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THE EMPYREAN AND THE CHTHONIC, THE SUN AND THE STARS, GO HAND IN HAND....

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ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM™

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BEHIND THE VEIL

INTRODUCING THE SECRET SOCIETY OF NOBIRAN VEILDANCERS

By Charles Myers with Alexander Macris

NOBIRAN VEILDANCER

Prime Requisite: WIS, DEX, CON, and CHA
Requirements: STR 11, INT 11, WIS 11, DEX 11, CON 11, CHA 11
Hit Dice: 1d6
Maximum Level: 11

To the uninitiated, a Nobiran veildancer appears as any other priestess of Ianna, if perhaps more graceful and assured than the already graceful and assured priestesses of Ianna. The Temple of the Blade and the Veil, sacred to Ianna, is known to be two orders in one, reflecting Ianna's dualistic aspects of love and war. The Temple of the Veil employs priestesses as sacred courtesans and advisors to the great noble families. The Temple of the Blade trains bladedancers to serve as an elite fighting force against the chthonic darkness. The Nobiran veildancers, a secretive and ancient order, combine Ianna's aspects of love and war into a unified sisterhood of guardians devoted to the bloodlines of the greatest noble families, descended from the kings and prophets of the Emyrean War.

Most veildancers do not become adventurers, but every year a few women are sent forth from their temples into the world at the instructions of the reverend mothers. A veildancer rarely knows the true intentions of her superiors, but always the order seeks to identify and husband the Emyrean blessing of Nobiran bloodlines, wherever they may be found.

Because of their lifelong training, veildancers are exceptionally skilled combatants. At first level, veildancers hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws and saving throws by two points every three levels of experience (e.g. the same progression as fighters).

At 1st level (Novice), veildancers most often use the melee weapons favored by bladedancers: daggers, swords, spears, and pole arms. Unlike bladedancers, veildancers are permitted to throw their daggers or spears, sometimes carrying throwing blades for this purpose. Additionally, veildancers may use a selection of weapons without the additional martial training and sanction bladedancers require, including the dart, flail, longbow, staff, and whip. Like fighters, veildancers increase their base damage roll from successful missile and melee attacks by +1 at 1st level and by an

additional +1 at 3rd, 6th, and 9th level. They may fight wielding a weapon in each hand, wielding a weapon two-handed, or wielding a weapon and shield.

Veildancers avoid bulky weapons and shields in the courts and estates of the nobility, and may not wear armor heavier than leather. Instead they favor a **graceful fighting** style focusing on fluidity and freedom of movement. So long as they can move freely, they gain a +1 bonus to initiative and a +1 bonus to armor class at 1st level, and an additional +1 at 7th level.

All veildancers are able to enter a state of **meditative focus** in which their body and mind act with hyperawareness. Entering into focus does not require an action. While in focus, the veildancer gains a +1 bonus to armor class, attack throws, proficiency throws, saving throws, and initiative rolls. A veildancer's meditative focus lasts for 1 turn (10 minutes). As the veildancer's mind expands, so does her ability to maintain her focus. Veildancers can go into focus once per day per level of experience.

Starting at 1st level, veildancers may **cast divine spells**. The power and number of divine spells available to the character are determined by level according to the Veildancer Spell Progression table. Veildancers use the Veildancer Spell Lists (which expands the Bladedancer spell list with numerous charms and illusions). They may use any magic items usable by fighters or clerics.

Starting at 2nd level (Daughter), the veildancer's **strength of spirit** makes her immune to normal and magical fear effects. She knows that fear is only an illusion, and lets it pass through her.

Upon reaching 3rd level (Sister-Initiate), veildancers are trained to be **mindful** of all things. A veildancer will notice details such as slight differences in air currents or designs of a room, suggesting secret doors, or the faintest whispers in a loud room. This gives the veildancer a +4 bonus on any proficiency throws to hear noises and detect secret doors. With a proficiency throw of 18+ she can notice secret doors with just casual observation. She gains a +1 bonus to avoid surprise.

At 4th level (Sister), the veildancer develops the ability to **perceive intentions** by detecting tiny variations in others' body language, vocal inflection, and nervous response. The veildancer always

NOBIRAN VEILDANCER LEVEL PROGRESSION						SPELL PROGRESSION				
EXPERIENCE	TITLE	LEVEL	HIT DICE	SPECIAL ABILITIES	DAMAGE BONUS	1	2	3	4	5
0	Novice	1	1d6	Graceful fighting, meditative focus, Nobiran	+1	1	-	-	-	-
4,075	Daughter	2	2d6	Strength of spirit	+1	2	-	-	-	-
8,150	Sister-Initiate	3	3d6	Mindfulness	+2	3	-	-	-	-
16,300	Sister	4	4d6	Perception of intention	+2	3	2	-	-	-
32,600	Sister-Disciple	5	5d6	Command of voice, magic research	+2	3	3	-	-	-
65,200	Veildancer	6	6d6	-	+3	3	3	2	2	-
130,000	Mother	7	7d6	Bonus languages	+3	3	3	3	2	2
260,000	Revered Mother	8	8d6	-	+3	5	5	3	3	2
420,000	Reverend Mother	9	9d6	Mastery of charms & illusion, magic research, temple	+4	5	5	5	3	3
580,000	Rev. Mother, 10th level	10	9d6+2*	-	+4	6	6	5	5	3
740,000	Rev. Mother, 11th level	11	9d6+4*	-	+4	6	6	6	5	5

*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

knows the exact reaction result (Hostile, Unfriendly, etc.) of creatures she interacts with, even if the creatures attempt to lie or conceal their reactions. Creatures with a CHA greater than the veildancer's WIS are immune to this power (and the veildancer will know they are immune).

By 5th level (Sister-Disciple), the veildancer achieves a **command of voice** that undisciplined minds find irresistible. She gains a +2 bonus to reaction rolls with creatures she speaks to. If this bonus results in a total of 12 or more, the subjects act as if charmed while in her presence. Creatures with a WIS greater than the veildancer's CHA are immune to this power (and the veildancer will know they are immune).

When a veildancer reaches 5th level she also learns to **perform magic research**, including researching spells, scribing scrolls, and brewing potions.

By 7th level (Mother), as an advisor to lords and rulers, the veildancer becomes conversant in the tongues of all the great civilizations. The character gains the ability to speak, read, and write four **bonus languages**.

Upon reaching 9th level (Reverend Mother), the veildancer achieves a **mastery of charms and illusions**. When the veildancer casts enchantments or illusions, the spell effects are calculated as if she were two class levels higher than her actual level of experience. Targets of her enchantments suffer a -2 penalty to their saving throw, as do those who attempt to disbelieve her illusions. This class power stacks with the Mastery of Charms and Illusions proficiency.

At 9th level she also learns to **create more powerful magic items** such as weapons, rings, and staffs.

In addition, a 9th level veildancer may choose to construct a **temple** as a stronghold. If she has not lost the favor of Ianna, the cost of building the temple will be half the normal amount due to miraculous assistance from her deity. When she does so, up to 5d6x10 0th level soldiers and 1d6 bladedancers or priestesses of 1st-3rd level will come to serve the Reverend Mother. They are completely loyal (morale +4). While in the veildancer's service, her followers must be provided food and lodging, but need not be paid wages. A veildancer's temple is otherwise identical to a cleric's

NOBIRAN VEILDANCER ATTACK AND SAVING THROWS						
LEVEL	PETRIFICATION & PARALYSIS	POISON & DEATH	BLAST & BREATH	STAFFS & WANDS	SPELLS	ATTACK THROW
1	13+	12+	14+	14+	15+	10+
2-3	12+	11+	13+	13+	14+	9+
4	11+	10+	12+	12+	13+	8+
5-6	10+	9+	11+	11+	12+	7+
7	9+	8+	10+	10+	11+	6+
8-9	8+	7+	9+	9+	10+	5+
10	7+	6+	8+	8+	9+	4+
11	6+	5+	7+	7+	8+	3+

fortified church, as detailed in the Campaign chapter of the *ACKS* Rulebook.

At 11th level (Reverend Mother), a veildancer may learn and cast ritual divine spells of great power (6th and 7th level), and craft magical constructs such as golems and animated statues.

As the **avored of the Empyrean powers**, all veildancers receive a +2 bonus to all saving throws. (This adjustment is already factored into the saving throws on the Nobiran Veildancer Attack and Saving Throws table below.) All veildancers are **ageless** and enjoy a lifespan three times longer than that of normal women. Like elves, they are immune to ghoul paralysis. They also enjoy **divine health** that renders them immune to all forms of disease, including magical diseases caused by spells, mummies, or lycanthropes. Finally, the **blood of ancient kings** and heroes flows in every veildancer. The character may hire one more henchman than her Charisma would otherwise permit, and the base morale score of any henchmen is increased by 1.

Nobiran Veildancer Proficiency List (31): Acrobatics, Apostasy, Arcane Dabbling, Beast Friendship, Blind Fighting, Climbing, Combat Trickery (incapacitate, wrestle), Contemplation, Contortionism, Eavesdropping, Fighting Style, Illusion Resistance, Laying on Hands, Lip Reading, Magical Engineering, Magical Music, Mastery of Charms and Illusions*, Passing Without Trace, Performance, Prestidigitation, Prophecy, Quiet Magic, Running, Skirmishing, Swashbuckling, Unarmed Fighting**, Unflappable Casting, Wakefulness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus

*Heroic Fantasy Handbook proficiency

**Player's Companion proficiency

Template:	Temple Veildancer
Proficiencies:	Swashbuckling, Performance (dancing)
Starting Equipment:	Holy symbol (9-pointed star of Ianna), pair of gracefully curved short swords, gold silk cloak, veil, and sash, scarlet silk chiton, long leather gloves, gold earrings (20gp value), high boots, backpack, 2 weeks' iron rations, 6gp

Temple Veildancer Template: This pre-generated template represents a veildancer of the temple. The template is ready for adventure. However, if your veildancer's INT is 13 or greater, you may pick one or more additional general proficiencies before play if you'd like (see **Starting Proficiencies** in Chapter 4 of *ACKS*).

