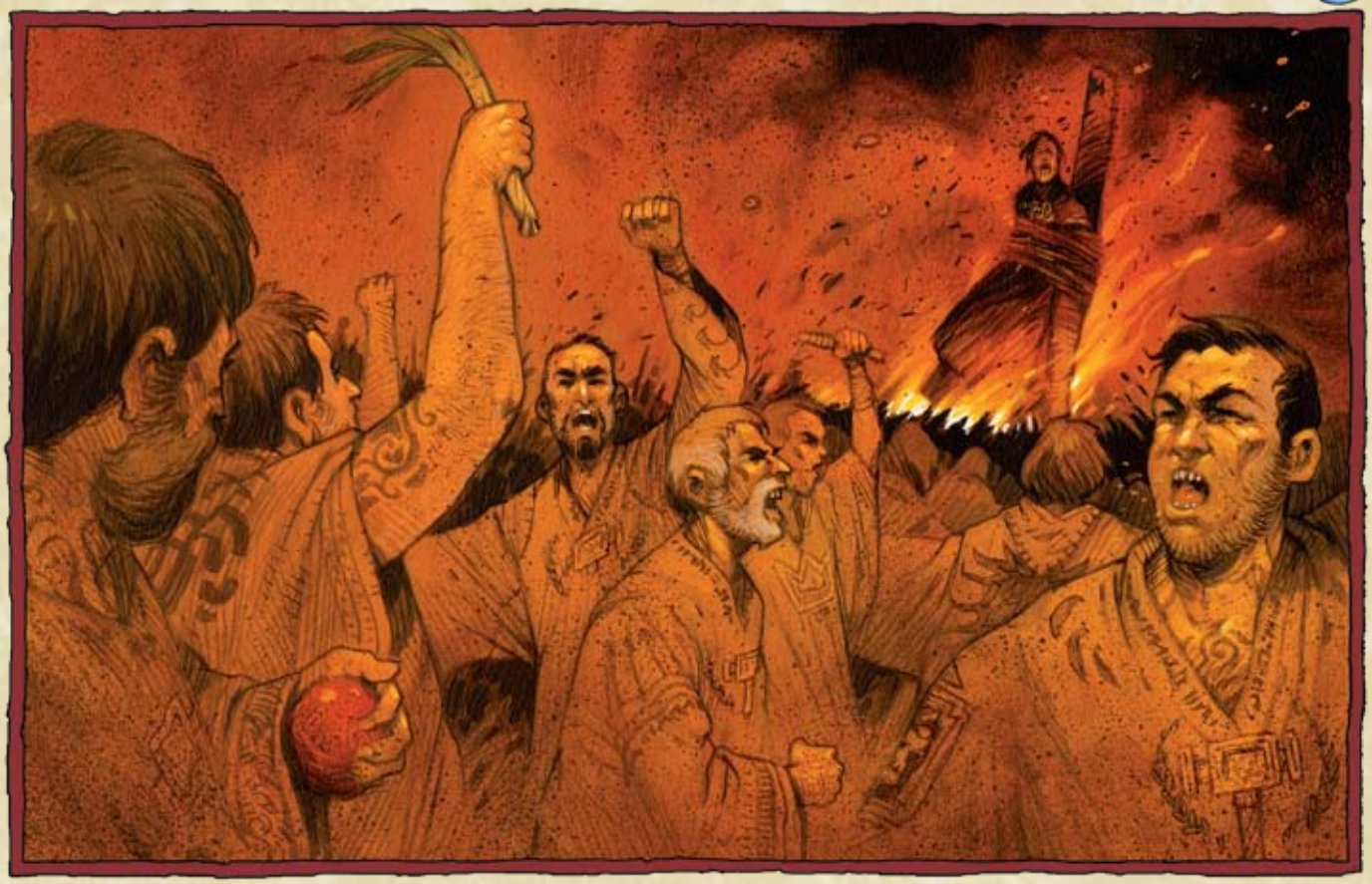
Manann is an indifferent God, and this attitude often plays out among his cultists. His priests are typically sailors who have travelled the breadth and width of the Old World, thereby being exposed to countless different cultures, beliefs, and attitudes. Minor variations in their fellows' practises therefore seem minor in comparison to the distasteful and deviant acts they have witnessed. The only truly unforgivable alteration to Manann's teachings that a cultist can make is to turn his back on the sea, and to attempt to worship Manann's blessings as a land god. Those who are guilty of this charge are either drowned outright or have their foreheads branded.

The Cult of Morr

The Cult of Morr must contend with deviations on a regular basis. Since cultists deal with the dead, and are often exposed to vile Necromancy, abnormal thoughts sometimes wend their way into the heads of Morr's servants. Defilement of the dead is the most common affront that occurs within the cult. Priests of Morr keep a close eye on their members to ensure that they perform all the proper rites and do not engage in such loathsome acts as grave robbing or selling body parts to unscrupulous individuals. The rest of the order ruthlessly purges those discovered to be performing Dark Magic.

The Cult of Myrmidia

Highly regimented and strict in their interpretations of Myrmidia's will, members of this cult are always on the lookout for corruption within their own ranks. Myrmidians are second only to the Cult of Sigmar when it comes to rooting out deviants from within. Potential renegades are tried in military style courts, including a jury and a defending litigant (chosen by the court), where they



can make their case. Cultists of Verena often accuse Myrmidians of conducting sham trials to punish suspected criminals regardless of how tenuous or circumstantial the evidence. The Verenans feel that the Myrmidian methods are too reckless and endanger the rule of law. Executions sometimes occur, but most of the guilty are imprisoned for life for their crimes.

The Cult of Ranald

For a cult with so few rules and restrictions, it is not surprising that the Cult of Ranald has few views on what is deemed as improper. Most of the guidelines that cultists of Ranald follow have more to do with not getting caught when breaking others' rules, or with not betraying your companions when you *do* get caught. In this way, the cult has more in common with unrelated thieves' guilds than other religious organisations. Because the cult has such extensive ties with the seedier parts of the Empire, they are often the first to encounter blasphemous rites, renegades, and Chaos cultists who strive to stay clear of the light of justice. Most take the law into their own hands when they uncover these pockets of corruption, quietly killing those they find and sending clues to law enforcement so that they may take care of the rest.

The Cult of Shallya

As befitting a cult that espouses mercy and forgiveness, the Cult of Shallya is rather accepting and understanding of divergent viewpoints. The cult spawns very few dangerous factions, as it is difficult to cause harm when one's overarching cause is to further love, compassion, and the healing of the sick and injured. The most egregious act possible within the cult is for a member to refuse to provide aid to someone in need, particularly when there is little or no reason not to do so. While all cultists receive token donations for the upkeep of their temples and as a way to feed and clothe themselves, cultists that "go into business" with their skills are deemed as straying from the true path of Shallya by the rest of the cult. In extreme cases, violators may be imprisoned, but are more likely to be simply cast out of the order.

The Cult of Sigmar

Of all the cults of the Empire, the cult of Sigmar is the most fervent and active in finding and rooting out corruption. The cult has strict guidelines on what is considered acceptable thought, action, and belief—too strict, some say—making unintentional errors in everyday behaviour quite easy. Within the cult, change is slow and painful, as divergent beliefs are quashed almost as soon as they appear. Priests or cultists that challenge the status quo too often are readily lumped in with heretics and accused of being servants

Deviant Organisations

Described here are a few deviant offshoots of the accepted cults that have persisted throughout the years. Some may be thought destroyed, but are merely hiding until their numbers and good fortune return to once more question the status quo. In truth, not all of these heretical organisations actually performed all the deeds that garnered the wrath of the other cults, although few are wiling to stand up and testify to that fact.

Table 5–5: Heretical Organisations

Name	Heresy Committed
Apostles of Truth	Believe that Sigmar was a mere mortal who was blessed by the Gods, but is not a God himself.
Ariasanism	Believe that Sigmar is the spawn of the Ruinous Powers.
Blood of the Sea	Pirate lords who infiltrated and perverted the cult of Manann.
Brotherhood of Amar	Believe that Taal is the weak son of Rhya, rather than her husband and ruler of the wilds.
Jemarism	Believe that Ranald created the other gods as a grand, cosmic joke.
Nordenians	Combated the Apostles of Truth, growing so violent and savage in hunting them down that they, too, had to be cast out.
Order of Lancers	Shallyan heretics who performed "cures" on healthy individuals.
Tavolians	Cultists of Myrmidia who sacked temples to fund their own army, supposedly with the goal of toppling the Sigmarites.
Wolfenburgians	Believe in only two gods: Sigmar, the benevolent deity, who created the human soul; and a dark god, an evil deity, who created the world as a form of prison for those souls.
White Flames	A sub-sect of Witch Hunters who believed that all merchants were tools of the Ruinous Powers.

of the Ruinous Powers, with punishments ranging from censure, imprisonment, or more commonly, execution. Priests are expected to keep an eye on their flock and fellow cultists for potential "incorrect" words or deeds, and to bring swift, open retribution when they discover it.

The Cult of Taal and Rhya

Priests of Taal and Rhya are rather casual when it comes to varying viewpoints within their cult. As long as a cultist shows the proper respect to the Gods, gives the correct sacrifices, and protects nature, the cult respects the fact that there are divergent views within its organisation. The cult draws the line at mutation and abominations of nature, however. It ruthlessly purges anyone within its ranks who possesses any form of mutation or taint of Chaos. Because many of the rites of Taal and Rhya are performed with little or no clothing, those with obvious mutations find it nearly impossible to hide them from their fellow cultists.

The Cult of Ulric

The Cult of Ulric follows Sigmar's lead in hunting down renegades and their dissenting views. Cultists are expected to live up to the code of honour set out by Ulric, and despise any deviation from the norm. In many cases, common sense and necessity enforce these codes more than a desire to do good; many of Ulric's cults are based in cold, desolate places where living by these laws are the only way that a person can survive and get along with others. Deviant beliefs are dealt with in an extreme manner: death by flaying, abandonment without food or tools in some frigid location, or the hacking off of hands and feet. The worst offenders are stripped and splayed out on the ground with their limbs bound, then left for a pack of hungry wolves to feast upon.

The Cult of Verena

The Cult of Verena is dedicated to justice, fairness, and debate. Because of this, cultists are allowed and even encouraged to argue the tenants of their faith among their peers. To some other cults, this in and of itself smacks of corruption, although Verena's followers counter with the fact that their debates never lead to serious schisms. When a particularly persistent belief arises that cannot be ignored, the cult holds tribunals to debate the merits and flaws of it. If, as is often the case, the beliefs are deemed unworthy, then the proponents of the belief are cast out.

— The Dark Gods —

Although the names of Chaos are legion, it is commonly believed that the myriad minor Chaos deities and Daemons that plague the Old World can be affiliated with just four powers—Khorne, Nurgle, Slaanesh, and Tzeentch. The few deities who cannot be traced to these four Ruinous Powers are said to be either not yet clearly understood or are aberrations.

The Chaos Cults

Despite the efforts of the government, religious orders, templars, witch hunters, and colleges of magic, the Chaos cults can still be found in every layer of society. Both before and after the Storm of Chaos, these vile cults killed, despoiled, and looted in the name of their foul masters. Chaos cults are universally banned throughout the Empire, and they are mercilessly purged whenever the light of justice is brought to bear on them.

For a more in-depth look at the goals, motivations, and methods of the Chaos cults and Ruinous Powers, see the *Tome of Corruption*. Described here is a brief view of those cults and the homage they pay to the four Gods of Chaos.

The Cult of Khorne

Khorne is the violent, angry, and murderous God of Chaos. His creed of mindless, wanton destruction appeals only to the utterly psychotic and violent, which take to the battlefield with the unabashed urge to kill, burn, and maim. Because this overt behaviour makes them so noticeable, Khorne's cultists are chased to the far fringes of the Empire, where the powers of Chaos can hold greater sway over the populace than the local governments. Those few cultists of Khorne who remain in the larger cities and Western portion of the Empire become solo mass murderers. They stay at large only for as long as they can elude the angry mobs who clamour for their heads. Witch hunters claim that finding and rooting out cultists of Khorne is the easiest of their tasks—just follow the trail of bodies, and the killer will be at the end of it.

Organised cults dedicated to Khorne can only successfully operate where there are no real laws. The head of the cult is invariably an extremely powerful, merciless individual who goads his minions into battle with promises of blood and gore. The cults must behave like sharks—they must be constantly on the move, killing whenever possible. Cults of Khorne that cannot find enough innocents to massacre turn upon themselves in short order, both to sate the desires of their foul god and to appease its members' own lust for death and chaos.

The Cult of Nurgle

Disease is an all too common aspect of life in the Empire. Many people live their entire lives suffering from one ailment or another, and almost every household has lost at least one immediate family member to a horrific illness. The cult of Nurgle preys on those who succumb to the grief and despair that result from this ever present disease and decay. In their madness, they come to believe that Nurgle offers some form of salvation or understanding of pestilence and the entropy of the world. Few realise their misguided convictions only fuel Nurgle's power, creating a never-ending cycle of disease and despair.

Table 5–6: Chaos Gods

Name	Affiliated Deity	Sphere of Influence
Arkhar	Khorne	Norscan God of Battle
Blood God	Khorne	Chaos God of Battle and Slaughter
Brass Lord	Khorne	Chaos God of Violence and Wrath
Changer of Ways	Tzeentch	Chaos God of Magic
Despoiler	Slaanesh	Chaos God of Moral Corruption
Fly Lord	Nurgle	Chaos God of Pestilence
Great Conspirator	Tzeentch	Chaos God of Plans
Great Corruptor	Nurgle	Chaos God of Plagues
Kharnath	Khorne	Norscan God of Battle and Blood
Khorne	—	Chaos God of Battle and Blood
Kweethul*	Unknown	Chaos God of Destruction
Lanshor	Slaanesh	Norscan God of Pain
Necoho	Unknown	Chaos God of Doubt
Neiglen	Nurgle	Norscan God of Decay
Nurgle	—	Chaos God of Disease, Decay, and Entropy
Nurglitch	Nurgle	Norscan God of Disease
Onogal	Nurgle	Norscan God of Death and Decay
Serpent	Slaanesh	Chaos God of Desire
Shornaal	Slaanesh	Norscan God of Excess
Skull Lord	Khorne	Chaos God of Killing
Slaanesh	—	Chaos God of Pleasure
Tchar	Tzeentch	Norscan God of Change
Tzeentch	—	Chaos God of Change
Zuvassin	Unknown	Chaos God of Undoing

*Some believe this is another name for the Horned Rat.

Common View of Chaos Cults

"The cults of our blessed Empire often act as frightened, vengeful children, squabbling amongst themselves. Yet, we forget that while we fight each other, the forces of Chaos and its minions wait to take us all by surprise."

—Avermar Teinhoff of Carroburg,
Magister of the Celestial Order

"When the blight ravaged our village, we of course turned to the Priests of Taal and Rhya to bring the crops back again. They said there was nothing that could be done! We pleaded with Sigmar and Shallya, even Manann to bring rain so something could grow. It was only when a strange woman came to the village bearing an odd statue that the crops grew right again. The words she spoke? I can't remember. They made me feel uncomfortable, but we have food again, don't we? Her Gods must be powerful indeed."

—Inga Schturr, midwife (missing)

"Unnatural folk are drawn to unnatural things. If they dare set foot on my property, I'll show them the unnatural end of my axe!"

—Udo Keint, woodcutter

"While the armies of every province rallied to fight the Storm of Chaos, the insidious cults of these powers hid in our cities and towns, like a festering disease in the bone. Which is worse: the evil your see before your eyes, or that which remains hidden from sight?"

—Sir Talrecht von Gennig,
Knight of the Stag, Talabheim

"Burn them! Burn them all! Set fire to the cities and the forests alike, for Chaos takes root in all these places!"

—Guntar Tashardt,
zealot of the Cult of Sigmar (deceased)

Cults of Nurgle recruit members from those suffering from horrible afflictions, nihilists, and those driven insane from disease or despair. Nurgle drives them to wander the Old World, spreading pestilence wherever they go. While most cultists eventually succumb to the numerous diseases they carry, a few become strangely energised by their afflictions, mutating into disgusting forms. Cultists of Nurgle are also remarkably cheery—Nurgle is seen as a "loving" god who teaches his followers to accept the diseases that mar their body as a sign of his approval and grace.

Given the number of diseased people in the Empire, locating cults of Nurgle is surprisingly difficult, as they both lay low, blending into the local populace, and stay on the move. These cults insinuate themselves in places of abject squalor and filth, where even hardened witch hunters pause before entering. Entire sections of towns have been burned to the ground after a cult of Nurgle has been uncovered; the cleansing fire is often the only thing that can stop the diseases they carry.

The Cult of Slaanesh

Easily the most insidious and subtle of the Chaos cults, followers of Slaanesh are dedicated to serving their God through the subversion and corruption of others. Cultists are wanton hedonists who seek stranger and more perverse delights to shock their jaded senses into some kind of reaction. Over time, cultists lose all sense of morality or scruples, turning to murder and vile debauchery in the name of Slaanesh, the God of Pleasure.

The cult of Slaanesh strives to insinuate itself in all levels of society. It is popular among the upper classes, the members of which often do not know exactly what it is that they are worshipping. In their quest for pleasurable moments, these misguided folk find amusement and novelty in paying homage to strange, seductive idols or partaking in debauched gatherings behind closed doors. Artists, poets, and other seekers of sensual things are often drawn to Slaanesh's cults. Of them all, the cult of Slaanesh is probably the hardest to uproot, as the political fallout of revealing such heresy could topple the entire Empire.

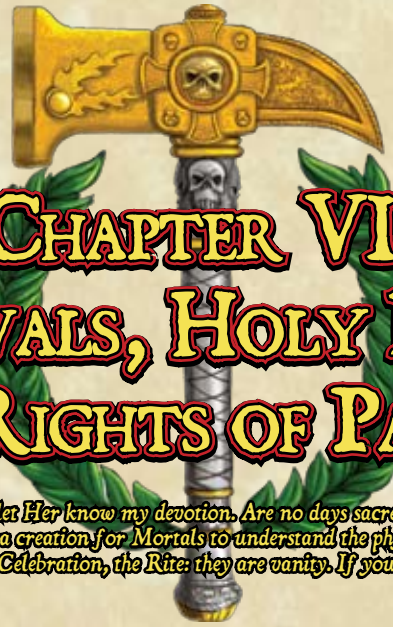
The cult also has its worshippers among the lower classes, who use its practises to find some form of relief from their harsh, degrading lives. Some festivals and holy days, particularly those with a message of release and letting go of restraint, push into what some could consider blasphemous ground, where Slaanesh holds sway. Cultists take advantage of these times to recruit new followers with promises of delights and decadence. Witch hunters and priests of the sanctioned cults keep a close eye on these festivals to ensure that they do not lead followers astray.

The Cult of Tzeentch

Those who follow the teachings of Tzeentch are dedicated to change in all its forms. They are the most mystical of the Chaos cults, seeking out forbidden knowledge regardless of the cost it exacts on the mind, body, and spirit. Hedge wizards, ex-priests, and those who dabble in the occult are the most likely candidates to be drawn into a cult of Tzeentch.

As befitting a cult that worships the God of Change, no two groups are exactly alike. Some are composed exclusively of spellcasters, while others are comprised of lowly commoners who seek to overcome their lots in life. By asking for such change to come into their lives, they call upon Tzeentch, often without a full understanding of the damage that doing so will cause.

The Colleges of Magic are constantly on the hunt for Cults of Tzeentch, viewing them as horrid aberrations that meddle in things that should be left alone. The Colleges engage in constant pogroms within their membership, rooting out those who have fallen sway to Tzeentch's control. Although they are never spoken of, these fallen brethren are all too common. Magic is intrinsically tied to Chaos, and its practitioners are more vulnerable to the call of entropy and corruption than the average citizen of the Empire.



Chapter VI: Festivals, Holy Days, and Rights of Passage

"And I said: But I wish to worship Her. I wish to let Her know my devotion. Are no days sacred to Shallya the Maiden? And the child replied: No day is of special importance to any God. Days are a creation for Mortals to understand the physical, and provide blessed Mercy for the mind. They mean nothing to the Gods. The Festival, the Celebration, the Rite: they are vanity. If you would seek solace for your soul, then look beyond the day to what lies beneath it."

—The Testament of Pergunda, 'On Daily Life'

For the common man of the Empire, there's little to differentiate one day from another, little to break apart the drudgery of existence for each day brings more filth, more hunger, and above all, more work. Since the Old Worlder is one accustomed to toil, those rare respites, those breaks from labour, are cherished for these too-infrequent moments are the times to live and play, to honour the gods, and escape from the pedestrian life of the commoner. As such, Old Worlders celebrate every holiday with zeal, cherishing the event and look for ways to extend the celebrations in whatever way they can.

— The Imperial Calendar —

The Imperial Calendar is of great importance and influence in the Empire. It allows the common folk to count the passing days and prepare for the festivals. It allows for historical events to be recorded and contextualised in time. It allows men who have never met to agree on reliable dates that they both understand. In short, it is the cog around which the machinery of the Empire revolves. Without standardised, measured time, everything would soon collapse into confusion.

Most people believe that divine Sigmar, first emperor of the united tribes of Man, formed the Imperial Calendar. The dating system splits the 400-day year into twelve months of 32 or 33 days, and includes six important festival days, each of which lie between the months. The months are further divided by eight-day weeks, which bridge the months uninterrupted, even if a week is broken by one of the intercalary festivals.

However, although Sigmar was involved with its creation, the truth of the calendar's genesis is more complex, and far older than the Empire's patron.

Before Time was Recorded

Most of the original tribes that settled the Reik Basin had no formal traditions for keeping time. Those that did usually relied upon the passage of celestial bodies across the sky to keep time for them. Although planets and stars were sometimes used for this, most early tribesmen observed the regular orbit of Mannslieb and the eternal cycle of spring, summer, autumn and winter. This eventually lead some communities to understand time as four seasons of 4 lunar cycles, but few used a system even that complex. As there was no central authority in those early times, each tribal community formed its own traditions for understanding time, often drawing inspiration from their neighbours, conquerors, and the ruins of the Elder Races.

By the time of Sigmar, many conflicting and often inaccurate methods of recording time existed. So many and so different were these, that misunderstandings between early Humans were common, and sometimes a source of conflict. Sigmarite holy texts claim that Sigmar decided to end this problem.

A Calendar is Born

Sigmar is said to have understood the importance of a centrally organised calendar. However, Sigmar's people were primitive, and though they could observe the seasons and the passing of various celestial bodies, they little understood how to accurately record the passage of time. Those few societies that did mark time rarely celebrated anything beyond the great equinoxes of the seasons, and

Almanac for the 2522nd year of Sigmar's Glorious Empire
detailing the Pilgrims' Temple of Ahlenhof, Middenland

Hexenstag — Nachexen

Throng welcoming the New Year

| | | |

often relied upon obscure rituals and the alignments of ancient standing stones to do even this. Unsurprisingly, most Humans did not even know how old they were.

Sigmar aimed to resolve this. As he was unable to draw upon established Human calendars and knowledgeable scholars, he turned to his strongest allies, the wise and ancient Dwarfs, and asked for their counsel.

The calendar reputedly created by Sigmar and his advisers drew almost all of its inspiration from the millennia-old Dwarfen calendar. The six Dwarfen festivals—which were already celebrated in most corners of the new Empire under different names—were kept unchanged, and the months were simply renamed, where necessary, to be more applicable to Human life.

Not only was this seen as a simple and convenient solution, but it also ensured that Imperial Dwarf and Imperial Human would forever be bound together in a mutual understanding of the passage of time, strengthening their growing relationship into the future.

However, just because a calendar was centrally created, this did not mean that everyone immediately used it. Indeed, in those early times very few did. Instead, they continued practising their local, and oftentimes inaccurate, traditions. To this day, over 2,500 years later, it is still common to find isolated communities that use only variations of the official Imperial calendar, or even ignore it completely.

The Making of a Week

The Dwarfs had no smaller division of their months, barring each day. They referred to each day by its number (from the 1st to the 33rd), and that was that. However, most Human tribes grouped days together in short clumps to help organise their short, busy lives, most commonly to plan their frequent market days. Further, many could not count as high as 33. Sigmar realised he would have to go further than the Dwarfen calendar alone.

Sigmar had the cults and noble bloodlines of the tribes report to him the methods used by their peoples to record the short passage of days. He was overwhelmed by the diversity of the responses.

The most common grouping for days was the 'week:' a number of days, typically from 3 to 12, between one local market day and the next. However, there were many other groupings. These included the 'Fünftage' (a five-day period generated from the solar cycle—*i.e.* five weeks of five days in one full passage of Mannslieb), the 'Vierzehnnacht' (a 14-day period supposedly based upon the time the Endals believed they could withstand a siege), and the 'Sennight' (a seven-day period with each day assigned to a different God, although the Gods whose names were used would vary), and many more.

So, rather than embroil himself with months of debate and pointless conflict about how to best split the months, Sigmar fell

The Imperial Year

Name	Reikspiel	Special Festival	Number of Days	Dwarfen Equivalent
Witching Day	Hexentag	New Year's Day	1	(Hekesdeg)
After-Witching	Nachexen		32	(Adderhekes)
Year-Turn	Jahrdrung		33	Sowing Month (Verzet)
Start Growth	Mitterfruhl	Spring Equinox	1	(Materfran)
Ploughtide	Pflugzeit		33	Preparation Month (Durgzet)
Sigmartide	Sigmarzeit		33	War Month (Kazakzet)
Summertide	Sommerzeit		33	Sun Month (Zhomerzet)
Sun Still	Sonnstill	Summer Solstice	1	Sun-Stay (Zhomerstikul)
Fore-Mystery	Vorgeheim		33	(Fornskrak)
Mystery Day	Geheimnistag	Day of Mystery	1	(Skraksdreg)
After-Mystery	Nachgeheim		32	(Adderskrak)
Harvest-Tide	Erntezeit		33	Harvest Month (Egrizet)
Less Growth	Mittherbst	Autumn Equinox	1	(Materhazt)
Brewmonth	Brauzeit		33	Brew Month (Valdazet)
Chillmonth	Kaldezeit		33	Need-Heat Month (Kulkelzet)
Ulric-Tide	Ulriczeit		33	Ice Month (Wyrzet)
World Still	Mondstille	Winter Equinox	1	Ice-Stay (Wyrstikul)
Fore-Witching	Vorhexen		33	(Fornhekes)

The Imperial Week

Archaic Reikspiel	Modern Reikspiel
Wellentag	Workday
Aubentag	Levyday
Marktag	Marketday
Backertag	Bakeday
Bezahltag	Taxday
Konigstag	Kingday
Angestag	Startweek
Festag	Holiday

back on his own traditions. Sigmar's tribe, the Unberogens, used the term 'week' and had a unique grouping of four weeks called the 'sextday' (a 16-day period of obscure origin). However, knowing that the warlike Teuotogens might easily take offence at a blanket enforcement of Unberogen terms, Sigmar also drew upon the Teutogen 'Woche,' a period of eight days reputedly ordered by Ulric himself. As Sigmar was a devout follower of Ulric, it seemed obvious to him to marry all of this for his new Imperial Calendar. And from these foundations, the eight-day Imperial Week was created.

Each day was given a unique name, chosen from the great selection of day names used across the new Empire. These names bore little relevance to the actual use of the day in practise, for any day could be a work day, or a bake day, but they provided comforting continuity for folk that used those terms.

Of course, even though the Empire recorded all official documents using the Imperial Week, most of the tribes continued using their older terms for the days and their groupings. Indeed, over 2,500 years later, some distant parts of the Empire still use archaic methods for counting the passing days, weeks, months and seasons.

Other Calendars

The Empire may have an ancient, centrally organised calendar, but it is not universally adhered to. As mentioned previously, many isolated communities cling to traditional calendars handed down to them by their ancestors. The reasons for this vary, but most commonly it is simply the "way things is done," no matter if it contradicts, ignores, or reorganises the Imperial Calendar, making matters very confusing for outsiders.

The most common alternative calendars are those sourced from other Old World nations. Although Bretonnia and the Wasteland use a dating system derived from the Imperial Calendar, the Empire's other neighbours—Kislev, Norsca, and the Tilean City States—practise their own methods of counting the days. Near the borders, these alternative Calendars are often used in tandem with the Imperial Calendar, and sometimes entirely replace it. Further, expatriate communities often retain their traditional calendars, although most of their residents understand, even if they do not use, the Imperial Calendar.

Kislev

Three dating systems are in common use in Kislev, although many more exist.

The most popular is the Gospodarin Calendar, which is state-supported, and thus used in all official documents. Like the Imperial Calendar, it breaks the year into 12 months and into eight-day weeks, but there are no intercalary festivals, and the year begins on a different date: Shoika Day, on the Summer Solstice. As there are no festivals between the months, there are exactly 50 weeks in a year. The calendar begins from the date Khan-Queen Shoika founded the city of Kislev, which happened halfway though 1524 IC.

The next most popular dating system in Kislev is the Imperial Calendar, which is commonly referred to in cities and is sometimes used along the Imperial border. Its growing popularity betrays just how influential the Empire has become in Kislev. Indeed, many official documents and the few printed periodicals of the kingdom use both the Imperial and Gospodarin Calendar.

Lastly, there is the Ungol Calendar. This is mostly used by northern *tirsas* and *stanistas* of Ungol descent, and is most common north of the Lynsk. It uses a four-year cycle called an *Urtza*, and begins on the year the Ungols believe the Bear God Ursun first awoke from hibernation (circa 500 IC). However, it is poorly documented, and date disparities between communities and variations of terminology are common. Indeed, most communities have their own names for the 24 (or, sometimes, 26 or 36) monthly divisions of the *Urtza*, which makes communication using the calendar difficult, if not impossible.

Norsca

The Norse use all manner of different dating systems. The southern Norse tribes are strongly influenced by the Empire and Kislev, and many use those areas' calendars or adaptations of them. The northern tribes are influenced by the Kurgan of the Endless Steppe, and some practise the blasphemous traditions of those peoples. These are often strange in the extreme, and may involve calendars based upon the bizarre cycles of an especially important Daemon God, or the waxing and waning of the Great Eye of Chaos itself. The Norse Dwarfs to the north and east use the Karak Ankor Calendar, although they have renamed many of the months, which can confuse the uninitiated. When all of this is mixed together with the original traditions of the Norsii tribes, the massive size of Norsca, and the lack of any central authority, it quickly becomes obvious why so many widely divergent calendars still exist there.

Just as the Norse are influenced by their neighbours, their neighbours are influenced in return. This is especially the case in northern Kislev, Nordland, Ostland, and the Wasteland, which the Norse often raid, settle, and trade with, taking their customs with them. This can result in some very odd dating systems in the fringes of these places.

The Palace of Time

I was led down an old, winding stair. I knew I couldn't be that far beneath Altdorf, because I could hear rushing water above. The Reik, I presumed. That made me nervous. The walls may have been lined with Dwarf mason runes, and they were dryer than a Shallyan Monastery, but there was enough water up there to drown Manann himself.

The robed thug I was following lifted his torch, gestured for me to follow with a crooked finger, then stalked down the dark corridor. I scurried after him, not needing further encouragement.

Ahead, I could hear a rhythmic tick tock, and I knew I'd almost arrived. The centre of all chronology in the Empire. The secretive offices of the emperor's Minister of Calendars. The so-called 'Palace of Time.'

To say I was disappointed is a massive understatement. The 'Palace'—a squalid hole no larger than the parasite-infested room Frau Grunner had grudgingly let to me—was ruled by a short old man. He wore a leather cap, the top of which bent over his forehead, almost touching his nose. A pair of spectacles with an array of adjustable lenses attached was perched precariously beside the huge wart on his nose. There was a small wind-up clock on his worm-eaten desk, and it was at least two bells wrong.

This, I presumed, was High Minister Gaspar von Derberg, keeper of the emperor's time, and a very powerful man in the Empire. He did not look pleased.

"I am not pleased," he coughed.

"I'm sorry. I..."

"Have I wasted all that coin?" he interrupted, spectacles wobbling as he adjusted the lenses. "You are three days late!"

"Ah, well, y'see: There was this..."

"Please tell me what you uncovered about Zunftfest." His beady eyes, now ludicrously magnified, bored into me. I slumped.

So, as I had been employed to do, I told him everything. Even the things I had promised myself not to say. I can only blame it on the surroundings. I had expected a literal palace, not a gloomy hole piled with papers and books. By Sigmar's Hammer! He was the Keeper of Time and his clock was slow! I opened my mouth and it all flowed out, as if someone else was talking.

As the Minister of Calendars, von Derberg had the impossible task of recording all the festivals, holy days and dating systems of Sigmar's Empire, and marking those that were no longer celebrated. Originally, the position, under some long-lost title, had been created so Sigmar could gather all of his people's calendars to study. Over 2,500 years later, and the job was still unfinished. However, as time passed, the remit of the Minister changed. Now, he was responsible for deciding whether a particular religious event was potentially heretical, and deserved the attention of the Templars of Sigmar.

Everyone knew what that meant.

The trouble was, Zunftfest was in Derberg, the High Minister's own lands. Worse, the merchants that had survived the Storm had twisted the festival into something... well... base. I'd tried to avoid the job; but, I was told, von Derberg had requested me personally. Stupidly, I'd let flattery overcome my good sense.

The High Minister shook his head.

"I am not pleased," he wheezed.

"I'm so sorry..."

"Yes, so am I." The old man turned to my escort. "Take him to the well and throw him in. I will not have my people put to the hammer by this scurrilous liar, and I will not have him spreading his lies any farther."

I'm ashamed to say that I was too shocked to respond. I let the thug drag me away with nary a word of protest. It wasn't until I heard the water that panic set in, and the enormity of what had just happened struck me.

Not only was the Minister allowing the cultists to practise in his lands, but I was about to be drowned.

Having seen their rites, I'm not sure what worried me more.

The Tilean City States

The nine great city-states of Tilea, as well as all the minor merchant-princedoms, towns, and villages they influence, use the same calendar system, one said to have been given to the nation by Glorious Myrmidia herself. Called the Verenean Calendar (*il calendario Vereno*), it uses the passage of Mannslieb (*Occiodiveren*) to record time, and divides the year into 16 months of 25 days, each with 5 weeks of 5 days.

Tileans believe that Myrmidia was taught by her mother, Verena, how to mark time by observing the heavens, which was why she installed a lunar calendar as her nation's dating system when she united all Tilea and Estalia. Unsurprisingly, Estalians also use the same calendar; however, they start it from a different date. Indeed, the start date of the calendar has long been a source of friction between the princedoms of Tilea and the kingdoms Estalia, as it drives to the root of the religious differences between the two lands.

This calendar is widespread across the Old World, and has long been used in distant corners of the Empire, even before northern tribes mixed with those of the south. Many Taalites and Manannites claim the calendar, and its lunar cycles are observed by some ancient forest and coastal communities.

Similarly, many Tileans use the Imperial Calendar or one of its many variants. This is especially the case in the northern city states of Miragliano and Trantio, for they more frequently deal with Bretonnians and Imperial folk.

Using the Calendar

The full Imperial calendar is provided on page 138. It is laid out with enough space for a GM to make notes for his campaign, or for players to track their day-to-day exploits. It also lists all of the major festivals celebrated in the Empire, and plots out the phases of Mannslieb.

Random Calendar Variances

"Did ya say 'Holiday?' We 'aven't no 'Holidays' around these parts, only Ulric's proper Festag! 'Holidays' is fer foreign folk. An' everyun' knows foreigners worship t'Dark Gods!"

—Ulthar Schmied, Middenlander Blacksmith

The following table can be used to quickly determine local variances in the use of the Imperial Calendar.

Table 6–1: Calendar Variances

Die Roll	Result
01–05	**Angestag Begins the Week:** Locals of this settlement begin their week with Startweek. However, rather than simply counting days from a different day, they have reorganised them (or, perhaps, remember an original organisation) so that Startweek replaces Workday, with Levyday now becoming Workday, and Marketday becoming Levyday, etc. The only day that remains unchanged is Holiday. In such communities, the weekend is Kingday and Holiday.
06–10	**Archaic:** The locals only recognise the older terms for the months and days of the Imperial Calendar (such as Festag instead of Holiday, or Jahrdrung instead of Year-Turn), viewing any alternatives as blasphemous.
11–15	**Aubentag Muster:** To better defend the Empire against attack, all Imperial citizens are expected to train on Levyday. Any men (*i.e.* of 10 years or older) failing to practise their weapon skills for at least 6 hours on this day are run out of town.
16–20	**Bezahltag Taxes:** All services and goods in the settlement cost 1d10 × 10% more on Taxday, with the extra revenues created going to the local cults, nobles, or, perhaps, some more nefarious source.
21–25	**Curtailed Weeks:** Weeks start afresh each intercalary festival day. For example, no matter what day it is before Sun Still, it is always Workday the day after. This can cause immense confusion for outsiders.
26–30	**Cycle of Royal Blood:** The locals chart the passing of the years by recording the reigns of the ruling emperor, duke, or minor noble, rather than by counting the years from Sigmar's coronation. This is typically referred to by naming the year of the reign, then the noble in question. For example: "Aye, was back in 3rd year of Duke Gustavus II...".
31–35	**Ecliptic Year:** The community measures time from one full eclipse of the sun by Mannslieb to the next, a cycle of time sometimes called the Draconic Year, and tied to legends of the great Shoggoths of old. These time spans, which can sometimes be very long, are broken up into smaller sections marked by partial and solar eclipses. Morrslieb is never used to determine time in such communities.
36–40	**Fast of Backertag:** Each Bakeday, the locals fast until the evening, only drinking water until the sun sets. Their strength of will in this endeavour is tested, as all the households use the day to bake breads and cakes for an evening feast, which sends wonderful smells throughout the community. Any who are caught eating during Bakeday are punished as the town leaders see fit. As the old saying goes: "Eat on Bakeday, pay on Taxday."
41–45	**Holy Festag:** The settlement regards Holiday as an especially important day. Anyone found doing anything beyond attending the Temples or training to better defend the Empire (Sigmar always allows this) will be in a great deal of trouble.
46–50	**Khalizad Calendar:** The locals use the Dwarf names for the months and festival days, although they still use the Imperial Week as normal.
51–55	**Konigstag Oath**: Every Kingday, the locals gather in the Temple of Sigmar, or by a shrine, to swear their loyalty to the emperor. Locals believe that any adults who laugh or smile during this solemn occasion must be traitors to the Empire, and thus, a servant of the Ruinous Powers.
56–60	**Manann's Beloved:** The weeks and months are measured by the 25-day lunar cycle of Mannslieb, providing five weeks of five days per month, with 16 months in the year. The names of the days and months vary by community.
61–65	**Marktag Business:** Local law allows for trade only on Marketday. Anyone trying to buy or sell on any other day will be in trouble with the authorities. This causes problems for local inns, for example, as they can only accept payment for their services on Marktag. Bar tabs are common, as are calls of: "Either you stay 'til Marktag, or you don't stay at all!"
66–70	**Morr's Beloved:** The locals mark their months according to the cycle of Morrslieb. However, given the Chaos Moon's erratic nature, some months may last little longer than a few days, and others may last entire seasons. Each Morrsleib full moon heralds celebrations the next day, with locals gathering to congratulate each other for surviving one more month. The community believes that if it ever has more than 88 months in a year, the world will end.
71–75	**No Festivals**: The six intercalary festivals are simply added to the normal months, leaving the community with 12 months of 33 or 34 days. The festivals are still celebrated, but at the beginning or the end of the appropriate months, not as separate days.

Table 6–1: Calendar Variances (cont)

Die Roll	Result
76–80	**Odd Week Length**: The week here lasts for 1d10+2 days instead of 8. If a 6 is rolled (which would result in an 8-day week), roll again and add the second result to the first (now providing a result from 9 to 18 days in the week). The names of the days vary by community.
81–85	**Seasonal Tracking:** This community does not mark months, but does observe the Imperial Week as normal. The only division of the year greater than a week is the 'season.' The four seasons are marked as normal, and the transitions from one season to the next are celebrated with important festivals.
86–90	**Wellentag Toil:** All people are expected to work from dawn to dusk on Workday. Anyone succumbing to sloth on such a day will be clamped in the stocks until the afternoon of the following day. *"I'm afraid I had to call the watch, sir. The sun rose some time ago, and you were still in your rooms."*
91–95	**Yearly Cycles:** The standard, 400-day year has secondary importance locally. Instead, a cycle of years (1d10+2 years) is observed, with individual years associated with some local God, Spirit, or similar power.
96–00	**Roll Twice:** Roll twice on this table. If you roll this result again, roll three times, and so on. If you score a result that contradicts or duplicates an earlier result, roll again.

Although keeping track of the days as they pass is not necessary for a game of *WFRP*, doing so can greatly enhance play, especially when playing in a protracted campaign, such as the *Paths of the Damned* or *Thousand Thrones*. It allows the players to feel more engaged with the world as they track and witness the passing weeks, seasons, and even yearly events, such as birthdays or one of the six major festivals. Further, tracking the date allows the GM to accurately add extra aspects to his game involving deadlines, keeping appointments, and describing surroundings according to the actual season, rather than GM whim.

Tracking the day of the Imperial Week can also help the GM describe the day-to-day activities of the various NPCs. Festag is considered a holy day by most citizens of the Empire, and almost every local economy grinds to a halt as the devout troop to their weekly Throngs at the local temple of Sigmar. Indeed, some folk consider it blasphemous to do any anything but worship and train to better defend the Empire on Holiday, and believe that sloth or inappropriate toil does nothing more than invite the attention of the Ruinous Powers. On the other hand, whereas the other days are little different to the average citizen, most larger cities mark a 'weekend' comprised of Startweek and Holiday, when the richer middle classes rest, paying the poorer classes to serve them. Smaller communities rarely celebrate the weekend, even if they acknowledge a distinction between weekdays (Workday, Levyday, Marketday, Bakeday, Taxday and Kingday) and Startweek and Holiday.

Game Masters are encouraged to use the calendar to mark all of the dates that are important to their campaigns. Maybe a community holds a special sausage festival every year, or the anniversary of a special triumph over invaders is celebrated in another. Similarly, players are encouraged to mark dates of importance to their PCs, such as their birthdays, or those of their family and friends, or the date of great victories for the party. Further, they can share in the dread of their PCs as they chart the slow but inevitable arrival of Hexenstag and Geheimnistag, the two most feared days in the Old World Year.

Adventure Hook: A Race against Time

The PCs are hired to protect a merchant train travelling close to the Black Mountains. Not long after they arrive at their destination, a horseman gallops into the settlement, a crudely-wrought arrow piercing his shoulder. Between groans and gasps, he explains that his outlying farm was attacked by Greenskins, and that a warband is gathering in the mountains.

The merchant panics, as his stock will not be ready for at least a week, and he will not leave without it. He charges the PCs to scout out the Orcs to see how far they are from the village and how many there truly are. If they succeed in this, he will pay them double their agreed fee.

The Greenskins are two days ride away, and Goblin wolf rider scouts are patrolling the area for easy pickings (like the PCs), which may delay them. The Greenskins will march in three days, and it will take them about five days to arrive. What will the PCs do? Ride for the next town, which is two days away, for help? Organise an evacuation? Flee? Fortify the settlement? Whatever they choose, time will be of the essence. To complicate matters, the village has a fanatically devout Sigmarite Priest who does everything in his power to ensure that the locals do nothing on Festag other than attend his Throng and pray.

— Holidays —

The Imperial Calendar is full of festivals, holy days, and other important dates. As religious and superstitious as most of the people of the Empire are, celebrating the rites on the appropriate day is vitally important to their spiritual wellbeing and peace of mind. As the Empire ages, new holy days are added to the calendar, whilst others are removed due to some perceived (or real) blasphemy. Some are simply slowly forgotten by the masses, never to be remembered or practised again. Finally, a few holidays have transformed over the years, so that they are barely recognisable as their original form.

Everyone in the Empire looks to holidays and festivals with great anticipation. For peasants and the lower classes, holidays are one of the few times in which they can cut loose and forget about their poverty and hardships. For the nobles and other upper classes, festivals are a way to flaunt their wealth, show up their peers, and, on occasion, show their respects to the Gods who have made their lives better than most. Holy days are also the times during the year where all the classes mingle together in supposed harmony, as all are subject to the will and whims of the gods.

Still, there are some holidays that are looked at with much trepidation. Several of the holidays on the calendar are devoted to grim events or times in which the Dark Powers are thought to hold sway. For example, Witching Night is viewed with particular dread.

Holidays of the Empire

It is always a holiday *somewhere* in the Empire. Each province and every town has its own variation in the way in which these particular holidays are celebrated. For more information on these differences, see **Variations in Folk Customs**, page 86.

Described here is an extended look at the major holidays of the Old World, originally described in the *WFRP*.

Witching Night (New Year)

Almost everyone in the Empire looks to the night before the New Year, known as Witching Night (or, in older times, called *Hexensnacht*), with particular dread. This night is sacred to Morr, whose priests are the only ones brave enough to leave the safety of their homes in order to conduct their rites in the graveyards. The line between the worlds of the living and the dead is particularly blurred on this night, and the spirits of those who have gone before sometimes come back. The vile Undead are seemingly energised by the wan, pale light of the moons on Witching Night, and shamble through the countryside, terrorising the living. Because the regions of death and sleep are so close, vivid dreams on this night give clues of a person's fate for the coming year.

Year Blessing (1st Day of Nachexen)

The day after the dreaded Witching Night is known as "Year Blessing." People emerge from the safety of their homes to celebrate both the fact that they survived and to ask the goddess Verena to bless the coming year with acts of justice and bursts of wisdom and knowledge. This is a solemn time, with the reading of passages and offerings of incense, wine, and parchments inscribed with holy sayings burnt up in fires. Old grievances between neighbours are brought up before Priests of Verena, in hopes of settling them to clear the following year. However, because grudges run deep in the Empire, many of these feuds are left to stew for years, with no foreseeable resolution.

Mitterfruhl (Spring Equinox)

Known to the common folk as Start Growth, the spring equinox is a time of great rejoicing. Start Growth is dedicated to Manann, as it indicates the beginning of the changing tides and represents the end of winter, which is the time of Ulric's rule. This is also when Taal's strength begins to grow in the form of rising sap, budding trees, and the stir of mating among animals. Tradition dictates that a calf, piglet, or other young animal be sacrificed to either Manann or Taal to bring good fortune and bounty for the following year. This animal is either thrown into the sea, drowned in a large river, or buried in the woods, depending on the person's location. Children born on Start Growth are thought to be quick-tempered and flighty, prone to wanderlust and adventure later in life.

First Quaff (33rd Day of Pflugzeit)

The Dwarf holiday of First Quaff is when the first kegs of new beer are tapped for an initial tasting. While this is a time of great celebration, it does take on a rather ominous tone, as the quality of beer is seen as a form of augury for the fortunes of the Dwarf hold for the next year. If the first keg is of inferior taste or colour, it indicates bad luck for those tasting it. However, a fine brew points towards good and glorious times ahead. An entire system of divination has developed for this tasting, and thus, the hold's runelord and king are always the first to sample the year's yield.

First Day of Summer (18th Day of Sigmarzeit)

The first day of summer is a huge and popular holiday, celebrated throughout the Empire. It is thought that this was the day that

Sigmar ascended to Godhood. The holiday is a time of great festivities, feasting, and song, and, in theory, all work is supposed to cease during this time, although farmers and others dependent on this long day sometimes take to their fields to work in the additional daylight. Tales of Sigmar's exploits are common entertainment, along with plays that depict some of his finer moments. The legendary "Sigmar's Sausages" are the food of choice during this holiday, with each province boasting their own unique recipes.

Day of Folly (10th Day of Sommerzeit)

One of the few holidays recognised in Ranald's name, commoners and nobles alike cherish the Day of Folly, though it is seriously frowned upon by the stern or ascetic. On this day, social conventions are turned on their heads, and those in charge act as servants whilst servants are treated as lords of the manor. Revels occur in the streets, as people wear colourful outfits and outlandish masks to conceal their identities (often quite poorly). Drinking, song, and harmless pranks are the norm. While this is an opportunity for authority figures to feel a bit of the sting that they often put others through, few accept much in the way of abuse from their inferiors, who must be careful in what they say or do. As Cultists of Sigmar often say: "it's not the Day of Folly that matters, it's the day *after* that does."

Sonnstill (Summer Solstice)

Sun Still is the common name for the Summer Solstice, so named because the sun seems to sit still on the horizon on this, the longest day of the year. It is an important date for farmers, sailors, wizards, and pilgrims; in short, for anyone dependent on the cycles of the sun and those keeping track of the remaining days of the year. Fertility rites are extremely common on this day, with young couples adorning themselves with flowers in their hair and dancing and drinking to songs dedicated to Taal and Rhya. The mysterious Elves are sometimes seen giving thanks and honour to their own Gods on this day. Children born on Sun Still are considered blessed and are thought to become bright, energetic adults destined for great things.

Saga (33rd Day of Vorgeheim)

Saga is an important and grim holiday of the Dwarves. Songs of the trials and epic battles of troll slayers, longbeards, and iron breakers fill the Halls of the Dwarfs. The Ancestors are revered during this holiday as their exploits are told over numerous tankards of ale. Humans, particularly those who live in areas with large Dwarf populations or near the World's Edge Mountains, often take up this celebration as well.

Geheimnistag (Floating Holiday)

This holiday does not fall on any particular day of the calendar; the Day of Mystery occurs when the twin moons Morrsleib and Mannsleib are both full in the sky. This occurs only once per year and is considered a time when the veil between worlds becomes thin, sometimes dangerously so. The Day of Mystery is dedicated to Morr, and many strange and unique festivals occur on this holiday throughout the Empire. Auguries are commonly performed,

sometimes with spectacular or terrifying results. Humans take this day to pay homage to their ancestors, and sometimes these spirits come back to converse with the living (see **Ancestor Spirits,** page 83).

Pie Week (1st-8th Days of Erntezeit)

This Halfling celebration is rapidly becoming a secular holiday throughout the entire Empire, as everyone gets swept up in the idea of eating delicious pies. The Halflings themselves do not ascribe any particular reverence to the occasion, something that has not been overlooked by those Humans who believe Halflings to be nothing but worthless, gluttonous layabouts. Human towns have begun including pie eating contests, awards for the best or most unusual pies, and other festivities. Business, other than that dedicated to the making of pies or the selling of alcohol to wash it down, often grinds to a halt during Pie Week.

Mittherbst (Autumn Equinox)

The Autumn Equinox is more commonly known by the name Less Growth. Obviously, with the weather turning colder and the leaves dropping from the trees, the citizens of the Empire feel winter impending. The time of Taal and Rhya is handed over to Ulric, who rules the dark winter months. Huge bonfires are dedicated to Rhya, the mother of the Autumn harvest, and portions of the best crops are thrown in as a sacrifice. Another portion of this harvest, along with an animal sacrifice of some kind, is quietly given to Ulric, in order to assure that his wolves stay at bay during the bitter cold of winter. It is thought that

children born on Less Growth become grim and fatalistic adults, with a penchant for looking towards the glory of the past rather than the promise of the future.

Second Breech (33rd Day of Brauzeit)

The third major holiday of the Dwarf calendar, Second Breech is the time when the family beer kegs are opened and tested once again. As before, songs and tales of Ancestors and heroic battle are the norm during this time. Few Humans celebrate Second Breech, unless they happen to belong to families of brewers or distillers.

Mondstille (Winter Solstice)

The Winter Solstice is known as World Still. It is the height of Ulric's time in the Old World, when his hungry wolves begin circling farms and villages in search of easy meals of livestock—and the occasional human victim. It is a time of despair, for the winter months are extremely hard and food is scarce, yet also a time of joy, for after this day the wheel turns once more to Taal and Rhya's eventual return. Bonfires are lit in hopes of guiding Taal and Rhya back into the world. In the farthest reaches of the Empire, the pelts of wolves are raised on sticks outside village perimeters, both as a sign of respect for Ulric and a warning for his "children" to stay far away. Children born during World Still are known for their laconic and subdued demeanour.

Keg End (33rd Day of Vorehexen)

Keg End is the conclusion of the Dwarfen calendar. It is a time in which Dwarf families must empty the last of their kegs in anticipation of the coming year. Copious amounts of beer are consumed during this celebration, and songs are sung that describe the previous year. Humans of the Empire have also taken up this tradition, though not nearly with the same fervour as their Dwarf brethren. Laws dealing with public drunkenness are either ignored during this time in liberal areas or tightened to excruciating levels in places that are more conservative. Excess beer is often given to those in need, although spilling even a drop during this festival ensures bad luck for the coming year.

