

# T H E PRIMAL ORDER





# Ars Magica

A.D. 1220

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T H E

# PRIMAL ORDER™

by

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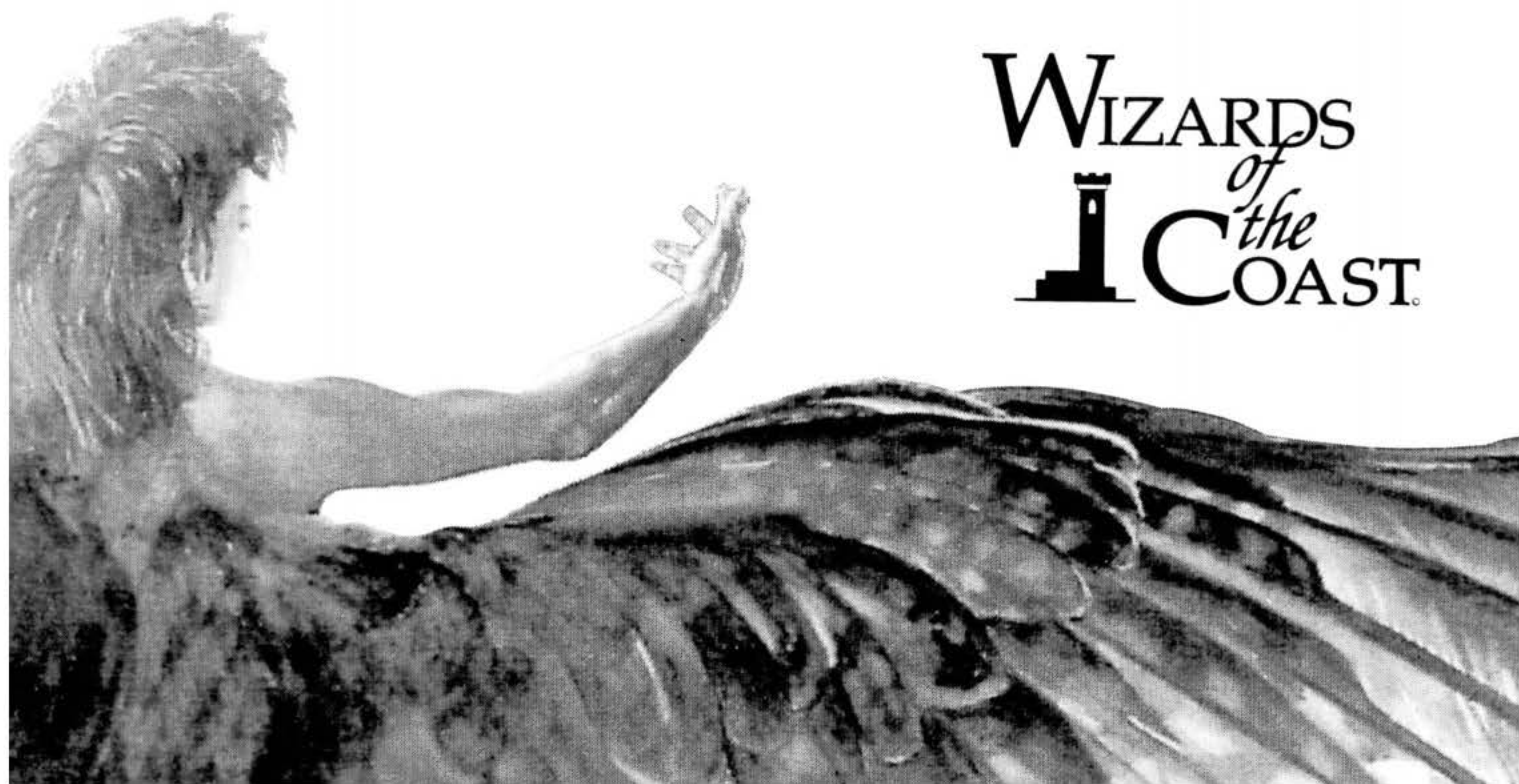
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with a foreword by Ken Rolston



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to  
our shareholders

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*What do you mean, "Try again tomorrow, I'm tapped out"?*



## Foreword

### *Informal Summary Introduction for the Impatient Reader*

- A (for folks who are standing in the store fondling this book and trying to decide whether to cough up the cash for it): Buy it. Good, simple ideas that work. Fun to read. Makes you think Bad Thoughts. Grade A prime brain tool for gamemasters. Swell wish list for wistful players.
- B (for folks who already bought it, read everything already, love it, and are now scanning through reading every last scrap of text, sorry they hurried through the book 'cause now they've got nothing else left to read but the copyright page and the introduction): Yeah, it's just as good as you thought. It's cool. Honest. I say so, and I'm a World Famous Game Designer and Former Ponderous Critic. Now, stop reading and go slap together some gods and universes.

### *Semi-Formal Introduction*

*The Primal Order* offers a scheme for modeling and quantifying the interactions between gods and mortals in roleplaying campaigns. The scheme itself, and the systems that support that scheme, are remarkably simple. The presentation is clear and readable, well illustrated with examples, and enlivened with those most blessed gifts, humor and irony. But even more exciting are the hints about the kinds of narratives and themes that can be developed in campaigns where the GM has a clear idea of the nature and motivations of the gods.

I think you are going to find the ideas presented here fascinating. I also think that reading *The Primal Order* is going to make your brain seethe with sleazy ways to apply these fascinating ideas in your own campaign.

*The Primal Order* is a new kind of roleplaying supplement. Essentially, it is a game designers' handbook, written to help gamemasters think through the roles that deities, and characters who aspire to divinity, can play in their campaigns. The special charm of roleplaying games is the degree to which they encourage everyone to participate in the art of game design. As such, it's surprising that so few books have spoken directly to the game designer about how to design a good roleplaying campaign.

The WotC folks call this new type of supplement a *capsystem*. The Modest Geniuses who conceived *The Primal Order* have privately revealed to me that they aspire to produce other titles like *The Military Order*, *The Economic Order*, *The Governmental Order*, and *The Underworld Order*. In each of these capsystems, they are going to take one of the varied and complex engines that drive roleplaying campaigns, examine and analyze it, and provide a plausible scheme for modeling, explaining, and quantifying the way that engine can work in a roleplaying campaign. A brief look at Appendix A, in which they explain how to use *The Primal Order* with a host of popular FRP game systems, will suggest how remarkably simple it can be to integrate a capsystem like *The Primal Order* with your own game system.

This is a Very Interesting Mission that WotC has assumed. If the intelligence and charm that animates *The Primal Order* is invested in their future projects, I'll have to set up a whole new section on my reference shelf for them.

The only regret I have is that I no longer have a vast, lovably incoherent, cheap-and-cheerful D&D Multiverse campaign where I can introduce Joey the God of Basketweaving. And I *must not* compromise the epic high tone of my Gloranthan campaign by introducing such a frivolous and unheroic cult. I *must not* even think of such a travesty. Not even if my players *begged* me. Nosirree.

Nugaciteus the Thrice-Tainted Host-Power of Blood-Basketry, now that's a different story.

KEN ROLSTON  
*February 1992*

## Preface

*There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.*

—Niccolò Machiavelli

Almost all fantasy roleplaying games (FRPGs) have their roots in ancient mythology. The myths and fables of old describe heroes and thieves, magic and gods, riches and adventure—and most FRPGs hold true to the spirit of these tales. However, while volumes of text have been written about other aspects of roleplaying, deities have been woefully neglected. Deities have no well-defined role in most FRPGs; they are banished from the realm of the campaign proper, instead popping up only occasionally. In some campaigns, they are the GM's Ultimate Enforcers; in others, they are merely watered-down versions of their mythic selves, so weak that an experienced PC can easily dispatch them.

This is the first book in a continuing series that will address the issue of deities in depth, returning to them the power and mystique they so richly deserve. In the following pages, we explore the origins, abilities, attributes, worship, and possibilities for demise that make deities unique among a campaign's NPCs.

Even if you run a campaign in which deities serve primarily as backdrops to the adventuring theater, the role they play still deserves considerable thought since they can heavily influence events in a campaign through their churches, clerics, and followers. And for those GMs who allow their own players to dream of divinity, and those who are just curious about whether Zeus and Apollo could take Hecate and Athena in a tag-team wrestling match, we present a playing system that opens the door to such explorations.

We are not encouraging or advocating any one playing system. Indeed, we have taken pains to ensure that the system given here is readily adaptable to any other roleplaying system. Nor are we encouraging you to drop deities willy-nilly into your campaign, letting them gallop around and wreak havoc on a large scale; in fact, we discuss various possible reasons why deities would avoid exactly that. What we are encouraging is a certain amount of thought about what role deities will play in your campaign, and about how to retain campaign balance in the process.

Ultimately, the fundamental theme of this work, as with all the works we produce, is that of *pandevlopment*, a term coined by Ken McGlothlen, one of the authors. Pandevlopment means the continual process of plausibly developing a campaign on all fronts. We trust that this book holds true to that ideal.



## Acknowledgments

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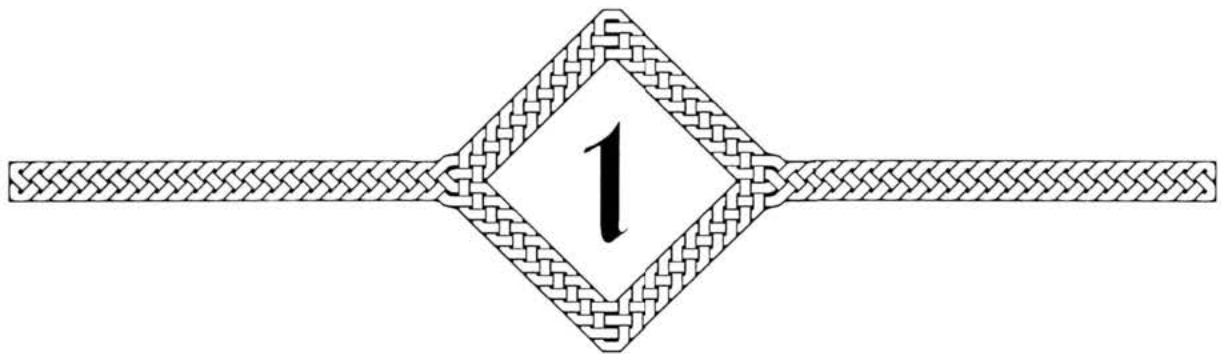
*Zeus, baby. Got an image problem? Hey, no sweat. A few spots on MTV, get seen with one of the new upcoming goddesses, and \*Whammo\* instant increase in teen worshippers, ages 14-23!*

T H E

# PRIMAL ORDER







**Oh, My God.**



## First, A Story

*What do you mean, there's no saving throw?*

*—An Incredulous Player*

Just imagine: you're approaching the end of the Saturday night gaming session. After almost four months, your players have finished cleaning out one of your more insidious constructions, a fortified underground temple of Set. One of the party members, a cleric of Set's archenemy Osiris, is about ready to drop, and the rest of the party is also pretty worn. The characters have finished dividing up the booty and are on their way out when one of the characters, the hotheaded fighter-thief Rhogan, notices a hidden door. You'd just about given up on them finding it, but you dig out your notes . . .

☒ ☒ ☒

"Be careful!"

Rhogan took a moment from picking the particularly tricky lock on a small chest that had rested behind an exceedingly well-concealed panel. "I thought I'd be sloppy, instead, because I like getting killed, all right? Cripes."

"Amadis, really. We're tired, you most of all, but relax, okay?" Zevdiel, the party's resident wizard, passed a hand over his forehead. He thought the whole business of stopping was a good way to get killed. It made a lot more sense to just take the chest now and open it tomorrow, or next week, or whenever they were all rested.

"Got it!"

The other three huddled around Rhogan immediately. A scroll. Trouble. Scrolls are always trouble, thought Zevdiel. Well, some gold and jewelry are in there, too, but that's no big deal at this point. He turned to the fourth member of the party, their weapons expert, Læcudis.

"Lee, don't you think we should wait until we're ready for whatever's on that scroll?"

She started to reply, "Well, actually—"

"Hey! I found the door, I disarmed the traps, and I picked the locks! I get to decide if we look at it now, and I say we do!"

"Rho, we're tired and drained and slow. If it's a problem, we might not be at our best."

Amadis chimed in, "It might be evil. It's got to be something of Set's. I say we burn it right here."

"No way!"

"A little prudence—"

"Oh, stuff prudence!"

"Well, I want to open it, so—"

"Well, then maybe the best thing for this scroll is to stuff it up your—"

"Hey, no fighting!"

☒ ☒ ☒

What the party doesn't know might hurt them. Along with all that gold, this cache actually contains some of the old high priest's regalia, stolen by a heretic. The heretic was consumed by snakes for her troubles, but the stolen jewelry was never recovered. Until now.

The thief of long ago had left one more trap, as yet unfound by our intrepid and stubborn Rhogan. The scroll itself, also originally stolen from the temple of Set, will transport the opener to a random location on the home plane of Set himself, as Rhogan is about to find out . . .

☒ ☒ ☒

"Osiris only knows what it's worth, and you want to *burn* it?"

"He may have helped us find it for our own use."

Rhogan had heard enough. "Jeez, you guys. *I'm* the one who found it, not Osiris. Stand back." In one swift movement, he broke the seal . . .



. . . and unrolled the scroll, realizing as he did so that they were no longer in the temple hallway; they were in . . .

". . . Set's throne room," Amadis whispered.

Set himself was on the throne, and the massive head slowly turned to regard this sudden appearance of four mortals. His eyes began to burn more brightly as the god took in the contents of Rhogan's hands. Gold, and a high priest's regalia, stolen from one of his own temples!

Amadis dropped to the floor. Zevdiel just rolled his eyes. Aren't scrolls trouble? A lot of trouble. For that matter, he couldn't think of how they could be in any more trouble.

An attendant scuttled over to them, apparently decided Rhogan was the leader, and whispered, "I don't know who you think you are, but if you don't want to be play toys for vipers for the rest of your very short lives, I suggest you grovel like you've never groveled before, and make a *very* sizable donation to our coffers, right now or sooner."

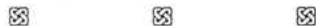
Zevdiel figured this would make Amadis turn purple with rage, or red with fury, or some other charming color, but Amadis appeared oblivious. She was still hunched down, muttering to herself. Unfortunately, it was Rhogan who decided to get upset.

"Hey, Set! I don't appreciate being swept off to your summer cottage. Why don't you save us both a lot of time and effort, and just send us back? Now would be a good time."

Zevdiel realized he was wrong. Very wrong. They *could* be in a lot more trouble.



By rights, Set should have just toasted them when they first appeared and had some minion sweep up later, but you decided to have some mercy, for the sake of the game. But this! Set, the ultimate symbol of evil in the Egyptian mythos, has just been challenged in his very own throne room, on his very own plane, possibly even before he's had breakfast, by a pesky, rude, insignificant mortal! You cover your shock by reaching for a Dorito." Oh, well. So be it.



The attendant, after a look of stunned amazement, ran madly for the other side of the room. Set rose from his throne, angrily raising his fist. A ravening bolt of power darker than the soul of Akhenaton shot forth. Rhogan was instantly slain.



Speaking from experience, this is a fair call. Deities are nothing to laugh at, and you certainly wouldn't demand free airfare from one. You even went so far as to give the player a chance. Your call, though completely arbitrary, is sensible and justified.

Of course, the player may not feel that way. Rhogan's player will probably respond with a barrage of questions: "How did he kill me? I have defenses against magical attack! Where's my luck roll? One of my abilities is premonition of death; besides, I've seen Set's stats in the book, and I think I could take him. Don't I even get a chance?"

*The Problem*

Hmm. Well, it was sudden. All right, somewhere around here is buried a bunch of stats for this divine crowd. You give the players a break while you dig them out.

Sitting back down, you start making decisions. What kind of spell does Set actually throw? You decide to go with the Lance of Excruciating Pain at three times the character's level. It has a good chance of stopping his heart.

☒ ☒ ☒

"Aaahhh!" screamed Rhogan as the tremendous energies pervaded his system. He collapsed to the floor and started spasming grotesquely.

Amadis cast a quick diagnostic spell, and reassured the other party members. "He got off light. He'll be fine in a bit." She stepped in front of the twitching Rhogan and joined the others in a counterattack.

☒ ☒ ☒

Rats. Of all the lousy luck. Rhogan may recover in time to fight, when he should at least have been temporarily paralyzed. You decide you'd better get some of the assistants in on the deal. You figure there are about twenty of them in the room. You've only got stats for twelve assistants, so you just duplicate some of them to save time, and send them into battle.

☒ ☒ ☒

"Zevdiel, look out on your right!"

Zevdiel glanced over to see a group of Set's aides converging on him. He had a Thing of Power that he'd been saving for an emergency; this seemed to qualify. Hauling out his Scepter of Tashts, he cast group paralysis over twelve of the entourage.

Læcudis, meanwhile, had been launching Black Widow Arrows at Set. One of them managed to defeat his defenses, causing a shriek to fill the hall. The god's eyes glared with new venom as he collapsed back into his throne. A divine arm gestured rapidly as he returned the favor.

"Mercury's toenails! What was that?" Læcudis asked as her armor blew apart rivets and all, her Cloak of Spell-Turning was reduced to spell-turning lint, and the contents of her pack transformed into a rather nasty goo.

"Draw and Quarter spell. Didn't work right. Shut up and whack," Amadis replied.

☒ ☒ ☒

Let's face it. The gods are taking a beating. This isn't right at all. They're *gods*, and no mortal should be able to push them around. At this point, even if Set's side wins, there'll be heavy losses, and some of the mortals will escape. Time to punt.

☒ ☒ ☒

"Gather," intoned Set.

The aides and assistants still capable of moving rushed to Set's side; as they reached out to each other and their god, Set began mystic gestures of such power that even Rhogan, only partially recovered, could sense the impending stroke.

"Quickly! Defend! To me!" cried Amadis, as she prepared an attempt to deflect the spell.

As Zevdiel prepared reinforcements, he filled in the details. "It's called Set's Will, and it's going to whack us but bad. Rhogan, can you get out your Amulet of Immunities? Lee, is your anti-pain ring still working?"

"No, but I do have that Ring of Flesh Regrowth . . ."

"No time!"

With a tremendous crash, energies to make the very air scream surged toward the huddled party. In a dazzle of thrust and parry, the magical defenses



You know, Frank, ever since we looted that temple of Set I've had the strangest feeling of being followed.



blunted the blow, even as they were tossed aside. As Zevdiel's Scepter fractured and broke, its bleeding energies . . .



. . . caused a strange side effect. When the party realized they'd returned to the temple hallway, they gathered their property and strolled off, already planning a truly epic victory party.



Wasn't that ugly? You try to avoid being arbitrary, and get into all sorts of trouble. Cranking up the stats to make a god just doesn't work all that well, because the tables stop somewhere below the level you need. And hey, shouldn't gods be immune to poison and other mundane stuff like that? Or even Slay Evil spells and other piddly stuff that's intended for zombies and spookers? Would quadrupling or quintupling Set's scores have solved anything? Maybe he needs special spells that only gods can use. Should you have just played out the fight and let the chips fall where they may, even if Set lost? Could you actually have allowed the mortals to beat a god?

These are good questions that the gaming industry, until now, has left largely unanswered.

Welcome to *The Primal Order*, a set of rules that can be used to extend any Fantasy Roleplaying (FRP) campaign. Our goal is to return to deities the power and mystique they rightfully deserve while enhancing their role in a positive, plausible way.

The main concept we provide that makes a clear and unambiguous division between mere mortals and gods is *primal energy*, a new energy unique to divine beings. Once we have defined primal energy and its use, we'll cover how deities behave; how they use their abilities, their physical attributes, and their specializations; the various types of deities and where they live; how to make your own; and some suggestions on how divine-level play can be integrated into an existing campaign on a variety of levels.

Even if you never plan to bring your players into direct conflict with a deity, this book should provide you with valuable insight into the roles deities may play in your universe—their possible origins, motivations, and even their potential for demise. We explore several likely answers for some of the more difficult questions, such as why deities need to worry about being worshiped in the first place, or how deities provide for their clerics, and we even speculate on how you might allow players to attain divine levels in your campaign without destroying campaign balance.

Since this book represents a subsystem for resolving divine issues in a general sense, the large amount of research into mythology that was required will be largely invisible to the reader. Still, we found certain books and games useful and inspiring, and include a suggested reading list.

We realized early on that this would be a controversial work. Every gamemaster has a different style of handling divine issues, ranging from power gamers who frequently allow characters to interact with deities, to more conservative GMs who use deities primarily as remote backdrops whose only tangible effect is the presence of clerics in the campaign. But talking about "gods" in particular is even more complex, because discussing deities crosses over into topics that may well conflict with a GM's real-life belief system. It is not our intent to offend people, nor do we wish to force a particular level of divine play on you. Our intent is to provoke some serious thought on the roles deities might play in your campaign, and to provide issues for discussion, criticism, and debate while suggesting several solutions to problems encountered in all levels of play.

## A Bigger Problem

## The Solution

## Things To Keep In Mind

We strongly feel that the GM is the ultimate authority when it comes to the playing system implemented within the campaign. Over time, some gaming companies have chosen to discourage GMs from changing their "official" system. We consider this a shortsighted approach, since no one playing system is going to fit every particular GM's needs or philosophies. Even Gary Gygax, in the first edition of TSR's *Dungeon Master's Guide*, stated, "It is the spirit of the game, not the letter of the rules, which is important. Never hold to the letter written, nor allow some barracks room lawyer to force quotations from the rule book upon you . . ." We want to revive this philosophy. We aren't here to tell you how to run your campaign; instead, we want to provide a springboard for ideas and concepts that you can use or discard as you see fit. We encourage you to use and adapt any or all of the information and discussion in this book to suit your individual campaign needs.

## Terminology

Before we go much further, we need to discuss several key terms and concepts that are used throughout this book. You've already met many of them in the opening story. We'll start at the top, with souls, and work our way through most of the key concepts to provide a good background for the coming chapters. All the terms are also defined in the glossary.

The difference between sentient and nonsentient living beings is a *soul*, an immaterial essence. Most souls belong to *mortals*; some belong to gods. Mortal souls require a physical body to function. When a mortal soul's body is destroyed or otherwise ceases to function, the soul is only dimly aware of its surroundings and cannot operate independently. This means that even beings that seem to be able to live forever, such as the elves in *The Lord of the Rings*, are "mortal" in that their souls require bodies.

Deities, on the other hand, use *primal energy* to hold the soul, so a physical body is optional for them; of course, without a body it's pretty darn hard to cast a spell that uses words or hand-waving. Primal energy is the ultimate form of energy in the multiverse, the one from which all other energies are derived. Primal energy can be in one of two forms: *primal flux* or *primal base*. It's the base form that's used to hold a deity's soul, and it's a rare and precious commodity. Not surprisingly, deities will rarely spend their primal base directly, preferring to use just the flux energy that is derived from base, among other sources. *Ascension* is what we call the process of a mortal soul becoming divine.

*Planes* are what keeps mortals from hanging out with deities. A plane is a physical, tangible, distinct location that is, as a general rule, inaccessible to ordinary people. The kinds of planes that deities are interested in are large and complex enough to have a semi-independent awareness, reacting in part to the sentient beings who occupy the plane. Deities gain some of their power and prestige by controlling such planes. If a deity can control a plane long enough, and meet certain other requirements, that plane becomes a *home plane*. Home planes have special relationships with their deities, so each deity can have only one home plane.

A plane need not be like Reality As We Know It. Planes have *planar constants*, like gravity and magic effects, and these can vary from plane to plane. Other planar constants might affect light or genetics or rutabagas. These planar constants can be modified by the deity who controls the plane.

A *metaplane* is a location that contains at least one and usually many planes. Metaplanes have metaplanar constants, which are common to every plane they contain, and metaplanes and metaplanar constants are beyond even the power of deities to change.

Deities, like planes, are usually found in groups. A *pantheon* is a group of deities united by a common cultural or ethnic background. Other groups formed for a common purpose, concern, or belief are called *councils*.

Mortal wizards can study magic until their brains fall out, but no matter how good they become, mere mortals can never actually change the properties of magic. A deity, on the other hand, can take an interest in a certain field and, in mastering it, become an integral part of that field. When deities do this, they establish *spheres of influence*. Should the goddess Plooplah become fascinated with chickens, she could, after establishing chickens as a sphere of influence, make fundamental changes in chickens; she could make them cannibal chickens, man-eating chickens, nuclear chickens, or chickens who lure little children into the woods with the sound of their clucking. Clerics of Plooplah might have access to spells like Chicken Foot Torture or Eggs of Wrath that are exclusive to them. Plooplah has gained an innate awareness of chickens, and in doing so, become a part of them.

Deities, like chickens, have a pecking order. It's called *divine rank*. Divine rank is based partially on how well deities have mastered the use of primal energy and partially by their resources, which will usually but not always correspond to how much base they have.

A brand new, bottom-of-the-heap deity is called a *godling*. Once godlings have established spheres of influence, they're called *demigods*. If a demigod can convince a higher power to provide support, or can control a plane, the correct term is *supported demigod*. A *lesser deity* is one who has acquired a home plane. A *greater deity* has a home plane and at least four more planes. The deity in charge of a pantheon or council is known as the *supreme deity* of that group. Supreme deities almost always have titles that indicate their affiliation: Odin, Supreme Deity of Åsgard, or Set, Supreme Deity of Evil.

Finally, a *resistance roll* is whatever your gaming system provides to avoid Bad Things or get Good Things. It might be called "checking your luck," or a "saving throw," or a "willpower roll," or something else. Specific examples are provided in Appendix A.

There's certainly more than one approach we could have taken regarding deities, but rather than try to address all possible systems and end up with a book the size of an encyclopedia, we grounded this book in a specific set of rules and ideas that we felt would offer the most interesting and complex situations for the most people. If you understand the way that we are approaching this topic, then it will be easier for you to modify the text to suit your own playing style.

We try to avoid making blanket statements about divine attitudes. We would prefer to think that deities, like any other social group, are going to represent a broad spectrum of personalities with differing opinions, goals, motives, philosophies, ethical perspectives, and methods of operation. To say that every deity regards mortals with contempt, for example, would be a gross generalization, and not as much fun.

Deities, by their very nature, are capable of incredible feats that transcend the capabilities of mere mortals. They accomplish this by using primal energy and various divine abilities, in addition to their other obvious advantages, such as experience or intellect.

Mortals may ultimately become divine beings, and divine beings may improve their ranks in the divine circles. We do not want to suggest that campaigns are better off if they allow mortals to become deities—indeed, this can make being a GM a very complicated task—but we felt this possibility should not be ignored.

## Basic Assumptions

### The Nature of Deities

## The Origin and Evolution of Deities

Deities who have home planes enjoy many advantages, including the “home-ground advantage” inherent in most strategic philosophies. Deities gain power through worshipers, and hence, through the growth of their religions. Deities can be killed, but it is *very* difficult; it should be nearly impossible for a mortal to kill a deity. Deities must be hit hard and repeatedly to be really wiped out—and even then one can never be too sure.

For the most part, these assumptions have little impact on the text in this book, so deviating significantly will have little effect. On the other hand, divine origins are well worth thinking about, since it's often hard to justify casually placing elves and orcs in the same environment as Babylonian deities.

Since most FRP campaigns draw their divine backgrounds from historical mythologies, it is only natural to try to draw a connection between the deities' campaign origins and the origins of their real-world counterparts. For this book, we assume that the historical pantheons originated from planes similar to the nations that worshiped them on earth. For example, the deities of the Egyptian pantheon in an FRP setting could be originally from some plane—maybe even called “Egypt”—that has a culture similar to the Egypt of our own world's history. Each deity in the pantheon started out as a powerful figure in the culture of that plane. Eventually, these deities took over the plane, branched out into nearby planes, and grew into a powerful cross-planar faction of divine beings. To each plane they conquered they brought their original value systems, architectural styles, clothing preferences, and population, adapting to each plane as necessary in order to deal with new cultures, environ-

ments, and circumstances, but for the most part remaining unchanged. It is this cultural background that to a great extent has formulated the “personality” of the pantheon; even deities are products of their environments.

As this pantheon and others like it began to gain power and explore the planes of their universe, they eventually discovered the existence of other pantheons and began to interact with them. Many of these interactions have strong parallels with the way people from these cultures have interacted in our own world. There are, however, many interesting exceptions. One obvious one is that many of our world's mythological deities are no longer worshiped. Most FRP campaigns will probably not want to model their deities after *this* aspect of reality.

To get back to the idea of pantheons interacting, let's look at some possible examples:

Since there is no known interaction between the Celtic society and the Chinese society, for instance, one could assume that these pantheons originated on planes so far apart from each other that the pantheons rarely encountered each other. On the other hand, historically the Middle East was a continual battle ground for the Hittites, Canaanites,



Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, and many other groups. In an FRP campaign, there might be a long history of bloodshed and warfare between these pantheons. You may even decide that one of these pantheons totally wiped out the other pantheons; the Babylonians, for example, might have completely annihilated the Egyptians.

Some pantheons are older than others. We have generally followed the chronological ordering of historical societies; for example, a Babylonian pantheon would be older than a Greek one. Our future products in this line will be geared toward a situation in which many pantheons exist and extensively interact with each other. This creates an extremely complex environment, one we've found quite fascinating. While this doesn't make for any obvious changes in the book you're holding, you might sense an underlying assumption that your typical deity is going to meet other deities in the same pantheon and from other pantheons.

Variations on some of these historical assumptions can provide very interesting scenarios. For example, a campaign setting designed in such a way that it starts within a specific pantheon's influence, or in a plane contested by two warring pantheons, can provide a wide variety of scenarios and ample opportunity for intrigue. Most campaigns are set on some plane that serves as the hub of cross-pantheon activity. It might also be interesting to create a campaign in an era that predates some of the more modern pantheons, or perhaps in an era when some specific pantheon has taken over, so that finding an item from the "old" Norse or Greek religions would be a rarity.

If the campaign has a single ultimate deity who actually possesses absolute power in the universe (not to be confused with deities who merely *claim* to have absolute power), then this deity would obviously be beyond the rules provided in this system, and should be played accordingly.

As we've mentioned, we expect this to be a fairly controversial work, in a field that is already fairly controversial. We'd like to put to rest some of the potential fears that might crop up among the more—well, "concerned" readers of this work.

- We do not mean to imply that Odin or any other mythological deity really exists, or ever did exist, just as we are not denouncing the possible existence of mythological deities. Nor are we part of some strange religious underground movement of pagan revivalists or modern-day druids.
- We are not part of a conspiracy to undermine the moral fabric of society.
- To our knowledge, there is no way that anyone could use any of the information in this book to in any way aid someone in practices of "real-life" witchcraft or demonology, if such "real-life" things even exist.
- Any resemblance to any actual divine being, whether living or dead, is purely coincidental. Honest.
- As a company, we do not support or condemn any religious organization. If asked about our religious beliefs, some of us would probably say "None of your business," others would actually describe their personal beliefs, and the rest would respond with something like "Be good, exercise, share your toys, and drink Ju-ju!" (see the glossary). In short, we're just generally good, wholesome folk who are promoting what we feel is a good, wholesome pastime.

We're nice people, and we've worked hard on this book, so it is a labor of love for us. But what's in it for you? In a nutshell: players who are involved with

## Disclaimer

## The Payoff



## Our Story, Concluded

deities will now have some idea what to expect, and gamemasters can easily create complex, interesting, fun-to-play gods who will behave consistently. If a cleric asks his goddess for a favor, you'll know right away who answers the call and what her powers are. If your players trash a temple, you've got a lot of background all ready to figure out who, if anybody, is going to come after the players for revenge, and what their powers are. In short, GMs can now get players in more hot water faster than ever before, and do it easily and fairly. Sounds fun, doesn't it?

On a more philosophical note, you'll notice that we've scaled our deities a little more toward the humanly comprehensible end as opposed to the limitless, mythic power end. You can see this in the sections explaining what deities can't do. This is mostly because we wanted a system that would permit players to become gods. If you're never going to let players ascend to divinity, you might consider ignoring some of the published restrictions. We encourage care in this, however, since many of the rules interlock in rather complex ways. Don't forget what happened to Pandora.

Now, let's finish the chapter by finishing the opening story as played by a gamemaster who has applied *The Primal Order* to his campaign . . .

⊗                      ⊗                      ⊗

The attendant, after a look of stunned amazement, runs madly for the other side of the room. Set rises from his throne, angrily raising his fist. A ravening bolt of primal energy darker than the soul of Akhenaton shoots forth. Rhogan realizes his mistake—perhaps a bit late, mind you—and he finally remembers that primal flux, the power of gods, treats ordinary magical protections like a machete treats jello. That bolt probably contains no more than ten to fifteen points of primal energy. That'll do it, since the only thing between that primal blast and his death are his hit points, and it doesn't take much primal to destroy those faster than you can turn a pencil eraser-side-down. Set, as a greater deity, has thousands of flux points. Many thousands.

This of course explains Rhogan's surprise when the black bolt splatters aside just inches from his face, leaving a rather nasty, jagged fissure in the floor in front of his toes.

Set's head whips around and his lips curl, revealing long, stained teeth.

"Horus!" Set's eyes narrow as he continues. "But you can't be here. Surely you didn't send an illusion all this way on behalf of *them*?" He gestures contemptuously toward the party.

Zevdiel finds he doesn't like being gestured at like that but decides that, really, this might not be the best time to bring it up. He overhears a whispered conversation from the side of the hall.

"How does Our Blessed Set know that the cursed Horus is an illusion?"

"Because Set, the Most Magnificent, the Mighty, has changed the properties of his home plane so that no deity may enter it unless it is willed by someone already here, and nobody here would invite Horus, may his sandals rot."

"Ah. Is there any way to check that? I mean, if Horus, pond ooze that he is, has a primal shield around the illusion, then there's no way of knowing for certain, is there?"

"Use your head. The Glorious Effulgence That We Know As Set has bent this plane to His will so that no deities can enter without invitation."

Set tosses off three bolts to the illusion in quick succession; with an angry glare, it slaps them aside. Sycophants and other attendants scramble for cover as large chunks of the throne room are converted to gravel. The heavy brow lowers as Set considers his enemy.

Zevdiel figures he knows what Set is thinking. What exactly is Horus hoping to accomplish here? And why would he imbue a mere illusion with such a powerful shield? The uses of primal energy were covered, on a theoretical basis of course, in some of his classes. A divine spirit shouldn't need such a strong shield; sooner or later, it's more expensive to shield the spirit than it is just to create a replacement.

He notices that Set is casting a spell that should reveal the difference between a divine spirit, an avatar, and the actual presence of Horus. Zev decides he'd give much to know the answer, although even Set won't find out unless Horus drops his primal shield or allows magic to pass through it. Horus's appearance can't be coincidental; he must be here because of them. But how could he accomplish anything unless he came in person? Anything else would be too vulnerable, or too slow, or something. On the other hand, who on earth—or rather, on Set's home plane—would invite Horus?

Zev's eye falls on Amadis, praying like mad, just as Set begins to roar. *"How did you get here! Who invited you? I will slay them, slowly, when I find out!"* His gaze sweeps the cowering underlings before spying Amadis. *"So. My mistake."* He makes a gesture. *"There. No more invitations today."*

The whispers start up again. *"Now the Most High Set can make carrion of the already-putrid Horus."*

*"Don't be a fool. Horus can't attack His Nastiness Set any more than Set, May His Darkness Fill The World, can destroy Horus. Even Set's not that stupid."*

Zevdiel realizes that Set is glaring in his direction. No, he's glaring at the whisperers.

*"You're right, of course, Baba,"* Set rumbles, his voice dripping with irony. *"Even I am not so 'stupid' as to seriously attack Horus. He cannot draw on the assistance I can here, so he would lose a fight, but the resulting war with his aides and servants would endanger our position. But perhaps we can drive him off. I appoint you as my hand, to rid this hall of his odious presence."* Set settles back in his throne to watch.

As the suddenly stressed Baba walks slowly toward Horus, Læcudis shoots a questioning look to Zev. Considering the evidence, he decides that a telepathic link would be better than whispering, and establishes one with her.

*I don't get it. He's sending a demigod after a greater deity? That's mad.*

*Zevdiel thinks it over. Well, either Horus is weaker than we think, this Baba character is a heck of a lot stronger, Set's going to back the little squirt, or, um, something else. I don't like any of those explanations, so it must be something else.*

Baba apparently decides to start with a quick spell to size up his opponent, laced with primal energy to add effectiveness. As he flicks off the spell, Zevdiel recognizes some of the gestures and deduces the purpose of the spell.

*Oh, wow.*

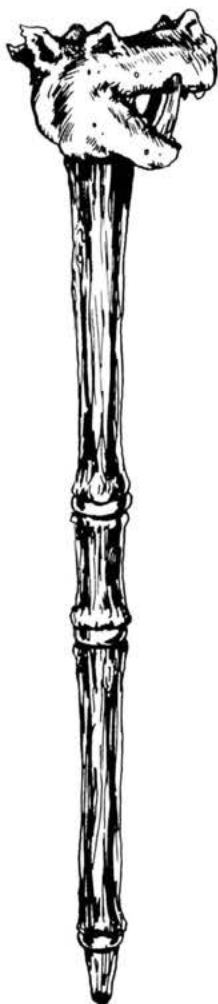
*What?*

*Well, given that a god is immune to most mental and direct magical attacks, it makes the most sense to attack his physical form. If he can drive Horus out of that, then the problem's solved. Usually you'd use, oh, I don't know, Decapitate, or Flesh to Dust, or Flay, if you're really twisted, as the attack spell. But this guy! I've never actually met anyone who knew how to cast that one.*

*Aaarrgh! Sometimes I could just shake you! What is the spell?*

*It's so old that it doesn't really have a name, but it turns the marrow of your bones to molten lead.*

Læcudis turns decidedly green as the demigod watches Horus brush aside the spell with little damage to his shield. Baba unslings a short scepter from his belt. A hippo adorns the top of the rod. With a malevolent sneer, Baba throws the mysterious staff in the general direction of Horus.



As it flies through the air, it appears to twist and squirm. Its flight path curves to make sure it meets up with Horus, and it transforms into a pale white cobra, glistening with some kind of fluid. While it's in transit, a few drops fall to the stone floor. As each drop hits, it flash-burns a pit the size of an orange in the marble.

Horus, showing anger for the first time, makes a slapping gesture as the snake approaches. With an audible, venomous hiss, the snake is driven to the floor headfirst, where it bites the marble. The resultant explosion as the snake's fangs make contact removes a good part of the floor, leaving Horus standing next to a large crater full of a particularly virulent acid that is rapidly eating its way deeper into the palace. With a slight grinding of his teeth, Horus turns on his attacker. A thin pencil of blinding primal energy lances out of Horus's hands and touches Baba in the middle of his chest.

Set watches the proceedings with interest and pleasure. Baba has clearly assumed that Set had a good reason for setting him up against a god that should be able to squash him like a fly. There is a good reason, but Baba isn't going to like it. Horus is toying with him; he could have squashed Baba like a bug, but he's burning off the demigod's primal shield slowly. Set watches as Baba links his shield with his reservoir of primal flux, so that it will automatically renew itself under Horus's attack until the flux is gone. Then the shield will fall, and the attack will chew away at his primal base. Baba is clearly expecting Set to step in before that happens, because otherwise Baba will drop from demigod to godling, and then be extinguished.

Set, however, has no intention of stepping in. Baba has been working behind Set's back to amass enough power to step out on his own, and was more than a little disrespectful earlier, when he thought Set wasn't listening. Politics are ugly, but it's always nice when you can get your enemy to do your dirty work. Horus must understand this; it's why he's burning Baba slowly. He wants to make sure Set has plenty of time to save his minion. Or plenty of time to let him die.

Baba seems to have caught on just as his shield fails. The adventurers have seen this upstart go from cocky to concerned to panicked. Now he's screaming. In desperation, he tries to transhift away, but Horus has already cast a primal transport suppression spell.

It ends quickly. A last shriek, a sudden flash, and a pile of ash on the floor. Set stirs.

"It seems you have solved one of my problems for me. I think I'll solve the other problem myself."

With a speed that is certainly primally enhanced, Set whips his arm around to the party of unwitting immigrants, and launches a blast of primal energy that counts its points in four digits.

Fortunately for the mortals, Horus is expecting this. Reasonably sure that he won't have time to transport himself and four mortal bodies off this plane without great cost, he's settled for traveling light. As the intense primal pulse instantaneously annihilates the characters' bodies beyond dust to nothingness itself, Horus uses the divine primal power of soul capture to grab the characters' essences and transhifts away as fast as he can.



And that's that. Horus will probably grant the characters new bodies, at no small expense to himself, as a reward for doing such a bang-up job on the temple. Their treasure, weapons, and possessions—in short, anything the players were carrying—are thoroughly and completely gone. Furthermore, Horus will probably require that all the adventurers become his

chancellors, dedicated to his will, in return for their lives. After all, they could just become minions on his home plane, supplying him with power through their worship. On the down side, this means they have a much better than average chance of running into Set again sometime. Poor Zevdiel was right: it's amazing what happens when you open the wrong scroll, especially when the gamemaster's deities are arranged in *The Primal Order*.

*The beginning is the most important part of the work.*

—Plato

1









## **The Big Picture**



*If a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, where is the man [sic]  
who has so much as to be out of danger?* —Æsop

This chapter is dedicated to covering the basics of the primal energy system. If you're a player who might get involved with deities, it will tell you everything that you need to know. If you're a gamemaster, this is where you start. Most of the key concepts are laid out in four sections.

The first section, "The Individual God," will cover what gods are, what they can do, and how they interact with worshipers. Then we'll examine how gods decide who's the boss in "Intrapantheon Ranks." What happens when one group of gods meets another will be covered in "Interpantheon Relations," and finally, we'll deal with "Planes," where gods live. After that, there are some dossiers on the deities we'll be using for examples: Pele, the Hawaiian Goddess of Volcanoes, and Joey, the Fictitious God of Basketweaving.

## The Individual God

Prior to this book, one of the key problems with deities in the FRP genre was that there was no well-defined gaming concept that differentiated deities from mortals. For our purposes, we wanted to establish a precise boundary between the two—some key attribute that would clearly distinguish deities as something different, with a well-defined set of concepts to back up those differences. To this end, we introduce the concept of *primal energy*.

## Primal Energy

Primal energy, often shortened to just "primal," is unique to deities. Every deity has at least a small amount of primal, and the more powerful the deity, the more primal the deity possesses. Indeed, primal energy is the underlying basis of divinity.

Primal energy is the most fundamental energy in the universe and the most powerful, the most "raw." It can bypass all "normal" magical, physical, and mental defenses as if they weren't even there, and none of these forces can bypass a primal shield. This is not to say that primal energy is completely unstoppable—primal defenses can be worn down—but there is no normal defense against primal, and no normal attack can completely bypass a primal defense. Primal energy cannot be negated, bypassed, cancelled, dispelled, or absorbed; the only way to stop primal is with primal.

### *Symantha vs. a Mage*

This concept is the core of the entire system. Let's see how it works in practice. Suppose Symantha, a demigoddess, is engaged in spell combat with a mortal mage. Both have shields; Symantha has a primal shield around her body, and the mage has a magical shield around his. If the mage casts a magical attack, the spell will hit the primal shield and will do some damage to it. Regardless of how powerful the spell, the defender cannot be damaged until the primal shield is completely destroyed; primal is a higher order of energy, and cannot be bypassed. If Symantha responds with a primal attack, however, it *will* bypass the magical shield as if it weren't even there. Primal energy can be used as the ultimate weapon because the wielder always controls how it conflicts with reality. Unless the caster of primal energy wishes otherwise, primal defensive measures are impenetrable, and offensive measures always penetrate. Primal energy has a sense of when it should interfere with other forms of energy; this is one of the things that makes it entirely unique.

There's much more to primal than just blasting away. Primal can be used as a sort of super-skeleton for spells, giving them perfect accuracy or enhancing them in other ways. It can be used to provide new abilities to the deity using it, or to others. Primal shields can be used to conceal other facets of an object,



or to protect specific parts, as needed. In short, it can in many ways influence reality itself.

Since gods' souls are sustained by primal energy, they don't necessarily *require* bodies, although there are a lot of good reasons for having them. This fact, and the power of primal to change reality, means that deities are free to choose the appearance of their bodies. Abilities like sight or strength may be enhanced; new abilities may be added.

Deities can spread their awareness over a wide area, gaining knowledge from many places at once. They can exert influence in a like way.

The quick-and-dirty description of a sphere of influence can be found in Chapter One. When you hear that Mars is the God of War, or that Pele is the Goddess of Lava, you're hearing about spheres of influence. A sphere of influence is more than just liking something; it requires that the deity and the concept become fundamentally joined. Plooplah, whom you may remember is the Goddess of Chickens, may like bowling very much and bowl whenever she gets a chance, but that's not enough to establish bowling as another sphere of influence. It requires scholarly research, research involving primal energy, actually claiming the topic, an epic event, and using more primal energy to back up the claim.