DIVINE SPELL LIST (VEILDANCER)

FIRST LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS	
1	<i>Angelic Choir</i>
2	Command Word ^{enc}
3	Cure Light Wounds*
4	<i>Delay Disease</i>
5	Detect Evil*
6	Detect Magic
7	Faerie Fire ^{elm(fire)}
8	Fellowship ^{enc}
9	Light*
10	Protection from Evil*
11	<i>Read Languages</i>
12	Remove Fear*
13	Resist Cold ^{elm(water)}
14	<i>Salving Rest</i>
15	<i>Trance</i>
SECOND LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS	
1	Augury
2	Bless*
3	Charm Animal ^{enc}
4	<i>Enthrall</i> ^{enc}
5	Hold Person ^{enc}
6	Holy Chant
7	Locate Object
8	Resist Fire ^{elm(fire)}
9	Shimmer
10	Speak with Animals
11	Spiritual Weapon
12	<i>Sleep</i> ^{enc}
13	<i>Swift Sword</i>
14	<i>Ventriloquism</i> ^{ill}
15	<i>Unseen Servant</i>

THIRD LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

1	<i>Alter Self</i> tm
2	Continual Light*
3	Cure Disease
4	Glyph of Warding
5	Growth of Animals tm
6	<i>Invisibility</i> ^{ill}
7	<i>Invulnerability to Evil</i>
8	<i>Levitate</i>
9	<i>Mirror Image</i> ^{ill}
10	<i>Phantasmal Force</i> ^{ill}
11	Prayer
12	Remove Curse*
13	Speak with Dead
14	Striking
15	<i>Winged Flight</i> tm

FOURTH LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

1	<i>Clairaudience</i>
2	<i>Clairvoyance</i>
3	<i>Chimerical Force</i> ^{ill}
4	Create Water ^{elm(water)}
5	Cure Serious Wounds*
6	Dispel Magic
7	Divination
8	<i>Fate</i>
9	Neutralize Poison*
10	Protection from Evil, Sustained*
11	Smite Undead* ^{nec}
12	Speak with Plants
13	<i>Telepath</i>
14	Tongues
15	Vigor

FIFTH LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

1	Atonement
2	<i>Charm Monster</i> ^{enc}
3	<i>Command Person</i> ^{enc}
4	Commune
5	Create Food
6	Dispel Evil
7	<i>Fear</i> ^{enc}
8	Flame Strike ^{elm(fire)}
9	Insect Plague
10	Quest* ^{enc}
11	Restore Life and Limb* ^{dth}
12	Strength of Mind*
13	<i>Spectral Force</i> ^{ill}
14	Sword of Fire ^{elm(fire)}
15	True Seeing

CLASS BUILD AND DESIGNER'S NOTES

The Nobiran veildancer is built with HD 1, Fighting 2 (Armor Narrow, Weapons Broad), Nobiran 4, giving it a HD cost of 500 + (1000 + 300 + 150) + 2125 = 4075.

Armor is traded down from Unrestricted to Narrow to gain 2 powers. Weapon is traded down from Unrestricted to Broad to gain 1 power. (The Broad weapons selection encompasses the bladedancer's narrow weapon selection with "any swords, daggers, spears, and polearms," then "adds any combination of 5 weapons.") Turn undead is traded to gain 4 powers.

Total number of class powers is therefore 7. Of these, two are traded for a single power at levels 2, 4, and 9; two are traded for a single power at levels 3, 5, 7; and three are selected at level 1. That yields the following schedule:

1	graceful fighting, initiative, meditative focus
2	strength of spirit
3	mindfulness
4	perceive intentions
5	command of voice (+ magic research)
6	
7	bonus languages
8	
9	mastery of charms and illusions (+ magic research, stronghold)
10	
11	(ritual magic)

THE PRIESTESS OF NASGA

Prime Requisite: WIS, CHA
 Requirements: None
 Hit Dice: 1d4
 Maximum Level: 14

When the gods of Cybele were born, none were so beautiful as the sisters Ianna and Nasga. It is said that in them the very Idea of Beauty was made manifest by the Logos. But Ianna's was the beauty of the azure heaven on a summer day; Nasga's was the beauty of the darkening sky in the calm before a terrible storm. Ianna found joy in the deeds of valor and romance she inspired, but Nasga found pleasure only in the lust and envy of those who sought her and were denied.

In her vanity, Nasga could abide no rival. A hatred grew in her heart for her sister, who was better loved than she; and it came that Nasga in a rage fell upon her sister in the night, seeking to maim and ruin her. But Ianna was a goddess of war as well as love, and violence was no stranger to her. The sisters struggled, and Ianna had the better of it: She broke Nasga at her ankles and waist and wrists; and Ianna threw her from the heavens.

The dark goddess fell to earth and lay still for long aeons. But when she at last rose, she laughed. For lo! She was become yet more beautiful and more terrible: Spikes were on her feet, and daggers on her hands, and her heart was armored with leather and bone. And she gathered unto her the vain and the wicked, and to them she said: "Beauty comes from pain. Sublimity comes from suffering. Go now and make the world in My image."

- Excerpted from *Folklore of Aurēpos*, by Axios Anarios

The Temple of Nasga was among the most powerful religious orders in the Zaharan empire. Born upon litters by scarred and hooded slaves, Nasga's leather-clad priestesses brought unnatural beauty and unbearable pain to every province and every city of their sinister realm; and an Exquisitrix of Nasga who espied a girl-child of particularly cruel manner and comely form could demand of her family that they render her unto Nasga's service.

But those halcyon days ended a millennium ago. Only in dusky Kemesh can one find still find Nasgan priestesses with sublime cruelty and ravishing beauty to rival the glorious depravity of Old Zahar. There, the black temples of Nasga still echo with ceaseless cries of ecstasy and agony. It is said that no man who enters a temple of Nasga will leave without bearing a scar; but some men do not leave at all. They give themselves over to carnality forever, becoming grotesque and ruined figures fit only to serve the priestesses as slaves and litter-bearers.

The fate of the women who enter the temple as aspirants is, perhaps, worse. They endure years of dreadful discipline, agonizing body modification, and unceasing torment. Most are broken by the suffering and discarded like unwanted dolls. The few who endure emerge from the temple remodeled body and mind into the image of their goddess – bound in leather, bone, and steel in a sign of eternal commitment to Nasga.

Few priestesses of Nasga become adventurers. Their crippling devotion to personal beauty leaves them ill equipped to climb through rocky corridors or march across trackless wastes. Instead, their battles are fought with malignant whispers and suggestive smiles before the thrones and altars of the mighty. For centuries, the Temple of Nasga has arranged for its priestesses to become the wives, concubines, and mistresses of the great and powerful. From such positions of privilege, the priestesses advise their consorts, aid them in achieving their ambitions, and ensure through seductive blandishment and unceasing manipulateness that the will of their dark goddess is carried forth.

Nasga imposes many strictures on her priestesses, and commitment to them is virtually irrevocable. The strictures are divided into the **strictures of the flesh** and **strictures of the soul**.

The strictures of the flesh are threefold. First, the priestess of Nasga must **walk on spikes**. Upon entering the service of Nasga, every aspirant's feet are tightly bound to point straight downward and encased in a hardened leather shoe equipped with a tall iron spike coming from its heel. She is thus forced to walk on the tip of her toes with just the narrow point of the spike to aid in balance and support. This ritual foot-binding imposes unbearable agony on the young woman, and many become crippled before adulthood. Such weaklings find no place in the service of Nasga and are typically sold as odalisques at the slave markets.

Those women that endure become inured to the pain and learn to walk with a sensuous grace that entrances and entices. The higher the spikes upon which she walks, the more respected the priestess. But the beauty comes with a price. While she walks on spikes, the priestess's wilderness movement rate is reduced by ½ and she must save vs. Paralysis or fall anytime she attempts to run or charge in uneven or broken terrain. Sadly, a priestess's ruined feet now need the support of the spikes and if she removes her special shoes the penalties are worsened: She loses her ravishing beauty (q.v.), her movement rate is reduced to 30', her DEX is reduced by 2/3 for AC purposes, and she must make a save vs. Paralysis or fall each round. The penalties do not apply if the priestess is mounted or flying.

Second, the priestess of Nasga must **bind her waist**. One year after an aspirant's feet are encased in her spiked shoes, her torso is bound in a leather corset reinforced by human bone. The corset stretches from her bosom to her hips and is removed thereafter only for bathing. As the aspirant grows to adulthood, her corset is periodically replaced, but the waist is not allowed to grow larger, forcing her ribs, lungs, and stomach to permanently reduce in size. Those who cannot endure the crushing constriction soon find themselves ostracized from the temple and reduced to chattel.

PRIESTESS OF NASGA LEVEL PROGRESSION			PRIESTESS SPELL PROGRESSION					
EXPERIENCE	TITLE	LEVEL	HIT DICE	1	2	3	4	5
0	Anchorite of Anguish	1	1d4	1	-	-	-	-
2,000	Daughter of Depravity	2	2d4	2	-	-	-	-
4,000	Initiate of Infliction	3	3d4	3	-	-	-	-
8,000	Sister of Seduction	4	4d4	3	2	-	-	-
16,000	Cenobite of Severity	5	5d4	3	3	-	-	-
32,000	Canoness of Carnality	6	6d4	3	3	2	2	-
65,000	Priestess of Pain	7	7d4	3	3	3	2	2
130,000	Concubine of Concupiscence	8	8d4	5	5	3	3	2
230,000	Exquisitrix of Erotism	9	9d4	5	5	5	3	3
330,000	Exquisitrix of Erotism, 10th level	10	9d4+1	6	6	5	5	3
430,000	Exquisitrix of Erotism, 11th level	11	9d4+2	6	6	6	5	5
530,000	Exquisitrix of Erotism, 12th level	12	9d4+3	8	8	6	6	5
630,000	Exquisitrix of Erotism, 13th level	13	9d4+4	8	8	8	6	5
730,000	Queen of the Damned	14	9d4+5	9	8	8	8	6

**Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored*

Those women who endure the binding come to see the corset as a lover whose embrace never ends and take great pride in the tiny span of their waists. Nevertheless, the priestess's body and breath are forever limited. While binding her waist, the priestess suffers a -4 penalty to saving throws vs. gas effects. She can never force march (even if mounted) and must rest for 2 turns every 6 turns of activity. Tragically, the priestess's weakened frame now needs the support of the corset and if she removes it for more than one turn (10 minutes) penalties ensue: She loses her ravishing beauty (q.v.), her STR is reduced by 2/3 for all purposes, and she cannot recover hit points from natural healing.