Local Festivals

Most of the holidays in the Empire are very localised, their roots and true intent forgotten long ago. For example, a village may continue to celebrate a particularly bountiful harvest from 100 years prior, remembering the way in which it boosted the community's wealth or status, even if times today are much less successful and harvests are slim.

Described here are some examples of festivals and holidays found on a local level. Some take a holiday recognised by the rest of the Empire and alter it in some special way, while others are utterly unique to the village, town, or province that practises it (though as a GM, you may place these local festivals anywhere in your game).

Water's Turn (1st week of Plough-Tide)

Water's Turn is a local festival for the village of Dunkelbild in Middenland. The village sits on the edge of a large, boggy lake that provides the populace with their fresh water. A few days after the Spring Equinox (Start Growth), the lake "turns"—the cooler water at the bottom swaps with the warmer water on top. This churns up a tremendous amount of algae and scum from the bottom, giving the top of the lake a sickly green colour and horrible smell. To celebrate the coming of spring, the townsfolk bathe in the lake and fill large barrels full of the scum-filled waters. This water is scattered over the newly planted crops and tossed onto barns and houses by the local Priest of Taal. The lake is said to have curative powers and the sick, lame, and elderly travel from miles around to have the priest anoint them with this blessed water. Those travelling into town can tell that the festival is underway by the pungent odour in the air, which can be smelled from miles away.

Von Alxber's Night (18th Day of Ulric-Tide)

Von Alxber's Night is a relatively new holiday, found in the area in and around Sylvania. Approximately 150 years ago, fireworks were introduced into this area, much to the delight of the inhabitants. Although the invention was used primarily for military purposes—as signal devices between distant troops—the populace came out in droves to witness tests, gasping in awe at the amazing colours and explosions. It is said that a Priest of Morr (only his last name, von Alxber, is known), upon watching one of these displays, fell into a deep trance as the fireworks went off in the cool, clear night sky. A vision came to him wherein he saw the town come under attack by marauding bands of Beastmen. The people, although frightened, took the vision seriously and prepared for the attack, which came a week later. Von Alxber perished during the height of the skirmish and his body was laid to rest in the town's cemetery, where a shrine was erected in his honour. To celebrate his life-saving vision, each year the townsfolk scrape together as much money as they can to purchase the expensive fireworks that inspired his trance. It is hoped that his spirit remains to guide others in such a way.

March of the Greenskins (19th Day of Brew-Month)

This holiday is celebrated in the town of Heisenberg in Wissenland, commemorating the day on which a horde of Greenskins was repelled from the town. During the rise of the Orc Warlord Garruz Bloodskull, the town was overrun by waves of Orcs and Goblins. Bloodskull was surprisingly far-sighted for an Orc, and decided to keep the town intact, along with its inhabitants. The town was held for nearly two months until a contingent of Knights of the White Wolf swept through the town and routed the horde with the help of the townsfolk. Today, townsfolk make effigies of Orcs and Goblins and beat them with colourful sticks and pitchforks. Another group, dressed garishly in the "armour" of their saviours, come riding into town and order the townsfolk to haul the effigies to a pit outside the village and set it on fire.

Net Casting Day (20th Day of Harvest-Tide)

Net Casting Day is a holiday celebrated along the rugged coastline of the Empire. Cultists of Manann create special, ornamental nets made from the rope of old ships, clothing, and hair. Special prayers are written on cloth and tied onto the nets. The priests then take them out onto the sea, sailing until they can no longer see the land.

After a lengthy prayer, the net is then tossed into the sea three times. Each time it is dragged out of the water, the priests study what is captured in the net as a form of augury. If the nets pull out a solid catch of healthy fish, the signs are clear that there is a bounty to come in the following year.

Sigmar's Walk (15th Day of Sigmar-Tide)

As the seat of the Empire and "birthplace" of Sigmar's rule, Altdorf has numerous festivals and holidays dedicated to Sigmar's name. Sigmar's Walk is the name given to the holiday in which his cultists follow the footsteps walked by their patron god as he left the city nearly 2,500 years prior. On this day, cultists of Sigmar take to the streets in a form of pilgrimage, walking from one end of the city to the other until they reach the Gate of the Emperor. During this walk, the cultists chant, pray, and strike their backs with chains, whips, and other painful scourges to cleanse their bodies and spirits of evil and to show their devotion to Sigmar. With the thousands of cultists that participate in this rite, the streets often run red with the blood cascading from their backs. Those on the wayside throw flowers on the cultists as they progress and offer water for those that fall during the journey.

Run of the Antlers (1st week of Summer-Tide)

The Run of the Antlers, sometimes known as a 'Stag Night,' is performed in the villages and hamlets of Talabecland in honour of Taal. Young men adorn their heads with the largest set of antlers that they can find and wear the pelts of stags. Another group acts as the hunters, carrying weak bows and arrows with soft heads. The "stags" then take off into the woods, with the hunters following behind, blowing horns and raising a racket. The hunters shoot at the "stags" with their bows, and continue long into the morning until all the cultists are captured. This festival lasts for an entire week, and the daily "hunts" are punctuated by a tremendous amount of drinking and feasting.

Two-Gifts Day (8th Day of Chill Month)

This unusual holiday from the Province of Ostermark is dedicated to Ranald, and centers around small gifts between family members. The first is a silly gift that is presented in a grandiose, over-the-top manner, while the second is something precious. Once the gift has been handed over, it is then considered "fair game" for others to steal and present to someone else. While the holiday is done with a festive tone, there are times when fights can break out over the theft of particular gifts. Priests of Ranald claim that the holiday is meant to show that material objects are relatively meaningless, and that ownership is a fleeting thing.

Night of the Fire Arrows (25th Day of Sigmar-Tide)

This holiday is found only in and around the area of the town of Halstedt in Stirland. Back in the year of 2015, hordes of Undead were mustered from the nearby land of Sylvania, bent on rampaging through the Empire. The town of Halstedt repelled wave after wave of Zombies, Skeletons, and worse abominations by erecting walls of felled trees and ramparts to keep the Undead out. On the second night of the siege, the town's Sheriff located a secret stash of alcohol that he "requisitioned" from the town's mayor.

Using this potent brew, he ordered the many hunters and farmers of the town to make their arrows into flaming projectiles in order to repel the horde.

Although many people perished during the siege, the town survived. In remembrance of that night, the men of Halstedt begin the holiday with a day of drinking powerful moonshine. They then make their way to the edge of town and launch flaming arrows at targets and effigies of the walking dead, all the while drinking and chanting prayers to ward against the return of the Undead. Accidents and errant arrows setting a farmer's roof alight are quite common.

Adventure Hook: Joining the Party

The characters arrive in a small town that prepares for a local festival in celebration of the upcoming harvest. The crops are meagre, however, and despite the apparent cheer by the townsfolk at the upcoming celebration, a definite sense of dread and worry underscore the preparations. The characters are welcomed into the town and offered a place to stay at the finest home of the town. They are granted good food and drink, although it's apparent that the town could soon fall to famine. If asked about this, the townsfolk explain that entertaining guests during this holy time is part of their tradition.

When the actual festival begins, the townsfolk take to the streets at night, bearing torches, wearing ominous costumes and masks, and singing strange songs with words that seem to be some ancient form of the dialect spoken today. The characters are encouraged to don masked costumes and to bear torches along with everyone else.

The Celestial Calendar

The Celestial Calendar is the creation of the Blue College of Magic—the Celestial Magisters, masters of the heavens, and oracles of the stars. The Celestial Calendar is a relatively new invention, having only been created a mere 150 years ago, and is considered "cutting edge" by the members of the College, with new discoveries and additions to it being added every year.

The Celestial Calendar tracks the movements of the sun, the stars, and the twin moons, Morrsleib and Mannsleib. While it has many ties with the regular Imperial Calendar that is used by the rest of the Empire, it is far more esoteric and bound by the Blue Winds of magic than by any holidays created by mankind. Magisters of the order plot the movements of the heavenly bodies against these winds, watching how the two interact, marking them down for future reference, and looking for patterns that may give long-term forecasts. The abilities of the wizards allow them to see things in the night sky that are impossible to view with the unaided eye—a layman who reads one of these charts could pick out several of the best known constellations, but would be bewildered at the presence of most of the other symbols and shapes marked on it.

In addition to finding and naming new stars, constellations, and other objects, the Celestial Calendar is designed to track the coming of the two-tailed comet that signals great change within the Empire. It is for this reason alone that the Emperor sees merit in the Celestial Calendar's purpose and provides funds for equipment, materials, and other aid for the College to continue in their scholarly pursuits. Nothing has been publicly announced about any pattern by which the comet's return can be predicted; one Magister, however, by the name of Otto Kerchlik, has claimed some progress. All that Kerchlik will say on the matter is that it may take another 200 years of watching the eastern sky for any definitive data.

Described here are some of the notable events on the Celestial Calendar. This list is by no means definitive, and new events are recorded every year. GMs may choose to have these dates affect the abilities (or at least mood) of practitioners of the Blue Winds of Magic.

High Winds (2nd–9th Days of After-Witching, every 5–7 years)

During this event, the highest wisps of the Blue Wind become very active and form strange patterns in the sky. All attempts to discern the meaning or purpose of these winds have so far met with little success.

Ebb Winds (1st–8th of Plough-Tide, every 2–3 years)

During the Ebb Winds, the Blue Winds of Magic slack off considerably, creating a smooth, blank spot in the sky. Celestial Wizards despise this time, as their magic becomes diminished. Most become short-tempered and surly as their Witchsight and ability to pull the skeins of magic lose their potency. Tracking the exact time of the Ebb Wind is one of the paramount tasks for those involved in the upkeep of the Celestial Calendar. At the GM's discretion, blue wizards may lose a Casting Die when the Ebb Winds are present.

The Summer Cyclone (14th–16th of Summer-Tide)

During the Summer Cyclone, the Blue Winds intermingle on a greater level with the regular weather patterns, often coinciding with fierce thunderstorms and tornadoes. For this reason, some storms have a magical element to them, producing oddly coloured lightning, winds that sound like screaming, and strange hail shaped like small skulls.

Day of Mystery (Variable Date)

When the twin moons, Morrsleib and Mannsleib, are full in the sky at the same time, the Winds of Magic are extremely active and turbulent. It is a time when augurs, practitioners of Blue Magic, and others blessed with the Witchsight receive visions, sometimes even when they are not prepared to receive them. Some of the most important events of the Empire's history were foreseen on this holy day.

Rain of Fire (31st–3rd Day of Harvest-Tide, every 11–15 years)

Blue Wind coalesces and falls from the sky, visible to those with Witchsight. Although this "rain" never seems to reach the ground, blue wizards note the increased number of oracles and prophetic visions that occur among the more sensitive members of the populace.

The Old Comet (5th or 6th through 18th or 19th of Chill Month)

Not to be mistaken with the twin-tailed comet associated with Sigmar's rise to power, the Old Comet is a small, dim celestial body that makes its presence known every year. Its steady presence is a sign that the traditions of the Empire are secure. For those of the Celestial Order, the Old Comet seems to blow through the Blue Winds, disrupting old patterns and "cleaning the slate" for them to start anew. Unfortunately, this also means that long-term prognostications are disrupted as well—wise wizards take the Old Comet's appearance into account in their calculations.

Sigmar's Rising (28 days between Ulric-Tide and Fore-Witching, every 30–33 years)

The constellation dedicated to Sigmar comes into alignment with other forces, strengthening the Empire and the resolve of its people. Blue wizards note that major events occur during this time, such as the building of huge public works, the rise of new Elector Counts, or the beginnings of a new campaign against the foes of the Empire.

The mood is strange but upbeat as the townsfolk chant through the town. When the characters reach the town square, the mob slowly encircles them, refusing to let them out.

The mayor of the town ascends the stage erected in the middle of the square and cheerfully thanks the characters for offering their bodies as a sacrifice to bring good harvests back to the town. The largest men in the village then try to drag the characters up onto the stage, which is really a stack of oiled wood, ready to be ignited. The townsfolk are poor fighters, but there are dozens of them, making escape a challenge.

— Rites of Passage —

Several rites of passage mark the various stages of a person's life. *WFRP* describes several of these milestones, marking important dates like birth, marriage, and death. The Empire is a diverse place, however, and every province has its own unique customs and idiosyncrasies when it comes to addressing those rites of passage. This section expands on the list of notable events from the *WFRP*, and adds details to some of those previously described.

Pregnancy and Fatherhood

When a woman first feels the stirring of life in her womb, a celebration is held to honour this fertility. Offerings are made to both Rhya and Shallya, and a priest or priestess of one of those cults blesses the mother's belly with sacred herbs and water. Impending fathers go deep into the wilderness if possible, leaving offerings there to Taal for the gift of life and to Morr so the child does not go early to his realm.

Auguries into the child's disposition and fate in life are commonly performed in the last few months of pregnancy. Wise women, priestesses of Rhya, and those with the Sight are asked to watch and feel the movement of baby inside the mother's womb, gauging what sort of person the child is destined to become when it enters the world. For a fee, these augurs claim to be able to "change" the unborn child through special gestures and words, preventing the terrible fate that the oracle predicted. Usually, as with most hedge magic and superstitions, this ritual is worthless; there have been priests and wizards powerful enough, though, to change the fate of a child while it still waits inside the mother.

Birth

Because of the high mortality rate of children in the dangerous and dirty Old World, the birth of a new child is considered an auspicious event. Prayers and offerings are given to Shallya in thanks for a safe delivery. It is tradition to bury a shilling or some other high-value coin beneath the doorstep of the house. These coins are dug up and gifted to the child when it reaches the time of his or her Quickening (see **Quickening**, page 153). It is considered extremely bad luck to spend one's birth coin, ensuring a life of pain and sorrow. Necromancers and Chaos cultists prize the birth coins of those children who die before attaining their Quickening.

Birthday

The celebrations of birthdays are simple affairs in which a person gives offerings and sacrifices to Shallya for safe passage in the world and continued good health. It is considered tradition for family and friends to wholly or partially provide this sacrifice, with the expectation that the beneficiary do the same at a later date.

Dooming

Sometime near his tenth birthday, every child in the Empire should experience the Dooming, a rite of passage that ends with a foretelling of death.

How the Dooming is handled varies greatly across the provinces, although a priest of Morr is commonly involved. In the cold forests of Nordland, communities gather their children on New Year's Day around a great feast of bloodpie and beef to celebrate "Doomtag" before the daylight fades and a local Morrian priest begins the foretellings. In civilised Reikland, doomsayers of Morr criss-cross the land, conducting the Rite of the Dooming wherever they encounter children of the correct age. Across the rolling plains of Averland, doomsayers are rare, so communities typically conduct a simple rite without a priest, relying instead on a village elder or parent to make the foretelling. By comparison, the Ostermarker Dooming is a complex ritual, held each year on the Day of Mystery, and involves hundreds of candles, bizarre conical hats decorated with bird skulls, and sacrifices of milk and horse flesh. These latter are firmly gripped by chanting children as, nearby, blood-covered Morrian priests swing great skull-shaped censers.

No matter the exact details of the rite, one thing is always the same: at the end, a pale-faced child is brought forth to be told how he will die.

A Typical Dooming

As daylight fades, the nervous child, bearing sacrifices for Morr, is brought before the black-robed doomsayer. The sacrifices are cast upon a sacred brazier, and the priest pleads with Morr to accept them instead of the child into his realm. The doomsayer then lights specially prepared black candles. Thick, muggy smoke coils from the candles and wraps around the face of the child, twisting into patterns and forms that are believed to represent the child's doom. The doomsayer explains what he sees in sombre tones, and then concludes that the sacrifices will only appease the God of the Dead until the day that doom comes calling.

The child then leaves, now much closer to becoming an adult, though often in tears.

Doom and the Player

A character's doom is generated from **Table 6–2: Foretelling of Doom**. It presents the words that the doomsayer (or his representative) used to describe the character's death. Unlike

many aspects of a character, the doom has no game effect, and is presented to provide extra depth and context, rather that explaining what a character can or cannot do.

The consequences of a character's doom upon his life and personality are left largely up to the player. What should always be remembered is that the Dooming is typically a horrific experience for any child, and few walk away from it unchanged. If players need some help considering how the Dooming influences their characters, they should consider the following questions.

How Well Did You Cope with Your Dooming?

- How did you feel before the Dooming?
- What happened at the Dooming?
- How did you react to what the doomsayer told you?
- Did you take it well? Badly?
- Did you ignore it? Welcome it?
- Does the Dooming influence how you approach life now?
- Do you avoid certain situations? Do you purposefully not avoid them?
- What will you do if presented with situations from your doom? Will you forge on? Run? Be afraid? Courageous?
- How do you deal with the fear of death?

Doom and Character Death

After the last Fate Point is spent, it is clear a character may die very soon. Players should not despair when this point arrives, it is very much part of the grim and perilous *WFRP* experience, and will happen. To help make the inevitable death of a PC more bearable, GMs may wish to use the **Death and Doom** optional rule.

Optional Rule: Death and Doom

If a player orchestrates matters so his character dies in a fashion that reflects his doom, his replacement character may start with an extra free advance. This benefit should only be awarded if the GM feels that the player has roleplayed the death appropriately.

Doom and the Game Master

The Doomings provide a useful tool for the GM to handle one of the more difficult aspects of running *WFRP*: PC death. Many players can get very attached to their characters, and some are less than keen for their characters to die. A GM can use a PC's Dooming to help deal with this.

Foreshadowing Death

When a PC spends his last Fate Point, the GM can help prepare the player for the inevitable death of his character by dropping hints of the character's impending doom. If a character's Dooming was "Three is thy number," a GM could introduce the number three into his descriptions of the game world: three NPCs could accost the character; three brass pennies may be lying on the road; a searched-for location could be three streets away.

6–2: Foretelling of Doom

Roll	The Prophet Speaketh
01	Thy end shalt be a sticky one.
02	Briny waters are poison to thy tongue.
03	When abandoned and alone, Morr shalt befriend thee.
04	Beasts of the field have eyes for thee.
05	Workings of the Witchling Star are thy doom.
06	A stalled blade bringeth a sharp end.
07	The written word shall spell thy doom.
08	Thy body shalt break after thy spirit is crushed.
09	Be not curious, only in ignorance art thou safe.
10	Lack of breath fills thy last moments.
11	Tie not the ribbon, nor the feather wear; yea, the peacock is thine enemy.
12	Be not like Gnuthus, for thy master counts thy days.
13	Three is thy number!
14	A beast of brass bellows for thee!
15	Ulric's cold hand shall lead thee to Morr.
16	Watch for the cloven hoof, it is thine enemy.
17	Eat neither the chitterlings nor the meat with tubes.
18	As thee began, so shalt thou end.
19	As the sun doth rise, thou shalt fall.
20	Thy doom already knows thee, though knows it not.
21	A stranger shalt bring thee more than a gift.
22	Beware the young, the child, yea, even the babe.
23	Take heed of Mammit and Mummit, for both seek to lay thee low.
24	Beware the purse, the sack, the velvet bag.
25	The raven answers to Verena's call, yea, but Her scales are weighted.
26	The tiniest of Taal's children shalt feast upon thy gut.
27	The limner's line shalt be false.
28	The holy day shalt be thy last day.
29	Thou shalt die in bed, but not thine own!
30	Thou shalt feed the barren soil with thy blood.
31	When thy need is greatest, Shallya shalt turn Her back to thee.
32	The scythe shall reap thy flesh.
33	Thy soul, consumed with anger, shall be blinded to the unseen enemy.
34	A friend in need brings thy death with speed.
35	Thy last breath is drawn by Morrsleib's light.
36	Rats wearing the Horns of Taal shalt bite at thy heels.
37	The sword shalt bring no justice, only suffering.
38	The twin-tailed comet doth soar as thou dost fall.
39	Water of all kinds is thy nemesis.
40	Thy end lieth hidden in the gloaming.
41	High places promise a low end.
42	Thy last exclamation is love.
43	Beware the man that is not a man!
44	Beware the Blind Maiden, for Her scales shalt weigh thy soul.
45	Thy broken cart shalt herald thy end.
46	The bun, the pastry, and the pie, yea, they art Morr's dishes!
47	When the bell doth toll, it doth toll for thee.
48	The laurel wreath hides a poisoned thorn.
49	Linger not upon the privvie, nor the long drop neither.
50	Cacklefax grips tight to coins of thy doom.
51	The hourglass shatters before thy last grain falls.
52	From the darkness cometh the raven.
53	High-born blood shalt spill thine own.
54	From above comes thy death.
55	Plague and dark disease shalt bring thee to thine knees.
56	Beware skin of green, it shalt afflict thee.
57	Beware the verdant depths, within doth lie disaster.
58	Be like the dancer, for rude words bring Morr to thy side.
59	The darkest rot shall eat thee from within.
60	The Gods watch over thy end.
61	Heed not the smith, in his artifice lies thy doom.
62	Wear not Grugni's baldric, for it shall carry thy death.
63	Ready your coins on the thirteenth chime.
64	The drummer beats out thy end.
65	Katya's eye and vanity shalt speed thee to death.
66	Thy end burns with flames unseen.
67	An ill reputation shalt an ill man make.
68	Morr finds thee naked as the day of thy birth.
69	One bullock is safe; two bullocks bringeth the raven.
70	Thirst not for blood, for it thirsts for thee.
71	In thy surest moment, thou shalt fail.
72	Beware the beast in the wood, it is Morr's Messenger.
73	Thou shalt sup from the cup of corruption.
74	Fear the workings of the bonesaw, they are the source of thy death.
75	Thy generosity bringeth tuppence and a sword in return.
76	The withering eye is thy reward, and thy end.
77	Torture and pain echo in thy end.
78	Follow not the steps of Dragomas.
79	Thy doom is wrought from violence.
80	Those born of Rhya's cauldron shalt build thee a ravenstone.
81	Absence makes thy heart grow weaker.
82	The Myrmidian spring is thy poison.
83	Beware the crow, honour the raven.
84	A greased goat is safer than keeping secrets.
85	Manann's folk shalt love thee not.
86	When thou art thrice haunted, Morr brings peace.
87	Walk with Vobist, for certainty shall take thy breath.
88	Beware the Lord of Murder's barb—it awaits to strike at thee from the darkness.
89	The flashing blade shalt carve thy end.
90	Fearsome engines belch forth fires of thy destruction!
91	Thy end is not the end!
92	As the piper plays his tune, thy heart shall break.
93	Green shalt undo thee.
94	As dark news comes knocking, Morr shalt surely follow.
95	Thou shalt stand like Wymund until Shallya courts thy enemies.
96	Ranald shalt abandon thee.
97	Think not beyond thy station, for change is the herald of Morr.
98	Morr sends a maiden.
99	Without the big cross, thou shalt make the wrong decision.
100	Just before he uttered your doom, the doomsayer died, his face frozen in a mask of horror.

Failed Dooming

A GM should not worry if a character dies in a way that seems to contradict his Dooming. After all, most doomsayers are far from accurate, and not everyone can understand what a Dooming specifically refers to, anyway.

The GM should take care not be too blatant with this, as foreshadowing death can quickly lose its impact if used in every other description. But subtly dropping hints here and there can not only prepare a player for the eventual loss of his character, but also present some interesting roleplaying opportunities. If a character spots increasingly frequent portents of his death around every corner, how will he respond? How will his companions react?

Further, as many players become more cautious after their character's last Fate Point is spent, hints of a Dooming can also provide a good rationalisation for sudden care, where previously a character was more reckless.

To help keep cautious players involved in dangerous scenarios, even once they've run out of Fate Points, some GMs may wish to use the **Morr's Embrace** optional rule.

Optional Rule: Morr's Embrace

When an Old Worlder's doom comes a-calling, sometimes even the most timid of souls can be unexpectedly emboldened, embracing rather than fearing the death that draws close. This fatalistic fearlessness is known by Old Worlders as "Morr's Embrace," for Morr is believed to have revealed himself, showing the mortal he should not be afraid of the Portal. It is a state torturers are said to dread, for it makes their work suddenly all but impossible.

If a Human PC with no Fate Points remaining passes a Fear or Terror Test with a double (11, 22, *etc.*), or survives a Critical Hit that rolls a double for the Critical Effect, the PC immediately gains the Fearless Talent for the next 1d10 hours.

GMs using this rule may wish to ensure that a symbol of the relevant character's doom is immediately woven into his description of the surrounding world, which can act as a catalyst for the "revelation" the PC undergoes.

Quickening

The Quickening is the term used for when a boy or girl reaches puberty. In most provinces, this is the time in which the child becomes an adult, which is also accompanied by the child's Dooming (see page 150), although this is not always a guarantee they'll receive the full responsibilities and rights granted to someone older. In theory, it is at this point in which he or she is eligible to become a craftsman's apprentice, join the military, or become a priest. In reality, many children begin their training in their given vocation long before this point, learning at the knees of their parents and others within their community.

The Quickening ceremony varies from province to province, but it often involves a small celebration with friends and family, where the new adult is presented to the Gods and to those attending. An article of clothing, toy, or other item that belonged to the child is ritually burned or buried, to symbolise his or her passage into adulthood. Another common practise is to divide up the young men and women of a settlement, then allow them to "choose" their future spouse (often at the prodding and advice of their parents). Although considered a time of joy for the adults, the event is usually dreaded by the pubescent youth as a horribly embarrassing affair. Depending on the area, these matches are either considered binding oaths or the "couples" are allowed to change their mind within a certain period of time, typically until the next time Mannsleib is full.

In the wilder areas of the Empire, particularly the far north, the fringes of Talabecland, and Ostland, boys are taken away by their elders and undergo a rigorous initiation in which they must hunt and gather their own food and prove their skills with weapons. Not all survive this initiation, and it is common practise for these lost children's names to be stricken from memory.

Marriage

For the average citizen, marriage is a simple and informal affair between the couple and a priest of any given cult willing to perform the ceremony. Marriages between nobles, however, are lengthy and grandiose, seen as a way to show the wealth of the union between houses. Generous offerings to various cults are expected of the couple—other, scheming members of their peerage assess the worth of these gifts to gauge the couple's current wealth.

One tradition that appears throughout the Empire at marriages is the gifting of a jug, plate, bowl, or other fragile item. It is considered law that a couple may divorce if the item is ever shattered. This can occur

The Sad Tale of Erwin Metzger

Konrad stared into the fire.

"I'm never going near the river again, father. You can't make me."

"Is that right, boy?"

"Don't call me 'boy.' I'm a man now."

"Well, act like one."

Otto looked up at his son. The boy was frowning, lost in his own thoughts. Otto patted the mossy log beside him.

"Come here, son. Sit down. Did I ever tell you about Erwin Metzger?"

Konrad looked to his father.

"What?"

"The butcher's boy. The one who worked in our stables when I was a lad. He was about the same age as you are now, when he decided he didn't want to touch anything sharp."

Konrad looked confused.

"Had he—"

"—just had his Dooming?" Otto smiled. "Yes, yes he had. What made you think that?"

Konrad didn't reply. Otto nodded, his smile slipping away. For some reason, this reassured the boy, so he sat by his father. Otto took this as a sign to continue.

"After his Dooming, Erwin grew really nervous near the kitchens and the slaughterhouse. Any knife made him pale. His father beat him—to force him to see sense—but it made no difference. Before Erwin could offer thanks to Shallya for his eleventh year, he had fled."

"He ran away from home?" asked Konrad, shocked.

"Yes. He was too afraid to disobey his father, but even more afraid of sharpened blades. So, instead of confronting that fear, he fled." Otto frowned. "It was a difficult time. I was young—foolish, I suppose—and Erwin was my friend. At least, I thought he was."

"What happened?"

"I let him hide in the old summer house. I took him food when I could, and stole a sling from your uncle Kastor, so Erwin could hunt for more. As the seasons passed, and I grew into man, Erwin grew, well... stranger. He challenged me sometimes when I arrived, even accusing me of secretly planning to stab him. But most of the time he was friendly, and I told him everything.

"On my eighteenth Birthday, my father organised a gathering of my friends to offer sacrifices to Shallya. As space was limited, Kastor, your uncle, was to stay in the summer house. To make sure Erwin wasn't discovered, I paid him a visit. He was wild and bearded by then, and an excellent shot with the sling. I told him to lay low for a few days, and to stay out of my brother's way.

"The next morning, I rode to the summer house to fetch Kastor. But he was nowhere to be found.

"I searched and searched, calling out his name, but he didn't reply. Just as I was about to give up, I found him." Otto shook his head. "He was hanging from the old oak, his dagger thrust through his throat, his clothes a bloody ruin.

"I fell to my knees. I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to. My brother..."

Otto straightened his back.

"Tears in my eyes, I ran.

"I found Erwin by my horse. He was sobbing and rocking back and forth, saying the same words over and over again: 'He had a knife. He had a knife. He had a knife.'

"I knew what had happened then. I had no choice."

"What did you do?"

"I strangled him."

Otto fell silent, his eyes boring into the fire. Konrad gripped his hand.

"Father?"

It was a while before Otto replied.

"Yes."

"Can we go fishing now?"

Otto nodded, and the two men gathered their rods.

both intentionally or by accident, although it's considered extremely poor form to break up families due to the accidental breakage. However, given the superstitious nature of most Old Worlders, the breakage of the "Wedding Jug" is often seen as a bad omen for the marriage's future. Also, others often see the state of the item as a measure of the marriage—a clean and polished jug indicates a happy union, while a dirty or cracked jug shows strife and problems.

Whilst it is tradition for the man to ask the woman to become his bride, there are parts of southern Reikland and Wissenland where it is the woman's duty to ask for betrothal. It is rumoured that in parts far to the north, a man can take more than one wife, although this is often laughed off as pure nonsense.

Divorce

Divorce is very rare in the Empire. The numerous ties to land, family, tribe, and province bind people together in so many ways that such a separation is often beyond consideration. When a couple decides to divorce, they must find a priest to do an unbinding ceremony—preferably the same priest who married them, or at least one of the same cult. The couple is to bring their binding cord or sash, which is severed with a ritual knife by the priest, who then throws the two halves into a ritual fire (or into a body of water if the couple was married by a priest of Manann).

Before the ceremony can commence, the couple must first come to an agreement on how property, care of children, and inheritance rights are to be divided. This process can go on for hours, days, or even weeks, and if necessary another priest is brought in to help mediate the dispute—it is considered unlucky to seek such counsel from the priest that does the unbinding, and most adamantly refuse to give it. Divorce among nobles is even more rare and convoluted than that among the common folk, as larger things are at stake. Families, burghers, and concerned business owners often get into the fray, turning a couple's personal conflict into a prolonged legal battle.

Journeyman's Release

The time at which an apprentice is deemed worthy of obtaining his status as a journeyman in his trade is a period of great celebration. In order to achieve this status, however, the apprentice must present his journeyman's work to his master. This is the finest example of the apprentice's skills that he learned under his mentor's tutelage, and it is also the only object that is considered the student's property—the master owns anything that he made previously. If the master deems the piece worthy (and feels that any of the apprentice's "debts" are paid in full), he announces the elevation to his fellow tradesmen and immediate neighbours.

It is tradition that the friends and family (if any are around) of the journeyman throw a small party for him. The newly named journeyman shows off his journeyman's piece, basking in praise and getting advice from older individuals on what is to come next. It is tradition to avoid any criticism of the journeyman's piece—a fine art has developed by which those who find the piece lacking in some way carefully choose words that do not offend the new journeyman (nor the master who saw fit to release him).

At the end of the celebration, the master offers the new journeyman three coins. The first is to be spent on the journey ahead, the second on equipment to prepare the journeyman's workshop, and the third to hold onto, in order to remind the journeyman of the lessons learned and the price of such knowledge. It is considered highly unlucky to spend this last coin, and those who do so are believed to produce cursed works.

Soldier's Day

Those who choose the life of a soldier give up much. Joining the military means leaving behind one's family, home, and everything familiar. Soldier's Day is a rite of passage when a new recruit (or conscript) is deemed competent enough to become a full member of the military order he has trained with and possibly fought alongside. The actual rite depends on the group—some knightly orders have their new members undergo long and rigorous rituals. Most common soldiers simply throw an enormous party to celebrate the end of their gruelling training. Some do this knowing that they march off to war the next day, so the rite can take on a fatalistic streak.

Another tradition of Soldier's Day is for the new soldier to receive some form of ritual scarring, branding, or tattooing. A sharp, hot knife is often applied to the person's face or chest. Ashes or ink are then rubbed into the wounds, leaving a permanent mark. Tattoos of the Imperial Crest or the unit's insignia are also common. In addition to giving a sense of pride and duty to the soldier, this practise also helps locate deserters or captured soldiers. Those who flee the service often try to hide their tattoos and markings with other symbols, although doing so is considered a treasonous act in and of itself.

— A Sample Town's Year of Festivals —

Provided here are samples of the ways in which a typical small town of the Empire practises its own rites, holidays, and festivals. While the townsfolk do celebrate the majority of the same holidays recognised by the rest of the Empire, they have their own local celebrations and peculiarities that make them unique.

Bernloch is a small town located in the Grand Duchy of Averland. Considered sizable for its 250 souls, Bernloch is well known for its famous Bernloch hard cheese, which is traded throughout the Empire. The town's ruler, Baroness Elise Alder, is a devout cultist of Sigmar and is known for her stern demeanour and strict practises. The inhabitants of the town are hard working, simple folk who only want to provide for their families. Many of the old ways are still practised in this small town, which is reflected in its holidays.

The following festivals reflect the ones unique to the community. They may, and probably do, celebrate other festivals mentioned in this chapter.

Witching Night (New Year's Eve)

The citizens of Bernloch look to Witching Night with more than a little dread. Their proximity to the cursed lands of Sylvania and the Haunted Hills means that sometimes the dead do indeed walk the land on this dark night. Thus, everyone stays inside during this holiday, praying and chanting loudly to keep evil spirits at bay. Garlic is hung outside the doors and windows of every building, along with charms and parchment filled with holy words. Young, brash men sometimes defy the orders and wisdom of their elders by running from house to house. On occasion, someone runs out never to be heard of again.

First Curds (1st Week of Year-Turn)

This week is when the curds for the first batches of cheeses are prepared. Songs are sung and festive dances are performed to ensure a good product. The remnants of cheeses from the previous year are buried in the wilderness as an offering to Taal and Rhya.

Blessing Night (15th Day of Plough-Tide)

Blessing Night is a time of romance and blossoming love, when young men go to the homes of the one they want to betroth and ask for their hand in marriage. These men wear flowers in their hair and carry a torch, which is handed off to the woman—if, of course, she accepts his proposal. If the woman accepts, she asks the man to enter into her home, where they both hold the torch and light a special candle, which is allowed to burn for three days, informing everyone of their intention to marry. However, if the candle goes out at any time, whether by intent or accident, either party is allowed to break off the engagement with no loss of face.

Day of Mystery (Floating Day)

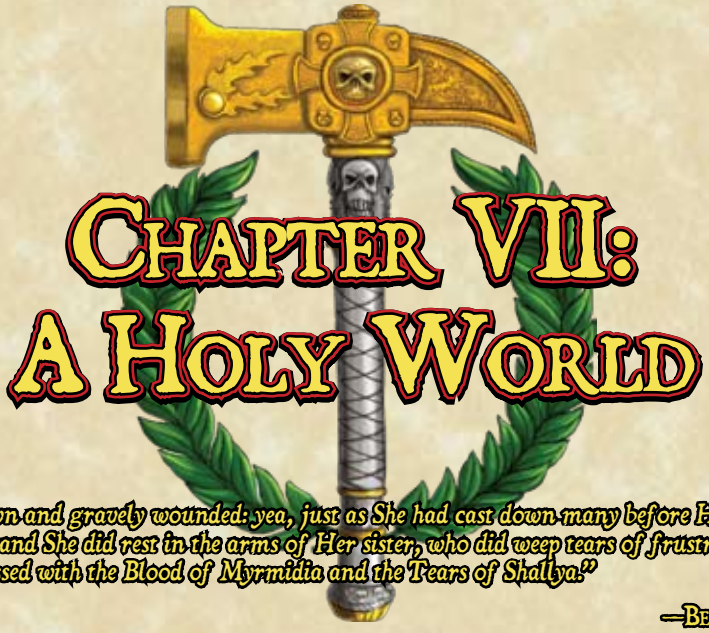
On the Day of Mystery, the townsfolk don colourful costumes and masks and take to the streets banging pots and pans. It is thought that this festival began as a way to drive away the evil spirits drawn near when the twin moons are full. In modern times within the village, however, the Day of Mystery has devolved into little more than an excuse to drink far too much grog, wear a disguise, and commit mischief.

Pie Week (1st Week of Harvest-Tide)

Although technically a Halfling holiday, the exuberance of Bernloch's sizable Halfling population touches everyone in the town. Little work gets done during this time as the townsfolk gorge on special pies made from their famous cheeses.

Cave Day (1st Day of Brew-Month)

Cave Day is when wheels of aged cheese are rolled out from the many limestone caverns that dot the area. It is a busy yet festive time, with those townsfolk involved in the making of cheese spending their time getting the new product ready for eating or shipment to other lands. It is tradition for the largest wheel to be rolled into the River Aver as an offering to its minor god, Altaver. The locals say that the river God's blessing is responsible for their cheeses' distinct flavour.



Chapter VII: A Holy World

"And Myrmidia was cast down and gravely wounded: yea, just as She had cast down many before Her; and She came upon a quiet place in the mountains, and She did rest in the arms of Her sister, who did weep tears of frustration and love; And, lo, was that place holy ever after, blessed with the Blood of Myrmidia and the Tears of Shallya."

—Bellona Myrmidia, *Becomings*

Throughout the Old World, there are places with strong connections to the divine. They may be sites sacred to a particular deity because of an act of self-sacrifice or a place that witnessed some incredible demonstration of faith or miraculous event. Others may be tainted with the unholy hand of the Ruinous Powers. Some would categorise the entirety of the Shadowlands in the north as such a place. Regardless of the God, sites sacred to the divine draw people of the Old World, exciting their imaginations with promises of succour, of hope, and of mercy from the trials of their lives.

The criteria for transforming an ordinary site into a holy or unholy one are inexact and unpredictable. In one stretch of forest, the murder of a dozen pilgrims of Sigmar by cultists of Khorne may not create a holy site, while a child falling into a well in an attempt to escape Greenskins might bring about a curse. The ways of the Gods are inexplicable to mortals, beyond even the ken of the priests whose lives are spent in trying to divine their methods. Still, sacred sites tend to appear as a result of common causes, usually involving the manifestation of a God, an act that interests a God, or are places that become holy by proximity to a particularly devout mortal.

Among the many sanctified sites of the Empire, the most popular ones are places where the God himself makes an appearance. Legitimate manifestations of the Gods are incredibly rare, and most cults view reports of such activity with suspicion. Gods do not walk with common men, after all. The problem, however, is that when word of such an occurrence spreads, people from all around flock to the site, offering prayers and invocations to deal with some ailment, problem, or to stave off some calamity. Since these manifestations often thrust an entire community into turmoil, priests are quick to respond. They investigate the site, interview the witnesses, and weigh their findings. Should there be any doubt, the priests may send Witch Hunters to punish the rabble-rousers and encourage the locals to return to their labours. Thus, while claiming to have witnessed a manifestation can be dangerous to a town, those whose claims are legitimate are rewarded with the creation of new shrines, altars, and other accoutrements of faith. Of course, savvy businessmen make the most of such opportunities, erecting roadside inns to house pilgrims, selling souvenirs and amulets to the faithful, and all manner of other nonsense.

Other important sacred sites are those that have witnessed an act of martyrdom. Whilst some worshippers of Ulric and Myrmidia are likely to claim that all the world's battlefields are in fact sacred, most dismiss the overly-dramatic views of these extremists and instead hold up specific places that reflect an act of supreme self-sacrifice as those worthy of being construed as holy. For example, a chapel in a narrow mountain pass in Tilea is called Captain Tarlozzo's Stand. It is said that a worshipper of Myrmidia held back an Orc invasion there, standing alone for an entire day, until reinforcements arrived.

Places may also have religious significance because of the person or people associated with them. A particularly devout individual may make a site holy because of how that site served them in their mortal works. For instance, Isabella's Library in Estalia, is a holy place of Verena because the Sage Isabella spent most of her life there, studying and dispensing justice. Single great events can also hallow a site, as can simple choice. The Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf is a holy place because the cult of Sigmar has decided it should be. A few places are holy because they always have been, with no other apparent reason. The Theatre of Ravens in Luccini, where the Priests of Morr gather every 10 years for their conclave, is one such. It has been holy for as long as there are records, but no legend explains why.

— Places of Worship —

Shrines, temples and supposedly holy places cluster in great profusion across the Empire, as numerous as sores on a leper's back. The number of holy places dedicated to a God is not the only measure of the deity's popularity, however. Some Gods are too new to the Empire to have many temples, while others simply do not require, or even look down upon, the creation of brick and mortar structures.

Sigmar, the patron deity of the Empire, easily has the most sacred spots dedicated to him, whilst Ranald has virtually none. As relative newcomers to the Empire, the "foreign" deities Myrmidia and Verena have far fewer holy sites dedicated to them than their current popularity would suggest, although if their birthplaces in Estalia and Tilea are any indication, such locations will eventually become common. The ancient Cult of Taal and Rhya have thousands of holy sites, although they are far from civilisation, scattered throughout the deep woods blanketing most of the Empire. Morr claims few shrines and temples, although it is accepted that every graveyard is sacred to him—and there are many graveyards in the Old World.

The area in and around Middenheim is dominated with sacred sites dedicated to Ulric, although some can be found far to the north. Fully equipped temples to Shallya are rare outside of the largest cities, but most towns, down to the smallest thorp, have at least a small, unroofed shrine dedicated to her mercy. It is said that the sea itself is the holiest of places for Manann and, obviously, the coastline is dotted with his shrines and temples, though the wide, powerful rivers of the Empire boast their fair share as well.

Shrines

If there's one thing every traveller can expect to find on a journey through the Empire, it is shrines. Along every road, every path, nearly everywhere in the Empire and beyond, there is bound to be at least some simple structure, the sole purpose of which is to venerate the divine. Most of these shrines are quite small, and even crude, being nothing more than a carved statue of Ranald, an icon of Sigmar, or a shelter dedicated to Shallya. They can be incredibly old, going all the way back to the time of Sigmar, or be quite recent, reflecting the modern outlooks regarding the Gods and their place in Empire society. A few shrines are large and lavish enough to approach the status of being full-fledged temples. They likely contain an idol of the place's principle God and smaller altars dedicated to other divinities, spirits, and Venerated Souls. These places, assuming they have not been defiled by thieves, may be decorated with breathtaking frescoes, painted statuary, well-crafted altars and minor relics.

Not all shrines are in good condition. While donations are expected to keep a shrine maintained, these houses are just as subject to theft and mistreatment as that of any mortal. Other shrines are simply forgotten, left to moulder and rot alongside infrequently travelled roads, while some may be swallowed or seized by Greenskins, Chaos cultists, or Beastmen, who defile these sacred sites in their own special ways.

Temples

Temples are the cornerstones of every active religion in the Old World. They are the centres of worship for priests and common folk alike. Every city boasts at least one, if not several, temples to each of the main Gods (although you'd be hard pressed to find one openly dedicated to Ranald). Even small villages do their best to have a temple dedicated to their patron God, though most make due with simple shrines.

Like shrines, the quality of the temple depends largely on the community that supports it. In poor hamlets, a temple may stand to venerate all the Gods at once rather than having a number of smaller temples for each individual deity. In larger, wealthier communities, the temples to each God might actually be massive cathedrals, rivalling the fortresses of the Old World in terms of size and defensibility. As with any architecture, temple construction depends on when it was build and the fashion of the day. As a result, truly odd examples can be found scattered throughout the Empire.

Temples are almost always manned by a complement of initiates, priests, scribes, caretakers, and assistants. Temples in the most remote locations, however, may be maintained by but a single caretaker, and even then he might not be an actual priest of the cult.

Table 7–1: Random Shrine Aspects

The following table can be used to provide some flavour and specific information about a given shrine. You may roll twice on the table, ignoring inappropriate or contradictory results.

Roll	Result
01–05	**Map:** The shrine has a map, either painted on it or in the form of a piece of parchment tacked to the walls. It is up to the GM to decide where this map leads, if anywhere.
06–10	**Richly Decorated:** Covered in gold leaf and gemstones, the altar is decorated with expensive materials (worth 4d10 *gc)* that have not been pilfered by thieves. A guardian of some sort, whether a living being or a magical or mechanical trap, discourages its removal.
11–15	**Popular:** The shrine is particularly popular with the local inhabitants. At any given time there are 1d10 people visiting during the day, and half that number at night.
16–20	**Shabby:** Ill kept and weathered, the shrine is in disrepair, although there is a sign of recent offerings having been made. There is nothing of value at the shrine.
21–25	**Ancient:** The shrine is staggeringly old and has been built to withstand the ages. Alternatively, another race or people from long ago built the shrine, with an unknown purpose.
26–30	**Looted:** The shrine has been recently looted by thieves and nothing of value remains.
31–35	**Corpse:** A corpse lays beside the shrine. It can be old and mouldering or still fresh. The cause of death is up to the GM.
36–40	**Riddle or Cipher:** A strange riddle or code is written within the shrine, which no one has claimed to have deciphered.
41–45	**New/Refurbished:** The shrine has been recently crafted, with fresh paint, new statues, and fresh offerings.
46–50	**Offerings for the Faithful:** A priest or devout Cultist has left behind food, new clothing, shoes, or a weapon with a note indicating that anyone in need may take it.
51–55	**Drab:** The shrine is simple, yet lacks elegance. It lacks paint or appropriate idols and the offerings there are meagre.
56–60	**Manned:** A priest or initiate has taken the shrine's upkeep as his personal obligation and lives in a small house or hovel beside it.
61–65	**Ostentatious:** The shrine is gaudy with an overabundance of tacky statues, pictures, and other accoutrements.
66–70	**Abandoned:** The shrine has been abandoned long ago and is overgrown with weeds or slowly falling apart in the wind and rain.
71–75	**Sturdy:** The shrine is sturdily built from stone or thick wood and looks like it could survive till the end of time. What it lacks in elegance, it makes up for in strength.
76–80	**Secret Cache:** The shrine has a secret compartment that may or may not contain treasure, a relic, or some other item. A Very Hard (–30%) Perception Test reveals the presence of the compartment. It may also be trapped.
81–85	**Defaced:** The altar has been defaced by vandals or by followers of the Ruinous Powers. No valuables remain and blasphemous words, graffiti, and waste mar its image.
86–90	**Artistic:** The shrine is an artistic marvel, incorporating magnificent craftsmanship and pleasing design.
91–95	**Generous Offerings:** Someone has left behind a staggering offering of 1d100 *gc*, gems, or other valuables at the shrine. Thieves risk angering not only the Gods, but also local Cultists.
96–97	**Strange Weather:** The weather within a 1-mile radius of the shrine is odd and counterintuitive, with cold winds in the middle of summer or light snow in the heart of summer.
98	**Cursed:** The shrine has been cursed by a witch, the blasphemies of a Cultist, or one of the Ruinous Powers. There is a 10% chance that a person worshipping at this shrine gains some terrible curse. The GM should determine its exact effects.
99	**Blessed:** The shrine is particularly blessed by the God to whom it is bound. There is a 10% chance that any Blessing (see *WFRP*) asked by a devout Cultist at the shrine is heard and bestowed upon him. This works only once per person.
00	**Heresy!:** The shrine actually hides idols and other blasphemous objects sacred to one of the Ruinous Powers, which are brought out for their secret worships. A Hard (–20%) Perception Test reveals this secret cache of vile objects.

Table 7–2: Random Temple Aspects

Not all temples are created equally. The following table includes various aspects, situations, or other factors that you can use to describe a new temple with a unique flavour. You may roll up to twice on the table, re-rolling for inappropriate or contradictory results.

Roll	Result
01–05	**Rich:** This temple enjoys a wealthy congregation who ensures that the structure is well-maintained. The interior is full of priceless icons, gilt statues, and religious paintings. To ensure that the temple is not defiled, a complement of templars is always on hand.
06–10	**Paranoid:** This isolated temple is reclusive and unfriendly. The priests here cater to their own, and are not welcoming of visitors. All Fellowship Tests are Hard (–20%) when made against members of this temple.
11–15	**Impressive Architecture:** This temple sports impressive architecture and is the gem of the community. Pilgrims travel from miles around just to marvel at its beauty.
16–20	**Scholarly:** This temple is famed for its large repository of books and scrolls. It is also a centre for scholarly pursuits and religious debate.
21–25	**Crumbling:** This ancient structure is on the verge of collapse. Perhaps as a consequence of war, time, or simply shoddy construction, it is scarcely inhabitable.
26–30	**Rebuilding:** Having fallen prey to fire, war, or vandalism, the temple is in the process of being rebuilt. Security is scattered or lax, and many of the temple's services are not available.
31–35	**Famous Priest:** One of the temple's priests, either at present or in the past, is famous for some deed, scholarly work, or martyrdom.
36–40	**Old Fort:** The temple was built within an old abandoned fort and is extremely defensible, though lacking in aesthetics. It looks more like a military compound than a place of worship.
41–45	**Struggling:** Hard times have fallen upon this temple and it has little to give in the form of charity. Priests constantly ask visitors for donations. Alternatively, the temple lacks the proper number of priests and other personnel to keep it running at manageable levels.
46–50	**Artistic:** The priests of the temple produce works of extraordinary style, grace, and value. Most of these items are at least Good quality, with smaller numbers of Best quality.
51–55	**Generous:** The temple either has a lot to give or their priests are simply bountiful with their charities. Visitors can expect several free meals, a place to stay for a short period of time, and helpful advice.
56–60	**Industrious:** The priests are very hard working and produce large quantities of a particular good or service, which can be purchased at a 10%-50% discount (roll 1d10/2).
61–65	**Suspicious:** The priests are suspicious of newcomers. Any Fellowship Tests made against the inhabitants are Challenging (–10%).
66–70	**Ancient:** The temple itself is extremely old, but it was built atop the remains of an even older site, possibly from the before the founding of the Empire. Its origins may or may not be known.
71–75	**Infamous Priest:** The temple is home to a priest known for his questionable beliefs, inflammatory views, or tainted past.
76–80	**Plague Ridden:** A disease (see *WFRP*) has taken hold in the temple. The inhabitants are quarantined, yet still need food and other assistance from outsiders.
81–85	**Refugee Camp:** The temple is home to a large number of refugees—far more than the temple can sustain for long.
86–90	**Relic Site:** The Temple is home to a famous relic (see Relics, page 247).
91–95	**Vengeful:** The priests are hateful and angry toward those of a particular race, nationality, cult, profession, or class. They snub, insult, or even attack anyone of that category that dares step foot inside.
96–97	**Pilgrimage Route:** The temple sits along a major pilgrimage route and specifically caters to those making the journey.
98	**Cursed:** The God of the temple has forsaken it. Cultists and locals shun it and priests are hard pressed to garner enough donations to remain open. The GM should choose some appropriate curse or bad luck that seems appropriate to the cult and setting; this unfortunate effect is inflicted upon any who rest or pray at the temple.
99	**Blessed:** The temple is blessed by its patron God. It has substantial income from donations and its own industry, good will from those who live near it, and a healthy congregation. In addition, spells belonging to the Lore of that god that are cast within the temple gain an additional Casting Die.
00	**Heresy!:** The Temple secretly harbours a Chaos Cult!

Inside a temple can be found idols, statues, frescoes, paintings, and other items that venerate the patron God or Gods. The actual worth of these items depends on the wealth of the temple's community, the generosity of its flock, and the circumstances of the times. Large temples in wealthy cities have been known to have to sell off precious relics simply in order to feed its clergymen and keep itself stocked in candles, while tiny temples in backwater villages could house priceless artefacts and do quite well for themselves.

For more details on temples dedicated to specific gods, see **Chapter II: Old World Cults.**

Monasteries

Monasteries are temples specifically dedicated to the training of new initiates and priests. In most cases, the monastery is self-sufficient, with gardens, fields, orchards, and possibly some additional method of generating income, such as a winery or scribing services. Monasteries tend to boast a large number of dormitories and rooms for study. For more information on Monasteries, see **Chapter VIII: The Life of a Priest**.

— The Monastery of the Dark Maiden —

"The Dark Maiden raised her hand, and Myrmidia said, Who are you that bars my passage to victory?

And the Dark Maiden said, I am Nahmud, Princess of my people, and far from home. You bore weapons and saved me, so, I pray thee, believe my words: When I was captive of Iscarius, I listened to his schemes, and I know you to be deceived."