One of the most important sources of primal energy is the worship of a deity by mortals. Worshipers also tend to bring in money, which can be spent to further a deity's goals. Since people don't come flocking to worship a deity just "because," most deities will spend a significant part of their time and effort assisting the growth of their own personal religions.

Some of the tasks involved, which either the deities or their mortal representatives must address, include forming new congregations, supplying power to selected worshipers (as spells or amulets or whatnot), empowering the clergy, grooming potential converts, proselytizing, enforcing appropriate behavior, and dealing with heathens and heretics. Busy, busy, busy!

Some deities lead, and some follow. Ranking deities allows you to keep track of who gets to be boss. More information on ranks can be found in Chapter 8.

Minions aren't actually gods at all; they're mortals who have been specially selected by a god for some reason. Minions are often invited up to the deity's place of residence to meet various important people. They may also be visited by other prominent mortals within the deity's religion, by divine beings who report to the main deity, or even by the Big Cheese in person. Minions don't have or control primal energy.

## Related Abilities

## Spheres of Influence

## Worshippers and Churches

## Intrapantheon Ranks

### Minions



"metaplanar" scheme. In the simple system, a plane is somewhere that gods go that mortals can't usually reach by any normal form of transportation. If mortals *can* get there on their own, it probably requires passing a particular gate or point. Orpheus made it to Hades, but he had to pass over the River Styx and past the Gates of Hades to get there. Mount Olympus was also a plane separate from our own.

The plane that most characters will think of as "their" plane is usually referred to as the main plane. Normally, getting from the main plane to any other plane, whether or not that plane is controlled by a deity, requires some very special circumstances. There's no particular restriction on how many planes there can be, or on what the rules of travel are between them. More on how planes connect can be found in Chapter Seven. That chapter also contains the metaplanar system.

This section is dedicated to introducing two deities that will be kindly demonstrating many of the concepts in the book. You don't have to read the rest of this chapter to use *The Primal Order*, but it will give you background for most of the examples used in later chapters.

Without further ado, let's bring them on out: Pele, the Goddess of Volcanoes, and Joey, the God of Basketweaving.

Pele is probably the best known Hawaiian deity, said to live in the volcano Mauna Loa. The information in this section is based on various myths from the Hawaiian Islands.

Pele has control of her own plane and has a sphere of influence, so she qualifies as a lesser deity. She is accompanied by an indefinite number of

## Example Deities

### Pele





relatives, including her brothers Moho and Kamakaua. But Pele's favorite relative is probably her sister Hi'iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele ("Hi'iaka from the armpit of Pele"), whom she carried with her under her arm when she first came to Mauna Loa.

Pele drove off the previous owner of the volcano, one Ai-laau, and promptly fell in love with a mortal tribal chief named Lohiau. Pele sent Hi'iaka to fetch him, with a limit on how long she could be gone. After a series of adventures, Hi'iaka finally reached Lohiau, but discovered that a couple of witches in his tribe had trapped his spirit to prevent her from taking him. As the Goddess of Sorcery and the Hula, Hi'iaka soon defeated the witches, but by the time she managed to return to Pele with Lohiau, she had taken too long to complete the quest. Unfortunately, Pele has a temper, and Hi'iaka's late arrival threw her into such a fury that she killed Lohiau. Hi'iaka then had to travel downward to retrieve Lohiau and bring him back to life.

Pele has a reputation for hitting her enemies hard and fast, and it is said that many of the strange rock formations around the volcano were once opponents of hers. She is also known for her love of strong drink, and the people who live near her mountain have been known to court her mercy with bottles of whiskey. Another property of her volcano is that any person who steals its volcanic rock, especially the obsidian drops known as "Pele's tears," will be cursed until the stone is returned.

## Joey

Joey, the God of Basketweaving, is an entirely fictitious deity, and any resemblance to any real deity, living or dead, is not only entirely coincidental, but highly improbable as well.

Born into wealth, Joey wanted for nothing during his mortal life. In fact, material possessions were so easily come by that he held more dearly items made with the patient, tender hand of an artisan than jewelry and weapons fashioned of gold and steel. During his late teens, Joey abandoned his parents' palatial estates and began roaming the world looking for adventure. He gained quite a reputation as a swordsmaster and philosopher, but knew that these were not the things he was meant to do.

Eventually, wounded in an ambush and unfamiliar with the territory, Joey happened upon a convent near the rushes of a river delta. The religious women there were quite content and received Joey warmly. As Joey recovered from his wounds, he grew quite attached to this small community. Through time he came to learn that the nuns had many financial troubles and only one source of income: weaving baskets.

Determined to repay these people, Joey devoted himself to the task of learning how to weave baskets. The quiet pleasure he found in weaving told him that at last he had found his calling. Basketweaving became to Joey the epitome of creativity, harmony, practicality, and artistry.

Soon Joey was a basketweaver without peer in the convent, and his reputation grew. Joey was continually able to amaze and astound people with his new and innovative designs. The reputation of the convent spread on the basis of the marvelous basketry that it produced.

Joey didn't stop there. He invented new basketweaving techniques that could make baskets waterproof and resistant to cutting. Soon his followers were weaving hats, carts, boats, armor, weapons, and even houses. The abundance of reeds in the endless marshes and the ease with which they grew provided an endless supply of raw material.

Eventually the entire countryside came to rely on Joey's weaving techniques as woven reed came to replace metals. Joey soon went out and created other centers where people could come and learn the marvelous joys of weaving. As his fame spread, Joey grew to be considered a god among the people. Those who denied the wicker movement became few and far between.

The movement took on strong religious tones as Joey's power and influence spread. Eventually, at the International Cross-Weave Convention in Bulrush, a group of young fanatics crowned Joey the King of All Kings. Support for this was so fervent that all the rulers in the land were forced to accept Joey as their leader. Besides, many of them had become devout disciples already.

Several years later, Joey became empowered with divinity, but he never forgot the simple nuns who shared with him the joy of basketweaving.

*To know all is not to forgive all. It is to despise everybody.*

—Quentin Crisp





## **The Power and the Glory**



*"But the bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it."*

—Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*

Prior to this book, the key problem with deities was that there wasn't any clear, surefire way to tell them from mortals. Gods and goddesses were at one end of a continuum that had peasants at the other. This meant that eventually a player might amass enough ability, power, tools, or whatever to defeat a deity without being acknowledged as one. We find this an undesirable state of affairs.

Primal energy changes all that. Deities have it, mortals don't. Even at her weakest, the volcano goddess Pele has the ability to blow mortals off the face of the earth with a flick of her finger. For any mortal to defeat a god in battle now requires both a very impressive mortal and a rather clumsy god.

But what makes primal energy so devastating? The reason this divine force is called primal energy is that it is a fundamental force of the universe, power at its most "raw." It can bypass all ordinary magical, physical, or mental defenses and barriers, and none of these forces can bypass a shield of primal energy.

This doesn't mean that primal is unstoppable or undefeatable. The key lies in primal energy's ability to *engage* another force. Let's look at some examples.

Joey, God of Basketweaving, finds an evil sorcerer infecting swamps with reed blight. He tells the fiend to desist. Mr. Evil responds by wrapping a Cloak of Pointy Object Deflection around himself and casting Bobbalu's Sphere of Basket Repulsion. While this spell has served the sorcerer well in the past against members of Joey's religion, it's futile against the god himself. Joey, always aware of the morale value of a resounding victory, goes for a flashy method of death for this scum by casting Wicked Wicker Spears at the blasphemous sorcerer. Since Joey uses primal energy in the spell, it can bypass both the Basket Repulsion and the Pointy Object Deflection defenses and engage only the physical form of the sorcerer, who is now feeling rather pierced.

Conversely, when the sorcerer casts Banish at Joey, it hits Joey's primal shield and stops, doing damage to the shield in the process. The sorcerer's spells and weapons must completely destroy the shield before any damage can be done to Joey himself.

It's too bad that the sorcerer doesn't have an Acid Fog spell handy, because Joey has decided that his primal shield will *not* engage air, to make it more convenient to breathe. Though he doesn't have to breathe, Joey loves the smell of growing reeds, and he figures this mortal will be a piece of cake even without a totally impermeable shield. Both gases and sound are being allowed through Joey's shield, although this could change at any moment if he so decides. If the sorcerer had Acid Fog, it would pass through the shield and could thus theoretically affect Joey.

But he doesn't, so we'll let the sorcerer quietly expire as we go on to a more pressing issue: the difference between *primal base* and *primal flux*.

*Joey Against the  
Mage of Rot*

## **Primal Energy, The Basics**

Primal energy exists in two forms, base and flux. Primal base is the form of primal energy that gives the soul divine qualities; it is almost synonymous with the deity's soul. In general, the more primal base a deity possesses, the more powerful the deity becomes. Primal flux, on the other hand, is the active component of primal energy; deities use flux in order to create primal effects.

The important thing to remember is that primal base is the regenerative form of primal energy. Deities will receive primal flux equal to one-tenth of



their primal base every day. Primal base transcends the law of conservation of energy; as such, it is a very precious commodity and deities do not use it lightly.

Primal energy controls how it engages reality; it can ignore it or affect it in ways that more “normal” means cannot. Because of this, it becomes an extension of a deity's will; through the use of primal energy, a deity can affect reality directly without having to resort to spell research, monetary expense, or any significant amount of time. However, the expenditure of primal is not a trivial matter. Deities must conserve primal for other things, such as supporting their clerics, minions, creations, and possibly less powerful gods if they so choose, doing research into their spheres of influence, and so on. An even more important thing to consider is that deities always want a reserve of flux; you never know what the day has in store.

Primal energy is a quantum energy. This means that there's no such thing as half a point of primal; primal must be used in whole increments. While this tends to simplify recordkeeping, it also has some far-ranging effects that will show up later.

As long as a deity has even one point of primal base, the deity lives on. With no primal base, the deity ceases to be.

Primal base is primal energy in a stable form. It is what binds together a deity's soul, and the more base a deity has, the better that deity can directly affect reality. Godlings, who are the least powerful deities, enter godhood with 100 points of primal base. After that, as deities gain rank, they attain more primal base. Flux generated from this base is what deities usually use to affect reality.

A good analogy to use when trying to understand the difference between primal base and primal flux is to think of primal base as “principal” and primal flux as “interest;” you can spend either one, but spending primal base will decrease your principal, and therefore reduce your interest gains of primal flux in the long run. One place where this analogy fails is that you aren't allowed to “reinvest” your primal flux.

Since deities do not have to be in physical contact with their primal base, one of the fundamental strategies a deity learns very early is to keep a safe reservoir of primal base, possibly in several locations. Since primal base is very stable, it can easily be partitioned into separate portions; a deity might divide primal base among several planes and an artifact, just to make its destruction particularly difficult. Primal base can also be converted directly to primal flux at any time, on a one-to-one ratio. Given the value of base and the difficulty in procuring it, this is rarely done.

When deities split up their primal base, they retain only one level of consciousness; to have multiple levels of consciousness the deity must use an ability called omnipresence, which will be discussed later. Whether or not a deity's base is split up, the flux generated by that base will always go directly to the deity, as long as the two are not separated some sort of force or shield that would stop such a transfer, such as another deity's primal flux shield.

Nothing in the universe can use a deity's primal energy, base or flux, against that deity's will. Since the deity's base and soul are inextricably combined, the deity must consent to someone else's use of that primal energy. This means that primal base cannot be destroyed or harmed in any way short of a primal attack from another deity.

Primal base is a running total corresponding to levels in a class-based system or ability scores in a skill-based system. As certain important events occur over the course of a deity's life, such as becoming a deity in the first place or gaining control of a plane for the first time, the deity's primal base will increase. As the deity suffers setbacks, or spends base to construct artifacts and creations, that base will decrease. Obviously, deities want to maximize their primal base. They will occasionally use their base instead of their flux, but only sparingly and only if there is a clear advantage in doing so.

## Primal Base

*Nechsis was pleased when the demon Urushchis faced him, for He knew his spark of life was his last, and He could feel victory. They fought, and Nechsis was justified, and vindicated, and Urushchis's spark was extinguished.*

## Primal Flux

Clearly, primal base is a precious commodity, and is rarely used directly. The form of primal energy deities use most often is primal flux, which can support clerical hierarchies, set up primal-based defensive shields, and unleash "primal blast" attacks, among other applications. Though primal flux is very powerful, it has a short lifespan. It must be used within a day of its creation or it will dissipate.

Primal flux serves as the physical manifestation of the deity's will. This ensures that any use of primal flux will serve the deity's will flawlessly; a primal blast will always hit its intended target, a primal shield will always protect its occupants, and a primal-enhanced spell will always be perfectly aimed. The only way to ruin this is if other deities intervene with *their* primal energy.

Each day, a deity will gain a certain amount of primal flux; the exact amount is determined by the amount of primal base the deity possesses and by the number of other sources, such as planes, worshipers, and so on. In short, the amount of flux available depends largely on the extent of the deity's influence and status. Most of this flux goes into supporting the deity's religion; the rest is what deities use for personal reasons.



For example, Pele receives a total of 2,250 points of flux each day: 1,000 from ownership of her volcano (her home plane), 500 from worshipers, another 250 from places of worship, and 500 from her base of 5,000; recall that every ten points of base generates one point of daily flux. However, providing her clerics with spells costs her 1,200, and supporting her four demigods costs her another 400, leaving her with a reserve of 650 points of flux.

Again, note that deities will rarely use all of their primal flux. Even though the excess is wasted, deities prefer to be ready in case of primal attack; deities are *very* vulnerable when they are low on flux. The commitment of these reserves is an important tactical and strategic consideration in divine matters.

Primal energy is difficult to hide. Any use of primal energy sets up a *signature* unique to the deity. Deities can sense such signatures and recognize those with which they are already familiar; they are invisible to mortals. A deity is allowed to create accompanying effects with almost any primal-based ability ("a crackling red and silver streak of energy issues from Nergal's hand and echoes with the wailing of a thousand tortured souls . . ."). Deities can even use such enhancements to fool mortals into thinking that another deity might be responsible for a particular phenomenon, but the signature is infallible and cannot be hidden from another deity. Note that the signature only lasts as long as the effect; there is no residual signature.

Identifying a signature is a fairly straightforward matter. If Joey visited Pele's volcano, it would be clear from the protective curse laid on the lava stones that a goddess had affected them. If he met Pele in person, it would be clear that the curse is hers, since the signature will match her primal aura. Also, just as mortal family members often share a last name, pantheons of deities will tend toward similar signatures.

If Joey wanted to teach a group of godlings what Pele's signature is like, the only reasonably effective method would be to grab one of those rocks and show it to them. Trying to describe a signature second-hand is rather difficult and prone to error.

As a GM, however, you do have to describe primal signatures second-hand. The best way to do this is to describe them in terms of senses. For example, Pele's signature might be "hot and red." Joey's could be "a placid calm with gentle waving," or "a rustling dampness," or something like that. For that matter, Pele could be "spiky black" or "slinky huskiness with hints of ginger," if you want to make it harder for the players to match deities with signatures. Don't get stuck on one sense, either. The examples just listed use emotion, sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

*Listen, my children. Like the tidal pools are clear, it was clear whose territory Erpk had found, for the spoor was in the very land! (Praise our god, and keep him whole.) It was as a scent, a sign, writ large upon the very rocks! (Praise our god, and keep him whole.) Erpk made his way to the depths of the realm, there to confront his sworn enemy! (Praise our god, and keep him whole.)*

*Engagement* is the term for describing whether primal energy does or does not affect another force or substance. Deities can choose with which other bits of the universe their primal energy will interact. The process of setting up what a deity's primal energies will engage is called *keying* the primal.

For example, Pele is annoyed by an incredibly foolish mortal witch. Showing unusual restraint, she keys her attack for magic instead of sending a blast of primal energy to destroy the witch. As a result, the witch is untouched by the nasty energies playing around and through her, but every magic item she has is vaporized.

## Primal Signatures

### What Signatures "Look" Like

### An Atarchian Tale Excerpt

## Engagement

## Limitations of Primal Energy

In spite of the incredible power and versatility of primal energy, it is a limited resource. When a deity's flux is gone, it's time to switch to another resource or possibly die.

Another limitation of primal energy is that a deity only has access to a certain number of abilities, depending on the deity's rank. Lesser deities, for example, regardless of how much primal they might possess, simply don't have access to all the abilities that greater deities have at their disposal. This is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Finally, the best way to fight primal is with primal. Primal energy may be powerful, but if an opponent has it too, the situation boils down to finesse.

## Using Primal Flux

In this section you'll find all the nitpicky details about using flux: the abilities, the cost, and the consequences. The abilities can be rather tidily divided into three categories: powers that work on the self, those that influence other things, and the direct application of divine will.

We're not promising that these will make complete sense the first time around, because many of them involve things that are discussed in later chapters. Naturally, some of the later chapters are based on material presented in this chapter. As a result, if you find an ability that doesn't seem very useful or doesn't make much sense, come back again later after reading further in the book.

### Self

We'll begin with powers that work on the self, which include immortality, immunities, enhancing sensory ability, reading primal signatures, and detonation of base, also known as suicide.



### Immortality

Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: None.

Cost in base: None.

Killing a deity is no easy task, but it is possible. Lesser deities usually won't fall in one stroke, but will require a series of battles. Greater or supreme deities are nearly impossible to wipe out completely.

The term *immortal* has traditionally referred to those who will live forever, those who always will be. Gaming requires a somewhat more practical definition, however: immortals are simply those who will never die of natural causes. They may be slain in combat, or killed by some natural disaster (earthquake, tornado, black hole, supernova—the usual stuff), but they never die of old age. Not all immortals are deities; many campaigns, for example, play elves as immortal, but they are certainly not deities. However, for this book, we'll limit our discussion to beings who possess primal energy.

A deity's immortality is assured because deities don't rely on their physical forms for life, but rather on their reservoirs of primal base. As long as a deity has a portion of primal base in which to house his or her consciousness, that deity will continue to exist. Deities' material forms only place constraints on some of the things that they can do.

Still, not all deities live forever. Deities can be killed by *destroying* their personal primal base, which is easier said than done. If, for example, Pele's base had been destroyed before she established her home plane, it would have been over for her; only a home plane can bring back primal base from nothing. If, however, her base were destroyed now that she is a lesser deity, her home plane could regenerate 75% of her former base in one hundred years. Once her base regenerated, Pele would be back, and probably exceedingly peeved at

somebody. She couldn't get an early start, however, since a regenerating deity does not become conscious until the hundred years have passed.

A deity's physical body is slightly easier to kill. This does not destroy the deity, as we've already mentioned, but it does limit the deity's abilities somewhat. Deities whose bodies have been killed can no longer use magic items, wield weapons, throw spells, or do anything else that requires a physical form, though of course they can still use pure primal to carry out an action. If deities in this position are low on flux and don't want to use any base, they will probably opt to retreat, taking their corpses or at least their more important items along. Once back home, the deities can fix up the old bodies or pick out new ones to inhabit and start plotting revenge.

A deity's primal base cannot be attacked directly while a deity possesses a material body. All attacks against the deity are initially against the deity's body if there is one. If the body is destroyed and the deity elects to remain on the battlefield without a material form, then the primal base can be attacked, but only by primal energy. In this case, each point of flux destroys one point of base.

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Prerequisites: None.  
Cost in flux: None.  
Cost in base: None.

### Immunities

Divine beings have the following immunities when they are inhabiting bodies containing primal base:

- **Exhaustion:** Deities don't need to sleep or rest. A deity of war could actually fight for days without stopping. Humanoid deities occasionally sleep only because they are accustomed to it, not because they need it. This allows deities to get more things accomplished.
- **Starvation and Suffocation:** Deities do not need to refuel their physical bodies. This is another detail that some young deities continue to take care of—not because they need to, just because eating is something they enjoy. Deities are also not reliant on gases, water, chemicals, or any other substance to keep a body running. Human deities could survive underwater, for example; they do not have to breathe.
- **Toxins:** Because the primal energy running through deities' bodies instantly destroys any toxic material, deities are immune to the toxic effects of poisons, gases, and other substances that are not actually corrosive. They are also immune to diseases of all kinds, including the common cold.
- **Environment:** Divine bodies are immune to the full spectrum of environments that are native to the plane from which their body originated. This may differ from deity to deity. Human deities could survive under conditions from the Arctic's harshest winters to the desert's hottest sun, but they could not survive on the sun itself. If a deity were to inhabit the body of a creature who did live on a sun, then the deity could survive there, although in this body, the deity would not be able to survive on earth, which would be extremely cold by comparison. If deities separate their primal base from their bodies, then it doesn't matter; primal base can survive *anywhere*, even within a black hole or a supernova.



### Manipulation of Divine Senses



Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: Varies; see below.

Cost in base: Varies; see below.

Because deities can alter reality through sheer force of will, they are capable of endowing themselves or others with enhanced senses, or of creating entirely new senses. Humans have a limited number of senses, which allow them to derive information about their surroundings. Touch, for example, allows a human to sense temperature, self-position (you can tell whether your hand is open or closed even if you can't see it), contact, and vibration. As you can see, there are a lot more than five senses, and they don't always follow the common concept of "sense;" for example, you can sense rotation and acceleration without sight, touch, sound, taste, or smell.

Deities can enhance these senses with some effort. They must spend a certain amount of flux each day during the development of the sense, and incorporation of the sense enhancement or new sense will require a one-time expenditure of primal base.

The sensitivity of any sense is rated as follows:

- Absent: The deity does not have that sense, period.
- Primitive: The deity has a vague awareness of the sense, but its use is inconsistent and not always reliable. If telepathy, for example, really exists in our own world, then those who have it are most likely in this category.
- Poor: The deity is able to prove he or she can use this sense, but its quality leaves something to be desired. An example could be someone with 20/50 vision; it'd be good enough to read by, but you wouldn't want to drive.
- Average: The deity can use this sense adequately.
- Improved: The deity can use this sense better than average—for example, 20/5 vision. This should be roughly the maximum level attainable without some sort of artificial enhancement.
- Superior: This is roughly equivalent to being able to see the details of someone's clothing five miles away; it would normally require some sort of artificial aid such as binoculars or telescopes.
- Cosmic: This is a truly astounding sensory ability, but still within the limits of physics. If the sensory input is reaching you, you're going to pick it up, period. A person with this ability would be able to see an orbiting baseball from the ground on a clear day, but wouldn't be able to see it through a brick wall.

To increase the levels of ability that deities have with senses they already possess, whether they are a natural part of their bodies or acquired with primal



base, the deities must expend 20 points of primal base. This will increase their levels of ability by one category with a single sense.

A deity may also create an entirely new sense. This is a two-step process. First of all, the deity must be able to duplicate the effects of the new sense either through magic, psionics, or some other method such as a primal wish or omnipotence. The second step involves using primal base to make the sense a permanent ability of the deity. This costs 50 points of base and provides only a limited capability (use the "poor" rating). Once the deity has created this sense, there is no primal cost to invoke it; the sense will act like any other the deity possesses.

A deity might create ways of sensing good, evil, magic, poison, friendliness, species, hidden things such as traps or doors, discord, emotion, death (perfect for a necromancer), ethereal presence, mass, depth, being watched, humor or irony, or even the history of something.

*Her eyes are as the eagle's eyes.  
Her nose is as the wolf's.  
Her ears are as the sabercat's ears.  
Her feet are as the niksa's.  
She is great.  
She is great.*



Prerequisites: None.  
Cost in flux: None.  
Cost in base: None.

As mentioned previously, all primal energy wielded by a deity has a signature associated with it. This signature can be sensed and identified by any divine being, but is completely undetectable by mortals or by energy forms such as mana or psi, unless the deity does something to make it detectable.

The distance at which primal signatures can be sensed varies by the rank of the divine being doing the sensing:

Divine Rank	Range
Godling	100 feet
Demigod	1 mile
Lesser deity	100 miles
Greater deity	1,000 miles
Supreme deity	planewide

Furthermore, a deity on a plane he or she controls can immediately sense the presence of any primal signature on that plane.

Deities can immediately tell whether they've sensed a particular signature before. However, this does not give any information about what the signature's owner is like, or even exactly who it is; that must be learned by other means. Of course, the various deities in a pantheon are going to be familiar with the signatures of the other divine beings within that pantheon. A pantheon might even organize a "library" to which deities could come and examine signatures for identification.

*Heard at an Urtzerran Camp*

*Detect Primal Signature*

**Detonation of Base**

Prerequisites: None.  
 Cost in flux: None.  
 Cost in base: *All*.

This use of primal results in the total destruction of a deity. The primal base of a deity is totally converted to explosive energy, which creates cross-planar and cross-reality shock waves; it's guaranteed to turn the heads of a deity or two. Clearly, this is a last-resort mechanism, by definition.

For example, consider a situation in which the forces of Kali have nearly succeeded in conquering the home plane of Marfa the Gray. In a last-ditch fit of pique, Marfa detonates his primal base, annihilating himself and everything within ten miles—except for Kali, who merely smiles at the effects of the explosion from within her primal shield.

A primal base detonation would annihilate all matter on the plane within a range of one mile per 100 points of base so detonated. Also, there would be a 1% chance per 100 points of base of creating a cross-planar rift that would cause a similar explosion of one-tenth the radius on all parallel planes. There is also a 1% chance per 1,000 points of detonated base of starting a chain reaction within the planar energies themselves, which would escalate into the total destruction of that plane. If the plane is small, it might be destroyed anyway, since the explosion could be capable of annihilating more matter than exists in the plane.

The explosion will destroy anything in its blast radius except primal shielding, which will be reduced in strength by an amount equal to the amount of base detonated divided by ten. If a planar chain reaction occurs, then an additional 50,000 points of any primal shielding will be taken down. If a deity is caught without a primal shield up, or doesn't have enough flux to support the shield in the wake of the blast, then each point of damage that would have hit the deity's primal shields is taken off the deity's base instead, just as if it were subjected to a direct primal flux attack. Certainly, this is one way to get the last word in.

Here's a quick table to summarize the effects of base detonation:

Base Detonated	Blast Radius	Chance of Planar Rift	Chance of Chain Reaction
100	1 mile	1%	N/A
1,000	10 miles	10%	1%
5,000	50 miles	50%	5%
10,000	100 miles	100%	10%
50,000	500 miles	100%	50%
100,000	1000 miles	100%	100%

**Others**

Now we'll cover those flux abilities that affect other deities, mortals, or objects. Some of these powers are combative, such as primal blast and possession; some are coercive, like divine aura; and some are pretty general purpose, such as spell lacing and omniscience. The text won't divide them into these sub-categories, though, because so many can be used for more than one purpose. The same avatar who can weed the garden can also crush a miscreant to a rather nasty, gooey mess.



Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: Any amount desired.

Cost in base: None.

Range: Line of sight; a primal blast can be hurled through scrying devices or through a focal point, such as a minion, godling, or demigod primally supported by the deity.

Area of effect: One target.

The primal blast is also known as the wrath-of-the-gods attack. This is just pure flux channeled into the destruction of the intended target. Primal flux used in this way will certainly attract the attention of other deities, even on other planes, and the more flux used in the blast, the farther away it can be noticed. A primal blast is not a subtle attack. Quite the opposite—it is for the deity who is unconcerned about having everyone know what his or her intentions are. It is a flashy attack; a mere ten-point blast has all the showiness of a full-fledged aurora. Anything destroyed by such a blast is completely vaporized, and a primal blast *always* hits. The only defense is a primal-based shield.

Since a primal blast, like any other expression of primal energy, is an extension of a deity's will, a deity who slays a mortal in this way can opt to immediately procure that mortal's soul.

Note that some game systems allow for enhancement of a physical body through spells, shapechanging, or polymorphing. These enhancements should *not* be taken into consideration when defending against a primal blast. A primal blast cuts right to the core of a person's true physical form, and causes real physical damage that cannot be magically healed over or polymorphed away.

For an explanation of how much damage a point of primal blast does in your game system, refer to "Effects of Primal Blasts" in Appendix A.



Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: Any amount desired.

Cost in base: None.

A primal shield is the opposite of a primal blast; it is the ultimate shield of defense. There is no power in the universe that can pass through a primal shield, including primal. The only way to get through the shield is by destroying the shield. Deities can instantly bring a shield to bear, and the shield can be placed around anything—their own bodies, another person's body or object, or a whole area and all its contents. The larger the area the deity protects,

### Primal Blast

*Shoot first and inquire afterwards, and if you make mistakes, I will protect you. —Herman Goering (Instructions to the Prussian Police)*

### Primal Shield



### *Determining Costs*

### *Primal Shield Tactics*

the more primal it costs. Each primal shield will last ten minutes before the energy burns out.

Typically primal shields are one-way; the people inside can attack things outside the shield, but the those outside cannot attack anything inside. The shield can be centered on a point or on a person, moving as that person moves. Note that if a larger spherical shield is centered on a person, that person might not be able to engage in melee action since the shield would keep an enemy from getting within melee range. Unfortunately, the enemy would then be free to hack the shield apart—most embarrassing. On the other hand, making the shield too small might leave the defender's limbs unprotected as they extend for an attack. The nice thing about primal is that, since it's an extension of a deity's will, the deity can simply state, "I'll put up a primal shield twenty feet in diameter and center it on a point fifteen feet behind Fred there." This way, nobody is stuck in the center, and the shield remains mobile. These are points to consider, particularly if there are multiple defenders inside the shield.

That's the good news. The bad news is that deities can only create a shield that contains or protects themselves and/or beings to which they have a link; they may *not* contain any souls who do not fit that description. In other words, Pele can only use a primal shield to protect herself, creatures made with her primal, and followers who derive part of their power from her. Her faithful masses don't qualify unless they are receiving spells from Pele.

A shield around one of Pele's underlings could also contain his or her horse, nearby vegetation, and whatnot, but it could not contain the underling's traveling companion, unless that person were also a cleric of Pele or otherwise actually part of her primal network. If the person were a follower of Hi'iaka who receives spells from her, then Pele could include both members of this traveling party when setting up the shield since Pele is supporting Hi'iaka.

Primal shields can be created in any shape desired: a bubble that can flow through the ground, skin-tight, a cube, a stellated dodecahedron, or whatever. The "standard" primal shield is a sphere ten feet in diameter; for this size of shield there is a one-to-one correspondence between the number of points invested in the shield and how many points of strength it has. For larger shields, of course, it costs more flux per point of strength. We use a purely linear relationship to determine this cost: a 20-foot diameter sphere would take two flux per strength point, a 100-foot diameter sphere would take 10 points per strength point, and so on. If you want to make the deity's job harder, you might try basing this relationship on the surface area of the shield, or the amount of space the shield encloses.

Each point of flux in a primal blast that impacts against a primal shield will destroy one strength point from the primal shielding. To see how other attacks in your game system affect a primal shield, refer to Appendix A.

There are a variety of tactics applicable to primal shields. Deities might want to preserve their magical and physical defenses as a last resort, so they would place their primal shields outermost. Other situations might make it preferable to use the magical and physical defenses as "spoiling" defenses. Some possible ways to configure primal shields are:

- *External shield.* This spherical shield is placed outside all other energy shields, such as magical spells, that the target may have. It will counter all attacks first, thus conserving a defender's other shields or armor. This shield can be extended according to the rules listed previously.
- *Skin-tight shield.* This shield behaves like a second skin. All battle effects will encounter other shields and the being's external armor before they get to the primal shield. This tactic minimizes the use of primal flux, and is particularly popular among young godlings and demigods who must use their primal sparingly.



- **Internal shield.** In this case, the shield surrounds only the brain, heart, and spinal areas. This is usually used by deities who have incredible regenerative processes and aren't too worried about most types of physical damage. This kind of shield protects against such things as decapitation and even mind-affecting attacks, since it surrounds the brain. If you play that the soul is centered in some part of the body, such as the heart, brain, or pancreas, a vital organ shield over the proper area would protect against soul-based attacks as well.

The use of a primal shield will vary depending on the personality of the deity, the amount of primal energy available, and the situation at hand.

Primal shields can be altered to suit the deity's will. One common type of alteration called *keying* allows certain things to pass through a shield at the deity's option. Keying is basically the process of setting up what a shield will and won't engage; there is no additional cost. Through keying, a deity may create a spherical shield that projects into the ground; otherwise, a spherical shield would act like a huge hamster ball, with the characters stumbling along within. Keying also helps counteract the shield's inherent one-way nature; without keying, you could swing a sword at someone outside the primal shield, but you couldn't bring your arm back. Finally, keying serves as a useful way of conserving the shield against attacks that wouldn't affect the deity anyway; if a deity is fighting fire elementals and the deity's body is immune to fire, the shield could be keyed to allow fire-based attacks through rather than force the shield to take the damage. Note, however, that deities may only key their shields for something they have experienced before; Bast, for example, would find it impossible to key her shield to admit proton beams unless she had some understanding of what they did.

It is also possible for divine beings to establish primal flux connections between their primal flux reservoirs and established primal shields. This is called *linking*. Linking costs one point of flux per minute to maintain, plus an additional point per minute for each planar boundary between the shield and the supporting deity. In general, then, supporting a standard-size shield on another plane requires two points of flux per minute, but there are campaigns in which access to certain planes is a linear process; you can't go directly to the ninth plane of Hades, for instance, without going through the first through eighth planes. In this case, supporting a shield on the ninth plane from the fifth plane would cost five points of flux per minute: four points for the planar boundaries, and one for the shield itself.

Essentially, linking allows a deity to use more flux to reinforce a primal shield during an attack. When a linked shield is attacked, the deity has three options:

- Do nothing.
- Allocate a stated amount of extra primal flux to the shield. This flux is used to reinforce the shield against an incoming attack at exactly the point on the shield where the attack impacts. This means that while it may take 520 points of flux to set up a one-mile diameter shield with one strength point, you can still counter a ten-point primal blast at the point of impact with only ten flux points. Since deities normally know only that an attack is taking place and not how strong it is, they usually allocate more flux to the shield than they expect to use, just in case. Any flux not used in countering the attack is added to the shield, using whatever ratios of primal flux to shield strength are appropriate for the size of the shield in use.
- Create an open conduit of primal flux that will meet the attack. This has the same effect as the previous option, but it doesn't require the deity to state how many points of flux are used; it just automatically allocates exactly the amount of primal flux necessary to counter the attack with no damage

*Keying*

*Linking*

*Nothing in life is so  
exhilarating as to be  
shot at without result.  
—Winston Spencer Churchill*

to the shield. This option has a potentially dangerous side, though. For example, Pele provides a defense for one of her priests and has a linked primal shield with a strength of three in place around him. He gets attacked with a primal blast. Pele realizes that if the primal attack is strong enough the priest will be fried with no chance for recovery, so she links the shield with a conduit. The attack turns out to be a one hundred-point blast, which costs Pele 100 points and leaves the original three-point shield in place. If Pele had only 80 points of flux left, however, the attack would use all 80 points, the shield would collapse with another three points of damage, and the remaining 17 would promptly introduce the priest to life as vapor. Perhaps more importantly, Pele would now have no flux left. *Oops.*

#### Variation

As an alternative, you might allow linking to be applied to more than just shields. Linking to a primal blast would allow precise, efficient strikes, and linking to a possession attempt, which will be described in a few pages, would allow a deity to grab minds with no waste. This lack of waste is why this option is listed as a variant; it takes a lot of the guesswork out of using primal, and just generally makes the universe a duller place.

Primal energy is a wonderful thing; it does just what you want it to. Unfortunately, it's a lot like money; you never have enough.



#### Divine Aura

Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: None.

Cost in base: None.

Range: Same as detect primal signature; see above.

All divine beings have a divine aura or presence that can awe mortals, instill leadership, increase morale, or cause weaker opponents to flee in terror, lose consciousness, go into shock, or even die of heart failure.

A divine aura is a glorious revelation of divinity. Witnesses of an aura will see the deity as a great, powerful being. But depending on the circumstances they may not necessarily give up fighting, let go of the gemstone, or otherwise drop what they're doing at the moment. A primal shield can nullify one divine aura, and a divine aura can counter another divine aura to a certain extent.

To project a divine aura, a deity must be physically present and currently carrying at least 51% of his or her primal base. The aura will radiate from the point where this base is located. The following table shows the effects a lesser deity might have on a variety of targets:

Target	Effect
Lesser deity or higher	No effect
Godling or demigod	Awed
Master or legendary character	Dazed
Other mortals	Overwhelmed

The specific results of these effects are:

- **Awed:** Experiencing an aura generally has a very positive effect on a deity's worshipers; usually this manifests as a surge in morale and generally heightened activity. If non-worshippers fail their resistance rolls, they immediately lapse into a state of awe. They can no longer make any offensive moves. In addition, if a character is somehow philosophically opposed to the deity (of an opposite alignment or opposing political party, for instance), the character will become completely enraptured, and will be unable to do anything as long as the aura is in effect.

- **Dazed:** If the characters fail their resistance rolls, they pass out. Characters philosophically opposed to the deity must make another resistance roll, or experience heart failure and possibly death.
- **Overwhelmed:** If the characters fail their resistance rolls, they die immediately of heart failure. If they manage the first resistance roll, they must make another or pass out for a full day. If they make it past that, they must make yet another roll or flee for a full hour; there is no magical counter for this. Characters philosophically opposed to the deity die of shock immediately, with no resistance roll.

The above chart should be used only for lesser, greater, or supreme deities. For godlings and demigods, downgrade the effect by one level of severity—awed would become no effect, dazed would become awed, and overwhelmed would become dazed. Deities may project a lesser effect if they so desire.

Deities who wish to oppose another deity's aura just project their own auras and will them to counteract the original aura. In this situation, characters affected by the first aura cannot be dazed or overwhelmed—these are reduced to awed. Another way of saying this is that Pele could use her aura to counteract the effects of Joey's aura on those present. The only restriction is that the divine auras can cancel each other only where they physically overlap.

*Her beauty was as the stars and the sky. All who saw her that day fell to their knees, and many collapsed, dazed by the glory thus beheld.*

*There were ill-hearted souls in the crowd, and upon seeing the beauty of her they wished to harm, they were filled with remorse, and died knowing the error of their beliefs.*

*The Beauty of Lusiila*



**Resistance**

Prerequisites: None.  
 Cost in flux: None.  
 Cost in base: None.

Most game systems provide some sort of “escape hatch” versus adverse effects—saving throws, willpower rolls, rolls against luck, or whatever. In this work these are collectively referred to as *resistance rolls*. For game systems that do not use these, ignore this section.

Due to the presence of primal base, deities’ bodies become extremely resistant to extraneous energies and effects. The element of chaos or luck has less of an effect on them, since in part, their existence helps to define the reality in which they live. Because of this, the chance that a deity will miss a resistance roll is halved and rounded down from that of a mortal, but never reduced to zero. If the required roll for a mortal would be five or higher on a d20, the required roll for a deity would be a two or higher. But if the required roll for a mortal were only a three, the required roll for a deity would still be two, since the chance of rolling a one or higher leaves no chance for failure.

A deity’s chance of succeeding at a resistance roll cannot otherwise be affected by primal energy unless the deity’s sphere of influence deals with luck in some way. For additional clarification of how this rule is used in your game system, refer to “Resistance Rolls” under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

**Possession**

Prerequisites: None.  
 Cost in flux: See below.  
 Cost in base: None.

Possession is used to overcome another being’s will and use his or her body as the deity sees fit. To calculate whether or not a possession attempt succeeds, allocate the amount of primal used to attempt the possession and figure out the amount of damage that this much primal would have done if it had been used as a primal blast instead, subtracting any damage that would have been absorbed by primal shields. The target will be unaware that this is a possession attempt, because this ability appears to be a primal blast. If the damage is sufficient to have killed the target, the possession is successful, and the deity has total control over the poor, hapless body; if not, all the flux allocated for the attempt is wasted and the victim takes no damage. Whether the victim is asleep or awake does not matter.

If a mortal is aware of the attempt and willing to be possessed, no primal need be spent. The deity can just walk on in and take control.

The deity may keep control without further expense as long as he or she is willing to focus attention on the subject or use omnipresence, an ability described later, to allow his or her awareness to be in two places at once.

Once possession has occurred, the deity has a few choices with regard to the consciousness of the original inhabitant:

- The deity may share control. This can result in the strange event of people holding conversations with themselves, as the deity takes control and speaks, then releases the vocal cords so that the owner can reply.
- The deity may take total control, and push the owner’s consciousness aside. The original owner will be able to watch, hear, feel, and so on as normal,

but will have no control over his or her actions. The owner will not know what has possessed him or her unless the deity allows it.

- The deity may take control and lock away the original owner. In this case, the owner loses all consciousness. When possession is released, the owner will wonder what day it is, what's going on, and why everyone has such funny looks on their faces.
- The deity can destroy the consciousness. This way, the possessing deity gets some peace and quiet, and when he or she relinquishes control, the body will be a totally mindless, drooling husk.

The possessing deity may switch between these options at will, except, of course, once the original owner has been destroyed. The deity may also choose to read the victim's mind, even if the victim is allowed to retain consciousness. Of course, the deity may not be able to access any specific information, what with all of those childhood memories, grocery lists, and other bits of mental clutter in the way.

A second deity may not possess the mortal until the first deity has left, and possession may not be passed from one to the other. The first must leave before a second deity may attempt possession, which allows the owner's mental defenses to return.

If a deity chooses to lock away the original consciousness, he or she can set an amount of time before the consciousness will return. The consciousness cannot return before this time has elapsed, whether or not the deity is possessing the body. Thus, a departing deity can leave the victim in a coma if desired.



Prerequisites: Prior exposure to the spell.

Cost in flux: See the notes for your game system in Appendix A.

Cost in base: None.

## Spells

Spells may be cast purely through primal energy. The effects of the spell are created through the expenditure of flux, but otherwise the spell behaves exactly like the normal spell except that no targeting roll is required. The cost to throw a spell will depend on what game system you are using; refer to "Throwing Spells Primally" under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

Deities have an innate understanding of spells, and do not require any time to learn a spell. They can acquire these spells in a variety of ways: reading a scroll with the spell on it, encountering the spell in combat, learning how it works from someone else, absorbing it from a magical item, or even probing someone's mind directly, which requires a successful possession.

Deities can also power magic items if the items are temporarily negated for some reason, such as an anti-magic aura or a negation field. The cost of powering an item is ten percent of the item's *power rating*. Power ratings are a relative measure of the power levels of various items and effects; this is explained in detail in Chapter Four. A greater work item rated at 50, for example, would cost five flux points to power.

Standard magical resistance rolls are applied versus this type of spellcasting. All casting times for the spells are instantaneous, because the deity has only to think about what to do with a spell to cast it. All spells will hit their intended targets unless unusual circumstances apply, such as if the target teleports away. A deity will not fumble or lose control of a spell.

If the effect of the spell relies on the caster's skill with magic, the effect should be calculated as if the spell were cast by a mage of the minimum skill

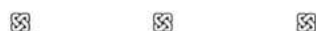


required to be able to throw that spell. A deity can boost his or her effective skill at casting the spell by spending extra primal flux. Every point of flux increases the effective casting skill by half.

For example, Pele wants to help one of her warrior-priests by temporarily turning the warrior's sword into a flaming one. She doesn't have a specific sphere of influence ability designed to create precisely this effect, but because she loves fire the GM determines that she is at least familiar with a spell, such as Feducci's Fabulous Fighter's Flames, that will do the trick. After referring to the appropriate section of Appendix A, the GM determines that this spell would cost two points to cast and at its minimal effectiveness would do an amount of damage that goes up according to the ability of the caster. By spending four points instead of two, Pele can throw the spell as if it were cast by someone twice as powerful as the minimum.

The point of this ability is to allow deities who have no natural magic ability to cast spells. Those deities who are capable of casting spells without the use of primal can get the same effect with less cost in flux by using the technique known as *primal lacing*.

### Primal Lacing



Prerequisites: Must be at least a demigod.

Cost in flux: One point.

Cost in base: None.

Since primal energy has the ability to bypass any physical or energy barrier, a deity may want to enhance a spell with primal energy. This is known as primal lacing. Lacing a spell in this way allows the spell to bypass any non-primal defense. In addition, it ensures that the spell will hit the target and be fully successful; since the primal energy provides guidance to the spell, there is no need for a targeting roll and no chance of a fumble. Lacing an attack in this way only requires one point of flux. As a matter of fact, there's only one reason ever to use more than one point of flux when lacing a spell, and that's if the caster thinks the spell is going to be countered by direct primal energy.

Note that primal lacing does not enhance the effect of the spell at all, nor does it extend the range; it just ensures that the spell will hit the target to full effect except for range restrictions. This is an economic form of divine attack. A primal blast can take up a tremendous amount of flux, but a fireball spell plus one point of flux will penetrate armor and magical or clerical shields, and it will hit with full effect, even if the target is dimensionally displaced. Resistance rolls will apply only if the resistance roll in your game system represents a resistance to the effect. The resistance roll will not apply if it represents a dodge; a primally laced spell will always hit.