Third, the priestess of Nasga must wear **daggers for nails**. One year and one day after an aspirant's body is bound in its corset, her nails are painted with a lacquer made from gorgon blood, and every day thereafter the lacquer is reapplied. After years of daily treatment with this strange ointment, the nails eventually become as hard and unbreakable as steel. But should an unlucky aspirant break one of her nails before they harden, the offending digit is cut off and the aspirant sold into slavery.

Those women who endure have their nails shaped and sharpened into daggers at the cold forges of Zahar. The longer and sharper her dagger nails, the more prestige the priestess receives within her temple. Some priestesses are said to have razor nails more than 6" long, but most are much shorter (1" – 2"). She may attack with her dagger nails in melee for 1d2, 1d4, or 1d6 points of damage. The exact damage depends on her nails' length and sharpness. She can apply poison to her dagger nails as if they were weapons (and is not harmed by the poison, even if she scratches herself.) With years of practice, a priestess learns to handle her nails without cutting herself, and the movements of her hands often acquire the beautiful grace of a cobra. Nevertheless, she suffers a -2, -4, or -6 penalty on any proficiency throws involving fine manipulation (the penalty is equal to the maximum damage she can deal with the nails). A priestess's dagger nails are unbreakable; her finger will break before the nail does.

If a priestess voluntarily removes her special shoes or corset for longer than necessary to bathe and groom herself, she is considered to have broken her strictures. Her feet and body remain crippled permanently, absent years of physical rehabilitation or a *restore life and limb* spell.

The strictures of the soul are also threefold. First, she must **maintain appearances**. The priestess of Nasga must never allow herself to be seen by strangers looking less than her best. If a stranger sees her unkempt or ungroomed, she must exquisitely torture (q.v.) the offending party within the next month or be considered to have broken her strictures.

Second, she must live in **lascivious decadence**. She is obliged to spend as lavishly as she can afford on fashion, grooming, jewelry, and accessories, and to participate in all manner of decadent debauchery. As a result, the priestess of Nasga must spend at least twice the normal living expenses by level each month or be considered to have broken her strictures. It is expected that she will extract the necessary funds from the various suitors and submissives who attend to her.

Finally, the priestess of Nasga must **embrace lust absent love**. She may not take a consort or husband, nor carry a child to term, without the permission of the Temple. A priestess who takes a spouse or gives birth without the Temple's permission will be ordered to murder the loved one; if she fails to do so within a month, she is considered to have broken her strictures. Note that she need not and should not remain chaste.

In exchange for her crippling demands on her priestesses, Nasga showers them with many gifts. As long as she abides by the strictures of her goddess, a priestess of Nasga can **manifest her deity's power in the form of divine spells**. The power and number of divine spells available to the priestess are determined by level according to the Priestess of Nasga Spell Progression table. She may use any magic items usable by clerics.

Every priestess is also blessed with **artificial youth**. While her lifespan is no longer than that of a normal woman's, she suffers no ability score penalties from aging, nor does her body develop wrinkles, blemishes, unwanted weight, or grey hairs. The priestess is also immune to natural diseases. A priestess's artificial youth is permanently lost if she breaks her strictures. Otherwise, a priestess's artificial youth expires at the end of her natural lifespan, when her body quickly decays into that of a withered crone.

This ageless grace is magnified by a **ravishing beauty** that grants the priestess a +2 bonus on reaction rolls with NPCs who are potentially attracted to her. If this bonus results in a total of 12 or more, the subjects act as if **charmed** while in her presence. Creatures with a WIS greater than the priestess's CHA are immune to this power (and the priestess will know they are immune), as are other priestesses of Nasga. This bonus stacks with Mystic Aura and/or Seduction proficiency. A priestess who breaks her strictures loses her ravishing beauty.

Through teasing, taunting, and flirting, a priestess can use her ravishing beauty to **provoke the passions** of an intelligent creature that is potentially attracted to her. Provoking the passions of a creature requires one round (10 seconds), during which time the priestess must remain stationary and take no other action. A creature must be within 30' of the priestess and able to both see and hear her in order to be the target of provocation. The targeted creature must make a saving throw versus Spells. The Judge may grant bonuses or penalties to the saving throw depending on circumstances, the temperament of the creature, and its training or familiarity with the priestess. If the save succeeds, the creature is not provoked. If the save fails, the creature is provoked for 1d4 rounds plus 1 round per level of the priestess.

The effect of provocation depends on the creature's current reaction to the priestess (see **ACKS**, p. 99). A hostile creature will become enraged, attacking the priestess in preference to all others without regard for its own safety for the duration of the provocation. An unfriendly creature will become hostile, seeking to verbally or physically harass the priestess for the duration. A neutral creature will become distracted, ignoring other duties or activities to pay attention to the priestess for the duration. An indifferent creature will become friendly, seeking to assist the priestess for the duration. A friendly creature will become enamored, helping the priestess as if **charmed** for the duration of the provocation. If the priestess or one of her allies attacks a creature while it is provoked, it immediately becomes enraged. Priestesses of Nasga cannot have their passions provoked by another priestess. A priestess who breaks her strictures loses this power.

Because of the discipline she endures as an aspirant, a priestess of Nasga **laughs at pain**. She ignores any penalty from Permanent Wounds 21-25/1 or 26+/1 (wounds that ache). If a priestess of Nasga is subjected to a *circle of agony* or *iron maiden* spell, she is healed instead of damaged by the effect. If she sees a *symbol of pain*, she regains all lost hp instantly. A priestess retains this special ability even if she breaks her strictures.

A priestess of Nasga knows how to command as well as obey. By her words, a priestess of Nasga can **compel submission** from the weak. Once per hour, she can cast *command word* (as the 1st level divine spell) with a casting time of 1 round. Creatures she has *charmed* with her special abilities suffer a -4 penalty on saving throws against this effect.

Through **exquisite torture**, a priestess of Nasga can replenish her physical and spiritual energies. The priestess must spend one turn (10 minutes) whipping, branding, or scarring a willing victim. An NPC under the influence of her **charm** (from alluring beauty, provoking the passions, or her spells) will allow himself to be tortured if he fails a saving throw vs. Spells. When the exquisite torture is complete, the priestess recovers hp equal to the amount of damage she deals to the victim, to a maximum of 60 hp.

If she chooses, she can leave the victim with one or more permanent scars, in exchange regaining one or more spell slots she has expended that day. By leaving a minor scar, she can regain a 1st or 2nd level spell slot. By leaving a major scar, she can regain a 3rd or 4th level spell slot. By leaving a grotesque scar, she can regain a 5th level spell slot. She can only regain one spell slot of each level per day. A priestess cannot benefit from exquisite torture if she has broken her strictures.

Priestesses of Nasga are trained to inflict pain but usually against helpless victims and not enemy combatants. They are unable to use shields, fight with two weapons, or wear any kind of armor. They may only fight with darts, daggers, saps, or whips, or with their dagger nails. At 1st level, priestesses hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws only two points every *six* levels of experience (i.e. the same as mages). They advance in saving throws by two points every *four* levels of experience (i.e. as clerics).

By 3rd level (Initiate of Infliction), the priestess of Nasga learns to **torment the mind** as well as the body. Once per day, she can cast *dark whisper* (as the 3rd level eldritch spell) with a casting time of 1 round. Creatures she has *charmed* with her special abilities suffer a -4 penalty on saving throws against this effect. It is customary (though not required) for the priestess to pierce her lips at this time to demonstrate her ability to inflict pain with her words.

When a priestess of Nasga reaches 5th level (Cenobite of Severity), she may begin to **research spells**, scribe scrolls, and brew potions. It is customary (but not required) for the priestess to have her body tattooed with occult or profane symbols at this time to demonstrate that her body is a temple to the dark arts.

Upon attaining 9th level (Exquisitrix of Erotism), she is able to **create more powerful magic items** such as weapons, rings, and staffs. She also may establish or build her own **temple of beauty and pain**. A priestess who founds a temple will be joined by 1d2x10 1st level priestesses of Nasga and 1d6x30 aspirants seeking to become priestesses. Another 3d6 aspirants will arrive every additional year. It typically takes an aspirant 8 years to become a 1st level priestess; during each of these years 10% of the aspirants will fail to meet one of Nasga's strictures. Failed aspirants can be

sacrificed for divine power, sold into slavery, or given to their former peers as toys to play with, depending on the exquixtrix's evil whim. Honestly, it's best not to think about it.

At 11th level (Exquixtrix of Erotism), a priestess of Nasga's ability to inflict suffering transcends to the spirit itself. She gains the ability to **consume souls**. Once per month she may cast *soul eating* (as the 6th level eldritch spell) with a casting time of 1 turn (10 minutes). Creatures she has *charmed* with her special abilities suffer a -4 penalty on saving throws against this effect. It is customary (though not required) for the priestess to pierce her tongue at this time to demonstrate her ability to savor the taste of pain.

At 11th level, she also may **learn and cast ritual divine spells** of great power (6th and 7th level), craft magical constructs such as golems and animated statues, and perform necromancy. She may add to her occult and profane tattoos if desired.

Priestess of Nasga Proficiency List: Alchemy, Animal Husbandry, Apostasy, Arcane Dabbling, Beast Friendship, Black Lore of Zahar, Contemplation, Diplomacy, Divine Blessing, Divine Health, Healing, Illusion Resistance, Knowledge, Laying on Hands, Loremasters, Magical Engineering, Magical Music, Mystic Aura, Naturalism, Performance, Prestidigitation, Profession, Prophecy, Quiet Magic, Seduction, Sensing Power, Theology, Unflappable Casting

Template:	Seductive Villainess
Proficiencies:	Quiet Magic, Seduction
Starting Equipment:	Holy symbol (medusa of Nasga), leather whip, black leather and bone corset, black silk chiton, spiked boots, war dog with leather collar and leash



Dominatrix Template: This pre-generated template represents an archetypal priestess of Nasga, whose dark whispers and subtle seductions inflict suffering on all who cross her. The template is ready for adventure. If your priestess's INT is 13 or greater, you may pick one or more additional general proficiencies before play.