—*Bellona Myrmidia*, 'Book of Transgression'

The following sections detail the first and largest Myrmidian monastery in the Empire. Any numbers used refer to the map on page 162.

The *Bellona Myrmidia*'s 'Book of Transgressions' tells the tale of the Dark Maiden, a woman rescued by Myrmidia who, in thanks, warned the Goddess of an ambush that lay ahead. Myrmidia sent her forces to flank the ambushers, and the resulting battle, the Massacre of the Three Gorges, proved to be the turning point in Myrmidia's campaign. The Dark Maiden then left for the mountains, there to live the life of "a stranger in a very strange land," and vanished from Myrmidian records.

The Hermitic Order of Nahmud's Peace

The Dark Maiden receives only seven definite mentions in the *Bellona Myrmidia*, but this has been enough for her to have a wide-reaching impact upon the Myrmidian Cult. Three Knightly Orders revere her as their patron, and two Monastic Orders have sworn to follow her reclusive ways.

Optional Rule: PCs from the Order of Nahmud's Peace

If your GM agrees, you can add the following Skills and Talents to any Advanced Cult career if your character is a member of the Hermetic Order of Nahmud's Peace.

Skills and Talents

Command, Common Knowledge (Tilea), Specialist Weapon Group (any one)

One such order is the Hermitic Order of Nahmud's Peace, or the Leoricans as they are more commonly known.

A History of the Leoricans

The Hermitic Order of Nahmud's Peace was founded in 1772 IC by a misanthropic Myrmidian Friar, Leoric Monpelitti, upon the slopes of the Appucini Mountains. There, Monpelitti had discovered four crocks containing well-preserved scrolls, all marked with esoteric designs of a noble, black-skinned female. Convinced that he had uncovered a lost testament of Nahmud the Dark Maiden, he immediately contacted his cult.

After many years of political wrangling and failed attempts to decipher the scrolls, the High Temple in Remas granted Monpelitti permission to form a Monastic Order dedicated to their translation. He named his founding monastery the *Eremitaggio di Nahmud* (Hermitage of Nahmud), and attracted many Myrmidian scholars, all sure they could succeed where others had failed. However, the language was too complex, and negligible progress was made.

The Only Good Elf...

In 2132 IC, a dying Asur Ranger was dragged to the Hermitage by fearful locals. Not sharing the peasant's superstitious fears, the Leoricans took the Elf in.

After a month with the Order, the recovering Elf's sharp ears overheard a distant discussion about the Dark Maiden's Testament, and enquired what it was. After much discussion with the Abbot, she was granted a brief, supervised viewing. To the Abbot's surprise, the well-travelled Elf knew the complex tongue, and in return for saving her life, the ancient Asur translated the texts. Unfortunately for her, she did not understand the implications of her translation.

The Abbot, appalled at what the scrolls revealed, knew he could not allow it to spread. Three days before she was due to leave, the Elf had an accident: She fell from the Hermitage's walls, inexplicably impaled upon her own sword.

Expansion

Before 2132 IC, the Leoricans were isolationists. However, with the dire words of the Dark Maiden's Testament seared into their minds, things soon changed.

GM Note: Using the Monastery of the Dark Maiden

The monastery can be included in any campaign with very little work. Perhaps the Tilean branch of the Order tries to take control, and the PCs are hired to sabotage their efforts. Maybe the PCs are employed to uncover the mysterious Black Maiden's Testament. How you weave the location into your games is left up to you. The following three adventure hooks are provided to start you off, but feel free to create your own as suits your needs.

- *The PCs are employed to pour powder on the yeast in the brewery (**Area 25**). The employer, an agent of a rival brewing company, believes the powder will kill it. However, he has been tricked by the Purple Hand (see the* Tome of Corruption *for more information): the powder contains Warpstone, and will not kill the yeast, but will cause subtle mutations in any that ingest it.*
- *Some robes were recently stolen from the vestry (**Area 21**), and word reaches the monastery that Leoricans were spotted robbing a noble's coach. The Abbess is looking for people unallied to her Order, and thus above suspicion for the crime, to investigate.*
- *Albrecht Oldenhaller of Nuln hires the PCs to retrieve an antique halberd from the locked room in the armoury (**Area 14**). He does not explain why, but does offer a lot of money.*

Once the PCs arrive, you can then use the locations to inspire sub-plots. The following three examples can be used to start you off.

- *Kehler (**Area 22**) is in a relationship with one of the sisters (Karlea Lächelt), and they have two children. Kehler receives a threatening note: if he does not stop his "unholy union," his children will be murdered. Unwilling to worry his partner, or admit weakness to his fellows, he turns to outsiders for help.*
- *A priest of Sigmar is residing in the Eagle's Nest (**Area 5**), here to persuade the Abbess to alter the Order's traditions (check **Area 23** for the issues). He is desperate not to fail in the eyes of his superiors, and is keen to find evidence of Chaos amongst the priests, even if he has to plant it himself.*
- *Gerlinde (**Area 12**) believes that the shrine to Shallya she tends has been tainted by the Fly Lord, Nurgle, and has slowly given in to despair. She plans to poison the entire Order, concluding that a fast death is preferable to that brought about by slow, painful disease.*

The Order began an aggressive campaign of expansion, founding seven monasteries in as many years. Leoricans arrived in all of the Tilean's City States, and offered the Order's services as tutors and lecturers, especially in the areas of history and strategy. Soon, their monasteries were awash with the children of influential Tilean nobles, sent by rich parents to be taught by some of the wisest Myrmidians in the city-states.

By the time of the Great War Against Chaos, the Order was well established as an educational bastion of Tilea. Leoricans were even found lecturing in the great universities alongside the wisest Vereneans, and the mercenary companies that marched north to support the desperate forces of Magnus the Pious included many Captains and Generals who had been tutored by the Order.

A War On Many Fronts

As the Knights of the Blazing Sun answered Magnus's call in the Empire, and Tileans marched north to make their fortune, the Leoricans were suddenly attacked. In the space of a month, more than half of their monasteries were assaulted by mercenaries. Although most had no concept why anyone would single out the Leoricans for attack, the Abbots understood: the Dark Maiden's Testament.

Unwilling to risk contacting other Orders of the Myrmidian Cult—for they had not shared the translations of their holy texts, and had no desire to do so—they instead turned inwards. The Abbot of the Monastery of Blessed Cornelia in the Vaults, where the scrolls had been moved a century ago, charged his most trusted Monk to hide the scrolls until the danger passed. The night after the Monk left, the monastery was attacked and razed. There were no survivors.

Art and the Maiden

"High on a Throne of Blue Blood unweighed,
With Wealth more than Ind or Haendryk mayde,
A Dark Maiden Man with Shallya's sharp eye
Look'd to the West and the storm toss'd sky"

—*The Withering of Westerland*,
Rickert Schwartzmehr, 2412IC

Early Estalian illuminations depicted the Dark Maiden with skin as black as coal, and a face so imperious and regal that some, so it is said, reverently dropped to their knees upon seeing it. This powerful interpretation has been exported throughout the Old World, and now stands as a metaphor for mystery, loss, and nobility, and has become a common motif in high art and epic poetry.

The Monastery That Jaeke Built

Lord Myrmathsson Jaeke von Hendorf became Grand Master of the Knights of the Blazing Sun in 2303. A long-term member of the Inner Circle of his Knightly Order, he was Leorican-educated, and was the new representative of Myrmidia on Emperor Magnus's

~To the Von Sient Estates, Altdorf.~

The Monastery of the Dark Maiden,
32 Nachgeheim, 2522~

My Lord and Gentleman,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd, in which you confirm your desire to have your son educated in the ways of wareraft by the Hermitic Order of Nahmud's Peace.

In reply, I have no hesitation in accepting your request, and have immediately taken steps to assure quarters of quality are prepared for his arrival. To ensure there is no difficulty in finding the monastery, I have taken the liberty of having a map copied from our library, which I have included with this letter to help guide your son safely to our care.

If you have any further queries, do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Abbess van der Hoogenband
Wissenland~

Goblins in the Mountains. I think he was just trying to scare me.

24 Erntezeit

We set off from Hendorf at first Light, and we barely managed to arrive at the ~~Monastery~~ Temple during daylight. The Weather was clement, and made the Journey through the Foothills quite pleasant. We encountered our first Patrol of Initiates, led by a Monk who interduced himself as Brother Galendregt, at Noon, and such encounters became more frequent as we drew closer to the Temple. It was quite a sight, nestled at the foot of the mountains as it was.

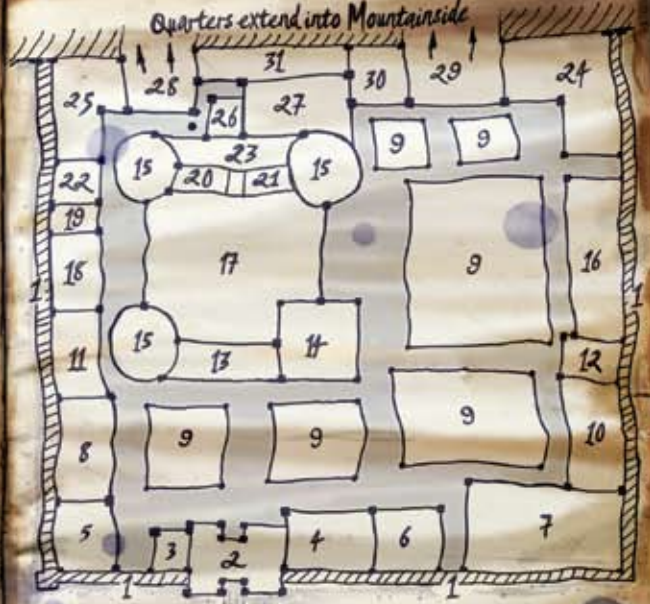
The View as I approached from Hendorf

I was met at the Gate by Sister Lächelt. She was very welcoming, and took time to ensure ~~my~~ my Journey had not been overly onerous. When I entered the Temple, I was shocked to see Men and Women fighting in the Training Squares, often against each other! It appears the Rumours of Myrmidia and Her Strange Ways are true! The Sister then gave me a guided Tour of the Temple as my Men unpacked my Belongings. I must have appeared like a slack-jawed Yokel: some of the sights were little less than awe-inspiring! I feel I will enjoy my time here.

Symbols I spotted

Sister Lächelt

Quarters extend into Mountainside



1 - Walls
2 - Gatehouse
3 - Pförtnerloge
4 - Initiates Barracks
5 - The Eagle's Nest
6 - Granary
7 - Guest Quarters
8 - Horse Barn
9 - Training Squares
10 - Stables
11 - Infirmary
12 - Quarantine
13 - Grand Hall
14 - Armoury
15 - Lecture Theatres
16 - Oblati Barracks
17 - Central Hall
18 - Scriptorum and Library
19 - Fruit-Drying House
20 - Abbot's Office
21 - Vestry
22 - The Workshops
23 - Holy Barracks
24 - Poultry and Livestock
25 - Brewery
26 - Laundry and Well
27 - Feast Hall
28 - Cultist Quarters
29 - Pilgrim's Quarters
30 - Kitchen Gardens
31 - Kitchens

Grand Conclave. With the Great War over, he was keen to strengthen his newly accepted Cult in the Empire.

When he encountered a battered Leorican travelling through the Reikwald, the answer suddenly seemed obvious: fund a monastery to teach his fellow Imperials the wisdom of Myrmidia's teachings. The monk agreed to help him, and plans were laid for the Empire's first Myrmidian monastery on Jaeke's lands in Wissenland.

As work went ahead, and unbeknownst to Myrmathson Jaeke, the monk he had met was the bearer of the Dark Maiden's Testament. He buried his secret burden beneath the foundations of the new monastery. When the monastery was completed, the monk became the first Myrmidian Abbot in the Empire. He died 37 years later, having never told a soul about the buried scrolls.

The Order Today

Today, the order is little changed from its 24th-century incarnation. It continues to spread the teachings of Myrmidia by offering tuition to those who can afford it. In Tilea, a Leorican education is still highly respected.

The Order's monasteries are all self-sufficient, and designed to withstand attack and prolonged siege. Most accept orphans, who they educate in Myrmidia's way. Unlike many other Orders, the Leoricans strongly believe in sexual equality, and demand equal treatment of both genders within the Order and its cult.

No living Leorican is aware of what the Last Testament of Nahmud contained, or where it now lies.

The Surrounding Area

The Monastery of the Dark Maiden hides in the Wissenlander Grey Mountains some 15 miles from Hendorf, a town now known for its Myrmidia worship. Busy fields and orchards line the well-maintained road that winds up the hillside to the monastery. The weather here is usually mild, although summers can be stiflingly hot.

As the area is unforested and well-patrolled, encounters with Outlaws or Beastmen are very rare. However, Night Goblins do occasionally raid from the mountains, and wild animals are common.

1. Walls

The monastery's solid granite walls are 20 feet high. They are patrolled by guards from the gatehouse (**Area 2**) and sport four small cannons forged in Schmeidorf, Middenland.

2. Gatehouse

The gatehouse has two connected, square towers with domed tops soaring high above the oak gate. Murder holes, a portcullis, and overhanging balconies are in clear view, although other defences also exist. Within, a barracks large enough to garrison over 60 men sits above the two guardrooms on each side of the gate. The officers have quarters in the upper levels of the two towers.

The Master of the Guards is Captain Bartolomeo 'Meo' Gallino, a vindictive Tilean with grey in his perfectly maintained moustaches. He is often found berating his men in the training squares (**Area 9**) or leading them on exercises and patrols in the surrounding countryside.

3. Porter's Lodge

The porter, Gebhardt Träger, and his five staff are housed in the Pförtnerloge, a blocky building with access to the Gatehouse. He takes great pride in his job, and tries to personally greet every visitor to the monastery. In his 23 years as porter, he has met many dignitaries, and likes to share anecdotes of their visits with any who will listen.

4. Initiates' Barracks

Initiates of the Order are organised into flights of up to five members, which are often found training and competing in and around the monastery. No individual commands each flight; instead, all Leoricans share the responsibility for their teaching and training. The barracks has four large rooms, each reserved for one flight, although there are rarely more than two flights in residence at any one time.

5. The Eagle's Nest

The Eagle's Nest is a tall watchtower that commands an impressive view of the surrounding countryside. Three guards from the gatehouse are stationed here around the clock, and sound a brass bell at the sign of any trouble. Two levels of the tower are reserved for the Abbot of the monastery. However, as the current Abbess has abandoned the quarters to barrack with the other Leoricans, the rooms are now reserved for important guests.

6. Granary

Most of the monastery's grain is stored in the granary, which also sports a sizeable threshing floor.

7. Guest Quarters

These quarters are reserved for "Guests of Quality," and have six well-appointed apartments with parlours, servants' rooms, and bedrooms.

8. Horse Barn

The large horse barn is where horses, their feed, and an assortment of farming tools are kept. The second floor has loft-quarters for the barn's staff, which is currently comprised of four generations of the Viehstall family. Grandpa Ed is the oldest of them, and lords over his descendants from a mouldy pile of dirty hay, which, he proudly claims, he has not moved from in over 20 years. He often barks orders down to his weary family as they work.

9. Training Squares

The courtyard of the monastery has six squares of various sizes marked out for martial training. At least two of them are usually in use at any given time, most commonly by competing wings of oblati (**Area 16**) or flights of initiates (**Area 4**).

10. Stables

This is a large stable reserved for warhorses and their feed. The ostlers here consider themselves superior to the Viehstalls that run the horse barn (**Area 8**), and often throw snide jibes in their direction. Much like the horse barn, there are loft-quarters for the staff, which sit above a small barracks for visiting templars.

11. Infirmary

Doktor Gaufrid Pfister maintains the infirmary with three assistants. Beside the rooms reserved for patients, the doktor's wife runs a small apothecary selling poultices and herbs. Quarters for the doktor's family are on the second floor. A small shrine for Verena, Myrmidia's mother, stands on the outside wall of the infirmary, overlooking a small hospital garden.

12. Quarantine

This small building is for victims of disease who do not have private quarters in which to recover. One of Doktor Pfister's (**Area 11**) assistants, Arzthelferin Gerlinde, runs the quarantine, and tends to the shrine of Myrmidia's beloved sister, Shallya, found within.

13. Grand Hall

The grand entrance hall to the temple has a southern-style fresco depicting the scene from *Bellona Myrmidia* where the Goddess meets the Dark Maiden. The windows here are small, and let in little light. As a result, the frescos have retained all their original colour over the years, and are considered a wonder by many locals.

Abbess Birgitte van der Hoogenband

The Abbess sports a disarming grin and has an easy way with those she meets. She is very much "one of the soldiers" and dives into any work that needs doing, laughing, joking, and swearing with the best of them. Her heavy Wastelander accent has not diminished in her years away from Marienburg, although her youthful fascination with acquiring wealth has.

She is a very tall, very thin woman, with wavy, flame-red hair worn in a braid, sea-grey eyes, and many freckles. Her ready smile has carved deep lines about her mouth and eyes, all of which are criss-crossed with scars gathered from her mercenary years before joining the Order. Her arms, back, and belly are thick with tattoos, many of which are quite rude, clearly acquired during less pious, probably drunker moments.

14. Armoury

Almost all of the monastery's weapons and armour are kept in the armoury, which stores enough equipment to outfit a small army. One whole wall is dedicated to training weapons, most of which are made of wood. The Order's ceremonial armour and weapons are stored on the second floor behind a solid, locked door.

15. Lecture Theatres

The circular lecture theatres are very cramped and very high. Their centres have open spaces where monks and sisters lead lectures in groups of two or more. It is very rare to find a Leorican lecture with only one speaker, as most of their teaching styles consist of conversations among the knowledgeable, with predetermined questions and answers presented to the audience. The lectures are also interactive, with the speakers asking many questions of the audience. The surrounding seats are reached by tight stairways accessible from the central hall (**Area 17**). The lecture areas are accessed from the order barracks (**Area 23**) and the narthex (**Area 13**). Lectures performed here are for Leoricans only; outsiders are taught in the central hall.

16. Oblati Barracks

Leoricans refer to their temple wards as *oblati*, and accept many local orphans and abandoned children. Younger oblati share beds in a hall large enough to fit 100 children. Older children (10 years or older) are segregated according to their gender, and have rooms on the second floor of the barracks, with each room dedicated to one 'Wing,' a group of up to 10 youths. Most oblati leave the barracks by their 14th year, commonly to join the state armies, study as an apprentice to a tradesman, or to get married. Some of the oblati stay on to become initiates, but this is comparatively rare, as the Leoricans encourage their wards to return to Imperial society, the better to spreading the word of Myrmidia among the common folk.

17. Central Hall

The high-ceilinged central hall is seated, and has a raised, circular sacristy in the centre. This is used by Leoricans to lead services to Myrmidia and to host lectures in all matters of warcraft and strategy. The monastery has a strong reputation in the Empire for its superior knowledge on military subjects, and many travel to learn the finer points of war from the secluded Order.

The surrounding walls are decorated with stained-glass windows depicting the greatest heroes from the *Bellona Myrmidia*. Before each window is a 10-foot-tall statue of the hero in question, wearing only a silk-scarf about the waist and an archaic Tilean helmet upon the head. The domed ceiling is painted with a massive rendition of Myrmidia sailing west to return to the Gods, a magnificent work of art that astounds almost all who view it.

18. Scriptorum and Library

The scriptorum is full of ink-smudged, worn desks, where the older oblati and initiates copy sacred scrolls and holy texts. Stairs lead up to a dry library, where Sister Otthild Taegert, an octogenarian with

a sharp wit and sharper temper, carefully guards, maintains, and restores the collected tomes of the Order. Above the library is the librarian's quarters, which are kept warm by the oblati at all times. Sister Otthild sells the copies of the Order's texts, which are very popular with visiting soldiers and mercenaries.

19. Fruit-Drying House

This small stone room is used for drying fruit. Stairs lead to the roof, where fruit is sometimes left to dry in the sun. The dried fruit is used in a variety of field rations prepared and sold by the Order, and in a Leorican food favourite called frumenty, which combines hulled wheat boiled in milk with beef, raisins, dried apricots, and spices.

20. Abott's Robe Room

The Abbot's robe room has recently been converted into a meeting office, as the current Abbess has chosen to robe with the rest of the Order, wishing to break down the barriers between her and the others. She now uses the room to talk privately with visitors and other members of her Order, and to host meetings that decide the future of the monastery.

21. Robe Room

The vestry is used to store the ceremonial robes the Leoricans wear during services and other special events that do not require armour. The Order wears yellow half-cloaks over orange robes emblazoned with a white sun bearing 12 wavy rays. At all other times, the monks and sisters wear riding leathers or light leather armour, with a sun clasp holding a yellow half-cloak in place.

22. The Workshops

The noisiest and smelliest area in the monastery is the workshops. Spread over three floors, an army of blacksmiths, carvers, coopers, fullers, goldsmiths, saddlers, shoemakers, turners, tanners, and weapon smiths toil four days in every five. Any excess the workshops produces is sold in a shop on the bottom level. The Master of the Workshops, "Handy" Anders Kehler, is a no-nonsense Master Artisan with a heavy Altdorfer accent. He organises the workshops with a firm but fair hand.

23. The Order Barracks

Leoricans practise a lesser form of hermitage than the early members of their Order, but still barrack in separate cells. The Order barracks has 53 such cells spread over two floors, including quarters for all ranking members of the Order. However, as Leoricans do not practise celibacy (but do forbid marriage), cell life is not as solitary as many outsiders might expect. Several of the monks and sisters are in permanent relationships (often with non-ordained followers of the cult), and some have even had children, which are raised as oblati.

All this extra-marital activity is deeply frowned upon by most visiting Sigmarites, who believe that it creates a breach in the Order's spiritual defences against the Ruinous Powers. Indeed, the Arch Lector of Nuln has written to the Order on three separate occasions asking them to change their dangerous lifestyle.

24. Poultry and Livestock Pens

The pens house geese, chickens, swine, cows and sheep. The animal keeper has a small house adjoining the pens, where he lives with his wife and six children (five of whom attend lessons with the oblati).

25. Brewery

The distinctive smell of brewing permanently emanates from the monastery's brewery. Barley malt, hops, and general winter stores are stored in a large cellar beneath the brewery, which is also where the Order's nine cats live. Dark Maiden Stout—the thick, black, metallic beer produced by the Leoricans—can be found across northern Wissenland, and is popular with the Nulner state army.

26. Laundry and Well

The laundry, which handles all the washing for the monastery, is staffed by 12 men and women. Broad-armed Frau Tuttwitz rules the steaming rooms with a steely eye, and is quick to chastise any interlopers. Outside the laundry, lines are loaded with washing every dry day, surrounding the monastery's well with a maze of wet cloth.

27. Feast Hall

The eating halls span three floors and can fit all inhabitants of the monastery with space to spare. Thus, the top floor is reserved for special events. The feast hall is always active, but is busiest at sunup, midday and sundown. It doubles as a large public house, and much singing, dancing, drinking, and general socialising takes place here.

28. Cultist Quarters

Most of the non-ordained that live and work in the monastery are housed in the cultist quarters at the rear of the complex. They are carved deep into the mountainside, and have space to house more than 200 people, although fewer than 70 make it their home.

29. Pilgrims' Quarters

Pilgrims and poor visitors are hosteled in the pilgrims' quarters. Spread over three levels, the quarters are sparse but functional, and rarely more than half full.

30. Kitchen Gardens

The kitchen gardens are tended by Ol' Man Rosselini, who lives alone in the sizeable gardener's cottage. He has lived in the monastery for as long as anyone can remember, and is well-loved. The garden has a host of root vegetables and herbs on offer, and includes some varieties more often found in Tilea than the Empire.

31. Kitchens

The sprawling kitchens eternally emit heat and the mouth-watering smells of good cooking. The Kitchen Master, Anja Rastovic, an Ostermarker with an incredibly thick accent, only works three days out of every five, leaving his wife Beatrice, a Tilean with an accent thicker than his, to organise the other two. The kitchen staff rarely has any idea what either of them are saying, but the food is delicious nonetheless.

— Holy Sites —

The following entries describe the general qualities and character of holy sites dedicated to the various Gods of the Empire.

Sites of Manann

Most of the Temples dedicated to Manann are found on the coastline of the Empire, extending from Marienburg, through the Wasteland, and up into the edge of Norsca, interspersed with small, unattended shrines. Furtive attempts have been made to establish a permanent temple on the coastline of Albion, but so far, each has been plagued with a series of unexplained disasters, causing the entire plan to be abandoned. Similar plans to expand farther north have met similar fates.

Temples to Manann are either grandiose, such as the Temple in Marienburg, or modest buildings built with practicality (and the survival of the inevitable shoreline storms) in mind. At a glance, most temples resemble little more than ornate warehouses or other dockside buildings, although the inevitable wave motif and decorations venerating sea life are sure signs that the building is in fact a temple to Manann. In some communities, more established and wealthy temples have replaced aging wood with marble and other expensive stonework. The ideal temple design merges images of the sea with solid walls to keep persistent wind, rain, and sea salt out.

Temples are always attended, unlike shrines, which may or may not have someone tending to them. Considering the hard-to-reach locations in which many of these holy sites are located, shrines are by far the most dominant form of holy structure. Most bear at least one statue, engraving, or other artistic rendering of Manann. Those who wish to show tribute at these places leave sacrifices of fish, coins, and pearls. Sailors who know that they are embarking on a dangerous journey often cut themselves and splash a small amount of blood on the altar to divert Manann's attention while they are at sea. As a result, many of these altars are dark with dried blood, which can be a grim surprise for anyone not familiar with this practise.

The Temple of the Red Coral

The Temple of the Red Coral is a small but well-tended temple that sits on the coastline just north of the town of Salzenmund. It is so named for the mysterious red coral that grows in the area, unusual in the chill waters of the northern sea, and pieces of which were used in the building's construction. The cult sees the coral, as well as the large numbers of fish that congregate there, as a sign of Manann's blessing. Over the centuries, the reef has grown and shrunk in size, often with alarming speed; the cultists who maintain the site have come to think that the reef's health is linked to the health of their temple as well as to that of the sea and to Manann's influence within the Empire. Priests of the cult spend the majority of their time in deep contemplation of the reef, swimming among the fish despite the frigid waters or floating on small boats, finding some insight into the way the tides work.

The fishermen of the area maintain decent but cool relations with the priests. Due to an old accord, the priests determine the places and times that the fishermen may fish the sea. This sometimes sends the boats to strange or dangerous locations, and to places that sometimes lack fish altogether. Whilst irritated at the seeming randomness of the arrangement, the fishermen are too frightened of Manann's wrath to fish the reef without this permission.

Sites of Sigmar

The Empire is littered with holy sites of Sigmar. From the hammer-and-comet-lined Temple District of old Altdorf, to the tiniest of isolated road shrines in Ostland, Empire folk are surrounded by the all-pervasive imagery of their largest cult.

Almost every town in the Empire, and each city district, has a temple to the Empire's founder. Their tall bell-towers loom over the surrounding morass of dirty buildings and ring out each Festag to summon the weekly Throng. As people of all classes attend these gatherings, most temples are divided into three general areas, corresponding to a hammer-shaped layout. The area leading up to the raised sacristy is called the haft, and is the place where the devout of the Cult of Sigmar worship. The hammer's head is reserved for nobles, while the hammer's claw is kept for

The Dark Glade

The Dark Glade is a secret place where worshippers of the forbidden Cult of Ahalt the Drinker perform their rites (see **Forbidden Cults** in *Sigmar's Heirs*). Located along the banks of the Upper Soll, near the town of Geschburg, the Dark Glade is forbidding and sinister. Surrounded by ancient black oaks and gnarled willow trees, the glade itself is actually a barren patch of rock—the dirt was scoured away long ago by unknown forces, and nothing grows there. The trees themselves seem to bend and twist on their own, even when there is no wind to rustle the leaves.

The Dark Glade is the traditional gathering spot of the scattered members of the Cult of Ahalt the Drinker, where they commit horrible acts of murder in the name of their banned God. Although several unfortunate people have unwittingly stumbled into the Dark Glade (and become victims as a result), so far, no one has made the connection between the Dark Glade and the Cult of Ahalt.

The Dark Glade somehow keeps itself hidden from almost everyone but those that worship Ahalt. Non–worshippers who actively seek the Dark Glade must make a **Very Hard (–30%) Navigation Test** to locate it, even with the aid of a map.

the common cultists of other faiths. In provinces where Sigmar worship is especially prevalent, Sigmarite temples can be found piercing the skyline all over. Come Festag, the streets empty, and all that can be heard is the booming voices of the priests and the choirs of the faithful.

Even most villages have a temple, although the smallest may only host a shrine, typically comprised of a statue of the God or a stylised hammer. Those communities without a temple await the arrival of travelling Silver Hammers with anticipation, keen to hear the word of Sigmar and to take part in His rites.

Lastly, many homes in the Empire have small shrines to Sigmar, as well. There, householders pray for guidance from the Patron of the Empire, and ask for the strength to overcome any obstacle, just as he once did.

The Skaranorak Temples

When mortal, Sigmar was said to have formed an allegiance with the Brigundian tribe by slaying Skaranorak, one of the first-born Dragon Ogres. According to *The Book of Sigmar*, the epic conflict took place in the Black Mountains and carved great gouges out of the landscape.

In 545 IC, a wandering Sigmarite friar came upon a ravaged section of mountainside high in the Black Mountains, and, so it is said, suffered a violent vision of the battle. With this "undeniable" proof, the cult immediately petitioned the local Elector Counts of Averland and Stirland for the permission and resources to build a great temple.

Now, almost 2,000 years later, there is not one temple in the area, but seven. They are maintained by High Capitular Marobaudes' chapter of dedicated priests, and each temple supposedly guards an important location from the Skaranorak Saga. Pilgrims line the Zhufbar Road to Schramleben every year, there to head up the Blue Reach to Sigmaringen, the site of the first Skaranorak Temple. Sigmarites believe Siggurdheim, the lost capital of the ancient Brigundians, once stood there, and the temple marks the beginning of the pilgrimage proper. From Sigmaringen, the devout make their way overland into the mountains, following a well-beaten path leading past the six other temples, the last of which is said to reside on the very spot where Sigmar killed the Dragon Ogre. Inside, the temple guards an eight-foot-tall rock that local priests claim is one of the creature's claws, and thus is blessed by Sigmar's holy blood.

Sites of Taal and Rhya

Although worshipped throughout the entire Empire, the Cult of Taal and Rhya are extremely popular in the central and eastern portions of the land, where mankind has had relatively small impact on the surrounding wilderness. Most of the shrines dedicated to these paired deities are small, modest affairs, typically taking the form of small shelters located far off the beaten path or tiny open-air altars on the edges of farm fields.

"Temples" of Taal and Rhya are usually huge monoliths, rings of menhirs, or mounds of strangely carved stones. Some are nothing more than extraordinarily ancient oak trees carved with sacred pictures. Cultists gather at these sacred places only at the equinoxes, solstices, and the time of the full moon—at other times, worship is done alone or with the family at small shrines, and the major sites are allowed to remain at peace. This is not to say that the Temples are left unguarded. Trackers, hunters, longshanks, and horned hunters constantly prowl the wilderness nearby, and priests of Taal and Rhya are often able to speak with the animals near their homes, which keep an eye out for any wrongdoing.

Most large cities have token traditional temples to Taal and Rhya somewhere inside their limits, intended to create a more formal and public face with which the citizenry and government can interact. These buildings are designed to blend in with the terrain and typically have large, wild parks surrounding them. Temples specifically dedicated to Taal are low-slung, made of dark wood, and have one or more sweat rooms where important initiatory rites take place. Temples more focused on Rhya are small, modest, and comfortable. Wheat fields are planted around them, if possible, though any crop is acceptable. Of the two, temples to Rhya are more rare; some say that this is because her temples already exist throughout the Empire, whether it be anywhere that

three or more women gather to talk or any marriage bed that is used to conceive children.

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.

In recent years, herds of Beastmen have intruded into the sacred space of the Rock, threatening its sanctity. Cultists have been called to protect the temple, including several horned hunters as well as Jade and Amber Magisters. Skirmishes are becoming more frequent and the priests are beginning to receive dire visions of entire hordes of the foul Beastmen moving into the area to claim the power of the Rock for their own.

The Rock of the 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 die to Casting Rolls.

Sites of Ulric

Ulrican holy sites are common across the north of the Empire, especially in Middenland and southern Nordland. There, wolf iconography dominates, and most people wear charms shaped like wolf-heads or made from wolf-claws to show their devotion to the warlike God.

Ulrican temples have more in common with fortified keeps than with other places of worship, and often contain everything required to last many months, if not years, of siege. Within, all temples guard a flame in their sacristy, a representation of the Eternal Flame in Middenheim, and priests are charged to ensure that it never extinguishes. If it does, Ulricans believe the next winter will be especially harsh. As Ulric teaches self-sufficiency—expecting his people to rely upon themselves rather than upon him—his temples are quieter than those of many of the other Old World Gods. This gives the priests time to organise affairs for the great winter festivals, train initiates, and join military campaigns in the summer months. Services are held at the temple, but they are infrequent, especially during campaigning season. It is more common for local cultists to approach their priests privately, sharing problems behind closed doors that Ulric's teachings may help unravel.

Shrines to Ulric are far more common than are temples. They line the roads of the north, especially where wolves may have hunting grounds. Most shrines depict a wolf's head or a stylised "U," although crude statues of the God are not uncommon. They are tended by wandering priests of the Howling Wolf or by devout locals.

Most common of all are indoor shrines to Ulric. They normally manifest as a statue where ale can be poured ("First drink to Ulric!") and where weapons are stacked to be blessed. Almost every barracks in the Empire, even those to the far south, have such a shrine to Ulric. These places, as befits the self-sufficiency the God demands, require no priestly involvement at all.

The Womb of the Wolf

The Sons of Ulric believe that they are the blood descendants of Ulric, who is widely claimed to have sired children with hundreds, if not thousands, of mortal women. They have been attempting to infiltrate the Cult of Ulric for decades, for they see it as an institution that is rightfully theirs to lead. Deep within the bowels of the Ulricsberg, the great rock upon which Middenheim is built, the sect maintains a small temple of special importance to their cause.

The Womb of the Wolf is believed by the Sons to be the site where Ulric's first mortal child was born. The mother, Griseldis, was the daughter of the Teutogen chief, and fled into the tunnels of the Ulricsberg when her father discovered her pregnancy. There, the Sons believe, she was brought meat by Ulric's wolves, and drank water from a holy spring.

There is still a spring there today, and the site where the birth supposedly happened is lined with wolf skins. At any one time there are normally 10 Sons of Ulric in the temple, although many scores may worship there at times of religious importance. Female Sons of Ulric often sleep in the temple in the hope that Ulric will chose one of them as his next bride.

Sites of Verena

Holy places of Verena tend to be strongly associated with one of her two aspects: learning and justice. A few combine them, such as the School of Sage Marius in Wurtbad, a temple commemorating a notable scholar of the law and crusader for justice, active about 500 years ago.

Holy sites of learning tend to be on the sites of libraries or schools that were destroyed and rebuilt. The temple in Nuln is one such, where legend claims that all schools were destroyed upon the founding day of the Empire, then rebuilt so that the taint of old, wrong-headed days would not mar the birth of a new way of life. A number of Verenan priests have expressed interest in creating holy sites in Wolfenburg by rebuilding the libraries and schools there. They claim to not be at all motivated by the immortal fame of those who founded other holy places to the Goddess.

Holy sites concerned with justice, on the other hand, tend to be places where justice was very conspicuously done. None of the Empire's regular law courts qualify, so these sites are more likely to be in rural areas. The Old Courts in Streissen are an exception; Friedrich the Just was the judge there for 60 years in the 1900s, and it is said that he never convicted the innocent or acquitted the guilty. It is also said that he curses anyone who does so in his courts, and after a series of unexplained deaths and accidents among the judiciary, the courts of Streissen were moved to the New Courts in 2014. The Old Courts are now a Verenan temple.

Visiting the Dead

Whilst there is a Garden of Morr in every settlement of any size in the Empire, there are no greater holy sites sacred to the God of Death, and thus no destinations for pilgrimage in his name. Even the Theatre of Ravens in Luccini, the holiest site of the cult, is not considered a fit place for a pilgrimage.

The priests of the cult have an explanation for this. They say that Morr is the God of the Dead, and that, in that capacity, none of the living are his concern. One of the living making a pilgrimage in the name of Morr would be like worshipping Manann by embarking on a mountaineering expedition. In his capacity as God of Dreams, he can only be venerated by those journeys undertaken in sleep, and as God of the Dead, the living are but those who have not yet awakened to his glory.

Ordinary folk think of themselves as giving worship to Morr any time they attend a funeral, and a long journey to help put a friend or family member to rest is sometimes called a "pilgrimage to Morr." Some Old Worlders juxtapose the role of active pilgrim, granting it to the deceased. They refer to a body's travels from its place of death to a Garden of Morr as a pilgrimage, such as those carried by the black funerary barques that carry departed to their family. The bodies of important (or infamous) people might be sent on pilgrimage around a province—in the case of notorious criminals, this is to prove their deaths, whereas for important leaders like Elector Counts or bishops, it allows the common folk a chance to pay their respects. Rarely, such elaborate measures are also taken to confuse the spirit of the dead, so that it doesn't haunt the family or other innocents—this is sometimes performed in the case of nobles who have died suspiciously. These many types of pilgrimages can lead to all sorts of confusion, especially when the recently departed is not widely known to be dead.

"Sir, can you tell me where Herr Reinholt is?"

"Alas, yev jes missed 'im guv'nuh. He'z onner Morr pilgrimage to Altdorf."

"Damn. Did he say how long he'd be gone?"

"A long time, iz me guess!"

The more mystically inclined say that the whole of life is a pilgrimage to the holy places of Morr, and that one's reception at those places depends on how one conducts oneself on the pilgrimage. However, since the holy places of Morr are in the realm of the dead, few are in a hurry to complete the journey.

Those with a morbid sense of humour point out that no one comes back alive from a pilgrimage to Morr, which points at the most likely reason for the God's paucity of holy sites. Most do everything they can to avoid thinking of, or drawing the attention of, the God of the Dead. Why seek him out when he all too often is on his way to meet you?

Ildebrand's Field

Ildebrand was a witch hunter, renowned and feared for executing anyone accused of consorting with the Ruinous Powers, proof or no proof. His trials were mockeries of justice. He came to Silberwurt in the Reikland, set up his court, and was promptly gifted with a flurry of accusations by the local villagers, who were all too eager to proclaim that the least popular and least powerful among them consorted with the Dark Gods.

The first accused was Bertha, an old woman who lived alone in a hovel at the edge of the village. Ildebrand thundered accusations at her, and her responses became incoherent from fear. He then rose in his chair to pronounce his verdict.

"You're just a silly old woman, not a heretic," he said, to the surprise of all present, including himself. "Step down."

He proceeded to acquit all the accused, and then bring cases against the accusers, one of whom was revealed to be a secret worshipper of Khaine, damned by items found hidden in his home. Ildebrand then accused himself of perverting justice, and hanged himself from a tree.

The temple of Verena on the site is built around the field and tree of the story, but some Witch Hunters still insist that the whole situation was the work of the Ruinous Powers.

Other Organised Cults

Other cults have relatively few holy places within the Empire. As noted earlier, Ranald does not really have holy places at all, and Myrmidia and Shallya are based outside the Empire, so few holy sites have had the time to take root within its borders. Nevertheless, each of these cults has a few significant locations.

Myrmidia

Myrmidia's influence is largely confined to the southern provinces of the Empire. The temple in Nuln is the most important structure, but the most significant holy site is a glade in the Reikwald, south of Altdorf and west of Grunburg. It marks the spot where Captain Myrtle killed the last of a band of Beastmen. She was alone when she saw the band of 200, but that did not dissuade her. She harried, hunted, and tricked the group into trap after trap to whittle down their numbers, before finally confronting and killing the survivors.

The cult has resisted building a temple here, but is investigating sites in the north where the Goddess is reputed to have intervened in the Storm of Chaos. They hope to establish temples and pilgrimage sites there that will extend their influence.

Shallya

While the cult of Shallya is granted much respect, its only truly holy place in the Empire is the Convent of the Stilled Heart, found in the Haunted Hills in Sylvania. The stories say that any Undead approaching the convent are instantly destroyed, and that the waters from the convent's spring can cure Undeath, returning the victim to genuine life. It also has a reputation for healing conditions that seem terminal.

Temples of the Other Gods

Although nowhere near as popular or pervasive as the nine main Gods, most of the other deities described in this work have temples, or at least shrines, named in their honour. Depending on the deity in question, these temples can be grandiose and out in the open, or hidden away from view so as to avoid harassment or prosecution by the authorities. These more secretive cults prefer shrines to temples, as they can more easily be broken down and moved if the need arises.

Some of the most notable temples of these minor gods include the Temple of Bögenauer in Bögenhafen, the Temple of Handrich in Altdorf, and the Temple of Clio in Carroburg. These temples are large, well-appointed, and increasingly popular with the local citizens (although Clio is only truly beloved by scholars and other "people of the quill"). The continuing growth of the Cult of Handrich's popularity in Altdorf and the size of the Temple there is a good indication that the cult may eventually be sanctioned as a major God.

Handrich's temple is the exception to the rule, however. Most temples to Gods of similar status are small and poor, with any donations desperately needed for the upkeep of the building and premises. If the God in question has some relation to one of the main Gods, then local Temples may receive assistance or charity from their wealthier peers.

Temples to the Ruinous Powers in the Empire are extremely rare, and are always kept well hidden or are located in wild, lawless areas where the worshippers can freely come and go. Those few that are located are purged immediately by the authorities or by angry mobs armed with spears, fire, and righteous fury. These temples are horrible affairs, decorated with blasphemous carvings, skulls of sacrificed victims, and other profane objects and art.

Temple of Clio the Scrivener

The Temple of Clio the Scrivener is surprisingly large and ornate for that of a minor deity. This is mainly because of the large fees (or "donations") that the cultists require in exchange for their services as premier scribes, illuminators, and documenters for the powerful and wealthy. The temple also receives regular and sizable contributions from patron temples of Verena.

Located in the heart of Carroburg, the temple is a simple square with an enormous front gate. The walls are adorned with gorgeous carvings, frescoes, and mosaics depicting Clio, Verena, and dedicated cultists hard at work. The temple's library is impressive and filled with original works on philosophy, history, and theology, along with copies of other famous tomes penned by the temple's professional scribes.

In addition to the usual contingent of servants, caretakers, and other laymen, the temple of Clio is home to several dozen scribes, illuminators, and other professional artists who spend their days hunched over their desks in the well-lit "scribing room" that dominates the centre of the building. Cultists offer their services to anyone who needs them, and have established a sliding scale to accommodate those who cannot afford to pay much, such as commoners needing legal documents filled out. For the wealthy, however, the temple not only performs their duties with great speed and care, but also produces amazing and luscious pictures and script—even mundane papers are considered works of art. The Temple charges accordingly, and something like a large, illuminated tome can easily run into the hundreds of *gc*. Other cults sometimes have their precious works sent to Carroburg to have the Temple of Clio copy these scrolls and tomes for safekeeping and archiving.

The temple bustles with activity throughout the day, but closes for an hour in the morning so the cultists can engage in vigorous exercise in the courtyard directly in front of the building. Newcomers to the city are often surprised to see these robed priests march orderly out into the courtyard, then begin a regimen of callisthenics and stretches while the Master of the Temple keeps the time in a slow, sing-song like prayer.

The High Temple of Haendryk in Marienburg

Marienburg is a city that derives its prosperity from the sea and from trade, so Haendryk rivals Manann in importance here, and certainly overshadows all other Gods but him. Haendryk's temple in this port is supported by the wealthiest members of Marienburg society.

In keeping with the philosophy of its God, the temple does not accept gifts, nor does it offer charity. Instead, the priests of the temple have "shops" within the temple, where they haggle with worshippers over payment for their services or over the price of holy symbols and votive plaques.

The temple also invests and loans out its wealth at reasonable rates, and some priests specialise as loan officers. Even adventurers can borrow money here, receiving advances in exchange for a portion of the returns on their next venture. Subsidising an expedition in this way also provides the added benefit of Haendryk's blessing upon the trip; intending to cheat the God, however, is said to lead to the unavoidable failure of the venture in question. Priests are paid by commission on the money they bring in for the God, and are promoted in the hierarchy based on the results. Witch hunters often denounce the temple for selling membership in its holy orders. Marienburgers find this baffling; how else would the cult of Haendryk work?

Minor Cults

Usually, even those minor cults with a holy place or two within the Empire are unknown to any but those who live near it. A handful of them have achieved more fame.

One such is the Throat of Tides, holy to Manas and found on the coast of Nordland. It is a narrow gorge formed by the emptying of a small river into the sea. Even on a normal day, the water level changes by as much as 30 feet between the tides. On days of particularly strong tides, the water level of the gorge can vary by as much as 100 feet. A long, vertical metal pole is fixed to the wall of the cliff, running up and down its entire height. Devout followers who wish to worship moor their boats with loose loops to this pole, then pray throughout the day, letting the tides move them up and down. Small shrines to Manas stand at both the top and bottom of the pole.

Wolfheim, on the other hand, is a small valley in the Middle Mountains sacred to Lupos the Wolf. It is said that there is always at least one wolf present there, and that it is impossible to kill a wolf within the valley, no matter how badly you wound it. Human worshippers who enter the area become prey for the beasts, so they leave offerings at the valley's edge.

— Pilgrimages —

Nearly all devout cultists participate in at least one pilgrimage in their lifetimes, as it is considered the most holy of endeavours. However, what constitutes a pilgrimage varies by cult. Some consider a circuit between local shrines to be a pilgrimage, whilst others demand that cultists travel far from their homes to be considered pilgrims. Given the extremely dangerous nature of travel within the Empire, undertaking these long pilgrimages is considered a deeply pious act; it takes significant faith to make a journey known to be subject to the perils of bandits, Beastmen, and the vagaries of the weather, just to name a few.

Those brave enough or foolish enough to participate in a pilgrimage are considered very holy in the eyes of most citizens and especially among their fellow cultists. It is considered both bad form and terribly unlucky to harass a person on a pilgrimage—bandits and brigands, obviously, overlook this bit of common courtesy. Those pilgrims who succumb to the dangers they face en route are consoled in their final moments by the knowledge that dying while on pilgrimage is considered the ultimate act of devotion.

Famous Pilgrimages

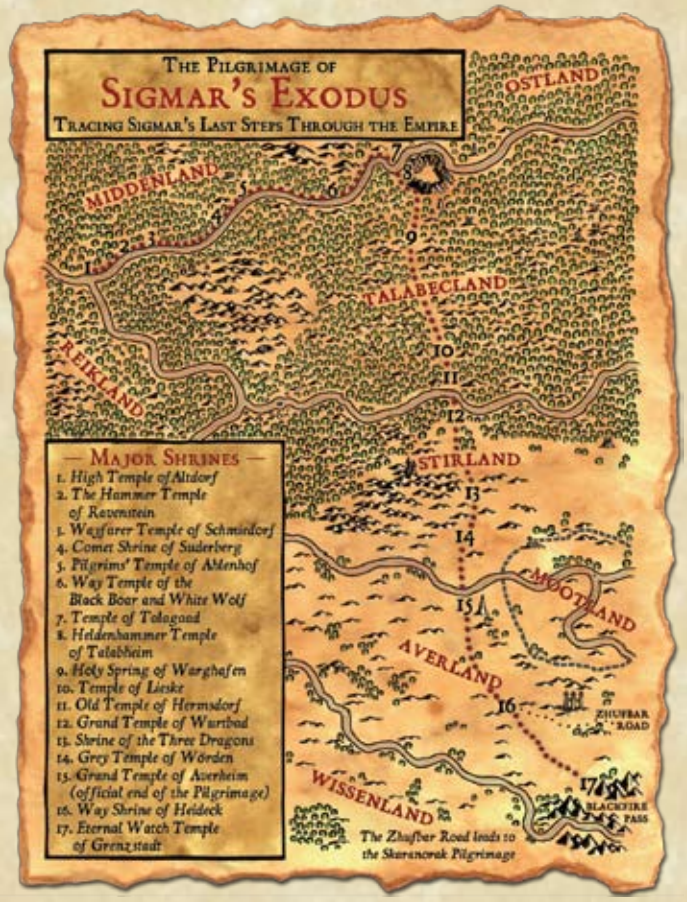
There are no shortage of pilgrimages for the faithful to join in the Empire. Described here are some of the most popular or unique pilgrimages.

Sigmar's Exodus

Easily the most popular and travelled pilgrimage, Sigmar's Exodus follows the alleged route that Sigmar Heldenhammer took when he left the Empire. The pilgrimage begins in Altdorf, follows the River Talabec upstream to Talabheim, and then moves the entire length of the Old Dwarf Road, through Averheim and beyond. Most consider Averheim the official "end" of the pilgrimage, although zealots are known to take the journey as far as the foothills of the Black Fire Pass. In good weather, and if nothing befalls the pilgrim, the entire journey takes two months to accomplish. Pilgrims stop at numerous shrines built along the path, which showcase important aspects and notable events in Sigmar's life.

The Pilgrimage of the Soldier

This pilgrimage is undertaken by ex-soldiers, who do so to cleanse their mind, body, and soul of bloodguilt from the atrocities they committed on the battlefield. Pilgrims undertake this journey in the name of Myrmidia, and travel to either Magritta in Estalia or Remas in Tilea, both of which claim to be the founding cities of that goddess's cult. These soldier-pilgrims believe that each step closer to these cities removes a tiny bit of the weight that hangs on their shoulders—only Myrmidia understands the pain each soldier carries in his heart. Most pilgrims make the journey alone,



although some band together in small groups, especially after a particularly harrowing campaign. Pilgrims wear white robes stained with their own blood. Brigands avoid these pilgrims, knowing that they risk dealing with a battle-hardened ex-soldier instead of a mere dirt farmer.

Journey to the Sea

This pilgrimage is dedicated to Manann, and is often the last act of an aging seaman or other crusty dog that feels his time is almost done. The pilgrimage begins at the Temple of Manann in Marienburg and follows the River Reik through Altdorf, then onto the River Stir, ending at Krugenheim. During this journey the cultist contemplates how the sea, and thus Manann, pulls farther and farther away. This distance is the symbol for death. Once the pilgrim reaches the Temple of Manann outside the city of Krugenheim, he leaves behind any worldly possessions that are connected to a life at sea. The pilgrim then returns following the same route—each step towards the sea bringing him closer to Manann and his final reward. Pilgrims wear blue robes adorned with Manann's wave pattern symbol while on this journey. The particularly zealous row themselves, and drag small boat anchors or old oars behind them as they make their way to Krugenheim, to increase the time and difficulty of the trip. After such a difficult journey, many pilgrims die on the spot once they return to the temple in Marienburg, their pilgrimage complete.

Pilgrimage of the Stones

This pilgrimage is done in the name of Taal. It is one of the shortest in the Empire in terms of distance, but is among the most difficult. The pilgrim must journey through the wilderness to visit a series of 12 shrines located in the heart of Talabecland. Pilgrims are forbidden from using roads or taking boats—the journey must be done on foot, with the pilgrim using his skills in navigation and survival to make his way. Once the pilgrim visits the 12th shrine, he sacrifices a deer, stag, or wild boar that he hunted along the way, and bathes in the blood of the animal. Most who make this pilgrimage are so changed that they can never again set foot within a house or other trapping of civilisation; but then, perhaps only those who wish for that sort of life undertake the pilgrimage in the first place.

Pilgrimages and Merchants

Pilgrimages are big business. When pilgrims pass through a town or village en route to their destination, they require places to sleep, food, new shoes, and dozens of other goods and services. On long-established routes, businesses often exist to cater solely to the needs of pilgrims. Although Empire law dictates that it is illegal to take advantage of anyone on a pilgrimage, loopholes and exceptions allow the clever and the greedy to skirt these rules. As a result, although pilgrims can find almost anything they need on their journey, those who purchase overmuch along the route will soon be penniless, begging their way to their destination.

As a general rule, the prices of goods and services for pilgrims making their way on well-established routes face a 10% mark up, unless the business owner belongs to the same cult as the pilgrim. This price can be brought down to the normal price with a Routine (+10%) Haggle Test. Of course, smarter business owners know never to raise the price in the first place when a noble or other official is within earshot. Savvy pilgrims exploit this fact and try to start negotiations while within the presence of an authority figure.