Again, the difference between lacing and using primal to cast a spell is that only deities who can cast spells normally can then lace those spells with primal; the rest have to use primal just to cast a spell at all. Deities who were formerly spellcasters who received magic from *their* deity may, since they are now divine themselves, grant their own requests for magic.

### Example of Lacing

For example, Hecate decides to attack some foolish mortal. She's a little low on primal and doesn't know what the rest of the day *has in store*, so she decides to use a spell instead of a direct primal blast. With her normal magical abilities, she prepares a Disintegration spell, and then laces it with one point of primal flux. No targeting, no absorption, no energy control, no negation—just a funeral, presumably closed casket.

If Voshtar, Hecate's adversary, had cast an ordinary disintegration immunity spell around this hapless mortal, Hecate's spell would cruise right through.

If Voshtar laced his, however, Hecate's out of luck; the situation is then dealt with just as if primal were not involved, and it doesn't matter if either side has used more than one point on the spells. Hecate's only recourse is to use a one-point primal blast keyed to magic to remove the impediment; *then* she can render the mortal into a form ideally suited for vacuum cleaners.

Primal flux can also be used to lace spells cast by magic items or energies other than magic. The rules work out the same.



Prerequisites: Must be at least a demigod.

Cost in flux: Twenty points.

Cost in base: None.

Duration: Ten minutes.

There are many ways that deities might choose to manifest themselves. They can, of course, appear in their true forms, with or without their primal auras, and they can also exist purely as raw, conscious primal base with no body; each of these has been discussed already. In addition, a deity may also create a mental essence called a *divine spirit*.

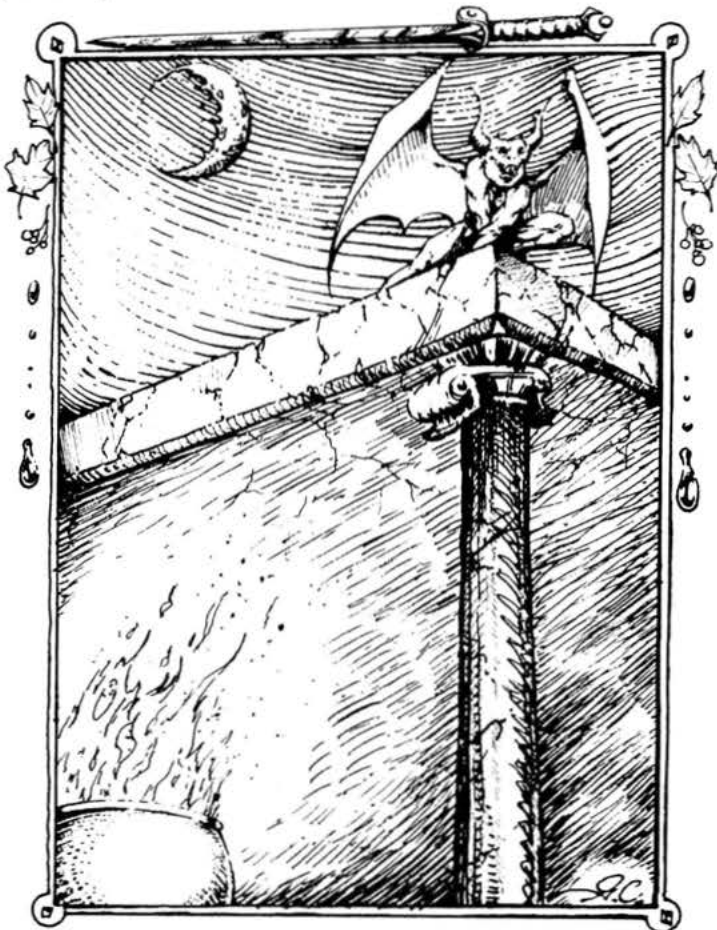
A divine spirit is not a primal essence, but merely an invisible mental projection. It can optionally carry primal flux and act as a focal point for primal activity, but typically it is used for situations in which the deity does not wish to leave a primal signature, or to travel to places where primal beings are physically or primally prohibited, such as non-intervention planes, which will be described in Chapter Seven. The divine spirit is capable of all of the mental abilities to which the deity normally has access, but it does not act as an independent consciousness; it is merely a sensory gateway, a proxy through which the deity may act. Of course, since our divine spirit has no body, it cannot wield weapons or cast any spells that require physical components. There is no signature associated with a divine spirit because there is no primal energy present at the site of its manifestation, unless it is carrying flux.

Even though a divine spirit is invisible, it can be detected by people or things that detect life, mental presences, enemies, alignment, and so forth. This can be cloaked if the deity has some way of cloaking a mental presence. The deity could use a primal ability to cloak the divine spirit, but this would mean leaving a primal signature, so the deity would end up with a divine spirit hidden from mortals but identifiable by other divine beings.

A divine spirit can be sustained longer than the duration specified simply by spending an additional twenty points of flux per ten minutes. Note that deities must use this ability to transfer their consciousnesses from one portion of base to another if the portions are not in close proximity.

### Divine Spirit

3



**Avatar**

⊗ ⊗ ⊗

Prerequisites: Must be at least a lesser deity.

Duration: One lifetime.

Cost in flux: See below.

Cost in base: See below.

An avatar, unlike a divine spirit, is a *physical* aspect of a divine being, similar to a very powerful mortal. Its body is created by expending base in the same way that the deity would to create any other body (see Chapter Nine) but at only half the cost. Like the divine spirit, an avatar has no independent consciousness; it is merely an extension of that deity's consciousness. Avatars will have all of the non-primal abilities of the deity. They cannot be resurrected; if they are slain, they must be created again.

Avatars are particularly useful to allow deities to travel without exposing their primal base to possible enemy attack, to be present where they do not want their primal signature detected, or to go someplace where deities are prohibited or restricted in some way, like some non-intervention planes.

What's actually happening here is that the deity forms a new, temporary body and moves his or her mental focus into the body, leaving his or her primal behind. The conscious mental focus can jump back and forth at will, but if it leaves the avatar, the avatar will be totally mindless until the deity's return. If the deity wishes to use *primal* abilities while in the avatar's body, he or she may do so if it's possible to move primal base into this body, which won't work if the avatar is on a non-intervention plane. If the deity does move both mental focus and base into the avatar's body, the old body will become a mindless avatar and the former avatar will become the deity's new body, at least temporarily. Under normal conditions the body of the former avatar will live a normal lifetime for its race, but because it was not constructed with as much primal energy as a regular divine body, an avatar can only support the presence of primal for one day. If the deity keeps primal base in this body for longer than one day, there is a 1% cumulative chance per day that the body will burn up due to the primal energy now coursing through it.

⊗ ⊗ ⊗

**Burning Primal Base**

Prerequisites: Must be at least a demigod.

Cost in flux: None.

Cost in base: See below.

Burning primal base, unlike detonating it, does not create an actual explosion. Rather, it generates a more controlled and perhaps more subtle change in the way the universe works—either in how the universe relates to one person, place, or thing, or, at greater cost, to an entire population, plane, or concept. Examples of this sort of change would include granting blessings, uttering curses, enabling special abilities, or changing fate or destiny.

Primal base so allocated is permanently used up and can never be recovered. In burning primal base, however, the deity has created a minor independent force in the universe that will continually be working to enforce whatever constant or alteration the deity envisioned. Because that force is created from primal base, it will be a very strong force indeed, depending on the amount of primal base used. Such a force can only be negated by the expenditure of an equal amount of primal base.

There is a subtle difference between burning primal base and the process of creating an artifact or servitor. We'll cover artifacts and servitors in the next

chapter. When a deity creates an artifact or servitor he or she actually places a part of his or her primal base into it, and it continues to have the same philosophy, personality, and general goals as the original deity. When a deity burns base to create an alteration or constant, the primal base is gone forever from the point of view of the deity. The primal base is not actually destroyed, however, but merely loses all connection to that deity, including its signature, and becomes an independent force.

The cost for such effects varies considerably. To calculate this, consider how much primal flux it would cost the deity to create this effect temporarily; for example, if the deity knows a spell that will create this effect, you would take the cost required to cast the spell using primal flux. Another possibility would be to use the cost to create the effect with a *divine wish*, which is described later in this chapter. This cost is then multiplied by ten to get the amount of primal base that would have to be burned to accomplish this effect on a permanent basis. The reason you have to multiply by ten is so that there will be enough primal base available to generate the necessary flux to create the effect.

Here are a few examples:

- **Permanent curse or blessing.** Normally, when a deity places a curse or blessing on a deserving mortal, any opposing priest can dispel it with the appropriate spell. If the curse or blessing is accompanied by a point of primal base, however, it cannot be dispelled. If an opposing priest tries to dispel the curse or blessing, it will be negated only for a period of one day.
- **Permanent spell effect.** A deity could burn primal base to cause some spell to exist permanently within an area. Examples of this would include a permanent gate, teleportal, or pool of healing, or even a “detect lies” spell on a sword. As with a primal curse or blessing, any attempt to dispel the effect would only negate the spell for a day; it takes another deity burning primal base to eliminate something created by burning primal base.
- **Permanent weather alteration.** A deity could burn primal base to create an area of permanent clouds, winds, rain, or some other effect. Note that this could have severe ecological repercussions if the deity isn’t careful. Furthermore, if the primal base would cause an effect that would conflict with explicit planar constants of the plane, the plane will automatically divert part of its planar energy to suppress the effect. The plane can’t dispel it completely, because these effects can only be negated by burning primal base, but it could continually apply enough planar energy to cause the two to cancel each other out. For all practical purposes, this is the same as canceling the effect, unless the plane stops applying the necessary counter-effect. More on the ability of planes to counter divine efforts can be found in Chapter Seven. To avoid these hassles altogether, a deity could use a *divine wish*, described later in this chapter, to discover the potential effects of any planned permanent alterations.

☒ ☒ ☒

Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: Varies; see below.

Cost in base: The amount of base a deity possesses will determine the number of souls that the deity can personally absorb. A deity can absorb one soul for every point of base possessed.

### Examples of Burning Primal Base

### Soul Capture

*Soul States*

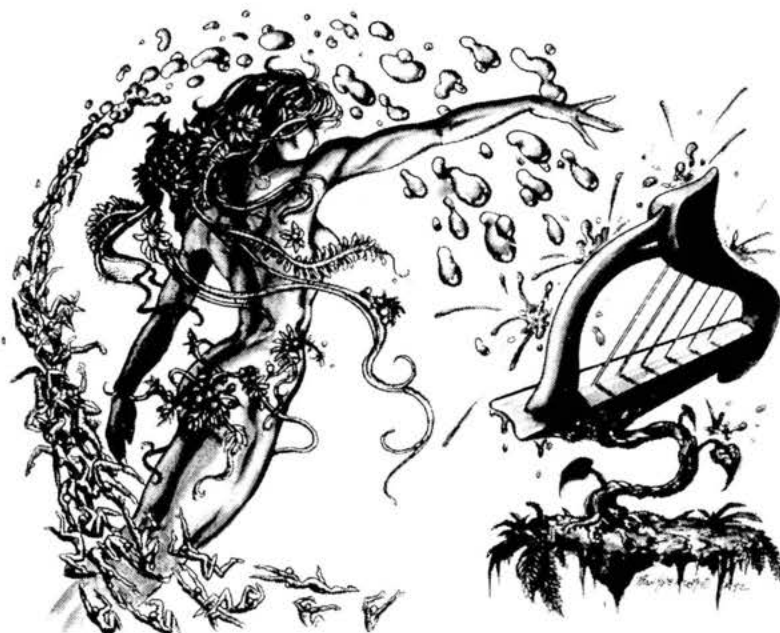
Divine beings have the ability to capture and hold “free-floating” souls. If a mortal dies in a divine being’s presence, then the divine being may opt to reach out and “grab” the mortal’s soul instead of allowing it to travel to the home plane of the mortal’s deity. Deities can establish any of their controlled planes or their own primal base as repositories for mortal souls.

A soul can be in one of six states:

- (1) *In use*: Inhabiting the body of a mortal, who’d probably prefer to keep it.
- (2) *Floating*: The body it was inhabiting has just recently kicked the bucket and the soul is floating aimlessly about, trying to figure out what to do next. “Hang out? Go to the home plane of my deity? Spy on the neighbors?”
- (3) *Absorbed*: Currently within the primal base or controlled plane of a deity; souls that are absorbed into a plane belonging to a deity are generally free to roam that plane, and at first glance might appear to be floating souls.
- (4) *Drawn*: A deity is in the process of trying to transfer the soul from one of the first two states to the third.
- (5) *Pulled*: A deity is in the process of trying to transfer the soul from the second state to the third through the direct use of primal flux.
- (6) *Contested*: Two or more deities are in the process of trying to absorb a soul in one of the first two states.

Deities cannot simply take souls that are in use unless the souls are willing. They can possess mortals, or attack mortals’ physical bodies in an attempt to kill the mortals and thus cause the souls to become floating, but they can’t just take a soul that is in use without a fight. If the owner of a soul is willing, perhaps out of piety, then the deity can make what amounts to a request for the soul, which then leaves the body. The body, now soulless, drops dead.

If the soul is currently floating, a deity can draw it in. A soul can be drawn across planes, dimensions, or other great distances. The soul starts drifting in the deity’s general direction—“following the light,” so to speak. Depending on the distance, this could take moments or days. Drawing a soul does not involve the use of primal flux.





If a soul is absorbed into the deity or one of the deity's own planes, then the deity may do as he or she wishes with it. If, however, the soul is absorbed into the plane or base of another deity, it becomes completely inaccessible. Of course, if a deity who has absorbed a soul would like to give it up, he or she can do so by returning it to a floating state.

There is no limit to the number of souls that can be absorbed into a plane of existence. A deity can hold one soul in his or her base for every point of base possessed.

If deities lose primal base in combat situations, they will lose a percentage of the souls housed within their base equal to the percentage of primal base they have lost. These souls will go to the deity who destroyed part of the original deity's primal base. This only applies to combat situations; in any other situation, no souls will be lost, since presumably the deity will have time to separate the souls from the primal base being lost.

A deity can draw a soul merely by willing it to be drawn and spending one flux point; souls must be willed individually unless they were recognized worshipers of that deity, in which case they will automatically be drawn with no effort on the deity's part. If two or more divine beings are drawing a soul, the soul will have to "decide" which way to go. Because the soul is operating without the obvious advantage of a brain, this "decision" is fairly simple, and is made according to the following rules in order of priority:

- (1) If the soul has had last rites performed, it will automatically go to the deity in whose name the last rites were cast, regardless of whether they were performed with or without the consent of the original owner of the soul. The souls of sentient beings who were sacrificed probably fall in the "without consent" category.
- (2) If only one of the contesting deities is present, the soul will automatically go to that deity.
- (3) If neither or all of the contesting deities are present, the soul will go to the deity of highest rank. If all the deities are of the same rank, then the soul will go to the one who is most closely associated with that soul in terms of religion, race, morals, and philosophy—the most "comfortable" deity.
- (4) If the situation remains unresolved, roll randomly; there should be an equal chance that a soul will go to one deity, go to another, or just stay floating. For instance, in the case of three contesting deities, you'd roll a four-sided die; this would give you one chance for each of the deities, plus one chance that the soul would continue to float, wander off in search of a pizza, or whatever.

If a divine being is really serious about acquiring a soul, he or she may opt to forcibly pull it. This costs one point of flux, but causes the soul to go directly to the deity very swiftly, regardless of whether or not other deities are trying to draw the soul. Of course, as soon as one deity starts pulling on a floating or drawn soul, other deities, if they wish to contest for the soul, must immediately up the ante by pulling on the soul as well. The other deities are immediately aware of how much flux the first deity is using and must commit an equal amount to cancel the pulling. Of course, they could spend more and begin pulling the soul themselves, in which case the first deity could again respond, and so forth . . . "I'll match your five, and up you three."

*Well, God's above all;  
and there be souls must  
be saved, and there be  
souls must not be saved.  
—William Shakespeare*

*Where a Soul is Drawn*

<p><i>Ascension</i></p>	<div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <p>Prerequisites: Must be at least a lesser deity.  Cost in flux: None.  Cost in base: 1,000 points.</p> <p>Ascension is the highest gift a deity can give to a worshiper. To accomplish this, deities take portions of their primal base—pieces of their own soul—and transfer that power to mortals, thus transforming the mortals into godlings. The new godlings receive a starting base of 100 points. More discussion on this process is found in Chapter Nine.</p> </div>
<p><i>Supporting a Demigod</i></p>	<div> <div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <p>Prerequisites: Must be at least a lesser deity.  Cost in flux: 100 points per day.  Cost in base: None.</p> <p>If a deity chooses to primally support a demigod, the demigod gains 300 points of <i>base</i> for as long as the support is maintained. More discussion is located in Chapter Four.</p> </div>
<p><i>Direct Expression of Will</i></p>	<p>As outlined in the previous sections, there are many abilities and benefits that a deity can realize by using primal energy. However, if primal energy is truly an extension of the deity's will, then it stands to reason that a deity could use primal energy in a sort of free-form manner by simply using force of will to bring an effect into being. This unstructured method of using primal is very useful in that a deity can do just about anything with enough primal; however, it is not very cost-effective.</p> <p>There are two categories within this ability: wishes, which are available to any deity, and the <i>omnis</i> (omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence), which are only available to lesser, greater, and supreme deities. These abilities deserve some discussion. When a campaign contains more than one deity, true use of any of the <i>omnis</i> is paradoxical—in short, impossible. For instance, if two deities were omnipotent, one could conceivably create something so massive that it would be impossible for the other to move it, which is awfully hard to conceptualize in game terms. So, in a campaign, no deity is capable of any of the <i>omnis</i>, using the words' true definitions; no deity is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere at once. Of course, you as a GM can design your campaign any way you want, but if that's the way your deities truly are, they fall beyond a system such as <i>The Primal Order</i>. Because of this, the <i>omni</i> terms as we use them here are somewhat misleading. Still, few deities are going to admit to their followers that there are things they don't know, places they can't go, and abilities they don't have. In fact, most would probably claim that they truly have these abilities in their literal form!</p> <p>Note also that none of the <i>omnis</i> can affect other deities; this limitation is also necessary to eliminate paradox.</p> <p>The thing to remember about these abilities is that they are relatively unstructured. Unlike spells, for example, which require a <i>certain</i> prescribed sequence of actions, symbols, words, and/or materials, direct expressions of will are literally an attempt to warp reality by sheer force of will. Because of this, a lot of energy is wasted in the process.</p> <p><i>An Omniwarning</i></p> <p>The playtesters had a lot of friendly discussion concerning whether this section should be included in the standard list of divine abilities or only as optional rules. There are two problems with this section—one mechanical,</p>

the other philosophical. The mechanical problem is that these abilities allow a deity to do virtually anything, on a limited scale. This violates the spirit of a system of rules, because, in a sense, this section is saying, "Well, in this case, there are no set rules." Yet it's very convenient to be able to have something that allows the GM to say, "Well, I'm sorry, but yes, Odin really *did* just strip you of all your magic and special abilities; you should think twice about calling him an 'old fart' next time." Designing limitations around this sort of activity is very difficult. We feel that we've generally succeeded, but be forewarned: these abilities require some careful judgment on the GM's part. We have included numerous examples in the hope of clarifying our position, but exercise care when using or allowing the use of these abilities.

The philosophical problem lies in clarifying what all deities should actually be able to do. Everyone has his or her own conception of what deities really are and what capabilities they should have. We eventually decided we wanted deities that were actually capable of some of the various mythological events in our own world's history, such as Paul Bunyan's creation of the Grand Tetons.

The point to all this is that we recommend these guidelines be considered "standard," but they should be treated with caution. We understand that you might prefer not to use these abilities at all, or you could choose to increase the cost or in some other way limit these abilities.



Prerequisites: None.

Cost in flux: Varies; see below.

Cost in base: None.

### Wish

Wishes are the most limited and direct category of direct expression. When a deity elects to use a wish, you should go through the following steps:

- (1) Determine exactly what the effect of the wish is. Exact wording is not necessary; deities are not going to pervert the intent of their own wishes! The important thing is that the intent be clearly understood.
- (2) Assign the level of power that would be needed to produce this effect. If a spell already existed that would produce this effect, how powerful of a spell would it be? Creating a cup of tea might be considered simple, whereas reducing a fortress to rubble might be nearly impossible. It's up to your experience and good judgment to determine this. It might be helpful to consider the following: difficulty of other spells with similar effects, area of effect, duration, conflicts with other energies, conflicts with universal constants such as time, and so on. Another factor to consider is whether or not the target will receive a resistance roll.
- (3) Determine the primal energy needed to fulfill the wish. This would be the cost to throw the spell if it existed, multiplied by five due to the inefficiency of this application of primal energy.
- (4) Implement the effect, and subtract the primal used from the deity's current amount of daily flux.



Prerequisites: Lesser deity or above.

Cost in flux: 100 points.

Cost in base: 10 points.

### Limited Omniscience

Omniscience causes the deity to become instantly aware of all facts pertinent to a question that the deity asks while expending the primal to exercise the ability. The information will be general or specific depending on the question. Note that this form of omniscience only reveals information directly related to the specific subject requested.

This ability cannot be used for research into the sciences or exploration into unknown corners of the universe, or to develop new skills. A mage deity must learn a spell either by standard research or by learning it from someone. A fighter deity must learn a new sword technique through demonstration and practice. There is no substitute for this sort of skill acquisition.



### Enhanced Omniscience

Prerequisites: Greater deity or above.

Cost in flux: 1,000 points.

Cost in base: 20 points.

This ability is exactly like limited omniscience above, but will also reveal information related only indirectly to the subject. The other limitations still apply.

For example, if a deity wished to know about a particular city, limited omniscience would provide information about its history, size, possessions, wealth, alliances, rulers, prominent trade articles, and so on. Enhanced omniscience would also provide similar information on its allies, enemies, neighbors, influential citizens, and so on.

Here's another example: Zeus is exploring the far ranges of a distant galaxy and runs across a Star Wars™ setting. The Jedi seem particularly interesting, so Zeus uses his omniscience ability to find out about them. Limited omniscience would tell him their basic principles and the underlying philosophy of the Force. Enhanced omniscience would tell him the identity of some of the top Jedi Knights and some specific abilities of the Jedi, but Zeus wouldn't learn how to use these specific abilities, or the Force. Of course, omnipotence might be helpful in persuading the strange little pointy-eared guy with the cane to arrange for some personal training.

A good guideline regarding the difference between limited and enhanced omniscience is to think of the limited form as equivalent to reading about

*If God is omnipotent, can  
he float a loan even he  
can't repay? —Anonymous*

something in an encyclopedia, while enhanced is like having a whole book on the subject.



Prerequisites: Lesser deity or above.  
 Cost in flux: 500 points.  
 Cost in base: 15 points.

Omnipotence allows a deity to perform some incredible feat surpassing even the power of a wish. The deity uses his or her very essence to warp the fabric of reality. As with a divine wish, you need not be concerned about precise wording; it's the *intent* that must be understood. Your biggest difficulty lies in placing limitations on omnipotence; the main thing to remember is to keep things in perspective. For example, limited omnipotence would be capable of:

- bestowing a permanent set of wings on each member of a group, enabling them to fly;
- killing any mortal outright, with no resistance roll;
- temporarily changing the stone walls of a room to pure mithril; or
- giving a mortal novice-level psionic or spellcasting ability.

The key thing about omnipotence is that it is capable of changing *anything* that cannot normally be changed, but since it does require primal base, deities are very particular about using it.



Prerequisites: Greater deity or above.  
 Cost in flux: 5,000 points.  
 Cost in base: 30 points.

At a significantly greater cost, deities may enhance their omnipotence. Building on the examples given above, a deity could use enhanced omnipotence to:

- bestow a permanent, functional set of wings on each member of an entire army;
- instantly kill any party of mortals, with no resistance roll;
- permanently change the stone walls of a room to pure mithril; or
- permanently give a mortal master-level psionic or spellcasting ability.



Prerequisites: Lesser deity or above.  
 Cost in flux: 1,000 points.  
 Cost in base: 20 points. The deity must also commit 1,000 points for the duration of the effect; these points are recovered when the effect ends.

Omnipresence allows deities to diffuse some or all of their essences into an entire area, gaining an enhanced awareness of anything taking place within that area. The area of effect is a sphere one mile in diameter; you could, of

### Limited Omnipotence

### Enhanced Omnipotence

### Limited Omnipresence





*Use your Omniscience to find out the mysteries of the Universe, I said.  
Use your Omnipotence to bring about world peace, I begged.  
What does he do? Picks up girls.*

*I'll take the low road and  
I'll take the high road,  
and I'll be to Scotland  
before ye! —Traditional  
(with apologies)*

#### *Example of Omnipresence*

course, for gaming purposes, change this to a cube or whatever. The deity is aware of anything happening within the area of effect. A deity using omnipresence may direct primal energy through any point in the area of effect, and in fact may instantly transport his or her physical form to anywhere in the area of effect *at no cost*, as long as the physical form starts out in the area of effect. The deity may also communicate individually with any lifeform or group of lifeforms in the area of effect.

Omnipresence is detectable; the deity's primal signature is also omnipresent throughout the area of effect. In this form, the deity can only be attacked by a primal blast, which impacts directly against the deity's primal base. However, the blast is only half as effective since the deity's base is so diffuse. Omnipresence isn't perfect; it won't go through a primal shield.

Effectively, what omnipresence does is create an independent entity in constant communication with the deity's essence; the omnipresence cannot act in a manner disagreeable to the deity, but still acts independently. In effect, this doubles the capability of the deity, though the omnipresence is limited to purely mental pursuits. For every extra thousand points of base, an additional entity is created, increasing the deity's capabilities accordingly.

Because base points are committed, and twenty of them are permanently lost, the radius of effect is set when the omnipresence is cast; it can't be moved once it's in place. The 1,000 base points committed "for the duration" are recovered when the omnipresence ends.

Hrgya, the lesser Goddess of Shoes, puts in an appearance at her main church on a holy day. Since she suspects a rival deity may attack the church in an attempt to capture soles, she uses omnipresence. For practical purposes, both her original consciousness and a second consciousness are now present in the area, and the second one is able to monitor the entire area and alert her if anything important happens. If the rival deity shows up and requires her full attention, the second consciousness could still keep *monitoring* events and looking out for reinforcements. If the rival deity's army arrives to back him up, then the second consciousness could deal with that, but it would no longer be possible to monitor all events in the area unless Hrgya casts another omnipresence and creates a third consciousness. Since Hrgya will probably need all the flux she can get to hold off her rival, two consciousnesses will probably have to do.



Prerequisites: Greater deity or above.

Cost in flux: 10,000 points.

Cost in base: 40 points (plus 10,000 points for the duration).

This ability has exactly the same effect as omnipresence, but the area of effect encompasses an entire plane.

It's pretty clear that primal flux is the key to getting things done if you're a deity. So, where do you get this marvelous stuff? From your primal base, worshipers, planes, other deities, souls, and objects.

Unlike the amount of primal base, which only changes occasionally, the amount of primal flux available to a deity can vary significantly from day to day. Some of this flux comes from worshipers through the rituals of faith associated with the deity's religion, while some comes from actions that the deity or worshipers can take. These adjustments, taken together, make up a deity's total daily flux. Note that primal flux does not last longer than twenty-four hours, so bonuses gained through specific actions are shortlived.

Let's be honest; it's a little strange to think that a deity's daily allotment of flux would appear at, say, exactly noon each day. A more realistic concept would be to have the flux appear continuously, with each point of flux only lasting a day from its appearance. The deity would always be spending and gaining primal flux, sometimes using up reserves and sometimes building them. But this does serve to complicate things; it's easier to take it in manageable increments. For adventuring purposes, you might find it more convenient to divide up the flux gained into hourly amounts. Flux over twenty-four hours old would disappear, of course.

Deities, simply by virtue of being divine, gain a certain amount of flux through their primal base. Each day a deity will gain an amount of primal flux equal to 10% of the deity's primal base. This rule embodies one of our fundamental assumptions; no matter what, a deity must always have *some* source of flux, even in those rare cases in which a deity exists without anyone's knowledge.

You may find that one of the following variations better suits your campaign:

- If you *really* feel that deities should be completely reliant on their holdings and worshipers, you may not want to use this rule at all.
- If you run a campaign in which deities are extremely powerful, but resources such as planes and worshipers are very limited, you may wish to increase the percentage. Note that increasing this percentage has a much more limited effect than changing the percentage of primal base gain, mentioned later in this chapter. If you want to increase one or the other and you aren't sure which, changing this one is much safer.

The fervent praise and support of worshipers generates considerable flux and serves as one of the primary sources of flux a deity has available. The number of points of daily flux that a deity will gain from worshipers is calculated separately for each plane by taking the square root, rounded down, of the number of worshipers on that plane; if you don't like math, use the table below. The points for each plane are then added together to get the total number of flux points gained from all worshipers. Note that on a given plane, the primal

## Enhanced Omnipresence

## Obtaining Primal Flux

### Variation

## Primal Flux From Primal Base

### Variations

## Primal Flux From Worshipers

flux from worshipers only kicks in when the deity has at least one hundred worshipers on that plane.

Worshippers per Plane	Flux Gain
100	10
300	17
500	22
1,000	31
4,000	63
7,000	83
9,000	94
10,000	100
100,000	316
1,000,000	1,000

Note that this encourages deities to spread out across more than one plane. For instance, two planes each with 4,000 worshipers and another plane with 1,000 worshipers would generate  $\sqrt{4,000} + \sqrt{4,000} + \sqrt{1,000} = 157$  points of flux per day, whereas just one plane with 9,000 worshipers would produce  $\sqrt{9,000} = 94$  points of flux. An expanded version of this chart is available in Appendix B.

Worshipers who are slain and whose souls manage to find their way to their deity's home plane continue to count as worshipers for that deity. See the section on soul capture for more information on where souls go; essentially, this rule means that a worshiper's contribution to a deity's power doesn't necessarily end with the worshiper's death. Even deities who no longer have living worshipers are still gaining flux from the souls of their dead worshipers.

#### Variations

You may find that one of the following variations better suits your campaign:

- If you prefer to think of all worshipers as worth the same, regardless of their plane of origin, then total them up first and then take the square root or find the closest number on the chart. However, note that a deity will receive far less primal using this method, so you might want to experiment with the equation.
- If you want to add a little additional realism, you may want to incorporate a fanaticism factor. Fanatical worshipers who are ready to die for their deity could certainly be worth more than those who just show up for church picnics once a month. For example, you might consider such worshipers worth twice as many normal worshipers; if a deity has 1,000 worshipers on a plane, but 500 of them are fanatically loyal, the deity would gain as much flux as if there were 1,500 worshipers on the plane. Another alternative is to assign an average "fanaticism factor" for each deity on a specific plane or across all planes, and then simply multiply the total number of worshipers by this number. If most of a deity's worshipers on a plane are fanatical, the factor might be something like 1.8, whereas a plane where there were yearly worship services at best might have a factor of 0.2.

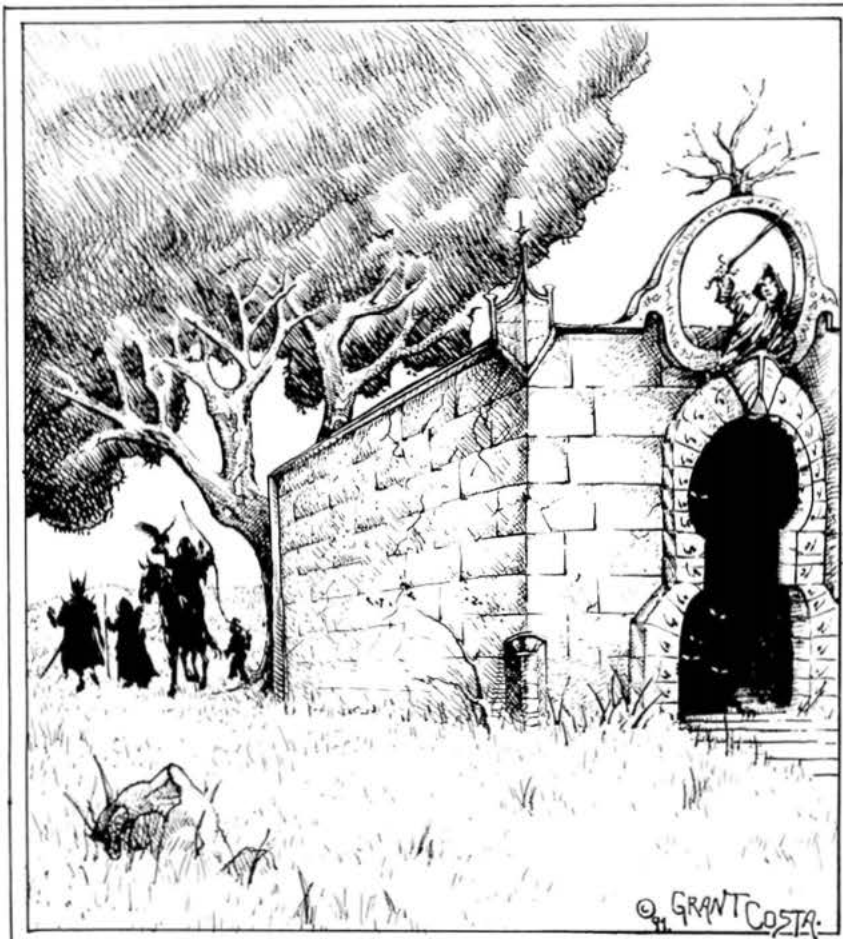
#### Primal Flux From Places of Worship

One of the primary sources for primal flux is the deity's hierarchy of worshipers. Part of this hierarchy involves places of worship or inspiration, which act as "collectors" of a sort. These include:

- *Consecrated ground*, (also called a *holy place*, *shrine*, or *altar*, among other things) which is a ritually blessed area significantly associated with a deity

or a prominent worshiper of that deity. Generally, these are not places where formal services are held, but rather places where worshipers can go for spiritual inspiration. Such places might include the place where a deity was born or adventured once, or perhaps a place where a famous worshiper or priest died, or a battleground. The consecration ceremony allows it to generate flux; each day, an area of consecrated ground will generate two points of flux, regardless of size. It is the event that is important, not the volume of soil. Also, sequential events of great significance in the same area could create an area that is considered double-strength consecrated ground, awarding twice as much primal flux to the deity.

- *Sanctuary*, which is a place where religious services are sometimes held. This includes small churches, homes where group services are held, or perhaps a small forest clearing used for religious ceremonies. Sanctuaries are usually found in small towns or rural areas, where the population is somewhere between ten and a hundred people. A sanctuary will generate five points of flux per day.
- *Temple*, which is a place specifically for the sole use of a particular religion. In a temple there are typically daily events (vespers, scholarly pursuits, prayer meetings) and frequent worshipers, including clerical acolytes and ordained warriors who come to study, train, give offerings, and receive healing or blessings. A temple might also be a place similar to a convent or monastery, where a group of the devout live in relative isolation in order to enhance their spiritual lives.



Usually, at least one priest is in residence at a temple at all times; this priest is responsible for the care of the temple and its charges. Temples are usually found in towns and cities, but even villages might support temples if nearly all the inhabitants were worshipers; it doesn't take much more than an average rural community to generate several hundred worshipers. Temples generate ten points of flux per day.

- *Greater temple*, which is a very significant center of worship, typically of outstanding size and value, and used as a focus of high religious rituals. The devout typically make their way to these structures as pilgrimages. The church's most important religious officers, such as high priests and perhaps minions, usually reside here, and artifacts or relics of the deity may be housed here. A greater temple might also house the deity's military force, and if the deity were to appear on the plane in person or through an aspect, it would likely be at a greater temple. These are usually found in metropolitan areas, and a deity will seldom have more than five per plane. They also require vast sums of money to keep in operation, and serve as central administration points for a number of lesser temples and religious sites. A greater temple should certainly be capable of seating 10,000 worshipers for services, if such activities are a part of the church. Greater temples generate twenty points of flux per day.

Sanctuaries, temples, and greater temples are often built on consecrated ground. In these instances, the primal flux is cumulative. Consecrated ground is the only category that can overlap the others.

All of these sites must be tended to by qualified representatives of the religion, must be recognizable as holy places at least to worshipers or scholars of that religion, and, except in the case of consecrated ground, must be attended by an appropriately sized body of worshipers in order to provide a deity with primal flux. PCs who are church leaders or holy warriors will be expected to place the construction, maintenance, furnishing, and protection of these places at a very high priority, spending significant portions of their resources toward this end.

Note that we have only given deities primal flux for *public* places of worship. We did not include private niches or shrines that devout followers might have in their homes because (a) we felt that it was covered in the flux that the deity gets from worshipers, and (b) we would be addressing a very low level of detail; there could literally be millions of household niches to a major deity. If you'd like to account for personal shrines more specifically, we recommend doing this by simply increasing the amount of flux that the deity gets from those worshipers; this can easily be achieved by applying the fanaticism modifiers discussed previously to the number of worshipers with private shrines.

#### Limits

Note that places of worship have to be legitimate and functional, tended by sincere priests and supported by sincere worshipers. Deities can't simply take their planes and primally construct hundreds of temples for extra flux. A good GM will not allow this rule to be abused.

#### Rival Places of Worship

When a deity has in some way seriously angered another deity, the two deities are then formally classified as *rival deities*. Rivalries of this sort can instigate holy wars or just cause some aggravation between the religions. If two deities are involved in a formal rivalry, one deity could "capture" places of worship belonging to the other by driving out all of the priests and holy warriors of the other deity. The captured places will then generate some flux for the deity who has possession of them; these places of worship will generate half (rounded down) of the amount they normally raise for the controlling deity. The original deity will receive no flux from that site while it is controlled by another deity. Not only is this tactic useful for gaining primal flux, but it also reduces the opposing deity's daily allotment of flux. Rivals only get flux for captured facilities if they control every inch. Having the friendly forces locked



up on site counts as control, but if there's a single candle attendant hiding in the coal cellar, the rival deity will not receive primal flux.

If the area is recaptured by friendly forces, it does not immediately start generating flux for the original deity, although it does immediately stop generating flux for the deity who captured it. The area must be reconsecrated to the original deity by the appropriate religious official, and the place must be purified, whatever that means for the religion involved. Note also that a deity may have more than one rival.

Deities also gain flux for controlling planes and *miniplanes*. You may decide that there are some key sections of territory in your campaign that do not satisfy the requirements of a full plane, but nevertheless grant the controlling deity some amount of primal. We refer to these as miniplanes; they can be anything from parceled-out sections of a very large plane to small pocket planes, smaller extra-dimensional realms, warps, or whatever your imagination may come up with.

Each controlled plane provides 1,000 points of flux per day; this is above and beyond the 200 points of flux that will be generated by the 2,000 points of base the deity gains for taking control of the plane. Miniplanes generate a smaller, variable amount of flux. They allow deities who aren't yet powerful enough to take over a full plane to acquire at least a little more primal energy, and perhaps establish a base of operations. As a result, they will probably be hotly contested by godlings and demigods. A miniplane cannot act as a deity's home plane, however. More detail on planes and miniplanes can be found in Chapter Seven.

Some examples of miniplanes from the authors' campaigns include:

- The Garmon Clearings, certain difficult-to-find clearings in an enchanted forest that are warps to small extra-dimensional realms ranging in size from a few dozen to a few hundred miles in diameter. Within these clearings, one might find the Pixie Queen, or the Elder Dragon that spawned all green dragons.
- The War Plane of Austra, which is an adaptation of one of the Nine Æsgardian Planes. Nothing prevents a deity from invading the plane with worshipers, and all deities are allowed to go to the plane and resolve their differences in person (to "throw down"). The War Plane is divided into territories, each of which is treated as a miniplane.
- The Bubble Pockets of the Boiling Sea, which are air pockets, maintained by planar constants, scattered throughout an immense sea of lava. These pockets are very large and contain self-supporting ecosystems.
- A series of miniplanes that form a "ladder" leading from the valley where the High Elven Council meets to the home planes of the elven deities.
- Hell's Mouth, an immense rift with different planar constants from its parent plane. The chasm is twenty-five miles deep, and about one hundred miles long.

A variation that might better suit your campaign would allow extremely large or significant planes (such as, perhaps, an elemental plane) to potentially yield much more primal due to their increased size and/or significance.

## Primal Flux From Planes

### Variation

## Primal Flux From Sacrifices

The vast majority of sacrifices are relatively mundane and part of the routine worship cycle, but occasionally an especially dedicated or stupid worshiper sacrifices something extremely valuable. These sacrifices should be worth an extra little boost of primal, and the person making the sacrifice may be rewarded by the deity. Sacrifices that are considered especially valuable are souls; rare materials such as gems, metals, and material magical components; and artifacts, worshipers, clergy, or minions of rival deities. The table just below can serve as a rough guideline. Note that “rival worshipers” actually means worshipers of a rival deity, and so on.

Sacrifice	Flux points
Rival worshipers	1 each
Rival ordained warriors	2 each
Rival priests	3 each
Rival minions	5 each
Rival artifacts	10 each
Rival chancellors or godlings	20 each
Enemies of the church	50 each
Rare gems or materials	(see below)

The amount of flux gained from the sacrifice of rare gems or materials should be equal to the number of digits in the monetary value. (The more mathematically inclined among you might recognize this as a rough estimate of  $1 + \log$  value, but we didn't want to scare anyone.) If the campaign in question has more than one currency in operation, then you should pick a standard and translate all sacrifices into this system so that deities don't get an unfair advantage if their worshipers' currency is devalued.

But another requirement here is that the sacrifice must be something that is rare and prized *by the person offering it*. A pearl donated by a peasant would qualify, but a king would have to dig up something much more valuable. The item's loss should truly be a sacrifice.

To reiterate, then, a sacrifice must first be a significant gift relative to the giver. A good guideline is the principle of tithing; the value of the sacrifice should be at least 10% of the total net worth of the giver. *If* the object qualifies, then find out how much flux it represents by using the chart.

Enemies of the church are not just people who are in the wrong camp, but are specific individuals who have personally and publicly affronted the deity's name. Even being a worshiper of a rival deity is not enough to qualify as an enemy of the church; one must have performed some truly dastardly deed on a fairly big scale. Enemies of the church should be very rare, and there should only be one or two, if any, who are known on any given plane at any one time. Use your discretion to keep PC deities from coming up with a ridiculous excuse for getting some peasant named an enemy of the church, so that a priest can go out and sacrifice the poor fool for some extra flux.

Sacrifices of sentient life, typically accepted only by the sort of deity who would find such acts appropriate, must be properly performed; just killing someone in battle is not enough. Sacrificed victims must be slain in a ceremony, on religious ground, with an appropriate official of the church performing the rites that will secure the soul's passage to the appropriate deity.

This leads to why deities have holy days—so that the worshipers know when they should make their sacrifices and so the deity knows when to expect extra primal. While a chaos deity might prefer an occasional surprise, most deities would like to be able to form strategies based around the knowledge that on certain days they're likely to receive a little extra “umph.”

To estimate the amount of flux that a deity would receive on any given holy day from these sacrifices, simply take the amount of flux that the deity normally receives from worshipers and multiply it by 8–80% (8d10). Roll an extra 4–40% (4d10) for each rival deity—to account for increased “opportunities”—up to a maximum of 200% (20d10). Halve this total if the deity doesn’t accept sacrifices of sentient life, and then divide the number by how many holy days there are in a year. Thus a deity with only one holy day gets the entire amount, while a deity with four would only get one-fourth the entire amount on any one of those holy days.

For example, Joey, God of Basketweaving, has two holy days per year and does not accept sentient life sacrifices—not even priests of his rival, Shūglot, God of Mold and Rot. On each holy day you would roll 12d10 (8d10 base, plus 4d10 for having a rival) and halve it twice (once because Joey doesn’t accept sacrifices of sentient life, and once because there are two holy days in the year).

Remember that gains in primal flux last for only one day; they do not accumulate over time. Sometimes, timing is everything.

At any time, a deity can transfer primal flux as a gift to another deity. Like transferring primal base during an ascension, this exchange of flux is not entirely cost-effective. If a deity elects to transfer primal flux as a gift, the receiving deity receives 1–20% less than the amount transferred.

The same variations that apply to transferring primal base, described later in this chapter, can also be applied here.

Deities may collect souls that are sacrificed to them, and hold them either on a controlled plane or within their own primal base. Deities can then “bleed” these souls on a daily basis in order to gain primal flux. Technically, deities can bleed any souls they have absorbed, but since they already receive all the flux they’re going to get from the souls of dead worshipers, they usually bleed only souls sacrificed to them and souls of nonworshipers they’ve managed to draw in. Bleeding also has the effect of torturing the souls, and is therefore typically performed only by the more ruthless or wrathful deities. If you’re worried that this rule might give some deities too much of an advantage, then

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### Primal Flux Gifts From Friendly Deities

### Bleeding Flux from Captured Souls



you can compensate by giving deities who don't accept sentient life sacrifices more worshipers.

The amount of flux gained is calculated exactly the same as for that generated by worshipers—separately for each plane and for the souls that the deity is keeping within his or her own primal base—and then divided by ten.