PRIESTESS OF NASGA SPELL LIST

FIRST LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

1	<i>Angelic Choir</i> ^{ill}
2	<i>Cause Fear</i> ^{enc}
3	<i>Command Word</i> ^{enc}
4	<i>Cure Light Wounds</i> *
5	<i>Darkness</i> *
6	<i>Delay Disease</i>
7	<i>Detect Danger</i>
8	<i>Detect Evil</i>
9	<i>Detect Magic</i>
10	<i>Fellowship</i> ^{enc}
11	<i>Protection from Evil</i>
12	<i>Putrefy Food and Water</i> *
13	<i>Resist Cold</i> ^{elm(water)}
14	<i>Salving Rest</i>
15	<i>Trance</i>

SECOND LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

1	<i>Augury</i>
2	<i>Bane</i>
3	<i>Charm Animal</i> ^{enc}
4	<i>Cure Moderate Wounds</i> *
5	<i>Delay Poison</i>
6	<i>Detect Charm</i> *
7	<i>Divine Grace</i>
8	<i>Enthrall</i> ^{enc}
9	<i>Hold Person</i> ^{enc}
10	<i>Incite Madness</i> ^{enc}
11	<i>Resist Fire</i> ^{elm(fire)}
12	<i>Shimmer</i>
13	<i>Snake Charm</i> ^{enc}
14	<i>Speak with Animals</i>
15	<i>Unseen Servant</i>

THIRD LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

- 1 *Alter Self*^{trn}
- 2 *Cure Blindness**
- 3 *Cure Disease**
- 4 *Cure Major Wounds*
- 5 *Feign Death*
- 6 *Glyph of Warding*
- 7 *Growth of Animals*^{trn}
- 8 *Invisibility*^{ill}
- 9 *Phantasmal Force*^{ill}
- 10 *Prayer*
- 11 *Remove Curse**
- 12 *Speak with Dead*
- 13 *Sphere of Visibility*
- 14 **Voice of Persuasion**^{enc}
- 15 *Winged Flight*^{trn}

FOURTH LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

- 1 *Animate Dead*^{nec}
- 2 *Chimerical Force*^{ill}
- 3 *Control Undead*^{enc}
- 4 *Cure Serious Wounds*
- 5 **Dark Whisper**^{dth}
- 6 *Death Ward*
- 7 *Dispel Magic*
- 8 *Divination*
- 9 *Fate*
- 10 *Neutralize Poison**
- 11 *Skinchange*^{trn}
- 12 *Sticks to Snakes*^{trn}
- 13 *Telepathy*
- 14 *Tongues**
- 15 *Vigor*

FIFTH LEVEL DIVINE SPELLS

- 1 **Bath of the Goddess**^{trn}
- 2 *Charm Monster*^{enc}
- 3 *Commune*
- 4 *Command Person*^{enc}
- 5 *Create Food*
- 6 *Cure Critical Wounds*
- 7 *Fear*^{enc}
- 8 *Finger of Death**^{dth}
- 9 **Guise Self**^{trn}
- 10 *Insect Plague*
- 11 *Spectral Force*^{ill}
- 12 *Quest**^{enc}
- 13 *Scry*
- 14 *Strength of Mind**
- 15 *True Seeing*





THE LORE OF THE STARS

ASTROLOGY IN THE AURAN EMPIRE

By Alexander Macris

The astrologers of the Tower of Knowledge recognize seven *quellari* (“planets”, literally “wandering lights”) in the celestial sphere of Cybele. The seven planets are named for the Empyrean gods (or the gods are named for the planets, or *are* the planets, depending on which cosmogonist is in favor at court); they are Ammonar, Mityara, Naurivus, Ianna, Türas, Istreus, and Calefa. Prior to the 2nd century IY, the Tower of Knowledge believed that all seven planets orbited around Cybele, but contemporary cosmological model holds that Ammonar (the sun) and Mityara (the moon) orbit around Cybele, while the other five planets orbit around Ammonar.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Because there are seven planets, there are seven days in the week. Each day is named for one of the Empyrean gods and planets. Important activities are traditionally undertaken on the weekday corresponding to the god that controls that activity. For instance, declarations of war are most auspicious if made on Iannadras, as Ianna is goddess of war.

SOLAR CALENDAR

The sun orbits around Cybele once every 364 days. Based on this rotation, the Auran solar calendar consists of eight short months of four weeks (28 days) and four long months of five weeks (35 days). Each of the year's four seasons consists of one long month and two short months. Each long month begins with a one-week festival commemorating the change of season.

HOLIDAYS

Each of the long months are five weeks long. The first week of each long month is a festival commemorating the beginning of the new season. Since the start of each season is also the start of a new lunar cycle, each festival begins on a new moon.

MAJOR HOLIDAYS	DATE	SIGNIFICANCE
Celebration of Unconquered Dawn	Vicelen 1 – 7	Winter Solstice
Rites of Hearth Fire	Froelen 1 – 7	Spring Equinox
Day of the Undying Sun	Esevelen 1 – 7	Summer Solstice
Festival of the Reaping	Nethelen 1 – 7	Autumn Equinox

LUNAR CALENDAR

The moon orbits around Cybele once every 30 1/3 days. The lunar calendar is organized into four cycles, each of which is exactly 91 days long and consists of three lunar orbits. Since each solar season consists of one 35-day month and two 28-day months, each solar season covers one complete lunar cycle, and each season always begins with a new moon.

COMMON DAY NAME	CLASSICAL DAY NAME	SIGNIFICANCE	GOD-DAY SIGN	WESTERN CALENDAR EQUIVALENT
Divine-Day	Ammonadras	Holy Day	The Eagle	Sunday
Ship-Day	Nauridras	Start of journeys	The Horse	Monday
Luck-Day	Calefadras	Funerals, estates	The Raven	Tuesday
Secret-Day	Istreudras	Day of work	The Owl	Wednesday
Strength-Day	Turadras	Court day, proclamations of law	The Bull	Thursday
Queen-Day	Iannadras	Engagements, declarations of war	The Lion	Friday
Duty-Day	Mityaradras	Marriages	The Dove	Saturday

CONSTELLATIONS

COMMON MONTH NAME	CLASSICAL MONTH NAME	NUMBER OF DAYS	WESTERN CALENDAR EQUIVALENT
Firstmonth	Vicelen	35	December 21-31 (11), Jan 1-24 (24)
Secondmonth	Genelen	28	Jan 25-31 (7), Feb 1-21 (21)
Thirdmonth	Juselen	28	Feb 22-28 (7), Mar 1-21 (21)
Fourthmonth	Froelen	35	March 22-31 (10), Apr 1-25 (25)
Fifthmonth	Pendaelen	28	Apr 26-30 (5), May 1-23 (23)
Sixthmonth	Zigelen	28	May 24-31 (8), June 1-20 (20)
Seventhmonth	Esevelen	35	June 21-30 (10), July 1-25 (25)
Eighthmonth	Agitelen	28	July 26-31 (6), Aug 1-22 (22)
Ninthmonth	Innelen	28	Aug 23-31 (9), Sept 1-19 (19)
Tenthmonth	Nethelen	35	September 20-30 (11), Oct 1-24 (24)
Eleventhmonth	Vinethelen	28	Oct 25-31 (7), Nov 1-21 (21)
Twelfthmonth	Genethelen	28	Nov 22-30 (9), December 1-19 (19)

1ST MONTH	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1 (New)	2	3	4	5	6	7
2nd week	8 (Half-Wax)	9 (Half-Wax)	10	11	12	13	14
3rd week	15	16 (Full)	17	18	19	20	21
4th week	22	23 (Half-Wane)	24 (Half-Wane)	25	26	27	28
5th week	29	30	31 (New)	32	33	34	35

2ND MONTH	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1	2	3 (Half-Wax)	4 (Half-Wax)	5	6	7
2nd week	8	9	10	11 (Full)	12	13	14
3rd week	15	16	17	18 (Half-Wane)	19 (Half-Wane)	20	21
4th week	22	23	24	25	26 (New)	27	28

3RD MONTH	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1	2	3	4	5 (Half-Wax)	6 (Half-Wax)	7
2nd week	8	9	10	11	12	13 (Full)	14
3rd week	15	16	17	18	19	20 (Half-Wane)	21 (Half-Wane)
4th week	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

CONSTELLATIONS

Illuminating the nighttime panorama of the celestial sphere are the *zeon* ("stars"). Along the ecliptic of the planetary orbits around the celestial sphere, the stars are organized into eleven great *zeogramma* ("constellations") – The Empress, the Cowl, the Eye, the Manticore, the Scorpion, the Naga, the Prince, the Wolf, the Kraken, the Egg, and the Thunderbolt – each encompassing approximately 1/12th of the complete ecliptic. A starless patch of darkness known as the Void takes up the last twelfth of the ecliptic and is considered the twelfth constellation. The constellations were originally named for the Chthonic gods, and the Zaharans used a sidereal calendar named after these constellations, with eight months of 30 days and four of 31 days.

No one disputes the eerie resemblance of the stars to the Chthonic gods, only what it means. The Chthonic myths teach that the gods are slumbering in the earth and that the stars were set with their likeness so that men would know when the time of the Awakening was at hand. According to the chaotic teachings, the bright light of the sun and moon and the wandering motion of the other planets are meant to blind and confuse mankind from these sidereal truths.

Such teachings are considered heretical lies by Auran clergy. According to Empyrean mythology, the Chthonic gods were chained in the Outer Darkness of the celestial sphere, where they can be watched over by the Empyrean gods, who patrol the heavens ceaselessly to ensure these demonic deities can never escape.