There is also a booming market in maps of popular pilgrimage routes, and every town along the way has hawkers who offer new versions that take into account washed out bridges, landslides, or other hazards. Unscrupulous map merchants sometimes sell maps that lead pilgrims off the main roads and into ambushes, and then claim a portion of the money that the bandits take from them.

Mindset of a Pilgrim

What inspires a person to leave everything behind and travel to some distant land? Several possibilities exist. Some might pick up

The Pilgrimage of Fingers

"I 'eard Goldkopf got 'is fifth cross! I don't believes it! They says you 'ave to do the von Walfen job for that uhn, and theres no way Goldkopf got in there! 'Ave you seen the size of 'is ... walls?"

—Hugi the Hand, Altdorfer Thief

Unlike members of other major cults, devotees of Ranald have no distant shrine to shuffle towards, no far-off oracle of obscure knowledge, no foreign temple of majestic importance. Instead, Ranald's priests urge his cultists to pursue a very different journey: The Pilgrimage of Fingers.

Exactly what this entails varies from city to city, even from priest to priest. The only thing they all share is that eight tasks, one for each finger, must be accomplished to reach the end of the pilgrimage. As each increasingly difficult task is completed, the Pilgrim is allowed to tattoo a cross somewhere on one of his fingers. Few, it is said, ever secure more than four crosses.

As Ranald is the patron of many different aspects of Empire life, including gambling, thieving, business, and more, the path each pilgrim walks may be very different. However, one thing all pilgrims can be sure of: at one point, they will have to gather a great deal of material goods, and fast.

and leave out of some effort to honour a God, or more commonly, to placate a God they believe they have offended. Such ventures are triggered because something dreadful has happened—crops failed, a business turned sour, a family member developed an unsightly mutation, and so on. By going on the pilgrimage, the cultist hopes to impress the God in question and receive a favour of some sort, such as being freed of a disease, causing people to forget the mutation in the family, an upswing in business, and the like. The purpose is rarely for personal growth (though a night in some pilgrim stopovers might cause growths); rather, the pilgrimage is seen as a good way to cosy up to a God in the hopes of encouraging him to see the mortal in a better light.

Not all pilgrims are so spiritual in their belief, however. More than a few see a pilgrimage as a way to escape the numbing boredom of their villages or to escape from debt, servitude, or enemies back home. In many provinces, a person who undertakes a substantial pilgrimage (and there is considerable debate on what exactly qualifies as "substantial") has their debts and taxes waived during their absence. As a result, it's not uncommon to find debtors, conmen, and thieves "finding their faith" and hitting the road on a pilgrimage to postpone owning up to their debts.

While on the road, a pilgrim is supposed to spend his time either in silent contemplation of his deity, speaking sacred mantras, or debating the philosophy of the cult with fellow travellers. Most pilgrims travel in groups so as to share food and camaraderie, as well as for mutual protection from the inevitable bands of brigands, Goblins, or worse horrors that might find the solitary traveller to be easy prey. Pilgrims are expected to take hardships like these in stride, each one a test of their faith and strength of character.

— The Road to Couronne —

The pilgrimage to the temple of Shallya at Couronne is one of the most popular pilgrimage routes in the Old World. Most people who travel it are sick or crippled, hoping to be healed by the mercy of Shallya when they reach their destination. The fact that people start out sick contributes to the fact that a very high proportion of the pilgrims die along the way.

This pilgrimage officially starts from the temple of Shallya in Altdorf. A few pilgrims join the route later, but unless they live along the route, most people prefer to go to Altdorf and start with everyone else. In part, this is due to the belief that Shallya is more impressed by people who make the whole pilgrimage. The main motivation, however, is that the temple in Altdorf arranges for groups of pilgrims to travel together, and encourages warriors with reason to be grateful to join them. Fairly solid rumours suggest that the temple occasionally pays for such guards if they cannot find those willing to go out of charity.

The priestesses in Altdorf record the names of everyone leaving on pilgrimage, and pray for them every day until they return to the temple, or until two years have passed. About a third of the pilgrims, particularly those from distant parts of the Empire, give up once they reach Altdorf, and content themselves with the blessing of the priestesses there.

Most of the pilgrims walk because they cannot afford any other transport. Some have to be carried by friends, or dragged in handcarts, because they cannot move under their own power. A tiny proportion have enough money to live well during the journey; others are reduced to begging, most of them before they get out of the Empire. Some of the beggars are arrested as vagrants, others turn to thievery and are caught, while some, weakened by lack of food and drink, simply die of their illnesses. Half a dozen temples along the route from Altdorf to Axe Bite Pass are specifically dedicated to the needs of the pilgrims. Three are temples of Shallya, while the other three are temples of Morr. Superstition holds that one is most likely to die when en route to one of the Morrian shrines.

Shallyan pilgrims do not have to pay tolls in Axe Bite Pass as long as they are carrying no valuables. Smugglers try to take advantage of this by dressing up as pilgrims to sneak heavily taxed items through, so the toll keepers have been forced to search those claiming to have nothing. Pilgrims with enough money for the journey can generally afford to pay the tolls, as well.

The inns are a different matter. One, The Well of Mercy, two days' walk from the Empire's border, offers free overnight accommodation (albeit in a rough shed) to genuine pilgrims. The shed is, however, within the walls that protect the inn, and the innkeeper is regarded as a model of charity and piety. The other

inns demand that pilgrims pay, just like anyone else. Rich pilgrims *occasionally* pay for their whole party, but most groups are forced to camp just outside the inn's walls.

Some sections have no inns at all. The stretch known as Ludwig's Run is too long for any but the healthiest walkers or those with mounts to manage in a single day, so many are forced to camp in the middle of the mountain pass. Some even survive the night.

The temple of Shallya in Inner Montfort has extensive accommodation for pilgrims, and, thanks to generous donations from people healed by Dhuoda of the White Hands, a miracle-working priest of the last generation, it also provides six meals to every pilgrim. This temple is also the place where citizens of the Empire change from the white robes representative of Shallya in most places to the yellow robes worn by her peasant followers in Couronne. The priestesses tell them that this is both a legal requirement and a commandment of the Goddess.

Pilgrims must pay the toll at the gate in Montfort. Those who have made it this far are likely resourceful enough to find some way to get the money, perhaps even legally. The priestesses their flock to pay for pilgrims' tolls as a form of charity, but a few notable abuses of this system by merchants and couriers have made most residents unwilling to give their money to strangers.

The route then runs north, through the foothills of the mountains. The going is difficult, and almost impassable for carts, but hostels dedicated to Shallya are located every day's travel along the way. These all have wells and provide free lodging for pilgrims. Sir Chroderis, a Knight of the Grail, is known to ride along the route defending the pilgrims. These hostels and Sir Chroderis's protection are the reason the route runs inside Bretonnia rather than going up through the Wasteland; very few pilgrims are lost between Montfort and the Pale Sisters. Only one in twenty who takes the other route emerges from the Wasteland.

The hostels continue through the Pale Sisters, as far as the temple itself. The kings of Bretonnia have traditionally given some support to these hostels, and King Louen Leoncoeur does so more enthusiastically than most. However, moves to establish them within Axe Bite Pass or the Empire have all failed due to raids by Orcs and bandits. No one has yet been able to prove that the innkeepers on the route are responsible, but there are rumours of just such a conspiracy.

Although the hostels make the Bretonnian leg of the route relatively easy, still only one pilgrim in ten actually reaches Couronne alive. Pilgrims of the Empire who make it are prayed for by the High Priestess in person, and a few even receive miraculous cures.

The pilgrims must then return home. More than half of those pilgrims who return from Couronne come back healed, a fact publicised by the cult, and which encourages others to attempt the journey. A less well-known fact is that fewer than one in a hundred return at all.

Pilgrim (Basic, Special Requirement)

The Shrine of Sire Severich of Verena. The Sigmarite Temple of the Holy Three. The Rise of Taal's Deep. Distant Heiligerburg, the Holy Mount of Shallya. Paths to all these places, and many more, are clogged with the trudging feet of the faithful. No matter how expensive, laborious, or incredibly dangerous the journeys may be, folk from all walks of life can be found forging forward to these holy sites, each with his own reasons for facing the horror of Old World travel. The most popular pilgrimages attract many thousands of penitents every year, and the routes are lined with souvenir sellers, way shrines, elaborate temples, heavy tolls, and desperate bandits keen to make an easy profit from the poorly defended. The few pilgrims who survive the ordeals can forever after wear the unique symbol of their particular pilgrimage, typically a brooch or necklace with a specific design alluding to the patron God of the worship and the journey's destination.

Special Requirement: The character must be on a pilgrimage to enter this career.

— Pilgrim Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%	+10%	+10%	+10%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

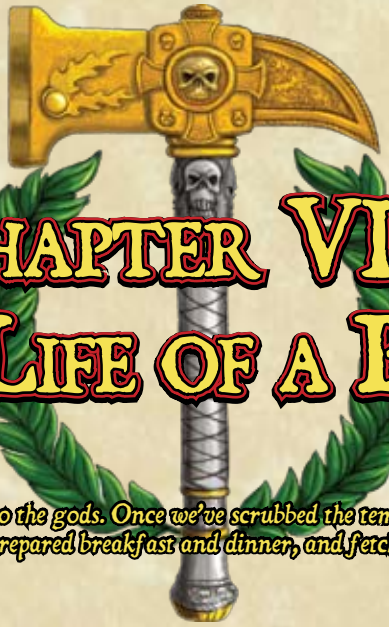
Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) *or* Consume Alcohol, Animal Care, Common Knowledge (any one—as dictated by the route of the pilgrimage), Haggle, Gossip *or* Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Performer (Storyteller), Speak Language (any one—as dictated by the route of the pilgrimage)

Talents: Seasoned Traveller, Very Resilient

Trappings: Religious Symbol

Career Entries: Any

Career Exits: Demagogue, Friar, Initiate, Outlaw, Vagabond, Zealot



Chapter VIII: The Life of a Priest

"Oh sure, we spend our entire days praying to the gods. Once we've scrubbed the temple steps, swept the aisle, repaired the ceremonial robes, polished the altar brasses, prepared breakfast and dinner, and fetched supplies from town. Then, and only then, do we pray."

—Detlef Siegerheim, Morrian Initiate

Priests are viewed with a mixture of reverence, envy, and pity by most Old Worlders. Reverence because they are intermediaries with the Gods themselves; envy because they are well looked after by the temple and live in greater comfort than most of their congregation; and pity because their lives are not entirely their own, their life governed by far tighter strictures than even the most pious of all worshippers would volunteer to live to.

> *"One cannot do Gods' work, until man's work is complete."*
>
> —Typical Admonishment

The life of a priest is not all worship, however. Every waking minute cannot be spent in prayer, and every day is not necessarily spent furthering the aims of their faith. So what is it that a priest does all day, and why would anybody want to become one?

— To Be a Priest —

It is a strange child who tells his mother that he wants to be a priest when he grows up. Some do feel the draw of serving a higher power early in life, but only the most devout of men and women intend to commit their existences to the priesthood. Yet, many find their way into an order as an escape from some other fate, or because they are told they must, or after an all-too-common terrible event changes their perceptions of the world. Regardless of how they come to the path, the Old World is not short of these men and women of the cloth.

By and large, the people of the Empire respect all of the Gods. Most Old Worlders venerate all of them at times, praying to a particular God based on the circumstances at hand. A rare few devote themselves to one God, placing one deity above the rest in their everyday lives (though not entirely ignoring the other Gods; only the foolish would do so). It is among these few who develop an affinity for one deity over the others that priests are made.

> *"There's not much difference, really. I've swapped my armour for my robes, and the battlefield for the temple. Which I guess makes the congregation the horde of Goblins. Sounds about right, looking at them."*
>
> —Fullsworth Heinmann

Preaching to the Converted

It is a given fact most people who become priests are already deeply religious—it is something of a prerequisite for the job, after all. Thus, many priests were involved with the cult before they became a priest, working in a career linked to the cult or in a temple.

The most devout of worshippers often become laymen and get involved in the running of the temple, from where it is a simple step up to becoming an initiate. Templars are pious and serious, but when the martial life becomes too much for them, or when they crave something more from their faith, many choose to remain in the cult and become priests. Similarly, many fanatical Witch Hunters choose to become priests, either as an alternative means of serving their god or to better aid them in rooting out Chaos.

Existing cultists are prime candidates for recruitment into the priesthood, and their

initiation is usually expedited due to their already proven devotion and the trust placed in them by the cult. Chapter masters, stewards and priests are tasked with looking out for those pious individuals with the potential to be initiated into the faith and passing the names of suitable candidates to superiors. Priestly recruiters then approach the candidate, sitting him down and asking him if he had ever considered becoming a priest.

Gifts to the Gods

"The eldest son goes to war; the youngest son goes to temple."

—Common saying and tradition

Many priests had little choice but to enter priesthood, for they have been in the temple since childhood. Some children are gifted to a temple or adopted by a cult, whilst others are merely sent there for schooling.

The more charitable temples of the Empire—especially those of Shallya and Sigmar—run orphanages to take in and care for the countless orphans of plagues and war. Some of the more martial cults also operate orphanages, taking in the sons and daughters of its knights and priests killed in battle. Orphanages are prime recruiting grounds for the priesthood—regardless of how much the priests may protest that their existence is purely for charitable reasons. Orphans spend most of their lives around priests, their education heavily steeped in scripture and their upbringing governed by its teachings. It is only understandable that many orphans decide—or have little choice—to become initiates. It's either that, or rebel against religion altogether.

In many parts of the Empire, the practise of Gifting is common, whereby a family gives thanks to a God in the only way it can—by offering one of its children. In olden days this was done by offering a child as a blood sacrifice to a God, but now the child is sacrificed to the temple in a metaphorical sense, by being offered into the priesthood (although it is said that the older practise remains in more remote parts of the Empire). Children offered in this way become temple wards and, when old enough, initiates. They don't get a say in the matter—to reject this path would be to reject their faith—and the only way to avoid it is to run away.

A similar practise is observed by noble families and wealthy merchant families throughout the Empire, whereby the youngest son is sent to become a priest. The son rarely gets a say in the matter, and is given over to a temple to become an initiate once he becomes an adolescent.

Education is rare in the Old World, reserved for the wealthy or the especially gifted. Only the middle and upper classes can afford to spare their children for schooling or to hire a private tutor. Poorer families rarely have the option to send their children to school, except where temple schools are available. Most such schools are run by Verenans and Sigmarites, and offer schooling to pupils from poor backgrounds, with the eventual aim of preparing them to join a seminary and become an initiate. Becoming a priest is not compulsory to all those who attend, although many temple students do go on to become initiates.

A Change of Faith

"I lay there thunkin' I was gonna die, lay there full o' arrers, surrounded by me comrades, deed ever one of 'um. Then I saw a dove, sittin' on a wrecked cannon, an' I got the message. I put me sword down and have not picked it up since."

—Guydar Fenk

Most priests enter the faith when they are young, either as children or young adults, pledging their lives to the priesthood whilst they still have an entire life ahead of them. But there are some priests that come to the priesthood, and indeed religion, later in life. The sacrifice made by such priests is no less than any other; they may not have pledged their entire lives to their faith, but they likely have more trappings and ties to leave behind from their old lives.

Some people experience a sudden change of faith, suddenly becoming fiercely devout. Often such a change of faith follows another life-changing event, for which the worshipper wishes to thank the gods and serve in the cult; his family might be saved from a particularly nasty plague, or his life might be spared during a bloody battle, and the only way he knows to give thanks is to become a priest.

Others might experience a slower conversion, becoming gradually drawn into a cult, starting as a worshipper, growing more and more pious and interested, until he reaches the limit of understanding of the mysteries that can be gained as either a worshipper or a lay member.

Such later converts abandon all trappings of their former lives, sacrificing friendships, families, and careers to serve the Gods, whereas others might retain a semblance of their lives, continuing much as they did before but with a radically different vocation. This very much depends on the cult in question.

Priests are always on the look out for the newly converted, for they are ripe for recruitment into the priesthood, full of zeal and enthusiasm. Even those who have not immediately expressed their devotion may be approached and gently nudged that an excellent way to give thanks for their miracle might be to become a priest, or to offer up a child to the priesthood.

Serve Thyself Above All Others

"I'd sooner risk my soul with Verena than my neck with the hangman."

—Günter Hagens, Wanted Criminal

Not all who enter the priesthood do so out of devotion. Religion is an excellent place to hide, for nobody suspects a priest of a crime (excepting a priest of Ranald, of course). Joining a temple offers many people a chance to make a new start or to hide from past crimes, although the punishment is that much worse if their lack of faith is found out or their past catches up with them.

Initiation is no easy feat, but those who are desperate enough to flee from their pasts will find a way through it. Criminals on the run might enter a temple to hide from the authorities. Victims or witnesses to crimes who find their lives in danger might turn to the

Temple Wards

The temples also may serve as orphanages for the unwanted and lost children of the Old World. Generally, these are children simply left on the doorstep by poor or ashamed mothers. A rare few are publicly given to the cult, along with great fanfare and rich gifts. These children are expected to become leaders of the cult, allies for the noble or merchant family that gave them up. Finally, a few are the unwanted, the corrupt, and the reviled. Children born with mutations of the flesh are sometimes left with temples by parents who have not the heart to kill their own children.

A child raised by a temple is steeped in the rituals and traditions of the cult. Everything she does, all of her experiences, centre on the observances of the God. She rarely speaks to anyone who is not, at the very least, a devout lay follower, and this gives her a somewhat distorted view of the world; whilst most know, intellectually, that there are followers of other Gods, they cannot really believe it.

Temple wards are particularly prone to either end of the spectrum of fanaticism or heresy. Fanaticism arises from the belief the God is the only thing that matters, while heresy comes from a confidence in one's own knowledge of the God's will and plans. A few do rise to high positions in their cults, as their loyalty is beyond question.

There are real problems if a temple ward feels an inclination to a different God. Most do not; faith in the temple's God is never questioned around them, so they simply follow along. A few, however, hear of other deities from casual worshippers, and become curious. A ward of Ulric showing an interest in Shallya, or vice versa, is in for a very uncomfortable time as the priests beat the foolishness out of her.

That said, there is an odd relationship between the temples of Shallya and Ulric in this matter. Although the Shallyans have a reputation for taking all orphans, they prefer to raise girls, who could become priestesses or be married off. A significant number of Shallyan temples have agreements with the local temple of Ulric, turning boys over around the age of seven for training as warriors. Since these boys are used to the kindness of Shallyans, the initial experience of Ulrican training is a terrible shock, and many try to run away. Nearly all are caught, brought back, and punished. It is rumoured that someone who is caught five times, and survives the punishments, is destined for great things within the cult, as Ulric admires resolve, independence, and survival.

priesthood for shelter, with or without any previous knowledge of or devotion to the cult.

Others might not be on the run at all, but looking to use the priesthood for cover for illicit activities. A priest can go about most of her activities without arousing any suspicion, and members of certain cults, especially Morrians, are painstakingly avoided when carrying out religious duties, making such a role an ideal disguise for criminals seeking to avoid being noticed. Chaos cultists might seek to operate from within a temple to better cover their dark rites.

Some of these priests might be found out, at which time they are usually disrobed and thrown out of the cult—or punished far more harshly, depending on the cult and the nature of the crimes committed. Others might experience a change of faith during their time hiding as a priest, becoming genuinely pious. Others still might just disappear one day, fleeing the temple or meeting an unfortunate end when their pasts really do catch up with them.

Initiation

The path to becoming a priest is not an easy one, filled with back-breaking labour, intensive study, long hours of prayer, day in and day out. Not all who set out to become a priest make it. Initiation into the mysteries of a cult is not a right for all, but those who survive the harsh life of an initiate are well schooled to deal with the trials of serving a God.

Becoming an Initiate

"So you say Morr himself came to you in a dream and bade you to become a priest? Oh yes, I'm sure you're chosen, alright. Now go and sit down there with all the others. Morr's been very busy these past few nights."

—Werner, Priest of Morr

Initiates of Different Cloths

The process of initiation varies tremendously from cult to cult, from the military training of the cult of Ulric to the brutal regime prevalent throughout the cult of Sigmar. Most cults leave their individual temples to organise their own recruitment and initiation, although some cults have central seminary schools where initiates from all over the Old World are sent to be trained.

Despite their different practises, which are described in more detail in the next section, *Different Paths,* initiation in all cults have many things in common, and these features are covered here.

The previous section described the many ways and reasons that an Old Worlder could come to the priesthood. But setting out to become a priest and becoming a priest are two very different things indeed.

Once a potential initiate has been selected, the cultists responsible for training initiates, usually an elder priest or anointed priest known as the Master of Initiates, or a religious teacher known as a Catechist (see page 195), gather together and subject the initiate to a rigorous interview. By asking him questions about theology, his faith, and the reason he wants to become a priest, the Master of Initiates can get a better idea about the candidate's personality and gauge his potential to become an initiate.

Only very rarely, with young candidates at least, will they reject a candidate. Most temples pride themselves on their ability to mould and shape young initiates, regardless of personality. With older candidates there is more chance that they will be rejected, for adults are harder to manipulate and mould.

Once a candidate has been accepted, he is ritually initiated. The initiate is stripped of all trappings of his former self—this is usually symbolised by his head being shaved and his clothing burnt. He then dons the simple robes of an initiate and swears an oath of initiation, devoting his body, mind and soul to the service of his chosen God. He is now an initiate, and his journey to become a priest has begun in earnest.

Theological Academy

"I'm makin' a break for it after prayers tonight. I can't take any more of Brother Heinrich's beatings, let alone Father Buckold's sermons. I'm goin' to shin up the apple tree and over the wall, and hope I reach the road before the Brother lets the dogs out."

—Ansel's Last Words

In small or remote temples, initiates train in the temple, working and praying alongside other priests and receiving schooling only when a more experienced priest has the time to teach them. In urban centers, however, initiates are trained in a theological academy—a school for priests.

Most theological academies are a part of a temple, where they can vary greatly in size and form from a few desks in the corner of the hall to a dedicated wing complete with classrooms and dormitories. Although there might be priests whose only duty is to train initiates, most in these seminaries will be trained by the regular temple priests.

Other theological academies are entirely separate from the temple, complete with a dedicated teaching staff whose only role is to train the initiates. Some theological academies are adjoined to a nearby temple for the purposes of prayer, whilst others are remote places far from any other structure or organisation.

Initiates might not be the only students at a theological academy. Monks, friars, and templar squires all receive their training alongside initiates.

Some theological academies are single sex, whereas others train both male and female initiates—this varies greatly from organisation to organisation, even within the same cult.

The Drakwald College of the Holy Wolf

Poking through the shadowy canopy of the Drakwald Forest, far from the Middenheim to Altdorf road, is a steep rocky outcrop, topped with a lonely-looking Ulrican temple. This is a temple that serves no village, a temple with no worshippers or congregations,

Tests of Faith

Throughout an initiate's training, he will be subjected to many tests, both spiritual, mental, and physical. Catechists often test initiates on their studies, quizzing them about obscure scriptures or discussing their interpretation of stricture. Priests frequently subject initiates to tests of contrition, forcing them to endure great hardships and punishments as a test of their faith, or, as is more likely, for the sadistic amusement of the tester. Initiates of Manann are tied to the masts of ships during great storms, whilst Ulrican initiates are abandoned in the wilderness and expected to survive and find their way back to the seminary.

With initiates who show great potential, a high priest may subject them to tests to gauge their magical potential, seeing if they possess the gift of being able to channel divine power. A priest may consult with oracles, carry out auguries or pray to his God for guidance to see how best to deal with a promising Initiate.

Failing Initiation

Just as not every worshipper is capable of becoming an initiate, so too not every initiate is destined to become a priest. Life as an initiate is gruelling and can break even the strongest and most stubborn of men and women, and many who set out as an initiate do not last, fleeing the seminary for a simpler life away from the temple.

And of those who stick it out, not all are made of priestly material. Some lack the devoutness, the piety, the wisdom to make it as a priest, and so they are destined to remain as initiates forever. Some are content to remain initiates, although eventually a kindly priest is likely take them aside and recommend that they try their hand at another career, whereas others leave of their own accord, disheartened and disgruntled.

Some failed initiates take their disappointments out on the temple that spurned them, becoming agitators and demagogues, ranting and raving against religion. Others remain devout, seeking to express their faith in some other manner, perhaps as a knight or a witch Hunter, or taking it to the extreme and becoming a zealot or a flagellant.

yet it is one of the cult's most important temples. This temple is the Drakwald College of the Holy Wolf, a renowned Ulrican seminary, famous for the devotion and piety of the priests it produces, and infamous for the brutal regime to which its initiates are subjected.

Membership in the college is reserved for those initiates of Middenheim and Middenland who show great promise, and only a dozen are enrolled in any year. Initiates are subjected to a gruelling routine, replete with frequent beatings, arbitrary punishments, and lengthy rituals. Of those dozen who enroll, less than half will become priests, for many flee the harsh regime before ordainment—of course, because the college is deep in the dangerous Drakwald Forest, few who flee make it back to civilisation.

Many high priests of Ulric have come from the college, including Ar-Ulric Bronnstein, who famously died in battle fighting a Skaven raiding party on the steps of the high temple in Middenheim in 1116.

Life as an Initiate

"Idiots! Fools! Heathen! You call this polished? I want to see my face in this holy symbol! My face!"

—Brother Hans van der Leben

Life as an initiate is anything but fun. Initiates are the lowliest members of cult, ranking below even the laity, and they are reminded of this fact daily. For most initiates, life is little more than an endless parade of days spent doing the menial work required to maintain the table. Assigned tasks fitting for the lowliest of servants, they can be found in the scullery, laundry, or the jakes, scrubbing, cleaning, and lamenting their fates as servants not of the Gods, but of fickle priests with cruel streaks. All of this, or so say the ordained priests, is done to build character, to inculcate the discipline necessary for a life of service to the Gods. As a result, initiates spend large parts of their days fetching and carrying, cleaning and cooking, along with whatever other duties the priests feel need doing.

For the first year or more, initiates are treated dreadfully. The best treatment an initiate can hope for is being ignored or pitied. At worst, they are subjected to harsh beatings or constant verbal abuse, forced to undergo unforgiving and often humiliating acts of penance. Even comparatively merciful temples of Shallya are less than kind to their initiates, preparing them to endure hardships to better understand the nature of suffering and mercy.

At least once a week, and sometimes more, an initiate receives formal schooling from a priest or, if the temple has one, a Catechist. He is schooled in all aspects of theology, from the strictures and history of his own faith to the teachings of other faiths. If he cannot already read and write, he is taught to do so, both in his native tongue and in the Classical language that many scriptures are written in. He is trained to address crowds and to deliver sermons, although he is not allowed to preach until he has been ordained. In between chores, prayer and schooling, initiates are expected to study by themselves, contemplating the holy writings and engaging in theological debate.

The rest of this time is spent in prayer and reflection. Initiates may gather with others of the same rank, or may retreat to their cells, where they spend their time considering the nature of their God and how best to serve. Initiates are not permitted to preach or

conduct services, but often assist a priest in his ecclesiastical duties, helping him prepare for religious services and divine rituals.

After the first year or so, the temple releases the initiate into the world, to live, work, and learn among the masses. This period abroad varies by cult. For some, it is a period of wandering to look for the fingerprint of their God in the world. For others, it is a time of arduous labour, lending their sweat, blood, and tears to the betterment of their fellow Old Worlders. Initiates of Shallya hone their healing skills among the sick and injured, while those of Manann may serve on a ship, learning the fundamentals of sailing and witnessing, first hand, their God in nature.

This time away is often one of danger, since many initiates find themselves drawn into perilous adventures, risking life for a dash of excitement or out of some sense of duty. The cults do not frown on such action and secretly encourage it, for only by confronting the horrors of the Ruinous Powers, witnessing the destruction wrought by the Greenskins, and combating the wrongness of the Restless Dead can these initiates truly understand their place, and more importantly, their purpose in the world.

Ordainment

"I, Novitiate Joseph, swear on the holy hammer with all of you present as my witness, that I will uphold the laws and words of Sigmar Heldenhammer, until my final dying breath."

There is no set time for an initiate to remain an initiate before he can become a priest. Some spend only a few months before they become priests, others might take years, and others still might never advance in their orders. The length of time spent as an initiate varies tremendously, not only between cults but also between temples.

Only the temple can decide when an initiate is ready to become a priest. In some cults an initiate cannot become a priest until he has passed a test of faith or performed some other difficult task. In other cults the priests of the temple await a sign or omen that an initiate is ready to become a priest. Becoming a priest is neither a right nor a certainty, and it is a process never taken lightly.

The process by which an initiate becomes a priest is called ordination, or ordainment, and every cult has its own unique ceremonies and rituals for ordination. Ordination is usually overseen by a ranking priest in the cult, usually an Anointed or high priest of some importance, and the ceremony may see the ordination of hundreds of initiates, or just one.

The ordination ceremony is one of the most important rites in a priest's life, the point where he is accepted fully into a cult and permitted to preach and lead prayer. At the heart of ordination is the priest's swearing of his priestly vows, where he swears to serve his God and his cult, and to dedicate his entire life to the God's service. In doing so the priest forges an unbreakable bond between himself and his God, taking on the responsibility for spreading his worship, extending his power and upholding his beliefs, as well as becoming answerable to any crimes or sins against his faith, to a far greater extent than any worshipper could be held to in life.

A Day in the Life of a Priest

Good evening Professor. I'm sorry if I kept you waiting at all, and I know it's getting rather late. As you can no doubt see, life around here is somewhat hectic at the moment. Well, I say at the moment, but really it's always like this. So you want to know what a typical day of a priest is like? Well, I'm sorry, but I can't really help you there. You see, there is no such thing as a typical day for me, or indeed for any priest, no matter what their faith. What I can help you with is telling you what my day has been like, which will be as close as you can get to a 'typical day' for a priest of Sigmar.

My temple, as much as it can be said to belong to anyone but Sigmar, is neither especially large nor small, but as the only temple of Sigmar servicing the town attracts a sizeable congregation comprising of most of the population. I am a priest, and alongside four other brothers in the temple, we serve Sigmar under our high priest, His Excellence, Father Wilhelm. There are also nine novitiates, and we each are responsible in overseeing their training and initiation. We all live and sleep in the temple, and much of our day is spent in and around it.

My morning began like every other, with the sounding of the dawn bells. On most days of the week these are a hand bell sounded by one of the novitiates in the temple, rousing all the priests. On Festag the hand bell is replaced by the sounding of the temple bells, which ring out across town for an hour after dawn, calling the faithful to the weekly worship of the Festag Throng. Today is Marktag, so I was awoken by the sound of a hand bell.

After waking, washing, and dressing, we congregated before the altar where one of my fellow priests lead the entire temple in the dawn prayers. These are prayers said by all Sigmarite priests to welcome the morning, give thanks for a safe and restful night, and pray for a blessed day. We take it in turns to lead the prayers, and on some days one of the novitiates does the duty, whilst on Festag Father Wilhelm leads the prayer. We pray not only to Sigmar, but also to each and every Imperial God, lest we bring the wrath of the Gods down on all our heads.

Once the dawn prayers were completed, we gathered in the dining hall of the dormitory wing for a simple breakfast. In addition to the clergy, the temple also has a small number of laymen who assist in the day-to-day upkeep and running of it. Amongst these are two servants, Martha and Giorg, who prepare the meals alongside one of the novitiates. In more austere temples mealtimes might be silent—I hear Ulricans are beaten if they speak—but we chatter amongst ourselves over breakfast, discussing any manner of things. Mealtimes are the only times outside of worship when the entire temple is gathered together, and the priests and high priest use it as a means to address various temple issues.

I forget what we discussed over breakfast this morning, but I do remember Brother Robert chided the novitiates for not having doused all the candles from the night before properly, before coming to bed. They were lucky it was Brother Robert who chose to rebuke them—had it been Brother Leopold or Brother Markus, they would have been rebuked with a stick, not a tongue.

After breakfast the clergy disperses to carry out our morning chores. We each have our chores, which change from week to week, and depend on our seniority within the temple. As a priest of seven years, I am excused most of the more menial of chores, without being utterly drowned in the boring administrative chores of the senior priests. Instead I have a little of both types to do.

This morning I was carrying out repairs to the temple along with three of the novitiates. I was a builder and carpenter before I joined the cult, and my skills from my previous life are still valued within the temple. I like to think that I've always been fond of the hammer. Yesterday we were up on the roof mending and replacing broken tiles, which afforded a spectacular view across the town, but today was a little less exciting as we were repairing some of the older pews. I like to use my time with the novitiates to teach them a little of what I know, things that might not be otherwise taught to them over the course of their theological education, so I instructed them in the basic points of carpentry as we went along. Some of the other priests—I'm sure you can guess which ones by now—frown on such diversions, preferring to teach the novitiates solely the purity of prayer and worship, but His Excellency is rather more forward-thinking and open-minded, and permits us to teach the novitiates whatever we see fit.

By midmorning I left the novitiates to get on with the repairs by themselves, for I had some other duties to carry out before the midday prayer. Our duties are not merely constrained to those within the temple itself, and most of us will leave the temple at least once a day to carry out business around town, which usually involves dealing with matters of spiritual concern and superstitions among the flock.

One of the townsfolk came to me as I was carrying out my chores this morning to tell me that over night a strange wind had blown a tree down and crushed a house. The townsfolk were all riled up and blamed Old Mother Hurbert, a lonely old woman who lives on the edge of town. Of course she is harmless, but there are those folk—both in town and in the temple—who think she is a witch. I decided it best to hurry into town to deal with this before it became a crisis.

By the time I had got to the town a crowd was gathering at the house to survey the damage. Luckily no one was killed, but the mob still believed that it was the work of a witch! I tried to reason with them, but they were determined that blood be spilt.

I was determined not to let them—I knew it was not the will of Sigmar this day, and so with faith on my side stood in their way, striking my hammer against the ground and causing it to ring out with the sound of thunder. The crowd paused and I spoke to them, declaring that this was not the work of a witch, but of the Gods. I pointed to the house and asked if it had been blessed this season by a priest to protect from ill spirits. The owner looked sheepish and confessed that it had not, for he had not had the time or the money to make an appropriate offering. I let his admission speak for itself and offered to perform a blessing to protect from any more trees, in return for an appropriate donation to the temple coffers, of course. The crowd dispersed shortly afterwards—a blessing is much less interesting than a burning.

I returned to the temple a little later than I had intended, arriving back at the temple to hear the sounding of the noon bell—the passage of time in the temple, and indeed the town, is marked by the tolling of the temple bells. I hurried to the altar where the other priests were gathering for the saying of the midday prayer.

After midday prayer it was time for a change of duties. Just as in the morning, in the afternoon everybody has set chores to carry out, and this changes from day to day. The afternoon's chores are usually less hard work than those of the morning, especially during the heat of summer.

This afternoon I was tasked with teaching a small group of novitiates. Some temples have dedicated teachers called catechists, but we must make do with the combined wisdom and learning of the brothers. We take it in turns to instruct the novitiates, giving them lessons on all manner or religious topics, such as the history of the cult or the study of Sigmarite scriptures. Today we studied an excerpt from the Book of Sigmar, which is my favoured holy tome, despite what some of the other Brothers might believe about its authenticity. We read it together, the novitiates helping their fellow students who are not as good at reading yet, learning the passages and prayers by rote, as well as discussing the various interpretations and comments that have been added to the book since it was first written.

By the middle of the afternoon I set the novitiates to some private studying to keep them busy, for I had my own work to do once again. This time I have a sermon to prepare and write, to deliver at evening prayer. We each take it in turns to give sermons, whether at evening prayer or at the Festag Throng—although Father Wilhelm usually gives that sermon, the most important of the week. Researching and writing a sermon can take a lot of work, although we do reuse them throughout the year or exchange them with one another. The fussier amongst the priests insist that each day a new sermon is penned afresh, but we do not all have time to spend our days writing! I decide to draw on the lesson this afternoon and prepare a sermon about the lessons learnt in both the Book of Sigmar and in the altercation with the tree in town.

Evening prayer comes as the sun is beginning to set, and I was pleased to see that there were more than the normal attendees from town tonight. For many, the Festag Throng is the sole time during the week that they come to the temple, although our doors are always open. But in these troubled times, many of the townsfolk have turned to their faith to see them through, and our congregation numbers have swelled inexorably, even during the usually quiet services of midweek. No doubt the clear message delivered to the townsfolk earlier today about the wrath of the Gods stirred the piety in more than a few as well.

Prayers we said and then I delivered my sermon. After the sermon the sun set, as it always does, Sigmar be praised, so the final evening prayers were said and a blessing offered to all amongst the congregation who wish to step forward.

After evening prayer the brothers and initiates all had dinner together. The topic for discussion over dinner is usually far less gossipy in nature—as it often is at breakfast—and more spiritual, with debates raging about all manner of theological points. Tonight was doubly the case, for a noteworthy guest arrived earlier and is stayed for dinner and the night. He is a wandering priest called Father Bauer, and although I do not know him, Father Wilhelm's deferential demeanour implies that he is certainly well known. The rich, if practical, cut of his robes, coupled with a hammer that looks less ornate and more battle-worn, suggests that he is no mere friar but a warrior priest. The righteous fire that burned behind his eyes as he debated matters of faith after dinner confirm this to my mind, and I will try to remember to say a battle liturgy for him in the morning to keep him safe from Sigmar's enemies.

After dinner, the novitiates have their final chores to perform before bed, whilst the rest of us are blessed with time to ourselves. Father Wilhelm, Father Bauer, and Brother Leopold will likely continue to argue well into the night, but I excused myself. Normally I would retire to the library—little more than a small study lined with theological tomes, in truth—or to the room I share with Brother Gerant, where I engage in private studies until I fall asleep.

Of course tonight, professor, I am here talking with you, explaining how there is no such thing as a typical day for a priest of Sigmar. So now you have heard what today was like for me—I can guarantee that if you return tomorrow evening, I shall tell a different story entirely.

—Brother Bregant, Priest of Sigmar

The surrounding ordination ceremony is less important than these vows, and some temples do little more than witness the swearing of the vows. Other temples go in for a far grander ceremony, involving hours of prayer, magical blessings being said upon the newly ordained priests, and their ceremonial dressing in priestly robes.

Once ordained, a priest is appointed to a temple or shrine and expected to begin his holy duties immediately. Ordainment is not always the end of a priest's training, and many priests are supervised for months or even years after being ordained. Orders or sects may require priests to pass further tests or tasks, or undergo yet more training, before they can become full members of them. Regardless of his age or wisdom, a priest's training is never fully complete, his position never completely unanswerable to some higher power.

— A Priest for Every Occasion —

The following advanced careers expand the priestly options available to characters with a religious bent.

Abbot (Advanced)

The eldest and wisest of monks eventually rise to become the leaders of their monasteries. Worshippers sometimes seek these abbots out to gain their advice on matters of faith or to gain greater understanding about the religious world, while priests and initiates answer to them in all things. Most abbots choose to remain secluded in their monasteries until death takes them, but some venture out into the wider world once again. Few abbots deign to get involved in temple politics, preferring the solitude of their own world or their journeys to the machinations of their cult. For this reason an abbot is rarely the head of a mendicant order, leaving the organisation and politicking to a high priest.

— Abbot Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+10%	+10%	+10%	+30%	+25%	+20%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any two), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Animal Care, Arcane Language (Magick), Charm, Common Knowledge (any two), Gossip, Heal, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (any two), Speak Language (Classical)

Talents: Master Orator, Savvy, Strong-Minded

Trappings: Prayer Book, Religious Relic, Robes, Writing Kit

Career Entries: Anointed Priest, High Priest, Monk, Scholar

Career Exits: High Priest, Scholar

Monk (Advanced)

Monks are members of the mendicant orders who seek seclusion to better devote themselves to their faith. Some monks live completely alone as hermits, whereas others congregate with other monks and live in monasteries, which are usually located in remote areas of the Old World. Most religions have their own mendicant orders, although the strictures of Verena and Shallya tend to lend themselves more towards monasticism more than most. Monks spend their lives in study and prayer, debating the finer points of theology and illuminating religious scriptures.

— Monk Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	—	+5%	+5%	+10%	+25%	+15%	+15%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any two), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Animal Care, Arcane Language (Magick), Common Knowledge (any two), Heal, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (any two), and Speak Language (Classical).

Talents: Linguistics

Trappings: Prayer Book, Religious Symbol, Robes, Writing Kit

Career Entries: Friar, Initiate, Physician, Scholar, Scribe, Student

Career Exits: Abbot, Demagogue, Friar, Physician, Priest, Scholar, Steward, Zealot

Warriors and Miracle Workers

Not every priest is a warrior priest, nor can every priest channel divine energy or perform miracles. In fact, most priests are decidedly mundane, lacking skills in magic or combat. Naturally, those priests who take up the life of an adventurer tend to be

Spellcasting Monks

As written, both the monk and abbot careers are non-spellcasting careers, representing a more mundane and non-magical type of priest. However, some orders of monks have a mystical bent. So as to better represent the monks of these orders, modify the careers as follows:

- **Abbot:** add Mag +2 to the Advance Scheme; add Channelling and Magical Sense to the list of skills; and add the following to the list of talents: Aethyric Attunement *or* Meditation, Divine Lore (any one), Lesser Magic (any two).
- **Monk:** add Mag +1 to the Advance Scheme; add Channelling and Magical Sense to the list of skills; and add Petty Magic (Divine) to the talents.

better prepared for such a life (or if not, they tend not to last long), possessing a knack for fighting or magic, or both.

The Priest career (and the other associated advanced careers, the Anointed Priest and the High Priest) as presented in *WFRP* is both a spellcasting priest and a warrior priest, intended for use by adventurers. If you would rather have a non-spellcasting or peaceful priest, apply the following changes.

Cloistered Priests

Most priests spend their lives cloistered away in their temples, preaching to their flocks and never so much as touching a hammer or sword. This is especially true of many Verenans and all Shallyans, to whom the concept of violence is abhorrent. Such priests can be created using the *WFRP* priest careers with appropriate talent choices, or the following variant options can be used instead.

- **Priest:** Reduce both WS and BS advances to +5%. Increase Ag to +10% and Int to +15%. Replace talents with Master Orator, Flee!, and Petty Magic (Divine).
- **Anointed Priest:** Reduce both WS and BS advances to +10%. Increase Ag to 15% and Int to +20%. Replace talents with Aethyric Attunement *or* Meditation, Fast Hands, Divine Lore (any one), Lesser Magic (any two), and Seasoned Traveller.
- **High Priest:** Reduce both WS and BS to +10%. Increase Ag to +25% and Int to +30%. Replace talents with Aethyric Attunement *or* Meditation, Mighty Missile, Etiquette, Fast Hands *or* Strong-Minded, and Lesser Magic (any two).

Mundane Priests

Not every priest has the talent to channel the power of the Gods and to create miraculous effects. Most priests happily devote their lives to serving their God with just their natural skills and abilities. To create these priests, apply the following changes to the careers described in *WFRP*.

- **Priest:** Reduce Mag to 0. Increase S and Ag to +10%, and W to +5. Replace Channelling with Academic Knowledge (any one) and replace talents with Master Orator, Resistance to Magic, Strike to Injure *or* Strike to Stun
- **Anointed Priest:** Reduce Mag to 0. Increase S and Ag to +15%, and W to +6. Replace Channelling and Magical Sense with Academic Knowledge (any one) and Perception. Replace talents with Flee! *or* Street Fighting, Keen Senses, Seasoned Traveller *or* Strike Mighty Blow, Stout Hearted, Strong Minded, Strike to Injure *or* Strike to Stun.
- **High Priest:** Reduce Mag to 0. Increase S and Ag to +20%, and W to +7. Replace Channelling and Magical Sense with Academic Knowledge (any one) and Perception. Replace talents with Etiquette, Fearless, Menacing *or* Mighty Shot, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller *or* Strike Mighty Blow, and Sturdy.

— Different Paths —

While priests do have a lot in common as dedicated servants of the Gods, they also have many differences stemming from the great differences between their deities. The lives of the priests of the main Gods are considered in this section.

Manann

Priests of Manann are always initiated through confrontation with the fury and peril of the sea. The Stormwatch, as described in **Chapter II**, is a popular initiation, but other rituals are used. The Reik is rarely afflicted by strong storms, so temples there prefer to bind the postulant with rope, then tow him downstream behind a boat, making as much speed as possible. The length of the initiation is up to the captain of the boat; unpopular postulants often die.

Many priests of Manann refuse to sleep unless someone is on watch. At sea, this is a natural precaution, but it is often extended to the land as well. For these priests, their last ritual before sleeping is handing over the responsibility for the watch to someone else. On waking, the priest then claims responsibility for the watch. If the watcher has fallen asleep, most priests deem him to be worthy of a heavy scourging, no matter how safe the location may be in fact.

The more elaborate daily rituals relate to the first sight of the sea, or of a large river. (Lakes and similar bodies of still, fresh water are outside Manann's domain.) On the Nordland coast, it is common to make a sacrifice of some products of the land, in return for the bounty of the sea. Food is a popular choice, but furniture, clothing, and even precious metals are possible. The priest recites a short prayer to Manann and then casts the sacrifice into the water. In the west of Nordland, the sacrifice is reclaimed from the waters for the use of the temple, while in the east it is believed to be the height of sacrilege to disturb it. There are several stories from the area of devout priests of Manann being martyred by other devout priests of Manann for this act.

The life of a priest of Manann is filled with minor superstitions, designed to avoid offending his God. A few swear never to set foot

on land, and thus must be carried when not on a ship, cart, or horse; they live on the upper floors of temples. (This vow tends to be restricted to high-ranking priests.) Some priests insist that their companions also respect these superstitions; after all, when aboard a ship, it does not matter *who* makes Manann angry…everyone aboard the vessel suffers when it sinks. Away from the sea, these zealots are rarely successful, but things are very different on a boat; there, a priest of Manann who is so inclined can become a petty tyrant.

Priests of Manann are mostly hearty individuals with a fondness for alcohol. Rum is the stereotype, but many are not fussy. They like to get drunk, sing lewd songs, and make passes at attractive individuals who happen by. Many were once sailors; some never talk of their pasts, while others tell everyone about swearing their souls to Manann when they escaped the sea.

Morr

Rumours portray the initiation rites of Morr as terrifying ordeals among the restless dead. In fact, the rites of ordination are extremely simple in almost all temples, involving little more than a solemn prayer to the God spoken by the high priest. Morr is not concerned with the waking living, and so the cult's rites do not try to draw his attention there.

As Morr is the God of dreams, as well as of the dead, priests believe they enter his realm temporarily when they sleep. As a result, there are rites to perform before retiring for the night. The details vary, but the outlines are the same; the following version is popular in the Reikland.

The priest first arranges his bed so that, as much as possible, his head is towards the south. He places a small metal stand, marked with a stylised raven, to the left of the pillow, and lights a short candle or incense stick placed within. He then stands by the right of the pillow, places his left hand on it, and recites a prayer asking for dreams of guidance. For some, this prayer actually has miraculous effects. After praying, he lies down straight away, and aims to fall asleep before the candle or incense burns out.

There are no rituals associated with waking, as that is when the priest leaves Morr's realm again. Most priests and initiates do, however, keep a dream diary, looking for signs of Morr's guidance. This notebook is a very personal item, as it can be highly revealing.

Morr's servants try to avoid becoming entangled in the affairs of the living, as they are not truly their concern. Priests are very reluctant to enter into contracts or agreements of any sort, and many refuse to make promises to the living, as their duties to the dead must always come first. A priest who has become deeply involved with the affairs of the living, particularly one who has had a major impact on the outcome of events, normally spends some time in seclusion at a garden of Morr, refocusing on his God. Some, however, prefer to redress the balance by going out and serving the dead—finding corpses to bury or Undead to lay to rest, for example.

Your Humble Servant

Just as there are dozens of different titles bestowed upon priests, so too are there dozens of different modes of address between priests. Very few people use the correct forms of address in every situation, sticking to what they know—this includes the priests themselves, few of whom would be concerned that a worshipper is using the wrong title. Only in the most formal of circumstances would this become an issue, such as during a meeting between the Grand Theogonist and Ar-Ulric, when all proper forms of address would be strictly observed.

A Routine (+10%) Academic Knowledge (Theology) Test can be made to determine the correct form of address for a priest of a cult with which a character is familiar. This becomes Challenging (–10%) when addressing a priest from an unfamiliar cult or in unusual circumstances—such as an anointed priest of Handrich at a funeral, for example (The answer, of course, is to address him as you would in any other formal situation: as "Your Excellency").

What follows is a selection of titles and forms of address commonly used throughout the Empire. Each of the cults has its own unique titles in addition to these, used most often to keep worshippers on their toes.

Titles

"Father/Mother …" is used when addressing a high priest or anointed priest. It is sometimes preceded with "Holy" when addressing the head of a temple ("Holy Mother, Sister Superior of Carroburg") or with "Most Holy" when addressing the head of a cult ("Most Holy Mother, the Matriarch of Manann").

"Brother/Sister …" is used when addressing a priest or friar.

"Initiate/Novitiate …" is used when addressing an initiate. Often disregarded altogether, or used without their name being appended ("Initiate! Fetch me some water!").

"The Reverend/the Revered …" is a formal title for a lay-member of the temple or an initiate. Also used for priests when appended with their title "The Reverend Brother" or high priests, "The Most Revered Father Kiefer of Wurtbad."

"Most Illustrious and Most Reverend …" is a lesser used title reserved for high-ranking members of a cult.

"Footsore" or "Wanderer" is sometimes used to describe or address priests who have taken the Wandering Oath.

Cult Titles

"Wave Lord …" is sometimes used to address a high-ranking priest of Manann.

"Watcher of Ravens" is sometimes used to address a priest of Morr.

"Spearguard …" is sometimes used to address a priest of Myrmidia, although more often than not they are be referred to by a military rank.

"Shadowmaster …" is sometimes used to address a high-ranking priest of Ranald

"Holy Heart …" is sometimes used to address a priestess of Shallya.

"Blessed of the Hammer …" is sometimes used to address a high-ranking priest of Sigmar.

"Green Watcher …" is sometimes used to address a priest of Taal and Rhya.

"Wolf-born …" is sometimes used to address a priest of Ulric.

"Lord Wolf" is sometimes used to address a high-ranking priest of Ulric.

"Master of the Pages" is sometimes used to address a high-ranking priest of Verena

"Spire Lord" is sometimes used to address a high priest from Altdorf.

Modes of Address

"Your Holiness… " is the formal mode of address reserved for the head of a cult. Should be followed by a full title ("His Holiness, Grand Theogonist of Sigmar, Volkmar").

"Your Eminence" is the formal mode of address used for a high-ranking member of a cult ("His Eminence, Arch Lector of Middenheim").

"Your Excellency" is a formal mode of address for a high priest or an anointed priest. When used to refer to such a personage in their absence, it should be followed by her full title ("Her Excellency, High Priestess of Nuln").

"Your Grace" is a formal mode of address for high priest or an anointed priest.

"Your Reverence" is the formal mode of address for a priest. "His Reverence, Brother Dieter of the temple of Morr."

"His most Reverend/his most Eminent …" is a very formal mode of address, rarely used.

"Your humble servant/Your devoted servant" is a formal manner of referring to oneself, especially in written form.

Some say that priests of Morr have no sense of smell, and while this may sometimes be true, the story probably exists because they all learn to tolerate foul stenches. Further, no priest of Morr is ever squeamish. They tend to be quiet, calm, and patient, with a tender concern for the dead and cool indifference to the living. A lot of them have a dry, morbid sense of humour; a few are actually very funny, but most people feel that laughing in the presence of a priest of Morr is highly inappropriate, so a reputation for causing laughter is hard to generate.

Myrmidia

Even though Myrmidia is a Goddess of War, the initiation rites of her cult almost never involve combat. That is not to say that people are not chosen for initiation based on their combat prowess, but that assessment takes place before the rite itself. Almost all rites involve the presentation of arms and armour to the new priest, and they are almost invariably public. The details vary a great deal from place to place, and even from one occasion to another, as it is common for the rite to involve some reference to the bold deeds of the particular initiate. For example, she might be presented with a sword to replace one she lost fighting Orcs.

When a priestess wakes in the morning, her first task is to arm herself for the day. Most do this literally, putting on armour and taking up their weapons. Every step of this ritual is accompanied by prayers to Myrmidia, and the prayers recount the function of the armour or weapon taken up. In many cases, armour is not the appropriate garb for the day, so the next thing the priest does is take it off again. Only if the circumstances make keeping armour in their quarters impractical will priests perform the ritual symbolically, treating their clothes as armour and any tools as weapons.