For example, Joey, God of Basketweaving, has 200 captured souls he has managed to draw in over the years. He keeps 100 of them within his primal base, and keeps the rest on his home plane. The total amount of primal flux that he can bleed from these souls, if he's ever in a nasty mood, is 2 points ( $(\sqrt{100} + \sqrt{100}) \div 10$ , or see the chart earlier in the section on gaining flux from worshipers). If Joey also had 200 souls of his own deceased worshipers, he could store them in the same manner, collecting another 2 flux points. And if Joey's church back on the main plane blossoms to 10,000 worshipers, Joey will gain another 100 points of flux from his living worshipers, for a total of 104 points.

The difference between taking primal flux from the souls of former worshipers and "bleeding" captured souls is a question of willing support. Forcing a soul to support a deity is met with some resistance, and the soul suffers as a result. For example, in Joey's case, the captured souls probably have continual nightmares of suffocating in constricting baskets, whereas the deceased worshipers imagine themselves weaving baskets of many joyous colors throughout eternity. Note that dead, suffering souls can never change their minds. Not only would this be conversion by duress, which doesn't count for purposes of generating flux unless it eventually becomes genuine belief, but it is also impossible since dead souls no longer have minds to change.

### Bleeding Flux from Other Things

There are, of course, a few other ways that a deity might gain flux. Anything that possesses primal base can be "bled" for its flux, including other deities and their artifacts. Regardless of how an item was acquired, a deity may opt to bleed flux from it on a daily basis for as long as the deity can retain possession. However, since primal base is actually part of a deity's soul, there is considerable resistance on the part of the primal base. The amount of primal flux that a deity will gain on a daily basis for possession of a "foreign" artifact is equal to 5% of the primal base that the artifact possesses. Bleeding flux from an actual deity only yields 2.5% of the primal base, since the deity will be putting up even more of a fuss than the artifact would. Deities are even harder to hold on to than their artifacts, too.

Note that a deity cannot use an artifact's abilities while bleeding flux from it, because the artifact is normally powered by the flux generated by its own primal base. Your car can't run if you've siphoned the gas into the lawn mower, in other words. If an artifact has specifically primal abilities, these are unavailable to the deity in any case. More on artifacts can be found in the next chapter.

We would like to emphasize that bleeding flux from captured artifacts or deities, especially deities, is considered a serious insult to the original owner of the primal base. This is an excellent way to obtain a lifelong enemy.

Note also that this method of gaining flux does not violate the rule that prohibits one deity from using another deity's flux without permission; in this case, the deity forcibly converts the captured flux in order to wield it.

There are only four basic ways of acquiring primal base. First of all, a deity slowly gains base over a period of time; we call this process evolution. In addition, a deity acquires base by advancing through the divine ranks and by gaining control of planes of existence. In some situations, a deity might even receive a donation of primal base.

Deities, like all characters, gain mastery of their skills over time. Since primal base is a reflection of how well deities may impose their will upon reality, it stands to reason that over time, this mastery is reflected in the amount of primal base the deities have at hand. As a result, deities who have been around a long time have an inherent advantage due to experience.

The amount of primal base that a deity has increases by 1% each year automatically. An easy way to keep track of this, if you're monitoring the exact amount of primal base for some of the deities in your campaign, is to pick a date on your campaign calendar. During every subsequent campaign year on that date, go through and multiply the current primal base for each deity by 1.01.

When we say "year," we're assuming a year that's approximately the length of a year on our planet. If your years are dramatically shorter or longer, then you have one of two choices: either multiply with greater or lesser frequency, or adjust the percentage of increase. Since all deities will gain with equal speed, you might wonder why it matters; there are other abilities and events in this book that are based on the length of a year, so we recommend trying to stick relatively close to a standard length of 365 24-hour days or the equivalent.

For example, let's say that Doofur, lesser God of Neutral-Evil Morons, has 10,000 points of base to begin with. A year later, assuming he hasn't figured out how to do anything else with his base, the amount of base he has at his disposal goes up by 1% to 10,100 points. The year after that, it increases to 10,201. By the eleventh year, Doofur would be able to draw on 11,046 points of primal base. Perhaps by then he'll have figured out how omniscience works.

If you don't want to muck around with math and simplicity is your primary concern, then simply have the amount of gain depend on the rank of the deity. Suggested values are given below:

Divine Rank	Gain per Year
Godling	2 per year
Demigod	5 per year
Supported Demigod	10 per year
Lesser Deity	100 per year
Greater Deity	250 per year
Supreme Deity	500 per year

If your deities have been around for eons and eons, you may want to consider reducing the percentage from 1% to 0.1% or even 0.01%. If you're using the table, that would be the same as dividing the table entries by ten or a hundred. Try a few percentages and check out the long-term returns until you find one you feel happy with. But watch out; this is a lot like compounded interest. One percent taken over 100 years would nearly triple the amount of base; over 500 years, the amount of base would be over 144 times the original amount, and after a thousand years, the deity would have nearly 21,000 times the original base at hand. If your deities are thousands of years old, you definitely want to think about reducing the percentage. If you want to increase the percentage, be careful; a 7% rate would result in doubling the amount of base *every ten years*.

## Obtaining Primal Base

### Evolution

3

#### Variations



## Acquiring Planes

Primal base is significantly enhanced every time a deity acquires control of a plane of existence. Each time a deity gains control of a plane, the deity immediately gains a total of 2,000 points of primal base. If control is shared, then the 2,000 points are divided evenly among the controlling deities. If you've glanced ahead in the book, you may have noticed that when deities lose control of a plane, they also lose primal base; this prevents a deity from continuously gaining primal base by collaborating with another deity on an endless cycle of losing and retaking the same plane. You can read much more about planes in their own chapter, Chapter Seven.

### Variations

You may find that one of the following variations better suits your campaign.

- The values listed for planes and miniplanes should really be treated as an average; some planes should be worth less than average, others more.
- You may wish to give bonuses for cooperation by ruling that if control of a plane is shared, the gain is not split evenly, but is only reduced by 10% for each deity involved in the sharing beyond the first. For example, three deities sharing a plane would allow each to receive 80% of the normal 2,000, or 1,600 points of primal base.

## Advancing In Rank

Deities, as we've already mentioned, belong to one of several ranks that represent both their power and accomplishments. When they increase in rank, deities also receive bonuses in primal base:

Divine Rank	Base Gain
Godling	+100 points
Demigod	+200 points
Supported Demigod	+300 points
Lesser Deity	+5,000 points
Greater Deity	+10,000 points
Supreme Deity	+25,000 points

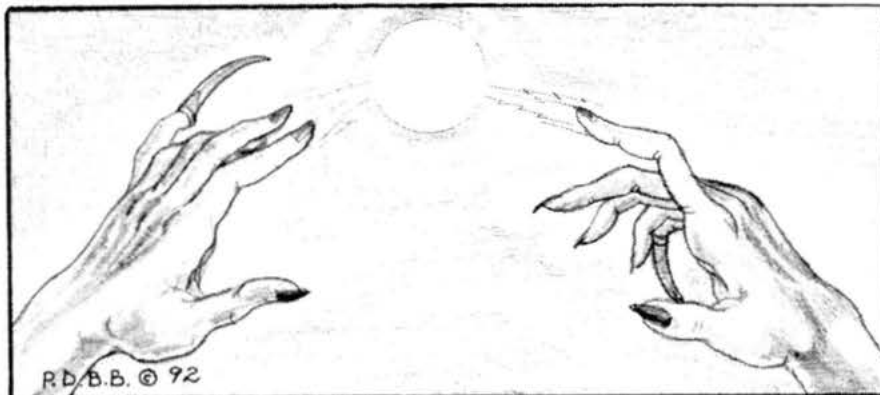
Note that there is a big jump between supported demigod and lesser deity. The key difference is possession of a home plane. Also, the plus symbols are there to remind you that the gains are cumulative, so that the minimum primal base for a demigod would be 300 points, for a supported demigod it would be 600 points, and so on. If, for some reason, a deity jumped directly from supported demigod status to greater deity status, the deity should gain the bonuses for both lesser deity and greater deity.

Also, this process works in reverse; a loss of divine rank will cause a deity to lose an amount of primal base equal to the amount gained for that rank. There is some danger in this; if such a loss drains a deity of all available base, the deity ceases to be.

Advancement in rank does not automatically occur just because a deity's base reaches a certain level; the other requirements listed in Chapter Eight still stand. For instance, no matter how much primal base a deity has, without control of a plane that deity is limited to demigod status.

## Transferring Primal Base

A deity can at any time transfer primal base as a gift to another deity. The exchange of this base is not entirely cost effective, as some base gets used in the process. If a deity elects to transfer primal base as a gift, the recipient receives 1–20% less than the amount transferred. Note that with this rule you can incorporate truly divine wagers and bets, with primal base as the stakes. Of course, enforcing payment could become a nasty proposition.



One interesting question here is: what happens to the base that doesn't get to the second deity? Well, since primal doesn't obey the law of conservation of energy, it *could* just disappear, except that's rather boring. Alternatively, it could generate splashy effects, or even act as if it had been detonated. This might well have a damping effect on the giving of base, since nobody would give a hundred points of base to someone if he or she might be exposed to a twenty-point base detonation.

You may find that one of the following variations better suits your campaign.

- You may wish to make gifts more difficult between deities of different alignments, assuming you even use alignments. One variation we've used is to subtract an additional 1–20% (1d20) for each alignment step of difference. A lawful-good deity transferring power to another would result in a 1–20% penalty, but a lawful-good deity transferring power to a neutral-evil deity would result in a 4–80% (4d20) penalty (one because you always lose 1d20, another for lawful to neutral, plus two for good to neutral and neutral to evil).
- You may want to give an advantage to familial relationships. If a deity transfers power to his or her child, there might be no loss of base in the transaction. For those relationships in the more distant family, you might impose a penalty of only 1–10%.

Deities don't hold on to primal energy forever. There are countless ways they can choose to spend primal energy. But occasionally, deities can also lose it involuntarily.

There are three basic ways that deities can involuntarily lose primal base: through combat as a result of an inadequate defense against primal assault, through the loss of a plane, or through loss of rank. Right now, we're only concerned with the latter two; losing primal through combat is covered throughout the book, and especially in the beginning of this chapter under "Primal Blast."

At the moment a deity loses control of a plane or miniplane he or she loses an amount of base equal to what was originally gained when he or she took that plane. The loss would include any bonus that was gained by making the plane a home plane. At the moment a deity loses a rank, he or she loses an amount of base equal to that originally gained for that rank.

Note that these two rules can produce a nasty side effect; by losing a plane, the deity may suffer a loss of rank and lose even more base as a result. For example, if a lesser deity lost his or her home plane, he or she would lose

### Variations

## Losing Primal Energy

### Losing Base

2,000 points of base. But since one of the requirements for a lesser deity is a home plane, the deity would then revert to supported demigod status and take another loss of 5,000 points of base.

When primal base is lost in this way, and a deity is keeping base in more than one location, the base should be subtracted from the various parts of base in proportion. If the loss of primal base for any reason brings the total primal base of the deity to zero or less and the deity does not have a home plane, then the deity is completely and irrevocably gone forever.

#### *Variation*

One variation on this would be to have the deity simply reduced to a mortal. In this case, deities could choose to expend all their base to become mortals; the base would then be used in the process of reforming the deities' mortal souls.

#### **Losing Flux**

The only way that primal flux can be taken away from a deity and used by another is through bleeding of the deity's primal base. If a deity is captured by another deity and the captured deity's primal flux is being bled by the imprisoning deity, then the captured deity will not be able to use any primal flux for any purpose.

To end the chapter, we've gathered the relevant rules for primal energy, not including the possible variations.

- Each day a deity will gain an amount of primal flux that is equal to 10% of the deity's primal base.
- The number of points of daily flux that a deity will gain from worshipers is calculated separately for each plane by taking the square root of the number of worshipers on that plane. The points for each of the planes are then added together to get the total number of flux points gained from all worshipers.
- Worshipers who are slain and whose souls manage to find their way to their deity's home plane continue to count as worshipers for that deity.
- If a deity elects to transfer primal flux or base as a gift, the receiving deity receives 1–20% less than the amount transferred.
- The amount of primal flux that a deity will gain on a daily basis for bleeding the flux of a "foreign" artifact is equal to 5% of the primal base that the artifact possesses. Flux gained for bleeding a foreign deity equals 2.5% of that deity's base.
- The amount of primal base that a deity has increases automatically by 1% each year.
- Each time a deity gains control of a plane, the deity immediately gains a total of 2,000 points of primal base. If control is shared, then the 2,000 points are divided evenly among the controlling deities.
- Each time that a deity gains control of a miniplane, the deity immediately gains a total of 200 points of primal base.
- At the moment a deity loses control of a plane or miniplane he or she loses an amount of base equal to that originally gained for taking the plane. The loss would include any bonus gained by making the plane a home plane.
- At the moment a deity loses a rank, he or she loses an amount of base equal to that originally gained for that rank.
- If a deity is captured by another deity and the captured deity's primal flux is being bled by the imprisoning deity, then the captured deity will not be able to use any primal flux for any purpose.

## Summary of Primal Energy







## **Tools of the Trade**



*Give the tools to him [sic] that can handle them.*

—Napoleon Bonaparte

When we refer to the “tools of the trade” for deities, we don’t mean hammers—with one well-known exception, of course. We mean people and things that are used to keep the whole process of being divine running smoothly. In this chapter we’re going to be even more specific, and only deal with those tools that require the expenditure of primal energy. These tools fall neatly into three categories: other beings (including godlings, minions, chancellors, and priests), beings created by the deity (servitors), and objects (artifacts). We’ll take a look at the first category first, and then move along through the others.

In case it’s not clear, the difference between the first and second groups is that the first group, the deity’s “staff,” is recruited from other places instead of simply created. For reasons that will become clear, deities won’t usually just zap their staffs into existence.

## Godlings and Demigods

Godlings and demigods are, with a few exceptions, the worker bees of divinity. All those boring little details like taking care of minor prayers and out-of-the-way congregations fall to the assistant deities. A complete definition of godlings and demigods in their own right will be found in Chapter Eight. Since this chapter is concerned with spending primal, we’ll skip the usual doings of the divine administrative squad. The important thing to note is that deities might choose to channel flux to some of their godlings or demigods to give them some extra power. The cost in primal flux of primally assisting a godling or demigod is 20 points per day.

### *Assisted Abilities*

Assisted godlings and demigods can:

- Request the immediate appearance of any church member of chancellor or minion status. People requested to appear by this ability know who is calling them and the full circumstances surrounding the summons; they also have the freedom to refuse to appear. Of course, they might have to account for this decision to the deity.

The method of summons is up to the deity or deities involved, but usually this is simply a matter of calling out a name. The being doing the summoning is free to make a big production out of it if that suits the mood.

- Immediately recognize any other element of the deity’s infrastructure, including artifacts, priests, and other minions, unless the element is deliberately disguised by the deity. A basic understanding of the element’s purpose and function is included.

If you’re scratching your head over this one, let’s look at a few examples. Sure, it’s easy to identify the high priests of Joey; they’re the ones in the wicker boots and gloves. But what about the difference between a consecrated and an unconsecrated reed-cutting knife? Outsiders will think they look the same, but beings in contact with Joey through the transfer of flux will know the difference at a glance. That grove of trees in the corner is clearly a result of Joeyites in the area; it’s apparent even at a distance that they’re offering trees.

- Tell whether an action will meet with divine approval. Again, the deity may suppress this ability for any reason; deities just love testing their servants.

This ability uses that little thread of primal flux connecting godlings or demigods and their deity to let the underling check on an action. If an

assisted being stops and thinks about an action, he or she will know if it's a good action, or if it would really ruin the deity's day.

- Act as a channel or focus for primal energy from any divine being of the church. The assisted deity can also personally wield this energy, while those providing the energy sit back and watch the action, perhaps from a plane or two away.

By the time a deity reaches demigod status, these abilities are pretty run-of-the-mill. For that matter, they're nothing to write home about for godlings, either. Usually deities will not assist their divine servants, preferring to use their limited flux to assist mortals, as we'll see in a couple of pages or so. As a matter of fact, the relatively trivial nature of this aid is reflected in the use of the term "assist."

While "regular" demigods promote a deity's religion and have some extraordinary abilities, supported demigods gain a number of extra benefits and generally take on aspects, personality traits, and powers similar to and closely identified with those of the deity.

Primally supported demigods are similar to underlings of other ranks in that they act as strongarms for their supporting deity's religion. There are, however, key differences. The primary one is that primally supported demigods are independent, unconstrained deities who are free to choose their own paths in life. This is their strength and their weakness as underlings; it is a strength, because they add diversity and character to a religion, and a weakness in that they may choose to leave the deity's service at any time.

While most demigods are by definition intelligent, resourceful, creative, and powerful, one who is particularly inventive and productive comes along every so often. To reward this, a deity may ascend the demigod to supported demigod status. This is a two-edged sword from the deity's point of view, however; while supporting a demigod strengthens the religion with added spice and new energy, the new underling may eventually become a potential rival who knows many of the deity's secrets and details of operation. As mysteries are revealed, the demigod may find the deity less worthy of the adulation previously offered. As his or her respect for the supporting deity diminishes, the demigod may decide a change of power or scenery is in order.

Perceptive deities will notice such uneasiness early and, depending on the deity's moral outlook on life, either arrange for a "mishap" or offer the demigod freedom. The deity might even go so far as to help the demigod take a plane, hold it, and become a full deity. Such a strategy would allow the deity to cultivate a relationship with the demigod that matures from one of master and servant to one of equal allies.

Deities can primally support as many demigods as they see fit—provided they have enough primal flux. To primally support a demigod, the deity announces the change in status and begins allocating 100 points of daily flux to the demigod. This announcement is a formal one that must be made to the demigod, to prominent members of the deity's church, and to other deities in the same pantheon if there are any.

Supported demigods receive the following "perks:"

- Immediately after becoming primally supported, a demigod gains 300 points of primal base. Note that an already supported demigod cannot be supported by another deity and gain an additional 300 points. Demigods can only be primally supported by one deity at a time; they must be "cut off" by one deity (forcing them to lose their 300 point bonuses to base) before they can receive primal support from another. The only exception

## Supported Demigods

### *How To Support a Demigod*

## Benefits of Having Demigods

to this rule is if the demigod went from being primally supported by a deity to being primally supported by a plane under his or her control.

- Primally supported demigods can use abilities stemming from their deity's spheres of influence. The supporting deity must determine which, if any, of these abilities a demigod can use. The allowed abilities may vary from demigod to demigod.
- Primally supported demigods have access to the standard campaign means for planar travel, with a suggested limit of four times per day. Information on planar travel is in Chapter Seven.
- They can immediately recognize any other element of the deity's infrastructure that is not deliberately disguised by the deity, including artifacts, priests, and minions. A basic understanding of the element's purpose and function is included.
- They may request an immediate appearance of any church member of chancellor or minion status.
- Tell whether an action will meet with divine approval.

In the political power games deities are prone to play, demigods are powerful chess pieces. If minions are pawns and servitors are knights and bishops, demigods are rooks and queens. As such, they are played or sacrificed for the benefit of the deity they serve. While demigods are very powerful and extremely valuable, they are also expendable and may be sacrificed, especially if the deity gains from the transaction.

Demigods are also symbols of the church. In sending a demigod to carry out a specific errand, the deity essentially says, "This mission is very important to me and I will take interference as a personal affront." Even if a demigod takes no direct action whatsoever, his or her very presence makes a powerful statement about the deity's position on the matter, and might only be the first step in the deity's involvement.

Demigods are also excellent military leaders, for troops fight much harder knowing they're being led by a personal representative of the deity. Demigods also bring their own talents to the battle plan.

Demigods can also lead strike teams on divine-level raids. When attacking another deity, a deity with finesse will use demigods to test defenses, create distractions, reconnoiter, and guard the flanks during the final assault.

In other words, demigods are too powerful to be taken lightly. Even a supreme deity who is able to completely obliterate a demigod with a relatively minor primal blast will not make this mistake. Even if such an action weren't politically dangerous, demigods usually have a surprise or two up their sleeves. Pele's sister Hi'iaka is an excellent example of a supported demigod who is put to good use.

We encourage you to play demigods—and other divine beings, for that matter—as tough nuts to crack. Our suggestion isn't based on the fact that they have primal and a few nasty items and abilities, but because they were once mortals who achieved their current positions by being smart, devious, sneaky, and slippery. Demigods love their lives as much as any player character; therefore, they should be played just as carefully, if not more so. You should never make one up on the fly; if your PCs unexpectedly encounter one, stop the game and take the time to create a complete character. This will allow you to play the encounter the way it should be played, and your better players will understand and respect you for it. GMs and players should take demigods as seriously as supreme deities do.

Minions are faithful mortal servants who have been rewarded for their piety with a divinely backed special ability. While not divine, minions have been recognized for excellent performance and stunning accomplishments. Becoming a minion is a special honor that is less expensive for the deity to perform than outright ascension. Because of this, deities usually promote mortals to minion status before ascending them; this offers another testing ground to see who is truly worthy of further attention. Many saints of a church will be minions.

Minions receive a number of special abilities, usually beginning with an extended lifespan; these abilities are granted by burning primal base as described in Chapter Three. They carry out important tasks of honor and the abilities they are granted will be useful for these tasks. Such duties and abilities for the most part depend upon the deity's personality. A fighter promoted to minion status by Thor might be given enhanced strength far beyond that normally attainable by mortals.

In addition to bestowing special abilities, a deity can choose to support a minion with daily amounts of primal flux, which grants a number of powers similar to those available to divine beings. It takes less flux to support minions than it does to support divine beings, which makes this another cost-effective means for deities to minimize their primal expenses. The cost in primal flux of supporting a minion is 10 points per day.

Primally supported minions can:

- Request the immediate appearance of any church member of chancellor or minion status.
- Use the standard campaign method to travel between planes, with a suggested limit of two times per day.
- Immediately recognize any other element of the deity's infrastructure that is not deliberately disguised by the deity, including artifacts, priests, and other minions. A basic understanding of the element's purpose and function is included.
- Tell whether an action will meet with divine approval. Again, the deity may suppress this ability for any reason; deities just love testing their servants.

As deities progress through the ranks of divinity and become more recognized, their time becomes more valuable and they have less attention to focus on affairs that are relatively minor but still important. During this time of growth, exceptional individuals begin to show their value; deities may elect to honor particularly useful servants by granting them the position of chancellor. Chancellors handle many necessary details for which the deity simply hasn't got the time. They keep the church functioning by tracking the "loose strings" and keeping different divisions in top form.

"Chancellor" is not a divine rank, but a position within a religious structure that can theoretically be held by mortals and divine beings alike. So, there could be minion chancellors, godling chancellors, or whatever seems to work. However, chancellors are usually mortals. Godlings and demigods are usually highly individualistic divine beings who are often off adventuring, conducting wars, partying, or delving into their own affairs. While they are on call to the deity at any time, they would simply be wasted on desk work. A chancellor, however, is an administrative type who keeps the organization flowing smoothly and douses flames before they become fires. Also, mortal chancellors can travel to places where divinity or even primal energy is forbidden.

## Minions

4

### *Supporting a Minion*

### *Abilities of Supported Minions*

## Chancellors



Demigods answer to the head chancellor in the deity's absence. For the most part, demigods only meet with the deity in person during Most Holy Feasts, Festivals of the Divine, or whatever this particular deity calls his or her staff meetings; the rest of the time, they deal with the chancellor. Therefore, it's important for chancellors to be good administrators who can track details and keep everything moving in a positive direction. If the job becomes too much for one person to handle, a deity may establish planar chancellors, people in charge of church operations on a specific plane. As the church continues to grow, this may happen several times and may involve more complex administration. Like any large organization, a church must work to avoid problems that can slow growth and eventually force a decline in church membership, which would mean the deity would receive less primal. It's not a good idea to be the one responsible for this; deities don't react well to this sort of situation.

### *Supporting a Chancellor*

If the chancellor is already a minion, godling, or demigod, then some of his or her abilities and duties may overlap. However, this does not decrease the support cost, nor does it allow the deity to operate at twice the effectiveness. If anything, this might slow things down. The cost in primal flux of supporting a chancellor is 20 points per day.

### *Abilities of Supported Chancellors*

Supported chancellors can:

- Request an immediate appearance of any church member of chancellor or minion status.



- Use the standard campaign method to travel between planes, with a suggested limit of ten times per day.
- Act as a channel or focus for primal energy from any divine being of the church.
- Help the deity monitor and respond to the church. This includes such things as answering prayers and handling communing, divinations, the sending of omens, and so forth. All that boring stuff.

Note that “answering prayers” is like answering the phone. A chancellor is empowered to receive worshiper communications. If there’s a request involved, a mortal chancellor might not be able to do anything, and would have to pass the request on to a godling or other divine assistant.

- Immediately recognize any other element of the deity’s infrastructure that is not deliberately disguised by the deity, including artifacts, priests, and minions. A basic understanding of the element’s purpose and function is included.
- Tell whether an action will meet with divine approval. Again, the deity may suppress this ability for any reason; deities just love testing their servants.

In order to have a religion that can deal effectively with others, deities must use part of their primal flux to provide priests with spells and other special abilities. While wizards and psionicists tap their powers through divination, forces of nature, mental powers, and alchemical means, priests receive their power from “on high,” directly from the deity. While we use the term “priest” throughout this chapter, these rules also pertain to holy warriors, clerics, monks, abbots, grand poobahs, and any other beings who are powerful enough to receive spells and other divinely powered abilities. There’s presumably no particular reason why clergy members couldn’t draw on magical power sources through their own abilities, but we assume that the support of the deity allows access to powers that would otherwise require significant effort on the part of the priest to access. By supporting their representatives with primal energy, deities more effectively spread their religion through the lands, which brings more worshipers into the fold. This, of course, yields more primal.

Naturally, deities want their representatives to pull their own weight and bring in enough worshipers to offset the cost of supporting them. This is not always an easy thing to do, and priests who don’t bring in enough recruits often find themselves limited in their opportunities for advancement. After all, if priests can’t be trusted to perform at lower ranks, how can one expect them to cope with the responsibilities of higher ones?

If a deity begins to run low on flux, priests are usually the first ones to receive cutbacks. Deities don’t have to primally support their representatives. Should a deity choose to direct primal energy elsewhere for a day, the priests won’t receive spells or be able to use any other divinely appointed abilities. An exception would be abilities granted by burning primal base. These talents are restored when the deity again directs primal toward that plane. In times of primal shortage, deities are more strict with their representatives. If good ol’ Friar Tuck has been a little remiss in his duties, he may not receive his spells today; he simply hasn’t earned them. Exercised properly, this strategy can provide servants with added incentive to go out and convert some more people. If used unfairly, this may cause the deity’s servants to try their luck elsewhere.

The primal cost of supporting a priest is equal to the *level of difficulty* of the most difficult or highest ranking divinely backed ability to which the priest

## Priests

### Supporting Priests

### Variations

#### *The Slaying of the Foolish*

has access. For additional clarification of how this rule is used in your game system, refer to "Spells" under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

- Some deities may want to emphasize certain priests or an order of monks as especially ordained and worthy of extra spells or abilities. This may lead to a new character class or set of special skills. You should examine the circumstances and assign a fair primal flux cost for this extra support.
- Some deities may want to add a seasonal or location-specific flavor to their religions. This is done by spending additional primal to support priests during certain seasons or focusing more energy toward priests in specific geographic regions. For example, a deity of winter may grant extra spells during the cold months and fewer when it gets warmer.

<sup>23</sup>There were those in the church who wished for what was not allowed, <sup>24</sup>and they prayed for fire-casting in winter, and for frost-touch in summer, and Dinchibis was displeased. <sup>25</sup>The Greatest One granted their desires, but spoiled their aim; <sup>26</sup>because they would not heed the warnings of their priests, they were slain in battles.

### Servitors

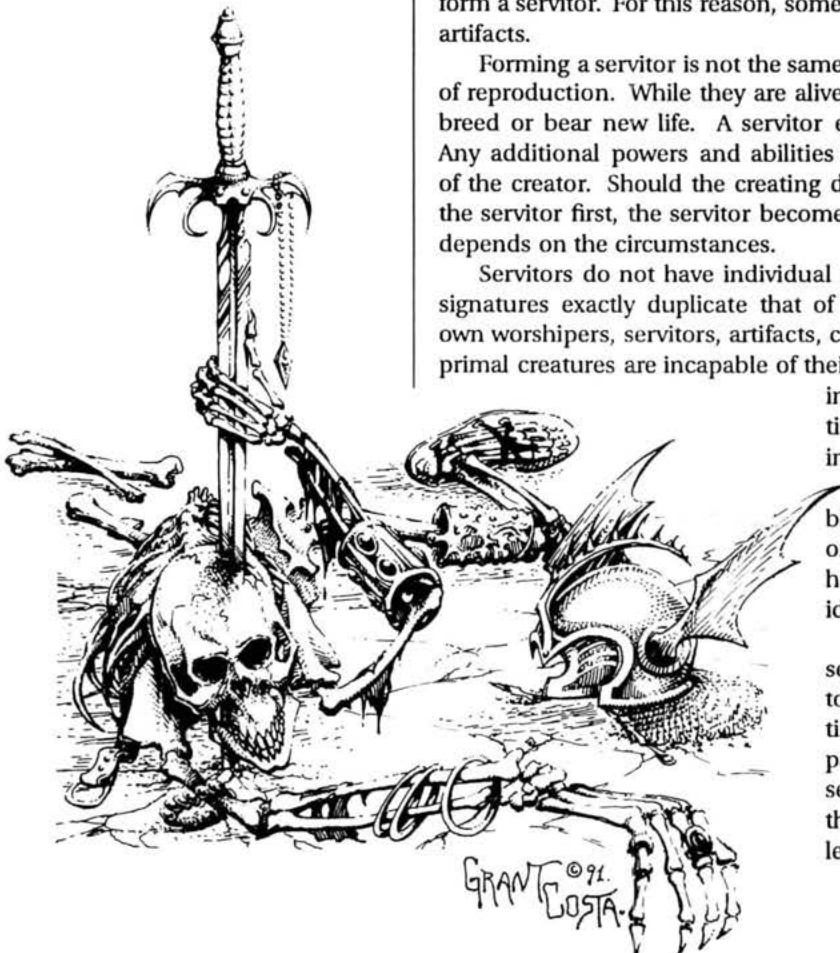
Divine servitors are primally based life forms created for the benefit of a deity or the deity's church. By using primal base, a deity is able to take a willing mortal life and evolve it into a divine creation or servitor. Unlike artifacts, which are containers for primal base and require special knowledge to create, the life force or soul of a mortal is able to merge with the deity's primal base to form a servitor. For this reason, some deities elect to make servitors instead of artifacts.

Forming a servitor is not the same as creating a race; a servitor is incapable of reproduction. While they are alive, immortal, and divine, servitors cannot breed or bear new life. A servitor exists until it is destroyed in some way. Any additional powers and abilities a servitor may have depend on whims of the creator. Should the creating deity die without recalling the base from the servitor first, the servitor becomes independent. Which powers it retains depends on the circumstances.

Servitors do not have individual primal signatures. Instead, their primal signatures exactly duplicate that of their creator. Nor can they have their own worshippers, servitors, artifacts, chancellors, godlings, and so forth. These primal creatures are incapable of their own motives; while they are capable of

independent thought and action, their entire existence is centered around furthering the aims of their creator. They don't cheat on their boss. Still, it is possible for a servitor to be misled by confused or vindictive underlings of the deity. If this happens, the deity will usually have a good idea of whom to blame.

Large religious organizations may have several levels of servitors, each reporting to servitors higher up the line. The ultimate leader is, of course, the deity. A particular deity might have three levels of servitors, each one more powerful than the previous. Once a deity has several levels of servitors, they will usually be



used to fill out the ranks in the church, as illustrated in the following example.

Joey, God of Basketweaving, creates three types of servitors—minor, major, and greater—and assigns them the following duties:

- **Minor:** Some are on permanent assignment to help protect and provide military support to the larger Temples of Wicker. Others are “on call” as entourage members for minions, chancellors, or demigods, and to respond to summonings by some members of the Church of Joey.
- **Major:** Some are on permanent assignment to the largest Temple of Wicker. They may be asked to be entourage members for chancellors and demigods, lead military units, be on call for special summonings, and act as envoys.
- **Greater:** Greater servitors may provide entourage support for chancellors, supported demigods, and occasionally unsupported demigods. Some will be personal guardians for Joey. Occasionally they will be called to answer Grand High Basket summonings. They also staff the Black Basket Corps, Joey’s secret service for pantheon politics.

Aside from specific abilities bestowed by a deity, all servitors have the following abilities by virtue of their primal essence:

- They are divine beings, with primal base, primal flux, and access to all divine abilities described for godlings throughout this book, with the exception that they are not able to have worshipers, consecrated ground, sanctuaries, temples, servitors, or artifacts of their own.
- They can act as primal focuses for their deity.
- They can be part of the communications network handling traffic between the deity and the church.
- They immediately recognize any other element of the deity’s infrastructure, including artifacts, priests, minions, and other servitors, unless the deity is purposely disguising the element.
- They know whether an action will be favorably received by the deity. Since servitors are direct extensions of the deity’s will, they are not tested in the same manner as the other tools we’ve talked about so far. There is complete trust.
- The deity can “turn off,” deactivate, slay, or otherwise terminate the servitor at any time and reclaim the servitor’s primal base. Reincorporating the primal base burns 50% of that energy.

The major problem with creating a servitor is that it must be based on a willing life form who is dedicated to the deity; otherwise, there is no soul to reinforce with primal. If the soul is not cooperative, it cannot be infused with primal energy.

The more powerful the life form is, the more material the deity has to work with. It is much easier to enhance current abilities than it is to create new ones. Servitors taken from individual life forms often keep their mortal names.

It costs at least 50 points of primal base to transform a soul into a servitor; the deity is free to allot as much primal as desired, so long as the deity can afford the expenditure. The servitor will have half the amount the deity spends; the rest is burned in the process of merging primal energy with a mortal soul.

*Example of a  
Typical Allocation of  
Servitors by a Deity*

4

## Standard Attributes of Divine Servitors

## Forming Divine Servitors

### *Cost to Create a Servitor*



<i>Cost of Supporting Servitors</i>	<p>Once the servitor is formed, the deity can enhance its physical body, give it extra senses, or add special abilities. As they are for minions, these abilities are granted by burning primal base as described in Chapter Three.</p> <p>As they do with other living tools, deities may choose to invest a daily amount of flux into their servitors, thus supporting the servitors primally. The cost in primal flux of supporting a servitor is 10% of the amount of primal base originally spent in forming the servitor.</p>
<i>Divine Benefits of Primally Supporting Servitors</i>	<p>Deities gain the following powers by primally supporting their servitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deity knows where the servitor is at all times.</li> <li>• The deity can use the servitor as a focus or channel to manipulate primal energy, funneling primal energy attacks, primal shields, or any other primal manipulation the deity desires through the servitor.</li> <li>• The deity can personally direct the servitor's actions. While servitors will never knowingly do anything counter to the deity's plans and goals, they may not be completely privy to the deity's entire plan. This ability allows the deity to control the servitor as an automaton.</li> <li>• The deity will have full knowledge of the servitor, including mortal abilities, history, and memories. Everything in the servitor's mind is open to the deity whenever the deity chooses to look.</li> </ul>
<i>Destroying Servitors</i>	<p>As mentioned earlier, servitors are immortal; they will not die of natural causes, though they can be destroyed or killed in battle like all divine beings. When slain, each servitor may die in a unique way, typically chosen by the creator. A slain servitor might simply wink out or erupt in a massive explosion. Most servitors do not rely completely on their physical bodies. If the physical body is destroyed, the servitor's primal essence travels back to the creator, who will likely put the primal essence into another body. Should the deity choose to reclaim this primal base, half of it is lost in the process.</p>
<b>Artifacts</b>	<p>This section discusses artifacts, particularly primal-based artifacts. Unlike "regular" artifacts, primal-based artifacts are created by divine beings using primal base. We will discuss what they are, what they do, how they work, how they fit into the overall scheme of things, and their relationship to other types of items.</p> <p>At a few points during this discussion, we refer to the power rating system covered in the next section. If you like, you can skip ahead and check out these aspects of the power rating system as they come up, but we think this information will be easier to follow if you've read all about artifacts first.</p>
<b>Ordinary Artifacts</b>	<p>Whether it's a Staff of Striking, a Flaming Sword, Artagyl's Wand of Confusion, or a Chair of Nasty Bites, a magical item gets its powers from somewhere. For the purposes of <i>The Primal Order</i> we're going to refer to a pool or source of supernatural powers like magic. This is just to keep things simple, though, so if your system includes self-powering spells you should be all right; just pretend we said it your way. Ordinary spells use learning, skills, gestures, or whatever to tap this power and cause certain results. Artifacts draw on the same pool, which we're assuming is effectively unlimited.</p> <p>One of the factors that determines the amount of power that an ordinary artifact can wield is the skill of the crafter who made the object. Whether you play that a more skilled artisan can create artifacts with a better ability to tap</p>



power, better control over that power, or both, this problem of knowledge and time tends to limit the efforts of mortal artificers.

Primal-based artifacts resemble ordinary artifacts until you try to slow them down. The presence of primal energy helps these artifacts more successfully create the desired effect; they'll probably do more damage, cover a wider area, or last longer, and they're very hard to destroy, damage, or even dent.

Most primal artifacts will not do primal sorts of things; they won't shoot primal blasts, cast primally laced spells, erect primal shields, or do other such useful things. The primal energy in the artifact is used only to make the tool's normal effects share more of the nature of the fundamental force that is primal energy. Primal energy makes the artifact's power a little more "real," if you will.

Primal-based artifacts aren't limited to purely magical effects, either. A primal artifact could just as easily wield mentalic forces, or even natural ones like gravity or magnetism. The principle remains the same.

Since ordinary artifacts should be covered by the game system you're using, from now on the word "artifact" is going to mean a primal-based artifact. If we want to talk about the ordinary kind, we'll specifically refer to them as ordinary or non-primal artifacts.

The most important property of an artifact is its ability to enforce the effect it's designed to create. Earlier in this book we mentioned how primal energy is the wellspring of power for all other energies. An ordinary artifact, perhaps a Wand of Whirling, would use some magical torque spell to make an object rotate, but it would clash with spell repellents and Stayfast Boots, which presumably use magic to counteract the wand. If the wand is a primal artifact, then the spin is imparted by something more than just magic. This magic rotate spell is backed by primal, so it is more fundamental than a spell repellent's magic. As a result, what might stop an ordinary artifact has only a chance of stopping a primal one, and a poor chance at that. The measure of the wand's ability to enforce its will is known as its *power rating*. The power rating system will be covered in the next section.

Along with reinforcing the item's effects, the presence of primal adds some other abilities to an artifact:

- *Permanency.* An artifact cannot be destroyed or permanently functionally damaged except by another primal-based artifact or primal energy itself.
- *Continued operation.* An artifact cannot be negated, dispelled, or affected by null-magic areas.
- *Immunities.* The item itself cannot be affected by normal spells, abilities, or other non-primal forces. The primal base in the artifact completely infuses the item, making it impervious to any spell, energy attack, or energy analysis.
- *Limited sentience.* Artifacts will gain a limited intellect and willpower unless they are specifically designed not to do so.

The permanency property is a tricky one. What it means is that under the right conditions ordinary objects can cause temporary damage, but only another artifact can permanently damage an artifact so that it will no longer function. Only primal energy can destroy an artifact, either directly or through another primal artifact.

Applying this rule takes some care. An artifact sword can be nicked by ordinary objects, but only up to the point that it would permanently affect the cutting power of the blade. An artifact suit of armor could be bent and punctured, but only to the point that it could no longer be repaired. As a

## Primal Artifacts

## Properties of Artifacts



GM, you will have to decide how beat up a wand can get before it no longer functions properly.

Continued operation is easier. This attribute is designed to maintain a connection to the artifact's source of power even if such a connection would ordinarily be broken. This applies only to passive suppression. For example, Seven-League Boots would continue to work on our nonmagical earth only if they were primal artifacts, since normal magic items can't reach their usual source of power. If you're using the concept of magic as a limited natural resource, artifacts will continue to work even where the magic is used up; the artifact's primal energy is supplying the power to draw magic from somewhere else.

Think of an artifact as a thirsty adventurer in a desert. There's nothing to stop this wandering soul from drinking except the lack of water. The primal energy in an artifact is like a hose to a source of water, keeping the adventurer going even in the most desolate wastes.

On the other hand, if there's another person in the desert who keeps knocking the hose away, that's a different story. If a spell or other artifact is actively suppressing magic, then the artifact faces a conflict of power, and you need to use the power rating system to resolve the issue. Put another way, a Gravity Staff would have no problem providing gravity in space, even if magic didn't normally work. But if the staff's owner is hit with a Levitation spell, then the staff will have to fight to keep its owner on the ground.

The immunities property applies only to the object itself. Whether or not the Gravity Staff keeps its owner on the ground, it is immune to enemy attempts to burn it, teleport it, transform it, slime it, or harm it any other way. It's also impervious to analysis by knowledge spells, psychic examinations, and so forth. Only spells cast entirely with primal energy can penetrate this immunity; even primally laced spells won't effect a primal artifact. One exception to this rule is usually included when the artifact is constructed; transportation by the owner, magical or otherwise, is permitted. The artifact does have some intelligence to decide these things. Without this exception, a party of adventurers could find an artifact, teleport home, and realize that this new toy didn't come with them.

How limited the artifact's limited sentience will be depends on the amount of primal used to infuse the artifact and the intellect of the infuser. The artifact's natural intellect is equal to the deity's intellect score multiplied by the power rating of the artifact and divided by 100. If a deity has an intellect of 50, and creates an artifact with a power rating of 82, then the artifact's intellect score is  $(50 \times 82) \div 100 = 41$ . The deity creating the artifact may choose to lower the item's intellect score without cost.

One final thing to remember is that the primal in any artifact belongs to a deity somewhere, and that deity can transport the artifact back to him or her at any time, temporarily prohibit the primal from having an effect, which would effectively turn the artifact into an ordinary one, or withdraw the primal altogether. The catch is that the deity has to locate the artifact in order to do this. Deities do not necessarily know where their artifacts are or what they are doing, but a quick wish usually solves that problem in a hurry.

#### *The Ooblia-varka Veil*

*Feel the wind. The Veil. It was divine. The Dreamtime was falling. The Veil knew. Decay spread. Evoikaeu and the Veil. Separate to together, many to one. Beyond becomes before. Evoikaeu and the wind. Far becomes near. The dreamers fled. The dreamers died. The wind. Evoikaeu could not. The Veil could. The Dreamtime fell. The dreamers were not. The dreamers were. The Veil.*

*Then becomes now. We are not dreamers. Dreamers are. Thank the Veil. Elsewhere. Thoughts become dreamers. Dreamers dream. Thank the Veil.*

With the amount of power that an artifact represents, it's no surprise that deities want their servants to have lots of them. An artifact makes a lovely gift and a very valuable tool. Not surprisingly, they're very difficult and expensive to create. It's important to remember that making artifacts should be hard. They can't be bought at a grocery store, they can't be wished into existence, and some deities may not be able to make them at all.

The first step in creating a primal artifact is coming up with an object that can withstand being infused with primal. This is usually the hardest part. Knowledge of this process is rare, and the skill to accomplish it even rarer. Omniscience or omnipotence won't give a deity the knowledge or skills, either; this is one of those things that has to be learned the hard way, or perhaps not at all. For starters, the crafter has to be a legendary-class artificer. We recommend that it take two, or that a single artificer require triple the time it would otherwise take to create the artifact. Why triple? Well, have you ever held down the wrapping on a gift while holding the lightweight roll of tape *and* trying to pull some tape off the roll? That's why.

We could leave it at that, but given the amount of time most deities have, most deities would eventually be able to make their own primal containers. Life becomes more interesting if there are greater obstacles. Here are some recommendations:

- Building primal artifacts is a sphere of influence ability, and has to be learned after a deity becomes a legendary artificer. The artifact can subsequently be imbued only with powers that are clearly related to the deity's sphere of influence. If Wutzukan is the God of Travelers, then his WuCord might form transport gates or find lost baggage, but he can't give it the power to crack stone or lure bunnies.
- Building primal containers might be a skill only deities with a sphere of influence dealing with the construction of small objects could learn. Thus, since it's very rude to get the same sphere as another deity in the pantheon, there will be only one or two deities in a pantheon with this skill, and all the other pantheon members must arrange for primal containment objects to be made for them.
- The ability to make a primal container might be a random ability granted by fate when the deity was born or ascended. Some deities will have the ability, some won't. In this case, pantheons might ascend mortals like mad until they find one with the primal container powers. Of course, this leaves the problem of what to do with all those pesky little godlings running around underfoot . . .
- It might be impossible for deities to create containers. The knowledge is held by a race, group, or culture of non-divine beings, and the deities must go, hat in hand, to arrange for containers. This group, whether it's a council of dwarven lords, a cyclops clan, the Sisterhood of Samechi, or a pack of grues, is the only source of reliable primal containers for artifacts. This, it should be noted, is the preferred scenario of the authors. There is a small problem with it, however. How do these beings keep deities from just forcing them to create containers, or stealing the secret and doing it themselves?
  - ▷ The mortals are, in some eldritch way, isolated or immune to primal effects, but lack the other abilities of deities.