CONSTELLATION / SIDEREAL MONTH	DEITY	AURAN CALENDAR MONTH AND DAY	WESTERN CALENDAR MONTH AND DAY
The Empress	Iskara	Vicelen 1 – 30	December 21 – January 20
The Cowl	Dirgion	Vicelen 31 – Genelen 25	January 21 – February 19
The Eye	Kaleth	Genelen 26 – Juselen 28	February 20 – March 21
The Manticore	Bel	Froelen 1 – 30	March 22 – April 20
The Scorpion	Galmorm	Froelen 31 – Pendaelen 25	April 21 – May 20
The Naga	Nasga	Pendaelen 25 – Zigelen 28	May 21 – June 20
The Prince	Ravanor	Esevelen 1 – 30	June 21 – July 20
The Wolf	Nargund	Esevelen 31 – Agitelen 25	July 21 – August 19
The Kraken	Lammala	Agitelen 26 – Innelen 28	August 20 – September 19
The Egg	Telith	Nethelen 1 – Nethelen 30	September 20 – October 19
The Thunderbolt	Ornaron	Nethelen 31 – Vinethelen 25	October 20 – November 18
The Void	All and None	Vinethelen 26 – Genethelen 28	November 19 – December 19 (20)

ASTROLOGICAL DIVINATION

Whatever the truth may be, every civilization of the Ammas Aurë practices divination through charting the stars. The ancient Zaharans were ardent practitioners of astrological divination, or horoscopy; and horoscopy is widespread in the Sunset Kingdoms of Celdorea, Somirea, Shebatea, and Kemesh. The astrologers in the Tower of Knowledge have cataloged the stars and constellations with great care, and carefully track the precession of the heavens. The Auran Empire frowns upon “popular” horoscopy, however, perhaps fearing it will lend itself to Chthonic heresies. Even the stern admonitions of the templars of Tūras have not been enough to snuff out the practice.

According to astrologers, at birth everyone is allotted certain blessings by the planetary and sidereal powers according to his *aragramma* (“sun-sign”) and *elenagramma* (“moon-sign”). A character’s sun-sign is determined by his date of birth on the Constellation table (p. 16), while his moon-sign is determined by finding the day of his birth on the Moon-Sign Lunar Calendar tables below. (If two signs are listed, the sign is determined by day or night birth.) For random determination, roll 1d12 for each sign.

MONTH 1/4/7/10	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1 Empress	2 Empress	3 Empress/Cowl	4 Cowl	5 Cowl	6 Eye	7 Eye
2nd week	8 Eye/Manti.	9 Manticore	10 Manticore	11 Scorpion	12 Scorpion	13 Sco./Naga	14 Naga
3rd week	15 Naga	16 Prince	17 Prince	18 Pri./Wolf	19 Wolf	20 Wolf	21 Kraken
4th week	22 Kraken	23 Krak/Egg	24 Egg	25 Egg	26 T-Bolt	27 T-Bolt	28 T-Bolt/Void
5th week	29 Void	30 Void	31 Empress	32 Empress	33 Emp/Cowl	34 Cowl	35 Cowl

MONTH 2/5/8/11	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1 Eye	2 Eye	3 Eye/Manti.	4 Manticore	5 Manticore	6 Scorpion	7 Scorpion
2nd week	8 Sco./Naga	9 Naga	10 Naga	11 Prince	12 Prince	13 Pri./Wolf	14 Wolf
3rd week	15 Wolf	16 Wolf	17 Kraken	18 Kraken	19 Kraken/Egg	20 Egg	21 Egg
4th week	22 T-Bolt	23 T-Bolt	24 T-Bolt/Void	25 Void	26 Void	27 Empress	28 Empress

MONTH 3/6/9/12	AMMONADRAS	NAURIDRAS	CALEFADRAS	ISTREUDRAS	TURADRAS	IANNADRAS	MITYRADRAS
1st week	1 Emp/Cowl	2 Cowl	3 Cowl	4 Eye	5 Eye	6 Eye/Manti.	7 Manticore
2nd week	8 Manticore	9 Scorpion	10 Scorpion	11 Sco./Naga	12 Naga	13 Naga	14 Prince
3rd week	15 Prince	16 Pri./Wolf	17 Wolf	18 Wolf	19 Kraken	20 Kraken	21 Krak/Egg
4th week	22 Egg	23 Egg	24 T-Bolt	25 T-Bolt	26 T-Bolt/Void	27 Void	28 Void

STAR-MONTH	PREREQUISITE	VERY....	SOMEWHAT...	VERY...	SOMEWHAT...
The Empress	CHA 13+	Commanding	Dignified	Ruthless	Vengeful
The Cowl	WIS 13+	Patient	Deliberative	Secretive	Morbid
The Eye	INT 13+	Observant	Thoughtful	Obsessive	Eccentric
The Manticore	STR 13+	Courageous	Disciplined	Violent	Prideful
The Scorpion	INT 11+, DEX 11+	Ambitious	Cunning	Treacherous	Greedy
The Naga	DEX 11+, CHA 11+	Charming	Sensuous	Lustful	Jealous
The Prince	STR 11+, CHA 11+	Honorable	Diplomatic	Arrogant	Brooding
The Wolf	DEX 13+	Loyal	Tireless	Brutal	Bullying
The Kraken	WIS 11+, CON 11+	Generous	Flexible	Gluttonous	Grasping
The Egg	CON 13+	Nurturing	Conscientious	Demanding	Overbearing
The Thunderbolt	INT 11+, WIS 11+	Energetic	Engaging	Capricious	Wrathful
The Void	STR 11+, CON 11+	Dispassionate	Meditative	Cold	Nihilistic

EXAMPLE: Tavus was born on Genelen 12. His sun-sign is the Cowl. Since Genelen is the second month of the year, he consults the Month 2/5/8/11 sub-table of the Moon-Sign Lunar Calendar tables. Since he was born on the 12th, his moon-sign is the Prince.

The sun-sign and moon-sign are alleged to influence the personality of those born under their influence. Astrologers are rich with anecdotes about famous kings and heroes of the various signs. For instance, the great Audarius Tarkaun was said to be born under the Empress and the Manticore – commanding and courageous, yet ruthless and bloody-minded.

Each sign is associated with four traits, two positive and two negative. Two of the traits are strongly associated with each sign and two are weakly associated with it. The interplay of the character's sun-sign and moon-sign (allegedly) determines his personality. A character will strongly express the strong trait of his sun-sign and weakly express the weak traits of his sun-sign; he will only weakly express the strong traits of his moon-sign. A character whose sun and moon sign are identical will strongly display all four traits of his sun-sign. If traits are opposed, the intensity of expression will lessen. Characters of Lawful alignment will usually display positive traits more strongly and negative traits less strongly; the opposite is true of Chaotics.

EXAMPLE #1: Tavus's sun-sign is the Cowl and his moon-sign is the Prince. Tavus is very patient and secretive. He is somewhat deliberative and honorable, as well as a bit arrogant and morbid. We can imagine Tavus as a man who plans years ahead, revealing little of what he intends even though he has thought through everything. He tries to keep his word because he knows that a single broken promise can destroy the value of his reputation in the long term. His careful plans make him a bit overconfident. Because he thinks so far ahead, he has already taken into account dark outcomes such as his own death.

EXAMPLE #2: By strange coincidence, Tavus' brother Felix has the same horoscope but in reverse. Felix's sun-sign is the Prince and his moon-sign is the Cowl. Felix is very honorable and very arrogant, though he can be diplomatic and patient when he needs to be. We can imagine him as a prideful man with an inflexible code, one who sees his honor as a gift to himself. He shares little of what he knows because few deserve his counsel. He is sometimes given to brooding over imagined slights and failings.

Each sign has certain prerequisites. A character who meets the prerequisites of his sun- and/or moon-sign is said to manifest that sign's blessings. Each day that the sun is in his sun-sign, he may re-roll one die roll per day related to his sun-sign. Each month, he may re-roll one day related to his moon-sign. Some character classes are, of course, better able to make use of their sun- and moon-signs than others.

EXAMPLE: If Tavis has a WIS 13+, he manifests the blessings of the Cowl. The sun is in the Cowl from Vicelen 31 to Genelen 25 (January 21 – February 19). For each of those 30 days, he could make a daily re-roll of a control/turn undead roll or a saving throw vs. paralysis or fear. If Tavus has STR 11+ and CHA 11+, he manifests the blessings of the Prince. He could re-roll one melee attack throw or diplomacy reaction roll per month.



SIGN	RE-ROLL
Empress	Intimidation Reaction Roll or Loyalty Roll (Henchmen)
Cowl	Control/Turn Undead Roll or Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or Fear
Eye	Loremastery or Knowledge Proficiency Throw or Magical Research Throws
Manticore	Strategic Initiative Roll or Morale Roll (Mercenaries/Troops)
Scorpion	Ambush/Backstab Damage Roll or Saving Throw vs. Poison
Naga	Personal Initiative Roll or Seduction Reaction Roll
Prince	Melee Attack Throw or Diplomacy Reaction Roll
Wolf	Missile Attack Throw or Tracking, Trapping, or Survival Proficiency Throw
Kraken	Seamanship, Navigation, or Swimming Proficiency Throw
Egg	Mortal Wounds Roll or Saving Throw vs. Petrification
Thunderbolt	Blast Damage Roll or Saving Throws versus Blast/Breath
Void	Death Magic Damage Roll or Saving Throw vs. Death

STAR-BLESSED HEROES

A character who manifests both his sun-sign and moon-sign has a formidable personality with the potential for great good and great evil. Such a character is called *zeosarë* ("star-blessed") and gains one rank in the Destined proficiency (+1 Fate Point; see *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*).

CALCULATING YOUR HOROSCOPE

Instead of rolling for your character's horoscope, you can assign him one based on your own date and day of birth. Simply convert your date of birth into the Auran calendar and voila! Your character's stars are ready.

EXAMPLE: Newton has just rolled up a new character, the Tirenean venturer Refundus, with STR 11, INT 16, WIS 13, DEX 11, CON 9, CHA 15. Newton's birthday is April 21, and he decides to use that to calculate Refundus' sun- and moon-sign. April 21 is Froelen 31. Therefore Refundus' sun-sign is the Scorpion and his moon-sign is the Empress.

Refundus is a man of great ambition with a heart filled with black treachery. He is assertive and wily but prone to greed and ruthlessness. Newton considers renaming his character Norefundus.