Most Myrmidian superstitions revolve around military strategy. Thus, many refuse to enter blind alleys, or any room with only one exit, and always keep an escape route in mind. Similarly, it is very bad luck to make a decision on impulse; priests should always be alert for facts they may have missed. This can easily be taken to extremes.

A very common superstition is the belief that a priest should never be unarmed. This weapon can be fairly small, but it must be a real weapon, not just a symbol. This can cause conflicts when the priest wishes to speak to a powerful and cautious individual.

A distinct set of superstitions revolve around eagles. It is incredibly bad luck to kill an eagle, or even to see a dead eagle. On the other hand, seeing an eagle take flight in the morning is an excellent sign, while many priests abandon a journey if they see an eagle land just before leaving. A lot of sheep farmers regard eagles as pests that harry their flocks; as the cult of Myrmidia expands through the Empire, conflicts over this become increasingly likely.

Myrmidian priests like clear chains of authority, although they do not have to be the ones in charge. They hate doing anything, even going to a tavern, without a plan, and are willing to be the ones to suggest the scheme, if necessary. They place great importance on group loyalty and morale, and never abandon a comrade, even one who does something foolish.

Ranald

If the rites of other cults are marked by regional variation, the rites of Ranald are marked by almost total anarchy. Part of this is entirely pragmatic; anyone practising distinctive 'rites of Ranald' would soon be in serious trouble with the local authorities. Another cause is the absence of any central body to enforce, or even create, a set of standard rituals.

It is not uncommon for Ranald's rites to involve an element of chance. For example, an initiation rite for a new priest might involve tossing a Karl until it lands emperor down. In some cases, the coin is tossed at the beginning of the rite, and if it comes down emperor up, the rite cannot be performed on that day. A few priests are known to roll dice to determine the form that the initiation rite should take; a witch hunter in Talabheim exhibited a set of tables on which an accused priest rolled to create rites as necessary. While the witch hunter was found to have added the "sacrifice to the Dark Gods" entries himself, the priest was still convicted of worshipping Ranald.

Priests of Ranald often entrust unimportant decisions to pure chance. Many prefer to sleep in a bed with space on both sides, and then toss a coin in the morning to determine the side on which they get out. Indeed, tossing a coin is a very common way to make decisions between two choices, and some priests do not restrict it to unimportant things. It is quite common for the coin used to make such decisions to become an offering to Ranald; wealthy priests only use a coin once, others use one coin per day. A very general superstition is that the priest should use a more valuable coin for more important decisions. A number also hold that the coin should be one that was stolen.

A story doing the rounds of the Empire says that a priest in Averland conned a goldsmith into making a pair of gold dice, with gems marking the pips, then stole the dice and used them to decide which Imperial province he should move to. The dice sent him to Ostland, just ahead of the Storm of Chaos. However, the priest survived, led over 100 refugees to safety, and then made his way to Altdorf to sell the priceless works of art he had plundered. Followers of Ranald disagree on the moral this is meant to show, but all agree that the priest's behaviour was exemplary.

Priests of Ranald tend to have a relaxed attitude to most things, taking their luck as it comes and not worrying about the future. They like to have money, and enjoy spending it; most have a vice that they indulge, with gambling a particularly common choice. They look out for themselves first, and it is not uncommon for a priest to have at least two or three "identities" (disguises, complete with names, habits and mannerisms) that he can switch between easily.

Shallya

Service to Shallya demands selfless devotion, and the initiation rites used in most temples both test and exhibit this quality. The details vary a great deal, but a version of the following rite is used in many temples in Nordland.

The postulant, barefoot and wearing a single light robe, stands in the courtyard of the temple for one day and two nights, eating

nothing, not sleeping, and drinking only a little water. During that time she may not speak, and must help anyone passing through the courtyard that seems to be in difficulties. However, she herself must not leave the courtyard. When day breaks after the second night, a priestess comes with a heavy robe, wraps her up, and leads her to the main altar, where she receives a single meal, as from the Goddess. At this point, she is a full priestess. Postulants who fail to complete the vigil are allowed to try again later; Shallya is, after all, the Goddess of Mercy.

Most Shallyans beg forgiveness for the hurt they have caused others before sleeping every night. This is almost always done quietly, but a few feel the need to scourge themselves before sleeping; if this is fairly light, it is regarded as zealous, but still normal. In the morning, a priestess first prepares a meal for someone else, before eating her own breakfast. The meal that she gives away should always be slightly better than the one she eats, and pious Shallyans would rather go hungry than fail to feed another. Less pious Shallyans follow the form, but have a hearty 'mid-morning snack' about half an hour after their light breakfast.

In their daily lives, Shallyans take great care to avoid causing harm to others, particularly physical harm. This includes the very minor harm that would be caused by bumping into someone in the street, which makes most Shallyans very cautious in crowds. If a Shallyan actually injures someone, she must apologise to and compensate the person she harmed. Formally, only followers of the Fly Lord are exempt, but almost no Shallyan would apologise to a known follower of any of the Ruinous Powers. A few refuse to apologise to followers of false Gods (any God apart from Shallya, in their eyes), and even to those who dishonour the Goddess with their impiety (any Shallyan who does not follow her teachings as strictly as the priest himself).

A few Shallyans refuse to eat meat on the grounds that its production harms animals, and some refuse to eat even vegetables and grains, on the grounds that its production harms plants (fruit is acceptable). These positions are regarded as extreme, however, as the Goddess is held to be primarily concerned with Humans. There are very few Shallyans willing to eat pigeon pie, however.

Shallyan priests can be rather bossy when they feel people are not taking good enough care of others. On the other hand, they are very stoic about their own complaints; no Shallyan ever admits to feeling ill or tired when asked. They like to offer advice to their friends, and to people they meet in the street. They get away with this because most people do not want to insult a Shallyan; after all, they might soon need help themselves, and the Shallyan is the most likely to be willing to give it.

Sigmar

Sigmarites like ritual, and also put a great emphasis on correct thought and doctrine. It might be expected that this would lead to great uniformity. Instead, it has led to great diversity, with every temple passionately committed to its own rituals as the only proper way to revere Sigmar.

There are common elements. A warhammer is a very common ritual tool, and many rites include short phrases of Khazalid. Stories of rural temples where the climax of the holiest ritual involves the high priest declaiming "I really need to make water" in Khazalid are common.

Most Sigmarites say a morning prayer while facing the rising sun, and often holding a hammer, whether a real weapon or a small symbol. For all, the east symbolises the place where Sigmar ascended to godhood, whilst the light of the sun has its own symbolism, varying by Order. The ritual is supposed to be performed at dawn, but wealthier priests often perform it somewhat later, when they arise. It is generally regarded as impious to perform the rite after the sun has started to sink into the West.

Many Sigmarite superstitions revolve around the risk of corruption in thought. A particularly common one is the belief that it is bad luck to be the first to read a particular piece of writing. Someone else should read it first, and then be examined for signs of corruption. A few priests take this to the extreme of believing it is impious to read at all, as typographical errors could introduce heresy into even the holy books of Sigmar. Some other priests acknowledge and accept the risk of reading, but see typographical errors in any book as a sign of corruption by the Ruinous Powers. The printer whose pamphlets misspell the name of Sigmar had best beware, lest he be lynched, his typo used as evidence that he consorts with the Ruinous Powers.

Unknown individuals are also a major source of potential corruption. A common superstition is that a layman who invokes Sigmar before the priest does is probably corrupt; he is trying too hard to prove that he is not. Of course, anyone who does not answer the priest's invocation of Sigmar with his own is even more likely to be corrupt, or foreign.

A very common superstition in rural areas is the belief that all foreign cultures are shaped by the Ruinous Powers, and that doing anything other than the way it has always been done is a sign of corruption. The extreme case of this is a woman coming back from town with a new hairstyle and being burned as a mutant, but as this story is always attributed to the next province over, it is probably apocryphal. Some people believe the cult has spread stories like this deliberately to temper these excesses. Nevertheless, rural priests are as likely as rural lay people to believe that anything foreign must be corrupt.

Sigmarite priests always speak with great confidence, in a firm voice, and assume that they are in charge of any situation where they are not clearly outranked. They like to extol the virtues of the Empire, and are always alert for heresy and difference. They keep themselves neat and tidy, if possible, as a neat appearance indicates a well-ordered mind.

Taal and Rhya

The Cult of Taal and Rhya does not go in for much formalised ritual, which actually makes initiations remarkably consistent across the Empire. Although the details may vary, there aren't many details in the first place.

Cultists who favour Rhya are initiated through a public declaration by the initiating priest that they have attained the relevant status. This declaration is followed by a feast. Cultists who favour Taal

are presented to the wilderness, where the priest announces the initiate's new status. This is always done at more than one place, and the last place is a public announcement in front of the lay followers, so they know who their new priest is. A feast often follows, and it is common for the new priest to hunt the main course himself. The presentation locations are normally spectacular natural sites, such as mountains or waterfalls, but some initiates find themselves being presented to the local wolves, deer, and bears. Priests known for getting a substantial audience of wild beasts at their initiations are often watched for future great achievements.

Priests of Taal and Rhya generally rise at dawn unless there are very good reasons not to, to align their cycles to those of the natural world. Even those who are already awake acknowledge the rising sun, even if only mentally. If possible, the priests wash their hands in natural water (a stream, river, lake, or rainfall). While these practises are universal, local groups add others. Taal cultists in one area shatter the skulls of any creatures they killed the previous day before washing their hands. They believe this releases the spirits to go on, and that proper respect for their prey requires them to give the spirits one night to attempt revenge. The fact that spiritual manifestations are rare is put down to the fact that most spirits are too frightened to confront a priest of Taal.

Superstitions tend to revolve around the natural world. Many priests believe that true cleanliness can only be achieved in natural water (probably true, in the Old World), that only food you have hunted, cleaned, and cooked yourself is really safe to eat (probably true, in the Old World), that carrying large quantities of metal, including coinage, invites bad luck (probably true, in the Old World), and that firearms bring a curse on their wielders (also probably true, in the Old World).

On reflection, followers of Taal and Rhya have very few actual *superstitions,* so much as they seem to wield an impressive degree of common sense.

Male priests tend to be very masculine, with large beards, while female priests tend to accentuate their feminine, though still rugged and passionate, sides. Both sexes revel in the physical, animal side of life, eating, drinking, and mating with great enjoyment. They rarely use flowery or euphemistic speech, and their directness is often considered rude in polite society.

Ulric

The rituals of Ulric tend to be direct and to the point, much like the God himself. They also tend to be ancient, handed down from one high priest to another within a temple over centuries, if not millennia. The differences between these rituals tend to be minor, although there are startling exceptions.

The initiation ritual of the temple in Dietershafen is typical of the most common form. The ritual is always performed in winter, in the courtyard between the outer wall and inner keep of the temple. The initiate starts outside, wearing nothing but a loincloth (the high priests of Dietershafen haven't held with female priests for generations), and bangs on the gates to demand entrance. The gates are left unlocked, and the initiate keeps banging until the force of his blows opens them. He then strides in, stops before the

high priest, kneels on the ground, and swears loyalty to Ulric. The high priest then places the initiate's wolf-skin cloak around his shoulders. Most would not accept initiation if there was no snow on the ground; it is considered an excellent omen if it snows throughout the ceremony, or if it starts during the ceremony. On the other hand, if it should stop snowing during the ceremony, this is taken as a sign of Ulric's displeasure, and often leads to the whole initiation being postponed.

An Ulrican's morning ritual generally involves grabbing something to eat, checking his weapons, and getting on with the day; Ulric is worshipped through deeds, not formal rituals.

Superstitions, on the other hand, are fairly common. Ulricans do not believe in backing down to anyone except a superior, and most take that to include never going back on anything they say. This leads to two approaches toward everyday life. A few Ulricans are very careful about making any statements or promises, so that they will always be right when they speak, or always able to follow through. Most, however, simply refuse to admit mistakes. The Ulricans' reputation for ferocity and battle mean that few are willing to confront them on the point.

Individual priests choose their own superstitions to uphold; there is a wide selection from which to choose. Some never remove their wolfskin cloaks, except for their annual bath in a frozen lake. Others refuse to enter a building through any door other than the main entrance. Still others insist on taking a battle axe everywhere with them; these tend not to be welcome in towns. A few believe in feeding the wolves that live near them, a superstition that does

not endear them to farmers. A handful of Ulrican priests think it is disrespectful to start any project on a warm day; these tend to seek out temples in the far north.

Ulricans are boisterous, enjoying a good brawl with their friends or other people in the bar; they do not regard beating someone up as a sign that you do not like him. They are proud of their hair and beards, competing over whose is the best; these competitions can become very serious. They almost never back down from a challenge, and like to issue them if they feel that they are not being treated with the proper respect.

Verena

The rites and practises of Verenan priests vary even more than those of others, to the point that it is impossible to do more than give examples. Whilst the priests remain true to the teachings of their deity, the way they express those teachings differs radically from place to place.

In Nuln, the initiation of a new priest is much like the ceremony of graduation from the university (historians argue over which was the original and which the copy). The high priest presides, and the new initiate is presented by a mentoring priest, who declares that the initiate is of good character and learning, and worthy to be a priest of Verena. The sponsoring priest then gives a very brief summary (no more than a couple of sentences) of the initiate's study. The initiate then kneels in front of the high priest, who places a hand on his head and declares him raised to the ranks of the priesthood.

In Kemperbad, two initiates come forward at the same time and stage a debate in front of the audience. Each must press his own case, while criticising the other, and at the end of the debate the audience votes on who should be initiated. The loser must try again later.

Priests of Verena almost invariably read before going to sleep, and some also read first thing in the morning, before getting out of bed. Thus, their whole day is marked off by study and the increase of knowledge.

The two most common superstitions among the priesthood concern memory and fairness. First, many believe that forgetting anything, no matter how trivial, is an insult to the Goddess. Some get carried away with the superstition, and try to keep notes on their whole lives. In some cases this means that the priest spends more time recording his life than actually living it. Most, however, just try to remember the majority of the things they learn, and pray for forgiveness for all the trivialities they have forgotten.

Second, many believe they should always make the fairest decision, not the one that best suits them. Thus, they might choose a coat on the basis of which tailor needs the business more, rather than based on which has a style that they like. Since poor craftsman often need more business, such Verenans are often poorly dressed. Others argue that a skilled craftsman deserves more custom; these priests save their money so that they can afford to buy the best.

Priests emphasise the importance of gathering information on a subject before acting, and then taking that information into account in a careful plan. They despise fast, impulsive decisions, and regard emotions as an unfortunate distraction to be suppressed as much as possible. They believe that reading transmits the wisdom of the past, and often cite old books to support their decisions.

A Wandering Life

The traditional life of a priest—praying to a God, studying scripture, preaching to the congregation—is somewhat at odds with the traditional life of an adventure—constantly travelling, facing dangerous creatures, stealing treasure, and then blowing it all in bawdy taverns. Yet many priests can be found not only wandering the roads of the Empire, but in the company of mercenaries and adventurers. There is obviously something that drives a priest to live the adventuring life, or at least to coexist with those who do.

The Wandering Vow

No cult is benefited by having all its priests based in temples. All cults wish to spread the worship of their faith, and it is unrealistic to expect would-be worshippers to come to the temple of their own accord. So, instead, cults have wandering priests who travel the Empire (and beyond) to take their faith to the masses, teaching people they encounter why they should become worshippers. Priests who take to the road to spread the word usually take what is commonly known as "The Wandering Vow," an oath that releases them from many of their priestly duties at a temple in exchange for the responsibilities for ministering to the needs of any worshippers they find on their journeys. Some wandering priests receive a stipend from the cult, whereas others can expect little more than a bed for the night at a friendly temple or shrine. Friars are the most commonly encountered type of wandering priest, members of holy orders devoted to travelling the Empire and teaching religious virtues to whomever they encounter.

Some priests wander not to preach to the unconverted, but because their flock is one that rarely remains in one place, such as sailors, traders, or itinerant travellers. The priests may travel along with their worshippers, or wander the Old World ministering to all travellers they come across.

Penance

"I was falsely accused, Templar, so put away your torches and swords. I mean no harm."

—Last words of Aldus Meinrich, defrocked priest

Although priests commit their lives to the service of the Gods, they do so with the understanding that their divine masters are fickle, capricious, and often cruel. Remaining in a God's good standing is an uncertain pursuit, for who can say with authority what is in the minds of the deities? In an attempt to sort out the demands made by the Gods, the cults record the theories and evidence from those who have come before, compiling them in great holy books. These tomes recount the lives and efforts of other priests, revealing the errors others have made in an attempt to assist future priests in living their lives in such a way as to avoid angering their masters. Naturally, there are no hard and fast rules, and these dense texts are as ponderous as they are confusing, filled with contradictions, ambiguous phrases, and random anecdotes that may have little to do with the topic at hand.

When a priest angers his master, there's only one thing to do: penance. Payments for failing a God may include spending time away to learn from one's errors and to regain proper standing with the cult. More dramatic acts include abstinence, fasting, vows of silence, self-flagellation, self-mutilation, and other acts of contrition. The more profound the suffering, the more likely the priest is to appease the God and therefore regain his favour. Most sane priests start with small acts of penance, gradually escalating their acts until they feel certain they have escaped the wrath of the God. Others seem to live for penance, and spend as much time abusing themselves as they do working on behalf of the cult.

Desperately Seeking Something

"Just as Verena promised—the final fragment of the seventeenth page of the Codex Astronomus. Now all we have left to do is find the disparate fragments of the remaining one hundred and forty-seven pages."

—Brother Phillipe, the Order of Mysteries

Many priests don't travel to preach or as an act of penance, but because they are looking for something, be it a person, a place or an object. These may be worldly desires or goals, such as taking to the road in search of revenge or looking for a long lost relative. Sometimes they go with the blessing of their temple, other times they are cast out for giving in to such base emotions. More likely, however, is that a priest is adventuring on behalf of the cult, dispatched in search of a long forgotten temple, the tomb of a venerated hero, or rumours of a lost relic. One such order of adventuring priests is the Order of Mysteries, dedicated to Verena, who spend their lives searching for forgotten or lost lore in the dark corners of the Old World. The Order is described in more detail in **Chapter III**.

All that Remains

"My body is my temple now, my spirit my cult. That is all that is left."

—Last words of Sister Annetta, formerly of the Temple of Shallya in Wolfenburg

A priest may have little choice but to leave his cult and his temple behind and embark on a life on the road, because he may be all that remains of one or both. The Old World is a dangerous place, and whole religions, or major segments of them, are likely to be destroyed when the races, cultures, or nations that supported them are overwhelmed by enemies. The Storm of Chaos left untold numbers of priests dead in its wake, for instance, for the hordes of Archaon took special glee in sacking temples and slaying their priests. As a result, many priests of all faiths across the Empire have been left without temples, and countless worshippers are in need of a little faith.

Survivors of a destroyed temple might simply join another temple, but the Old World is a very large place, and friendly faces may be few and far between. If the cult itself has been severely damaged or if they take a suspicious view of surviving priests, then this may not be an option at all. Surviving priests might take up the wandering life as penance for their perceived failure in allowing

Table 8–1: Priestly Motivations

2d10	The Priest …
2	Has taken the Wandering Vow and is travelling as a preacher or a friar.
3	Must wander as a test of faith before he can advance in the cult.
4	Has committed a serious affront to his God and must spend 1–3: 2d6 months travelling as penance, 4: 1d6 years travelling as penance, 5: 2d6 years travelling as penance, 6: no set length of time, but until some quest is completed as determined by the GM.
5	Is searching for a holy relic.
6	Is searching for someone, maybe a missing relative or an enemy.
7	Is searching for a sacred site.
8	Was a member of a temple that has been destroyed.
9	Has made powerful enemies and must keep travelling to avoid them.
10	Has been thrown out of his cult and has no choice but to wander.
11	Is a member of a rogue sect and must keep travelling to avoid the more mainstream cult.
12	Is a member of a rare sect and must search the Old World for a teacher to advance in the cult.
13	Has been cursed and cannot rest for more than a day or two in one place, lest doom befall him.
14	Has been sent forth to spread the word of his faith to an indifferent land or region.
15	Has been sent forth to found a new temple.
16	Is searching for a long-lost temple sacred to his faith.
17	Has been recruited by a prominent noble or merchant to watch over the soul of a relative–one of the priest's fellow adventurers.
18	Is undertaking a pilgrimage or following in the footsteps of a famous wandering priest.
19	Is searching for the mortal bloodline of one of the Gods, although his fellow priests consider him crazy.
20	Wants to found his own religion or sect and is searching for followers.

their temple to come to harm, they might be searching for other surviving members of their order, or they might seek revenge on the perpetrators.

Going Rogue

"No, I'm a different type of Ulrican, a member of a different sect. I'm delivering a sermon in the market square tomorrow morning if you want to attend. I suggest you ask any questions now, though, as I'll probably be leaving rather quickly afterwards."

—The Reverend Boris Baumach, Priest of the Order of the Winter Throne

Some priests keep on the move because they don't want to be found, either by an enemy or by their own cult. Cults are dominated by the power struggles of mortals, and a priest can easily fall foul of mortal machinations without falling foul of a God. Contrary to what most cults would rather have believed, they are not the sole authority for a god, and it is perfectly feasible for a priest to break from a cult without necessitating a loss of faith, or indeed a loss of divine powers.

Priests who fall out with their cult, whether due to a clash of personality or beliefs, are often defrocked and thrown out of the temple, but may well decide to remain a priest. Such pariahs might start their own sect or cult (although established cults tend to come down very heavily on new sects), or they may take to the road and try to keep out of sight of their former cult.

— The Laity —

Within every cult there exists three broad groups. The first is the clergy, made up of initiates and priests, along with monks, friars, templars, and all the other ranking members of the cult. Worshippers are next, and they comprise those citizens who attend services at a temple, but are not actively involved in its day-to-day operations. Last comes the laity, those who are the un-ordained members of a cult, but are nonetheless important to the everyday running of a temple. The lay members of a cult are often overlooked in favour of the clergy, but the laity play a very important role in the operations of a cult, doing much of the behind-the-scenes activities that enable the priests to concentrate on divine matters.

Larger temples employ the laity in all manner of different support roles like cleaning, cooking, temple and shrine repair, carrying messages, and upkeep of the grounds. The smaller the temple, the more likely it is that a lay member must perform multiple roles, or even that initiates or clergy must fulfil the duties. Some laymen are paid by the temple for these services, although rarely a great amount; others see the work as their religious duty, and refuse payment for completing the tasks.

Warriors and Guards

Many temples contain items and artefacts that are far more valuable than anything their worshippers could afford to possess. From holy symbols made from silver to altar decorations made from gold, from finely crafted fixtures to furnishings made from expensive wood and stone, wealth can take many forms within a temple. Regardless of the consequences from both cult and God, there are those folk who would not think twice about stealing from a temple, and more than a few thieves who specifically target the wealth gathered by cults.

Additionally, there is no crime in disagreeing with the teachings of a cult or the preaching of a priest, there may be those who disagree so violently that they try to silence a priest or burn down his temple. Likewise some temples, especially those of Verena and Sigmar, are known to possess controversial texts, and many zealots would see these destroyed rather than safeguarded, to say nothing of the corrupted fiends who would go to great, almost suicidal, lengths to possess them.

Temples therefore employ guards to keep watch over their valuables or to act as bodyguards for members of their order. The job of temple guardian is often given to members of the congregation who want to help but lack the skills to take on a more demanding role, or to those who show promise as an initiate but lack the dedication or devotion to become a priest. In larger, or more martial temples, the role of guarding a temple falls to its templar knights or to dedicated soldiers.

Temple Guardian (Basic)

Temple Guardians are chosen, not from amongst the brightest members of a congregation, who would be far better put to use elsewhere, but rather from among those whose skills lie in a more physical area. They are expected to be above reproach, and to resist the temptation to steal from their own temples. Some cults ensure this behaviour by telling particularly horrid tales of the fate that awaits such traitors in the afterlife, while others simply encourage temple guardians to keep a close eye on one another, rewarding with great wealth any accusation of theft or disloyalty that proves to be true.

— Temple Guardian Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
+10%	+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%	—	+5%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (any one), Dodge Blow, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception, Search

Talents: Cool Headed *or* Stout Hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack), Robes *or* Uniform

Career Entries: Initiate, Militiaman, Watchman, Zealot

Career Exits: Initiate, Mercenary, Soldier, Squire, Watchman

Servants

There are always things that need doing around a temple, from fetching oil for the lanterns to carrying about heavy religious tomes for the elderly priests, to cooking, cleaning, sweeping, and even digging graves. Where possible, these mundane tasks are left to the lowlier members of the cult. Most temples of a decent size employ servants to do all the laborious work, but smaller temples tend to make use of initiates to do the menial labour.

In addition to servants, some of the more important and wealthier temples employ valets to act as personal servants to anointed and high priests. Such valets are little different from those who serve the nobility, although a certain degree of piety is expected of them.

Attendants

The logistical duties of running a temple are immense, far more than the priests and the clergy can manage on their own. For this reason almost every temple makes use of the laity to assist the priests with the temple duties. These attendants assist with the running of the temple, from organising the other laymen to helping priests prepare for rituals and assisting them during services.

The most important of these are the cult attendants, who operate behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of religious services and the day-to-day operation of the temple itself. They help the priests organise services, from planning which prayers are to be said to which hymns to be sung to who is going to be doing what during rituals. During a service they lead the clergy into the temple, all the while remaining innocuous.

Alongside the cult attendants, and sometimes superior to them, are the temple stewards, who are tasked with responsibilities similar to household stewards. Stewards manage the temple building itself as well as its lay staff, organising the servants that clean the temple and the tradesmen that maintain it. In some temples the position of steward is combined with that of cult attendant, while in others a priest takes on the role.

Finally, combining the duties of servant, temple guardian, and cult attendant are the porters. Porters guard the entrance to a temple during religious services, welcoming worshippers, passing out prayer books and scrolls, and showing visitors around. The duties of a porter often fall to a temple guardian or even an initiate. In the most important temples, a herald may be employed instead of a lowly porter, announcing the arrival of important dignitaries and heralding the presence of the high priest.

Cult Attendant (Advanced)

A cult attendant is an assistant to a cult's priests, entrusted with organising all of the mundane details involved in the running of a temple. Cult attendants are concerned with the logistical side of a cult, organising orders of service, coordinating the activities of the clergy and the laity, and ensuring that rituals and prayers proceed as smoothly as possible. A cult attendant rules behind the scenes of a temple, and many pride themselves on remaining as inconspicuous as possible.

— Cult Attendant Advance Scheme—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
+10%	+10%	+5%	+5%	—	+20%	+15%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Charm, Common Knowledge (any one), Gossip, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (any one), Speak Language (Classical)

Talents: Dealmaker, Public Speaking

Trappings: Robes

Career Entries: Anointed Priest, Courtier, Initiate, Messenger, Priest, Valet

Career Exits: Politician, Priest, Squire, Steward

The Choir

Many religious services contain hymns and other songs of praise. In most temples these are sung by the congregation, but some temples are blessed with a choir of talented singers to assist matters. These choristers also assist the clergy during rites by chanting and singing in unison. Only the largest and richest temples employ professional choristers, the most renowned of which are known as cantors. Not every cult makes use of choirs—they are most frequently found in temples of Sigmar and Shallya, although Ulrican and Myrmidian temples sometimes have martial choirs who sing rousing war hymns and battle chants.

Cantor (Advanced)

Cantors are talented singers who have devoted themselves to performing in temple choirs and during rituals. Cantors are responsible for leading choirs during services as well as for instructing individual choristers. Some cantors are also skilled musicians and write new hymns in praise of their Gods. As well as singing hymns, many cantors are skilled at performing incantations and rhythmic chanting that aids priests in performing divine rituals, and for the most potent of rituals a high priest may request the presence of many cantors. The common symbol of office for a cantor is a short staff used to strike the ground (or out of tune choristers, if necessary) to keep tune with the music when leading a choir. A skilful cantor can easily enhance the reputation of a temple and its priests.

— Cantor Advance Scheme—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
+10%	+10%	—	—	+15%	+10%	+15%	+20%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Charm, Common Knowledge (any one), Perception, Performer (Musician), Performer (Singer), Read/Write, Speak Language (any two)

Talents: Incantation (see sidebar)

Trappings: Chorister's Robe, Hymn Book, Staff

Career Entries: Anointed Priest, Entertainer, High Priest, Initiate, Minstrel, Monk, Priest

Career Exits: Catechist, Entertainer, Initiate, Priest, Minstrel, Zealot

New Talent: Incantation

Description: Your hymn singing and chanting helps to focus divine energies, aiding in magical rituals. You can assist a divine spellcaster perform ritual magic, and if you pass a Performer (Singer) Test and remain singing throughout the ritual, one spellcaster gains a +1 bonus to his Casting Roll. A number of people with this talent may assist in this manner equal to the number of spellcasters participating in the ritual.

Scholars and Students

Temples are not solely places of worship; many temples fulfill other functions like acting as a fortress, barrack, hospice or a guildhouse. The most common such function is as a school, for most priests are educated and wise men who are all too willing to teach others what they know. Most temples offer such education on an informal basis, the priests teaching those who come to them as time allows. Other temples, especially those of Verena, operate more formal schools, teaching local children, temple wards left in their care, or young initiates. As a result of this role, many temples have lay brothers who become teachers in some respect: scholars, students, monks or catechists, usually. Some are dedicated theologians, teaching religious studies, whereas others, especially priests and monks, are merely religious men who teach all manner of subjects.

Catechist (Advanced)

The catechist is a religious teacher versed in the study of holy scripture and stricture who teaches the finer points of both to any who wish to listen (or are forced to listen). They are rarely as open-minded or clever as scholars, favouring tradition over progress and learning by rote over true understanding. A catechist is usually responsible for the religious education of a temple's initiates, even if they themselves are merely lay members.

Not all catechists are religious in nature—some concentrate on studying the arcane but lack the talents to become a wizard, instead teaching theory to apprentices at one of the Colleges of Magic.

— Catechist Advance Scheme—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
—	—	+5%	+5%	+10%	+20%	+15%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any one), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Common Knowledge (any two), Read/Write, Speak Language (any one), Speak Language (Classical)

Talents: Public Speaking

Trappings: Prayer Book, Writing Kit

Career Entries: Anointed Priest, Friar, Priest, Scholar, Scribe, Student, Zealot

Career Exits: Demagogue, Friar, Initiate, Scholar, Zealot

— I Need a Priest! —

This section contains ready-made statistics for initiates, priests, and anointed priests. Each entry provides a basic profile with common skills and talents appropriate for religious characters of any stripe. Following are cult skills and talents listed separately, so the sample characters can be adapted easily to represent worshippers of the various Gods. These are ideal for use when the GM already has a character background and personality in mind but needs game statistics.

Initiate

Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
34%	31%	33%	36%	28%	37%	38%	34%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
1	13	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Gossip, Heal, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel +10%)
Talents: Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Sturdy
Armour: None
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Mace, Sword, or Axe)
Trappings: Religious Symbol (as appropriate to deity), Robes

Manann

Modified Profile: S 38%, Ag 33%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Swim; **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Very Strong

Morr

Modified Profile: WS 39%, Ag 33%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History), Intimidate; **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Warrior Born

Myrmidia

Modified Profile: WS 39%, S 38%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History); **Additional Talents:** Strike to Injure, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Ranald

Modified Profile: Ag 33%, Fel 39%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Sleight of Hand; **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Suave

Shallya

Modified Profile: Ag 33%, Fel 39%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History), Heal +10%; **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Suave

Sigmar

Modified Profile: WS 39%, S 38%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History), Common Knowledge (Dwarfs); **Additional Talents:** Very Strong, Warrior Born

Taal & Rhya

Modified Profile: WS 39%, S 38%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy), Outdoor Survival; **Additional Talents:** Lighting Reflexes, Warrior Born

Ulric

Modified Profile: WS 39%, S 38%; **Additional Talents:** Strike Mighty Blow, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Verena

Modified Profile: Ag 33%, Fel 39%; **Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History), Perception +10%; **Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Suave

Priest (ex-Initiate)

Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
44%	41%	38%	46%	33%	47%	58%	49%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
1	17	3	4	4	1	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) +10%, Channelling, Charm, Common Knowledge (Dwarfs, the Empire +10%), Gossip +10%, Heal +10%, Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write +10%, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Classical +10%, Reikspiel +20%)
Talents: Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Sturdy
Armour: None
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Mace, Sword, or Axe)
Trappings: Prayer Book, Religious Symbol (as appropriate to deity), Robes, Writing Kit

Manann

Modified Profile: S 43%, Ag 38%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) +10%, Row, Sail, Swim +10%, Trade (Shipwright); **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Very Strong

Morr

Modified Profile: WS 49%, Ag 38%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History, Necromancy +10%), Intimidate, Ride, Trade (Embalmer); **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Menacing, Warrior Born

Myrmidia

Modified Profile: WS 49%, S 43%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History, Strategy/Tactics), Command, Ride; **Additional Talents:** Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Throwing, Two-handed), Strike to Injure, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Ranald

Modified Profile: Ag 38%, Fel 54%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, Law), Concealment, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Luck, Suave

Shallya

Modified Profile: Ag 38%, Fel 54%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History) +10%, Heal +10%, Trade (Apothecary), Trade (Herbalist); **Additional Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Resistance to Disease, Ride, Suave

Sigmar

Modified Profile: WS 49%, S 43%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) +10%, Command, Common Knowledge (Dwarfs), Ride, Speak Language (Khazalid); **Additional Talents:** Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Very Strong, Warrior Born

Taal & Rhya

Modified Profile: WS 49%, S 43%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) +10%, Charm Animal, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Lighting Reflexes, Orientation, Warrior Born

Ulric

Modified Profile: WS 49%, S 43%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History), Intimidate, Ride; **Additional Talents:** Frenzy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Verena

Modified Profile: Ag 38%, Fel 54%; **Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History +10%, Law +10%), Hypnotism, Perception +10%, Ride, Secret Language (Guilder); **Talents:** Lightning Reflexes, Suave

Anointed Priest (ex-Priest, ex-Initiate)

Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
49%	46%	43%	46%	38%	52%	63%	54%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
2	18	4	4	4	2	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology) +20%, Channelling +10%, Charm +10%, Common Knowledge (Dwarfs, the Empire +10%),

Gossip +10%, Heal +10%, Magical Sense +10%, Perception, Read/Write +10%, Speak Arcane Language (Magick) +10%, Speak Language (Breton, Classical +20%, Reikspiel +20%)
Talents: Lesser Magic (any two), Public Speaking, Resistance to Poison, Sturdy
Armour: None
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Mace, Sword, or Axe)
Trappings: Prayer Book, Religious Symbol (as appropriate to deity), Robes, Writing Kit

Manann

Modified Profile: S 48%, Ag 43%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy +20%, Science), Common Knowledge (the Empire +20%, Norsca), Row, Sail, Swim +20%, Trade (Shipwright); **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Divine Lore (Manann), Fast Hands, Lightning Reflexes, Seasoned Traveller, Very Strong

Morr

Modified Profile: WS 54%, Ag 43%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History +10%, Necromancy +20%), Common Knowledge (Border Princes, the Empire +20%), Intimidate, Ride +10%, Trade (Embalmer); **Additional Talents:** Divine Lore (Morr), Fast Hands, Lightning Reflexes, Meditation, Menacing, Seasoned Traveller, Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Myrmidia

Modified Profile: WS 54%, S 48%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History +10%, Strategy/Tactics +10%), Command, Common Knowledge (Estalia, Tilea), Ride, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Armoured Casting, Divine Lore (Myrmidia), Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Throwing, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Ranald

Modified Profile: Ag 43%, Fel 59%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, History, Law +10%), Common Knowledge (the Empire +20%, Wasteland), Concealment, Ride, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Fast Hands, Divine Lore (Ranald), Lightning Reflexes, Luck, Seasoned Traveller, Suave

Shallya

Modified Profile: Ag 43%, Fel 59%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History) +20%, Academic Knowledge (Philosophy), Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire +20%), Heal +10%, Ride, Trade (Apothecary), Trade (Herbalist); **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Fast Hands, Divine Lore (Shallya), Lightning Reflexes, Resistance to Disease, Ride, Seasoned Traveller, Suave

Sigmar

Modified Profile: WS 54%, S 48%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy +20%, Strategy/Tactics), Command, Common Knowledge (Dwarfs +20%, the Empire

+20%), Ride +10%, Speak Language (Khazalid); **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Armoured Casting, Divine Lore (Sigmar), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Taal & Rhya

Modified Profile: WS 54%, Ag 43%; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Astronomy +20%, the Empire), Charm Animal, Common Knowledge (Halflings, Kislev), Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Ride, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Divine Lore (Taal), Fast Hands, Lighting Reflexes, Meditation, Orientation, Seasoned Traveller, Warrior Born

Ulric

Modified Profile: WS 54%, S 48%, SB 4; **Additional Skills:** Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History +10%, Strategy/Tactics), Common Knowledge (Kislev, Norsca), Intimidate, Ride, Swim; **Additional Talents:** Aethyric Attunement, Armoured Casting, Divine Lore (Ulric), Frenzy, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Very Strong, Warrior Born

Verena

Modified Profile: Ag 43%, Fel 59%; **Skills:** Academic Knowledge (History +10%, Law +20%, Philosophy), Common Knowledge (the Empire +20%, Tilea), Hypnotism, Perception +10%, Ride, Secret Language (Guilder), Swim; **Talents:** Divine Lore (Verena), Fast Hands, Lightning Reflexes, Meditation, Seasoned Traveller, Suave

Chapter IX: Holy Warriors

"It is in war that we glorify our Gods, for what greater cause is there than to fight and die in the name of Ulric!"

—Frandegast Ulfheim, Knight of the White Wolf

"There is nothing holy about war."

—Brutte van der Klar, Veteran Soldier

In a world of war and violence, it should come as no surprise that one of the most common expressions of religion in the Old World is that of the templar, the holy warrior, the crusader who fights on behalf of his God, his cult, and his values. Such individuals are staunch opponents, fearing not their foes; these warriors believe that their cause is just, and so long as they live by the ideals of their faith, they will enjoy the favour of their patron God, even beyond that life.

Most of the imperial cults have (either openly or secretly) one or more militant branches. These warrior orders are dedicated to the protection of the cult and its assets. Of those orders, nearly all have associated orders of knights and warrior priests. These are the sword and shield of the cults, striving to protect them from their enemies and to advance their cause (both religious and temporal) by military might.

— Crusades —

Perhaps the purest expression of a cult's military presence is the crusade. Throughout the annals of the Empire's history are blood-drenched pages describing the horrific wars fought on behalf of one cult or another. At the forefront of these accounts, none so accurately define the drive that impels cults to bold acts of violence than the Crusades against Araby.

The Crusades Against Araby

Even twenty centuries after it began, the Crusades against Araby remain one of the defining events of the Old World, continuing to this day to have an impact on the nations that took part. The Crusades against Araby were one of the largest military expeditions ever mounted, and probably the largest such war fought against a foe other than the hordes of Chaos.

The Crusades began in 1448 when the tyrannical ruler of Araby, Sultan Jaffar, sailed across the Great Ocean with a huge army to invade Estalia. The Estalians are a hardy and fierce folk, but despite putting up a hardy defence, were soon overrun. Countless numbers of Estalians were enslaved and sent back across the seas to the infamous slave markets of Lashiek.

Worried about where the Sultan might turn his attention next, King Louis the Righteous of Bretonnia raised a great army, and sent emissaries to Emperor Frederik III and his Elector Counts to urge them to do likewise. A council was called in Altdorf, and although many of the provinces were embroiled in civil war at the time, hostilities were temporarily halted, and each count offered a small number of their own men to the cause. Along with the Knights of Bretonnia and their feudal armies, the armies of the Elector Counts, and a considerable force raised by the knightly orders of the Old World, a great army was mustered at Brionne.

Yet, what happened next was something that was rarely seen in the Old World. Instead of preparing to defend the borders and passes of Bretonnia and the Empire against the Sultan's armies, the grand army marched south into Estalia to liberate its neighbour. The Sultan may have been greedy and cruel, but he was no fool, and realised he could not stand against the combined armies of Bretonnia and the Empire. He fled back to Araby.

Only a rebellious sheikh named Emir Wazar, often called "Emir the Cruel," was stubborn enough to remain behind and face the armies of

the north. He is generally thought of as having been excessively greedy, cruel, and more than a bit foolish. He consolidated his position in the city of Magritta, forcing his slaves into backbreaking work to fortify the city against the advancing army. A small contingent of knights laid siege to Magritta, a siege that would eventually last eight years before the Knights of the Blazing Sun and their allies managed to break into the city and rout the armies of the sheikh.

Elsewhere, the remaining armies marched across Estalia, discovering only ruin and destruction left in the wake of the Sultan's retreating armies. Entire villages and towns were put to the torch by the vengeful Arabyans, their occupants either enslaved or murdered. The knights, upon seeing the fate that befell Estalia, vowed to take their crusade to the homeland of the Arabyans themselves, to liberate the slaves still living and avenge the deaths of those murdered by the occupiers.

The Crusade stalled in the ports of Estalia as great fleets were mustered, ships sailing from all the ports of Estalia and Tilea and beyond to carry the Crusaders across the Great Ocean to Araby. By the time the fleet eventually set sail, the armies of Jaffar had arrived back in Araby and had begun to make preparations for the oncoming invasion, conscripting slaves and fortifying towns and cities.

The Crusaders landed at the port of Copher, famous for its spice trade. Although they had constructed defences, the denizens of the city were unprepared for the rage their Sultan had unwittingly unleashed, and the knights swept the port's defenders aside and put all who opposed them to the sword. Much of the anger and hatred of the crusaders was vented on the hapless population, and the port's tall walls and graceful spires were pulled to the ground. Of course, this was exactly as Jaffar had intended, and he withdrew to his citadel in the city of El-Haikk along with most of his armies. He hoped by the time the crusade had sacked Copher and endured months of fighting and marching in the sweltering Arabyan heat, that their taste for vengeance would be lost.

It is true that the knights were unprepared for the realities of a desert campaign, or warfare in a hot climate, and the march from Copher to El-Haikk was long and arduous, and saw countless casualties en route. But Jaffar had not accounted for the honour at stake for the knights, or for the vows the crusaders had sworn in Estalia. If anything, the trials throughout the year en route to El-Haikk affirmed the righteousness of the expedition in the minds of the crusaders, and when finally they met the Sultan in battle they were more determined than ever before.

Sultan Jaffar was a tyrannical despot, almost as hated by his own people as by those of the Old World, and during the crusade against Araby many of his subjects took the opportunity to rise up against the sultan. For the most part, these uprisings had little impact on the crusade, but as the crusaders descended upon the city of El-Haikk, many hundreds of tribesmen conscripted into the Sultan's army decided to revolt, plunging the city into disarray and throwing Jaffar's carefully planned defences into chaos.

The sultan was forced to abandon his plans to hold firm against the attacking knights and waiting out their siege, instead marching

out to meet them in open battle, confident that the desert sun and the fear he inspired in his men would ensure victory. But the invaders had by that time learned to use magic and common sense alike to ward off the sun, keeping their heavier metal armour cool and shaded until the just before a battle. Though the armies' numbers were even, the crusaders boasted several thousand knights in plate, astride powerful horses similarly clad; they were as a wave of unstoppable metal, thousands of tons of it crushing the lightly-armoured pikebearers and swordsmen of the sultan. That charge, which has been immortalised in many a legend and ballad, scattered and crushed the sultan's army utterly, staining the stony ground a blood-red shade that remains to this day. Jaffar himself was slain, his back pierced by a Bretonnian lance as he fled the field.

With the sultan dead, the crusade ended. The Bretonnian knights who made up over half of the army declared that their honour had been satisfied, returned to Copher, and sailed for home. The Imperial knights had a very different view, having included in their vows at Estalia the promise of a more complete victory. At this point the main crusade began to split up into many smaller crusades, as the various contingents of knights began to hunt down the remnants of Jaffar's army and free every single slave taken in the Old World.

The crusades lasted nearly 100 years as the armies of the Empire quested across the deserts and mountains of Araby in pursuit of vengeance. Although the most famous battles, the siege and sack of Copher and the Battle of El-Haikk, occurred during the first two years of the crusades, it is during the following century of warfare that most of the knightly orders of the Empire gained their wealth, prestige, and renown.

One such contingent pursued the remnants of the sultan's army into the mountainous region to the south of El-Haikk, around the mountain-city of Martekk. Here they braved gigantic vultures that could carry off a fully armoured man and horse, and ferocious cats that attacked any knight that strayed away from the main army. This contingent hunted every surviving soldier from Jaffar's armies, slaying each and every one of them, offering no mercy to those Arabyans they viewed as cold-blooded, sadistic killers. To this day the people of those mountainous regions whisper tales of the silver-skinned warriors who adorned themselves with the skins of great cats, agents of vengeance and justice. Upon returning home, these Knights Panther became a brotherhood, an order laden with honour and wealth, and the Emperor himself granted them the freedom of the Empire.

Religious Wars

Whilst the crusades against Araby led to the formation of many knightly orders and militant branches of the contemporary cults, it is important to note that those wars were driven more out of a political need than a religious one. The battles fought were not done so out of religious disagreement, but rather as a response to an unprovoked attack. The unexpected act of violence allowed the various provinces, and more importantly the cults that bridged them, to set aside their differences and join against a common cause. It is by this example that the cults of the Old World still form up their armies and mount wars against the enemies of their faith and beliefs, capitalising on the prestige and honour of the past to achieve some lesser goal of the present.

Most contemporary crusades are fought purely over disagreements of faith rather than for political reasons. Some crusades are fought in the open, such as those undertaken by followers Myrmidia and Ulric against other faiths. Others are fought internally, bred from a dangerous schism that explodes into terrifying violence, as is often seen among Sigmarites. Some of the worst crusades are fought between followers of the same God who are divided by ethnicity and culture, which is the present concern with the problems between Estalia and Tilea. Finally, a few crusades are fought against enemies of the faith, specifically against the

Peasant Crusades

The concept of a crusade was intended to appeal to warriors, providing a reason for knights and templars to march to war, yet during the crusades against Araby, as well as most crusades since, many peasants and common folk marched along with the knights, sometimes with tragic consequences. The benefits to be gained from a crusade, both material and spiritual, prove very tempting, and many folk with no business on the battlefield take vows alongside the warriors. Whilst the idea of peasants marching on crusade is commendable, the strain they place on already thinly-stretched supplies, not to mention the lack of training and vulnerability of these irregulars, cause great headaches to the leaders of a crusade. Whilst cult leaders do their best to discourage these kinds of camp followers from marching on crusade, ultimately there is little that can be done to stop them.

There have been some well-documented tragedies involving these types of common folk on crusade. The Wives' Crusade was a pilgrimage made by the wives of many of the crusaders in an attempt to lend their support to their men as camp followers. Making their own way to Araby, largely unarmed and unprotected, the women were easy pickings for the slavers and soldiers who found them first upon arrival on the shores of Araby, and many were enslaved, murdered, or worse.

The Crusade of Mercy was a crusade launched by followers of Shallya alongside a far more militant expedition launched by the temple of Sigmar against a bandit-kingdom forming in the depths of the Drakwald by Mutants, plague-victims and other followers of Chaos. The Shallyans sought to placate the Sigmarites and prevent them from slaying innocents. They were ultimately unsuccessful, getting lost in the forest and eaten by Beastmen or slain by bandits in the process.

Greenskins, followers of Chaos, and other foul creatures of darkness.

Starting a Religious War

Before a religious war can spark, it requires a trigger. This can be as innocuous as a disagreement over a piece of religious writings or as deadly as Greenskins preying on the villages and hamlets that make up the congregation of a particular temple. Sometimes the trigger may be the result of old grudges, bigotry, or even just good old intolerance. In rare cases, religious wars are caused by an ambitious priest who seeks to advance his own standing within his cult through military success.

Once there is sufficient cause, either a temple or the cult as a whole sets about to gather the resources to fight the conflict. Cult priests may range throughout their area of influence, preaching the evils of the enemy and rallying support from the peasants. During this time, they also extract financial and military support from the nobility and other influential figures, whilst working to drum up support from other temples in the same cult. As the gold and soldiers pour in, the cult makes ready to mount the offensive.

Of Fanatics and Wars

Should a crusade be organised by reasonable men against reasonable foes, military engagements may be avoided altogether. Sometimes a show of force and faith is enough to bring the other side to the bargaining table to resolve differences without the shedding of blood. Such efforts are for naught when fanatics are involved, however. The unreasonable zealots and flagellants have little concern for what is better for the cult or the nation; rather, the lust for blood and a need to prove their righteousness guides them. Once a mob of fanatics march to war, there's little to stop them, and they push on until they are destroyed by their opponents, or until they have sated themselves on famine, disease, and death, slinking back to their rude hovels… until the next agitator comes to town.

Religious Wars and the Cults

Ulrican, Myrmidian and Sigmarite crusades are far more common than those of other faiths, but this has more to do with their inherent martial nature than their being any more passionate in the defence of their beliefs and followers. Shallyan crusades take a different form, for obvious reasons, and crusades by followers of Ranald, Taal and Rhya are similarly unheard of, at least in any recognisable sense.

The cults of Sigmar and Ulric actively encourage crusades, rousing their followers to take up arms and join battle against their enemies. These are usually fairly haphazard affairs, orchestrated by individual temples or sects, or even by lone rabble-rousers and demagogues. Well organised cult-wide, crusades are much less common. They require the sanction of the highest authorities within the cult, along with the funding and manpower to ensure their success. These true crusades of Sigmar or Ulric (and there has been at least one crusade on the part of each cult against the other since the Empire's founding) is inevitably waged on a national scale, drawing in the army of an Elector Count and a host of lesser nobles, as well as the forces of various knightly orders.

Crusader (Advanced)

It is perhaps the greatest deed a templar can perform to go to war in the name of the Gods. In ages past, especially during the crusades against Araby, it was unusual for a knight to not go on crusade with his order. But in more recent times crusades are far less common, especially on such a scale.

Crusaders are those knights who are veterans of crusades, who have earned great glory for their order and faith through their deeds in foreign lands against the enemies of the cult. They are world-wise men, skilled at fighting in all manner of conditions and against all manner of enemies, and many knights who return from crusade find their deeds forever etched in the legends of their order.

Not all crusaders hail from the nobility or from a knightly order, although it is certainly true that most do. Some are pious men who are mere soldiers, fighting alongside the armies of templars and knights, and their deeds are no less noble despite their lesser status.

— Crusader Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+30%	+10%	+20%	+20%	+20%	+20%	+25%	+15%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+8	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History), Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Common Knowledge (any three), Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Arabyan, Breton, Estalian, *or* Tilean).

Talents: Orientation *or* Linguistics, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Stout-hearted, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Heavy Armour (Best Craftsmanship Full Plate Armour), Maps (depicting the route of either a pilgrimage or crusade), Religious Symbol

Career Entries: Knight, Noble Lord, Sergeant, Veteran

Career Exits: Captain, Judicial Champion, Explorer, Initiate, Knight of the Inner Circle, Noble Lord, Veteran

When the cult of Myrmidia launches military operations against its enemies, its forces travel with all the religious trappings of a crusade, but they do not internally consider themselves to be on such a mission. Calling a Myrmidian assault a "crusade" because it happens to be religious is like calling a Dwarf "violent" because he happens to relish killing Greenskins. There is simply no other way for a Myrmidian assault to be.

Even though other cults rarely engage in the practise of crusades, even the most peaceful temples can be roused to violence when faced with dangerous heretics, or worse, followers of Chaos or another forbidden God. The hesitant crusader often has an easier time slaying an enemy that his cult has told him is a servant of the Ruinous Powers, or who is accused of twisting the nature of the Gods to suit some sinister purpose.

Crusaders, and many priests and templars, view the act of going on crusade as merely another form of pilgrimage. The traditional view of a pilgrimage may seem to be at odds with the idea of a holy war; pilgrims are often commanded to travel without weapons or supplies, the better to prove their faith that their God will protect them. Crusaders see their actions as an opposite way to reach the same goal. Instead of asking their Gods to protect and fight for them, they ride out in effort to protect and fight for their God… perhaps the God himself is not in danger, but his beliefs or his followers may be. Knights may lavish their entire household's wealth on supporting a crusade, considering it an equal act to a lifetime of virtue. Most cults would disagree on this, but few would turn away a wealthy noble and his funds to make the point.

— The Holy Orders —

Although priests of most faiths are trained in the art of combat so as to be able to defend their temples in times of need, no cult wants to rely solely on its clergy for protection. This duty falls to the templars, holy and devout knights dedicated to the protection of their cult, its temples, and its followers throughout the Empire. There are many such orders throughout the Empire, and every cult (except that of Shallya and Ranald) has a number of well-known templar orders in its service. The most famous knightly orders do not just fight for their cult, but for the Empire as a whole, and many have earned much honour and prestige on the battlefields of the Old World.