## Creating Artifacts

### Step 1: The Container

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▷ There's no secret, but the nature of primal prohibits primal beings from making primal containers. Only mortals of great skill can succeed.</li> <li>▷ The secret is held by a group that lives on a plane that excludes divine influence (a <i>non-intervention plane</i>), and so the deities have no easy way to coerce the knowledge from the artificers.</li> <li>▷ Primal containers can only be made in a place entirely free from the influence or presence of primal—a different sort of non-intervention plane. This differs from the last suggestion because in that scenario a deity might be able to convince an artificer to reveal the secret, while in this one it won't do any good since the deity still won't be able to create a proper container.</li> </ul>
<i>Choose This Rule</i>	<p>Throughout this book, we've presented a suggested rule and then some variants. Unless a GM specifically chooses a variation, you'd expect to play by the suggested rule. This is the exception. We recommend that, unless told otherwise by the GM, you use the next to last scenario for why deities can't create their own containers.</p> <p>Whichever of the four last alternatives you choose, it's unlikely that the non-divine artificers would play favorites. Even with the most stringent restrictions in place, there's probably some way a jilted deity could make trouble. As a result, the group of crafters will probably be just as willing to help a Goddess of Dark Twistedness as a Lord of Sweetness and Light. Of course, if one or two of these elite artisans should happen to wander off their plane or otherwise lose their protection, and some unscrupulous deity found out that they were loose, it probably wouldn't be a pretty sight.</p>
<i>Time</i>	<p>The time it takes to create a primal container should be ten to one hundred (1d10 × 10) times as long as it takes to create an equivalent non-primal artifact, even though the primal one will not have any powers when the artificer is done constructing it. The skill and precision of the work is one of the delays, and the distinctive nature of the special materials involved is usually another reason the work takes longer.</p>
<i>Materials</i>	<p>The materials needed to craft a container are always extraordinary. For example, when Pele wants a new Lava Amulet, she needs to provide such materials as sunfire and lava from the pits of Haleakala. It's a sure bet that the crafters don't keep materials like that in stock.</p>
<i>Cost</i>	<p>If the primal container is being crafted by a deity, there won't be much in the way of costs. If there are mortals doing the work, chances are they're going to soak the deities for as much as they can get. Here are some examples of methods of payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Large</i> amounts of money.</li> <li>• Armies for their defense.</li> <li>• A future favor. A favor from a deity is always nice.</li> <li>• The artificers might decide to make two of the artifacts that the deity requested and keep one for themselves; in such a case they might build a booby trap of some sort into the item so that if their copy stops working, so does the deity's.</li> <li>• Rare and valuable materials. Since many elements are unique to one plane, it's possible that a deity might have a monopoly on a certain market. The artisans could request a certain amount up front with recurring shipments for some established length of time.</li> </ul>
<i>Step 2: Enchantment &amp; Primal</i>	<p>Once the deity has the container, it must be enchanted with the powers that it will have. This process should be covered by the game system you're using.</p>

The powers must be in place before the object is infused with primal, since it's not going to change afterward unless the primal is removed.

It requires at least 500 points of primal base to make an artifact. Any less just won't work. The more primal added to the artifact, the more fundamental and powerful the object's effects will be. This is reflected in a higher power rating. For every 50 extra points of primal base added to an artifact, its power rating goes up by a point, up to the maximum for primal artifacts.

In the example power rating table in the next section, the range for primal-based artifacts is 75 to 99. At 50 points of base per power rating above 75, it would cost  $500 + [50 \times (99 - 75)] = 1,700$  points of primal base to construct an artifact of maximum power.

The primal energy in an artifact does not grant the artifact primal powers, though it is possible to add true primal abilities to an artifact by burning primal base above and beyond what is needed by the artifact. This extra base does not affect the power rating of the item.

For example, a Bracelet of Concealment artifact does not guarantee that the wearer will be undetectable. The concealment spell is more powerful than normal, but a skilled mage or item has a chance to bypass it. If the concealment spell were primally laced, then more ordinary forces would not be able to evade it. As it happens, the deity who built the bracelet burned ten points of base to provide enough flux for one primal-laced concealment per day. If a deity burned 100 points of base, a Flamelance Ring could throw ten points of primal blast per day.

Sometimes artifacts turn out flawed. The usual reason for this is that a deity just couldn't wait to meet all the criteria for building an artifact. If primal energy is stuffed into a faulty container or an ordinary artifact never designed to hold primal, it will work at first. Eventually, which could mean minutes or centuries later, the artifact will fail. The primal energy will shred the container and escape as raw flux, doing damage to anything in a ten-foot radius as if it were struck by a primal blast of half its strength. Obviously, while the short-term effects might be nice, this idea is a loser in the long run. Starting with the first use of the artifact, roll once per year to see if the artifact fails. The chance of failure is the artifact's power rating divided by ten.

Using an artifact should be pretty straightforward. Sometimes deities use artifacts themselves because the artifact's power and intelligence could make it a valuable ally in a fight. Another popular reason for making artifacts is to give them to underlings. This gets the underlings excited, gives them more power to further the deity's cause, and, if the underlings are deities, provides a way to check in on them, since powers like omniscience can't be applied to other divine beings.

Artifacts gain ten points on the power rating scale when their creator is primally present. If this gain would make the artifact more powerful than the maximum rating possible on the scale, then the artifact will receive the maximum rating but no higher. In the chart coming up, artifacts are allowed ratings from 75 to 99. If an artifact had a rating of 87, it would jump to 97 in the presence of the deity. If the artifact had a power rating of 94, it would jump to 99, not 104.

Once an artifact is finished, a deity may choose to primally support the artifact with additional flux every day. The amount of flux needed is 10% of the amount of base in the artifact. Primally supporting an artifact confers these benefits:

- The deity knows where the artifact is at all times.

## Adding Primal Powers

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## Faulty Artifacts

## Using an Artifact

## Supporting an Artifact



- The deity can more easily control or possess any mortal who is bearing the artifact and has used it. If a deity attempts to possess the bearer of the artifact, cut the amount of primal needed for success to 50% of normal.
- Except on non-intervention planes, the deity can use the artifact as a focal point for primal energy manipulation, funneling through primal energy attacks, primal shields, or whatever. Effectively, a supported artifact can be used much like a divine spirit, except that no base needs to be transferred.

### *Independent Artifacts*

Although the primal energy contained in artifacts does not generate flux for their deities, it is still considered their deities' primal. One of the ways that this ownership can be lost is through the destruction of the artifact. Base contained in an artifact when it is destroyed does not return, but escapes as flux as described in the previous section on faulty containers.

The deity will also forfeit this base if the deity is killed. Usually, deities so close to death will locate one of their artifacts, jump to it, and withdraw the base, possibly converting their own base into flux to accomplish this task. Especially with weaker artifacts, this might not be worth it, and some items could be orphaned. They would continue to function as before, except they cannot be primally supported by any deity or otherwise "reclaimed."

### *Stealing Primal from an Artifact*

A third way for the connection between deities and their artifacts to be broken is by a rival deity. Should an artifact fall into the wrong hands, a divine being could use flux to temporarily isolate it from its creator. Keeping the artifact isolated would cost 10 points of flux daily.

One of the reasons for such an action is simply to gain the use of the artifact's powers, but another one is to drain the flux from the artifact. For every 20 points of base in the artifact, one point of flux can be drained each day. The reason for the inefficiency is that the flux must be converted as it's being drained in order for another deity to be able to use it. Deities can drain their own artifacts and gain a point of flux for every ten points of primal in the artifact.

If an artifact is drained of its flux, it becomes totally nonfunctional for the duration. No primal abilities, no intelligence, nothing. Not only is this hard on the poor artifact, it's very insulting, and will probably get the owner very, very mad. Wars have been started over the theft of flux from artifacts.

### *Facing Your Own Artifact*

Even if an artifact has been isolated by a rival, the base still belongs to the deity who created it. Thus, none of its primally related powers can be used against its creator, including any facets that are merely enhanced by the presence of primal. Perhaps Goráchtak creates the artifact sword Torkháh. Torkháh falls into the hands of an enemy who later tries to use it against its creator. In this case, Goráchtak would be immune to all of the extraneous effects of the weapon, its magical bonuses to hit, spells it could cast, and so forth. He could, however, be affected by the physical edge of the blade itself.

### *Destroying an Artifact*

Destroying an artifact is extremely difficult. That's one of the reasons, after all, to create a primal artifact: it's nearly impossible to destroy. The primal base that makes the artifact's effects more fundamental also anchors the object itself in reality. As a result, tossing the Amulet of Wizard Death artifact into the heart of the sun is just going to make it a bit harder to retrieve. Basically, the artifact can't be damaged unless the primal is removed, and the primal can't be affected unless the container is destroyed. What this boils down to is that only another artifact or pure primal from a deity can damage it; attempts to do so should be arbitrated by the power rating system. There is always the possibility of a campaign-specific way of destroying primal artifacts, but the existence of such an opportunity is up to you.

Deities can easily destroy their own artifacts by pulling the base from them and then treating them as merely powerful, ordinary artifacts. In case some of the more devious among you are wondering, a deity can only pull base from artifacts, not godlings or servitors.

Aside from standard primal artifacts and artifacts created by mere mortals, there are some other variations that might prove interesting.

Pantheon artifacts are primal artifacts that are primally supported by an entire pantheon. The artifact may have been created with this in mind, or might have once been a single deity's artifact. Usually, the differences between pantheon artifacts and normal primal artifacts are the result of being supported by more than one deity, containing base from more than one deity, and/or having abilities added at creation by a variety of deities. The availability of multiple sources of base usually results in an artifact with maximum abilities. Strictly speaking, the supporting group doesn't have to be a pantheon. Any divine group could choose to deal with an artifact in this way.

A planar artifact draws its power and abilities from a plane. This power is not primal energy, so planar artifacts can't be bled for flux, and compared to planar artifacts, primal ones are a pushover to destroy. The reason for this phenomenal resistance will become clearer in the chapter on planes, Chapter Seven.

Just as primal artifacts tend to reflect the powers and interests of their creators, planar artifacts tend to reflect the attributes of the planes to which

## Other Types of Artifacts

### *Pantheon Artifacts*

### *Planar Artifacts*



they are linked. The larger the plane, the more potent the artifact will be. An artifact from the Plane of Evil Thought will be significantly more powerful than an artifact from the Diminutive Plane Of Tea-Time.

Occasionally a being comes along with the ability to craft planar artifacts, but this is very rare, since it requires an understanding of the particular plane as well as the other necessary skills. Only 5% of artifact artificers have the talent, and they can't do anything unless the plane, whether consciously or instinctively, allows the artifact to be connected to it.

A more common source of these exotic objects appears to be the planes themselves. The theory is that, just as pearls will grow in the rare oyster, some planar irritant or stimulus will cause a planar artifact to form. The cause is completely unknown, although there are many deities who would dearly love to prod their planes into creating artifacts. Even the process is a mystery, causing some deities to dismiss the whole idea, claiming that planar artifacts are just the creations of a crafter lost to history.

### Relics

As the ages pass and civilizations arise and die, items of supreme importance occasionally come into existence. Relics are items that learned to tap into fundamental powers of their own accord as they passed through the hands of many people who believed in their use and purpose. A relic no longer relies on any spells that may have been cast at its inception, but uses other energies to enforce its will.

The rather mysterious nature of relics is reflected in the fact that analysis spells, wishes, or even omniscience usually won't reveal the relic's powers, although its history might become clearer. People have carried relics around for years before finding a hint of the power they carry.

For example, a character might carry a relic dagger around for quite a while before noticing that it never needs sharpening, never bends or breaks, and seems strangely resistant to magic. This innocent-looking dagger, as it turns out, was first used by the Queen of the Catkin as she led the defense of her people against the bloodthirsty Wolf Lords. After a long and vicious war, the Wolf Lords eventually exterminated the Catkin, sacrificing the queen to their god with her own dagger. Now, ages later, this once-simple dagger represents the annihilation of a race. Numbered among its eldritch powers are the ability to coerce its wielder to slay any descendants of the Wolf Lords, and an absolute refusal to participate in sacrifices. It also manifests a strong respect for queens.

Every relic will have its own story, which is why this can be a potentially interesting area for GMs to explore.

### Ancient Artifacts

An ancient artifact is the primal equivalent of a relic: a primal or planar artifact, probably dissociated from its creator long ago, that has become so strongly anchored in reality that even primal is but a plaything. The existence of such an object remains in doubt.

### A Fragment from the Play of Passion

VEENIA: *I do so insist. You will bend like grass.*

GRNXX: *You are foolish as always. I will not bend.*

VEENIA: *Very well, let the challenge begin.*

*[Appropriate gestures conveying power and conflict. Veenia ends up standing on top of Grnxx.]*

VEENIA: *Once again my will is the greater, my power is the stronger.*

*[Audience goes wild. Allow time for festivities before continuing.]*

## The Power Rating System

As we've indicated in the previous section, you can't usually tell the difference between being turned to stone by an ordinary magic wand and being turned

to stone by a primal magic wand unless you try to avoid being turned to stone. Since most people do indeed try to avoid being petrified, the power rating system provides a numeric basis for deciding who becomes a garden ornament when two magic items are used against each other. Note that this system should be used only when your game system and this book provide no other rules for resolving a conflict; if you *really* want to use it throughout your campaign we won't stop you, but don't say we tried to force it down your throat.

There are many energies in the universe. Even our own nonmagical universe has magnetic, nuclear, gravitational, kinetic, and other forms of energy. An FRP campaign could have many more, including magic, mentalics, planar, elemental, and, if you're using this book, primal. Any item that is powered by such an energy should be given a power rating based on the relative power levels of these energies in your universe.

"Based on the relative power levels?" You may never have thought about this before. Now is a good time. Deciding which kind of energy is strongest is ultimately a pretty personal choice, and every GM should come up with some sort of system. Are mentalic powers as strong as magic? With how thick a rope must you tie yourself down to prevent levitation? Telekinesis? Being blown away by the wind? How much primal energy does it take to extinguish the sun?

What we're actually addressing here is to what extent the various energies of the universe are anchored in reality. In effect, we're deciding which forces are more fundamental. Since the premise of this book is that primal is the most fundamental, we will rank that one at the top of the scale. Here's an example table:

Energy or Item	Rating
Physical forces	1–30
Mentalics	20–35
Lesser magic	30–50
Greater magic	50–70
Non-primal artifacts	60–75
Relics	70–80
Primal artifacts	75–99
Primal energy	100–∞

For our example we used a sample FRP campaign that includes physical forces (such as technology, weather, gravity, and the like), mentalics, magic, and primal energy. We decided that the physical forces should be at the bottom of the list since they're environmental, not intentional effects. Above that we have to decide between mentalics and magic. Well, magic in this universe is a very powerful universal force, and mentalics are, say, limited energy generated by the mind tapping into a fairly vague universal consciousness, so we'll rank magic higher. It's somewhat arbitrary, but we wanted magic to be able to accomplish wonders compared to ordinary stuff. That's why physical forces cut off at thirty, where lesser magic starts. Mentalics in this campaign are powered primarily by the individual, so they're placed across the divider between physical forces and magic.

Magic covers a wide range, not surprisingly. As a matter of fact, the range is wide enough that the top end of the greater magic range guarantees dominance over some of the lesser magic. If you want to make it much harder for wimpy spells and objects to have a chance against really powerful ones, you might

#### Example Power Ratings

want to use a different chart or modify the dominance roll described in a couple of pages by 3% or even 4% for every point of difference.

We chose to overlap the ranges of greater magic and non-primal artifacts to allow truly great spellcasters to override ordinary artifacts rated at the low end of their scale. For similar reasons, we also overlapped the ranges for ordinary artifacts and relics, putting relics on top since we want the mysterious energy on which they draw to be stronger than normal magic.

Next we come to primal objects. There's very little overlap between primally powered artifacts and ordinary ones, to reflect just how awesome primal is. Note that primal artifacts are listed as *less* powerful than primal energy itself, which is the opposite of the way magic works. This is because primal artifacts almost always owe their power to deities, and are thus powered in a somewhat indirect fashion.

At the top of the chart is primal energy, of course. Artifacts can have their power ratings increased by adding more primal at the time they are created, up to the maximum listed. Primal abilities work similarly, but we chose, in this table at least, not to set an upper limit to the power rating for direct primal energy. Increasing the power rating of a primal ability takes 50 points of flux per point of power rating. This flux applies only to the ability's power rating, not to any of its effects. For example, a five-point primal blast, like any other primal ability, would start out with a power rating of 100. If you wanted to increase the odds that this blast could counteract a primal artifact with a rating of 99, you would probably want to raise the blast's power rating by ten points or so. To give the blast a power rating of 110 would take 500 extra points of flux, and you would end up with a five-point primal blast with a power rating of 110, not a 505-point primal blast. If this sounds complicated, remember that you will usually be using the power rating system on primal abilities only when they come into conflict with primal artifacts, since no other kind of magic will usually be able to touch primal energy, and there are rules to cover conflicts between two primal abilities elsewhere in this book.

## Assigning Power Ratings

Now that you've got a table, let's put it to use. Your game system might tell you how to assign ranks to the various physical forces, mentalics, and magic, and it will possibly cover non-primal artifacts as well. If not, pick a number based on the history of the spell or device, or just roll randomly. An alternative would be to adopt some variation of the system that primal artifacts use, and have rules that state exactly what must be done to give an object or spell a particular power rating. For relics, you could choose a rating based on the item's age and level of power before it became a relic. Since we've already covered how to rank primal artifacts and abilities, now we're all set to begin using these ratings.

There are two types of situations in which you should compare power ratings: conflicts of intent and conflicts of power.

## Conflict of Intent

Kwesi, an apprentice wizard, may create a ring that produces light in a small area, but because this is his first magic item, he has yet to master the ultimate capabilities of magic. It works, but not very well. Using our sample table, his ring may be rated at 34, a number appropriate for a beginner.

His mentor, Daka, decides to create a ring that will continually create darkness around the wearer. Daka spends more time and effort and uses her full knowledge to craft her ring. Since she is more accomplished as a mage, her ring might be rated at 53.

Now, what happens when both rings are used at the same time? This is the sort of question that can really be a pain. Two contradictory effects are thrown together and the GM has to make a decision as to whether both items will cancel each other out or one will take priority over the other. Now it's



entirely possible that you as a GM may have already come up with a specific rule that covers light spells versus darkness spells, or perhaps the great sages in the gaming industry have shed some, er, light on the subject, but what if you don't have such a rule? Or what if the conflict is between an ice wand and a fire wand or some other sort of items your system doesn't cover?

We propose that you revert to the power rating system when trying to determine the outcome of two contradictory effects not covered by another rule. To do this, assign to one of the items a 50% chance that its effect will overcome the other item's, and then adjust this percentage by 2% for every power rating point of difference between the two objects. Let's try this on the above example in which the ring of light is rated at 34 and the ring of darkness at 53. The difference between 34 and 53 is 19 ( $53 - 34 = 19$ ), and if each point of difference means a 2% change, then we need to make a 38% adjustment ( $19 \times 2 = 38$ ). To find out what chance Kwesi's Ring of Light has to win the battle, you'd subtract 38% from 50% and find the ring of light has a 12% chance to beat the darkness. Or, if you looked at it from the perspective of Daka's item, the chance that the darkness will flush out the light is 88%. It really doesn't matter which way you look at it, but to avoid having to make even those trivial decisions we recommend allowing the defender, if the distinction is clear, to make the roll. This roll of the dice is called a *dominance roll*.

This example of the light versus darkness is an illustration of what we call a *conflict of intent*. This occurs when two items, energies, or forces are trying to execute two directly contradictory effects, and it is not clear which should win out. Some situations may appear to be conflicts of intent, but aren't. For example, a Slicing Sword enchanted to draw blood every time it is used would be stopped by a Nemesis Tunic resistant to edged weapons. If the sword's job were to slice up tunics, then there would be a conflict of intent. But it is designed to slice up people, and since there is a magically sword-resistant tunic between it and the person, it can't find anyone to slice up. Similarly, a Skeleton Key, unless specifically enchanted to work on magic doors, won't be able to tell that a Door of No Admittance has a keyhole. In general, defensive items that resist a certain kind of effect will be able to negate that effect without making the GM resort to a conflict of intent resolution.

If you're with us so far and are willing to get even more complex, you could say that whether or not such a situation should be considered a conflict of intent depends on how the defensive item works. For example, let's say someone throws a Rope of Binding at a person wearing a Bindbane Armband. The rope is specifically trying to tie up its target, and the armband is specifically trying to prevent its wearer from being tied up. If the armband works by making all ropes and knots go somewhere else, there won't be a conflict of intent; the rope may still get to bind something, but not this particular target. However, if the armband works by loosening knots while the rope is trying to tie knots, the armband wearer will have to make a dominance roll to see which item succeeds.

As an alternative in a situation like the light versus darkness example, you could have both items function according to their percentages: the area of darkness could be only 88% of its usual size, or the same area as usual could only be 88% darkened. However, there are times when this won't work, such as a conflict between a philter of pregnancy and a contraception charm, and you'd need to decide which items are affected in which ways. So, although this variation might be more "realistic," we recommend the all-or-nothing approach.

The other type of situation in which the power rating system might be used is when two items come into conflict and one of the items is in a higher power

*Variation*

**Conflict of Power**

## Modifications to Power Rating Rolls

rating *category* than the other. For example, an item based on primal versus an item based on magic would be a *conflict of power*, as opposed to the previous example in which both items were based on magic.

Let's consider a defender who has activated a magical spell that protects her from missile fire. An elven archer starts plugging missiles at her and, of course, keeps missing. "Hmmm, she's pretty tough," he reasons, so he pulls out his artifact, the Arrow of Artemis, and fires. This isn't a conflict of intent, since while this particular arrow has improved accuracy and does tremendous damage, it can't work if the archer misses and the spell makes the archer miss. But we're not talking just some magic arrow here, we're talking primal. Should this anti-missile spell of, say, the fourth plateau, stop a primal artifact arrow? We think not. A primal artifact should have a chance to penetrate a defense that would stop an attack based on a lesser force.

A conflict of power is resolved in a manner identical to that for a conflict of intent. Note, however, that in the majority of cases, the defender is going to have less than a 50% chance of defeating the attacking force, since this resolution is only used if the attacking force has a power rating that is in a higher power rating *category* than the defending force. If the defending force is in a higher power rating *category*, it will automatically defeat the attack.

Occasionally, when you are resolving conflicts of intent or conflicts of power, situations will arise in which one or both items deserve a temporary bonus to their power ratings due to the circumstances. Three general situations that we've identified are:

- Situations that involve the use of a primary purpose or ability. This modifier would apply only to an item that has multiple abilities, with one of these abilities designated as its primary purpose or goal. In the story in the opening chapter, Baba's Cobra Staff was created by Set as an attack staff, although it can also heal and squeeze. Thus, it was fulfilling its primary purpose when Baba tried to use it against Horus. Too bad for Baba that even the bonus didn't make it powerful enough to counteract the divine wish Horus used to make it bite the floor instead of him. The bonus, by the way, is +10 to the power rating.
- Situations in which an item itself—not just its effect—is being threatened with temporary negation. An example would be an artifact such as a Dark Death sword crossing blades with a Lethe sword, which makes sentients forget everything they know. Since the Dark Death sword is sentient, the Lethe sword will try to make it forget. This is an attack on the Dark Death sword itself, so it gets the temporary negation bonus of +20 power rating points.

Another example involves a shrine with the power to suppress all magic within. Any magic-based artifact would not only be unable to create any of its effects, but it would also be incapable of understanding what those effects were, when it was supposed to cast them, or how it used to cast them. Since the shrine's antimagic power is suppressing some of the artifact's inherent abilities as well as its effects, the artifact receives a +20 to its power rating.

- Situations in which an item faces permanent destruction. This bonus is +40 since the item would do everything in its power to avoid total annihilation. Primally casting Unravel against a Flying Carpet artifact would be an example. Trying to melt the Skull Necklace of Kali with a Lava Amulet would be another.

Optionally, you might choose to allow any item a power rating roll with the +40 bonus whenever it is faced with destruction, regardless of whether or not there is a conflict of intent or a conflict of power.

*I get thar fustest with the mostest men.*

—Nathan Bedford Forrest (when asked the secret of his victories)

*Variation*





## **Under the Influence**





*Influence is to be measured not by the extent it covers, but by its kind.*  
—Channing

## Defining the Sphere of Influence

A sphere of influence is an idea, object, activity, or philosophy with which a particular deity is strongly associated. Pele's sphere of influence is volcanoes; Poseidon's spheres include horses and the sea. In this chapter we will address the definition of a sphere of influence, why a deity might want one in the first place, how a deity goes about defining one, how to develop abilities within that sphere, and how much these abilities might cost in terms of primal flux or primal base.

A sphere of influence is an aspect of reality that the deity has specifically staked out as his or her own. In more common terms, a sphere of influence is often what the deity is known as "god of." However, this isn't a hard and fast rule. Some deities will have spheres of influence that are not quite as well publicized. There aren't many good reasons for downplaying a sphere, but as we know, deities can be somewhat ineffable. For instance, many stories in Greek mythology associate Aphrodite with beauty, so beauty might well be one of her spheres of influence, though love is the most famous.

Development of a sphere of influence requires extensive research in the area, in addition to becoming associated with the concept in the minds of worshipers, the public at large, and other deities. All deities can manipulate the universe, but the better they understand certain aspects of it, the better their control over those aspects. A deity who studies only the attributes of war or magic has much more knowledge in these areas and thus more control and power than other deities of equal strength.

Ultimately, however, the complete development of a sphere of influence requires one final step: the establishment of an actual metaphysical overlap between the deity and the chosen sphere of influence, so that the deity and the concept become fundamentally connected to each other. This is more than just being associated with the concept; it involves actually becoming an underlying part of the concept. The deity must become so entrenched in the concept that wherever the concept exists, the deity's influence will be felt.

On rare occasions, this final meld between deity and sphere of influence might happen without anybody noticing, but by far the most common catalyst is a heroic quest, some event or task that defines and establishes a deity's right to claim his or her sphere of influence. After Pele had prepared herself for a position as a volcano goddess, her defeat of the previous owner of Mauna Loa was the heroic quest that established her sphere of influence. The fact that the process also netted her a home plane was a nice bonus.

## Why Have a Sphere of Influence?

Deities have three basic reasons for wanting a sphere of influence. First, the deity will be able to gain additional abilities, more powerful than the standard divine-level abilities. Sphere of influence abilities are more powerful because they can extend to any location where the associated concept exists; this often allows a deity to have influence in an area that the deity is normally prohibited from accessing, such as a non-intervention plane or a person or place protected by a primal shield. A deity whose sphere of influence is weather can affect the weather on any plane, and a deity whose sphere of influence is death will be able to collect any soul that is not being directly absorbed or pulled by another deity, for example.

Second, having a sphere of influence attracts followers who are seeking guidance, protection, or assistance within that sphere, or those who identify closely with the sphere. A nation going to war might choose to honor a war

deity, while a student of magic would feel a close identification with a deity whose sphere of influence involves magic. Students with upcoming midterms might try a burnt offering of Post-It™ notes to Mnemosyne, the Goddess of Memory.

Finally, a deity of higher rank may order another deity to develop a sphere of influence. This is particularly true in the case of godlings; the deity who ascended someone has a natural interest in seeing that godling advance in power. In this case, the godling may not have much choice over what his or her sphere of influence should be; the ascending deity may already have something in mind. The Greek Muses, a series of demigodesses with related spheres of influence, may have been under such orders.

You may rule that the death of a prominent deity will have some sort of impact within his or her sphere of influence. According to Babylonian mythology, when Ishtar was imprisoned in the underworld by her sister Eresh-kigal, love ceased to exist in the universe; humans became apathetic, animals ceased their mating, and even the plants began to die. This, of course, might be a little extreme on a universal scale, but could certainly be a reasonable side effect on a plane where the deity was represented by many worshipers. Of course, the decision to incorporate such a side effect, and how extensive to make it, is up to you; we do recommend, however, that the effect only be drastic for greater deities, and that other deities with overlapping spheres of influence be allowed to counter the effect to some extent.

As deities increase in power, they gain a stronger influence on reality, which allows them to control more and more areas in their own names. The number of spheres of influence that a deity can claim will depend on the deity's divine rank; the number of abilities a deity can have within a given sphere of influence, however, is theoretically unlimited. Demigods and supported demigods may only have a single sphere of influence; as mentioned earlier, godlings with a sphere of influence become demigods. Lesser deities may have up to two spheres of influence; greater deities may have up to three. Supreme deities are allowed up to four spheres of influence.

If a deity loses rank and ends up with more spheres of influence than is appropriate for the new rank, no spheres of influence will be lost. The deity may not be able to come up with enough primal to exercise all of his or her sphere of influence abilities, but the abilities will still be there in case things improve. The deity will not be able to pick up any new spheres of influence, however, until he or she has attained a rank that would allow this.

To establish a sphere of influence, a deity must research the subject, study its relationship to primal energy, claim it as a sphere of influence, and back up that claim with primal base.

If a deity is going to claim a sphere of influence, then he or she must first learn nearly everything there is to know about that subject through extensive research, experimentation, and experience. In modern terms, the deity should have a Ph.D. and several decades of experience in the chosen field of study.

The precise ratio of research to experience will vary depending on whether the sphere is related to mastering a skill or mastering a discipline. Mastering a skill, such as basketweaving, requires limited research but extensive experience. Mastering a discipline, such as mathematics, would involve a significant amount of research but less experience. Magic would probably be about half and half.

## The Death or Misfortune of a Deity

5

## Number of Spheres Allowed

## Creating a Sphere of Influence

## Scholarly Research

If the sphere of influence relates to a character class or set of game skills, then the deity should have attained legendary skill within that area. An explanation of what it means to have “legendary” skill can be found in the chapter on creating deities, Chapter Nine.

## Primal Research

In addition to knowing a great deal about a sphere of influence, the deity must practice applying that knowledge to the manipulation of primal energy. This means that the deity must spend significant quantities of flux every day experimenting with the use of primal energy within this sphere. The amount required will vary depending upon the difficulty of the sphere, but it typically ranges from 50 to 500 points. Later in this chapter we will look at several detailed examples of spheres of influence, including how much the experimentation for each would cost to perform.

## Claiming the Sphere

Claiming spheres of influence requires that deities call their preeminence in their fields to the attention of their worshipers. The best way to do this is usually to undertake a heroic quest, not only because it gets the attention of the masses in a hurry, but also because there is extra power associated with the completion of such a task, which can make defending the claim easier.

## The Heroic Quest

A heroic quest should be a specific task or deed that demonstrates why the deity has the right to claim a sphere of influence. Pele's fight for the possession of Mauna Loa is a great example. The battle was almost certainly dramatic—fraught with earthquakes, violent blasts of energy, rocks running like water, and so forth. When the smoke cleared and Pele emerged triumphant, no one could doubt her ability to be Goddess of the Volcano.

The heroic “quest” needn't be a trip or a fight, however. Forging a truly amazing sword might be Vulcan's way of establishing himself as the God of Forges, laboring for untold periods of time to bring life to a barren plane might help Prakriti earn the title of Mother Nature, and Coyote might have made his name as the Trickster by pulling a really incredible prank on a greater deity.

Deities who were once mortals often already have reputations for something. As their religions initially develop, they will be associated with those reputations. Worshipers will try to live their lives in a way that they feel would please their deities; they will memorize and record quotes the deities once said, stories of the deities' quests as mortals, and all manner of facts associated with



the lives of the deities. Therefore, if a deity chooses a sphere of influence that is closely associated with this religion, the worshipers will naturally associate the religion and the sphere of influence.

This is how Joey managed to become the God of Basketweaving without completing a quest. Even without a quest to fire the minds of his worshipers, Joey's church was able to spread the legends of his skill and inspire sufficient devotion for Joey to claim the sphere by default and move right to the next step, the final meld. The big problem with this method is that it usually takes much longer than the quest method, and some deities are less patient than others. Quests are also a great way to alleviate boredom.

Deities may choose spheres of influence that are not associated with their religions, but the subsequent development of the spheres will take longer, simply because all that has already been done in the names of the deities will be unassociated with these new concepts. If this is the case, then the deities will need to refocus their worshipers in a new direction. If a deity isn't careful, confusion will result, not to mention the loss of those mortals who put all their faith into a way of life they thought would please their deity. In short, deities have the right to choose any spheres of influence they want, but if a deity known far and wide as Darsil the Barbarian-God chooses a sphere of influence centering around opera, it will take more than a subtle rearrangement of beliefs for Darsil's worshipers to accept this. It's also doubtful that a barbarian warrior deity could retain all those uncivilized brawlers as worshipers after claiming such a sphere.

Another consideration a deity must face is the uniqueness of his or her chosen sphere of influence. Is the sphere so common (magic, for instance) that when someone is trying to decide whom to worship, they would find the deity's name buried on a lengthy list, competing with long-established names such as Hecate and Isis? Or is the sphere so unusual or weird that no one would even think of worshipping the deity? Our Joey, God of Basketweaving is a good example; it is highly unlikely that anyone outside the profession would consider worshipping him, and there just aren't that many people who are willing to dedicate their lives to wicker, or make perilous journeys on behalf of picnic baskets everywhere.

It is usually better to choose a less common sphere of influence, so long as the sphere is still an important one. A deity who chooses to develop a common sphere has the possible advantage of getting help from a friendly deity who has already mastered that area, but most deities are not going to be willing to share their secrets. The deity must also be careful when choosing a common sphere, because the market might be so glutted that the deity would be lucky to claim a few disgruntled worshipers from another deity. Uniqueness can be of some benefit; if you are the only deity in your area, you've cornered that particular market of worshipers. That may not seem like that big of a deal in the case of basketweaving, but it worked for Condrijo, who chose to be God of the Lost. As far as he has researched, he can find no other deity who claims that specific sphere, although there are a few related ones. Thus, people who find out about Condrijo and would like to find a lost item, lost love, or lost piece of knowledge might consider joining or contributing to Condrijo's church. With this sphere, Condrijo could probably inspire a few heroic quests as well.

After their research is complete and deities have firmly established their mastery of their spheres within the minds of the public, it's time to put their primal base where their mouths are. This base cost typically ranges between 100 and 500 points, depending on the complexity of the sphere of influence, whether other deities are already competing within that realm, and how general or specific the sphere of influence is. Love is certainly going to be a more expensive sphere of influence than, say, hunting dogs.

*Foregoing the  
Heroic Quest*

*Unrelated Spheres  
of Influence*

*Sphere Uniqueness*

*Backing the Claim  
with Primal Base*



*Advancement as Suicide*

Note that when godlings acquire spheres of influence, they immediately become demigods. However, since claiming the sphere precedes the advancement in rank, even if only by an instant, the godlings must have enough primal base as godlings to claim their spheres and still have base left over. Otherwise, they'd be essentially committing suicide, and even Doofur isn't that stupid.

*Premature Claiming*

Another possible mistake would be for a deity to attempt to back a sphere of influence primally without actually having met all of the previous requirements (*i.e.*, there's more research that needs to be done, or the deity is not yet associated with the concept in the minds of the public). This is a serious error; the primal base used to back up the claim is lost forever, and any subsequent attempts will require the full amount. For this reason, most deities use a divine wish to ascertain whether or not they're ready before they expend that all-important primal base.

## Developing Sphere Abilities

### *Aarni, the Goddess of Strength*

Once a sphere of influence has been created, the deity must learn to develop abilities within that sphere. Until this is done, the sphere of influence is really only a title, useful primarily for attracting worshipers. The process of developing sphere of influence abilities is similar to that for claiming a sphere, except that no heroic quest is required.

For example, the deity Aarni has taken on strength as a sphere of influence. She's always been extremely muscular, and had quite a reputation ever since she demolished a temple with her bare hands. Since this temple was the main temple of the most influential god on the plane, this qualifies as her heroic quest. The god in question, one Vurgeous, had addressed a divine gathering as "Fellow gods and godettes," and, well, something had to be done.

After researching everything she could learn about muscles, physique, exercise, and diet, Aarni started working out every day in her gym, pumping out an extra 100 points of flux to experiment with the effects of primal on strength. She sent the word down to all the athletes in her church that strength was going to be their thing, and finally, she plopped down 200 points of base (the amount her GM deemed appropriate for this sphere), and *voilà*; Aarni became Goddess of Strength.

So what? To really make her point, Aarni needs to develop some abilities that demonstrate strength in some sort of metaphysical way, beyond what could actually be accomplished through muscle power alone. For example, Aarni could come up with the idea of removing the strength from someone else. To make this into an ability, Aarni has to essentially repeat three of the original four steps that she went through to establish her sphere in the first place. She must do any additional scholarly research on strength that might be applicable in this case, then spend primal flux every day practicing in the lab; souls that have been sacrificed to a deity make great subjects for such experiments. Finally, she must back up the ability with an appropriate commitment of primal base.

*Cost of New Abilities*

The actual amount of flux deities have to spend each day while learning their sphere of influence abilities and the amount of base that must be spent at the time of completion will vary depending on the ability. Suggested costs on a case-by-case basis are given for some abilities covered later in this chapter, and you can extrapolate the costs for other abilities.

The effects of a sphere of influence ability are not typically overwhelming. The power and value of these abilities lie not in their magnitude, but in their ability to penetrate into areas that the deity would typically not be able to influence. All sphere of influence abilities should allow divine defenders a resistance roll, but mortal defenders are on their own; they receive a resistance roll only if the ability is so designed.



Once an ability is developed and backed, it can be activated at any time by expending the appropriate amount of flux.

Sooner or later two deities are going to be using their sphere of influence abilities against each other. When the Sky God is trying to hold a picnic and the Goddess of Crops wants rain, someone's got to give. The power rating system is the arbitrator of such a conflict.

Since all sphere of influence abilities are primal ones, the two deities in opposition start out with a 50% chance for each to dominate the other. If the conflict occurs on ground consecrated to one of the deities, that deity receives a +10 power rating bonus. If a place of worship is facing desecration or destruction as a result of the opposition's actions, the deity who owns it receives a bonus of +20. Then if the deities wish to increase their ratings, they may do so at the standard rate of 50 points of flux for every point increase. The deities can increase the amount of flux used to modify their power ratings until they run out of flux, but neither can decrease the amount or deallocate flux. Once the deities have finalized their ratings, make a standard power rating roll. The full activation cost and power rating increase cost of both sphere of influence abilities must still be paid, even though the effects of one ability will be cancelled by the power rating roll.

For example, Fen Bou Zhi, God of Destruction, decides to use his sphere ability Natural Disaster to cause a river to flood and wash away a city whose ruler refused to allow his church to recruit worshipers there. Amadahy, the Goddess of Rivers, would rather not see that happen, particularly since it would destroy one of her temples. So she applies her Control River Flow ability to stop the flood. Since she has a temple in danger, her power rating is 120, while Fen Bou Zhi's is only 100, the starting point for primal abilities in our example power rating table. Fen Bou Zhi finds this unacceptable, so he spends 1,250 points of flux to bring his power rating to 125, and Amadahy counters with 1,100 points to bring her rating to 142. Fen declines to increase the stakes, leaving him with a 16% chance of success ( $142 - 125 = 17$ ,  $17 \times 2\% = 34\%$ , and  $50\% - 34\% = 16\%$ ) and Amadahy with an 84% chance of success. We normally suggest that the defender roll, but Amadahy lets Fen Bou Zhi roll because he's looking pretty disappointed at the prospect of his flood failing. Fen rolls a 29, so the city is saved, but its ruler will probably wish the flood had succeeded when she finds out what he has in mind for her *now*.

The final section of this chapter is a listing of several sample spheres of influence, with corresponding abilities. Our intent was not to provide an exhaustive list, but to provide several examples covering a broad spectrum of possibilities.

These samples will reflect several basic guidelines we've established for creating spheres of influence. First of all, the more encompassing a sphere of influence, the longer it takes to master it, and the more general the abilities it provides. If a sphere is more specific, research goes more quickly and the abilities are more focused and powerful. The time needed to research any sphere of influence should range from ten to fifty years; abilities within that sphere should take anywhere from one month to twenty years, depending on their power and difficulty.

The sample spheres also make assumptions about which things are more encompassing and which are less. If you want to make good a fundamental force in your universe and death merely a janitor of unclaimed souls, these sample spheres will need to be modified. Ideally each GM will select a set of priorities when assigning spheres of influence.

## Sphere of Influence Conflicts

*Bonuses to Ability  
Power Ratings*

*Sphere of Influence  
Conflict Example*

## Sample Spheres of Influence

The following information is given on each sphere of influence listed in this chapter:

- **Research Cost:** The amount of primal flux that must be spent each day while researching this sphere of influence.
- **Research Time:** The number of years required for researching this sphere of influence.
- **Backing Cost:** The amount of primal base that must be spent to primally back the sphere of influence after all of the other requirements have been met.
- **Total Flux Cost:** The total amount of primal flux that must be spent to gain the sphere. This number is simply the research cost times the number of years to research it times 365 days in a year, and is provided to illustrate the relative difficulties of claiming the various spheres.
- **Advantage:** A continual advantage some spheres of influence grant to the deity as soon as he or she backs up the sphere.
- **Abilities:** A listing of several sample abilities for the sphere. With each ability is a description of its effects, the research cost in daily flux, the backing cost in primal base for the ability itself, and the activation cost, or flux cost per use.



## Good

Research Cost: 60 flux per day.  
 Research Time: 50 years.  
 Backing Cost: 100 base.  
 Total Flux Cost: 1,095,000 points.

This sphere of influence deals with all that is good and just in the universe. A deity in possession of this sphere will tend to value life, the rights of mortals, fairness, equality, honesty, humility, generosity, and so forth. Deities with this sphere vary as to their outlook on evil; some might insist that evil be totally destroyed, while others would insist that no life should be taken unnecessarily.

### Advantage

Possession of this sphere gives the deity continual protection *versus* evil as per the ability below.

### Abilities

This sphere could include the following abilities:

*Protection versus Evil:* Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 20 flux. This ability allows the deity to aid a designated beneficiary by protecting him or her against *any* attack that relies on evil-based energy or concepts of evil, or is made by an evil-based

creature. This protection will also defend the beneficiary completely against any evil-related sphere of influence abilities as well, although it will not stop a primal blast or primal possession attempt.

**Inspire Worship:** Research Cost: 20 flux per day. Research Time: 2 years. Backing Cost: 20 base. Activation Cost: 10 flux. This effect causes people to experience a sense of contentment and reverence, and wish to strive for “a better life.” This ability must be activated by a public speaker in order to have any effect; all those within hearing range will become followers. Mortals receive a resistance roll versus this ability; if they fail, they become devout followers of the deity. Note that this effect is actually pretty minor; a stern talking-to allows the mortal another resistance roll.

**Improved Attacks versus Evil:** Research Cost: 30 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 20 base. Activation Cost: 30 flux. This ability allows the deity or some designated beneficiary to attack an evil opponent with a 20% bonus in attack effectiveness and damage.

**Improved Loyalty:** Research Cost: 10 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 10 base. Activation Cost: 10 flux per day for one person, 100 flux per day for any cohesive cultural group such as a nation, society, or race, or 1,000 flux per day for all worshipers on a plane. This ability strengthens the loyalty and dedication of the deity’s worshipers by 50%. Note that it’s generally much more economical to improve the loyalty of worshipers across a plane—if you can afford to.

⊗                      ⊗                      ⊗

Research Cost: 100 flux per day.  
Research Time: 25 years.  
Backing Cost: 100 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 912,500 points.

This sphere is concerned with merchants, shopkeepers, and others who are engaged in selling or trading. Deities with this sphere value the free exchange of goods; merchants who worship a deity of merchants often claim to have the god-given right to trade with anyone, anywhere, anytime. Merchant deities also tend to promote the philosophy of *caveat emptor*—“let the buyer beware.”

This deity will always know the intrinsic value of an object by looking at it. “So this is Excalibur, eh?” *Its true value is 64 plinketts, and there’s no way that Excalibur would go for so little. Either this fellow’s been misled or he’s a fraud. It’s certain the sword is.* “No, I don’t think I’m interested, thanks.”

This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Know Buyer’s Desires:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 20 flux.

This ability allows the deity to know what a buyer wishes to buy, and how badly he or she wants it. This power can only be applied if the buyer is consciously considering making a purchase.

**Coerce:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 8 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux.

Coercion allows the deity to convince victims that they really do want such-and-such, or that this is a better deal than they think, and so on.

**Mediator:** Research Cost: 25 flux per day. Research Time: 4 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 20 flux.