Because of his ability scores, Refundus manifests the blessings of both his sun-sign of The Scorpion (his INT 16 and DEX 11 meet the prerequisites) and his moon-sign of the Empress (because he has CHA 15). From Froelen 31 to Pendaelen 25 (April 21 – May 20), he can re-roll an ambush/backstab damage roll or a saving throw vs. Poison each day. Once per month he can re-roll an intimidation reaction roll or a loyalty roll.

Your game designer has the sun-sign of the Manticore and the moon-sign of the Cowl but as far as he knows he does not manifest much in the way of courage, discipline, secretiveness, or morbidity. He fears this may be indicative of low ability scores.



THE METAPHYSICS OF THE COSMOS

THE COSMOGONIC SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE, REVEALED!

By Alexander Macris

As a general design principle, **ACKS** holds that game mechanics should always be justified by, or at least compatible with, the underlying reality of a coherent game world. Some of the mechanics of **ACKS** have profound implications for what that underlying reality must be. Game mechanics such as arcane and divine magic; divine power, sacrifice and congregants; reincarnation and resurrection; and sinkholes of evil all demand an explanation or explanations.

Accordingly this section includes a complete and self-consistent metaphysical system that offers in-world explanations for the mysterious phenomenon implied by **ACKS**'s game mechanics. It is, in other words, the implied metaphysics of the implied setting.

There are, of course, many possible explanations for things such as reincarnation and undeath, including the possibility of providing no explanation at all ("it's a great mystery"). The answers below are merely one set of possible explanations. As Judge, it is your prerogative to change or ignore any of them; but even if your intent is to create your own metaphysical explanations, we feel confident that it's easier to be creative when there's an established framework to compare and contrast against.

The metaphysical explanations below are provided in a question-and-answer format. This is both for ease of reading and reference, and also because it is the most likely means for such explanations to arise in play – as adventurers like to ask difficult questions. Note that in many cases, the answers below reveal that the mythology and history of Cybele presented in earlier chapters is somewhere between "true from a certain point of view" to "outright false".

WHAT IS THE COSMOS?

The Cosmos is a hyperdimensional space within which float the various Spheres of Existence. The inhabitants of Cybele know of seven Spheres: The Celestial Sphere, the Empyrean Sphere, Chthonic Sphere, and the Elemental Spheres of Fire, Earth, Air, and Water. This is true, as far as it goes; but it is not the complete truth.

The Celestial Sphere that holds the world of Cybele is not *the only* celestial sphere; it is merely one of many such spheres floating

within the infinite plenitude of the Cosmos. The Cosmos is not just vaster than the inhabitants of Cybele can comprehend; it is vaster than even the *gods* can comprehend, for it was not created by them.

WHO CREATED THE COSMOS?

The true creator of the Cosmos was an omni-conscious entity that is as remote from the gods as the gods are remote from mortal men. The certainty of this entity's existence is known only to the gods themselves, though the possibility of such a being has been theorized by Cybele's wisest and most enlightened sages and philosophers. These scholars have given the cosmic creator many names: the Demiurge, the Godhead, the Precursor, the Source, and the Unmoved Mover. The gods themselves call their creator *the Cosmarch*.

Whatever the entity's name, its creation of the Cosmos was its first and last deed: In the generative act, the Cosmarch transferred all of its divine power into the Cosmos itself and became immanent within it. After creating the Cosmos, the Cosmarch was no longer an entity per se; but everything in the Cosmos had a trace of the Cosmarch within it. Living things have more than a trace; they have a veritable shard of the Cosmarch in them. This shard is called the *soul* and carries a measure of divine power. The collective sum of all these shards and traces of divine power immanent in the Cosmos is called *the Logos* or *divine power*.

The metaphysics of the Auran Empire setting are based primarily (but not exclusively) on philosophical and spiritual beliefs espoused during the Hellenistic era within Mediterranean, Near Eastern, and Indian realms. The primary inspiration is Stoicism. In Stoic cosmogony, God, which is both Nature and Reason, created and became the cosmos. All matter carries within it a fragment of the soul of God (also called the world-soul, *anima mundi*, or *logos*). In living creatures, this fragment of God is what endows them with locomotion, perception, and reason.

WHAT ARE THE GODS?

Gods are immortal entities possessed of exceptional amounts of divine power. There are countless gods extant within the Cosmos. The most powerful of them can do almost anything they will; the least powerful are minor spirits or demons, weaker than the mightiest mortals. But not even the mightiest gods are all-knowing, all-powerful, or all-wise. The gods aren't even sure what their purpose in the Cosmos is.

Despite believing in a creator god, Stoicism (and its contemporary rival Neo-Platonism) were polytheistic. Both philosophies taught that the world was peopled with divine agencies who possessed souls even more rarified and pure than that of man.

After aeons spent pondering the higher mysteries, the gods have broken into three different theological factions, each with a unique view as to the intended function of the Cosmos.

The first faction of gods believes that the Cosmarch sought to rid itself of evil – “to separate the light from the darkness,” according to the Seven Radiant Scrolls. They divide the Cosmos into good and evil, order and entropy, life and unlife. Acknowledging that all things came from the Cosmarch, they are moved by their shards of the world-soul to struggle on behalf of good, order, and life to purge evil, entropy, and unlife. The Empyrean gods of the Auran Empire belong to this faction. They are associated with the Lawful alignment.

The second faction of gods believe that the Cosmarch sought to rid itself, not of evil, but of weakness – “to separate the wheat from the chaff.” They divide the Cosmos into strong and weak, powerful and servile, free willed and enslaved. Their shards of the world-soul imbue them with a will to power and conquest. The Chthonic gods of the Zaharans belong to this faction. They are associated with the Chaotic alignment.

The third faction of gods believe that the Cosmarch sought to experience a richness of existence denied it as an Unmoved Mover. Love, hate, pleasure, pain, birth, death, all of these were contained within the Cosmarch but could not be perceived as such unless the Cosmarch became Many from One. The shamans of Skysostan, Jutland, and the Ivory Kingdom hold views similar to these. They are associated with the Neutral alignment. They believe that the other two factions, while necessary, simply misunderstand the role they are intended to play.

All three factions agree that at some point in the future, when the cosmic purpose is fulfilled, the Logos will be re-absorbed and the Cosmarch will be reborn – a moment they call the Rebirth. But how the Rebirth will occur is a great mystery.

The Lawful faction of gods believes that the Rebirth will occur through the transmigration of souls (discussed below). As the wheel of birth and death revolves, each soul gradually ascends to a spiritually purer form, ready to rejoin the Cosmarch. All souls

will eventually be re-united in apotheosis into the Cosmarch. The gods of this faction see themselves as stewards responsible for overseeing the Cosmos and safeguarding it and its inhabitants until this time.

The Chaotic faction of gods takes a diametrically opposed position. These malign entities believe that only a small number of beings, perhaps even just one, will participate in the apotheosis of the Cosmarch. Just as the generation of the Cosmos demanded the willful dissolution of the Cosmarch' divine power, so the regeneration of the Cosmarch will necessarily demand the willful consolidation of divine power. To this end, these implacable gods reap the souls of sentient creatures like men reap grain.

The Neutral gods see the ontological struggle itself to be the means by which the Cosmarch will be Reborn. When the Cosmarch has experienced all there is to experience, then Rebirth shall follow.

According to the Stoics, the cosmos will end in a great conflagration called *ekpyrōsis* in which everything will be re-absorbed by God. The *ekpyrōsis* would occur when the stars had returned to their original celestial positions.

WHAT ARE SOULS?

Souls are the shards of the Logos that reside in every living creature. Each carries a measure of divine power. The transmigration of souls is the process by which immortal souls transition to new bodies. The ability of the Logos to reside in matter is dependent on the matter's configuration and properties - its *form* in classical parlance. Death results when the physical form becomes so damaged or decrepit that it can no longer contain a complete soul.

What happens next is a point of disagreement among the gods and theologians of the Cosmos. The Lawful gods teach that when a body dies, its soul is judged by the Logos. A soul judged worthy become *exalted* or deified, ascending to become a spiritual being of great power. Exalted beings are often worshipped as deified emperors, demigods, angels, and saints by the mortals of their Sphere.

A soul that does not become exalted instead transmigrates to a new form which can contain it. This process is called reincarnation or *metempsychosis*. Reincarnation does not occur immediately. When a living creature dies, a residue of its soul will remain coagulate within the body for a time, only gradually dissipating from its corpse. How much of a residual soul remains depends in large part on how intact the body is – the more intact the body, the more residue of the soul will remain. It is this residue of the soul that makes creature parts valuable as special components. It is this residue of the soul that a spellcaster speaks with when using **spell with dead**. It is this residue that seeps into the ground in places of death to create sinkholes of evil (see below).

The residual soul is also why it is easier for a cleric using **restore life and limb** to bring back the soul of a creature which has recently died and whose corpse is mostly intact. One of the reasons that

WHAT ARE SOULS?

the Empyrean faith teaches its clergy to cremate the dead is to help free the residual soul to move on to its next incarnation.