Knights of the White Wolf

Patron Deity: Ulric
Primary Chapterhouse: High Temple of Ulric in Middenheim

Grandmaster: Rein Volkhard
Colours: Red and silver, with wolf skins

The Knights of the White Wolf, or White Wolves as they are more commonly known, are the most famous of all the templar orders, readily identified by their distinctive wolf pelts and their savage fighting. The Knights of the White Wolf are the oldest and the largest templar order in the Old World, their founding dating back to the time of Ar-Ulric Wulcan, over 2,000 ago. The Knights' wolf-skin cloaks, coupled with their long, often wild hair and beards, gives them a somewhat barbaric appearance, but in truth they are a highly disciplined and martial order whose presence at most of the significant battles in the Old World is a testimony to their prowess.

The Order

Almost every temple of Ulric, from the smallest of shrines to the high temple in Middenheim, has at least one or two White Wolves stationed in it. Independent chapterhouses of White Wolves do exist, but these are rare. These larger chapterhouses house several units of White Wolves, the duties of which extend beyond merely guarding Ulrican interests. The templars there often venture out on military missions to take the fight to their enemies (raiding encampments of Orcs or laying siege to a necromancer's castle, for example).

Knights

Knights of the White Wolf are distinctive, both on and off the battlefield. When on duty or in battle, White Wolves dress in heavy suits of plate mail, lacquered black or treated with dark oils. Every Knight wears a distinctive wolf pelt over his shoulders, and it is a rite of passage that every White Wolf must hunt, kill, and skin a wolf with his bare hands in order to become a full-fledged member of the order.

White Wolves fight from the back of red-barded warhorses wielding cavalry hammers instead of lances when they charge. When not mounted, they often replace these with huge warhammers that they swing about themselves in deadly arcs.

White Wolves are tasked with guarding the temples and priests of Ulric throughout the Empire and beyond. Units of White Wolves may be dispatched on quests or missions, or they may be sent to battle, marching as part of the army of Middenland to war, or accompanying a larger templar army on a crusade.

Keiner Reizfeld

Keiner Reizfeld is the youngest captain in the Knights of the White Wolf at just 24 years of age, a distinction that has earned him both the admiration and jealousy of his subordinates and rivals. Keiner is the captain of Red Company, one of the prestigious companies of knights based at the High Temple of Ulric in Middenheim. Keiner is viewed as little more than a barbarian by his fellow captains, and is prone to losing himself to bloodlust in the heat of battle. However, they cannot dispute that he commands total loyalty amongst his men, driving them ever onwards to greater and greater deeds, and it is said that had it not been for Keiner's bravery, the list of White Wolves lost during the Siege of Middenheim would have been even longer.

The Black Guard

Patron Deity: Morr
Primary Chapterhouse: Luccini, Tilea
Grandmaster: Lavarro San Andera
Colours: Black

The Black Guard of Morr inspires feelings of fear and dread in both friends and foes alike. The combination of their all-enclosing black, obsidian plate armour and their vow of silence makes their presence unsettling, and many whisper that they are really Undead spirits bound into the service of the Cult of Morr by its priests. The truth, of course, is far more mundane: The Black Guard are mortal Knights who are devoted to the God of the dead and whose purpose is to guard the graveyards, mausoleums, and other sites sacred to Morr. In some instances, they are called upon to hunt down Undead and the Necromancers who would bring them into the world.

The Order

The Black Guard rarely march to war, spurning conquests and threats in favour of standing watch against enemies from the realms of the dead. Not surprisingly, most forces marching against the dark counts of Sylvania find members of the Black Guard among them. Notably, however, the Black Guard took part in the crusades against Araby. Their presence was to prove invaluable during the siege of El Haikk, when their silent and stalwart demeanour terrified many of the defenders, who believed they were the angry spirits of their ancestors returning to kill them.

The true reasons behind the Black Guard's involvement in the crusade became clear after the Sultan was slain and his armies scattered. Rather than return home, the Black Guard marched onwards towards the Land of the Dead, Khemri. There they sought to do battle with the Undead armies of the Tomb Kings, and entered a protracted war with them, allying themselves with some of the native people who lived in their cold shadow. Many of the Black Guard perished on the crusade in Khemri, named the Black Crusade in their honour, but those who returned brought with them fabulous treasures and dark tomes, now interned within sealed vaults beneath the Temple of Morr in Luccini, opened only in times of great need.

Knights

The Black Guard are instantly recognisable, for they wear heavy suits of black obsidian plate mail, ornately carved with raven imagery and padded to allow the knight to move with eerie silence. The armour totally hides any sign of the living knight encased within; this is partly theatrical, the better to maintain the knights' otherworldly aura of fear, but is also practical, as even the most minor of touches can allow some creatures of the night to drain their preys' souls from their bodies. Finally, when fighting foes who have a knack of returning from the grave, and who use Dark Magic to unleash nightmares and other foul spells long after the field of battle has been quit, it can be sensible to hide your identity.

Members of the Black Guard take vows of silence when initiated into the order, and are not permitted to speak or to utter a sound when on duty. This further adds to the air of menace that surrounds them. The Black Guard are permitted to speak at specific times, such as to call out warnings or orders in battle, although there are some within the order who maintain their vow of silence at all times outside of prayer. The most penitent and fanatical members of the order cut out their tongues to enforce the vow.

The Black Guard fight from the backs of mighty, black warhorses similarly clad in barding made from black lacquer or obsidian. When mounted, they fight with huge greatswords and warhammers that glint silver as they smite their foes. The Black Guard cannot always fight from horseback, especially when standing guard or pursuing their enemies into tombs or crypts, and when on foot often use wicked-looking halberds.

The Black Guard's principal purpose is to serve as guardians of the temples and Gardens of Morr. They vigilantly protect these sacred sites from defilement by graverobbers and their ilk, patrolling the grounds with weapons at the ready. Many of these knights attach themselves to Morrian dignitaries, providing protection and adding to the priests' sinister atmosphere. Whilst the Black Guard rarely has opportunity to confront the more vile opponents of their faith, they welcome such opportunities, and are more than suited to the task of destroying Undead.

Black Guard vs. Knights Raven

The Knights Raven is a sister-order to the Black Guard. Comprised of talented and fearless warriors, its purpose is to seek out and destroy every Skeleton, Zombie, and shade upon the earth, and to exterminate the Necromancers and Vampires who summon them. This is an aggressive order, and one not suited to the long quiet periods endured by the Black Guard. For more information on these characters, be sure to check out *Night's Dark Masters*.

Members of the Black Guard are a curious lot, for it takes a peculiar person to voluntarily spend his time stalking the mist-shrouded grounds of the Old World's cemeteries. Most are tormented souls who see themselves as more akin to the dead they guard and the Undead they fight than to those who walk, talk, and breathe around them in everyday life.

Knights of the Blazing Sun

Patron Deity: Myrmidia
Primary Chapterhouse: Carroburg, Middenland
Grandmaster: Siegfried Trappenfeld
Colours: Black and gold, with a golden sun motif

Foremost of the many knightly orders in the service of Myrmidia, the Knights of the Blazing Sun were not always so pious. Once the knights were a secular order of the Empire sworn to no one God, but during the precursor to the crusade of Araby they underwent a miraculous conversion that has passed into legend: Sixty of the knights were stationed in Estalia when the sultan's attack washed over them. They were cornered by his forces, with no hope of relief, when a sudden earth tremor caused a massive statue of Myrmidia to topple onto their enemies, allowing them to turn the tide of battle and escort several hundred Estalians to safety. They converted to the worship Myrmidia and set out on the crusade of Araby in the name of the Goddess of strategy and battle, earning much glory there for themselves and their faith.

The Order

The Knights of the Blazing Sun are by no means the largest of the Myrmidian orders—the older Order of the Righteous Spear, along with its countless sister orders, is much, much larger—but it is by far the most famous and well-respected, not to mention the richest within the Empire.

The order is based in the middle of the Empire, but is rapidly gaining support and influence in the south, and in these parts it holds a great deal of political power. In recent years the cult of Myrmidia has gained a stronghold among warriors, replacing Ulric in the prayers of many soldiers. As the cult has ascended, so too has the order.

Foremost of the order's duties is the maintenance and guarding of the important pilgrimage routes between the Empire and the holy sites of Magritta. These duties have proven to be especially lucrative, as many upper-class would-be pilgrims are willing to pay handsomely for the guarantee that their Gods will, indeed, keep them safe as they travel (albeit using the Myrmidians as vessels to ensure that safety).

Knights

Knights of the Blazing Sun wear highly ornate plate mail armour, decorated with polished black and gold etchings. The order's symbol, a golden sun with sixteen rays, is prominently displayed either on the chest or on the helmet. Especially ornate armour may have the helmet modelled as a stylised sun with a crown of sixteen protruding spikes. The knights carry swords, lances and spears into battle, and bear highly polished shields with which they are trained to dazzle enemies with reflected sunlight.

Knights of the Blazing Sun spend a great deal of time away from their chapterhouses and temples, often embarking on crusades or quests for the glory of their order. They travel in small groups, sometimes alone, and lend support to whatever military endeavours most need their aid, whether it is bolstering beleaguered units of soldiers on the battlefield, taking command of leaderless companies in the midst of a campaign, offering military advice to generals and nobles, or training local militia. Each knight must spend the first several years directly after his initiation performing these sorts of deeds, and only after putting his skills and training to the test may he return to the chapterhouse as a full brother of the order.

Dieter Manschen

Dieter Manschen is a wandering knight and especially pious member of the order, eschewing the comforts of a chapterhouse in favour of a questing life. He spends the summer months wandering the pilgrimage routes, escorting pilgrims over the treacherous mountain passes, and in the winter months he heads north, offering his sword to noble causes. Dieter has become something of a local legend, a lone figure clad in black and gold, arriving out of nowhere when a community or individual is in great need, lending his sword arm to help. After the danger is averted, he departs as quietly as he arrived.

Knights of the Everlasting Light

Patron Deity: Verena
Primary Chapterhouse: Altdorf
Grandmaster: Sigismund Drak
Colours: Dark blue and gold

Known throughout the Old World, the Knights of the Everlasting Light are a doomed order, an institution that shoulders the heavy burden of an ancient curse. Many view these warriors with a mixture of sympathy and derision, for they cannot understand why any would voluntarily accept the curse by joining the ranks of this ancient order. Despite their blight, the Knights of the Everlasting Light are noble and true in their service to their Goddess, and amongst the countless tales of their curse there are a similar number revolving around their heroism and bravery. These are always coloured by gloomy ends and desperate efforts to hold back the call of the curse that afflicts them all. It is the self-sacrifice that makes them beloved in the eyes of the common people.

The Order

Like many templar orders, the Knights of the Everlasting Light traces its origins to the crusade against Araby, where it gained its fame and fortune from its part in the wars. Along with their great wealth and notoriety, though, came their curse. Legend holds that when these knights passed through a small town filled with women and children, they hardened their hearts and slew them all. With a dying breath, the matriarch of the village cursed these knights for

all time—consigning them to a life of heroic service, but one that ultimately would doom them to ignoble deaths.

The curse first became apparent when the order made its way home from the crusades, its ships laden down with fabulous treasures. Despite the sea being calm, and the order's ships sailing in a fleet along with ships from countless other orders, only its ships sunk, sending the wealth of the order to the bottom of the Black Gulf. In the centuries that followed, the order has suffered worse and worse turns of bad luck, ranging from strange outbreaks of illnesses that afflict only them, to blights in the food they purchase, to lamed horses and worse. Nearly every knight has met some ignoble end, and the stories are filled with heroic warriors who survive battle but succumb to plague, choke to death on food, slip down a flight of stairs and break their necks, and more. In every case, these deaths are always from some mundane source, and rare is the Knight of the Everlasting Light who finds an honourable end.

Despite being spurned by fortune, the Knights of the Everlasting Light are renowned for their bravery and courage, and in upholding truth, justice and liberty. They often find themselves standing in defence of someone or something that no one else will defend. They were the only warriors to defend the plague-afflicted village of Hafbad from an advancing horde, when nobody else would venture near. And it was only knights of the order who would fight the fearsome Shaggoth, Brakorth, high up in the World's Edge Mountains.

The Knights of the Everlasting Light rarely undertake the mundane activities that many templars face as a daily reality, such as guarding temples or priests. Instead the knights of the order are constantly embarking on crusades or quests, either as a means to further the cause of justice, or as a way to expiate themselves of the curse, if such a burden can ever be lifted.

Knights

Knights of the Everlasting Light are almost all drawn from the ranks of the nobility, usually the middle sons of nobles sent to join the order as a compromise between a martial career and a religious education. Regardless of the order's infamy and notoriety, there is never a shortage of applicants wanting to join. There are those strange folk in the world—again, mostly nobles—who believe it is better to belong to a well-known but cursed order, than to belong to a mundane but obscure order.

The knights swear to uphold the values of Verena, truth and justice, although as a result of their noble status, most of their views are skewed somewhat. The commoners they "deliver" unto justice do not always agree with their pronouncements.

The Knights of the Everlasting Light wield great swords, representing the sword of justice, and wear expensive and elaborate plate armour. They have a tendency to throw themselves into battle recklessly, seemingly without a care for their own safety or for the curse that hangs over their heads, reasoning that if they are doomed anyway, there is little left to fear.

Hilda van der Kratt

One of the few female members of the Knights of the Everlasting Light, and indeed of any templar order, Hilda is the youngest child from the aristocratic van der Kratt family from Nordland, a family with a curse all of their own. The van der Kratts were cursed several generations ago by a witch whom they drove from their lands, the results of which doomed all of their male descendants to die in battle. To this end, the van der Kratts hid their sons away, practically locking them into their dungeon to ensure their safety, while they sent their daughters into the world to seek their fortune and, hopefully, a cure for the curse. Hilda had the misfortune to join the Knights of the Everlasting Light, avoiding one curse only to be afflicted by another. Since joining, she has been mistaken for a wanted criminal, lost seven horses from misfired arrows, and has misplaced fourteen swords. Heedless of her fate, Hilda throws herself into her duties with great relish, and it is said that in battle she has the bravery of 10 men. She quests ceaselessly with her fellow knights, partly for justice and valour, but ever with one eye searching for a cure to her family's ills.

Longshanks

Patron Deity: Taal and Rhya
Primary Chapterhouse: Talabheim
Grandmaster: Ulrika Grunfrau
Colours: Green and brown

Of all the famous orders of the nine Empire cults, the Longshanks are the most distinctive. Eschewing the heavy metal armours, decorated shields, and overbearing weaponry employed by the other templars, the Longshanks rely on stealth and skill to overcome their foes. Rather than slowing themselves down in mail

Hermetic Orders

Some templars behave more akin to monks than to knights, hiding themselves away in the remote corners of the Old World where they ceaselessly hone their martial skills and pray to their Gods. Orders of these templars are known as hermetic orders, for they lead a hermit-like existence. The secluded and secretive nature of hermetic orders leads to suspicion and distrust, and rumours abound of corruption and heretical practises conducted out of sight in their monastic retreats.

Table 9–1: Orders of Templar Knights

Order	God	Colours	Notes
Black Guard	Morr	Black	Vow of silence
Knights Griffon	Sigmar	Green and gold	Rivalry with Fiery Heart, founded by Magnus the Pious
Knights Mariner	Manann	Blue and white	Guard High Temple in Marienburg
Knights of Sigmar's Blood	Sigmar	Silver and red	—
Knights of the Blazing Sun	Myrmidia	Black and gold	Wield polished mirror shields
Knights of the Everlasting Light	Verena	Dark blue and gold	Cursed with bad luck
Knights of the Fiery Heart	Sigmar	White tabards with red heart design	Personal bodyguard of the Grand Theogonist
Knights of the Hammer	Sigmar	Black and white	Shaven heads, wield warhammers
Knights of the Jade Griffon	Sigmar	Green and black	—
Knights of the Merciless Titan	Myrmidia	Red and gold	Sister order of the Righteous Spear
Knights of the Starry Shield	Myrmidia	Blue and black	Sister order of the Righteous Spear
Knights of the Twin-tailed Orb	Sigmar	Blue, orange and yellow	Hermetic order, wield comet flails
Knights of the Verdant Spear	Myrmidia	Green and gold	Protectors of Talabheim, sister order of the Righteous Spear
Knights of the White Wolf	Ulric	Red and silver	Wear wolf pelts, carry hammers, largest order
Longshanks	Taal and Rhya	Green and Brown	Skilled outdoorsmen and rangers, templars only in the loosest sense of the word
Order of the Righteous Spear	Myrmidia	White and gold	Largest of the Myrmidian orders, tasked with guarding temples
Sons of Manann	Manann	Turquoise and white	Widespread throughout coastal regions

and plate, they don leathers. Rather than swinging greatswords, they use longbows and sharp knives. They are the protectors of the holy sites and groves sacred to the Gods, and any who would defile them face the staunchest of enemies.

The Order

Taal and Rhya have but one formal order of warriors, and so it falls to the Longshanks to fulfill all the roles and duties that templars of other cults perform. Since their focus is on the wilderness, tracking, and trapping, many discount the Longshanks altogether, decrying them as mere rangers rather than being a prestigious templar organisation. However, the Longshanks take their responsibilities seriously, and are ardent protectors of their affiliated holy sites.

All newly accepted Longshanks are forced to take the Wandering Vow, which prevents them from remaining in one place for longer than a week. They wander from one sacred grove or shrine to another, assisting in each one's upkeep and protection. Since many of their routes overlap, the Longshanks organise into small bands called packs. The hierarchy and organisation of these packs is very fluid, changing all the time as they move about the land.

The leadership of the order is similarly flexible, changing on a regular basis as new needs arise. Packs combine their talents to best serve their Gods. Generally peaceful, they abandon all serenity when they discover a holy site that has been defiled. Henceforth, they commit themselves and their lives to hunting down the vermin responsible.

Knights

The Longshanks are more akin to scouts than knights. They are masters of the wilderness, stalking the wild woods and forests like vengeful ghosts, hunting down enemies and trespassers with no mercy.

They dress in comfortable outdoors clothes, typically in hues of green and brown to allow them to blend in with their environment. Longshanks favour the bow, in particular the longbow, as a weapon, and they are renowned marksmen, only surpassed in prowess by the Wood Elves. One of the first acts a Longshanks templar takes is to fashion his own bow, and he may spend weeks acquiring the proper materials and rubbing sacred oils and herbs into the wood.

In battle, Longshanks eschew all but the lightest of armours, preferring to let stealth and agility protect them from harm. If they wear armour, they don leathers stained darkly with oils and inks, so they may blend in with their surroundings. Many also wear green, brown, and red woad on their faces and exposed skin to better hide them from view.

Ulrika Grunfrau

The current leader of the Longshanks, Ulrika Grunfrau took charge of the order following the previous leader's death hunting a Beastlord through the forests of the northern Empire. Ulrika was keen to follow in her predecessor's footsteps, and has led many raids into the Darkwald and Forest of Shadows against tribes of Beastmen and Mutants, ridding their presence from countless shrines and sacred places of the Gods. There are some within the cult who think that Grunfrau is a little too eager to take the fight to the enemy, unnecessarily risking the lives of the Longshanks when the sacred sites of Taal and Rhya are no longer threatened, but many of her fellows agree that none of the cult can truly be safe so long as Beastmen and worse lurk within the forests.

Knights Griffon

Patron Deity: Sigmar
Primary Chapterhouse: Altdorf
Grandmaster: Tomas Bacham
Colours: Dark green and gold
Affiliated Orders: Knights Panther

The Knights Griffon is a relatively young order by comparison to many of the other knightly orders of the Empire, founded by Magnus the Pious in 2305. The order is responsible for guarding the High Temple of Sigmar, as well as keeping senior members of the cult safe whenever they travel abroad.

The Order

The Knights Griffon were founded by Magnus the Pious as part of his attempts to rebuild the Empire in the aftermath of the Great War against Chaos. Founded from 100 of the most devout Knights Panther, the Knights Griffon are a templar order devoted to Sigmar and the protection of his cult. The order's primary task is to guard the High Temple of Sigmar in the Empire's capital city—once Nuln, but since the crown moved to Altdorf in 2429, so too did the Knights.

The Order enjoys an easy relationship with the cult of Sigmar, but less so with the Reiksguard, who consider the Knights Griffon to be intruding on their traditional territory of Altdorf and their role of guarding the Emperor; or the Knights of the Fiery Heart, the personal honour guard of the Grand Theogonist, who often vie with the Griffons for political power within the High Temple.

Knights

The Knights Griffon drill and train within the barracks adjoining the High Temple. It is said that there are none so efficiently trained or resolute in their duties as a Knight Griffon. They are exceptionally proud of their heritage and honour, often to the point of arrogance. Critics claim this as one of their weaknesses; the Knights Griffon see it as a strength.

Knights Griffons are always arrayed in splendour when parading or fighting, wearing ornate plate mail lacquered dark green and gold. They wield swords and hammers in battle, along with lances from which fine banners flutter in the breeze. The most senior members of the order wear the pelts of griffons. In the past it was a rite of passage for a grandmaster to capture and skin a griffon to wear as a trophy, but today such beasts are highly prized in the Emperor's menagerie, so the rite has been done away with.

The Knights Griffon spend most of their days patrolling the High Temple of Sigmar, guarding the holy shrines and relics as well as the priests and other members of the cult. The one area they do not hold jurisdiction over are the private rooms of the Grand Theogonist, which fall under the protection of the Knights of the Fiery Heart. When a priest from the High Temple travels, he can request that a Griffon accompany him, and a lector or arch lector can expect to be accompanied by a whole unit of the bodyguards.

Graf Randolph of Grunberg

Once a young and impetuous noble from Grunberg, Randolph was sent by his aging father to be tempered in service to the Knights Griffon in preparation for his inheritance. Tempered he was, and Randolph is now a shining example of a knight and a noble, although perhaps a bit more devout than his father intended: Upon his father's passing, Randolph turned the family seat and castle over to his order. In the aftermath of the Storm of Chaos, the Knights Griffon see their remit expanding, with temples of Sigmar throughout the Empire needing protection. Randolph has set up a training school for a new generation of Knights Griffon at his family castle in Grunberg.

Sons of Manann

Patron Deity: Manann
Primary Chapterhouse: Salkalten, Nordland
Grandmaster: Hrofil Halfdane
Colours: Turquoise and white

The Sons of Manann are the most numerous of all of Manann's knightly orders, although they lack the prestige and wealth of

their great rivals, the Knights Mariner. The Sons of Manann are ill-thought of by the leadership of the cult of Manann in Marienburg, often derided as land-lubbers and viewed as lapdogs to the Emperor. Whilst most would disagree on principal, it is certainly true that the Sons of Manann look far more towards Altdorf than Marienburg, and their chapterhouses are almost exclusively found within the Empire.

The Order

In recent years, the Sons of Manann have become more active in the northern provinces of the Empire. Uniting to defend their countrymen from Norse despoilers hailing from the frozen peaks of Norsca, they have begun to fortify the northern shores against attack. So successful have they been and so quickly has their reputation for vigilance and honour spread that they are positively inundated with fresh-faced recruits looking to give their lives to the service of the sea.

Knights

Clad in turquoise and white-enamelled armour, the Sons of Manann are a common sight in the coastal towns of the northern Empire. They fight with weapons true to their marine heritage—cutlasses and bucklers, chosen to allow them to fight freely on the rolling deck of a ship.

When not fighting at sea, the Sons of Manann ride great white horses into battle, said by many who witness their charge to be no mortal creatures, but great elementals of wave and water. Of course this is untrue, but the Sons of Manann like to foster the impression all the same. Their steeds are trained in the surf along the northern shores, giving them great strength and endurance unmatched by the horses of other orders. From horseback, the Sons of Manann often spurn the lance, preferring to use wicked tridents instead in honour of their patron God.

Grand Admiral Hrofil Halfdane

Hrofil Halfdane, Grand Admiral of the Sons of Manann, is a veritable bear of a man standing close to 7 feet tall with flowing white hair and a great beard, into which he has woven all manner of sea shells. Halfdane is a Norseman who found fame and fortune fighting in mercenary armies throughout the Old World. When the ship he was aboard was sunk by a great storm, Halfdane prayed to Manann for mercy, and when he was washed up alive on the northern coast of the Empire, he gave thanks to Manann by offering his blade to the service of the cult. Halfdane is a compelling leader, and he has worked his way through the ranks of the order over the past 20 years, until reaching his present position at its head.

Other Orders

There are countless other orders of templars, some comprised of only two or three knights, whilst others number in their thousands. Many smaller, less famous orders are merely sister orders to the larger orders, little more than offshoots with subtly different names and heraldry. Some of these sister orders have been deliberately founded apart from their roots, perhaps to cover some duty the primary order does not usually perform, or to establish a semi-autonomous chapter in some distant land. Other sister orders are founded in a less than deliberate manner, perhaps due to some sort of schism or disagreement in the main order.

— Templar Careers —

Most templars have ranks in the Knight career or Knight of the Inner Circle career, as presented in *WFRP* page 75. In addition, there are several dedicated knightly careers in other supplements. The Knights of the Blazing Sun are described in *Sigmar's Heirs* on page 124, while the Knights of the Verdant Field can be found on page 20 of *Terror in Talabheim*.

Not every knightly order has a dedicated career—as an option, add the following skills and talents to the Knight career depending on which God the order worships. If the character is a member of an order but in a career other than the Knight career (such as one of those named above), the following options are ***not*** available.

Templar of Manann (Any Order)

Row, Sail, Swim

Templar of Morr (Black Guard)

Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Menacing, Perception

Templar of Myrmidia (Order of the Blazing Sun)

Common Knowledge (Estalia *or* Tilea), Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (any one)

Templar of Myrmidia (Order of the Righteous Spear)

Common Knowledge (Estalia *or* Tilea), Specialist Weapon Group (any one), Warrior Born

Templar of Sigmar (Any Order)

Command, Intimidate, Etiquette

Templar of Taal & Rhya (Longshanks)

Members of the Longshanks are rarely members of the Knight career, instead favouring the Scout and Targeteer career; they gain no additional benefits

Templar of Ulric (Any Order)

Intimidate, Frenzy, Menacing

Templar of Verena (Any Order)

Perception, Secret Language (any one), Speak Language (any one), Strong-Minded

Warrior Priest (Advanced)

Whilst all priests are expected to bear arms in the defence of their temple and faith, and most are at least proficient in combat, only a few march to battle alongside their templars and the Imperial army. These warrior priests have a threefold responsibility: ministering to the faithful amongst the army, offering spiritual and tactical advice to the army's leadership, and smiting the unfaithful in battle. When war comes to the temple, a cult's warrior priests take charge of its defence, marshalling the rest of the cult to repel attackers. Warrior priests are usually members of holy orders, such as the Sigmarites of the Order of the Silver Hammer. Most warrior priests come from the cults of Sigmar, Ulric, and Myrmidia, although other cults are not without a few token militant brethren.

— Warrior Preist Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+20%	+15%	+10%	+10%	+15%	+15%	+25%	+15%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+5	—	—	—	+2	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Channelling, Common Knowledge (any two), Dodge Blow, Heal, Magical Sense, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (any one)

Talents: Armoured Casting, Divine Lore (any one), Lesser Magic (any two), Meditation *or* Fast, Hands Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed*) *or* Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Great Weapon*, Medium Armour (Full Mail Armour), Religious Symbol

Career Entries: Anointed Priest, Priest

Career Exits: High Priest, Knight, Witch Hunter

*Warrior Priests tend to wield weapons sacred to their faith, typically a greathammer, greatsword or polearm. Warrior Priests of Taal and Rhya may substitute a longbow.

Note: Followers of Shallya may not become Warrior Priests.

Grandmaster (Advanced)

A grandmaster is a paragon of knightly virtues and the leader of one of the knightly orders. A grandmaster is not only one of the most fearsome warriors in the Old World, but also a legendary commander and leader of men. There are very few grandmasters in the Old World, for even amongst those dedicated individuals who have the skill and strength of mind to become a Knight of the Inner Circle, few have what it takes to reach the pinnacle of knighthood. A grandmaster is always at the forefront of an army when it marches to war, leading his fellow knights, and often the entire army, into battle. He is usually amongst the most trusted of military advisors and generals, and when not engaged in warfare is often charged with planning for it. A grandmaster of a templar order is often a leading personality within a religious cult as well, commanding total loyalty from its warriors.

— Grandmaster Advance Scheme—

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+40%	+15%	+25%	+25%	+25%	+15%	+30%	+20%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+8	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry *or* Religion), Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Animal Training, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (any three), Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Secret Signs (Templar), Speak Language (Breton, Estalian, Kislevian, *or* Tilean)

Talents: Fearless, Fleet Footed, Menacing, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (any two), Strong Minded

Trappings: Magic Weapon, Heavy Armour (Magical Full Plate Armour), Religious Relic *or* Blessing of the Emperor

Career Entries: Knight of the Inner Circle

Career Exits: Captain, Champion, Noble Lord, Witch Hunter

— Hammers of Righteousness, Shields of Faith —

Ask any templar what weapons and armour he prefers, and he will no doubt reply that his faith is his shield, his belief his armour, and his righteousness his sword. Of course, that's just in conversation. In reality, none but the most fanatical would enter battle naked and unarmed, and few go to war with anything less than a full suit of plate mail armour, a shield, and a wide array of weapons.

New Weaponry

The following new weapons expand on those presented in *WFRP* and the *Old World Armoury*.

Comet Flail

A peculiar, if devastating, weapon used by the most fanatical members of the Knights of the Twin-tailed Orb, the comet flail consists of two hollow iron balls attached by a long chain to a heavy stock, much like a normal flail. The balls are filled with pitch or oil and set alight, flames and burning oil pouring from them through holes in the metal. Knights of the Twin-tailed Orb charge into battle with these flails, swinging them about their heads to give themselves the appearance of being surrounded by a pair of flaming comets. In addition to any damage caused as normal by the weapon, when ablaze the comet flail also causes an additional damage 2 hit from the flames, with a chance of setting a target on fire. A comet flail counts as an experimental weapon, but with the following changes: if a 96–98 is rolled on the attack roll, the flames go out and the flail must be refilled with oil and relit. If a 99–00 is rolled the wielder manages to hit himself, dealing himself a Damage 4 hit and setting himself on fire.

Polished Shield

Templars of Myrmidia march to war armed with great polished bronze shields, used to reflect the glare of the sun and give the impression of a fiery horde going to battle. Ranged attacks made against bearers of the shield incur a –10% Ballistic Skill penalty if the bearer is aware of the attack. This penalty increases to –20% in areas of bright sunshine, as the reflected light dazzles attackers. In addition, canny wielders can actively use the shields to reflect sunlight at nearby foes as a half-action, dazzling and blinding them. To do so, they must make a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test; if successful, all targets within a cone template originating from the shield-bearer take a –10% penalty to their Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility, and Perception Tests involving sight, all for 1 round. The penalties to Ballistic Skill tests from this action stack with those caused by the passive use of the shield.

The Spoils of War

Crusades are ridiculously expensive to finance, for they are typically large wars fought on foreign soil far from home. A cult or order might raise a good deal of the funds themselves, but much of the financial burden is placed on the shoulders of the crusaders, and they are often forced to sell much of what they own to help pay for the crusade.

It is therefore considered an unfortunate necessity that those who go on crusade are entitled to the spoils of war, usually amounting to whatever they can loot from their enemies. Sometimes this may be fabulous amounts of gold, making the returning crusaders—or their orders at least—very wealthy indeed. At other times, crusaders are forced to take whatever treasure they can, as unusual or impractical as that might be, whether it is in the form of strange foreign beasts, unusual weapons, ancient relics, or hostages.

Crusaders are often recognisable after their return by their expensive choice of clothing and gear or unusual equipment. The Knights Panther, for example, famously wear the skins of exotic big cats slain whilst in Araby. Other Crusaders might ride strange animals, such as camels or lithe Arabyan horses rarely seen in the Empire. Some might take to using the weapons and armour of their enemies, wielding great scimitars or wearing ancient armour taken from the tombs of Khemri.

The lavish nature of such practises might seem at odds with the austere nature of many holy orders, but allowing knights to take spoils of war is both an incentive to go to crusade, and a great boost to morale to those who have given everything for the opportunity to fight for their faith.

Holy Heraldry

In battle, an army of knights and crusaders is a brightly coloured sight, each with tabards, armour, and barding of the colours of their order. Such heraldry was originally conceived as a way for a commander to tell the various contingents under his command apart, allowing them to be easily recognisable. Many such colours worn on the battlefield with pride today were formalised during the Crusades against Araby, when a commander might have men from a dozen or more different orders fighting for him. As the knights were victorious, their colours and symbols became a source of pride and prestige, representing everything the order stood for.

Symbols were often highly significant, chosen to remember some great deed or victory (such as the panther of the Knights Panther, proving their courage and resilience) or representative of their faith and belief (such as the wolf of the White Wolves, symbolising their loyalty to Ulric). Some symbols are not worn merely as abstract heraldic designs, but also provide practical benefits to the physical uniform of an order, such as the mirror shields of the Myrmidians or the comet flails used by the Knights of the Twin-Tailed Orb.

A PC belonging to an order is expected to wear the colours and heraldry of his fellow knights while on a mission, and as such will be instantly recognisable to anyone with any knowledge of heraldry.

Table 9–2: Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Enc	Group	Damage	Qualities	Availability
Comet Flail*	20gc	95	Flail	SB+1	Experimental**, Impact, Tiring	Rare
Shield of Myrmidia	20gc	50	Ordinary	SB-2	Special	Scarce

*Requires two hands to wield, so this weapon cannot be used in conjunction with a shield or buckler. **See text for more details

Relic Weapon

A relic weapon is a holy weapon, having once belonged to a divine champion or devoted hero. Sometimes these weapons are blessed by the Gods, coveted for the potent magic contained within them, whilst others are really quite mundane, but are desirable due to their famous heritage. Such is the fame and prestige associated with a relic weapon that the wielder gains a +10% bonus to Charm and Command Tests made when dealing with worshippers from the same faith as the relic, regardless of whether they appreciate the significance of the weapon. A relic weapon may only be a melee weapon, and counts as a Best Craftsmanship weapon of its type. Such items are never for sale in markets, though they are worth at least ten times the normal price of such a weapon. These items are gifts from the cult or treasures found or recovered.

Reliquary Weapon

A reliquary weapon is a rather gruesomely holy weapon, incorporating a body part of a holy warrior or divine champion into its design. Some reliquary weapons might be quite subtle, incorporating a finger bone into the handle, whilst others may be rather more blatant, with the iron-bound skull of a long-dead hero forming the hammerhead. The wielder gains a +10% bonus to Charm and Command Tests made when dealing with worshippers of the same faith as the reliquary, so long as they realise the significance of the weapon. A reliquary weapon may only be a melee weapon, and counts as a Good Craftsmanship weapon of its basic type. Such items are never for sale in markets, though they are worth at least five times the normal price of such a weapon. These items are gifts from the cult or treasures found or recovered.

Table 9–3: Advanced Armour

Armour Type	Cost	Enc	Location(s) Covered	AP	Availability
Leather					
Fur Mantle	10gc	20	Body, Head	1	Average
Plate					
Full Obsidian Armour	500gc	450	All	5	Very Rare

Clothing

Attire	Cost	Enc	Availability
Heraldic Tabard	5gc	10	Average

New Armour and Clothing

The following new items expand on those presented in *WFRP* and the *Old World Armoury*.

Fur Mantle

Several orders of templars wear mantles of exotic fur over the top of their armour, usually taken as trophies from slain creatures or worn in remembrance of past glories. Famous adherents include the Knights Griffon, whose leading members wear griffon pelts taken in historic hunts, the Knights Panther, who wear panther skins to mark their founding in the mountains of Araby during the Crusades, and, most famously, the Knights of the White Wolf, who wear the pelts of wolves slain by every knight as a mark of passage from squire to templar. Exotic furs have their practical advantages too, such as keeping the knight warm in the depths of winter, or protecting vulnerable areas from attack. A fur mantle counts as light armour when worn on its own, but may be worn over the top of mail or plate, giving an additional 1 AP to the head and body (maximum of 5 APs). The cost of a fur mantle given in the table is for the fur of a common type of animal, such as a wolf or bear. The fur of a rare beast counts as a Good Craftsmanship item, and includes furs of tigers, panthers and polar bears. The fur of an exotic beast counts as a Best Craftsmanship item, and might include the pelt of a griffon or something even more exotic.

Heraldic Tabard

This simple tabard or overcoat is decorated in distinctive colours and heraldry and is worn over the top of a suit of armour to allow the wearer to be easily identified on the field of battle. Skilled warriors in a noble's army may wear a tabard displaying their master's heraldry, while members of a knightly order may all wear a common design. Nobles or ranking offices often display a more ornate version of their personal heraldic design, to allow them to remain distinct from their subordinates whilst being identifiable as part of the same army. Of course there are times when an army or an officer does not wish to be so easily recognised, in which case the heraldic tabard is simply removed and hidden in a bag. A character may make an Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry) Test or a Challenging (–10%) Common Knowledge (relevant country) Test to identify the heraldry of a character wearing a heraldic tabard, although the difficulty of this may increase or decrease depending on the rarity of the design.

Obsidian Armour, Full

The Black Guard of Morr take their name from the massive suits of plate mail armour they wear, ornately crafted from pieces of obsidian. Obsidian armour is bulky, but the sinister appearance it gives its wearer strikes fear into the hearts of all who face them in battle. Obsidian armour is almost always worn as a full suit—the disadvantages caused by its bulk make it impractical to use without the advantage of the intimidation factor. The wearer of the armour gains the effects of the Unsettling talent.

— Men of God, Men of War —

The following entries are sample characters that take advantage of the rules and information presented in this chapter. Use them whenever you need a knightly NPC in a snap.

Hubert, Squire (Human Squire)

Hubert is a squire in the service of the Knights Griffon, in training to become a knight himself one day. He is representative of the countless young boys in the service of the templar orders of the Empire.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
38%	29%	33%	31%	34%	31%	30%	34%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	3	5	0	0	2

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry), Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Gossip, Ride, Speak Language (Reikspiel) +10%
Talents: Etiquette, Excellent Vision, Fleet Footed, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Strike Mighty Blow
Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt, Mail Coif, Leather Jack (Head 2, Arms 1, Body 3, Legs 0)
Weapons: Demilance, Shield, Mace
Trappings: Horse with Saddle and Harness

Reiner Aldhart, Griffon Knight (Human Knight, ex-Squire)

Reiner Aldhart has been a fully-fledged member of the Knights Griffon for 2 years now, and in that time has fought all manner of horrors on the battlefields of the Empire during the Storm of Chaos. He will go far within the order, such is his piety and martial prowess, and already has a unit of knights under his command. Aldhart is representative of the templars of Sigmar found within holy orders throughout the Empire.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
57%	41%	42%	45%	43%	34%	41%	43%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	14	4	4	4	0	0	3

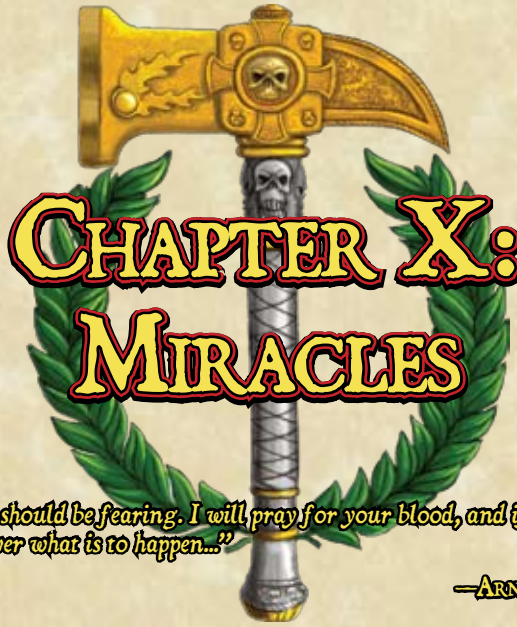
Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry), Academic Knowledge (Religion), Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow +10%, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception, Ride +10%, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Breton), Speak Language (Kislevian), Speak Language (Reikspiel) +10%
Talents: Etiquette, Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate Armour (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Flail, Lance, Shield, Sword
Trappings: Destrier with Saddle and Harness, Religious Symbol of Sigmar

Otto Vance, Knight of the Inner Circle (Human Knight of the Inner Circle, ex-Knight, ex-Squire)

Otto Vance is a senior member of the Knights Griffon, commanding entire regiments of the order when they march to battle. He is a veteran of countless wars and crusades, and bears the scars of many battles. He is a taciturn commander and a redoubtable warrior. He wears the pelt of a griffon as his badge of office.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
57%	38%	50%	50%	55%	41%	56%	41%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	16	5	5	4	0	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry), Academic Knowledge (Religion) +10%, Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) +10%, Animal Care, Animal Training +10%, Charm +10%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (the Empire) +10%, Common Knowledge (Kislevite), Common Knowledge (Estalia), Dodge Blow +20%, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception +10%, Read/Write, Ride +20%, Secret Language (Battle Tongue) +10%, Secret Signs (Templar), Speak Language (Estalian), Speak Language (Kislevian) +10%, Speak Language (Reikspiel) +10%.
Talents: Acute Hearing, Etiquette, Lightning Parry, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing), Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Sturdy
Armour (Heavy): Griffon Fur Mantle, Best Craftsmanship Full Plate Armour (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)
Weapons: Great Hammer, Lance, Main Gauche, Rapier, Shield, Sword
Trappings: Destrier with Saddle and Harness, Religious Symbol of Sigmar



Chapter X: Miracles

"Furious, so I am! But it is not I you should be fearing. I will pray for your blood, and if it do be rotten, Taal will answer. I am only His vessel, I have no influence over what is to happen..."

—Arnulf of Taal's Deep, Hierarch of Taal

The Gods of the Old World are real. The signs of their power are everywhere, from the cataclysmic storms that ravage the northern coasts in the winter, to the verdant forests watched over by Taal, King of the Gods. Whilst the Gods' presence can be felt throughout the Old World, they rarely assume a physical form, and never interact with mortals directly. Instead, they manifest their wills through the magical powers they bestow and the relics and artefacts that they bless.

There are tales of great men and women that are blessed with the power to work miracles on demand, and indeed, these chosen few become the objects of great devotion from the laity. Although not all priests can tap such power, most have some rudimentary ability to call forth divine power in the forms of spells and rituals. Some priests, and all wizards, believe these come at least as much from the priest as from the God, although all priests believe a God's intervention is necessary.

This chapter contains expanded lists of spells for all the main Gods, along with new Divine Lores for lesser Gods, new Petty and Lesser Magic, a selection of Divine Rituals, and details on relics and holy artefacts. However, working the will of the Gods can take its toll on mere mortals, so this chapter also includes expanded rules for the Wrath of the Gods, marks of the Gods, and the effects of breaking the strictures of your faith.

— The Book of Prayers —

Tome of Salvation presents an array of new Petty Magic Spells, Lesser Magic Spells and Divine Lores. All of the appropriate spells from the *WFRP* rulebook are also included, some of which have been updated.

To introduce the new spells into your game, use the following rules:

- When you learn the Petty Magic (Divine) Talent, you gain access to the Petty Magic (Divine) Spell List as found on pages 146–147 of the *WFRP* rulebook.
- Some cults teach extra Petty Magic spells that may be purchased for 50 XP each with the Extra Spell Talent (see the boxed text). You must have your GM's permission before buying an Extra Spell.
- You gain access to Lesser Magic spells by purchasing the Lesser Magic Talent from any career that includes it. Your GM may require research or a teacher for any Lesser Magic presented in this book.
- When a character gains the Divine Lore Talent, he must choose an appropriate Spell List from those available to his cult. Each spell list contains six spells and represents the advanced prayers and rituals taught by one branch of the Cult. The Spell Lists are found later in this chapter beside the appropriate Divine Lore.
- You may only ever know one Divine Lore.
- Extra Divine Lore Spells from the same Lore may be purchased for 100 XP each with the Extra Spell Talent (see the boxed text). The Extra Spell Talent may only be purchased with a GM's permission, who may require that some form of in-game research or teaching be completed first. Finding a source for this can be the focus of an adventure all by itself.

— Divine Magic —

The grinding unpleasantness of life proves that the Gods exist, that they are fickle, frequently cruel, and must be placated at all costs. Miracles only further prove their existence—they are the will of the Gods, loaned to their favoured servants. Any priest might intone a blessing, rite, or spell in the hope that the Gods will answer, but in practise, only a few please the Gods enough to be granted their power. Elves might teach otherwise, but frankly, who would listen to those suspicious, haughty swine anyhow?

Arcane Language (Magick)

Most priests speak a cult-specific, ritualised dialect of Magick, which they use to grant blessings and sometimes even to preach. Unlike the *lingua praestantia*—the dialect of Magick reputedly created by Teclis for the Colleges of Magic—the older cult varieties are sprawling, massively complex languages, the origins of which are not well-understood. However, these ancient dialects share much vocabulary and often have identical grammatical structures, making them, albeit with a little work, mutually intelligible. Many cult scholars claim this is because all cult languages are descended from the "Language of the Gods," taught to Humanity by Verena. Other Scholars believe in the "Prime Language Theory," which suggests that the Mother of all Languages was not spoken by the Gods, but by immensely powerful mortals called the Old Ones.

Whatever the truth, any priest with the Arcane Language (Magick) skill can understand other cult dialects of Magick with a successful Arcane Language (Magick) Test, and may pick apart the meaning of collegiate use of the language with a **Challenging (–10%) Arcane Language (Magick) Test**.

GM Note: Arcane and Divine Lores

In the rules as written, a character could, with the right selection of careers, gain access to both an Arcane Lore Talent and a Divine Lore Talent. Arcane Lore and the Divine Lore are mutually exclusive; the study, focus, and mindset required by any Lore Talent is such that you may only use one at a time. For example, an Anointed Priest of Morr who joins the Amethyst Order effectively abandons his faith in favour of scholarly learning, and thus loses access to the Lore of Morr in favour of the Lore of Death. Conversely, an Amethyst Wizard who chooses to become a servant of Morr would set aside his academic approach to working with magic and embrace his faith—using Divine Lore rather than Arcane Lore.

Magic Sense

Regardless of what the Elves may teach, perceiving Divine Magic with the Magical Sense skill shows it to be very different from Arcane Magic. When casting spells, wizards draw upon the Winds of Magic and channel them into an effect. This can be perceived with Magical Sense as the flows of magic gather, siphon, then release towards the target. Divine Magic, on the other hand, varies massively in its appearance. Sometimes a miracle is blinding for onlookers with Magical Sense, as the appropriate God or perhaps one of his servants appears to manifest in the local Aethyr; other times, the effects are barely perceptible, with nothing more than a faint, holy light surrounding the chanting priest.

In both cases, Magical Sense can also detect those who use such magic, even when they are not casting spells or chanting prayers. How this is perceived, again, varies. Where a Sigmarite may see a Jade Magister as a creature surrounded by faint tendrils of corruption, a Taalite may see the wizard as an ivy-wreathed man with a diffuse, green aura. Equally, when viewing other magic-using priests, what is perceived is changeable. A Manann worshipper may suddenly appear like the God himself, bearing a trident in his hand and a crown upon his brow. He may drip with aethyric, briny waters, and leave wet footprints wherever he walks, or he may just have a faint halo of water about his head. The results are rarely consistent, although the beliefs of the cult of the viewer seem to influence what he sees. In the end, it is up to the GM to describe the results of Magical Sense as suits his interpretation of the Warhammer World.

As far as the rules are concerned, characters with Magical Sense can detect the use, and capability to use, any Lore talent they know with a successful Magical Sense Test. For example, a successful test allows a character with the Divine Lore talent to detect others

New Talent: Extra Spell

Description: Your great devotion to your God has granted you the ability to cast a spell not yet on your Spell Lists. Extra Spell is unusual in that it is not one talent but many, and each must be acquired individually. Each Extra Spell Talent gives you access to a single spell, noted in parenthesis, such as Extra Spell (*Guiding Dream*), for example. This spell must come from your Divine Lore or be a Petty Spell taught by your Cult, so you must have a Divine Lore or be able to cast Petty spells before you can take this talent.

Stacking Spells

Multiple castings of any Spell in this book do not offer cumulative bonuses. Thus, intoning two *blessings of fortitude* over the same character will still only provide a +5% bonus to Toughness and Will Power.

with the Divine Lore Talent, or others' use of a Divine Lore. A **Challenging (–10%) Magic Sense Test** allows characters to detect magical Talents they do not possess, and their use. Success at this test allows the same character to detect those with the Arcane Lore or Dark Lore talents, or the use of those talents.

Petty Magic (Divine) Spells

The following blessings are known by priests across the Old World.

Blessing of Courage

Casting Number: 3
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: —
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A tuft of dog hair (+1)
Description: Your inspirational words put fire in the heart of an ally. A single frightened or terrified character immediately regains his composure and may now act as normal.

Blessing of Fortitude

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A piece of turtle shell (+1)
Description: Your prayers provide one character with a +5% bonus to Toughness and Will Power.

Blessing of Healing

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A sprig of holly (+1)
Description: Your prayers heal an injured character of 1 Wound. The target can only receive the *blessing of healing* once per battle or encounter in which Wounds are lost.

Blessing of Might

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: An iron nail (+1)
Description: Your prayers provide one character with a +5% bonus to Strength and Weapon Skill.

Blessing of Protection

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A small token with your deity's symbol (+1)
Description: Your prayers provide the protection of your deity to one character. Anyone who tries to attack the character must make **Routine (+10%) Will Power Test**. Those who fail must pick another target or take a different action.

Blessing of Speed

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A snake scale (+1)
Description: Your prayers provide a +5% bonus to Agility and a +1 bonus to Movement.

Manannan Petty Magic

The following prayers are spoken only by the cult of Manann.

Blessing of Manann

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredient: A fish (+1)
Description: Your prayers allow a character to hold his breath when under water for longer than normal. He can ignore the Suffocation rules on page 136 of *WFRP* for the duration. It is not possible to cast this spell while your mouth is under water.

Duration and Range

To make finding all the information easier in spell descriptions, *Tome of Salvation* adds two extra lines to the spell entries—duration and range.

Duration

Entries include all of the following.

Instant: This entry indicates that the spell does not have a duration and that its effects are resolved immediately.
1 hour/minute/round: The spell lasts for 1 hour, 1 minute, or 1 round.
1 minute or triggered: The spell lasts for 1 minute (6 rounds) or until the circumstances of the spell's effect are triggered, whichever occurs first. For example, a spell might give you the ability to re-roll failed Strength Tests. At any point within the spell's duration that you re-roll a Strength Test, the spell is discharged.
See description: The spell has a special duration as described in the text.
Time/Magic: The spell lasts a number of rounds, minutes, or hours per point of your Magic Characteristic.
Triggered: The spell remains in effect until a specific circumstance triggers it. You gain no benefit from casting such spells multiple times.

Range

You: The spell may be cast only on yourself.
Touch: You must touch a target for the spell to take effect.
Touch (You): As touch, but you may also cast the spell on yourself.
Yards (Squares): The spell has a range measured in yards.

Blessing of the Mariner

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredient: A piece of rope (+1)
Description: Your blessing grants a character a +5% bonus to Row, Sail, and Swim.

Morrian Petty Magic

The following prayers are known only by the cult of Morr.

Blessing of Morr

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredient: A feather from a raven (+1)
Description: Your stirring words inspire a character to understand the truly pitiable state of the Undead. The character is immune to Fear or Terror caused by the Undead.

Blessing of Passage

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A torn burial cloth (+1)
Description: You invoke the blessing of Morr to extend the God's outrage at the presence of Undead. Any weapon the character wields counts as magic for the purposes of harming Undead opponents until the effect expires.

Myrmidian Petty Magic

These blessings are only known and taught by the Cult of Myrmidia.

Blessing of Fury

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A polished ball of copper (+1)
Description: Your passionate prayers fill a single character with righteous fury, allowing one missed close-combat hit to be re-rolled.

Blessing of Myrmidia

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: An eagle's eye stone (+1)
Description: You bless a character to have the keen combat insight of Myrmidia Herself. This allows the target to act first next round, disregarding normal Initiative. If two characters have abilities that allow them to act first, they act in an order determined by their normal Initiative orders.

Ranaldan Petty Magic

The following prayers are spoken only by the cult of Ranald.