This ability allows the deity to reduce or eliminate antipathy in negotiators, and can be applied even if the deity is personally involved in the negotiations. This ability would be very useful if the deity were to serve as an arbitrator or other third party to a dispute.

## Merchants

### Advantage

### Abilities

		☒	☒	☒
	Love	Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 20 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Total Flux Cost: 730,000 points.		
		This sphere of influence relates to the emotion of love, and overlaps somewhat with marriage, sex, and fertility.		
	Advantage	The deity is liked by everyone who has not been directly offended or harmed by the deity.		
	Abilities	This sphere could include the following abilities: <i>Dispel Hatred:</i> Research Cost: 20 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 20 base. Activation Cost: 20 flux. This ability will cause one person to stop hating another. This will not necessarily stop hostilities if the aggressor is driven by some motive other than hate, but it will increase the chance that the aggressor will opt for alternate targets if available, or merely imprison the defender rather than slaying him or her. <i>Cause or Dispel Love:</i> Research Cost: 30 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 40 base. Activation Cost: 40 flux. Cause Love would cause the target to fall in love with another person of the deity's choice. The process will seem natural enough. For example, targets who don't already know the new objects of their desire will soon hear of them, be curious, arrange to find out more, seek circumstances in which they could meet, become infatuated, and fall madly in love. Dispel Love causes targets to become apathetic toward designated people and wonder what they ever saw in them. This doesn't mean that those who are couples will necessarily separate; some people stay with their mates long after the love is gone, whether for duty, money, or "the sake of the children." <i>Matchmaking:</i> Research Cost: 30 flux per day. Research Time: 2 years. Backing Cost: 30 base. Activation Cost: 30 flux. This ability allows the deity to know who a particular person's perfect partner would be. The ability does not throw the partners together or help either of them realize the value in the other, but simply provides the deity with this knowledge. <i>Cause Scandal:</i> Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. Cast on an organization, this ability will cause a series of two, three, or more love triangles to develop that will cause some sort of scandal within the organization. Cast on an individual, it will cause that person to feel an overwhelming desire for a totally inappropriate person, who will feel an equally overwhelming desire to publicize the affair.		
		☒	☒	☒
	Destruction	Research Cost: 300 flux per day. Research Time: 15 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Total Flux Cost: 1,642,500 points.		
		Deities with this sphere of influence genuinely savor the <i>destruction</i> and annihilation of other people, places, or things, using everything from arson to heavy weights to primal blasts. They might get their start by playing with tinderboxes as children, eventually graduating to firecrackers and lightning bolts, and going on from there.		
	Advantage	All non-primal destructive effects generated by the deity have double effectiveness.		



This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Natural Disaster:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 20 years. Backing Cost: 500 base. Activation Cost: 500 flux. This ability will invoke some natural disaster within 100 miles of the designated target. The effect could be an earthquake, tornado, hurricane, tidal wave, meteor impact, volcanic eruption, flood, or whatever would be appropriate to the area.

**Mass Death:** Research Cost: 200 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 200 flux. This ability causes massive numbers of people to die in a large area of effect. Resistance rolls are made with a substantial bonus of +40% due to the widespread nature of the attack. The area of effect is 100 square miles. This ability is great for battles in which everyone is lined up in nice formations. For additional clarification of how this rule is used in your game system, refer to "Resistance Rolls" under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

**Unhealable Wounds:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability causes all wounds inflicted in the area of effect to be healable only through natural rest at one-tenth of the normal rate. The ability doesn't actually cause any damage, but it makes damage done by other means more effective. This ability only applies to wounds inflicted within a week of the time it is cast. The area of effect is 100 square miles.

**Inspire Destruction:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability causes the target to become overwhelmed with a destructive urge. The deity has no control over what specifically the target will do, but can rest assured that some sort of rampage against life or property will immediately ensue.



Research Cost: 100 flux per day.  
Research Time: 8 years.  
Backing Cost: 200 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 292,000 points.

This sphere of influence deals with rivers, streams, and other flowing bodies of water.

The deity is automatically aware of all unusual conditions of rivers and streams, including flooding, pollution, damming, and other such conditions.

This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Create River:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux for a small stream, up to 1,000 flux for a full-sized river, possibly doubled or tripled as described below.

## Abilities

5

## Rivers

### Advantage

### Abilities



This ability causes an underground spring to well up from the earth at the desired location, forming the source of a stream or river. This ability does not control what course the river will follow; it will follow whatever course a natural flow of water would take from that location, unless this is modified with *Alter Course*. The activation cost of this ability doubles if the river's source is placed on flat land or some other location where a river would not logically begin, or triples if it is placed where water is unusually scarce.

*Destroy River*: Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 8 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux for a small stream, up to 1,000 flux for a full-sized river.

As the reverse of the above ability, this ability causes a river to dry up by closing off the spring at its source and/or leveling its channel. This will likely cause some natural disruption, as the water that used to flow down the river will now bog down or find some other outlet to the sea.

*Alter Course*: Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 30 flux for a small stream, up to 300 flux for a full-sized river.

This ability lets the deity subtly alter the contours of the land around a river so as to shift the river's course up to one mile in either direction. For example, this can be used to move a river away from a port city or through the center of town. Such course changes are permanent until the terrain is again altered, whether magically or by redigging the channel.

*Alter Flow*: Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 30 flux for a small stream, up to 300 flux for a full-sized river.

By altering land contours and the water table, this ability lets the deity increase or decrease the flow of a river by up to 50% of its natural level. Increasing the flow by this much will likely cause flooding; reducing the flow can likewise be used to stop flooding.

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## Actors

Research Cost: 50 flux per day.  
Research Time: 20 years.  
Backing Cost: 200 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 365,000 points.

## Advantage

This sphere of influence is one of theater and lies, and includes those who deceive for entertainment and those who deceive for personal gain.

The deity's ability at theatrical performances is unsurpassed. Not only is it legendary, it exceeds the ability of anyone else in the universe.

## Abilities

This sphere could include the following abilities:

*Mimic*: Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability allows the deity to change appearance, personality, movement, and habits to perfectly mimic any being he or she has studied through close observation for at least one hour. This will not give the deity access to the person's knowledge, but if it is used in conjunction with omniscience, the deity will be able to discover things about that person that otherwise might not be revealed through omniscience.

*Engage Emotion*: Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows the deity to inspire one target to become instilled with any emotion that the deity wishes. The target is not *forced* to act on that emotion, but will be more likely to do so. If the emotion is something that is alien to the target, it will have less effect. For example, a demon who was ordered to feel love might only feel a curious desire to preserve life and dismiss it immediately as totally absurd.

**The Great Tragedy:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows the deity to cause any number of targets to suffer from some permanent mental disorder or delusion. The only restriction is that the intended audience must watch the deity perform in a play over which the deity has complete control. The play must last at least four hours; only those who see the entire performance will be affected. Nothing in the play will tip the audience off that there is something untoward going on until the final scene, when every element of the production is brought together in a dramatic climax that is so twisted and confused it sends the audience into the desired insanity.

**False Friend:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 25 flux. This ability allows the deity to question some subject very effectively by acting in such a way that the subject feels the deity is a friend and can be trusted with this information. The deity must have at least one hour of time with the subject, and if the subject fails a resistance roll the subject will pour his or her heart out to the deity. Only subjects with an active reason to distrust the deity will get a full resistance roll; if the subject has reason to trust the deity, then the chance of making the resistance roll is quartered, otherwise the chance is halved.

☒ ☒ ☒

Research Cost: 100 flux per day.  
Research Time: 30 years.  
Backing Cost: 200 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 1,095,000 points.

This sphere of influence is concerned with books, maps, charts, and other printed means of distributing information, and indirectly with the information and knowledge contained in such materials.

The deity has perfect knowledge of the contents of all books, maps, and other printed materials that have been distributed. "Distributed" means that exact copies are in the possession of at least five different people, so private maps and diaries owned by only one person are excluded, even if the owner keeps multiple copies. This advantage does not confer any knowledge of whether these contents are true or false.

This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Duplicate:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux for each 1,000 copies.

This ability causes a book, map, or other printed material to be magically duplicated; these copies can appear all in the same place, or can be distributed automatically, so that copies appear in all temples, sanctuaries, and other areas consecrated to the deity. Libraries are extremely likely candidates for becoming consecrated ground to such a deity.

**Alter Popularity:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 150 flux.

This ability can cause a specific book or other printed material to become more popular or fashionable and increase the attention it receives. The effect is to double the number of copies of the book that will be sold or distributed, assuming that many copies are available. Alternatively, it can be used to reduce the publicity and comment that a particular book receives, halving the number of copies that will be sold.

**Edit:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 200 flux. Activation Cost: 300 flux. This ability can be used to subtly change the contents of some or all copies of a book. It does not allow the entire contents to be rewritten; at most, a hundred words can be changed, or two or three paragraphs added or deleted, or typographical errors removed

## Books

### Advantage

### Abilities

or added. With judicious choice of changes, however, such as the insertion or removal of the word "not" in strategic places, the thrust of the book can be markedly changed. Mortals who have already read the work must make a resistance roll to realize when they read it again that the work has changed; otherwise they will assume that they misread it previously. The author of the book automatically succeeds at this resistance roll.

*Inspire Authorship:* Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux.

This ability will inspire a mortal target with the passion to write a great book or novel on a desired subject; the subject must be one that would normally be of substantial interest to the target. The target must make a resistance roll; if the roll fails, the target will abandon all other time-consuming activities, including any occupations, to devote all of his or her time to the task. Even if the resistance roll succeeds, the target will spend every spare moment on the work until it is finished and distributed.



## Strength

Research Cost: 300 flux per day.

Research Time: 10 years.

Backing Cost: 300 base.

Total Flux Cost: 1,095,000 points.

### Advantage Abilities

This sphere of influence ability deals with physical strength.

The deity's own strength cannot be drained or reduced by any means.

This sphere could include the following abilities:

*Great Hand of Strength:* Research Cost: 200 flux per day. Research Time: 2 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: 200 flux. This ability



allows the deity to extend a metaphysical hand 1,000 times normal size, with a strength to match. With this hand the deity can lift mountains, hurl pyramids, create tidal waves, or just make rude gestures.

**Sap Strength:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability reduces a target's strength to zero, rendering him or her incapable of any physical activity.

**Increase Strength:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows the deity to increase someone's natural strength by 100% for a duration of one hour. This increase cannot increase the target's strength beyond the deity's natural strength. For an example of how this is done in your game system, refer to "Adjustments to Attributes" under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

**Skin and Muscle Strength:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: See below. This ability causes a person's bodily components to increase in physical strength, thus making them more difficult to harm physically. Every ten points of primal spent reduces the effectiveness of incoming physical attacks by 10%, up to a maximum of 50%. The duration of this effect is 24 hours.



Research Cost: 300 flux per day.  
Research Time: 20 years.  
Backing Cost: 500 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 2,190,000 points.

A deity with this sphere of influence has mastered the knowledge, creation, summoning, and control of demons and devils.

The deity can never be controlled in any way.

This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Create Demons and Devils:** Research Cost: 200 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 200 base. Activation Cost: One-tenth the cost of creating a body as described in Chapter Nine. This ability allows the deity to take an absorbed soul and convert it into a demon or devil while retaining absolute control over it. When the soul becomes a demon or devil, it will take on an appropriate temperament and whatever campaign-specific abilities and liabilities exist for such creatures.

**Summon Demons or Devils:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability allows the deity to instantly summon and control any demon or devil that the deity has ever seen, even if only once.

**Destroy Soul:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows the deity to permanently destroy a mortal soul, killing the person irrevocably. While it can be used on souls the deity has absorbed, it is more often used as a way to kill a mortal without having to damage his or her body. The target will receive a resistance roll.

**Soul Pact:** Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability allows the deity to tie someone's soul to an agreement as insurance that the contract will not be broken. The person must provide a physical manifestation of the contract such as a signature, thumbprint, or something similar, and if the contract is broken the soul is instantly absorbed by the deity. This takes precedence over the rule that deities cannot absorb a soul that's in use; if the contract is broken, the soul is forfeit, and is therefore no longer in use.

## Demons and Devils

### Advantage Abilities

		☒	☒	☒
	War	Research Cost: 400 flux per day. Research Time: 30 years. Backing Cost: 400 base. Total Flux Cost: 4,380,000 points.		
	Abilities	<p>A deity with this sphere of influence has mastered the strategy and tactics associated with warfare.</p> <p>This sphere could include the following abilities:</p> <p><i>Military Intelligence:</i> Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability allows the deity to know instantly the location and status of all enemy military units. This cannot be applied to individuals; generally, units consist of 250 people or more.</p> <p><i>Command Control:</i> Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: 75 flux. This ability allows the deity to perfectly orchestrate the command, movement, and orders for all military units. The deity will know the exact location and status of all of his or her units, and will be able to effectively communicate orders to the appropriate people.</p> <p><i>Perfect Morale:</i> Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. All units under the command of this deity will have perfect morale. The deity must be on the same plane for the entire duration of the effect, which lasts 24 hours; otherwise, the effect dissipates.</p> <p><i>Military Insight:</i> Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux and 10 base. This ability allows the deity to increase someone's skill in military strategy and tactics by one category, or by 10% if the person is already of legendary skill. This effect is permanent, but cannot be used on the same person more than once.</p>		
	Death	Research Cost: 400 flux per day. Research Time: 30 years. Backing Cost: 1,000 base. Total Flux Cost: 4,380,000 points.		
	Advantage	<p>This deity controls all aspects of the afterlife.</p> <p>This deity automatically draws all unclaimed souls, can draw souls as easily as a deity of the next-higher rank, and pulls souls at double effectiveness.</p>		
	Abilities	<p>This sphere could include the following abilities:</p> <p><i>Sudden Death:</i> Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 3 months. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: 25 flux. This ability allows the deity to instantly kill one mortal target, who will receive a resistance roll.</p> <p><i>Exchange Soul:</i> Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 50 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows the deity to substitute one soul for another during a resurrection. Imagine Eku the cleric's surprise when he tries to raise his dead friend; instead of <i>greeting</i> good old Fred, he meets up with the soul of his long-deceased grandmother, who is understandably grouchy at being sucked into the body of a man who never brushed his teeth.</p> <p><i>Retain Soul:</i> Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 100 flux. This ability causes a mortal's soul to stay in his or her body, even after the mortal is "dead." This</p>		



allows the target to be returned to consciousness by a relatively simple healing spell.

**Create Undead:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 150 base. Activation Cost: One-tenth the cost of creating a body as described in Chapter Nine. This ability allows the deity to send a soul back to the main plane as a form of undead. If the deity chooses to return the soul in a noncorporeal form, the activation cost is only 1 flux.



Research Cost: 500 flux per day.  
Research Time: 50 years.  
Backing Cost: 1,000 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 9,125,000 points.

This sphere of influence guarantees mastery of the forces of nature.

This deity is immune to any attack based on elemental or natural forces.

This sphere could include the following abilities:

**Weather Shift:** Research Cost: 250 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 300 base. Activation Cost: See below. This ability allows the deity to adjust local (50 flux), continental (100 flux), or planar weather patterns (500 flux). In this case, a "local" area is an area of up to 10,000 square miles. The deity will know ahead of time what side effects these adjustments will have; note that this does not mean that they won't occur.

**Terrain Adjustments:** Research Cost: 200 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 250 base. Activation Cost: See below. This ability allows the deity to create ecologically sensitive planar constants, as described in Chapter Seven, at 10% of the normal cost. The deity will know ahead of time what side effects this will cause.

**Control Creatures of Nature:** Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: See below. This ability allows the deity to control all non-sentient animal life on either a local (25 flux), regional (75 flux), continental (150 flux), or planar scale (250 flux). In this case, a "local" area is an area of up to 100 square miles and a "regional" area covers up to 10,000 square miles.

**Plant Control:** Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: See below.

This ability allows the deity to control all plant life on either a local (50 flux), regional (150 flux), continental (250 flux), or global scale (400 flux). Plants controlled by this ability will be able to grow at an accelerated rate, entangle a person, or bear fruit out of season, but they will not be able to uproot themselves and walk, grow money, or do anything else foreign to their nature. The sizes of these areas are the same as in Control Creatures of Nature.

*I like to break the word "expert" into two parts: "X," the unknown quantity, and "spurt," a drip working under pressure.*

—Edwina Mountbatten

## Nature

### Advantage Abilities





## **You Need Only Have Faith**



*All religions are founded on the fear of the many and the cleverness of the few.*  
—Maurice Stendahl

Religion has probably stirred up more controversy and inspired more emotional expression than any other single topic. Prophecies, jihads, ecstasies, polemics, inquisitions, excommunications—yes, there can be a lot of excitement in one little word.

This kind of activity doesn't come free, however. Deities need promotional organizations to spread their religions; for this they rely heavily on their churches, those groups of people who think their particular deity is the most wondrous being in the universe.

Running such a church isn't all fun and games. It requires a lot of people busily buzzing about taking care of day-to-day functions, plus others worrying about recruiting new members, holding inspirational services, and not having too many potato salads at the holiday potluck. The deity must be involved to some extent in most of these activities.

In return, the church will supply the deity with many benefits, including:

- Steady supplies of primal flux and monetary income.
- Ways to create consecrated ground, steal rivals' artifacts, and acquire other sources of flux.
- Help in becoming recognized as a power in the multiverse.
- A recruiting pool from which to obtain armies, heroes, chancellors, godlings, demigods, and perhaps even more deities to serve as future allies.

Because of these and many other advantages, most deities will want to establish and cultivate a church. To be completely successful, an organized religion needs several things, including:

- A well-defined religious philosophy dictating the tenets, ideas, and goals of the church.
- An organized infrastructure to disseminate the philosophy and handle the church's daily operational needs.
- Active participation from the deity and worshipers to maintain this infrastructure.

By now you're probably starting to realize that fully developing several religions could be a lot of work. You also might be wondering if it's worth the effort. Well, depending on how interesting the subject is to you, we recommend that you go ahead and develop a number of religions, but pursue this at your own rate. Understanding what's happening behind the scenes could have a big impact on the attitude of various church officials toward the PCs. While details like this aren't strictly necessary, they do add a level of richness to the game.

## **Religion as Organization: The Church**

An important deity's church is probably one of the largest and most complex organizations a PC will encounter in your campaign. Indeed, the only type of organization that rivals the size and scope of a church spanning several planes is a galactic-level empire from science fiction.

One of the major problems with designing such an organization is its potential. There are so many possibilities and very few simple decisions. It's a lot like designing a government, society, or military structure. Really, the only

simple decisions are who's on top (the deity) and who's filling the trenches (the believers). What goes in the middle is anyone's guess.

Perhaps the best way to approach this herculean task is to break it into smaller ones. Start by defining the basic goals the structure needs to meet. Most religions will have three basic tasks: perform ecclesiastical duties for the worshipers, handle the day-to-day administrative tasks, and serve as a conduit between the deity and the worshipers. While each of these might warrant a separate chapter, we'll only touch them lightly, hoping you'll take our thoughts and run with them as far as you want to go.

Someone has to look after the flock. There are gatherings to run, rituals to perform, and questions to answer; these are among the central duties of the clergy. This part of the organization is the most visible, because those involved represent the deity both to the faithful and to nonbelieving society at large. These individuals will be concerned with recruiting new worshipers, inspiring the current ones to greater devotion, consecrating new sites of worship, carrying out holy missions for the deity, and spreading the deity's philosophy. In other words, their primary mission is to pull in primal for the deity.

A typical church is going to have a pretty well-defined pecking order for its various officiants. It's possible to run a church by consensus, but this will almost certainly result in more discussion and less activity per member as well as extra effort on the part of the deity in managing the flock. Most gods, especially the more powerful ones, would rather leave that kind of activity to underlings. Less powerful deities, such as godlings or demigods, will probably dictate policy directly to the heads of their churches. Lesser deities are likely to communicate through subordinate demigods or godlings while greater and supreme deities will have fairly extensive chains of command insulating them from their planar churches, primarily because they usually have a number of other "projects" going on.

The amount of influence a deity exerts over a pantheon also contributes to the size of this bureaucracy. For example, an influential demigoddess may have godlings handling her top-level church leaders, simply because she needs to spend more time concentrating on other affairs, like pantheon debates. On the other hand, a lesser deity who abstains from political considerations might have more free time to focus on his church's activities and talk directly to his church. It's important to note that a demigoddess rarely has a church this complex; it's possible, but not likely.

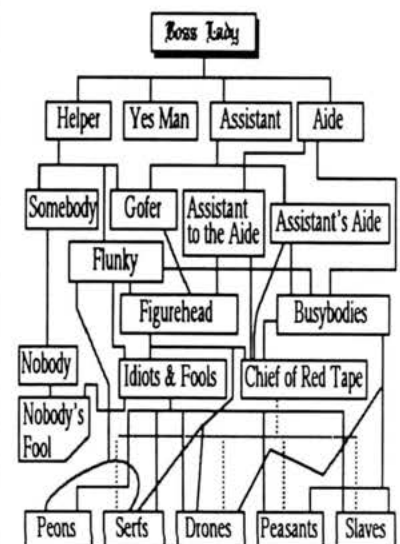
Similarly, older religions have more complex bureaucracies. A new church doesn't have as many people to control or keep busy. Religions that have been running for a while will probably also exert more influence on their local societies. As a result, they'll need more leaders and councils to compile and summarize the information that the deity truly needs to deal with personally. The deity may have these councils report to a demigod, godling, minion, saint, or other representative simply to cut down on the amount of information flowing upward.

In other words, there are two types of bureaucracies involved in any religion. The mortal one handles the actual operation of the church, while the divine one coordinates communication between the deity and the church. Generally, busier gods have larger chains of command. After all, with several planes to govern, universes to explore, races to discover, and wars to fight, there isn't a lot of extra time to spread around.

*So speak me: And You Shall Report to Your Respective Leader. So speak me: And You Shall Obey Them. So speak me: And They Will Be Speaking Me When They Speak. So speak me: To Lie is to Die.*

## Ecclesiastical Administration

### Hierarchy



*Excerpt from The Rules of Ra-Ekon-Dasu*



### Communication Within the Church

Communication within a church is like communication in any large organization. Someone has to make the decisions and someone has to tell the masses; in other words, someone needs to communicate the deity's thoughts to the laity. While deities have been known to appear to mortals in dreams and visions, these are rare occurrences that usually happen only when the deity is just getting started or when the church needs a kick in the pants. Usually, information flows through a clearly defined chain of command. A deity passes a thought to a lieutenant, typically a demigod or godling, who carries this to the mortal leaders of the church, who communicate the message down the line. Eventually, it reaches the worshipers. At some point, usually when it gets into mortal hands, the message is translated into holy scriptures, canons, edicts, or other writings. These become sources of study, philosophical debate, meditation, and interpretation by the lower-level members of the clergy and perhaps even the worshipers themselves, if they are literate.

Every once in a while, a deity should give the church some visible feedback about its progress. This is usually done through omens, which can indicate that everything's going as scheduled or that things are really messed up—in which case, someone's head is likely to roll. Omens usually appear as purely natural phenomena, except to those who know better. Some specific examples are a localized storm over the main temple, milk going sour for no apparent reason, horses sweating before they're worked, and so on. While attributed to the deity, these are not usually directly caused by the deity. Instead, they're assigned to some demigod, who hands them to some poor godling, who finally ends up having to take care of the details. Naturally, omens are often misinterpreted, unnoticed, or just plain ignored. Some deities must feel like political satirists trying to write comic strips for a grade-school newspaper.

Deities usually have their reasons for being so subtle, however. One possible reason is so that worshipers will study and observe. If a deity always told worshipers exactly what they should do, they would eventually forget how to think and lose all sense of initiative, which would make them useless in a crisis. This subtle approach teaches worshipers to remain attentive and rewards those who do so. Another reason might be that the deity wants to project a sense of divine mystique. Many worshipers feel that deities are *supposed* to speak in the wind and the thunder, and a deity who just talked like plain folks wouldn't attract as many worshipers as one who put more effort into the special effects. If you aren't comfortable with either of these explanations, and can't think of one of your own, then feel free to abandon the idea of omens altogether.

### Commitment of the Deity

The more work a deity puts into making the religion succeed, the more likely it will. While a religion may do well without the deity's direct input, it may take longer to do so, it may not realize its full potential, or it may get confused and become successful at the wrong thing. After all, it's unreasonable to start a new business and expect it to flower without keeping track of its performance and adjusting to its needs. Deities should check up on their churches every so often, just to make certain everything's on course.

It is possible, though, to "over-manage" a church. Deities who control every single aspect of their organizations may eventually offend their mortal supporters. People like to be trusted; they like to have a sense of responsibility and the freedom to do their work. While deities don't often care about offending mortals—after all, what are they going to do?—they should be careful not to encourage talented members of the clergy to jump ship; it leads to other problems all too easily. For example, let's say Nayeb is a high priest of Mhatyi. Nayeb tries to promote Mhatyi's philosophy through the church, but Mhatyi constantly intervenes, making minor corrections in the sermons he writes and telling him exactly what orders to give and to whom he should assign each

duty. After a while, Nayeb gets tired of being treated like a fool and leaves the church. Mhatyi's rival Sussar, sensing an opportunity, recruits Nayeb and gets him to join her clergy and tell them Mhatyi's secrets. Mhatyi is understandably quite distressed, but he can't punish Nayeb without risking retribution from Sussar, who now knows enough about Mhatyi's church to hit him where it hurts. Most deities prefer to avoid such dilemmas by letting the clergy feel useful.

If the deity is the capstone of a religion, worshipers are its foundation. After all, their souls are providing the primal energy the deity gains from their worship. Because of this, it's important to consider what each party must do to keep the other's loyalty and interest. Mortals' commitments to their churches are like contractual agreements; something must be returned on their investments of time, effort, money, and so on. These benefits may be something as basic as praise, or something more complex, such as spell energy, the powering of magic items, military support, or financial security. No matter what is expected and delivered, worshipers will sometimes ask, "What have you done for me lately?" If the answer is "Nothing much," they'll start looking for a more profitable partner.

Along these same lines, worshipers should be rewarded for actions above and beyond the normal expectations, and these rewards should match the scope of the achievements. If a warrior converts a large city, establishes a major temple, sacrifices an artifact, and basically contributes more primal to the deity than the average worshiper, then the warrior's deity should be very careful to reward this meritorious service; possible rewards could include a wish, a magic item, or a promotion through the ranks. At the very least, this warrior should have a few prayers answered or receive an encouraging vision. If a deity ignores this type of devotion, word will get around, and it's very likely that this warrior and several others may begin to reconsider their commitment to the church. While some deities will save their rewards for truly epic deeds, savvy ones will find a way to encourage and reward anything out of the ordinary.

Naturally, most deities will have certain requirements that the faithful must adhere to as a matter of course, including attending services, abiding by rules of conduct, providing financial support, and so on. Different deities will have different moral codes or standards of living for their people. Some require extensive sacrifice and devotion while others are less demanding. In any case, believers are typically expected to display their loyalties publicly by attending religious services; after all, deities won't receive primal unless their religious sites are attended by a significant body of worshipers.

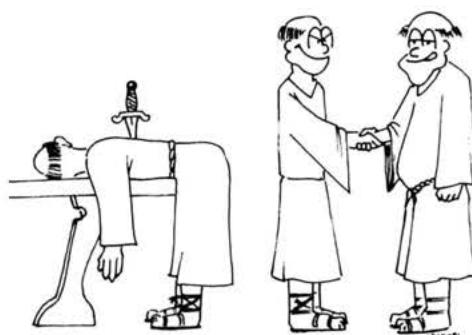
Every church needs a way for staff members to get promoted into more influential and better-paying positions. Theoretically, this will be a process based on the mortal's ability, piety, and loyalty to the church. Committees may select the best qualified candidate from a pool of hopefuls or award the position to the first candidate who completes a minor quest. You shouldn't feel compelled to have such testing quests relate directly to the church; sometimes they might even be silly quests concocted solely to challenge the candidates. "We want a shrubbery. But make it a nice one . . ."

Of course, most organizations fall prey to some form of political maneuvering, infighting, or intrigue that will certainly contribute to the decision of who gets promoted to what job. Churches whose philosophies approve of such things will typically be more guilty of this than others. Advancement may be handled through backstabbing, treachery, or even assassination if the deity chooses not to intervene. Some deities may encourage such competitiveness, or even start various rumors about different individuals in the church just to watch the fur fly.

## Expectations

6

## Advancement: How Priests Get Raises



Congratulations on your appointment  
to bishop.

## Places of Religious Importance

### *Places of Public Worship*

Whatever the case, it's important for you to have a sense of how people progress through the ranks. This helps keep your NPCs fresh and challenging to your players, and it also contributes to the store of potential adventure ideas.

Once you have set up the general structure of the religion, it's time to determine where believers go to express their piety. These sacred areas can be places of public worship, places of private worship, or places of historical significance.

Places of public worship help keep a religion going by offering believers a place to worship their deity actively and contact members of the clergy. Consequently, each temple will have a staff large enough to support the congregation and maintain and protect the temple. Most are built by capable followers or paid builders. Temples should be designed with an architecture that the society finds aesthetically appealing or at least appropriate, for such a building will attract more worshipers than an offensive or plain structure. The cost of building a temple varies depending on materials, location, size, and the society's economy. Annual maintenance will run about 5–10% of the original construction cost.

For the most part, details on places of public worship have already been covered in the discussion on sources of primal energy in Chapter Three. The key things to remember are diversity and variety. Different religions have different types of temples, and some may have none at all. These can range from architectural wonders, like Westminster Abbey or the ziggurats of the Babylonians, to "natural" formations, like Stonehenge. Religions of undead deities might meet in cemeteries or mausoleums, for example. In other words, these structures will come in all sizes and configurations.

Larger places of worship might also act as civic centers, social hubs, or even focal points for military activity. Some may be fortified and look more like fortresses of war than sanctuaries in which to get married; others might serve as gambling casinos, brothels, universities, centers of government, art galleries, or torture chambers. Again, variety is the key.

### *Places of Private Worship*

Many religions encourage places for private worship within a household, where individuals can meditate and pray to the deity. This could be a relatively intricate niche or shrine with incense burners, hangings, and a small image of the deity, or a spartan chamber with nothing more than a mat and a copy of whatever writings the church produces, if any. Again, the details vary from church to church and offer very interesting opportunities to help develop a specific culture or society. Places of private worship do not require the church

to supply members of the clergy, construction fees, or maintenance costs; the individual worshipers will normally purchase their own supplies, which may be sold by the church.

Certain geographic areas can be significant to a religion. Generally referred to as "consecrated ground," these regions can be such places as the city where the deity was born as a mortal, the site of a major battle, or the place the deity once appeared during a rare visit to the main plane. Other possibilities include sites of some crucial turning points in the church's development, like the spot where a prophet received a vision from the deity, a former temple of a rival church, the place a martyr was slain, and so on.

Consecrated grounds must be ritually dedicated to a deity by the deity's clergy, but they usually do not require maintenance or upkeep. If the church does not protect them, however, they can be reconsecrated to other deities; this is considered a grave insult to the original deity and usually results in a conflict between the two churches.

A religion is an expensive organization to maintain; there are salaries to pay, temples to build, supplies to purchase, charities to support, and so on. Like any organization, a church needs a source of income. While some churches maintain their coffers through invasions, tributes, and taxes, most rely on donations from their followers.

The most common forms of donations are *offerings* and *sacrifices*. While these terms are almost interchangeable in our world, they have separate and distinct meanings in this book. Offerings are regular amounts a deity demands from the faithful as part of the worship process. Sacrifices are special gifts that believers offer the church as extreme expressions of gratitude or demonstrations of piety and loyalty; these special gifts also give the deity extra primal flux, as described in Chapter Three.

The major difference between an offering and a sacrifice is its scope. An offering is usually a flat percentage of a believer's income. To keep from hurting the believer's lifestyle and thus discouraging worshipers, deities tend to keep the percentage small, usually no more than ten percent (a *tithe*). A sacrifice, on the other hand, is a substantial and significant gift from the believer. Again, this is relative. To a king, ten gold pieces is hardly a sacrifice, but a peasant offering the same amount makes a true sacrifice, especially if that's more money than the peasant usually sees over the course of several months. If a sacrifice is particularly generous, the deity receives extra flux for that day.

Material offerings like this should not be confused with ritual ones. Many religions require some form of payment for difficult or extremely powerful ceremonies. For example, significant compensation is expected for raising someone from the dead. Ritual offerings like this can take any form, though they usually relate to the type of boon sought. For example, a deity may bless a village's harvest in return for the "first fruits." Again, these sacrifices are simple business transactions and the deity will not gain flux from them, unless the payment is made in mortal souls, which is a different ballgame altogether.

Deities with no philosophical objections to such things often prefer intelligent life for ritual offerings. Such an offering gives the deity a new soul that can be bled for daily flux, as we mentioned in Chapter Three. So, while some churches try to convert worshipers, others may advocate ritually slaying anyone in sight. While you can't get as much flux from bleeding sacrificed souls as you can from willing worshipers, you don't have to provide services for them, either.

### Places of Historical Importance

### Offerings and Sacrifices

## 6



*Tales of Urukzha,  
Chapter 5486*

*... and the people cried out, for fear was in them, and Urukzha glared, and many died, and many fled, but more seized their neighbor, and slew him, and the rivers ran red, and Urukzha was pleased, and the troubles passed . . .*

Churches also demand offerings and sacrifices for a purely practical reason. Specifically, high priests occasionally skim a little off the top; they feel they've earned a percentage for their loyalty and accomplishments. While many deities encourage or turn a blind eye to this, some become quite irritated when they find out and react accordingly.

### Other Sources of Income

A church can also supplement its income by offering products or services. These range from purely mundane things such as crafts, statuettes of the saints, and raffle tickets to magical services like healing spells, item identification, and indulgences. The most lucrative service of this type is spellcasting. Unless they are part of an adventuring party and receiving equal shares of the booty, clerics will ask for payment to cast a spell. In fact, clerics rarely cast spells for free; it's simply too much work. Even if some particularly noble clerics felt it wasn't right to charge money for healing, they wouldn't openly violate the practice for fear of being swamped with sick and injured people who have no intention of showing their gratitude to the church.

Many churches will, however, offer discounts to worshipers who attend services regularly and promptly pay their offerings. Most churches only charge their worshipers about one-tenth of what they charge nonbelievers. Some churches won't help nonbelievers at all, or at least do so very rarely; after all, everyone has a price.

### Alternative Organizational Structures

Our suggestions are really a small sample from a host of possibilities. Some deities may run their organizations more loosely, essentially using minions and demigods to run the central organization through direct inspiration of the various church leaders. Deities of this type will not have extensive central networks on their home planes.

Others may not get involved in the mortal churches, preferring to leave everything, including the development of the canon, payment of rewards, and so on, in the hands of the mortal church leaders. Still others may avoid any



kind of structure at all. Such deities could inspire one great prophet or book of writings and then let the worshipers organize themselves or not, as they please. While religions with fewer rules and less structure may initially attract more worshipers, they will likely be less cohesive and less efficient at getting tasks done, and a deity who tries to manage his or her religion this way will find it difficult to keep the worshipers focused and working together towards any given goal.

At the core, religions are political organizations populated with mortals who have desires, ambitions, goals, and private agendas. This poses a number of interesting scenarios for political rivalries between various aspects of the religion and the outside world. A church, like any other organization, usually becomes a political faction eventually. As such, even the most ethical, scrupulous, and magnanimous religions eventually face the same bureaucratic problems plaguing all organizations.

There are four basic political arenas you need to consider when setting up religious organizations within a campaign: intra-religion politics, inter-religion politics, deity-to-deity politics, and church and state.

Intra-religion politics is the political maneuvering that goes on within a church. This subject includes relationships between various sects of the religion, the methods employed to advance within the organization, internal corruption, and mortal competition. All religions of significant size have a certain amount of internal politics. The nature of this atmosphere depends on the religion's structure, management efficiency, wealth, philosophy, and relationship to the outside world. Each factor plays a part in determining what things are like on the inside.

Larger, wealthier, and more politically powerful religions tend to stagnate, rest on their laurels, and become bureaucracies. As a church becomes secure, complacency, greed, and manipulation can become more important than spreading the gospel. Power-hungry individuals who could care less about church doctrine may bribe their way through the ranks and co-opt church resources for their personal gain. Some deities eventually tire of this behavior and start some form of revival in the ranks, while others let the church work out its own problems; it all depends on the nature of the deity. Occasionally, deities inspire dramatic reforms that can split the church in half. In these situations, some deities continue to primally support clerics on both sides of the question, leaving the final outcome to fate; others desert their more complacent worshipers in favor of those who actively live the faith. Remember, most deities love to test the faith and dedication of their followers.

*Gløi looked down, and its church was corrupt. Gløi was very unhappy, and from its loins sprang an avenger, who was sworn to remedy the foolishness. Many were taken to Gløi by the avenger to answer for their behavior. Few returned.*

*There were many promotions that year, in the Church of Gløi . . .*

One problem that occasionally crops up in a sedentary church is a situation in which high-ranking members of the clergy, who have perhaps lost some of their initial zeal and are settling down comfortably into the good life, fear that PC adventurers who go out and acquire fame and wealth are going to usurp their positions. In some churches, these jealous clerics might arrange for some "mishap" to befall the adventuring priest or holy warrior, or perhaps the adventurer might be brought up on trumped-up charges and excommunicated. PCs who are faced with such a situation might consider finding a sponsor, a high-ranking clergy member who is willing to intercede on their behalf and

## Church Politics

### Intra-religion Politics

# 6

### The Great Purge

handle any political problems while they're away adventuring. Of course, such a sponsor will probably want to share in the glory, prestige, and valuables the PCs will bring in, and may also want to give them specific tasks from time to time. Sponsors don't always make things perfect, but they can certainly help in tight situations.

Many deities won't allow such infighting to occur within their organizations, but others will have their reasons for doing so. Some deities may not be watching that closely, particularly if their churches are vast organizations and some godling or demigod is supposed to be monitoring the situation. Others may decide to let the mortals in the church work out their own problems, intervening only if the church seems in danger of total collapse. Still others might decide that this is an excellent opportunity to test the PCs' loyalty and shake up the lazier clergy members at the same time. In this case, if the PCs succeed in reforming the church or at least keeping it going, they will likely be handsomely rewarded for their troubles.

Another crisis that can arise within a religious organization occurs when multiple people or factions have differences of opinion on how various omens and works of scripture should be interpreted. Again, devout followers of the truth might be branded heretics by perfectly sincere church authorities. Unless the deity chooses to intervene, these debates can become quite heated, particularly when both sides are genuinely convinced they're right.

#### *Inter-religion Politics*

Relations between religions are usually distant at best. Even if two churches are allied, they are rarely close. Most are far more likely to oppose other religions to varying degrees than welcome them with open arms. It all depends on the philosophies of the churches and deities involved. This tension stems from the simple fact that there are only so many worshippers to go around. As the number of competing religions in a single area increases and the flow into the pews and coffers slows down, the competition between churches becomes more intense.

In extreme situations, religions will band together to cope with a particular crisis, especially if there is a strong leader to placate and smooth the feathers of those involved. However, once the crisis has passed, the alliance will begin to strain and eventually crumble unless there are very compelling reasons to keep it together. Even if two deities have formed an alliance and sent word through the ranks to "get along," the clerics in the field will usually merely tolerate their competitors. After all, it's very difficult to become close to people if you might be asked to rip out their throats in the next minute.

Some churches manifest this contempt more openly than others. Their representatives will be more likely to react to "infidels" with open hostility or verbal abuse. If this goes too far, things may escalate to vandalism, public humiliation, assassinations, and all-out warfare. Today's "police actions" pale when compared to a jihad between two diametrically opposed religions.

#### *Deity-to-Deity Politics*

Mortal structures aren't the only elements of a religion subject to rapid breakdowns. Ancient alliances between deities can fall apart with the snap of a finger if one deity feels personally affronted by another. While a conflict between mortal churches might eventually involve the deities, it's far more likely to happen the other way around. A divine brawl almost always includes combat between the respective churches; both sides go into a jihad mode, fanaticism runs rampant among the faithful, and both deities spend massive amounts of primal to boost the performance of their clerics, holy warriors, and paladins to top form. Other allied religions can become involved as deities and religious leaders call in favors and debts. When two deities go to war, the effects are extremely widespread.

It's important, though, to remember the other side of the coin; a war between churches can end as quickly as it started. If one deity apologizes and

offers some token of contrition—say, a major artifact or ten—the other deity may choose to forget the whole thing.

How powerful subordinates play into divine conflicts can be very intriguing. In one instance deities might not give their godlings a second thought, yet in other situations deities may go into an outrage at the very hint that one of their godlings or demigods has been challenged.

Things can also become interesting when a godling or demigod attempts to manipulate more powerful deities politically to assist in some personal goal. Other minor deities may end up stretching the limits of their political ability in their attempts to avoid getting caught in the crossfire of whatever the latest divine scandal is. Avoiding a war can be a tricky exercise, particularly when deities who've helped you out in the past expect you to return the favor.

In a fantasy realm where deities are more visibly active in mortal affairs than in our own world, there is much more interaction between the church and the state. Nations not ruled or heavily influenced by one or more religious organizations are the exception, not the rule. Alliances between nations are affected by the relationships between the major religions of each nation. Also, a war between deities can easily lead to war between nations, or a church that significantly influences two nations about to go to war can exert an extremely pacifying effect.

One reason religions enjoy more power in fantasy realms stems from the way supernatural powers are viewed by the population at large. After all, depending on the game system, churches can use magical means to provide food, heal wounds, cure diseases, and even raise the dead. Imagine the popularity of a church that could have prevented the Black Plague! Secular nations, on the other hand, are known primarily for taxation and conscription. A church's supernatural power offers a certain amount of influence over people—influence most religions quickly manipulate.

Another reason for the importance of religion lies in the impact that the greater physical presence of deities makes on a fantasy campaign. Miracles do happen and are documented by reliable sources; reports of divine appearances aren't relegated to supermarket tabloids. The majority of the populace will earnestly believe in the existence of at least one or two deities. Depending on the extent of divine intervention on the plane in question, this can be a fairly major factor. A deity can intimidate a government with chancellors, minions, godlings, demigods, natural disasters, or even a personal appearance, if things get that rough.

The more actively involved deities are in the course of events of a campaign, the more influence their religions will have on the politics and societies of that world. Furthermore, you'd see more things like state-sponsored rituals for sacred holidays or important events, priests as secular rulers, sacred cows, cats, or other animals pampered at public expense, and so forth.

Each religion has its own philosophies and ideas. These often cover topics like how to interact with fellow mortals, proper ways to worship the deity, appropriate reactions to secular authority, correct ways to treat devotees of other religions, and so on. Philosophies vary widely from church to church, even among those with similar moral stances. For example, one church may prefer a certain set of ethics, want the rest of the universe to comply with them, and kill the "pagans" who refuse to convert. Yet, another religion with similar ethical ideas may also abhor loss of life. This second religion wouldn't use a sword to spread the word, yet clerics of both religions would generally agree with each other on moral issues, in spite of the different ways each church applies its views.

## Church and State

# 6

## Religious Philosophy



Also, what is good for one society may repel another. For example, a particular deity may support, protect, and provide for people of a certain nationality or race while commanding them to destroy anything in their path—men, women, children, cats, dogs, you name it. This deity's followers would see their deity as a good benefactor who lovingly watches them, while the people being attacked might see this deity as an evil god of destruction and genocide. Point of view has much to do with how deities are perceived. A historical example can be found in the Persian deity Ahura-Mazda, who was worshiped by Darius I as the personification of goodness and light. Those enslaved by Darius's armies, however, had a much different opinion of that particular deity.

One of the first questions to address when formulating religious philosophies for your campaign is whether or not there is an ultimate force of "good" and an ultimate force of "evil," and whether these are actual deities, planes, galactic forces, or whatever. If such forces exist, they will by their very nature set the universal definitions of good and evil. Spells that detect these qualities will be powered by these concepts, and it will be pretty obvious where most religions lie in the spectrum.

On the other hand, if no such forces exist, things become much more hazy. Some "evil" deities will claim to be "good," and get away with it until proven otherwise. Other "evil" deities might not really be all that bad; perhaps they're simply misunderstood. Still others will drift around a bit, or be seen as different things to different peoples. Spells such as Detect Evil and Detect Good would probably respond relative to the deity worshiped by the caster or the caster's own views. In fact, a given person might register as good to one cleric and evil to another! In this type of world, a cleric of Isis would appear differently to a cleric of Ra than to a cleric of Set.

In either case, deities and religions should never be stereotyped according to their philosophical bents. No two evil deities are exactly alike, and not every paladin keeps his or her word; there are various degrees of virtue and contemptibility.