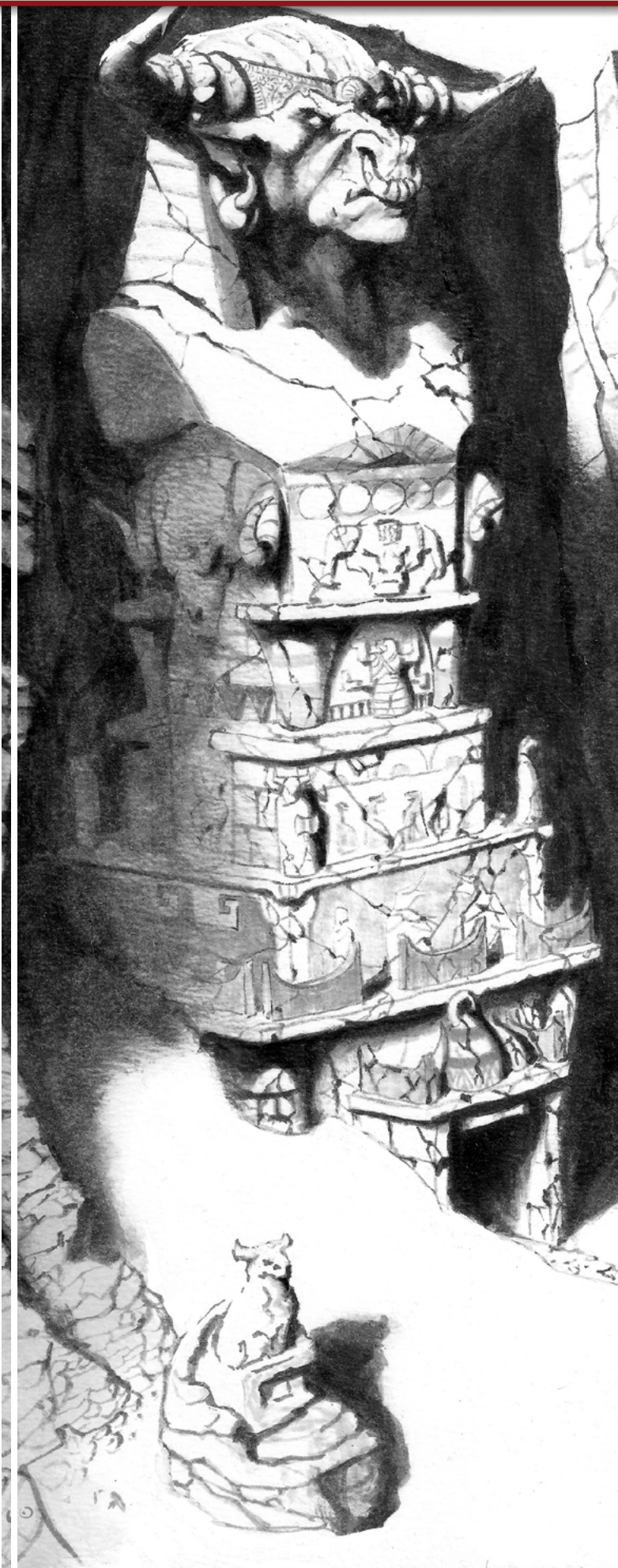
Once the soul is reincarnated, it loses access to the memory of any prior lives it lived. Nevertheless, the Lawful gods teach that the soul retains its unique individuality; and the memories are not lost, merely hidden. A soul that becomes exalted can hope to regain all the memories of all its prior lives.

The Chaotic gods offer a different interpretation. They teach that when a body dies, its soul is not so much reincarnated as *recycled*: The souls of the dead are blended together like lumps of ore in a furnace melted into slag, only to be smelted back into individual ingots. The newborn soul does not retain access to the memory of its prior life because it did not even *have* one particular prior life; it's a composite of many souls blended together. As such, reincarnation means the loss of a soul's particular individuality forever. In death and rebirth there is neither justice nor karma, merely absorption and reconfiguration. The Chaotic gods believe that exalted souls are just a form of undead (see below) and that the so-called individual memories regained by exalted souls are just a confused jumble of memories from many individual beings.

The Neutral gods argue that the distinctions that the Lawful and Chaotic gods cling to are illusory. Since all souls are simply aspects of the Cosmarch or world-soul, individuality itself is an illusion. All souls come from the Cosmarch and all souls return to the Cosmarch; all thoughts are of the Cosmarch and remembered by it.

Each of these theologies is internally consistent and unfalsifiable. Neither magic nor philosophy has been able to ascertain which is true, if such a question is even meaningful. Whatever the case, all three factions agree that as shards of the Logos, souls can neither be created nor destroyed, merely transformed or subsumed. And all three agree that when a soul is absorbed by another more powerful soul, as occurs when a Chaotic cleric sacrifices a creature to his god, it is effectively destroyed as an individual. Lawful theologians find this abhorrent, of course, while Chaotic theologians see it as the virtuous process by which the strong grow stronger.

Reincarnation is nowadays thought of as an "Eastern" belief. But the transmigration of the soul was known to the ancient Greeks as *metempsychosis* as early as the 6th century B.C. It was espoused by Pythagoras and through him Plato (in *the Myth of Er*). It was central to the Orphic mystery religion, to Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists, and to the Greco-Egyptian wisdom texts called the *Hermetica*. It also dominated the teachings of the Celtic druids.



WHAT IS UNDEATH?

The Lawful gods believe that undeath is a corruption of the natural order that the Lawful gods are relying on to achieve their version of the Rebirth. Undeath blocks the natural process of reincarnation from occurring. Lawful societies are taught to prevent undeath from occurring, and to destroy it wherever it arises.

The Chaotic gods believe that undeath is an overcoming of flesh and a victory over death. It is the ultimate exercise of the will to power, when a soul refuses to obey even Nature's Laws. Chaotic societies see undeath as the best means by which an individual soul can avoid melting away after death.

Undeath can arise from corrupting the natural order of either the body (form) or the soul, and the disruption can be spread from tainted creature to creature.

When the body of a living creature is corrupted, the soul within is trapped in the corrupted body upon its death. Ghouls, mummies, and vampires are examples of undead with corrupted bodies. Corrupted bodies are no longer truly alive and in the absence of magic or physical means of preservation, they rot. Ghouls magically maintain their bodies by feeding on the flesh of the living, vampires by feeding on their blood. Mummies do not feed, so great care is made to physically and magically preserve the body before undeath.

When the soul of a living creature becomes corrupted by undeath, the condition of the body is less important; the soul itself is unable to enter the cycle of reincarnation. Wights, wraiths, spectres, and vampires all have corrupted souls. Undead with corrupted souls are greatly feared, for they feed on the life-energy of living things, and whatever they drain away is filled by corruption. This is the basis for the much-feared energy drain.

Based on the existence of incorporeal undead, The Chaotic gods believe that so-called exalted souls are simply incorporeal undead who have learned to feed on life energy given in worship. A Lawful priest claims that a deified emperor is worshipped because he is divine; a Chaotic cultist claims that a deified emperor is kept in a state of incorporeal undeath by worship. (The Chaotic cultists think this a good thing, of course, while their Lawful counterparts claim it as heresy and blasphemy.)

Since the world itself is the Logos or Cosmarch made immanent, it is possible for entire regions of the world to be as corrupted as an individual body by undeath. Such areas are known as *sinkholes of evil*. In such sinkholes, the corruption may leak into corpses within, causing them to animate as skeletons and zombies. Similarly, magical animation of the dead functions by extracting tainted shards of the Logos from the environment and imbuing it into corpses. Skeletons and zombies are insentient, then, because the traces of Logos which animate them are not the soul of their original inhabitants but rather spiritual slag in nearby matter.

Places of death tend to become sinkholes of evil when the spiritual residue in corpses lingers in the environment and spreads back into the decaying corpses. By cremating the dead, the Emphyrean faith keeps its places of dead clear of such pollution.

HOW DO THE GODS ACCUMULATE DIVINE POWER?

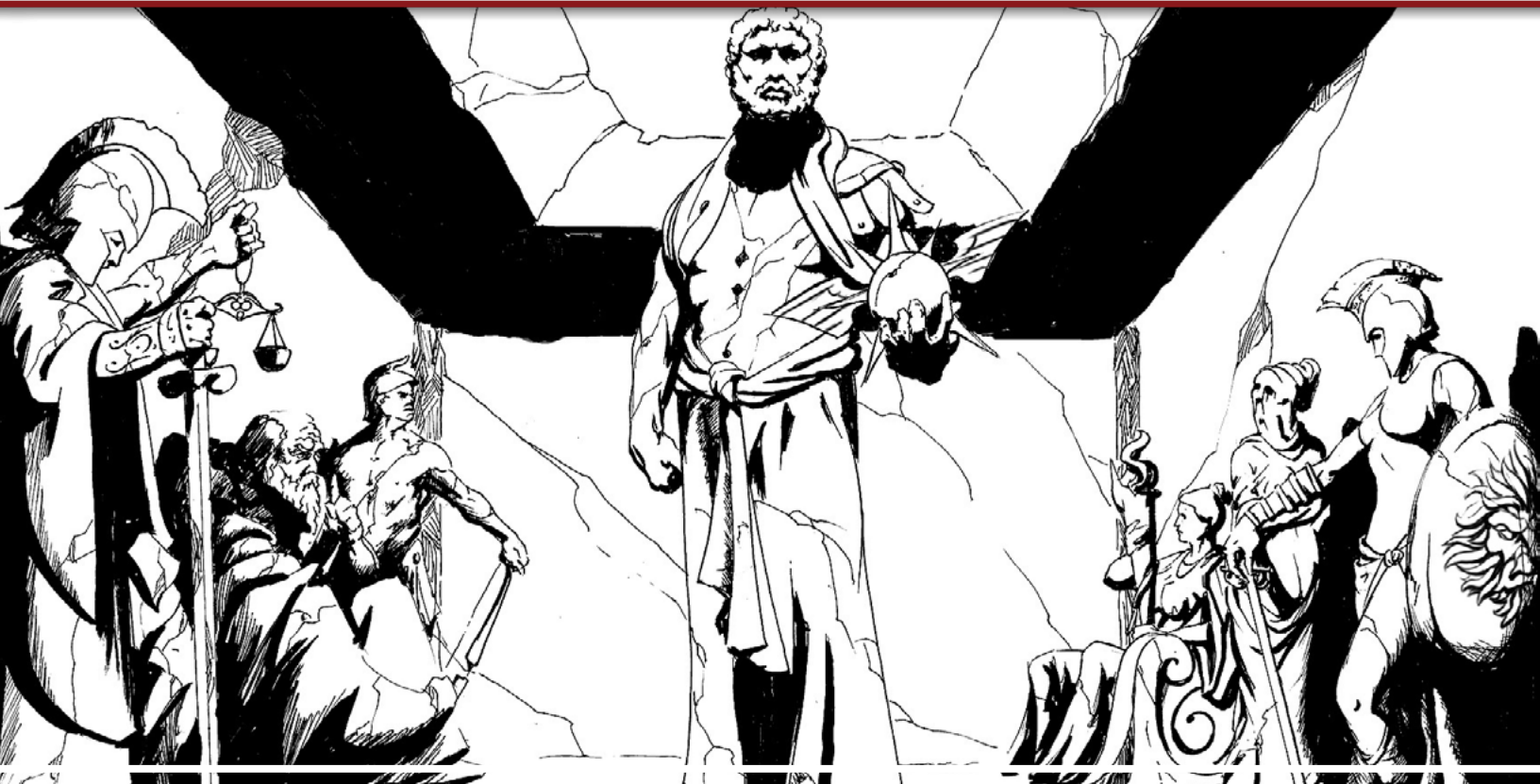
As the Logos was once the Cosmarch, it is the nature of the Logos to seek reunification with itself; thus divine power flows easily from one creature to another, especially from a creature with less divine power to a creature with more. Worship, a voluntary act of will, can bequeath a measure of the worshipper's divine power to the focus of his worship. Worship never bequeaths anywhere near the total of the worshipper's divine power, merely a tiny, surplus portion created by the creature's continued existence.