Blessing of Fortune

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A die (+1)
Description: Your blessing grants a character good luck, allowing him to re-roll his next failed roll, at a –10% penalty. If the re-roll succeeds, the Test succeeds.

Blessing of Ranald

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A glove in a purse (+1)
Description: Your prayers bless a character with Ranald's light-fingered touch, granting a +5% bonus to Sleight of Hand and Pick Locks.

Shallyan Petty Magic

These prayers are only intoned by the cult of Shallya.

Blessing of Calm

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A cup of water (+1)
Description: Your soothing prayers help a character overcome a terrible event. If the character gained an Insanity Point within the last minute, he may make a Willpower Test to overcome the mental onslaught and remove the Insanity Point. *Blessing of calm* may only be cast once per battle or encounter in which Insanity Points are gained.

Blessing of Shallya

Casting Number: 3
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A herbal draught (+1)
Description: When this prayer is intoned, Shallya intervenes to ameliorate the effects of a disease. One character may immediately make another Toughness Test to reduce the duration of the disease by 1 day per degree of success. This prayer may only be used once per instance of a disease per person.

Sigmarite Petty Magic

The following two prayers are solely taught by the Cult of Sigmar.

Blessing of Sigmar

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A fragment of meteoric iron (+1)
Description: Sigmar's signature weapon becomes imbued with the God's power with this prayer. You bless a hammer so that it inflicts +1 Damage in combat.

Blessing of Unification

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: Two lodestones (+1)
Description: Your devotional prayers can stir ancient feelings of patriotism and a sense of fraternity in a single Empire Human within range. If the target wishes to actively attack an Empire Human or Dwarf, either physically or verbally, a **Routine (+10%) Will Power Test** must be rolled. Failure causes the target to lose his actions this round as he shakes his head in disbelief at what he was contemplating.

Taalite Petty Magic

The following prayers are spoken only by the cult of Taal.

Blessing of the Hunter

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: An arrow (+1)
Description: Your blessing grants a character a +5% bonus to Follow Trail and Set Trap Tests.

Blessing of Taal

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A waterskin (+1)
Description: Your prayers grant a character a +10% bonus to his next Navigation or Outdoor Survival Test, provided it is made within the duration.

Ulrican Petty Magic

Some factions of the Cult of Ulric teach the following blessings.

Blessing of the Blood-hand

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: See description
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: The blood of a violently-killed wolf (+1)
Description: Your furious prayers incite a berserker rage in another character. One character immediately enters Frenzy, as detailed on page 98 of the *WFRP* rulebook. If the character has the Frenzy Talent, he stays frenzied until the end of the combat; if not, the Frenzy lasts for one minute (6 rounds) or until the end of the combat, whichever comes first.

Blessing of Ulric

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A wolf's fang (+1)
Description: Your harsh words and roared prayer bless a character with Ulric's savagery, adding +1 to all Critical Hit results.

Verenan Petty Magic

The following prayers are only spoken by the Cult of Verena.

Blessing of Verena

Casting Number: 3
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A tuft of dog hair (+1)
Description: Your prayer leaves a character within range keenly aware of injustice and tyranny. Whilst under the effects of this spell, the character must pass a **Routine (+10%) Will Power Test** to commit a crime. On a failed test, the target does not act, as he is suddenly overwhelmed with guilt.

Blessing of Wisdom

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: An owl-feather quill (+1)
Description: Your solemn prayer grants measured wisdom to a single character, allowing one failed Intelligence Test to be re-rolled.

Lesser Magic

The following lesser magic spells may be purchased by any career with the Lesser Magic talent, not just Priests.

Anathema

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A small bell (+1)
Description: Your invocation marks a target, leaving a stain upon his soul. Whilst this mark is invisible, other living creatures unconsciously detect it, making them feel uncomfortable and hostile. The target takes a –20% penalty to all Fellowship Tests. Generally, this lesser spell is cast as a symbolic means to exile someone from a community. As a result, the target has usually done something to warrant this rebuke and is likely to already take a penalty to his Fellowship Tests.

Dormancy

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: See description
Range: Touch
Ingredients: An obsidian shard (+1)
Description: Your spell suppresses the power of a magical item, making it briefly mundane. For this spell to take effect, you must make a separate **Challenging (–10%) Channelling Skill Test**. If the object is held by another creature, you must instead make a **Hard (–20%) Channelling Skill Test**. For every degree of success, the item's powers are suppressed for 1 round. Varieties of this spell are common in the Golden Order and the Verenan Cult, the better to deal with corrupt artefacts, and are also known by a smattering of wizards and priests outside those organisations.

Great Preaching

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: See description
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A bull's horn (+1)
Description: The target's voice can be heard clearly up to 500 yards away, but it is not deafening to those standing close by. The

spell lasts until the target stops speaking; normal pauses to draw breath do not end it, but finishing a speech does. Priests use this spell to preach to large congregations, while wizards use it to communicate on the field of battle.

Link

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A fine, silver chain (+2)
Description: This spell allows you to link yourself to another willing spellcaster who shares your Lore and is within range. For the duration, you gain +1 to all Casting Rolls for each degree of success scored by linked others on a Channelling Test. The linked others must use a "Use a Skill" half action to enact the Channelling roll, which must be enacted 1 round before the boosted spell is cast. This spell is rare, and is only widely known by the Order of Light and some temples of Ulricans.

Repel the Unclean

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A sprig of witchbane (+2)
Description: You surround yourself with a shimmering barrier of blue magical energy. Creatures with chaos mutations who attempt to attack you in melee must succeed on Will Power Tests each round or be unable to attack you, instead choosing another target or action that round. Even on a success, they take a –10% penalty to Weapon Skill Tests against you.

Sanctuary

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: See text
Ingredients: A lock (+2)
Description: You can cast this spell on a room in which you are inside. Anyone trying to enter the room must succeed at a **Routine (+10%) Will Power Test** to do so. This does not stop people throwing missiles, including large rocks and fire bombs, into the building, so it is most effective on strong, stone rooms. Priests often use it to protect temples.

Strengthened Resolve

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A lord's symbol (+1)
Description: The target gets a +10% bonus to his next Will Power Test.

Vow

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: One minute
Duration: See description
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A written text of the vow (+2)
Description: The target of the spell swears to carry out, or refrain from, a certain action. He must do so of his own free will, although he need not know the spell is being cast. If he breaks the vow, he immediately and permanently reduces his Toughness Characteristic by 1d10. If the target swears to do something, merely attempting is not enough; he must succeed to avoid the penalty. The spell remains in effect until the vow is fulfilled or broken, and may be dispelled before that point. Priestesses of Shallya never learn this spell; it is a grave violation of their strictures.

— Divine Lores —

Tome of Salvation presents expanded versions of the Divine Lores for the major Gods, and new Divine Lores for the Minor Gods. The expanded Divine Lores for the major Gods all include three Spell Lists. When a character gains access to a Divine Lore from a major God, he must choose one list. He has access to all spells on that list, but no others. He may gain access to spells on other lists by taking the Extra Spell Talent. A character may still only ever know one Divine Lore. The labelling of the Spell Lists varies from God to God, but one of the lists is always identical to that given in the *WFRP* core rulebook.

The Lore of Gunndred

Gunndred's holy prayers focus on brutality and intimidation, rather than on cattle-theft specifically. As his cult is small, there are, as yet, few stories about more powerful miracles.

Fearsome Glare

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A mask in the form of a skull face (+1)
Description: You glare fiercely at one character and intone a prayer. The target must immediately make a Fear Test.

Painful Blows

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A cosh (+1)

Description: Your blows are much more painful to your victims. They do no more damage, but the agony is excruciating. Anyone you hit in combat suffers a –10% penalty to all Tests made during the following round, due to the pain. *Painful blows* is generally used on helpless victims, and does not affect Daemons or the Undead.

Rustler's Cloak

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour
Range: 60 yards (30 squares)
Ingredients: Muffling cloths (+2)
Description: Your prayers allow any Concealment and Silent Move Tests you make to affect a group travelling with you. The group may include both Humans (or similar creatures) and large animals, such as horses or cattle. *Rustler's cloak* can affect up to 10 Humans and 20 horse-sized or cattle-sized animals per point of your Magic Characteristic. Smaller herd animals, like sheep or goats, count as half an animal for this purpose.

Terrorising Blow

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A drop of your own fresh blood (+2)
Description: Upon casting this spell, any living creature you hit and on whom you inflict at least 1 Wound must make a Terror Test.

Fearsome Mien

Casting Number: 17
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: The body part of a victim (+2)
Description: Your prayers grant you the Frightening Talent.

Threats of Terror

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)
Ingredients: A whip (+2)
Description: Your prayers threaten a group so effectively that they become overwhelmed with fear, and they injure themselves in their mad attempt to get away. Place the large template anywhere within range. All those affected must make a Terror Test. If they fail, they take a Damage 4 hit as well as suffering the effects of Terror.

The Lore of Handrich

Handrich, the God of Merchants, is well known in the lower stretches of the Reik. His cult is well-organised, and teaches the same prayers and rites to all of his priests. The following list represents these, but GMs should not hesitate to add their own creations to expand or replace them.

All of the spells in the Lore of Handrich use money or commodities as ingredients. These are sacrificed to "buy" Handrich's blessings. Handrich is concerned with spreading money, so sacrificing usually entails spreading wealth by giving to the poor, although handing in a sacrifice to a Handrich temple will suffice. Uniquely, Handrich's priests do not need to have an ingredient when casting the spell, just the intent to use it. Thus, as each spell is cast with the benefit of an ingredient, a debt to Handrich will be created. Each week (or portion of a week) such a debt is unpaid, the priest gains one disfavour point (see page 241).

> **Example:** *Lindsay's Priestess of Handrich casts bought loyalty to ensure that some bribed Riverwardens stay bribed, and uses 5 GC as the ingredient. As there is no one to give her sacrifice to Handrich to on the river, she waits until she arrives in the next town. A day later she arrives in Kemperbad, and gives the appropriate sacrifice to the poor. As the debt to her God increases by 10% each week or portion of a week, and 10% of 5 GC is 10 s, she gives 5 GC and 10 s to the beggars on the waterfront, who goggle at the enormously generous donation and head for the local tavern, boosting the local economy with their windfall.*

Bought Loyalty

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: See description
Range: You
Ingredients: 20% of the transaction (+2)
Description: You pray to Handrich to bless your transaction, binding all parties to their agreements. To break any deal blessed by *bought loyalty*, a character must first pass a Will Power Test. If he fails, he must do everything in his power to ensure that he fulfils his part of the bargain. Furthermore, if a character does manage to break the deal, he takes a –10% penalty to all Charm, Evaluate, and Haggle Tests until a week after the next Marktag.

Burgher Acquisition

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: 10% of the value of all transactions completed, minimum 5 *gc* (+2)
Description: You plead with your God to make sure that there will be a local merchant willing to deal with you. For 1 hour per point of your Magic Characteristic, you may add +20% to all Gossip Tests used to check for Availability (see *WFRP* page 104).

Eye for Profit

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: 5% of all Evaluated items, minimum 3 *gc* (+2)
Description: You pray to Handrich asking his aid to judge the worth of a commodity. You gain a bonus of +20% to Evaluate Tests and double any degrees of success scored.

Gilded Tongue

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: 10% of the value of all transactions completed, minimum 10 *gc* (+2)
Description: You mutter prayers to the Merchant God and every transaction seems to go your way. You gain a bonus of +10% to Haggle Tests and double any degrees of success scored.

Time is Money

Casting Number: 19
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: See description
Range: You
Ingredients: 10% of debt (+2)
Description: You beg Handrich not to curse you for not paying your debt to him, reasoning that the longer you take to pay, the greater the sacrifice he will earn. If you successfully cast this spell, you are given an extra week to pay your debts to the Merchant God (*i.e.* to the next Marktag). If you fail, your debts are doubled and you are immediately cursed.

Word of Mouth

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: 10 minutes/Magic
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: 5 *gc* (+1)
Description: Your prayers cause your competitors and allies to speak well of you. All characters within range talk well of their past dealings with you, no matter how bad they may have been. For the duration of the spell, you receive +10% on all Fellowship Tests with any who have heard these positive reports.

The Lore of Khaine

The disparate cults of Khaine, the Lord of Murder, do not share their lore; indeed, few are even aware of the existence of other cults dedicated to their God. The following prayers are an example of what a typical priest of the Scorpion Prince has at his disposal. However, as the various, hidden Khainite cults are all very different,

GMs should feel free to create their own spells or adapt the following list as suits their campaigns.

Bloody Hand

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A vial of a murdered man's blood (+2)
Description: You chant your dark dedications to the Scorpion Prince, and your hands begin to drip blood, marking you as Khaine's chosen. Your hands drip the blood of the murdered, splashing on your foes in combat. Any that wish to charge you must first pass a Will Power Test. If they fail, they waste their charge action this round, staring at the blood in horror. Furthermore, those in combat with you suffer a –10% penalty to Weapon Skill and Agility Tests as they instinctually try to avoid the terrible ichor.

Dagger of Khaine

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A murdered man's finger (+1)
Description: Your prayers imbue your dagger with Khaine's lust for blood. Your melee weapon, which must be a dagger, counts as a magical weapon with the Precise quality.

Eternal Torment

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: The corpse's undamaged heart (+2)
Description: You speak your prayers over the body of a recently deceased corpse, and claim the soul for Khaine. The spirit (and corpse) becomes immune to Necromancy spells and will never know Morr's peace as it is sent screaming to the Lord of Murder's Dark Realm. It is said those sent to Khaine sometimes return to do the bidding of his priests; if this is true, it is a very rare event.

Hidden Blade

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A crushed tail of a scorpion (+1)
Description: You chant prayers in your enemy's face, misdirecting him from the true threat: the Hidden Blade. A dagger flashes from an unexpected direction, held by a hand and arm that appears as one of your own, but cannot be. As a free action, make a Weapon Skill Test. If you succeed, you deal SB Damage and as if you had attacked with a weapon that had the Precise Quality.

Sting in the Tail

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A vial of scorpion venom (+1)
Description: Your prayers draw the killing power of the scorpion to your blade. Your melee weapon, which must be a dagger, deals an extra +1 Damage on any successful strike. Furthermore, if a strike inflicts Wounds, the victim must pass a Toughness Test or lose an extra Wound per point of your Magic Characteristic.

The Lord of Murder

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: The blood of any creature with an Attacks Characteristic of 5 (+2)
Description: You chant your prayer and are filled with the killing power of Khaine. You gain +1 to your Attacks Characteristic per point of your Magic Characteristic, and you can take the swift attack action as a half action. The extra attacks may only be used in combination with a dagger. You can still only take one attack action per round.

The Lore of Manann

Manann is the fickle God of the Seas, and his moods range from violent outbursts to strange acts of benevolence. When a priest requests the aid of his God, he never knows exactly how his patron will react. When angry, Manann punishes his Priests with jolts of painful albeit harmless electricity, but when benevolent, he fills them with the soothing calm of a gentle spring rain. The spell lists of Manann reflect the two sides of the God: the benefactor and the violent God of storms. As the Lord of Journeys list combines the two aspects, it is the most popular.

Becalm

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: 96 yards (48 squares)
Ingredients: A dagger carved of whalebone (+2)
Description: You steal the wind out of the sails of one ship within range. The ship is completely becalmed and unless it has oars, it remains dead in the water. Should this spell be cast in the midst of a storm, it creates an area of calm around the ship and to 100 yards beyond. The waters are smooth and the air is still, whilst the gales, lashing rains, and towering crests rage around the ship. *Becalm* is centred on the ship, so if propelled by means other than wind, the area of calm moves with it.

Blessed Voyage

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: See description
Range: You
Ingredients: A bottle of wine (+1)
Description: You pray for Manann's blessings at the beginning of a sea voyage. Any Navigation Tests made on the voyage gain a +10% bonus as long as you remain onboard. For the purposes of voyage, this spell lasts until the ship next docks at a port.

Blessing of the Albatross

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: See description
Range: See text
Ingredients: A bottle of wine and a fish (+2)
Description: You pray to Manann whilst standing on the deck of a ship that is afloat, although it may be in harbour. Upon completing the invocation, an albatross descends from the heavens and follows the ship no matter where it goes. The albatross waits up to 1 hour for the ship to sail, and after that, it stays with the ship until killed, or the ship makes port. As long as the albatross is present, the ship cannot sink, no matter how much damage it takes. The crew are not, however, protected from falling overboard, or through holes in the hull.

Table 10–1: The Lore of Manann

Lord of Journeys	Lord of Storms	Lord of Bounty
Becalm	Becalm	Blessed Voyage
Blessed Voyage	Curse of the Albatross	Blessing of the Albatross
Breathe Water	Drowned Man's Face	Breathe Water
Curse of the Albatross	Rip Tides	Fair Wind
Water Blast	Sea Legs	Fisherman's Eye
Waterwalk	Water Blast	Waterwalk

Breathe Water

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A live fish (+1)
Description: Your touch and the power of Manann confer the ability to breathe water as if it were air.

Curse of the Albatross

Casting Number: 19
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)
Ingredients: An albatross feather (+2)
Description: The wrath of the God of the Seas is nothing to trifle with. You call down doom on enemies of Manann within range. Use the large template. Those affected by the Curse of the Albatross have the Critical Value of any Critical Hits suffered increased by 2.

Drowned Man's Face

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: A cup of salt water (+1)
Description: You chant your prayer at one character within range. His lungs immediately fill with salt water, making it impossible for him to speak, and other actions far more difficult. Whilst the water remains in his lungs, he takes a –10% penalty to all tests. Each round, the target may spend a half action to make a Toughness Test to cough up the water, thereby ending the spell. If the target does not succeed on a Toughness Test whilst under the effect of Drowned Man's Face, he takes a Damage 2 hit when the spell expires.

Fair Wind

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour
Range: See text
Ingredients: A bellows (+2)
Description: Manann blesses the ship you are on with fair winds. The wind blows from the ideal quarter for the ship to make its destination, and strong enough to move the ship at its maximum safe speed. This spell works even if you do not know the way to your destination, as long as the destination is somewhere you have been before. If you have not been there, you must specify the direction in which you want to go. The ship must be guided around hazards normally, but the wind gives all such tests a +10% bonus.

Fisherman's Eye

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A small fishing line (+1)
Description: *Fisherman's eye* fills you with an uncanny sense of where you might find a desired creature in the sea. Upon casting the spell, name an ordinary creature. You know the best place within your current field of vision to work on the water. If fishing, this is where you should drop the net or line; if diving for shellfish, it is where you should dive.

Rip Tides

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour
Range: See text
Ingredients: A handful of salt (+1)
Description: You can chant this prayer at one boat or ship that you can see. All Sail or Row Tests to control that vessel are at a –10% penalty.

Table 10–2: The Lore of Morr

Morr in Twilight	Morr in Darkness	Morr in Daylight
Destroy Undead	Dooming	Destroy Undead
Dream Message	Dream Message	Eternal Rest
Preserve Corpse	Glimpse Ahead	Preserve Corpse
Sign of the Raven	Guiding Dream	Sign of the Raven
Sleep of Death	Speech of Morr	Sleep of Death
Vision of Morr	Vision of Morr	Threshold Line

Sea Legs

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: A splinter of wood from a wrecked ship (+2)
Description: Your prayer curses a character to feel as if he is standing upon the deck of a storm-tossed ship. The target must make an Agility Test every round to remain standing. If he falls, it takes him a half action and a successful Agility Test to stand up again. If such tests are necessary anyway, the spell imposes a –30% penalty to these tests, which is cumulative with any penalties already in effect.

Water Blast

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: A vial of seawater (+1)
Description: You unleash a powerful torrent of seawater from your outstretched hands. This is a *magic missile* with Damage 4. The target of a *water blast* must make a successful Strength Test or be knocked to the ground. *Water blast* also extinguishes all fires in a 4-yard radius. Since this is water borrowed from the seas, many castings also produce a fair bit of sand, fish, and crustaceans, which are quite surprised by their unfortunate turn of fate.

Waterwalk

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A dried water beetle (+2)
Description: You can walk on water. You can also walk over marsh and swampland as if it were firm ground.

The Lore of Morr

As the God of the Dead and of Dreams, Morr grants his priests guidance and aid in dealing with the restless dead. By tradition, the wisdom he grants as God of Dreams is associated with Darkness, and his aid against the Undead with Daylight, while those who choose to balance the two are associated with Twilight. The Morr in Darkness list is generally taken only by augurs, while those priestly members of the Black Guard blessed with the ability to work miracles have the Morr in Daylight list.

Almost all Priests of Morr learn the prayers and rituals to put a corpse to rest (*Eternal Rest*), and many also study the rituals to bring about prophetic dreams (*Guiding Dream*). As these are so broadly known, the GM should allow access to these spells with the Extra Spell Talent without too much difficulty.

Destroy Undead

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A wooden stake (+2)
Description: You cause a Damage 8 hit on an opponent with the Undead Talent.

Dooming

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A hair, nail paring, and drop of blood from the target (+2)
Description: Morr grants you a vision of one important fact about a character's future. This is most often his manner of death, but not always. The fact is always isolated: you might that learn someone will be killed by Orcs, but not where or when. If this spell is cast on a player character, the GM should use the revealed fact to advance the current adventure. *Dooming* may only be cast once per character. The GM is the final arbiter on the quality of the information learned.

Dream Message

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 30 seconds
Range: See text
Ingredients: A piece of wool (+1)
Description: You appear in the dreams of one character and deliver a message no longer than 30 seconds long. The receiver must be someone you have met personally, must speak a common language, and must be asleep when the spell is cast.

Eternal Rest

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A stake made of fragrant wood (+2)
Description: You chant a solemn prayer over a corpse, ensuring that the soul is sent to Morr's Realm. This makes the corpse permanently immune to Necromancy spells. If the target is Undead, it must make a Will Power Test or be instantly and utterly destroyed. If the target has no Will Power, it gets no test to avoid destruction. The priest must touch the target throughout the casting. This ritual is chanted over many corpses in the Old World, but only those with the Divine Lore talent actually empower it.

Glimpse Ahead

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 24 hours or triggered
Range: You
Ingredients: A small mirror (+2)
Description: Upon casting glimpse ahead, you gain a sudden powerful insight about some future event, though the circumstances of this event are not immediately known to you. You gain a +10% bonus to any single test made within 24 hours. You need not declare use of this bonus before you roll. You may only be under the effects of one *glimpse ahead* spell at a time. If you use this spell more than once in a 24 hour period, you must make a Will Power Test each time after the first or gain 1 Insanity Point.

Guiding Dream

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A stick of incense (+2)
Description: You receive a dream concerning a particular course of action Morr wishes you to undertake. The dream is always clear, but never complete. It never explains *why* Morr wants you to do something. The vision generally shows you performing a particular action, in a particular place, at a particular time, and you somehow know the name of the place, and where it is, and exactly what date is meant, even if those would not be obvious from the things seen in the dream. You have no control over the contents of the dream, and there is no guarantee that you will survive to carry out the actions you see.

Repeated castings almost always yield the same dream, at least until the priest has done what was required, or the time during which he was supposed to perform the deed has passed. Failing to follow such a dream counts as violating the strictures of the cult; if you have prayed for an illuminating dream, you should follow it.

Preserve Corpse

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 24 hours
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A piece of fresh fruit (+1)
Description: You temporarily stop the decomposition of one corpse, keeping it perfectly preserved. Whilst this spell is in effect, the corpse cannot be re-animated by Necromancy spells.

Sign of the Raven

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A raven's feather (+1)
Description: You summon a ghostly raven (the symbol of Morr) that casts the shadow of death over the field. You and all your allies within range at the time of the casting add +1 to all your damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Sleep of Death

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: See description
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A small silver scythe (+2)
Description: Your prayers cause a group of enemies within range to slumber like the dead. Use the large template. Those affected fall asleep for 1d10 rounds unless a successful Will Power Test is made. Sleeping characters are considered to be helpless. This prayer is often chanted to calm the bereaved, particularly the noisy ones.

Speech of Morr

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: See description
Range: See text
Ingredients: A large mirror (+2)
Description: The spirit of a dead Human appears before you, and answers a number of questions equal to your Magic Characteristic. You must have the body or a portion of the body the spirit once possessed. The spirit cannot lie and must answer, but it can choose how much information to give. The spirit is limited to information it knew in life. If asked something it does not know the answer to, it says nothing, and the question counts against those you may ask. Since the spirit is released from the realm of the dead with Morr's permission, any corpse may only be targeted by this spell, regardless of the caster, once; whether the first casting succeeds or fails, subsequent castings upon the same corpse automatically invoke the Wrath of the Gods.

You must ask all of your questions within a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic. Once this time expires, the spirit returns to the realm of the dead.

Threshold Line

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: See description
Range: See text
Ingredients: A piece of charcoal (+2)
Description: You draw up to an 8-yard long line on the ground while chanting to Morr. Any Undead creature must make a successful Will Power Test to cross it; Undead without Will Power automatically fail. The line retains its power until sunrise, and each Undead creature only gets one attempt to cross it. If the line is not a closed loop, Undead may go around the ends, so the line is normally drawn as a ring or across a doorway.

Vision of Morr

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A mushroom harvested from a grave (+2)
Description: You pray to Morr and ask for a vision relating to a problem you are currently experiencing. The GM must secretly make a Fellowship Test on your behalf. If successful, you receive a vision that relates to your problem, and may offer clues to help you resolve it. If the test is failed, you receive a bizarre vision that seems like it might have meaning, but is really just a confusing mess.

The Lore of Myrmidia

In Tilea and Estalia, the many orders of the Myrmidian Cult practise an array of different prayers, rituals, and rites that reflect the many aspects of the Goddess. In the Empire, where the Cult has less influence, prayers tied to Myrmidia's association with the art of war are most common.

The Order of the Eagle practises an assortment of prayers, with two primary camps found in the Empire. Some warrior priests perform tactical roles, leading units of men according to the dictates of their leaders, and learn prayers that aid them to do this (Myrmidia the Captain). Others prefer to support the generals directly, and memorise rites more appropriate for this role (Myrmidia the Commander). In the Empire, only the Order of Fury goes beyond these prayers, preferring rites that demonstrate their unique view of the world (Myrmidia the Wrathful).

Blazing Sun

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: You (large template)
Ingredients: A page mentioning Fury from the *Bellona Myrmidia* (+2)
Description: Myrmidia answers your prayers with blinding flames of retribution. Centre the large template on yourself. Those affected (friend and foe, though you yourself are not affected) take a Damage 3 hit that ignores armour, and they must pass a Will Power Test or be stunned next round as they stagger, half-blind and beating at their aflame accoutrements.

Command the Legion

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round
Range: See text
Ingredients: An eagle's beak (+1)

Description: You pray to Myrmidia to lend her strength to your words, and shout out your orders. Until the end of the round, any one target you can see hears your commands, no matter how far away he is. Furthermore, you gain a +10% bonus to any Command Test taken to influence the target this round.

Dismay Foe

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A beaten-copper mask (+2)
Description: You take on the wrathful aspect of Myrmidia. Any opponent struck by you in melee must make a Terror Test. A test must be made for each successful attack. Those who fail become Terrified.

Eagle's Vision

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A gold-rimmed lens (+2)
Description: Answering your prayers, Myrmidia sends you visions of a nearby battle as if you were an eagle flying high above it. You can view any pre-specified battle within your Magic Characteristic in leagues (a league is 3 miles). You see all of the primary actions and movements of the participants, thus gaining +10% to any Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Tests concerning that battle, and count all allied regiment and unit leaders as being within your line-of-sight. Whilst under the effects of eagle's vision, you count as being unaware in combat, granting opponents a +30% bonus to Weapon Skill Tests made to hit you. As well, you can only take cast actions.

Fury's Call

Casting Number: 15
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredients: A broken spear-tip (+2)
Description: Your passionate prayers instil your allies with a fervent hatred of their enemies. All allies within range may re-roll their first missed attack each round.

Inspired Leadership

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You and 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A baton (+1)
Description: You take on an aura of authority, your prayers inspiring allies with faith in your abilities. You gain a +20% bonus to all Command and Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Tests. Furthermore, any allies within range can re-roll any failed Fear or Terror Tests they are required to take during the spell's duration.

Quick Strike

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A charm engraved with a lightning bolt (+2)

Table 10–3: The Lore of Myrmidia

Myrmidia the Wrathful	Myrmidia the Captain	Myrmidia the Commander
Blazing Sun	Dismay Foe	Command the Legion
Dismay Foe	Inspired Leadership	Eagle's Vision
Fury's Call	Quick Strike	Inspired Leadership
Quick Strike	Shield of Myrmidia	Shield of Myrmidia
Spear of Myrmidia	Skill of Combat	Shieldmaiden's Devotion
Vengeful Wrath	Spear of Myrmidia	Skill of Combat

Description: Infused with Myrmidia's power, you gain +1 to your Attacks Characteristic and you can take the swift attack action as a half action. You can still only take one attack action per round.

Shield of Myrmidia

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A shield (+2)
Description: You bless your allies with Myrmidia's protection. All allies within range gain +1 Armour Point on all locations, up to a maximum of 5 APs.

Shieldmaiden's Devotion

Casting Number: 17
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: An eagle standard (+2)
Description: Your chanted prayers fill Myrmidia's children with the devotion of her bravest Shieldmaidens. All Myrmidians, Tileans, and Estalians within range gain the Fearless Talent.

Skill of Combat

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A bundle of sticks (+1)
Description: You instil your allies with the skill of Myrmidia. All allies within range gain a +10% bonus to their Weapon Skill.

Spear of Myrmidia

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A whetstone (+1)
Description: Your weapon, which must be a spear, becomes imbued with Myrmidia's power. The spear counts as a magical weapon and has the Armour Piercing Quality.

Vengeful Wrath

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: The blood of a wronged woman (+1)
Description: Your prayers fill you with unbridled fury and hatred. You may re-roll each failed Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test once. Whilst *vengeful wrath* is in effect, you must attack the nearest enemy in melee combat, all attacks must be all out attacks, charge attacks, or swift attacks, and you may not flee or retreat.

The Lore of Ranald

Ranald represents a variety of interests, both positive and negative. Whilst reviled as the God of Thieves, he is also prayed to as the God of Good Fortune. But Ranald can be a fickle patron. His priests know enough not to entreat their God too much, lest Ranald's blessings dry up. A sudden downturn in the priest's fortunes can be the price of over-reliance on Ranald's attentions. Aside from the typical thieves that venerate him, Ranald is also the patron of merchants and the God who shelters and supports those who fight for freedom.

Bamboozle

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A piece of wool (+2)
Description: You fool one man-shaped creature (Human, Elf, Orc, Beastman, *etc.*) within range into doing your bidding unless it makes a successful Will Power Test. On its next turn, you may decide what actions you want the character to take and it will do as you say. The affected creature does whatever you say short of actively harming itself. You could, however, instruct the creature to do something foolish that might result in its harm. *Bamboozle* does not work on Daemons or the Undead.

Bargain Hunter

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: A coin (+1)
Description: Ranald guides you to the cheapest source for a particular kind of good. When intoning this prayer, you decide the geographical area, type and quantity of good, and its quality. If such goods are unavailable, you learn that. Unless there are unusual circumstances, the cheap source is 90% of the normal price, but for Rare or Very Rare goods this spell might lead you to the only source, who can charge whatever he likes.

Bountiful Fortune

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A pair of silvered knucklebones (+2)
Description: As *good fortune*, but it affects you and all your allies within range at the time of casting. Each individual may discharge the spell on a different Skill or Characteristic test.

Eye of Ranald

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A small pair of scales (+2)
Description: Ranald blesses you with a fine eye for the value of things. You gain a +20% bonus to Evaluate and Haggle Tests.

Good Fortune

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A rabbit's foot (+1)
Description: You gift one character with the luck of Ranald. During that time, the subject of the spell can reverse the order of the percentile dice on any one Skill or Characteristic Test. A Concealment Test of 82%, for example, could be made into a 28% instead. A character can only benefit from one *good fortune* spell at a time.

Perfect Empathy

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A mirror (+2)
Description: You perfectly understand the person to whom you are speaking. This overcomes any language barriers, but also means you know what he really thinks, as well as what he actually says. This gives a merchant an overwhelming advantage in negotiations; you get a +50% bonus to Haggle Tests with this person. It is also very useful for interrogation, but priests of Ranald tend to be less interested in that sort of thing; in fact, they are less likely to use the spell for such a purpose lest someone get the idea to use a similar spell on them!

Poor Man's Face

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A box with a false bottom (+2)
Description: Any valuables you or your allies carry become impossible to find by any search that is against your will or without your knowledge; even if a bag full of gold coins is turned inside-out, the inspectors find only a few crumbs and half a biscuit, or similar worthless items. Priests believe Ranald keeps the valuables for you for the duration, and teach that the Trickster God may not give back items that he likes overmuch.

Table 10–4: The Lore of Ranald

Ranald the Rogue	Ranald the Dealer	Ranald the Liberator
Bamboozle	Bamboozle	Bountiful Fortune
Bountiful Fortune	Bargain Hunter	Good Fortune
Good Fortune	Eye of Ranald	Open
Open	Good Fortune	Poor Man's Face
Stealth of Ranald	Perfect Empathy	Stealth of Ranald
Trapsense	Rumour of Bounty, Rumour of Dearth	Unremembered Face

Rumour of Bounty, Rumour of Dearth

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A printed broadsheet (+2)
Description: You beseech Ranald to manipulate the prices of a particular object or commodity in a settlement. *Rumour of bounty, rumour of dearth* instils a vague sense in the locals that something is about to become more common, reducing the prices, or that something is about to become more scarce, increasing the prices. Choose which is true upon casting this spell. If you choose to make something more common, the prices on one specific type of object or good drop by 10%; of more scarce, the prices increase by 10%. This spell extends only to transactions between you and another target, and only so long as you are negotiating a price. All bows (and by extension, arrows) might be made cheaper by this spell, but not all ranged weapons; likewise, all bread and grains might be made more expensive, but not all foodstuffs in general.

As an unexpected consequence of this spell, the rumours tend to remain in the minds of those affected and excessive use of this spell has been known to cause riots—especially when word spreads of food shortages.

Open

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 2 yards (1 square)
Ingredients: A key (+1)
Description: You cause any one lock, bolt, or latch to unlock, unbolt, or lift. The object cannot be forced shut in that time (though you, as the caster, may shut it if you wish). *Open* can override a *magic lock* with an additional successful Channelling Test.

Stealth of Ranald

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A tuft of cat fur (+1)
Description: Ranald blesses you with incredible stealth. You gain a +20% bonus to Concealment and Silent Move Tests. Should you run across a *magic alarm* during this time, you can bypass it with a successful Channelling Test.

Trapsense

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: Instant
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: The eyes of a hawk (+2)
Description: Your prayers allow you to magically sense all traps within range. *Trapsense* does not disarm these traps, it only alerts you to their presence and location.

Unremembered Face

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A mask (+2)
Description: Upon intoning your prayers, you make it harder for people to recall details about you. Any creature you encounter must succeed on a Will Power Test or only be able to recall two facts about your appearance. These must be accurate, but you can choose what they are. Most users of this spell wear a flamboyant and distinctive hat and cloak, or something similar, which can easily be removed and hidden. This allows a priest of Ranald to gain a reputation without risking his identity.

Table 10–5: The Lore of Shallya

Shallya Contemplative	Shallya Enduring	Shallya Restoring
Cure Disease	Compassionate Mind	Cure Disease
Cure Insanity	Martyr	Cure Insanity
Cure Poison	Purify	Cure Poison
Cure Wounds	Shallya's Endurance	Cure Wounds
Martyr	Vestment of Purity	Delay Affliction
Purify	Withstand Disease	Golden Tears

The Lore of Shallya

The spells granted by Shallya fall into two main groups: those that allow her servants to heal the troubles of the world, and those that allow them to endure those troubles to bring relief to the suffering. As both of these aspects are equally important to Shallyans, all the holy prayers are widely known, and use of the Extra Spell talent is common for those priestesses blessed by the Goddess. Wandering Shallyans normally take the Contemplative or Enduring spell list, while those who remain at a single temple typically choose Contemplative or Restoring.

Compassionate Mind

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A blindfold (+2)
Description: Your reassuring prayers resolve a character's mind to facing the horrors of the world. Any time the target makes a Will Power Test during the duration to avoid gaining an Insanity Point, the target gains a +10% bonus.

Cure Disease

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A poultice (+2)
Description: Your prayers heal a character suffering from the effects of a disease. The disease is removed from the subject's system, and all effects are nullified. *Cure disease* can do nothing for those already dead by disease; for them, it is too late. You may only cast this spell once per instance of a disease afflicting a target.

Cure Insanity

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: 1 hour
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A blessed water sprinkler (+2)
Description: Your prayers heal an insane character. One insanity is cured and all effects are nullified. *Cure insanity* may only be attempted once per instance of an insanity afflicting a target.

Cure Poison

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A snake's fang (+1)
Description: Your prayers heal a character suffering from the effects of a poison. The poison is removed from the subject's

Optional Rule: Restricted Healing

Healing spells can diminish the grim and perilous nature of the game if they are overused. A gaming group that has lost its fear of combat because it boasts a priest of Sigmar or Shallya among its number is missing out on the feel of *WFRP*. The following optional rules provide an alternative for GMs who wish to limit the effectiveness of healing spells in their games.

Healing spells only heal 1 Wound to heavily wounded characters, no matter how many Wounds the spell would normally heal. In addition, a heavily wounded character may only gain the benefit from one Healing spell per day, no matter how many are cast upon him.

system, and all effects are nullified. *Cure poison* can do nothing for those already dead by poison; for them, it is too late, and it can only be attempted once per poison.

Cure Wounds

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A leech (+1)
Description: Your prayers heal an injured character of a number of Wounds equal to 1d10 plus your Magic Characteristic.

Delay Affliction

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 day/Magic
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A silver heart (+2)
Description: You plead to Shallya for mercy, to stave off the inevitable suffering for a time. You may touch a creature and temporarily neutralise the effects of disease, insanity, poison, or similar effects for the duration. Once this spell wears off, the target suffers the normal effects of the affliction. A target may be a recipient of *delay affliction* just once per affliction.

Golden Tears

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A tear (+2)
Description: Your blessing heals any Critical Effect other than a 4, 9, or 10, as long as it is cast within two rounds of the Critical Effect. This spell does *not* raise the dead, and must be cast before a character dies. Insanity points are gained as normal for any healed Critical Hits.

Martyr

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A lock of hair from the target of the spell (+2)
Description: You create a sympathetic connection between you and one character of your choice within range. Any damage done to the chosen character is inflicted on you instead.

Purify

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)
Ingredients: A burning torch (+2)
Description: Nurgle, the Chaos God of Disease and Decay, is abhorrent to Shallya. This spell allows you to target any one Daemon or follower of Nurgle within range and overwhelm him with the purifying power of Shallya. This is an anathema to the servants of the Plague Lord. The target of *purify* loses 1d10 Wounds, regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour, and must make a successful Will Power Test or be stunned for 1 round.

Shallya's Endurance

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A bandage (+1)
Description: You invoke the power of Shallya to temporarily boost a target's vitality. A single creature you touch increases his Toughness Characteristic by 10%, which also increases his Toughness Bonus by +1.

Vestment of Purity

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic (see description)
Range: You
Ingredients: A white robe (+2)
Description: Your prayers make you immune to all poisons and diseases, mundane or magical, for the duration of the spell or until you take violent action against anyone. In addition, whilst under the effects of this spell, Daemons or followers of the Plague Lord must pass a **Hard (–20%) Willpower Test** to target you with melee attacks or magic. If they fail, their action is wasted for the round as they shrivel before they unyielding purity of Shallya.

Withstand Disease

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A draught of pure water (+1)
Description: Your prayers lend strength to the target's natural resistances. Any time the target makes a Toughness Test during the duration to resist a disease, the target gains a +10% bonus.

10–6: The Lore of Sigmar

Sigmar the Anvil	Sigmar the Hammer	Sigmar the Purifier
Armour of Righteousness	Armour of Righteousness	Comet of Sigmar
Beacon of Courage	Beacon of Courage	Hammer of Sigmar
Deny the Heretic	Comet of Sigmar	Heed Not the Witch
Healing Hand	Hammer of Sigmar	Immaculate Flesh
Heart of the Gryphon	Healing Hand	Soulfire
Vanquish	Soulfire	Word of Damnation

The Lore of Sigmar

Each of Sigmar's primary orders gives importance to different prayers. The orders of the Anvil and Torch, the largest orders of the Cult, practise defensive rites, focussing upon catechisms that protect the body and mind from harm or influence (Sigmar the Anvil). The Silver Hammers follow some of this doctrine, but also teach prayers to smite Sigmar's enemies, knowing that the best defence can often be offence (Sigmar the Hammer). Lastly, while the Cleansing Flames believe they must take Sigmar's purifying fires to their enemies, they also teach warding prayers, designed to protect the Order from the foul corruptions of the Ruinous Powers (Sigmar the Purifier). The other Orders of Sigmar use variations upon these themes, with most preferring defensive prayers over the offensive.

Armour of Righteousness

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A small, iron ring (+1)
Description: A nimbus of power protects you from harm. You gain +1 Armour Point on all locations, though the maximum of 5 APs still applies.

Beacon of Courage

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: See text
Ingredients: A prism (+2)
Description: The power and majesty of Sigmar fills you, making you shine out like a beacon in the night. Any frightened or terrified ally that can see you is inspired by your faith and bravery. Such characters immediately recover and can act normally on their turns.

Deny the Heretic

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A small, silver hammer (+1)
Description: You pray over an inanimate object, such as a door or wall, and greatly strengthen it. The object doubles its Toughness Bonus for the duration.

Comet of Sigmar

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A goldenarrowhead (+2)

Description: You throw a fiery missile that takes the form of Sigmar's famed twin-tailed comet. The miniature comet streaks towards an opponent of your choice within range. A *comet of Sigmar* is a magic missile with Damage 6.

Hammer of Sigmar

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A charm engraved with the symbol of Sigmar (+1)
Description: Your hammer is imbued with Sigmar's power. Your hand weapon, which must be a hammer, counts as a magical weapon with the Impact quality.

Healing Hand

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A leather glove (+2)
Description: Your touch heals an injured character of 1d10 Wounds.

Heart of the Gryphon

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A gold-filigree griffon feather (+2)
Description: Your strident prayers embolden Sigmar's chosen, filling them with courage and determination. All citizens of the Empire and Dwarf allies within range gain the Fearless Talent.

Heed Not the Witch

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A blessed parchment marked with the prayer (+2)
Description: Your prayers beseech Sigmar to protect you from his direst enemies. You gain +20% to all Will Power Tests to resist magic from the Dark Lore talent. If such a spell offers no Will Power Test to resist it, you may still attempt a **Hard (–20%) Will Power Test** to avoid the spell.

Immaculate Flesh

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A dove's wing (+2)
Description: Denying the power of Chaos with fiery passion, you implore Sigmar to protect you from the Ruinous Powers' perverting ways. You gain the Resistance to Chaos Talent. While *immaculate flesh* is in effect, you may not cast spells of any type.

Soulfire

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: You (large template)
Ingredients: A golden amulet engraved with the comet of Sigmar (+2)
Description: The purifying flames of Sigmar surround you, as his wrath manifests on earth. Centre the large template on yourself. Those affected take a Damage 3 hit. Undead and Daemons have it worse, suffering a Damage 5 hit. Armour offers no protection against *soulfire*.

Vanquish

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A miniature hammer wrought from bronze (+2)
Description: Your urgent prayers cause your allies to redouble their efforts to destroy Sigmar's foes. All allies within range may add +1 to their Attacks Characteristic when facing Chaos, Undead, or Greenskins.

Word of Damnation

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A mirror (+2)
Description: Your righteous prayer fills a heretic with hopelessness as he is faced with the prospect of his own damnation. The heretic (as defined by the GM, but should include Chaos Cultists, Necromancers, Witches, traitors to the Empire, and others who are foes by nature of their activities, Careers, and Gods rather than by nature of their race) takes a –20% penalty to all Will Power Tests to resist any spell from any Divine Lore and against uses of the Intimidation and Torture skills.

The Lore of Taal and Rhya

The sacred prayers of Taal and Rhya are passed down from one generation of priests to the next. Because of this, the rites known by each cultist can vary widely. Also, as the seasons have inexorably passed, the influence of Rhya upon the cult has waned, and that of Taal has waxed, so many of the rites once attributed to Rhya are now part of Taal's domain.

Therefore, many cultists learn prayers that focus on Taal's control of wild creatures (Taal, King of Beasts) or over nature as a whole (Taal, King of Nature). However, the most commonly practised rites are still those that balance the two, and maintain that Rhya is important to the cult (Taal and Rhya).

Bear's Paw

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: The claw of a bear (+2)
Description: Your touch imbues a character with the strength of a bear. The target of *bear's paw* receives a +20% bonus to his Strength Characteristic.

Beastfriend

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 10 minutes
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: The tongue of a beast (+1)
Description: With Taal's aid you are able to converse with a single animal within range. You gain a +20% bonus on Charm Animal Tests involving this creature. Animals are not used to conversing with man-things, so they sometimes have trouble articulating ideas. The GM should decide how much the animal knows, remembering that the worldview of the average animal is limited, at best.

Lord of the Wild

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: A jawbone of the beast to be commanded (+2)
Description: You command a beast with the authority Taal, and it complies. Choose one animal within range. You may control its next action. Taal will not allow you to abuse his subjects, so you cannot command an animal to do anything obviously suicidal, such as attacking a creature significantly bigger than itself or jumping over a cliff edge.

Ox's Heart

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: Touch (You)
Ingredients: A square of ox-hide (+2)
Description: Your prayers imbue a character with the constitution of an ox. The target of *ox's heart* can re-roll one failed Toughness Test every round.

River's Blessing

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: 10 minutes/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A live fish (+1)
Description: You call on Taal, Lord of the Rivers, to grant you passage through his 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 divide your current Strength Characteristic by 10, rounding up. For example, if you have a total Strength Characteristic of 52%, your swimming Movement would be 6.

Rhya's Comfort

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You (large template)
Ingredients: A cup of fresh milk (+2)
Description: You ask the Mother Goddess to provide succour for her children. Centre the large template on you. Those affected are refreshed as if they just had a full night's sleep and received three day's worth of natural healing.

Snarling Rage

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A large predator's tooth (+1)
Description: You growl wild prayers to Taal, and they fill you with wild rage. You gain the Frightening talent, immediately frenzy as if you had just used the Frenzy Talent, and increase your Attacks Characteristic by +1.

Stag's Leap

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A tuft of stag hair (+1)
Description: You are imbued with the power of a wild stag. Increase your Movement Characteristic by 1. Whilst under the effects of this spell, you may make a charge as a half action.

Taal's Fury

Casting Number: 26
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: The horns of a Great Stag (+3)
Description: You pray to the King of the Gods to unleash his fury. One character within range suffers 1d10 Damage 4 hits. *Taal's fury* manifests according to the surroundings, but is most commonly lightning from the sky, the earth opening, river waters rising, or the forests themselves coming to life. This spell is a *magic missile*.

Tanglefoot

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)
Ingredients: A cutting of vines (+1)
Description: You summon up tangling vines anywhere within range to bind and hinder your opponents. Use the large template. Those affected cannot move at all unless they make a successful Strength Test, and even then their Movement Characteristic is halved (rounded down) whilst in the area of effect. This spell may only be used in areas with roots or natural vegetation.

Thunderclap

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)
Ingredients: A small gong (+2)
Description: You cause a cacophonous clap of thunder to peel out anywhere within range. Use the large template. Those affected must make a successful Toughness Test or be stunned until your next turn. The *thunderclap* is so loud that it can be heard up to a mile away.

Table 10–7: Prayer Lists of Taal and Rhya

Taal, King of Beasts	Taal and Rhya	Taal, King of Nature
Bear's Paw	Bear's Paw	River's Blessing
Beastfriend	Beastfriend	Sacred Glade (as Rhya's Comfort)
Lord of the Wild	Rhya's Comfort	Taal's Fury
Ox's Heart	Stag's Leap	Tanglefoot
Snarling Rage	Tanglefoot	Thunderclap
Stag's Leap	Thunderclap	Wild Wind

Wild Wind

Casting Number: 19
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You (large template)
Ingredients: A handful of autumn leaves (+2)
Description: You call to the King of the Gods, and he answers with wild ferocity. Centre the large template on yourself. Those affected (not including you) are buffeted with raging, swirling winds, and suffer a –20% penalty to their Weapon Skill and Agility Characteristics. At the beginning of each round, all those affected must pass a Toughness Test or be stunned. No ranged weapons can be used by you or characters affected by the spell, nor can any of you be the target of non-magical missile attacks, excluding gunpowder and artillery weapons.

The Lore of Ulric

The cult of Ulric practises different rites according to where the warrior priest is from. In the northern reaches of the Empire, most Ulrican temples teach prayers that focus upon their deity's winter aspects (Ulric, Snow King). Farther south, including most of Middenland, the temples still practise rituals revolving around winter, but they also learn prayers spoken during war (Ulric, White Wolf). Lastly, some far-flung temples, including many ideologically on the fringes of the Cult, focus solely on Ulric's wild patronage of war, and include some of the cult's most fearsome warriors (Ulric Blood-Hand).

Battle Fury

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A smear of fresh blood (+1)
Description: Ulric's spirit fills you and your bloodlust is unleashed. You gain a +1 bonus to your Attacks Characteristic. Whilst

battle fury is in effect, you must attack the nearest enemy in melee combat, all attacks must be all out attacks, charge attacks, or swift attacks, and you may not flee or retreat.

Crush the Weak

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A broken wolf claw (+1)
Description: Reciting the vitriolic prayer fills you with Ulric's scorn for the weak and cowardly. Once per round, you may re-roll one missed attack against a single target.

Table 10–8: Prayer Lists of Ulric

Ulric, Snow King	Ulric, White Wolf	Ulric Blood-Hand
Frost's Bite	Battle Fury	Battle Fury
Heart of the Wolf	Heart of the Wolf	Crush the Weak
Hoarfrost Thews	Howl of the Wolf	Howl of the Wolf
Ice Storm	Ice Storm	Ulric's Gift
The Snow King's Decree	Ulric's Gift	Unbridled Rage
Winter's Chill	Winter's Chill	Wild Pack

Frost's Bite

Casting Number: 9
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A frozen ball of blood (+1)
Description: You pray to Ulric to freeze your enemy's body and blood. One opponent within range loses 1d10 Wounds, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus. Furthermore, the target must pass a Toughness Test or be unable to take any actions next turn (though he may still take defensive actions, Dodge, and the like).

Heart of the Wolf

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A wolf's heart (+2)
Description: Your allies are inspired with the martial spirit of Ulric. Any allies within range automatically pass any Fear or Terror Tests they are required to make and become immune to the effects of the Intimidate skill and the Unsettling talent.

Hoarfrost Thews

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: 1 day/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A handful of wolf fat (+2)
Description: Your prayers send ripples of chill through your body, and frost forms on your flesh. You are immune to exposure caused by freezing conditions. This spell may only be attempted once per day.

Howl of the Wolf

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A wolf's tongue (+2)
Description: You howl like one of Ulric's wolves and instil your allies with a lust for battle. Until your next turn, any allies within range can attack twice during a charge attack action, regardless of their Attacks Characteristic. A charge normally allows only one attack.

Ice Storm

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: Instant
Range: 48 yards (24 squares)

Ingredients: An icicle (+2)
Description: You summon up a fierce storm of lashing ice anywhere within range to decimate your foes. Use the large template. Anyone affected takes a Damage 5 hit and must make a successful Will Power Test or be stunned for 1 round.

Ulric's Gift

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 1 hour
Range: Touch
Ingredients: An axe (+2)
Description: Your touch and blessing awakens the slumbering berserker in one ally. The target of this spell counts as having the Frenzy talent. Unwilling targets are entitled to a Will Power Test to resist this spell.

Unbridled Rage

Casting Number: 21
Casting Time: 1 full action and 1 half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 36 yards (18 squares)
Ingredients: A dead wolf-cub's paw (+3)
Description: You roar dedications to the God of War, and those already under his sway respond. All allies within range who are frenzying gain +1 to their Attack Characteristic, and only use a half action to enact a swift attack. They still may only take one attack action in a round.

The Snow King's Decree

Casting Number: 21
Casting Time: 2 full actions and 1 half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A best craftsmanship axe (+3)
Description: Ulric's hatred for the weak, the cowardly, and the dishonourable drips from the scornful words of your bellowed prayer. Silvery, freezing fire erupts about one target within range, and causes one Damage 8 hit per round. However, devout Ulricans, or any that are brave and honourable (as dictated by the GM), are immune to the spell, and the flames cause no damage against them. Armour offers no protection against *the Snow King's decree*.