For these reasons, you should take some time to think about the religious philosophies of the primary religions in your campaign. Here are some questions to consider:

- What kind of moral stance does the church take? The first step in trying to figure out where a church lies is to look at how closely what it claims to be matches what it really is. If you use alignments or some similar concept in your campaign, consider which alignment the church's philosophy will support.
- Does the church advocate the use of force in spreading the gospel? If so, to what extent? Does it only persecute rival clerics? Or does it also advocate force against ignorant peasants? Are the heathen allowed the opportunity to convert?
- Does the church teach guidelines for daily life, and if so, what are they? Does it have a cosmology to explain the creation of the universe and the meaning of existence?
- How well does the religion get along with the local government? Does it support conforming to legal strictures, or is it fomenting and financing a rebellion? Or does it ignore worldly affairs altogether?
- What does the church demand for offerings or sacrifices? Precious metals and gems? Magic items? Fruits? Goats? Infidel lives? Firstborn children?
- How much charity work is the church involved in? What charities does it support, if any? Orphanages? Hospitals? Asylums? The local thieves'



guild?

- How does the church feel about material wealth? Do influential members live in palatial estates while the rest of the populace starves? Is it an order of mendicant friars who only keep what they absolutely need to survive?
- To what rules and codes must priests and holy warriors of the church adhere? What are the specific positions on combat? Celibacy? Honor? Defense of the weak and handicapped? Involvement in politics? Involvement in the military? And what are the penalties for straying from the path?
- To what rules and codes must the lay worshipers of the church adhere? What penalties do common sinners pay?
- How does the church treat its enemies? Are they hunted down and killed, tolerated as nuisances, or respected as adversaries? Does the church allow people from enemy churches or opposing philosophies to join? What is involved in atonement for former sins?
- Does the church place more emphasis on rules and rituals or on individual expressions of religious fervor?
- Is the religion socially or racially prejudiced? If so, against whom? To what extent? How is this prejudice manifested?
- Who are the major saints or prominent figures of the church? How did they get so honored? Does the church have any major myths or parables?
- What rituals does the church have? Are there regular, structured meetings? Does the church celebrate annual or seasonal events such as equinoxes or solstices? To what extent have these rituals and services influenced the secular society?
- Does the church have any symbols, relics, or tokens that distinguish it from other churches or beliefs? Are any of these items lost or missing? Is there a sacred jewel, sacred color, or sacred hairstyle that allows worshipers to recognize each other?

This is not intended as an exhaustive list. Still, it should stimulate some ideas and generate other questions. Remember, the goal is to come up with something that works and is still playable. Naturally, a GM who fully understands the major religions in the campaign will have a richer game than one who doesn't; it'll also be easier to generate adventures and local color for the players.

People need something to believe in. A deity with no concrete or formal philosophy will be difficult for mortals to identify with. Also, a strong philosophy can generate fanatic loyalty among worshipers, bring more people into the fold, and strengthen the deity's position in the multiverse.

Religions are, at heart, political entities and all such entities need a premise or theme to guide them. Organizations without strong underlying goals or working philosophies flounder with no clear objectives or reasons to progress until, at last, they fall.

For religions, this concept is particularly crucial. Deities are asking mortals to become completely devoted to, if not obsessed with, their way of life and philosophy. If this lifestyle isn't practical, productive, logical, and also emotionally fulfilling, the religion will fall short of its true potential.

Some deities, though, choose not to spend much time hashing out clean, detailed philosophies. Many deities are incredibly busy having their own adventures and worrying about day-to-day life on the divine level. Even godlings and demigods assigned to look after a church may be more concerned with their own advancement than with the needs of the people their religion is

## The Value of a Religious Philosophy



## Developing a Religious Philosophy

designed to serve. In fact, deities very rarely truly examine the specific needs, desires, and drives of would-be worshipers when formulating their religious philosophies. You are, of course, free to do things differently in your campaign.

Since most deities really don't put much thought into the development of their religious philosophies, the ideology that springs forth is often simply an extension of the deity's personal philosophy. For example, a deity who was a warrior in mortal life, rose to power through combat, and took possession of a plane by force may create a religion based on combat readiness and excellence. This certainly isn't anything original, but one probably wouldn't want to take this up with the deity. Some mortals will find that this deity's philosophy offers a practical advantage, especially if their country is being invaded. They need this deity's expertise and aid to keep their homes from being overrun.

Now, if a deity did want to put some thought into developing a religious philosophy that would appeal to the masses, then he or she would probably go about it much the same way modern marketing agencies target consumers. (A quick warning, here: things are about to get appallingly un-mythical. If you don't want to see the little man behind the curtain, skip ahead to the next section.) If a new upstart deity named Reinad, for example, wants to develop a philosophy and sphere of influence around families, he might approach it like this:

### The Four Ps of Marketing

**Product.** Reinad must decide upon the fundamental precepts of his religious philosophy. He takes into consideration the knowledge and resources that he has at his disposal, his reputation, and the needs and desires of his targeted segment of society. Since Reinad is big on family values and fondly remembers his childhood, his fundamental precepts might center around family "togetherness." He decides his church's major goals are to keep families together during times of crisis, reunite lost loved ones, help families cope with a loss, and help families expand.

Now, that last precept enters a different market, specifically the realm of fertility, an area already being cultivated by other deities. Still, Reinad decides that it is a high-demand market that can be "broken into" easily, so he sticks with it. In other words, there are few monopolies in religious thought.

**Price.** With religions, this usually takes the form of tithes, offerings, sacrifices, vows, attendance requirements for religious gatherings, adjustments in



lifestyle, and so forth. Reinad decides to demand a tithe from his worshipers to help support the church and the clergy and insists that his people spend time supporting orphanages and other charities, which will help spread the news. He also wants to require vows of lifelong commitment to love and support all family members. Required lifestyle adjustments for his church will include such things as annual reunions and large family showings for weddings, baptisms, graduations, funerals, and similar gatherings.

**Placement.** In Reinad's case, his religion has the potential to appeal to basically everyone, since everyone is involved with a family, or potentially could be, especially if they worship him. More specifically, his target worshipers are those people who have families or want to be part of a family.

**Promotion.** To get things started, Reinad finds some fairly large families, both poor and wealthy. Using his divine influence, he creates situations that are overcome when the family pulls together and supports each other. He might then appear in a vision to one of the prominent family leaders, encouraging that person to start up a church in Reinad's name. Reinad might also inspire a poet to write moving prose celebrating the family's victory over this crisis and Reinad's part in bringing things to a good ending.

What we're talking about here is *advertising*, pure and simple. The thing to remember about advertising, from the point of a view of a deity, is to be serious. Deities must use the same tactics that banks use; they have to sound intelligent, wise, strong, powerful, and secure; they must project the feeling that they are looking out for a mortal's interests and that investing faith in them is a smart move. No one would put their money in a bank with a frivolous reputation, and likewise few responsible citizens would worship a deity who went around throwing parties with their offerings. Oh, sure, Celebrae might get the nod come festival time, but when Cereous, God of Propriety, shows up for a holy war, Celebrae's warriors will still be reeling with hangovers.

Effective divine advertising involves analysis of the *customer* and the *competition*. This is followed by a successful advertising campaign designed to establish the name of the deity in the minds of the public, and to demonstrate why this religion is better than the competition's.

The advertising must be targeted to a specific audience, just like the philosophy. Different approaches appeal to different people. The target audience will vary from deity to deity, depending upon the scope of the religion. The larger the scope, generally, the more basic the advertising has to be. For example, our warrior god isn't going to be too worried about reaching the mages of the world, but Reinad has to reach the mages, the warriors, and the peasants. So, his advertising may be more generalized.

Once the target population is selected, deities should take a good look at who their competitors are and devise strategies to illustrate why their own religions are better choices. Tactics for this can be anything from simple emotional appeals by streetcorner preachers ("A gold-piece in every purse!") to a carefully orchestrated series of seminars or services. Since Reinad wants to reach those with families, his clerics might offer marriage counseling, midwifery, occasional quality babysitting, and similar services.

Services like this are the most effective way to draw and keep worshipers. Unlike a "commercial" approach, this method demonstrates what the religion can offer mortals, provides opportunities to explain the canon, and assists the faithful. As always, deeds are more effective than words.

When presenting a religious philosophy, the idea is to determine the best approach to reach and attract worshipers. What will be the cheapest and most effective method? As a GM, you will want to be careful not to let this marketing approach go too far. While a basic understanding of advertising

## Revealing a Philosophy to Worshipers

6

### The Two Cs of Advertising

### Who Needs Public Relations

can enhance the campaign, few GMs and players will want to coordinate something as complex as modern-day corporate sponsorship of athletes. A little work here can be rewarding, but too much can bog the campaign down. Don't go overboard or get silly, unless, of course, that's the idea behind *your* campaign. "This melee brought to you by Ares, *the* God of War. Accept Nothing Less."

Some deities may opt for a more direct approach to converting worshipers. Instead of going to all the trouble of figuring out what worshipers want, they may prefer good old-fashioned fear, force, and intimidation, especially if they control the local government and can back up their threats. Fear can be such an effective motivator, and if that fails, well, a captured soul can offer nearly as much primal as a devoted worshiper.

### What Attracts Mortals to a Philosophy?

Worshipers are attracted to religions that are perceived to fill some need or set of needs that the worshipers feel is important. To fully analyze how a religion might fit a worshiper's needs, it is helpful to understand the fundamental needs of mortals. In the following subsection, we discuss the needs of humans in our own world; you can use this list as a starting place to discover the needs of other prominent races in your campaign.

### Mortal Needs

Understanding mortal needs is one of the great fundamental questions of our society. But, since we the authors are not psychologists but merely gamers, we're going to address this topic like any lazy gamer would: by deferring to an expert's opinion, in this case Abraham Maslow. Maslow, a well-known psychologist, developed the hierarchy of needs, which describes what humans need and which of those needs are most important. Now unless you really want to put a lot of time into developing varied religions, this subsection may be a bit too much. This is simply one tool that some of us have used from time to time in helping to design religions that meet various needs. Taking this human hierarchy of needs and adjusting it can be an innovative tool in helping you design other races as well.

These needs, in order of most to least important, are listed below:

- Physiological needs: satisfying hunger and thirst and maintaining the internal state of the body are the strongest of human needs. When these are not being fulfilled, everything else can wait.
- Safety needs: to feel secure and safe, to seek pleasure and avoid pain.
- Belonging and love needs: to affiliate with others, be accepted, and give and receive attention.
- Esteem needs: to achieve, gain approval, and excel.
- Cognitive needs: to understand, be curious, and explore.
- Aesthetic needs: symmetry, order, and beauty.
- Self-actualization needs: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential.
- Need for transcendence: to find meaning in existence.

Maslow goes on to say that the lower-order needs take precedence over higher ones. For example, the need for water takes precedence over the need for friendship; people need water to survive and only after they have taken care of this physiological need do they begin to look for friends.

Deities need to match their philosophies and approaches with the needs of their target societies. In an impoverished or famine-stricken place, any deity who runs a soup kitchen will be extremely popular; in fact, everyone will convert if it's a choice between that and starvation. In a less distressed economy, focusing on the church as a family might fulfill belonging needs,

*from Robert Ornstein,  
Psychology, the Study  
of Human Experience,  
(New York: Harcourt Brace  
Jovanovich, 1985), 467-8*

using it as a school and library might fulfill cognitive needs, and so forth. Of course, it's important to remember that not everyone in a given society will be at the same need level, so it might be wise for a religion to offer something in each of the categories.

To fully understand the potential scope of a religious organization, it's best to look at some examples. The next subsections outline a couple of churches in very broad strokes. We're not saying your religions need to be this in-depth, but we thought it might be easier to scale down a detailed example than to extrapolate from a more limited one. This also gives us a chance to put some of this theory into practice.

What follows is a description of a sample church that is fundamentally linked with a specific culture and society. This is the sort of church structure you might design if you are primarily interested in providing a detailed setting for PC priests.

Like most of the rest of kithkin culture, kithkin religion is essentially simple and easygoing in structure but a matter of deep-rooted belief at the core. Kithkin culture revolves around a central symbol, the hearthfire, which represents to the kithkin everything that is warm, safe, comfortable, and in balance, as it should be. It is significant that the kithkin word for "clan" would translate most directly as "household-big."

The divine manifestation of this symbol is the lesser goddess Petri, most often represented as a not young, not old pregnant woman with long, bound red hair and golden-brown eyes. Officially, she is called Goddess of Home and Family, and she is starting to develop protection as a sphere of influence for when she becomes a greater deity. Her sacred animal is the nanny goat, her plant the potato, and she is associated with the sun and the earth. She is considered the Grandmother of the Flame Household, the "family" of the living. Her personality is said to be compassionate and generous, but also very, very clever, and she is known to win her battles by clever plots. Her punishments for transgressions against her House are always proverbially suited to the crimes.

Petri has a very prominent demigod named Skree, who some claim is actually an avatar of Petri in disguise. He is a tall, gaunt figure with black hair and ice-gray eyes. His province is death, and he is associated with omens, fate, and mysteries as a result. His sacred animal and plant is the stone, as a kithkin priest would put it, and he is associated with the moon and with large bodies of water. He is the Grandfather of the Ash Household, the "family" of the dead and unborn. Descriptions of his personality vary from person to person, depending on whether that person fears or welcomes death. Skree's priests maintain only that he is mercilessly just.

In any settlement of kithkin there will be one Great House, which is considered Petri's temple even though Skree is also revered there. It is, as one would expect, a homey place with many extra rooms, since no one seeking a hearth by which to spend the night is ever turned away. Donations are accepted but not required or even encouraged; it is assumed that Petri will provide for her House just as it is assumed that a she would not allow harm to come within its walls.

Petri's priests can be either male or female, but most are females who feel themselves "chosen" shortly after puberty. When the novitiates come into Petri's House, they spend a year learning the lore and ritual and brushing up on their domestic skills, which are required. At the end of this year, if they still wish to do so, they go through the marriage ceremony as brides with the ranking priest, called the Mother, speaking the part of the groom. From this

## Complete Religions

### A Kithkin Religion

#### Introducing Petri

6

#### Skree

#### Priests and Temples

*Church for Lay  
Worshippers*



point on the priest is no longer part of her clan; she wears her hair bound like a married woman, and she is sworn to allegiance and chastity. There are normally between ten and forty priests of varying ages in every Great House.

Skree's priests generally choose themselves. They are often people who have had close brushes with death or lost a loved one too soon. There are between two and five priests of Skree in each Great House, and always one of each sex. Like Petri's priests, they have a year's novitiate and swear vows of allegiance and chastity, but they use the funeral ceremony, in the sense of dying to the old self. Afterwards they are still considered single, but they take new names and no longer belong to their clans, which mourn them as if truly dead.

The major duty of Petri's priests, besides providing shelter and food for wayfarers and officiating at ceremonies and worship services, is tending the Great Hearth, a sort of kithkin version of the Eternal Flame. It is said that the original Great Hearth was lit with the very brand that Petri gave to the kithkin ancestors so that they would live through the Cold Time. In the winter, the Great Hearth is an actual fire in a sacred fireplace; in the summer, it is a long row of thick, white candles on the mantel. Naturally, Petri's priests go to serious lengths to keep it from going out. If by some unavoidable circumstance it does go out, which is an extremely bad sign for the whole village, the sacred hearth must be completely demolished and a new one built, and a contingent of priests must travel to another Great House and beg a brand lit from its Great Hearth. During the interim time of no fire, Petri's priests will shed their usual yellow robes and put on the black mourning robes of Skree's priests.

Skree's priests conduct the majority of the funeral service and comfort the bereaved, at which they are surprisingly adept. They are also accomplished fortunetellers who are consulted furtively but often. In the course of these two duties they occasionally act as personal counselors, but anyone seeing them for this reason would strenuously deny it.

There are two aspects to the cult of Petri, the public and private. In each kithkin house there is a shrine to Petri, represented by a single candle ritually lit from the Great Hearth flame in the local temple and kept burning at all times. This candle is to let Petri know that the inhabitants of the house are part of her household; if it goes out, she might not recognize or protect them until it is lit again, though that is the extent of the ill omen. Before meals and at any other time desired, brief impromptu prayers are directed towards this candle, and occasionally small sacrificial items or written prayers are burned in its flame.

Once a week, the entire clan will get together in the house of its eldest member and hold a worship service at which a priest officiates and either another priest or a novice assists. There's no set format for the service, though it almost always includes a very simple shared meal, a very brief parable or fable told by the priest, lots of energetic hymn-singing that is no doubt assisted by the wine with the meal, a voluntary but socially encouraged offering, and some sort of closing benediction. The total time this service takes is 45–90 minutes, depending on the length of the singing.

Once a year, at summer solstice, the entire village gets together at the Great House for Petri's feastday. The celebration begins with a huge picnic, followed by an inspirational play or concert put on by the priests, followed by a ceremonial bonfire around which everyone drinks and dances until they can't. Sometimes someone will offer a sacrifice to insure good luck on a coming venture, but this is widely regarded as unnecessary. Petri is big on everyone being happy and comfy, and sacrifices don't contribute a lot to that. Petri's no fool; she knows that happy, comfy worshipers mean lots of converts, and lots of converts will contribute more to her long-term power than a few sacrifices.



With the obvious exception of funerals, Skree is openly worshiped only on his fastday, the winter solstice, though who knows how many fervent oaths are sworn to him during the year. On this day all gather in the Great House in a special chamber, and no one who is healthy enough to fast eats. The priests of Skree, using whatever method suits best, create an atmosphere of remembrance and sanctity, and then each person who has experienced the death of a loved one in the past year is invited to share a memory of the dead or any lingering sorrow, guilt, or anger he or she may feel. When all have been comforted, the priests bring out a great urn full of ashes cleaned from Petri's hearthfire, and as each person passes by the altar on the way out, he or she kneels a moment while a priest traces a crescent moon in ashes on his or her forehead. These ash moons are worn until midnight that night when they are washed away and the fast is broken.

*But above all you must revere your mothers, for where life sparks you will find my flame. In every womb I make my House; in every breast that nourishes is my love manifest. Cherish your mothers and hold them dear, for their toil bears my finest fruit.*

Kithkin sacraments reflect a deep reverence for the household and a mild but superstitious fear of anything outside its bounds. Simple occasions such as housewarmings, birthdays, and the beginnings and ends of journeys are marked with nearly as much protective ritual as major life events. In the interest of saving space, however, we will describe only the most significant ceremonies.

A dedication ceremony is held as soon as the newborn has a reasonable head of hair, whether this is one day or one year after the actual birth. All of the members of both parents' clans plus any close friends are invited to the ritual, which is held in the Great House. The baby is dressed in an elaborate gown, which was part of the mother's trousseau at her marriage, and the parents bring it before a priest at the front of the sanctuary, accompanied by the couple they have chosen to be the baby's godparents. The priest says a few words about the sanctity of new life, and, if the baby is the couple's first, about the holy transformation from couple to family. After this there might be a song, or the Grandfather of the new baby's clan might make a welcoming speech—whatever spontaneously seems appropriate. Much will be determined by whether this is a first child or an eighth, a long-awaited girl or yet another daughter. When the priest thinks this has gone on long enough, he or she will begin the ritual questions. The parents are asked if they will watch over the child, provide for all its needs, educate it, bring it up in the ways of right living, and make Petri's job of protecting it as easy as they can, to which they reply each time in chorus, "We will, so help us Goddess."

The godparents are asked if they will take special care to see that the child is well-educated, look out for its interests in case of trouble within the family, and take it for their own in the event of the death or incapacity of its parents, to which they respond as the parents did. Then while the mother holds the baby, the godmother takes a ritual pair of golden scissors and cuts a lock of its hair. The priest takes the lock and burns it along with incense in a brazier lit from the Great Hearth, naming the child aloud and calling Petri's attention and blessing on it as a new member of the Flame Household. After this, there is of course a rather large party paid for by the godparents, with lots of presents given to the new baby.

This is a very, very private ceremony, and the details differ from clan to clan. There is no real standard ceremony for men, since the exact point at which fathering a child becomes possible is a bit difficult to determine, but some

*From the Book of Counsel*

## Sacraments

### Birth

### Coming of Age

*Marriage*

clans hold a modified version of the women's ceremony when a boy's voice changes or when he begins to shave. For the women's ceremony, the female head of the household will bustle all the men and boys, even male infants, off somewhere else for the evening. The newly menstruating girl will kneel before her immediate family's Petri shrine, surrounded by her closest female friends, her sisters if she has any, her mother and godmother, and any grandmothers who are still menstruating. Some words will be spoken by either the mother or the godmother; perhaps they will be additional instruction in the facts of life, or a sharing of the experience of the girl's own birth, or personal blessings and wishes for the girl's future fertility. Somewhere in there, a small circle of cloth stained with the girl's blood is burned and Petri's blessing is invoked. Then the non-menstrual girls present are sent to bed so the women can pass around a bit of red wine and talk "women talk" late into the night. Usually, before the party disperses entirely, the godmother will give the girl some small gift for her trousseau, which she will now begin collecting since she is now eligible for marriage.

For kithkin, marriage is an especially sacred institution since the married couple is the foundation of the family, which is sacred. Divorce is unheard of and separation utterly shameful, so courtships tend to be rather long, especially since the groom is expected to provide a house to move into and a bride must have a complete trousseau. Because courtships often last several years, a bride and groom are not necessarily expected to be virgins on their wedding night, but they *are* expected to have given themselves to none but their intended.

On the day of the wedding, just about everybody for miles crams into the sanctuary of the Great House, which is decorated as befits the season. The groom, escorted by his oldest brother and dressed in white, approaches the altar and cues the musicians to begin the Wedding Song. Then the bride, escorted by her oldest sister and dressed in a long red or yellow gown with a crown of leaves or flowers on her head, proceeds down the aisle and stops at the side of her groom. She carries a white taper lit from her family's Petri shrine, and hands this to her sister so she can place both her hands in the groom's. The bridal couple kneels at the request of the priest, and the priest says a few words on the sanctity of marriage, giving whatever advice or encouragement is needed for this specific couple. Then the priest asks the groom, addressing him by his full name, if he will accept this woman as his wife, as the keeper of his household and the mother of his children; if he will give her his name and take her into his clan; and if he will love, respect, and provide for her all of his days, to which he replies, "I will, so help me Goddess." The priest asks the bride if she will accept this man as her husband, as the provider for her household and the father of her children; if she will take his name and give herself into his clan; and if she will love, respect, and nurture him all of her days, to which she gives the same reply. Then, as the priest says a prayer invoking Petri's blessing and protection on this union, the groom will take the crown from his bride's head, braid her hair in the style of a married woman, and bind it with a clasp handed to him by his brother. As the clasp is shut, the priest says, "I pronounce you husband and wife," and the bride's sister blows out the bridal taper.

What exactly happens next varies place to place and time to time. Always there is a kiss, and lots of throwing of rice and other grains, and eventually a huge party with a tremendous cake and even more tremendous casks of wine. In the cake is hidden a small copper ring, and whoever finds it will supposedly be blessed with either a marriage or a new baby within the year. When the party reaches its climax, the bride and groom are carried on a litter to their new house and sometimes even all the way to their new bed. The priest will ritually light their first hearthfire and their new household Petri shrine with

a brand from the Great Hearth's fire, and then everybody except the couple will go back to finish getting drunk. A "Just Married" sign is placed on the couple's door, sometimes with appropriate or inappropriate drawings around the edges, and no one is supposed to knock on the door or bother the couple until they decide to take it down.

As a person lies dying, a priest of Skree will be summoned and if possible given a few moments alone with the dying one to ease the passage and hear any last requests, regrets, confessions, or other private loose ends. Ideally, the members of the immediate family will return for the final words and actual death, at which time the priest places a blessing and a preservation spell on the body. This rite indicates legal death, so the priest makes quite sure the person is truly dead first. Then the priest helps the family ritually wash the body and dress it in a shroud.

After a period of mourning, in which the body lies in state and the house is dressed in black curtains, the funeral takes place by a special stone altar in the backyard of the Great House. All of Skree's priests are present, though two are especially chosen either by the dying person, by the family, or among themselves. Of these, the senior begins the funeral by going to the dead person's house and beginning the Death Song, which is sung until the procession of family, friends, and body reaches the ceremony site. At the head of the procession is a special lay officiant, either someone previously chosen by the dead person or the next of kin, carrying a torch lit from the dead one's family Petri shrine. At the end is a priest of Petri carrying a torch lit from the Great Hearth. When they reach the site, Petri's priest passes her torch to Skree's priest and leaves, and the lay officiant gives his or her torch to secondary priest and is seated. All of the mourners wear black, gray, or some combination of the two, the extent of darkness signifying the extent of the felt loss. The officiating priest will say a few words about the character and accomplishments of the dead, sometimes augmented by the lay officiant or by musicians. Then the senior priest stands at the head of the body, which is placed on the altar, and the other priest stands at the foot. With a ritual invocation to Skree they simultaneously light the pyre. The second priest officiates at the burning, leading a few traditional mourning songs or in silence as is appropriate, while the head priest guides the lay officiant indoors to a special chamber for a few words of private consolation or counseling. After some moments the lay officiant will return to the site and any other mourners who feel a need to do so will go in to the priest one by one or in pairs, tradition allowing members of the family to go first, then clan members, then friends. When all who wish to do so have gone in and returned and the pyre has died out, the head priest will say a prayer while the second priest sweeps the ashes into an elaborate urn. This urn is given to the lay officiant, who will dispose of the ashes in whatever way he or she feels the dead person would have wanted. After the funeral the black curtains are taken down and most mourners return to their normal clothing, though a widow or widower may continue to wear black for up to a year without causing undue worry and priestly visits.

This section serves as an example of a more traditional high fantasy religious structure. This is the sort of church structure you might design if you're primarily interested in divine-level play and the advancement of PC priests.

Mürin is a lesser deity of war in the dwarven pantheon. He's one of the newer deities and has only been around for a couple of centuries. Nevertheless, because of his strict military discipline and organizational skills, his church has experienced steady growth to the point that his missionaries will soon be showing up at a plane near you.

Mürin's titles include Dwarven Deity of War and Keeper of Oaths. Mürin's followers are known for their fighting valor, pride, confidence, honor, and

## Death

# 6

## A Dwarven Religion

### Mürin: An Overview

### Church Hierarchy

loyalty. Any follower of Mürin who breaks an oath, betrays a comrade, or violates a secret trust will immediately be excommunicated.

Mürin has control over two planes, one of which is his home plane. He does not have any supported demigods, but has three demigods, one godling, two hundred servitors, and fifty minions.

Mürin, a very straightforward and practical dwarf, established a singular church structure. The entire church is one organization, with a clear-cut hierarchy and chain of command. He's at the top; his demigods, godlings, and certain minions report directly to him, and things branch downward from there.

Mürin looks at the universe in terms of how much he controls. The people who report directly to him do so as representatives of a plane or set of planes. To explain clearly how this works, it is first necessary to describe the various planar groupings Mürin uses to divide up the universe. To Mürin, all planes of existence in the universe are in one of the following four categories:

- Unknown Planes. These are planes that the church has not yet discovered.
- Mission Planes. These are planes where the church is currently expending significant effort to gain converts. There may be worshipers and established temples there, but in general the religion is still considered somewhat unstable and in need of constant support and vigilance. There are currently twelve planes in this group.
- Growth Planes. These are planes where the church has become well entrenched in culture and history. The deity's name is known and respected or feared, and the church is sustaining itself nicely. There are currently five planes in this group.
- Controlled Plane. These planes are planes where the church's influence has spread to the extent that the plane is under control by the church, and therefore by the deity. The only planes in this category are Mürin's two planes, including his home plane.

Mürin has an office under him in charge of unknown planes, an office in charge of mission planes, an office in charge of growth planes, and a separate office governing each controlled plane. The offices in charge of mission planes and growth planes are immediately broken down into separate offices for each plane in that group. Oftentimes, Mürin's staff meetings include those offices too.

### Roles in the Church

Advancement within the church is dictated by how much territory one commands, how many assets one controls, and how many worshipers one attracts. But this advancement does not occur in a solitary fashion. Each office is occupied by three people instead of one; the only exception to this is Mürin himself, who has sole control over his office. These three people form what is called a *Mürgruppe* (plural *Mürgruppen*). Each person in a *Mürgruppe* performs a distinct role:

- The *Kriegsoffizier* typically assumes the role of leader, although this is not a hard and fast rule, and he or she can easily be voted down by the other two. The *Kriegsoffizier* is the leader of military activities, the commander of any military units that the *Mürgruppe* might have under its control, and typically the spokesperson in situations that do not obviously fall under the jurisdiction of one of the others.
- The *Beschützer* is in charge of the personal well-being and security of the other two members of the *Mürgruppe*. The *Beschützer* will often have skills at subterfuge, traps, and scouting, and will usually be as good or better in hand-to-hand combat than either of the others.



- The *Kapeller* is in charge of healing, missionary work, spreading the faith, and otherwise tending to the spiritual well-being of the other two members of the *Mürgruppe* and any followers that might be under the *Mürgruppe*'s jurisdiction. The *Kapeller* is also in charge of all administrative duties.

The people who advance the most rapidly in the church are typically those who find two other talented, dedicated people in the appropriate categories. It quickly becomes obvious to all that to get far in this organization requires learning teamwork, mutual trust, mutual respect, and cooperation. The dwarves of this religion have a word they use to describe this temperament; they refer to it as *haufska*.

In some contexts it would seem that certain members of the *Mürgruppe* will be more important than others. However, when you look at it more closely it usually becomes apparent that there are many opportunities for the other two as well. During a war, for example, the *Kriegsoffizieren* would seem to be the ones with the most work. However, the *Beschützern* will be very pressed to provide adequate security and scouting, while the *Kapellern* will be busy providing spiritual counseling, support, and healing during this stressful time. Another example that would seem at first to favor the *Kapellern* would be a position in a temple safely within friendly territory. In this setting the *Kriegsoffizieren* will be charged with training new recruits and building up the military, while the *Beschützern* must look after security, guards, patrols, and investigating the competition.

All members of the church are expected to train in fighting abilities, even the *Kapellern*. This is because of *Mürin*'s intense desire for all members of his church to be able to account for themselves in a combat setting. In the seminary, students of the religion spend their first year studying all three roles equally. At the end of that year they choose their vocation and spend the next three years training in that one vocation. That first year serves to give each of them a thorough understanding of the role played by the other two. Once chosen, a vocation is a lifetime commitment; it can never be changed.

Because of this overlap of responsibilities at all levels of the church, the various church elements will tend to be quite active across the board. Churches are centers of worship, information, and military activity. Missionaries are always sent out in multiples of three and military formations are uniquely designed to account for these roles.

For example, let's take a closer look at the way *Mürgruppen* typically work in combat situation. When there is no specific enemy yet identified, such as when marching along a trail, the *Kriegsoffizier* and *Kapeller* will typically march side by side if there is room, or in single file with the *Kriegsoffizier* in front. The *Beschützer*, meanwhile, will be scouting and maneuvering around these two. Once an opponent has been identified, the *Beschützer* will attempt to get into a position between the enemy and the other two. If there is time, all three will hurl missile weapons at the enemy until the enemy closes. At that time, the *Beschützer* will fight the enemy hand-to-hand while the *Kapeller* casts spells. The *Kriegsoffizier* will watch out for untoward actions, like a surprise attack from another direction, and assist the *Beschützer* by firing missile weapons or using polearms against the enemy. Obviously, this won't be possible if the team is outnumbered, in which case the team will simply form a back-to-back triangle with the *Beschützer* taking the brunt of the attack to the extent possible.

When operating in a large military formation, each *Mürgruppe* retains this basic posture—the *Beschützer* forward, with the *Kapeller* and *Kriegsoffizier* supporting from behind. The *Beschützern* tend to favor large weapons with lots of swinging room, while the *Kriegsoffizieren* and *Kapellern* will tend toward missile weapons and thrusting weapons such as polearms. When the

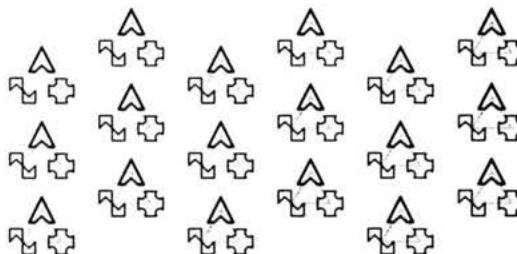
*Oberint dum metuant—"Let them hate, so long as they fear."*

#### *How Mürgruppen Work*



*A Section of the Battlefront*

- ▲ Beschützer  
 ↗ Kriegsoffizier  
 ⊕ Kapeller

*How Mürgruppen Are Formed*

Mürgruppen get together in formation, each offsets itself by one so that every other group on the front line has its Beschützer out in front, while the interspersed groups have their Beschützer beside the Kapeller or Kriegsoffizier of the adjacent group. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

Once every year, on Mürin's high holy day, worshipers of Mürin gather together for the *Mürging*. This is the only time that a Mürgruppe can be formed or dissolved. All Mürgruppen formed at this ceremony are bound for at least one year through elaborate oaths and rituals. Since Mürin is a God of Oaths, the importance and magnitude of these bonds cannot be overemphasized.

An elaborate set of rules governs how the members of the Mürgruppen are selected. Generally the three people choose each other or follow dictates from a higher level of management. Strangely enough, if all three members want to form a Mürgruppe, their wishes will take precedence over the desires of superiors.

Fierce competition runs rampant between Mürgruppen and is encouraged by the church through contests and awards. Between the three members of a Mürgruppe, however, there will more likely be a sense of pride in each other's accomplishments. It's not uncommon to hear a Kriegsoffizier bragging about how many new worshipers his or her Kapeller brought into the church that month. When referring to each other, members of a Mürgruppe will often do so in the possessive; the Beschützer might say "my Kapeller," and the Kapeller might say "my Beschützer."

If one or two members of a Mürgruppe are killed in a battle, are separated from the rest of their Mürgruppe, or are otherwise prevented from performing their duties, the remaining member or members must carry on as best they can. They will be not be allowed to acquire replacements and will be in a state of mourning until the next Mürging. While in this state of mourning, unless there is a crisis going on, partial Mürgruppen will typically be pulled back to the largest temple in the vicinity and confined to a group hermetic existence until the Mürging. Alternatively, if some sort of rescue attempt is feasible, they may be allowed to try it, possibly enlisting the aid of other Mürgruppen in the attempt. During a war or some other crisis, partial Mürgruppen will be allowed to function, and will even be allowed to merge with other partial Mürgruppen on a temporary basis for the sake of the cause.

Due to the confusion or partiality it might cause, husbands and wives are not allowed as members of the same Mürgruppe. In fact, a strict code of celibacy is enforced among the members of a Mürgruppe, and even past lovers cannot be part of the same Mürgruppe.

With its strong traditional values and serious tone, the church of Mürin holds many ceremonies. Some of them are listed below.

- The Grül is performed when someone has transgressed against the church in a minor way and wants redemption in the eyes of Mürin. The Grül is an extremely rigorous physical and mental exercise in which the worshiper is pushed to the utter limits of mortal endurance, dexterity, and mental capacity. At the beginning of the contest, two leeches are placed upon the transgressor. The significance of the Grül is the rinsing of the soul through sweating and bleeding.
- The Cease is similar to the Grül, except that it never stops until the worshiper dies. If the worshiper faints, he or she is revived and pressed onward. The Cease is used as an extreme form of punishment for those who have committed *fatal sins*—sins the church especially despises, such as oath-breaking, lies, or secret murder. This is seen as the only way of sufficiently cleansing the sinners' souls so that Mürin can accept them. The significance of the Cease lies in the belief that the fatal sins have poisoned the souls to the point that only death through exhaustion and blood loss will cleanse them completely.
- The Commitment signifies that a worshiper has committed or re-committed his or her life to Mürin. The ceremony consists of an elaborate dance performed by an anointing Mürgruppe, in which the worshiper is the center of the dance. The dance is set to deep drumbeats and involves fire and real weapons to create a dizzying, exhilarating, and somewhat dangerous event. Facing this danger signifies a person's willingness to put his or her life in the hands of the church.
- Most religious ceremonies center around the chanting of *The Oaths of Mürin and the Honored*. Some of these oath-chants were created by Mürin personally; others were composed by members of the church of at least minion status. Most of these oaths promise victory, protection, or a better life to those who are faithful to Mürin. Repeating these oaths gives the worshipers something to do at church, and helps instill them with the love of Mürin.
- The Breaking is performed by worshipers once they have finished their training and have been accepted into the ranks of the clergy. These ceremonies are always performed on the eve of the Mürging. At this time the new clergy members announce to the world whether they are Beschützern, Kapellern, or Kriegsoffizieren. They will then purchase some items of great value, the greatest they can afford, and break them into three pieces. Each of these pieces is saved until the next day when the new member of the clergy is brought into his or her first Mürgruppe; at this point, one piece is given to each of the other members of the Mürgruppe. These pieces will be kept and treasured forever, even if the members leave to join other groups, as symbols of the significant role each member played in that person's life. The exchange of these pieces is deep in ceremony, and also includes an oath always to honor the fragments, even if later disputes drive the giver and recipient in different directions. The reason for this oath is to remind people that there is an immortal binding that transcends mortal differences, bringing all worshipers of Mürin together for a higher cause.
- The Forging is the ceremony of marriage. It typically begins with lots of chanting, dancing, socializing, and drinking. This eventually leads up to revelry surrounding a forge where two weaponsmiths forge the man

## Ceremonies

### *The Grül*

### *The Cease*

### *The Commitment*

### *The Oath-Chants*

### *The Breaking*

### *The Forging*

*The Last Rites*

and woman a set of ceremonial weapons, each with some characteristic marking or design common only to these two weapons. If either of the weapons is flawed, it is considered a bad omen.

- The Last Rites secures the passage of a soul to Mürin. If performed on a devout worshiper, the ceremony consists of placing a shield on the body's arm, symbolizing protection in the journey through the afterlife. If the ceremony is performed on an enemy sacrifice, a spear is driven lengthwise through the body, preferably as the actual means of slaying the victim. The body is then propped between two shields, each of which is set into the ground firmly enough to hold it up, and left to rot. For sanitary purposes, this is usually done well outside of town. Again, the shields symbolize protection, while the spear symbolizes the force behind sending the soul to Mürin for eternal torment.

*Mürgruppe Positions  
in the Church*

There are several positions of rank that Mürgruppen can hold. The ranks are listed in order from lowest to highest, along with what each member of the Mürgruppe at that rank is called. The titles run in the following order: Kapeller, Beschützer, and Kriegsoffizier.

- (1) *Anfangsgruppe; Anfangskapeller, Anfangschützer, Oberanfänger.* These groups are typically used as guards, patrols, temple maintenance workers, and bodyguards.
- (2) *Soldatsgruppe; Soldatskapeller, Soldatschützer, Obersoldat.* These groups are typically used as elite guard military, lesser officers, honor guard members, or caretakers of consecrated ground.
- (3) *Befehlsgruppe; Befehlkapeller, Befehlschützer, Oberbefehlshaber.* These groups are typically used as major officers in the military, as the overseers of lesser temples, or as missionaries.
- (4) *Kampfgruppe; Kampfkapeller, Kampfschützer, Oberkämpfer.* These groups typically have major roles in the hierarchy, such as generals in the military or overseers of greater temples.
- (5) *Führungsgruppe; Führungskapeller, Führungschützer, Oberführer.* These are the highest-ranking Mürgruppen in the hierarchy, and include the heads of the church for each plane and the minions, godlings, and demi-gods of Mürin.

There can be several layers of Mürgruppe within one strata; for example, there might be a Befehlsgruppe that reports to another Befehlsgruppe that reports to yet another before finally reaching a Kampfgruppe. In these cases, the lowest Mürgruppe will be called by its normal title, while the Mürgruppe above it will have the term "second rank" in front of its title, and the one above it "third rank," and so forth. So the above example chain of command, from lowest to highest, would be Befehlsgruppe, second rank Befehlsgruppe, third rank Befehlsgruppe, and then Kampfgruppe.

Most Mürgruppen will come up with a name also, and will often refer to the Mürgruppe to which they are attached. In this case they would not refer to the Mürgruppen that are of the same strata, but would reference the highest ranking Mürgruppe in the strata above them. Again, using the above example, one of the soldiers in the lowest-ranking Befehlsgruppe might refer to herself as Oberbefehlshaber Helga of the Third Firebreathing Hussars Befehlsgruppe of the Ninth Griffinriders Kampfgruppe.

As you can see, it takes a lot of work to fully design and integrate religions into a campaign. Like societies, races, and governments, religions have goals, need to be consistent, and must be played intelligently. The more care you take in designing your religions, the more satisfaction you and your players will receive when playing them.

In any case, the idea of GMing is to have fun and be creative. Above all, don't listen to self-appointed experts and scholars who'll tell you that it "has to be this way because that's the way it was historically." It's your campaign; do it however you want. Just take some time to make certain your ideas are internally consistent and make sense to you. Once that's done, you can patiently explain to these players how, in your universe, your choices make perfect sense—if one takes the time to learn the idiosyncrasies of the cultures and histories that you've created to backdrop your own personal work of art.

*God is love, but get it in writing.*

*—Gypsy Rose Lee*

## Final Comments







## **There's No Plane Like Home**



*I came into a place void of all light, which bellows like the sea in tempest, when it is combated by warring winds.*

—Dante Alighieri

Some roleplaying campaigns get along fine without the use of planes. However, without them, all the gods must exist alongside mortals and monsters, which is not recommended. In order to have enough room for deities to be happy, separate planes of existence are exceedingly useful, and, as you may have noticed, are an integral part of *The Primal Order*. Deities use planes as sources of power, places to live, and places to hide, among other things. We're going to provide two methods of dealing with planes: a simple one, and a more complex one that builds on the simple method.

## Plain Planes

Basically, a plane is a place you can't get to by any normal means of transportation, a place that's "not here." Walking, sailing, or flying won't get you to Narnia; it takes a certain magic wardrobe for that. Tornadoes are the preferred transport to Oz, and we still don't know of any way to get to Middle Earth.

This isn't a perfect definition, unfortunately. Sometimes you *can* just walk to a place that would qualify as another plane; Mount Olympus is one example. The big feature of a plane is its limited access. If you are on the plane that mortals usually inhabit (which you may know as the prime material plane, reality, or the first plane; we'll call it the main plane), getting to another plane is going to be hard, hard, hard. In the case of Mount Olympus, no mortals will get there unless the Olympian gods notice someone searching and decide to reveal and open the gate. Otherwise, all the poor seekers will ever find up there is goats and hypothermia.

The idea of gates is a key one. You can connect planes physically, but it's not recommended. In any case, there will always be very specific points through which you must pass to cross from one plane to another. If the United States and Canada had an impenetrable wall of primal force between them, and you could only get from one to the other at the Customs stations, then we would be on our way toward making the U.S. and Canada separate planes.

Examples of such gateways to other worlds occur frequently in mythology and fiction. In one myth, Orpheus traveled to Hades and back, passing through two gateways—the River Styx and the gate guarded by Cerberus—by means of the magic in his music. In the movie *Mary Poppins*, Mary takes the Banks children and Bert for a lovely day spent with dancing penguins and a magic merry-go-round. They travel to this animated plane by way of a sidewalk chalk drawing. And in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the rabbit hole is Alice's gate to mad queens and mushrooms. None of these places is available to the typical bus traveler; each journey required either magic means of transport, passing through a specific point, or both.

## Complex Planes

As long as nobody wants to change things, simple planes may do. However, what happens when a new deity comes along? Where does a godling look for new planes? Peeking into wardrobes and looking down rabbit holes isn't very dignified. What about dividing one plane into multiple planes? Well, that's what the full-scale planar rules will cover. First, though, let's look at some of the different kinds of planes that could exist.

## Types of Planes

Planes can come in all different sizes, shapes, and ways of mapping, and they certainly have very different properties. Some examples include main planes,

alignment planes, elemental planes, pocket planes, planes of thought, and more. Accompanying each of our sample planes will be a discussion of the unique problems and properties of such a plane.

This is really the simplest shape for a plane. No matter how far you travel, there's always something new. A complete map could never be made, because this plane goes forever. You map it by just adding new bits onto whichever side you want.

These planes are just like they sound; sail too far and you'll fall off the edge. These can come in all different sizes. One possible hazard for PCs is that if they dig too deep, or go too deep into a cave, they might fall out the bottom. Issues like what holds the atmosphere in place and how the passage of the sun is accomplished can be worked out through magic, celestial spheres, or other means. The myth of Apollo might be a great source here.

This concept is certainly the simplest to visualize from a galactic point of view, although it's a bear to map. If all main planes and divine home planes are actually planets in some common galaxy then it's easy to answer the questions "Where do planes come from?" and "What is a plane?" On the other hand, several other considerations might make things more complicated.

First of all, if the planes are planets, then it would certainly be possible to travel from one plane to another through space. This may or may not be an immediate consideration depending on the sophistication of magic or technology in the universe you are GMing, and whether or not relativity is something to be considered. But if you GM your campaign long enough, the question will most certainly arise.

Problem two is that if you are using planets as planes you should clarify, at least to yourself, what really is going on when a character uses a plane-traveling or teleportation device. In this scenario, plane traveling becomes a method of planet hopping, and teleportation becomes an "on-planet" form of transportation. Continuing with this line of thinking, it would be reasonable to assume that plane traveling in such a universe would be much more difficult than teleportation, and you should remember this when trying to decide how accessible these abilities would be.