Much more divine power can be garnered by sacrificing a creature. The creature's death releases all of its divine power at once, which the sacrificer channels to the worshipped god. The god, in turn, usually rewards the sacrificer by returning a fraction of the divine power it received. Sacrifice utterly consumes the creature's soul, removing it from the cycle of reincarnation and denying it the future opportunity for direct reunification with the Logos.

Chaotic gods prefer to acquire divine power from the sacrifice of living creatures. Reaping the life force directly is faster, and also is brutally effective when a new population of living creatures comes under their power. But widespread blood sacrifice is inimical to life flourishing, and the brutal practice generally results in the rapid collapse of populations under the sway of Chaotic gods.

Lawful gods prefer to harvest only a fraction of their worshipper's divine power, and even devote some of their own incalculable energies towards assisting their leading emissaries. This practice has proved so successful that in some Spheres, the Chaotic gods have begrudgingly begun to copy the Lawful gods' tactics and send missionaries amongst mortals to establish their worship.

The accumulation of divine power is not inherently limited to the gods. A mortal creature whose soul receives enough divine power through worship and sacrifice can become a god of the weakest sort, what might be called a god-king, godling, or demi-god, and even if the body dies it can maintain its existence. Exalted souls may actually be examples of this process. Usually such souls pledge themselves to more powerful entities in a form of deific feudalism. Others seek to be independent, but this is risky. If a godling maintains a low profile and limits itself to local affairs, it may be able to flourish, but would-be deities who seek greater power are not usually viewed kindly by the extant gods or their mortal worshippers. A rare few succeed in ascending to the pantheon of powers, but most are destroyed and their divine power seized by greater deities.



The idea that the gods gain something from worship and sacrifice was implicit in the syncretic Greco-Roman religions. Worship was an act of propitiation, expressed in the formula *do ut des* ("I give that you might give"): The gods were expected to reward acts of worship with blessings, gifts, victories, and so on.

Do ut des is the basis for the mechanics of divine power detailed in Chapter 7 of *ACKS*. While the rules discuss divine power in the context of clerical magic, all magic is, in effect, an application of divine power. The difference between arcane and divine magic is that mages use their personal power to manipulate sources immanent within the world, while clerics use their personal power to channel divine sources.

DIVINE POWER OF CREATURES

The total amount of divine power possessed by a creature is equal to ten times its XP value. When a creature dies, about 90% of this value rapidly transmigrates; the other 10% remains as a residue within the creature's blood or organs, which can be harvested as special components for magical research. When a creature is sacrificed, 80% of its divine power passes to the entity worshipped, 10% is retained by the sacrificer for his own ends, and 10% remains residual within its blood and organs. This why
XP value = special component value = sacrifice value.

A living creature will generate excess divine power each day equal to 6% of its XP value. For example, a mage with HD 14** (worth 3,800XP) therefore has (3,800 x 6%) about 230 points of divine power available. Casters use some of this to fuel their spells (a 14th level mage's spells cost about 190 divine power). The rest is dissipated or bequeathed to a god through worship. (As with sacrifice, a cleric that leads a congregant in worship collects 10% while the god collects the rest). Once expended, the creature's divine power will recharge through food and drink.

THE COST OF SPELLS

For Judges who, like Pythagoras, believe that numbers constitute the true nature of things, here are the actual costs in divine power to cast each level of spell in *ACKS*:

1st	1 / 5	4th	10 / 50	7th	28 / 140
2nd	3 / 15	5th	15 / 75	8th	36 / 180
3rd	6 / 30	6th	21 / 105	9th	45 / 220

The number before the slash is how much of his own divine power the spellcaster must expend to channel the spell's magic, while the number after the slash represents the total divine power consumed to fuel the spell, drawn from the caster's god or from immanent sources in the environment.

Note that spell point costs for spells (found in the *Heroic Fantasy Handbook*) are actually the cost in divine power divided by 2 and rounded off into a smooth progression. Hence 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21 and became 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10.

Creating magical items (including the components to cast ritual magic) requires an additional 500 divine power per spell level to transform the materials used into a form which can hold the magic. This extra divine power is sourced from special components, sacrifice, etc.

DIVINE POWER OF GODS

How much divine power do the gods have access to? From *ACKS*, we know that sacrificing a normal man to a god will yield 5 points of divine power to the sacrificer. Since the sacrificer gets 10% and the god gets 80%, the god must get 40 points to the god. Sacrificing 50 normal men will yield 2,000 points of divine power.

Alternatively, 50 average peasants might yield a cleric 4 points of divine power per week (out of a maximum of 10 – most men aren't that worshipful!) That means the cleric's god is getting 36 points of divine power per week from those 50 men (or about 0.7 points per worshipper). Given its global population of about 150 million normal men, the world of Cybele yields around 108 million points of divine power per week.

There are around 2.7 million clerics in Cybele; fueling their spells costs about 80 million divine power per week. That leaves the gods with about 25% of their power available for other purposes.

APOTHEOSIS

How much divine power would a mortal have to accumulate to achieve godhood? It costs 800 divine power to fuel a 14th level cleric for a single day, 5,600 to fuel him for a week. This would require about (800 divine power / .7 divine power per worshipper) 11,420 worshippers. It is thus conceivable that the priest-king of a city-state who persuaded his subjects to worship him could serve as his own god...

That priest-king is not really a god, of course, merely a cleric of his own faith. To be a nigh-almighty being, for example one that could cast **wish** continuously for seven consecutive days of creation, how many worshippers would be required? A 9th level spell costs a total of 265 divine power. Being able to cast **wish** every round for a week would cost (265 x 6 rounds/minute x 60 minutes/hour x 24 hours/day x 7 days/week) 16,027,200 divine power per week. That would require (16,027,200 / .7) 22,896,000 worshippers. Any mortal is likely to be struck down before acquiring so many worshippers... though some will still try.

WHAT ARE THE CELESTIAL SPHERES?

The celestial spheres are pocket universes created by the Lawful gods as strongholds to protect living creatures from the predations of Chaotic gods. Within them, huge populations of mortals are able to flourish in relative safety. The Lawful gods periodically gather in pantheons and construct these pocket universes using substances drawn from the Elemental Spheres of Water, Air, Fire, and Earth, manipulated by their own raw divine power.

After they fasten a celestial sphere, the gods introduce a variety of ensouled life forms on it, their forms drawn from successful archetypes such as men, elves, dwarves, and dragons. To make them harder to find and destroy, the spheres are set adrift through the Cosmos, eternally on the move.

Any fantasy campaign world can be placed within a celestial sphere. Each campaign world will have its own gods, who created the celestial sphere, and who occupy their own divine spheres. Particular physical and magical laws may vary depending on the decisions of the celestial sphere's creators. Since the celestial spheres move over time, they may occasionally touch or overlap. This structure allows for adventures to travel to different campaign worlds while remaining within the Cosmos. It also allows the Judge to introduce travelers from other spheres into his campaign, or alien gods, strange artifacts, or anything else imagine. This framework is especially useful for online play under the FLAILSNAILS conventions.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTAL SPHERES?

The Elemental Spheres are reservoirs of matter and energy that drift within the Cosmos. Some of the gods believe that they are detritus — accidental byproducts of the act of creation. Others believe that the Cosmarch specifically created the Elemental Spheres as a source for the gods to tap, or from which it might one day reconstruct itself. Whatever the truth, the gods manipulate the substances of the Elemental Spheres to forge new spheres of existence; and both gods and men call on them as a source when they cast spells.

Much of each Elemental Sphere's substance is animate, with the Logos thickly concentrated within it even though the form is not that of a living creature. When this animate substance is summoned to another sphere of existence, it temporarily becomes an independent entity called an elemental. When animate elemental substance is permanently fastened into the shapes of men or beasts, it becomes an elemental creature such as a djinni, efreeti, hell hound, or salamander. Many such creatures were created in past eras as servitors and soldiers of the gods.

IS THERE A PRIMARY SPHERE?

Such acts are rarer now, for over aeons of use by gods and men, the Elemental Spheres have gradually diminished in size. This has made the greatest acts of creation increasingly harder to accomplish, forcing the gods to accumulate ever greater levels of divine power to continue their works.

IS THERE A PRIMARY SPHERE?

There was, once. The Prime Sphere was a celestial sphere created by the Logos itself, a sphere of such enormous extent that it almost defied being termed a sphere at all. Unlike Cybele's sphere, which holds but a single sun, the Prime Sphere carried over 70 sextillion stars. The gods of the Cosmos were birthed on this sphere, evolving from primitive lifeforms into higher entities over countless millions of years.

But the Prime Sphere was destroyed long ago in a terrible war between the Lawful and Chaotic gods in which the lives of countless mortal and divine beings were extinguished. It exists now only in the memories of the surviving gods. The Empyrean gods honor their ancestral home each time they create a pocket universe: The creatures and civilizational models they employ are all, in one way or another, descended from those of the Prime Sphere.

The intent here is that the Primary Sphere was our own real-world universe. It explains why so many fantasy RPG campaign worlds are filled with creatures and cultures that resemble those from Earth's history and mythology – it's because the gods originated in our Primary Sphere. This assumption thus sets all **ACKS** campaigns in our reality's future (insofar as we know, our universe hasn't been destroyed in a divine war). But it's really up to the Judge. For instance, he could rule that our real-world universe is actually a partial copy of the destroyed Prime, one in which the distant galaxies are a clever *trompe l'oeil*. Or he could assume that the Primary Sphere is still in existence, and allow his **ACKS** adventurers to visit Earth and explore our real galaxies and planets.



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