Wild Pack

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A small horn carved of wolf bone (+2)
Description: You howl forth your angry prayers to Ulric, and your allies bristle with barely restrained violence. All allies within range gain the Unsettling Talent.

Winter's Chill

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A tuft of wolf fur (+1)
Description: You radiate a coldness that chills to the bone. Anyone attacking you in melee combat suffers a –10% penalty to their Weapon Skill. This spell does not affect Undead or creatures that are immune to (or thrive on) cold.

The Lore of Verena

Verenans have no fixed prayers or rituals that the cult as a whole formally practises. Instead, each temple seems to support its own unique mixture of rites, as dictated by the local traditions and great minds that have created them.

However, in general, there are three broad camps into which each of the temples fall. Firstly, and controversially, some temples teach that justice should be the cult's primary pursuit, not the vagaries of due process and law; all that matters is what is right, not what is necessarily legal (Verena the Just). Most temples agree that justice needs to be sought, but prefer to follow Empire law, and teach prayers and rites that also support their priest's investigations into injustice (Verena the Judge). However, the majority of the cult's priests follow a more balanced approach, and teach rituals that not only allow the priesthood to uncover injustice, but also show that Verena is a Goddess of wisdom and intelligence (Verena the Wise).

As Verena is my Witness

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Free action (but you still count as having used a "cast" action that round)
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A holy symbol of Verena (+2)
Description: Simply by starting a sentence with "As Verena is my witness," the truth of your words becomes evident to all listeners. As long as you are speaking nothing but the truth, you gain a +10% bonus to your Charm Tests, and can double the normal amount of people affected (after any appropriate talents are taken into account).

Eavesdrop

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A listening horn (+2)
Description: You can listen to what is happening in any area that you can see, no matter the distance. You hear things as if you were standing right there.

Owl's Wisdom

Casting Number: 17
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic (see description)
Range: You
Ingredients: An owl's skull (+1)
Description: Your prayers flood your mind with the wisdom of your Goddess. Double any degrees of success scored with any Intelligence Tests. Further, you can re-roll one failed Intelligence Test, but doing this immediately ends the spell.

Preserve the Balance

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) or triggered
Range: You
Ingredients: A silver pair of scales (+2)
Description: Your prayers beg Verena to mete out justice to those that wrong her servant. Any crime committed against you during the duration, or within 1 minute previous to the casting, is immediately returned upon the criminal. If a thief stole your purse, the thief's purse would fall to the ground. Or, if a thug punched you in the chest for a Damage 4 hit, then the Thug would immediately suffer a Damage 4 hit to *his* chest. Of course, any crime you commit will be returned upon you in turn.

Reprobate's Sentence

Casting Number: 17
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 1 day/Magic (see description)
Range: Touch
Ingredients: A drop of blood from the criminal's victim (+2)
Description: You ritualistically accuse a character of a crime and, if the accused is guilty, he suffers dire consequences until he confesses. The target of the spell must hear the entire 1-minute prayer. If he does so, and he is guilty of the crime you specify, the spell takes effect. From that point onwards, the character must pass a Toughness Test each hour. If he fails, he vomits until there is nothing left in his stomach, sickened to his core by the depth of his own guilt (for the next hour, he suffers a –10% penalty to all of the Characteristics on his Main Profile). This spell lasts for the listed duration, or until the character confesses to the appropriate authorities.

Retribution

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic
Range: 24 yards (12 squares)
Ingredients: A drop of blood from the criminal's victim (+2)
Description: You chant the "Prayer of Retribution," and the guilty are justly punished by the wrath of Verena. One

target within range that you know to be guilty of a crime must pass a **Hard (–20%) Will Power Test** or suffer debilitating pains. The criminal may now only use half an action each round.

Shackles of Verena

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A pair of iron shackles (+1)
Description: You immobilise a character with invisible shackles of magical power. Unless the target makes a successful Will Power Test, he is rendered helpless. The target can do nothing on his turn except try to break the shackles. This is an Opposed Test using his Strength Characteristic against your Channelling Skill.

Sword of Justice

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)
Range: You
Ingredients: A charm engraved with a set of scales (+1)
Description: When all other options have failed, your prayers empower your weapon, which must be a sword, as an instrument for Verena's justice. It counts as a magical weapon with the Precise quality. Additionally, it grants you a +10% bonus to Weapon Skill when attacking those you know to be guilty of a crime.

The Blind Maiden

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredients: A silk blindfold (+1) (which must be worn)
Description: Your prayers allow you to see the truth, even when it is blinded from you. You know when those talking to you are lying if you pass an Intelligence Test (which the GM may wish to take on your behalf). Furthermore, a successful Perception Test allows you to pierce any illusions and disguises, as well as to spot hiding characters or objects within your line-of-sight. When using *the blind maiden*, you can also see though a worn blindfold as if it were not there.

The Past Revealed

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instant
Range: You
Ingredients: An owl's eyes (+1)
Description: You can touch one item and learn the three most important things about its past (as decided by the GM). This spell typically reveals who made it, important previous owners, or famous incidents involving the item. *The past revealed* can only be cast on an item once.

Table 10–9: Prayer Lists of Verena

Verena the Just	Verena the Judge	Verena the Wise
Preserve the Balance	Eavesdrop	As Verena is my Witness
Reprobate's Sentence	Shackles of Verena	Eavesdrop
Retribution	Sword of Justice	Owl's Wisdom
Shackles of Verena	The Past Revealed	The Blind Maiden
Sword of Justice	Trial by Fire	The Past Revealed
Trial by Fire	Words of Truth	Words of Truth

Trial by Fire

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: See description
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredients: A fire opal worth at least 50 *gc* (+2)
Description: You subject one character to the ultimate test of guilt or innocence. You accuse one character within range of a grave injustice, and that character is immediately engulfed in divine flames. If the target is innocent of the charge, the flames inflict no damage and dissipate after 1 round. If the target is guilty, he suffers one Damage 8 hit per round for a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic. The fire rules from page 136 of *WFRP* apply. This miracle is not lightly used. Verenans using this spell in a foolish or profligate manner are severely "corrected" by cult superiors.

Words of Truth

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: Instant
Range: See text
Ingredients: A mirror (+2)
Description: You may ask a character one question (which he must be able to hear and understand). Unless he makes a successful Will Power Test, he must answer the question truthfully. Note that a character so compelled will answer with what he believes to be true, whether or not it actually is true. The GM should make the Will Power Test in secret. If the target makes his test, he can answer as he pleases (or not at all). A character can only be asked the same question with this spell once (and rewordings and mild variants count; questions must be substantially different).

Ritual Magic

Ritual is an important part of cult life; however, surprisingly few of the cult rituals actually do anything miraculous.

It is believed by some magisterial commentators that all the rituals practised by the cults once held great power, but repeated errors in transcription of holy texts have weakened most to the point of being useless. The cults disagree, and believe their rituals hold power and importance far beyond simple pageantry, and that observers like the Imperial Colleges of Magic simply do not understand their older traditions.

Whatever the truth, variations of the following two rituals are known by all the cults, and many more than these still exist in long-forgotten religious tomes across the Empire.

Call Divine Servant

Type: Divine
Arcane Language: Magick
Magic: 3
XP: 300
Ingredients: A quart of blessed liquid (different cults prefer different liquids, including fresh water, brine, animal blood, and beer) and a holy symbol of your cult.
Conditions: You must purify your body for a full week before the ritual. How this is done varies according to the cult, and may include seclusion, fasting, bathing, flagellation, drinking, gambling or fighting. Once the weekly purification is finished, you must contemplate your cult's holy texts for two days before marking out your God's holy symbol on an appropriate surface with the blessed liquid, and begin the ritual.
Consequences: If the casting fails, you have displeased your God with your arrogance, and you must immediately roll on **Table 10–11: Vengeance of God**.
Casting Number: 26; the casting number should be modified by –1 if the ritual is conducted on a holy day of the cult, and a further –1 if conducted on appropriate holy ground.
Casting Time: 1d10+4 hours
Description: The ritual calls a servant of your deity from your God's realm, which appears within 12 yards (6 squares). No two Divine Servants react the same, but very few would contemplate killing a priest of their God (although some may be particularly terrifying, such as Ulric's White Wolves). You have absolutely no control over the Divine Servant, so you had better have a very good reason to be summoning it, or it is likely to bring down the **Wrath of God**, or, if particularly annoyed, the **Vengeance of God**.

Divine Servants that can be called with this ritual include creatures holy to your God (Portal Ravens for Morr, or the Horned Stag for Taal), cultists of especial importance (Caccino for Verena, or Pergunda for Shallya), mythical entities tied to the God (Triton for Manann, or Periphata for Myrmidia), or something a bit more odd (a twin-tailed comet descending from the sky for Sigmar, or a small cat's paw for Ranald).

Each variation of this ritual summons a specific Divine Servant, and is normally recorded in a single holy tome carefully guarded by the Cult. Few ever attempt these rituals, as they are seen as an imposition upon their God, and those who do try either fail or are never seen again. Indeed, some cultists do not even believe such rituals work, thinking the existence of such otherworldly entities to be nothing more than fanciful myth.

Consecrate

Type: Divine
Arcane Language: Magick
Magic: 1 (shrine), 2 (temple/monastery), 3 (high temple)
XP: 100 (shrine), 200 (temple/monastery), 300 (high temple)
Ingredients: Blessed liquid (different cults prefer different liquids, including fresh water, brine, oil, animal blood, and beer), a holy symbol of your cult, a sacrifice (again, varying according to the cult, including blood, animals, money, and even time in the form of the priests promising to tend the new holy site), and an appropriate site (newly-built shrine, temple, etc.). Beyond this, the size of the site to be blessed, and the cult in question, will dictate what is required. Blessing a shrine only requires what has been mentioned. Blessing a high temple requires much more, including a host of religious tools and at least one holy artefact of major importance to the cult.
Conditions: All priests involved with the ritual must purify their bodies for a full day (shrine) or up to a week (high temple)

beforehand. How this is done varies according to the cult in question, and may include seclusion, fasting, bathing, flagellation, drinking, gambling, or even fighting. Beyond this, consecrating a shrine has no further conditions, but larger holy sites may need choirs of cantors, censer bearers, or similar, as dictated by the GM.

Consequences: If the casting fails, the site is not properly consecrated, although it will appear as if it is to those with the Magical Sense Skill. This can have wide-ranging consequences.

Casting Number: 10 (shrine), 18 (temple/monastery), 26 (high temple); the casting number should be modified by –1 if held on a holy day of the cult, and a further –1 if the site is especially appropriate or grand, according to the cult's tastes.

Casting Time: 1 hour (shrine), up to a day (temple/monastery), at least 3 days (high temple)

Description: This is the most commonly known of all divine rituals, and is used by all cults whenever a new holy site is established for their diety. If successful, priests of the God gain +1 to Casting Rolls per point of Magic Characteristic needed for the ritual when within the holy site, or within two yards (1 square) of a shrine. Furthermore, your GM may decree that holy ground has implications to certain Daemonic or Undead creatures. Examples of how this may be applied can be found in the *Night's Dark Masters* supplement.

Unfortunately, many of the temples of the Old World were consecrated by priests without the Divine Lore talent. As a consequence, they are not properly consecrated. However, over time, even a botched consecration can eventually be corrected by the trudging feet of the faithful. As the years turn to decades, almost all cult sites gain a measure of holiness.

— The Wrath of the Gods —

From those to whom much is given, much is expected. The Gods apply this rule to their priests, and particularly to those whom they bless with miracles. The Gods expect exemplary service, and exemplary penance for any lapses; if they do not receive it, they may visit their wrath on the sinners. Those who work miracles may suffer this wrath in retribution for sins only a God could notice.

Disfavour and Retribution

It makes sense for priests to suffer more from the wrath of the Gods if they violate their strictures. The following rules are optional, as they require some extra bookkeeping, but they do mean that impious priests are far more likely to have problems.

Growing the Disfavour Pool

Whenever a priest breaks one of his God's strictures in a significant way, add 1 point to a pool of points called the Disfavour Pool. "Significant" is up to the judgement of the GM, who need not tell that player that a violation was significant, nor how many points there are in the character's Disfavour Pool.

If a priest is played as not particularly pious for a whole gaming session, add 1 point to the Disfavour Pool at the end. This means that although he committed no major violations of the strictures, he did commit minor ones, and didn't appear particularly guilt-ridden over them; alternatively, he may have largely neglected his God's aims in favour of those of the party.

Using the Disfavour Pool

Whenever a character with a Disfavour Pool casts a spell, roll a number of dice equal to the number of points in the Pool. These dice do not add to the Magic Characteristic dice for the purposes of beating the Casting Number, but they do count for the purposes of rolling doubles.

> **Example:** *A character with a Magic Characteristic of 2 and a Disfavour Pool of 1 rolls a 9 and a 1 for his Magic Characteristic dice, and the GM rolls a 9 on the Disfavour Pool die. The casting total is 10, but the character counts as rolling doubles, and thus suffers the wrath of the Gods.*

After rolling the dice from the Disfavour Pool, reduce the Disfavour Pool by one. A priest who can successfully invoke miracles has clearly not offended his God that much.

Penance

Priests may reset their Disfavour Pools to zero by performing spectacular acts of penance. A qualifying act must be roleplayed, be an important part of a gaming session, and not interfere with the other players' enjoyment of the adventure. The priest must deliberately attempt to do penance, and must act appropriately to his God. All this is a matter of GM judgement, but if the roleplaying entertained everyone, the GM should be generous.

Option: Disfavour and Lay Priests

Non-spellcasting priests may also develop a Disfavour Pool. At the GM's option, he may remove one Disfavour Point to impose a –10% penalty on any single test made by the character. This only applies to priests who have Fate Points. Others are not significant enough to warrant such attention.

The Wrath of the Gods

This section reprints and slightly expands the Wrath of the Gods table from *WFRP*, customising one entry for each of the major Gods. For minor Gods, you can use the basic version.

Table 10–10: What Will You Sacrifice For This Boon?

God	Sacrifice
Manann:	You vomit up salt water, and feel as though you are almost drowned. Take 1d10 Wounds, regardless of Toughness or Armour.
Morr:	All warmth and vigour leach from your body. Take a –20% penalty to all actions for the next 1 minute.
Myrmidia:	You automatically fail your next Dodge or Parry Test.
Ranald:	You must re-roll your next three successful Tests. If the second roll fails, you fail the Test. If the re-roll succeeds, you succeed and need not roll again.
Shallya:	The next time one of your allies suffers an injury, you suffer exactly the same injury. This may mean taking Wounds, or taking a Critical Hit.
Sigmar:	A brand in the shape of a twin-tailed comet appears on your forehead, inflicting 1d10 Wounds ignoring Toughness Bonus or armour.
Taal:	Your mind becomes that of a beast for three rounds. You flee most situations, but fight if cornered.
Ulric:	Your body is rimed with frost. Take 1d10 Wounds, regardless of Toughness or Armour.
Verena:	You are robbed of your knowledge. You automatically fail any Academic Knowledge Tests you make in the next 1 hour.

The Vengeance of the Gods

Priests with a high Disfavour Pool may roll quadruples or higher when checking for the Wrath of the Gods. If they do, roll on this table instead.

Table 10–11: Vengeance of the Gods

Roll	Vengeance
01–15	**Behold Your Wickedness!:** You suffer visions of your failures, which seem to take an eternity but are over in an instant. Gain 1d10 Insanity Points; if you become insane, you gain Heart of Despair.
16–30	**Lash the Flesh to Purge the Soul:** You take 2d10 Wounds, ignoring Toughness Bonus or Armour.
31–45	**You Shall Not Abuse My Mercy:** Your Magic Characteristic is reduced to zero, and increases by one every time you do penance (as if attempting to reduce your Disfavour Pool to zero), until it returns to its original value. If you have no Magic Characteristic, the same happens to your daily allowance of Fortune Points.
46–60	**Thou Art Accursed and Outcast:** You are cast out from the cult, and this is marked on your soul. You take a –30% penalty to all social interactions with followers of your God until you do penance.
61–75	**Rely Not On These Vanities:** All your goods and equipment are stripped from you, leaving you in a tunic. Any non-magical equipment you were carrying is gone forever; magical equipment is mysteriously returned if you do penance. (GM's option: non-magical but important items may also be returned after penance.)
76–90	**Called to Account:** You are summoned before your God to face judgement. Unless you have a Fate Point to spend, it is time to roll up a new character. If you do have a Fate Point, your God returns you to the world after 1d10 rounds.
91–00	**Daemonic Visitation:** Roll on the **Catastrophic Chaos Manifestation** Table instead using the table in *WFRP*.

— Optional Rule: Marks of the Gods —

Repeatedly channelling the power of the Gods can have a lasting effect upon a priest. But the channeling of divine energy can be an unpredictable thing. These effects—called Divine Marks, or the Marks of the Gods—always bring the priest closer to her deity, but not always in a positive or beneficial fashion.

These Matks can have a concrete effect on a character who is closely aligned with the gods. The following pages provide a table for each of the major organised cults of the Empire. Whenever a priest rolls two or more 1s on his casting roll, his character must pass a Willpower Test or roll on the appropriate Mark of the Gods table. If a player rolls a mark his character has already developed, the result should be re-rolled.

The provided lists are far from exhaustive, and GMs are encouraged to create their own tables for other deities, or to expand the ones already detailed.

Table 10–12: Marks of Manann

Roll	Result
01–10	**Fishy:** You are infused with the odours of the sea. Permanently reduce your Fellowship Characteristic by 5%.
11–20	**Pelagic Yearning:** You long for the open seas. When not on, or surrounded by, the sea, your Will Power is reduced by 5%.
21–30	**Seaweed Growth:** Holy seaweed thrives somewhere on your body. At the GM's discretion, this may apply a –10% penalty to Fellowship Tests in some social situations.
31–40	**Tidal:** You are bound to the changing tides. During low tide, you reduce your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Toughness Characteristic by 5%. At high tide, increase your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Toughness Characteristic by 5%. All other times, and when far from sea, your Characters are unchanged.
41–50	**Manann's Mien:** You grow taller, you hair darkens, and you develop a briny smell. You grow larger, increasing your height by 1d10/2 inches and adding 2d10 pounds to your weight. As well, permanently increase your Strength Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	**Piscine Charisma:** You become intensely attractive to fish of all kinds. They greet you in open-mouthed wonder and shoal around you in docile masses when you are in the water. For this reason, albatrosses and other seabirds like you. Add +20% to Charm Animal Tests made to interact with sea birds.
61–70	**Rip Tides:** Large bodies of water twist and churn in your presence. All Swim Tests made by others within 4 yards (2 squares) of you take a –20% penalty, and a –10% penalty if between 4 and 12 yards (3–6 squares).
71–80	**Webbed:** Your toes and fingers become webbed. Gain a +20% bonus to Swim Tests.
81–90	**One With the Sea:** Manann reveals the secrets of his realm. You cannot drown in seawater; any time you would drown, you are instead reduced to 0 wounds and are Helpless, and either float to the surface or wash up on a shore. You also add +10% bonus to all Sail, Row, and Navigation Tests whilst at sea.
91–100	**Marked by Manann:** A Trident, Crown, Wave, or Albatross mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Manann, and +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Manannites if they can see the mark.

Table 10–13: Marks of Morr

Roll	Result
01–10	**Enervated:** Your muscles weaken. Permanently reduce your Strength Characteristic by 5%.
11–20	**Distracted by Death:** Your preoccupation with morbid subjects makes others uncomfortable around you. When interacting with individuals who are not priests in the cult of Morr, you take a –10% Fellowship Tests.
21–30	**Disturbing Visions:** You are plagued by disconnected visions that you know to be portentous, but cannot understand. You take a –10% penalty to Perception Tests. Once per day, you may gain a +10% bonus to any single test.
31–40	**Skeletal:** Your face and scalp draw tightly to your skull. You take a –10% penalty to Charm Tests, but gain a +10% bonus to Intimidate Tests.
41–50	**Morr's Mien:** You grow taller, your hair darkens, and your skin pales, becoming cool to the touch. You grow larger, gaining 1d10/2 inches in height. As well, increase your Will Power Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	**Flock of Raven:** Wherever you go, there always seem to be ravens present. Under most circumstances, they appear in places where one might expect them. Whilst indoors, you see them through windows, and underground, you may see raven cave paintings with disturbing regularity. You gain a +20% bonus to Charm Animal Tests made when interacting with ravens.
61–70	**Dead Eyes:** A single glance causes others to flinch. Gain the Unsettling Talent.
71–80	**Morr's Servant:** Sentient Undead shy from your presence. Any creatures with the Undead Talent *and* a Willpower attribute must make a Will Power Test or suffer from Fear. This ignores the Undead talent's normal exemption to Fear.
81–90	**Enlightened:** You have gazed beyond the Portal and no longer fear death. Gain the Fearless Talent.
91–100	**Marked by Morr:** A Rose, Portal, or Raven mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Morr, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Morrians if they can see the mark.

Table 10–14: Marks of Myrmidia

Roll	Result
01–10	**Vengeful:** You become deeply vengeful, which blinds your reason. Permanently reduce your Intelligence Characteristic by 5%.
11–20	**Rites of War:** You feel obliged to recite terms of war before any battle, an act that takes a Full Action. Until you complete this honourable rite in a combat, you take a –5% penalty to Weapon Skill Tests.
21–30	**Calculating:** You coldly weigh the strengths and weaknesses of all you meet. You take a –10% penalty to Fellowship Tests made to deal with those who you meet for the first time.
31–40	**Righteous Fury:** You punish the wicked, for you are honourable and true. When fighting an opponent who has harmed you or one of your allies, you take a –10% penalty to Intelligence Tests, but gain +10% bonus to both Strength and Will Power Tests for the duration of the encounter.
41–50	**Myrmidia's Mien:** Your skin darkens to a deep tan that glints coppery in the light. You grow larger, gaining 1d10/5 inches in height. You also gain a +10% bonus to Command Tests.
51–60	**Eagle Friend:** Eagles like you. You gain a +20% bonus to Charm Animal Tests made when interacting with eagles.
61–70	**Eagle Eyes:** Your irises darken and your eyes become exceptionally sharp. You gain a +20% bonus to Perception Tests involving sight.
71–80	**Fanatical Love:** In combat, you may select one ally as a free action. That ally must have a religious symbol of Myrmidia in plain view. For that round, the ally gains a +10% bonus to all Will Power Tests.
81–90	**War-honed:** Myrmidia reveals the secret of facing war with courage and honour. You gain the Stout-hearted Talent.
91–100	**Marked by Myrmidia:** A Shield and Spear mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Myrmidia, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Myrmidians if they can see the mark.

Table 10–15: Marks of Ranald

Roll	Result
01–10	**Weak Willed:** You become a slave to your passions. Permanently reduce your Will Power Characteristic by 1d10%.
11–20	**Liar:** You are loathe to tell the truth. Gain a +10% bonus to Blather Tests.
21–30	**Knavish:** You exhibit all the untrustworthy characteristics that nobles and priests find repugnant. You take a –10% penalty to all Fellowship Tests when interacting with these individuals.
31–40	**Lithe:** You become more wiry and nimble. Increase your Agility Characteristic by 1d10%, but reduce your Toughness by the same amount. In addition, you lose 2d10 pounds.
41–50	**Ranald's Mien:** You become leaner, your hair and skin darken, and you always seem to smile mischievously. Lose 2d10 pounds, but permanently increase your Fellowship Characteristic by 1d10%.
51–60	**Cat Friend:** Wherever you go, you seem to attract cats. Moments after entering a community, at least one cat finds you. Each day you remain in the same community, (1d10/2)–1 more cats show up. These cats do not fight on your behalf, but are friendly to you, giving you a +20% bonus to Charm Animal Tests involving these animals. Should you leave the community, the cats do not, generally, follow.
61–70	**Forgettable:** People who do not know you find it hard to remember anything more than your disarming smile and flashing eyes. Those who interact with you closely for several hours must pass an Intelligence Test to recall further details.
71–80	**Ranald's Luck:** Whenever you use a Fortune Point, roll a d10. If you roll 8, 9 or 10, the Fortune Point works as normal, but isn't spent.
81–90	**Irreverent:** Ranald reveals to you the great joke of life. Whenever you are influenced by Fear, Terror, Intimidate, or the Unsettling talent, and you fail a Willpower Test, you immediately burst into fits of uncontrollable laugher, and ignore the effect. However, whilst laughing (which last for 1d10 rounds), you take a –10% penalty to all tests and reduce your Movement Characteristic by 1.
91–100	**Marked by Ranald:** A cross mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Ranald, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Ranaldans if they can see the mark.

Table 10–16: Marks of Shallya

Roll	Result
01–10	**Pacifist:** You find it very hard to even think of striking another. Permanently reduce your Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Characteristics by 5%.
11–20	**Bleeding Heart:** Whenever you are in the vicinity of a creature that is suffering, you take a –10% penalty to all Will Power Tests. Should you leave the suffering individual untended, the penalty increases to –20% and it remains for 24 hours.
21–30	**Fear of the Fly Lord:** Insects and other agents of decay make you deeply uncomfortable. While in the presence of a swarm of flies, maggots, roaches, or similar critters, you take a –10% penalty to all Will Power Tests.
31–40	**Unworthiness:** You always feel you have somehow failed those around you, especially if you could not heal their wounds or save their lives. You take a –10% penalty to Fellowship Tests made to interact with others because of your constant self-deprecating ways.
41–50	**Shallya's Mien:** Your hair lightens, your eyes flow with holy tears and your face appears innocent. Henceforth, you take a –10% penalty on Perception and Search Tests, but you permanently increase your Fellowship Characteristic by 5%. In addition, whenever you make a Heal Test, you repair 1 extra Wound.
51–60	**Peaceful Demeanour:** You exude peace and tranquillity. Ordinary animals will never attack you unless you first attack them.
61–70	**Healing Hands:** Your hands are cool and soothing to the touch. Whenever you make a Heal Test, you repair an additional 2 Wounds.
71–80	**Tranquil Aura**: Your presence calms aggressive tendencies. All creatures within 4 yards (2 squares) take a –10% penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests. This aura does not work on Daemons or Undead.
81–90	**Emboldened:** You fundamentally understand Shallya's Mercy, and would martyr yourself rather than retreat from your duties. So long as there are allies or innocents to help and protect, you may act normally when suffering from Fear or Terror, so long as your actions include healing those in need, warding their bodies from blows (but not attacking), helping them reach safety, and the like.
91–100	**Marked by Shallya:** A Dove, Heart, or Drop of Blood mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Shallya, and a +10% bonus on Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Shallyans if they can see the mark.

Table 10–17: Marks of Sigmar

Roll	Result
01–10	**Stubborn:** You single-mindedly pursue Sigmar's cause, no matter the consequences. Permanently reduce your Intelligence Characteristic by 5%.
11–20	**Hammer Bearer:** When wielding a hammer Hand Weapon or Great Weapon, you deal +1 damage. However, you take a –10% penalty to all Ballistic Skill Tests.
21–30	**Suspicious:** Anyone may be a servant of the Dark Powers. You take a –10% penalty to all Fellowship Tests the first time you meet an individual.
31–40	**Grudge Bearer:** You really bear grudges. When fighting an opponent who has harmed you or one of your allies, you take a –10% penalty to Intelligence Tests, but gain +10% bonus to both Strength and Will Power Tests for the duration of the encounter.
41–50	**Sigmar's Mien:** Your hair lightens, body bulks out and your eyes turn blue. You permanently gain 1d10/2 inches in height, +2d10 pounds in weight, and increase your Toughness Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	***Dawongr* (Dwarf Friend):** Your manner reminds Dwarfs of their ancient promises to Sigmar. You gain a +10% bonus to all Fellowship Tests made when interacting with Dwarfs.
61–70	**Greenskin Animosity:** The thought of Greenskins fills you with righteous anger. Gain the Grudge-born Fury Talent.
71–80	**Symbol of Unity:** You presence inspires others with nationalistic pride. The first time during an encounter that a citizen of the Empire that is within 6 yards (3 squares) makes a Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test against another citizen of the Empire, he takes a –10% penalty.
81–90	**Enlightened:** Sigmar fills you with his divine purpose. When combating Greenskins or servants of Chaos, you automatically pass all Willpower Tests.
91–100	**Marked by Sigmar:** A Comet or Hammer mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Sigmar, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Sigmarites if they can see the mark.

Table 10–18: Marks of Taal and Rhya

Roll	Result
01–10	**Wild Mind:** Your thoughts are preoccupied with the passing seasons and baser needs. Permanently reduce your Intelligence Characteristic by –5%.
11–20	**Little Friends:** Small animals, such as rodents and little birds, are attracted to you. They can be highly inconvenient, as they nibble everything and leave droppings everywhere. You take a –10% penalty to Fellowship Tests in social situations where such creatures are inappropriate.
21–30	**Plant Growth:** Holy plant life thrives somewhere on your body. At the GM's discretion, this may apply a –10% penalty to Fellowship Tests in some social situations.
31–40	**Seasonal:** You are bound to the passing seasons. During the winter, you reduce your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Movement Characteristic by 1. In the autumn, you reduce your Wounds Characteristic by 1. In the spring, you increase your Wounds Characteristic by 1. In the summer, you increase your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Movement Characteristic by 1.
41–50	**Taal or Rhya's Mien:** You have an equal chance of assuming the likeness of Taal or Rhya. If Taal, you grow tall, strong, with shaggy hair. If Rhya, you become more curvaceous, with long flaxen hair, and appealing features. In either case, grow +1d5 inches taller and 2d10 pounds heavier. In addition, permanently increase your Fellowship Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	**Animal Friend:** Animals see you as one of their own, and never attack you even if you attack them first. Unusual or controlled animals must pass a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test to attack you.
61–70	**Enlivened Flora:** Whenever you remain in a natural setting for more than 1 round, all living plants within 4 yards (2 squares) grow healthy and lush. Whilst you are unaffected by this verdant growth, the area counts as difficult terrain afterwards, halving movement through it.
71–80	**Tranquil Fauna:** Animals are calmed by your presence. You gain a +10% bonus to Animal Care and Animal Training Tests.
81–90	**Beast Senses:** Taal or Rhya reveals the world around you as they see it. Gain the Keen Senses Talent.
91–100	**Marked by Taal or Rhya:** An Antler, Axe, Coil of Life, Sheaf, or Bow and Arrow mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Taal and Rhya, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Taalites or Rhyans if they can see the mark.

Table 10–19: Marks of Ulric

Roll	Result
01–10	**Berserker:** Each round in combat, you must pass a Will Power Test or immediately enter a Frenzy as if you had the Frenzy Talent.
11–20	**Claws:** You grow wickedly sharp claws. Permanently reduce your Ballistic Skill Characteristic by –5%. Gain the Natural Weapons Talent.
21–30	**Wolf's Eyes:** You gain the clear, blue eyes of a Winter Wolf. You gain the Night Vision Talent, but can now only see in black and white.
31–40	**Predator:** Those around you become uncomfortable, instinctually aware that a killer is in their midst. You take a –10% penalty to Charm Tests, but gain a +10% bonus on Intimidate Tests.
41–50	**Ulric's Mien:** Your hair darkens, your body bulks, and your skin pales, becoming icy-cold. You grow 1d10/2 inches taller and 2d10 pounds heavier. In addition, permanently increase your Strength Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	**Wolf Friend:** You attract a wolf companion. This creature is loyal and fights on your behalf. Should you treat the wolf poorly, it abandons you. You can gain this mark multiple times. Each time, you gain an additional wolf.
61–70	**Pack Leader:** You gain a measure of Ulric's undeniable authority. You gain a +10% bonus to all Command Tests.
71–80	**One with the Wild:** Ulric reveals the world around you as he sees it. You gain a +10% bonus to all Outdoor Survival Tests.
81–90	**Ulric's Servant:** Touched by Ulric, you no longer suffer the harmful effects of cold—except when it's triggered by a Wrath of God.
91–100	**Marked by Ulric:** A Wolf mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Ulric, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Ulricans if they can see the mark.

Table 10–20: Marks of Verena

Roll	Result
01–10	**Savant:** Your unchecked intellectual superiority makes it difficult for you to connect with others. Permanently reduce your Fellowship Characteristic by –5%.
11–20	**Daemon's Advocate:** You can't help expressing alternative stances. If you allow an opinion or argument to be stated without countering it and balancing matters, take a –10% penalty to all Will Power Tests for 24 hours.
21–30	**Just Heart:** Whenever you see injustice, you must speak out against it unless you pass a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test.
31–40	**Piercing Gaze:** Your all-seeing eyes bore into everything around you. You gain a +10% bonus to all Perception Tests relying on sight, but take a –10% penalty on Charm Tests.
41–50	**Verena's Mien:** Your back straightens, eyes clear and your face gains a dignified appearance. You grow 1d10/2 inches taller. In addition, permanently increase your Intelligence Characteristic by 5%.
51–60	**Owl Friend:** Owls like you. You gain a +20% bonus on Charm Animal Tests made against owls.
61–70	**Eidetic Recall:** With a successful Intelligence Test, you can perfectly recall any text you have read. You also gain a +20% bonus to all other tests involving memory.
71–80	**Voice of Wisdom:** Your voice carries the wisdom of Verena Herself. Double the number of people you can affect with a Charm Test.
81–90	**Enlightened:** Verena grants you a small portion of her wisdom. You gain a +10% bonus to all Academic Knowledge Tests that you have selected as skills. As well, you may attempt Academic Knowledge Tests outside of your fields of study, albeit at a –20% penalty.
91–100	**Marked by Verena:** An Owl, Scales, or Sword mark appears somewhere on your body (GM's choice). You gain a +10% bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Verena, and a +10% bonus to Fellowship Tests when dealing with other Verenans if they can see the mark.

— Relics —

Some objects in the Warhammer World carry the blessings of the Gods, bearing a fragment of their power among the struggles of mortals. These items may take any form, and have almost any power, but those recognised by the cults are among the holiest objects in the Old World.

Genuine relics are extremely rare; most temples do not possess one. Any shrine that gains possession of one quickly becomes a large temple, as priests gather at the holy spot. Relics and holy artefacts are rarely sold, although they are very occasionally given into the care of a powerful noble, who acknowledges the favour of the God with extensive gifts of land and money to the temple. Most priests have never so much as seen a genuine relic, much less handled one.

On the other hand, fake relics are everywhere. There is a whole sub-culture of conmen devoted to creating and selling them, mainly to gullible peasants for a few clanks a time. Other conmen go for the big score, creating a somewhat plausible situation around a fake relic and extracting large amounts of money from a wealthy noble. A few even try to con priests, and some of these succeed, so that some of the "genuine" relics recognised by the cults are, in fact, fakes. Some wizards suspect that most genuine relics are false, or that their supposed power is at least exaggerated.

The origins of genuine relics are simple: the God chooses to bless an item with some fraction of his power. Everything else about the process is completely obscure. No one knows why the Gods bless the items they do, why they choose those powers, and why they do not provide more obvious evidence as to which relics are genuine. Most priests believe that even asking these questions is a sign of impiety.

One thing is clear, however. Genuine relics and holy artefacts are not created by the efforts of priests, not even by the efforts of those who are blessed with miraculous powers. Some relics do appear amidst strong efforts or sacrifices by priests or devout laymen, but never due to any kind of intention by the mortals to summon the miraculous power.

Blessed Items

The Old World is full of greedy traders hawking charms claimed to be blessed by the Gods. Most cults frown upon selling such artefacts, probably because many exchange blessings for donations themselves, and some even build roadside shrines solely for this purpose.

Indeed, there are many well-known examples of this in the Empire. In Talabheim there is Reliquary Row, a stall-lined thoroughfare where almost every known cult has a pitch. And Altdorf has the ironically-named Echt Strasse, which is piled high with gaudy shrine-stalls dedicated to all manner of deities. In all these places and more, grubby priests sell blessings, charms, and relics of all kinds for coin. Of course, most of these do nothing more than salve the superstitious mind.

However, occasionally, they really do work.

Optional Rule: Charms and Amulets

All manner of charms and amulets are sold in the noisy markets of the Empire, all supposedly blessed by one God or another. Although most are fakes, belief is a powerful thing, and Empire folk certainly believe in their superstitions.

The following table provides some common charms and amulets found in the Empire. Each lists a blessing that the charm is believed to provide. The blessing has a 5% chance of activating if the charm is worn and an appropriate situation arises. A test to check for a blessing may only be attempted once per day per charm. Only one charm may influence an appropriate situation (*i.e.,* bonuses from multiple charms do not stack), although many charms may be worn to increase the chance that a blessing activates.

Elves and Dwarfs do not believe in such superstitious nonsense, and gain no benefit from wearing Human charms and amulets. Halflings believe in them, and often wear them, but the charms do nothing for them.

GMs should feel free to populate their markets with charms of their own devising. The following table only lists the most commonly found examples.

Table 10–21: Common Charms and Amulets

God	Charm	Cost	Enc	Availability	Blessing
Khaine	Black Tooth	1 *gc*	—	Very Rare	+1 Critical Value
Manann	Sacred Fish	12 *s*	5	Rare	+10% to Navigation Tests at sea
	Crab Leg	5 *p*	—	Average	+10% to resist disease
Morr	Bone Charm	5 *gc*	—	Average	+10% to Fear and Terror Tests
	Merciful Pillow	1 *gc*	—	Scarce	Automatically die from blood loss
Myrmidia	Blessed Shield	35 *gc*	55	Very Rare	+10% to Parry Tests
Rhya	Sprig of Mistletoe	12 *s*	—	Rare	+10% to Charm Tests
Ranald	Dice Talisman	25 *gc*	—	Scarce	+10% to Gamble Tests
	Drinking Rag	7 p	—	Scarce	+10% to Consume Alcohol Tests
Sigmar	Seal of Devotion	15 *gc*	—	Average	+1 AP on the worn location (max 5 AP)
Shallya	Prayer Parchment	10 *gc*	—	Average	+10% to Toughness Tests to resist diseases
Taal	Carved Horn	5 *gc*	5	Scarce	+10% to Outdoor Survival Tests
Ulric	Wolf-Head Charm	10 *gc*	—	Average	+1 Damage in Close Combat
Verena	Owl Amulet	25 *gc*	—	Scarce	+10% to Perception Tests

The Blessing

Any unscrupulous priest can make good money blessing items. However, only those with the Divine Lore talent can reliably imbue their blessings with power.

To bless an item, a priest intones sacred prayers over the object to be blessed and attempts a Channelling Test. During combat rounds, this takes a full action with the "Use a Skill" action. Success means that the item is blessed for 1 week per degree of success scored. If the Test succeeds with no degrees of success, the item will only be blessed for a day.

Priests need to be careful with their blessings, as no God likes to be taken for granted. If a priest tries to Bless an item that he has already attempted to bless before, and fails his Channelling Test, he must roll on **Table 7–3: Wrath of God** in *WFRP*, page 144.

A blessed object is no different from a mundane object in terms of its effectiveness unless the priest achieved two or more degrees of success. Should this be the case, the object bestows a +5% bonus to related tests for the duration. Even blessed items that are not so empowered may have special effects against some of the darker inhabitants of the Old World (such as Vampires; for more information on this, refer to *Night's Dark Masters*). Finally, the object counts as a magical weapon if used in combat.

Blessing People

Old Worlders are a superstitious lot, and most are keen to ease their wretched lives in any way they can. Thus, they turn to the cults to bless their everyday activities. Priests often supply these blessings for coin; however, unless a Petty Magic (Divine) spell is used, such a blessing provides no game mechanics benefit.

Of course, GMs should feel free to ignore this as suits their campaigns. After all, there may be a great deal of difference between receiving a rushed blessing from a lowly friar on the road to Carroburg, and having the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar bless your deeds in the High Temple of Altdorf.

Identifying Holy Relics

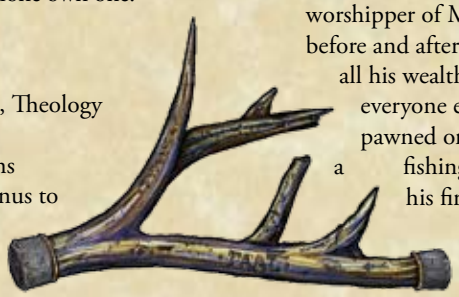
Determining a real relic from a fake can be achieved by any character with the Magical Sense skill. A successful test (secretly rolled by the GM) determines whether a relic is really "holy" or not. Failure provides the character with no information. Three or more degrees of failure may provide incorrect information, as decided by the GM.

Being sure of the holiness of a relic does not reveal what it is, or what it is believed it can do. Any character with Academic Knowledge (Theology) or Academic Knowledge (History) may attempt a test to determine the capabilities and history of a relic. The Difficulty for this is provided in the relic's description. The more degrees of success secured, the more accurate this information should be. Failure provides the character with nothing. Three or more degrees of failure may, at the GM's whim, provide false information.

Relics and Artefacts

The following is a small sample of the holy relics and artefacts that can be found in the Empire and beyond. This list is designed to provide the GM with inspiration for creating his own, unique relics, not to be viewed as a complete listing of all possibilities. Like all items of magical power in the Old World, real examples of holy relics and artefacts are very rarely found in the hands of common folk, most of whom are unlikely to ever see one, let alone own one.

Antler of the Blue Stag



Academic Knowledge: History (Challenging), Theology (Challenging)

Powers: The community of warriors that claims ownership of this relic gains a +10% bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests.

History: The Antler of the Blue Stag is an ancient relic that is said to be a fragment of the first animal slain by mortals. It's said that Taal granted this animal to the first men as a sign of his blessing and protection. The Antler (or facsimiles of it) has changed hands many times over the centuries, manifesting in one village only to vanish once again once a threat has passed. It has never appeared in a city, except for one event: Some claim that it was carried by Valten during the siege of Middenheim.

Black Pomander

Academic Knowledge: History (Challenging), Necromancy (Routine), Theology (Hard)

Powers: When worn about the neck, this ball of aromatic black rose petals issues a pleasant aroma that Undead find repellent. All creatures with the Undead Talent that attack the wearer take a –20% penalty on Weapon Skill Tests.

History: The Black Pomander was assembled during the Wars of the Vampire Counts, nearly five centuries ago. Fashioned by a devout priest of Morr, who believed the world was doomed and that Morr himself had abandoned mortals, he imbued the item with his prayers, all of his faith, and some say his very essence to create a tool of worth to those who would resist the Undead enemy. This sacred relic is interred in a secret vault in Tilea, where it is occasionally loaned out to allies of the cult to aid in the ongoing struggles against their chosen foes.

The Bountiful Net

Academic Knowledge: History (Hard), Theology (Average)

Powers: The user can draw in and lift the net, whatever it contains. This is always hard work, but is possible, whether the net contains one fish or gold weighing many tons.

History: Theutmar of L'Anguille was a rich merchant and devout worshipper of Manann, who made offerings to the God before and after every voyage. When his ship sank with all his wealth just outside the harbour of L'Anguille, everyone expected him to curse the God. Instead he pawned or sold his few remaining possessions to equip a fishing boat, and offered the nets to the God. On his first trip, he drew his own ship up in the nets, restoring his wealth. He gave the nets to the temple, but rumours say that they have since been lost.

Eagle Banner

Academic Knowledge: History (Challenging), Strategy/Tactics (Challenging)

Powers: All allies to the banner wielder who are within line of sight gain a +10% bonus to Fear and Terror Tests. In addition, as a full action, the wielder of the Eagle Banner may make an Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Test to bestow a +10% bonus to one ally's Weapon Skill Tests for 1 round.

History: Nearly four centuries ago, a Tilean (or Estallian) commander named Lisabetta held an outpost on the edge of the Border Princes against an Orc horde for 22 days. Supported by just 15 soldiers, they achieved the impossible. Legend holds that Lisabetta was a devout follower of Myrmidia and that, through her prayers, the banner she carried filled her allies with hope. The tragedy of this tale is that although they managed to rout the Orc enemies, they all later succumbed to the plague that had bloomed amongst the corpses of their dead.

Relics and Artefacts

Relics and Artefacts are described in the following format:

Relic or Artefact Name

Academic Knowledge: The Academic Knowledge and Test difficulty required to know general information about the relic, or identify it if found.

Powers: What the holy item can do.

History: The story of the relic or artefact.

Table 10–22: Relics and Artefacts

Name	Enc	Group	Damage	Range	Reload	Qualities	Locations Covered	AP
Antler of the Blue Stag	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Black Pomander	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Bountiful Net	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eagle Banner	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grease of Caccino (1 jar)	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Grieve	9	Ordinary	SB	—	—	Fast, Precise	—	—
Jade Amulet	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
in Breastplate	45	—	—	—	—	—	Body	2
The Pauper's Box	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ranald's Coin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Red Bandages	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
White Wolf Cloak	80	—	—	—	—	—	Body	1

Grease of Caccino

Academic Knowledge: History (Hard), Theology (Routine)

Powers: Books rubbed with the grease become waterproof and impervious to decay.

History: Deep below the Temple of Verena, hidden in the folds of the Irrana Mountains of northern Tilea, lies a corpse. According to the temple records, it has lain there for almost 900 years, unchanging and unspoilt by the ravages of time. The local priests guard it carefully, for they believe it once housed the soul of the man who founded the temple, Caccino the Wise. Once a year, the temple's high priest conducts a three-day ceremony that culminates in the "Sacred Scraping," during which the corpse is scraped from head to toe with a blessed blade.

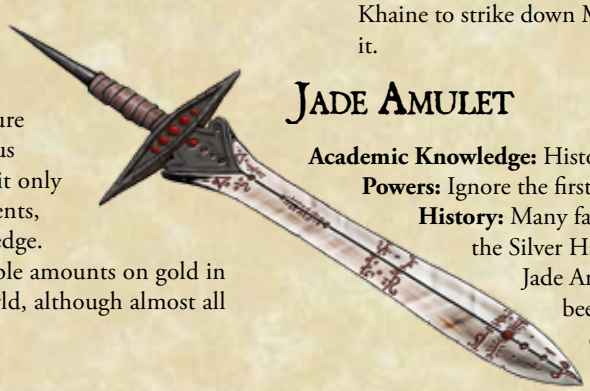
After several hours, the high priest will have gathered about a jar's worth of "Holy Grease," a yellowish substance with the texture of jelly. This grease has tremendous preservative properties, although it only seems to work on books, parchments, and similar repositories of knowledge. Jars of the stuff are worth incredible amounts on gold in the black markets of the Old World, although almost all examples are fakes.

The Grieve

Academic Knowledge: History (Challenging), Theology (Hard)

Powers: A target wounded by this dagger must pass a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or take a Critical Hit one step worse than normal for that wound. For example: a +3 Critical Hit becomes a +4. Even if a victim should suffer no critical from a wound, he still suffers a +1 Critical Hit.

History: The Grieve has been secured within the deepest vaults of the Imperial Capital on many occasions, but, somehow, the dagger always escapes. Its long, straight blade bears runes of uncertain origin. Some claim they are a lost variant of Arcane Eltharin. Others believe that the runes are those of the Dark Gods of the Strigos Empire, a long-dead and cursed civilisation from far to the south. No matter the truth, the dirk has surfaced again and again throughout history, and is always associated with murder, death, and insanity. Some claim that Emperor Mandred Ratslayer was assassinated by it. Others whisper that the mad Elector Count, Aldebrand Ludenhof, cherished it. Some suggest that a Merchant Prince of Lothern was driven insane just by the sight of it. Most disturbingly, more than one secret Cult of the God of Murder unswervingly believes it to be the blade used by Khaine to strike down Morr, and will do anything to secure it.



Jade Amulet

Academic Knowledge: History (Routine), Theology (Routine)

Powers: Ignore the first point of damage from any hit.

History: Many favoured priests of the Order of the Silver Hammer in the Sigmarite cult bear Jade Amulets. Most are ancient, and have been passed from priest to priest for centuries. It is believed that Jade Amulets contain fragments of the Jade Griffon, an artefact of extreme power and importance to the Sigmarite cult. They are typically carved into the shape of twin-tailed comets or a griffon claws, and some are permanently attached to intricately carved breastplates. Jade

Amulets are occasionally presented by the grand theogonist as a reward for great services to the Empire and the Cult of Sigmar.

The Pauper's Box

Academic Knowledge: History (Average), Theology (Hard)

Powers: Any business deal overseen by the Pauper's Box eventually fails.

History: Handhardt Shillerstein of Carroburg was once the city's most successful businessman. His trade-concerns spanned from Marienburg, across the Reikland, and deep into Bretonnia. He was unimaginably rich, courted by the nobility and loved by his employees. However, it was all to come to an end. On his 50th birthday, he hosted a great festival celebrating his life and fortune in Nuln, the capital of the Empire at the time. When asked about the secret to his success, he replied with a wink: "Why, my wit, my intelligence, and, of course, my charm! I would outwit old Handrich Himself if given half a chance." The next day, his servants found him greatly changed. His eyes were unsure, his hair white, his jaw slack. Although he never talked of what happened, rumours spread that Handrich had indeed given Schillerstein chance to outwit him, and Schillerstein had failed. The once-successful merchant died a pauper ten years later—an unrecognisable madman, street-preaching against the dangers of a loose tongue. Pauper's Boxes are said to contain some of Shillerstein's bones, which are believed carry the curse of Handrich to this day. It is rumoured that a Pauper's Box can never be given to the unwilling, and that they always return unharmed to their true owners, no matter what extremes are taken to discard them. Crafty merchants often try to sell suspected Pauper's Boxes to their rivals, passing them off as relics of a more beneficial kind; however, they have to be careful, because if the Box is physically present at such a sale, it is sure to fail.

Ranald's Coin

Academic Knowledge: History (Hard), Theology (Hard)

Powers: Whilst Ranald's Coin is in a character's possession, he always has at least 1 Fortune Point. However, all other individuals within 16 yards (8 squares) have one less Fortune Point and take a –10% penalty to all tests. The Coin vanishes after the character uses 1d10 Fortune Points, and with it goes 1 permanent Fate Point.

History: Ranald's Coin is a curious golden disk stamped on both sides with the face of a laughing youth. It has appeared many times over the centuries, and almost always with disastrous consequences. Once gained, the person has unbelievable luck, but everyone around him seems to suffer. Those who don't rid themselves of this strange item eventually find themselves murdered by those around them—an act that perhaps signals the end of Ranald's favour.

Red Bandages

Academic Knowledge: History (Easy), Theology (Very Easy)

Powers: The bandaged character immediately heals all lost Wounds. A Red Bandage can only be used once.

History: Red bandages are sacred wrappings taken from those who have miraculously overcome their injuries. As such, they are filthy, stained with the blood, dirt, and sweat of previous victims. Most large temples of Shallya have at least one such bandage that they claim is genuine, but Red Bandages are possibly the most commonly faked relics in the Empire. The worst are those reclaimed from plague victims.

White Wolf Cloak

Academic Knowledge: History (Average), Theology (Hard)

Powers: The wearer is immune to the negative effects of cold. This includes exposure to low temperatures and damage from cold-based spells and attacks.

History: The very first White Wolf Cloak is said to have been created by Ar-Ulric Wulcan almost 2,500 years ago. The then chief of the Teutogens had been struck low in the northern wilds, where he had been leading a defence against Goblins from the Silver Hills. He was weakening quickly, and the bitterly cold conditions of the late-autumn nights were making him worse. Wulcan, upon hearing the dire news, immediately set off from his new temple on the Fauschlag in search of the chief. After a week's hard travel through driving winds and stinging snow, it is said he was set upon by a giant White Wolf, its eyes wild with hunger. Wulcan took this as a sign from Ulric, and, although a very old man, proved his worth by slaying the beast with his bare hands, strangling the life from the giant's neck as it frantically snapped for his throat. Soon after, he strode into the camp of the dying tribal chief, dragging the dead wolf by its tail. He immediately slit open its belly and wrapped the steaming, hot pelt about the dying Elector, claiming to the gathered onlookers that the White Wolf, a gift from Ulric, was sure to preserve the chief's fading life. True to that word, the fever soon broke, and the chief was soon well enough to travel home. Since then, tradition has demanded that all newly appointed Ar-Ulrics should seek out White Wolves in the forests of Middenland, there to wrestle Ulric's messengers and secure their warmth against the winter, or die in the attempt. In the last two centuries, only the current Ar-Ulric, Emil Valgeir, has succeeded in finding such a wolf.

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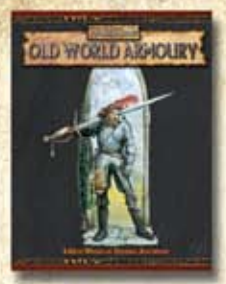

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