A third consideration is the method for discovering new planes. Here are two options you might use:

- Deities are capable of space flight, have some knowledge of astronomy, and simply go out and explore a new section of space to find more divine planes. If you use a rule that says planar travel will only take deities to planes where they have already been, and make sure that things like wishes or other powerful artifacts won't let them get around this rule, then the deities will actually have to travel physically to these new planes using some sort of means to achieve space travel. Depending on many campaign-specific variables, this could be very time consuming even for deities, and perhaps even dangerous.
- If plane-traveling devices will allow characters to travel to places they haven't been before, and they can use wishes or primal to obtain coordinates "to that star over yonder," then exploring the universe would be much easier. Of course they must be careful to wish for coordinates that are actually a safe distance from the star, and prepare for such things as the vacuum of space, possibilities of meteor showers, and so forth.

We recommend that the same restrictions placed on omniscience in Chapter Three be used on all campaign methods for acquiring knowledge or exploration. Preventing armchair exploration and research makes the game much more playable and enjoyable.

## Infinite Planes

## Flat Worlds

## Planets, Moons, and Other Celestial Objects

7

*The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me. —Blaise Pascal*

### Altered States as Planes

In fantasy realms, it is not uncommon for adventurers to alter their molecular states through some spell or magical device, placing them in what we call an altered state. Examples of this are travel to extradimensional locations, æthereal and astral travel, and perhaps even the noncorporeal state of some undead. It is certainly possible that some deity could claim to rule all the “area” encompassed by such a state, although it could become quite a formidable task to hold it since this plane is likely quite enormous.

This is a very interesting concept, and offers some mindbogglingly complex opportunities. The biggest problem for the deity who tries to take control of an altered-state plane is that the plane is so huge. It will border every place in the universe where this altered state is possible, perhaps including other divine planes whose controlling deities won't be too appreciative of having such an intimate neighbor. Other disadvantages potentially include a lack of resources or population on the plane.

One very intriguing twist to this idea occurs if an altered state exists such that only one person, presumably a deity, knows how to get to it. If there is no life native to this altered state, then no one will be able to compete with the deity for control of this plane. And no one could ever kill a deity who was hiding out on a plane nobody else could find.

### Ideas as Planes



If you thought that the concept of altered states as planes was a little farfetched, you're really going to love this one. Depending on the metaphysics of your campaign, it may be possible to get to planes whose location is more of an idea than a place—the stronger the idea, the stronger the plane. This makes a good basis for universes with planes of evil, or elemental planes such as the planes of water and fire, or perhaps even a plane of mana. We suggest if you're daring enough to use this concept, you should give planes only to really huge ideas—the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues, or the sensory planes of touch, taste, and smell, or the seasonal planes of winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Having planes for such trivial ideas as the plane of wry looks or the stubbornness plane is probably asking for trouble.

If you want to get even more metaphysical, you might have “elemental” planes like an elemental plane of paradox, where the understood is not understood, random events are predictable, and games have meaning; perhaps M. C. Escher and Douglas Hofstadter would be demigods there. Keep in mind, however, that whatever you unleash will be used against you by the players, so beware.

An interesting question to consider when using this kind of plane is what happens to people when they travel to an idea plane. It could be that their physical forms stay behind, leaving only their mental presences to travel onto the plane. Whether the body can go or not, the mind is certainly going to be dominated by the thoughts that originate from this plane. On a plane of good thought it may actually be impossible to contemplate an evil activity.

### Sentient Planes

You might also choose to incorporate a few sentient planes into your campaign. In this case, the planes themselves have intelligence of some kind, from higher animal-level to genius-class, and have temperaments and personalities of their own.

The difference between idea planes and sentient planes is that idea planes *are* ideas and sentient planes *have* ideas. This gives sentient planes a lot more flexibility. For example, an idea plane devoted to good would base itself on a set of moral laws that would be absolute and unchanging, and it would always enforce these laws the same way. A sentient plane that wanted to be good might initially adopt the same moral laws, but it would be able to modify them to suit specific circumstances, refine them over time, and enforce them differently at different times. A sentient plane could also start out being good

and eventually drift toward a more neutral outlook, or generally be good but get in naughty moods once in a while; an idea plane would remain the same forever.

A sentient plane should clearly reflect a distinct personality or philosophical outlook. A plane that loves simplicity might be nothing but white sand and black ocean inhabited by nothing more complex than microbes, while a plane that thrives on variety could have a different color of sky every hour and a new race of peculiar beings behind every bizarre rock formation.

Because of their unique qualities, sentient planes should be few and far between in your campaign. They should also be large enough and powerful enough to support several deities. A sentient plane may choose on its own to support a demigod, for instance, and it would consent to be a home plane only for an immensely favored deity. Sentient planes cannot be controlled normally; they choose whom they wish to support, so they should be influential in the politics of the deities who inhabit them.

Here's where things really start to cook. So if there's this flat earth, where is it? Or if planes are planets, then what's the universe? The answer in both cases is a *metaplane*.

A metaplane is a space that contains planes that share some physical traits. Dante's *Inferno* could be an example of a finite metaplane, where each ring is a plane, and the whole thing has clear boundaries. Other metaplanes could be infinite. More fun possibilities might include an æthereal ocean with occasional planes dotting the seascape, or a bunch of island-like planes on a flat surface. Perhaps you would prefer a universe bounded by a large light source above and a huge molten core on the bottom; occasionally a piece of mica gets hurled away from the bottom, creating a plane. Night on such a plane could be caused by other planes obstructing the light source, and air would exist everywhere. The design of a collection of planes in a metaplane is a wonderful opportunity to be creative and confuse players.

Metaplanes are beyond the direct control of mere gods. You may postulate the existence of metagods, but this book will decline the opportunity to feast on that can of worms.

In order to keep things flowing smoothly, from now on in this chapter we'll assume you're using complex planes. It should be pretty easy to ignore these bits if you choose to use simple planes.

The shape of a plane and its relationship to other planes would normally be only of academic interest to most mortals who live in such a place, but to deities, these issues are of burning importance. For ones of such power, it takes an entire plane to provide enough elbow room. Even the ranking of deities is based on the number of planes that each deity controls.

Another benefit to having planes is that they supply primal flux in large amounts, typically 1,000 points per day. This allows deities to power more clerics, artifacts, demigods, minions, and so forth, or just have more flux at their fingertips when they decide to go out and party.

There are also some less direct benefits of controlling many planes. Planes can house worshipers or industries, or provide a great place to build a summer home; they come with the usual benefits of owning real estate. For the rest of this chapter, we'll use the term "plane" to refer only to those places that have the following three important attributes:

- The plane must be large enough to potentially house several intelligent civilizations and a variety of terrain features. It should probably have a

## Metaplanes

7

## Deities and Planes

### Requirements for Controllable Planes

#### Sufficient Size



<i>Significant Boundaries</i>	<p>surface area of at least three million square miles—roughly the size of earth's moon or a flat circle with a radius of one thousand miles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plane should be clearly separate from other places, not joined by any natural means. If there are gates, warps, or other special connections, they should contain clearly marked division points. The Gates of Minos between the first and second rings of Dante's <i>Inferno</i> is such a point.</li> </ul>
<i>Importance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plane should have some sort of intrinsic value in and of itself, along with historical interest. It shouldn't be so boring that Theodolus, the God of Surveying, would look at it and write nothing but "big chunk of rock" in his log.</li> </ul> <p>Of course, these are suggestions, and subject to change by the GM; if all else fails, just apply common sense. Remember that the purpose of controlling a divine plane is to further entrench its owner into the ultimate reality of the cosmos. Your typical asteroid or deserted island in the æthereal sea just won't cut it.</p> <p>Once the deity has control of a plane he or she will often restructure it significantly, perhaps into something that may not appear to meet all the above requirements. In this case, appearances must be deceiving. The plane must in reality continue to satisfy all of the requirements for divine planes if it is to continue to act as one.</p>
<b>Miniplanes</b>	<p>As we've mentioned earlier in the book, a plane that doesn't meet the requirements for full plane status is called a miniplane. It's possible to allow miniplanes to be controllable as well, although the flux gained from controlling a miniplane should be correspondingly smaller, and a miniplane could not be a home plane.</p>
<b>How Deities Get Planes</b>	<p>Deities can't claim planes just by planting little flags in them and proclaiming them controlled. In order to enjoy the benefits of controlling a plane, a deity must establish and maintain authority over the plane and its population.</p> <p>A deity begins attempting to control a plane by <i>contesting</i> for its control. Any deity who arrives on a plane and places a point or more of his or her primal base into the plane is considered a contestant for that plane. The planar energies will reflect this influence by taking on that deity's primal signature, so it is impossible for a deity to contest a plane secretly. If another deity also tries to contest for the plane, the planar energies will take on that deity's primal signature as well.</p> <p>Next the deity must destroy or drive off all of the other deities contesting for the plane. Though battle is the most obvious method for this, trickery, bribery, or diplomacy might also prove effective. Once the other contestants have departed and their primal base has been blasted or otherwise removed from the plane, the deity can set about establishing authority over the mortal population. This requirement can be fulfilled by gaining control of all of the plane's major political and military factions. If the deity can hold this authority against all comers for five years, he or she will begin reaping the benefits of controlling that plane. If, however, the deity fails to put down any mortal uprisings within a year after they become widespread, or if another deity is able to contest for the plane for more than a year without being driven off, the original deity will have to begin again as a contestant.</p> <p>If a plane has no indigenous population, but meets the requirements for a controllable plane, then claiming the plane might involve no more activity than keeping other deities away for five years. On the other hand, when there are mortals inhabiting a plane, then the contest gets more exciting and may draw more contestants. Many deities will try to find out whenever another deity is claiming a plane just to zoom over and fight for it. Because the mortals must either become worshippers or be eliminated, and killing them all would waste</p>

a lot of potential primal, a contest for an unowned plane is pretty close to war between deities, but with rules. Many younger deities find this a tremendous opportunity to test their skills without igniting a major divine conflict.

Claiming a plane that another deity already owns is much closer to war without rules. Take Joey's recent planar acquisition as an example.

Joey, God of Basketweaving, had been rather bored, and it was time to expand. His target was the relatively insignificant Bob, the God of Laundry Baskets. Joey quietly alerted his followers, gathered his best magic, and showed up on Bob's plane. He started right out by blowing away some of Bob's godlings and chancellors and pointing out to their successors the increase in longevity they would experience by worshipping him instead. Joey's greater minions were on hand to ensure cooperation.

Bob didn't take this lying down, of course, and he did have the home court advantage, so in short order these two gods had faced off primal-to-primal, and assistants and staff on both sides were doing whatever they could to reduce the amount of primal flux available to their opponents.

Joey won, and he had enough minions, champions, and whatnot to keep the natives of the laundry basket plane under control. Five years later, the plane was his. Note that this did not make him God of Laundry Baskets, however; that would require studying for a new sphere of influence.

Cooperative conquest occurs when two or more deities agree to share a plane. Timing is irrelevant; they can contest simultaneously or one after another. Though each deity must go through the entire standard procedure for gaining control of the plane, allied deity presence is ignored when considering whether or not the various requirements have been met.

When multiple deities share a plane, there are a couple of points to keep in mind. The primal that can be drawn from a plane, typically 1,000 points, must be shared equally among the deities. A single plane may not be used as a home plane for more than one deity at the same time. Furthermore, at any given time, only one deity can be going through the process of trying to turn the plane into a home plane; we'll describe this process later in the chapter. If any deity breaks the alliance and the plane is *not* the home plane of any deity, the plane instantly becomes uncontrolled and contested by each deity. Whichever deity wins the upcoming conflict will have to go through the entire process of controlling the plane all over again. If any deity breaks the alliance and the plane *is* the home plane of one of the deities, then the deity whose home plane it is immediately becomes the controller of that plane and the other deities are considered contestants for control.

Note that "breaking the alliance" means that one deity decides to share the plane no longer and either forsakes the plane or declares it in contention. Until this happens the deities can scheme and plot all they want without initiating an actual contest.

It's funny, but total control of a plane's sentient population, including 100% attendance at church, often isn't enough to satisfy a deity. Most deities will want to exert control at a more basic level, changing such annoying little details as the color of the sky, or the sound of rain. Maybe this plane is too flat, or too lumpy, or too hot, or too cold. Also, as long as this dissatisfied owner is making things "just right," it might be a good time for improvements. This kind of planar remodeling is accomplished through the manipulation of *planar constants*.

There's no law that says all planes should be similar; on the contrary, they are usually prone to extreme differences. Some magic or magic items may not work on some planes. Clerics may feel cut off, sound may not travel at all, or

### *Example Planar Contest*

### *Cooperative Conquest*

### *Dangers in Sharing Planes*

## 7

## **Intraplanar Issues**

### **Planar Constants**

*Planar Energy*

there may be too much magic, causing one tiny fireball to incinerate the entire countryside.

Many GMs already use or have thought about planes such as this; planar constants are provided as an excellent way of explaining and defining these phenomena. A planar constant is a description of one fundamental property of a plane. Some planes just happen to have different planar constants from those to which most people are accustomed. Others had their planar constants altered by a deity who controlled the plane for some length of time.

Planar constants are supported both by the primal flux generated by the plane and by the *planar energy* of the plane itself. Planar energy is energy infused throughout the plane; it performs many tasks that are typically taken for granted. Here are some examples of such tasks; note that not every plane will necessarily have every type of energy listed:

- Generation of gravitational fields that keep objects attached to the plane, maintain orbits around the plane, and maintain the plane's orbit around a celestial body or location.
- Generation of a magnetic field, which is useful for many animals, occasionally used as protection from radiation, and useful for keeping compasses functional.
- Generation of the "glue" that holds the plane together, consolidating it into one physical body, location, or idea. Sometimes this task is performed by gravity, sometimes by another type of force.
- Generation of light, which can come in handy if the closest sun is a bit too far away.
- Generation of heat, including geothermal and atmospheric.

Planar energy is a lot like primal, except that it's only for use by planes, and there's a lot of it. The base and flux that a deity can pull from a plane are a reflection of the "shedding" of planar energies. This excess energy can be used to add to or modify the constants that are already in place. Once a constant is in place, whether naturally or artificially imposed, the plane will draw on the universal reserves of planar energy to enforce it. Thus, if a plane had an imperative planar constant that caused all left-handed people to move at five times normal speed all the time, whether they wanted to or not, and a deity



When planar constants  
turn variable...

tried to slow down a left-handed opponent, the plane would apply as much planar energy as necessary to counter the deity's efforts.

Fortunately, imperative constants are relatively rare. Most planes' natural constants will be things like "everyone can fly," so magic or ropes can be used to prevent flying. "Everyone *must* fly" would be quite a bit more annoying.

Planar constants are divided into three categories: minor, major, and greater. Different types of constants have different requirements for their formation, and each are described below.

Since campaigns vary, you may want to raise or lower the ranking of these example constants to suit your campaign.

Examples of minor planar constants:

- No lesser magic items work on this plane; spells and more powerful items continue to function.
- Stone may not be disintegrated or passed through magically; the only way to get past a stone wall is to chisel or mine it out. Fortresses and dungeons become more useful.
- Gravity always pulls things toward the surface with which they are in contact. You can walk up cliffs and stand on the ceiling, and you don't need a nail to hang up your wall calendar.
- Biting insects can penetrate any clothing, including armor.
- Dead things turn to dust in minutes. Carnivores would have to eat quickly and cooks would be out of work, but the plants would certainly appreciate such accelerated decomposition.

Examples of major planar constants:

- No lesser or greater magical items work on this plane. Only spells, relics, and artifacts function.
- No parallel planes (astral, æthereal, shadow, etc.) exist parallel to this plane.
- No object can break contact with the plane itself. Characters will not be able to jump, fly, throw things, or use missile weapons, which will put some emphasis on melee combat. Even spells won't work if some part of the spell travels through the air. If you let go of something it will stick to your hand, unless you set it down first.
- No mentalics work on this plane.
- All flowers have teeth, and know how to use them.
- Males get pregnant, not females.

Examples of greater planar constants:

- No magic, even spells or items of artifact caliber, works on this plane.
- The *timeline* on this plane is backwards from the rest of the universe, so that to someone on another plane it would appear to be moving from the future into the past. You might not want to allow this kind of thing, since it can be very tricky for a GM to keep track of.
- Gravity repels rather than attracts. Such a plane would be nothing but debris that continually drifts away from anything approaching it.
- No primal energy is allowed to leave. Any deity who comes here will have to take over the plane and change this constant or be trapped.

### Examples of Planar Constants

**Forming Planar Constants**

Planar constants can only be changed by a deity who controls the plane.

To alter or create a planar constant, the controlling deity first defines the effects of the planar constant in explicit detail. Forming a planar constant takes several years, during which time the deity cannot draw any primal flux from the plane without having to start the process over again from the beginning. This amount of time is required to convince the plane to accept the proposed change. The rare sentient plane could refuse altogether or change it immediately, but most planes will not tamper with the process.

Type of Planar Constant	Time to Establish
Minor planar constants	3 years
Major planar constants	5 years
Greater planar constants	10 years

Since planes can only generate a certain amount of energy, each plane will be able to support only a limited number of planar constants. Each altered planar constant detracts from the primal flux shed by that plane; when the alterations use all the flux being generated, then the plane will not support any more changes. However, the deity can supplement the plane's own energy with primal flux drawn from other sources, thus enabling further changes in planar constants. To do this, the deity must provide the necessary amount of flux for the entire time it takes the constant to form and for each day that the constant is maintained. If this supply is ever cut off, the planar constant will dissolve; it can only be reformed by starting from scratch.

Type of Planar Constant	Cost/Day in Flux
Minor planar constants	100
Major planar constants	250
Greater planar constants	500

**Example Power Supply for Planar Constants**

Talatha is a more powerful plane than average, generating 1,500 points of flux per day. This plane could support the creation or modification of two greater planar constants at 500 points each, and two major planar constants at 250 points each. If Zed, who controls Talatha, wants to institute an additional minor constant, she will have to supply the necessary 100 points of flux per day herself. If she wants to draw flux from the plane instead, she will have to eliminate one or more of the planar constants.

Often planar constants will reflect the personality of the deity who controls the plane. Deities like Thor or Bellona may want to severely restrict magic or mentalics, forcing people into their kind of fight. On the other hand, a nature deity could make vines that could not be cut and mazes that could not be navigated. Remember that planar constants affect the deity and his or her minions too. Sure, it's possible to create a planar constant that would kill all mortal life on the plane, but then the deity could not stage armies from that plane. Often a deity who has several planes will have different planes set up for different purposes. Let your imagination run wild. Here's an example:

**Example Implementation of Planar Constants**

Our Basketweaving God Joey decides that on his home plane, reeds will grow at phenomenal speeds. Also, no fire other than that generated by primal spells can exist on the plane. The reed growth is deemed a minor constant, the fire suppression a major constant. Joey immediately stops drawing flux from the plane, which ordinarily provides about 700 flux points. After three years, he's established the reed growth change, and the total flux available to be tapped is down to 600. After five more years, he's enacted fire suppression,



and he can once again use the flux generated by the plane, which now totals 350 points per day.

If a deity who has control of a plane wants to remove a planar constant or restore it to its natural state, he or she would simply begin drawing on the primal used to support it. Without this needed energy, the constant would return to its original state.

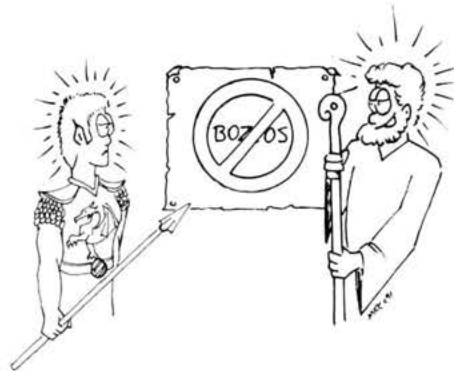
Any attempt to challenge imperative planar constants will result in a clash of power between the challenger and the plane, often with dire consequences. As we've discussed earlier, planes can draw on vast reserves of energy if necessary to enforce their constants. It might in theory be possible for a deity to apply more primal to break a constant than a miniplane can counteract, perhaps due to a limit on the amount of power a plane can channel. But this depends on the individual campaign. There are recorded instances of planar energies recoiling onto challenging deities and destroying their primal base, so deities are understandably reluctant to push the issue.

Metaplanes can also have planar constants, although they cannot be altered, formed, or removed in any way; they are too intrinsic to the metaplane's existence. Creating a planar constant that directly opposes a metaplanar constant in force on that plane would take twice as long and cost twice as much primal flux per day to create and maintain.

Note that just because every island plane in the Sargasso Shoals metaplane is in constant daylight does not mean that constant daylight is a metaplanar constant. If the area *between* the planes in this metaplane also has constant daylight, that is a metaplanar constant.

Maybe there are metadeities who can change metaplanes, and maybe there are metametaplanes that contain the metaplanes, and maybe there are metametaplanar constants, and maybe there are metametadeities who can change them, and . . . nyah.

Changing planar constants can be a very disruptive process if the constants are related somehow to the planar ecosystem. Throughout nature there are vast interrelationships and interdependencies between various types of habitats, animals, geological formations, weather patterns, and other elements. When a deity starts to tweak things, or worse yet, to make major changes, chaos could be the result. Deities who aren't careful might end up destroying all life on the plane. Most deities will consider this a less than desirable result; we'll ignore the sadistic ones who don't.



*It cost 500 primal points and one major constant but it's worth every bit.*

## Removing Planar Constants

## Violating Planar Constants

## Metaplanar Constants

## Ugly Variation

## Planar Ecology

**Coercing a Constant**

If you know something about ecology and want to run a more realistic campaign, you could try to determine the side effects a given constant *might* create and make the deity live with them or create more constants to take care of them. Or you could just not allow deities to make major ecological changes. But if you want a more general method for figuring out what it would take to clean up after changes in ecologically related planar constants, this section is for you.

The obvious way to deal with a severe, planewide ecological side effect is to create another planar constant that clears it up. But if the problem is just a minor one, or if it affects only a limited area, the deity can take care of it by burning some primal base to convince the plane to bend a constant slightly or enforce it just a little differently in a specific area. This is called *coercing a constant*.

Instead of going to great lengths to determine exactly what side effects a planar constant might cause, whether they would best be solved by more constants or by coercing, and how much it would cost for each, we've come up with a general table:

Level of Constant	Cost in Base to Fix Side Effects
Minor planar constant	20 – 200 points (2d10 × 10)
Major planar constant	40 – 400 points (2d10 × 20)
Greater planar constant	200 – 2,000 points (2d10 × 100)

To determine what a deity must do to clear up the side effects resulting from a new planar constant, roll randomly on the above table to come up with the cost in base. No matter which category you use, if the roll comes up under 300 points, it represents base that needs to be burned immediately to create some coercions.

If the roll comes up 300 or over, then the changes required to solve the side effects are more than mere coercion can handle, and planar constants are required as well. What kind of constants and how many depend on how far over 300 the roll is. If the roll is 1,500 or over, a greater constant must be established. Subtract 1,500 from the base that needs to be burned and check to see what's left. If there's 700 or more points of base required, subtract 700 points of base from the amount needed and establish a major planar constant. If there's 300 points or more left, a minor planar constant must be established. Subtract 300 from what's left. Eventually, you will reach a number below 300, which will be the amount of base burned for coercion. A result of 1,200, then, represents one major constant (700 points), one minor constant (300 points), and 200 points of base that must be burned for coercion.

Base Required	Constants Required
300+ points	Minor planar constant
700+ points	Major planar constant
1,500+ points	Greater planar constant

**Example of Coercion**

Diosdedo, a god who just can't leave well enough alone, has decided that he wants normally stationary portions of the landscape to begin zooming about randomly. The GM decides that having the very land scuttle to and fro is a greater change. This will cost Diosdedo 500 points of flux every day for ten years. At the end of those ten years, people's houses start cruising, and rivers get very confused. Needless to say, the side effects are nasty. Using the first chart, we roll 2d10 and get a 9 and a 7. This adds up to 16, so Diosdedo is

looking at a cost of 1,600 points of base. This is over 1,500, so according to the second chart, dealing with the side effects will require burning 100 points of base for coercion of constants and establishing one new greater planar constant. Should Diosdedo refuse to pay, 1,600 points' worth of side effects probably means the death of all life on the plane in ten years. If he does pay, he will end up ten years, 100 points of base, and many, many points of flux later with the plane the way he wants it. The fact that the plane's entire flux output of 1,000 points is now going to support the greater constants doesn't bother him nearly as much as the fact that the sky isn't quite the right shade of brown . . .

Intelligent deities will soon figure out that if they can use coercion to counter side effects, they might also apply it to do quick touch-ups of the environment, such as forbidding rain on the castle grounds, or keeping plants free from disease in the divine gardens. Because coercion involves bending a planar constant a slight amount, it could have a very mild effect over a large area or a stronger effect in a small one.

The actual cost of a coercion will vary wildly depending on the effect desired, but we've prepared some guidelines. Note that the gradations in cost are based on the amount of effort deities must expend, not on how big a mess they can make with this effort.

- *Minor Coercion.* In the area of climate, this would be a change of up to ten degrees of temperature or up to ten inches of annual precipitation in a localized area, say, about 100,000 square miles. In the area of terrain this could be a change as great as light forest to heavy forest, desert to plains, or hills to low mountains, again in a localized area. To create the change itself would cost 100 points of primal base; to counter each of the side effects that would crop up would cost an additional 10–100 points of primal base.
- *Major Coercion.* This could be a minor change as described above, only on a planewide scale. It could also be a more dramatic effect, such as a change of up to fifty degrees or fifty inches of annual precipitation, or any "normal" terrain modification desired, on a localized scale. To create the change itself would cost 200 points of primal base; to counter each of the side effects that would crop up would cost an additional 20–200 points of primal base. If the change involves alteration of a planet's crust, there will be an additional cost of 2,000 points of primal flux.

Remember that a deity will have to deal with side effects only when creating ecologically significant planar constants. Constants involving magic, the color of the sky, or the time of day when tea is served won't require this kind of cleanup work.

You might want to allow a reduction in cost if expert assistance is available. A deity with a sphere of influence in nature or ecology might be able to provide invaluable assistance in the planning of a planar constant. If you use this variation, halve all costs whenever such help is available.

On the other hand, you might want to make changing ecologically sensitive constants even more difficult. For this variation, if controlling the side effects requires another constant, you would roll again to see how much it costs to control *its* side effects, and so on. In this case, those greater constants are going to get prohibitively expensive in a hurry.

While some deities might spend most of their time on a single plane, the vast majority will be frequent travelers. For this reason, deities pay a lot of attention to how planes are connected. In this section, we'll cover different ways planes are connected, methods of travel between planes, and the possibilities of moving, joining, and splitting planes.

### Using Coercion For New Effects

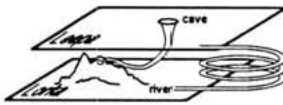
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### Variations

## Interplanar Issues

## How Planes Relate to Other Planes

### Connected

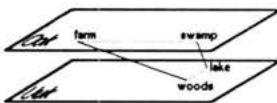


There are several possible ways that two planes might be metaphysically positioned in relation to each other. If you'll remember, one of the definitions of a plane had to do with the limited ways to get from one plane to another. Just how limited these ways are, and how they work, will depend on whether the planes are connected, parallel, adjacent, removed, or isolated.

Plane Leepa is considered *connected* to plane Lorka because Leepa and Lorka are connected in such a way as to allow physical travel, so that one could conceivably walk, fly, or otherwise travel normally from one to the other at specific points. An example of this would be the planes of Dante's *Inferno*, each of which can be accessed, by the appropriate people, from the plane above it and the plane below it. Note that this differs from the concept of two planes actually sitting next to each other physically; in this situation the connection is based on metaphysical constructs, not on anything that makes sense in a normal physical way. In other words, if two flat planes are floating around, and one is above the other, there's no guarantee that you would travel downward to get from the top to the bottom plane. You might have to travel leftward, or inward, or anything else. Connection as it relates to planes is different from pushing them together and laying a plank over the gap.

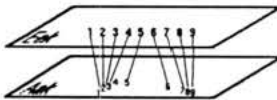
To get to Lorka from Leepa, the traveler descends into the deepest caverns, eventually coming out in Lorka. The curious thing is that, despite the fact that our intrepid traveler descended for miles into the depths of Leepa, the exit point on Lorka is a cave at the top of a mountain. To return to Leepa, the traveler must navigate a peculiar river that flows in such a way that at some mysterious, indefinable point, the banks of the river are in Leepa again. Leepa and Lorka qualify as separate planes because there are very specific and limited means of getting from one to the other.

### Parallel



Plane Ook is considered *parallel* to plane Uuk if it is possible to travel metaphysically from Ook to Uuk, and there is a one-to-one correspondence between points on Ook and points on Uuk. A person traveling from Ook to Uuk will appear at the point on Uuk that corresponds to the departing point on Ook. So, for example, if a person begins at point Ook<sub>1</sub>, travels to Uuk<sub>1</sub>, walks one hundred feet to point Uuk<sub>2</sub>, and then travels back to plane Ook, the person will probably not appear at Ook<sub>1</sub> again. Good examples of such planes are the æthereal and astral planes, which are parallel to many planes in the universe, and merely adjacent to others. Be aware that Ook<sub>2</sub> isn't necessarily a hundred feet from Ook<sub>1</sub>. It might be a hundred thousand feet, or a hundred feet up, or even what would appear to be a random distance away.

Let's assume that the intrepid planar traveler Glish is at a farm on Ook. He does his Magic Transport Dance and appears on Uuk, in a wooded area. Glish walks northward about two miles until he reaches the edge of a lake. He foolishly decides to jump back to Ook, thinking that he'll walk north on dry land there and then cross back. After transporting himself to Ook, Glish finds that he is now forty miles east of his departure point, and knee deep in a swamp. One mile on Uuk equals twenty miles on Ook, and north on Uuk is east on Ook. What he still doesn't know is that if he goes north on Ook he won't go west on Uuk, he'll go east. Directions are not only twisted, but also flip-flopped.



But that's nothing. On Ook and Uuk, if you keep jumping back and forth, both paths will be a straight line. This is not necessarily true. Take a look at Eek and Aak. What appears to be a neat line of points on Eek will take you all over the place on Aak. On the first couple of points, the Aak points are closer than they are on Eek, but 5 and 6 turn out to be very distant. Needless to say, unless you have some kind of map, trying to figure out where on Aak you'll end up when you leave Eek is very much a matter of trial and error, even though there are predictable correspondences.

Plane Xenta is considered *adjacent* to plane Yonka because it is possible to travel metaphysically from Xenta to Yonka, but there is no correspondence between points on Xenta and points on Yonka. People who leave Xenta to go to Yonka either appear at a random location on Yonka (*adjacent variant*), have a choice of specific locations at which to appear on Yonka (*adjacent selective*), or will always appear at the same specific point on Yonka (*adjacent determinate*).

The first case, adjacent variant, is simple enough. No matter where you are on Xenta, when you shift to Yonka you'll appear at an entirely random location, making travel . . . interesting. Hopefully this randomness means you'll appear somewhere where it is possible to appear safely, although it's certainly possible that "a random spot" could mean the air above or the ground below. If planar travel is *that* random, maybe it's better to stay home.

For adjacent selective, assume that there are a very specific set of places on Yonka that accept interplanar travelers. If you shift from King Heffalump's garden, then points 1–4 are available on Yonka. If you depart from the temple of Nsk, the choice is between points 3, 5, and 6. Travelers should be aware that these choices may not work the same way on the return journey.

Simplest of all is adjacent determinate. No matter where you are on Xenta, shifting to Yonka puts you at the same point, where the Yonkans have conveniently built a bus terminal.

So far, these examples have been assuming that you can twitch your nose anywhere on Xenta and transfer to Yonka. This isn't necessarily true, depending on your method of transportation. For those who can't get their noses to twitch properly, there might be gates on Xenta that transport people to Yonka. Aside from the fact that the Xentan departure points are more limited this way, the process is the same. For example, if the Xentan Bear Cave always takes a traveler to the Yonkan Snake Pit, that would be adjacent determinate, and stressful.

Plane Fip is considered *removed* from plane Neek since there is no way to travel from Fip to Neek without going through Lulk and Flooj to get there. Many GMs play that one cannot travel to any of the traditional planes of hell without going through each of the planes that are "above" it. In this case, the first and third planes of hell, for example, would be removed from each other. The fastest way to Neek from Fip, by the way, is by crossing your arms and bobbing your head to appear on Lulk, then taking the Planeplane flight nonstop to Flooj; Flooj and Neek are connected, so one can walk to Neek from there.

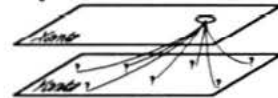
Plane Villabilla is considered *isolated* from plane Wizzygawoo if there is no known way to travel from Villabilla to Wizzygawoo, no matter what you do. If Tolkien's Middle Earth were real, it would certainly be isolated from our own world.

Note that the metaphysical relationships between two planes may vary depending upon the medium of travel. For example, in one campaign each of the planes of hell may be removed from each of the other planes except for the ones directly "above" and "below." However, there is an artifact sword called Hellkey that allows its wielder to travel instantly and directly between any of the planes of hell and the main plane, making each of the planes of hell adjacent to the main plane for those using Hellkey, but not for anyone else.

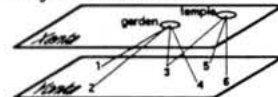
We're not going to get into discussions of all the various methods that various game systems have come up with for travel from one plane to another, whether by magic, psionics, demonology, or whatever. But, so as to avoid leaving you totally in the dark, we've made some generalizations about travel. For convenience, we'll divide them into two kinds: non-primal and primal.

## Adjacent

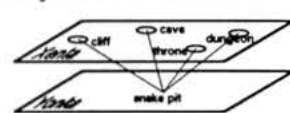
### Adjacent Variant



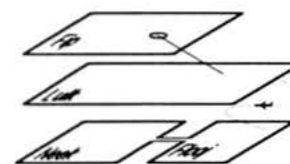
### Adjacent Selective



### Adjacent Determinate



## Removed



## Isolated

## Methods of Travel



*Non-Primal Travel*

This would be how mortals jaunt from plane to plane. If they're lucky enough to be traveling between connected planes, they won't need any powers. Slightly less accessible planes might require a transposition spell, planar deck, Amulet of Elsewhere, or whatever tool of travel your game system provides. This is the sort of travel that can be blocked without too much difficulty. It's also cheap compared to primal travel, and can be slow if the planes between which you are traveling are seriously removed from one another. In the earlier example of planes Fip and Neek, the process might be a lengthy one.

It is certainly possible for the compulsive planar engineer to assume that different items and spells might use different means of non-primal travel. The Medallion of Djusis might use a method in which Baksta and Llyrica are parallel, but the Ankle Hoops of Farwalking might use a method in which Baksta and Llyrica are removed from each other by a couple of planes. At worst, every spell and object might find the planes connected differently.

*Primal Travel*

Despite the category names, many deities will use the non-primal method of travel if they've got the time, because it takes less primal energy. If they've got an Instant Rabbit Hole, or a magic hairclip, it might take no primal at all.

Sometimes, however, a deity has to be someplace in a hurry. Primal planar travel involves temporarily altering reality so that instead of being at point A, the traveler is now on point B. Essentially, the traveler remains stationary and brings the destination to his or her position. Usually, all planes are adjacent to each other via this method of travel. To be precise, they are adjacent selective with all points available for selection. Thus primal travel is fast and easy, and can go places that non-primal methods might not be able to reach at all.

To determine the cost of traveling primally, figure out how much the cheapest non-primal method to which the deity has access would cost a deity with no magic ability to cast using primal; use the guidelines found in Chapter Three for casting spells with primal to determine this. Then quadruple the cost. Since there isn't really a Primal Travel spell, it must be cast by using primal. To illustrate, if it takes a non-magic-using deity four flux points to cast *Æthereal Doorway*, and a magic-using deity just the normal magical ability to cast it, then it will take any deity sixteen flux points to travel via the primal method.

There is always the possibility that mortals could use this method of travel if they had an artifact that could provide the necessary powers. Finding such a God's Gate would be rare indeed.

*Moving a Plane*

It doesn't take too much imagination to see that some deities might not like the particular way a plane of theirs is situated, or maybe they don't like their neighbors. Others might prefer to be less isolated so they could get just about anywhere with a minimum of effort. This section discusses how deities can change the way their planes connect with others and hints at a few of the issues involved in physically moving planes.

*Connecting or Disconnecting Planes*

To alter the way one plane is connected to another, a deity must burn primal base according to the chart below. The chart assumes the deity wants to make a connection, but the costs are the same to break an existing connection. We gave creating or breaking primal travel connections a separate, much higher cost because primal travel is so powerful that it would take a considerable amount of effort to block it. Yet, once it is blocked, it would take an equal effort to open it again. The costs in the chart also reflect the fact that making two planes connected is a matter of making them adjacent or parallel and then adding a warp or gate to make the connection visible and usable by people traveling via purely physical means.

Present Connection	Desired Connection	Non-Primal Travel	Primal Travel
Iso. or Rem.	Adjacent	200	1,000
Iso. or Rem.	Parallel	200	1,000
Iso. or Rem.	Connected	250	1,000
Adj. or Par.	Connected	50	100

Pele is getting pretty tired of watching well-meaning mortals toss bottles of whiskey into Kilauea Crater instead of bringing them to her. To make it easier for reverent mortals to reach her, she decides to establish a cave on the side of the earthly Mauna Loa that will connect with the throne room on her plane of the same name. This will make Pele's Mauna Loa connected to the Hawaiian one via a non-primal connection. Since her volcanic home is already adjacent to the mountain itself, she only has to burn 50 points of primal base to establish the link.

Pele also wishes to prohibit access to her plane from the æthereal meta-plane. It is presently accessible through non-primal travel, and is parallel to her home plane. To prevent pesky mortals wandering the æther from dropping in unannounced, she burns 200 points of base to break this connection.

Through most of this chapter, we've been talking about planes as if they were all pretty independent from their environments. But it's certainly possible that a plane could be orbiting one sun when its deity would prefer another farther away from his archenemy. Another could be hanging from the Dome of Stars near Beta Lyrae when its deity would rather hang around near the rest of her pantheon by Aldebaran. Fulfilling these desires would require physically moving the plane.

What exactly is involved here depends very much on what kind of plane we're talking about. If the plane is a planet, it would require taking the planet out of orbit and somehow transporting it to another solar system. Adjusting for gravitational chaos, maintaining an atmosphere and the right amount of sunlight during transit, and dealing with any satellites are just a few of the problems a deity would face in this situation. On the other hand, if the plane is an æthereal island, moving it from one area to another might be as trivial as stepping off the island and pushing.

Setting up rules for each of the myriad possible types of planes is really beyond the scope of this book, though we may take it up in a later supplement. If you don't want to wait that long, you are certainly free to come up with your own system.

The problem with having deities share planes with mortals is that they tend to spoil all the fun for the mortals. Deities monopolize the politics, warfare, and history of the universe and sometimes even toy with mortal hearts and lives for their own amusement. For this reason, many GMs limit the involvement of deities on the plane where most of the play takes place. We call these planes where divine activity is restricted *non-intervention planes*.

In any given universe, there might be one non-intervention plane, several, or none. This is completely up to you as a GM, and could depend on the justification you use for the existence of non-intervention planes. If divine activity is restricted because the deities are off in some other dimension or something, then the entire galaxy could be a non-intervention plane or set of planes, depending on how you slice it. If there is some sort of barrier or

### An Example of Connecting Two Planes

### Moving a Plane Physically

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My fellow countrymen, I have just been informed that we are now at war.

## Non-Intervention Planes

### Justifying the Non-Intervention Plane

### The Politics of Intervention

### Not Having Non-Intervention Planes

*Mid pleasures and palaces  
through we may roam;  
Be it ever so humble,  
there's no place like home.  
—John Howard Dayne*

### A Home of Your Own

organization that keeps primal beings out of a given location, then perhaps only a couple of planes will turn out to have non-intervention status.

To provide a justification for this rule, we need look no further than to planar constants. A plane could happen to have a planar constant that forbids the presence of primal energy. This prohibits the presence of any deities, and disallows a number of primal abilities, forcing a deity to work through minions, visions, and other non-primal intermediaries. Ascension and the pulling of souls may still be allowed, but this depends on the plane. The amount of indirect intervention could vary from plane to plane, with some planes prohibiting any form of primal while others might just forbid the presence of primal base.

There is also the intriguing possibility of planes that only appear to be non-intervention planes because the local divine political situation prevents anyone from intervening. Perhaps a very powerful deity or group of deities has decided to protect this plane and devotes much effort to driving other deities away. Or maybe two deities who have been taking the same plane away from each other for millennia have finally agreed that neither will touch it anymore, and no one else dares to start meddling with it under their noses. While this kind of situation could make for some very interesting roleplaying, it is a little unstable as a justification for non-intervention because deities will only refrain from intervening so long as it remains in their best interests to do so. If one deity decides it's worth it to challenge those who would protect a plane, others may follow, and if the protectionists are defeated the plane will probably see more than its fair share of intervention.

If none of this sounds like any fun, you might decide that the whole concept of non-intervention planes does not even exist in your campaign. If that is the case, then divine warfare, intervention, and manipulation of mortal lives on the plane could become commonplace, often destroying whole civilizations in their wake. While this might be a lot of fun for high-level characters, there would be a high attrition rate for low- to mid-level characters. Frequent divine intervention would have a profound effect on politics, economics, culture—just about every aspect of society. For that matter, the divine power to affect nature could literally change the face of the plane.

Depending on your taste, this could be lots of fun, or a hopeless morass. We will guarantee that there will never be a dull moment if you choose this option!

### Home Planes

For a primal being to be considered a lesser deity, he or she must exercise control of at least one plane and transform it into a *home plane*. No matter how many planes a deity controls, he or she can only have one home plane. For deities who control numerous planes, *which* plane is actually the home plane might be a closely guarded secret. They may even claim three planes when they actually control four, thus keeping even the existence of their home plane a secret.

That home plane is the deity's assurance of eternal life. As long as a deity's home plane is not taken over by another deity, the owner's soul will be able to regenerate there, regardless of how he or she may have been killed on another plane. Unfortunately, this can take a while—traditionally on the order of one hundred years.

Creating a home plane requires a little bit of effort and a lot of patience. After establishing control over a plane, a deity who wishes to make that plane his or her home plane must “loan” it 100 points of primal base. This base continues to provide the deity with flux and for all intents and purposes still belongs to the deity, but it is kept with the plane at all times.

This process effectively introduces the deity to the plane, and the plane will start to adapt to this signature and forge a link between itself and the deity. This forging process requires 100 years. At the end of that time, the deity has a home plane. All but one of the hundred points of base can be withdrawn after the link is established.

Should the deity later wish to make a different plane the home plane, he or she must first sever the old link by withdrawing the last point of base. Depositing the required one hundred points on another plane starts the process over again. Until the old link is broken, no other plane will attempt to establish a link no matter how much base is left there. This does leave a period of time in which the deity won't have a home plane on which to regenerate, so a deity involved in such a move will usually keep it a secret.

While planets are often the most comfortable, there are some annoyances to consider when using the planets as planes concept. If all planets are planes there could be a lot of potential home planes in the galaxy. Once a deity figured out how to get from one planet to another, it might be a trivial matter to find a planet that lacked a powerful enough defense mechanism to thwart a divine takeover attempt. In such a situation, there would likely be a lot of deities and they would be able to get very powerful pretty quickly. Also, there would be less competition for planes, which could cut down on the possibilities for roleplaying.

To help prevent this, you could say that most planets are uninhabited and have no significant importance, which would mean they do not qualify as controllable planes.

But if a deity cannot find a planet of significant importance, he or she might be able to find an inhabitable planet, populate it, and bring it into the foreground of intergalactic politics, thus giving it significant importance. This is typically more trouble than it's worth, and takes much longer since the one hundred-year atunement cycle can't start until after the planet has reached significant importance status. Yet it would be possible to create a home plane this way.

If you're still worried about the possibility of there being too many potentially divinely useful planes, then a variation that works especially well with science fiction/fantasy settings is that of *primal pockets*. Primal pockets are places in the universe where raw primal energy courses through the planets in that sector, but not planets in other sectors. Using this concept, to qualify as a divine plane a planet must be a *primal plane*. This particular concept works very well in universes that like to mix fantasy and techno, yet keep them distinct as well. The gods, wizards, dragons, and the like inhabit the primal planes, while the spacefaring races explore the rest of the universe. With magic and primal fading in power as you leave the primal planes, deities will be very hesitant to leave the comfort of their own living rooms. And any spaceship that happened to stray into a primal pocket would have its own troubles; imagine the effects of a chaos spell on the ship's computers!

Deities only need to be regenerated if their consciousness is destroyed. Killing the bodies of deities does little permanent harm; they can always create others or inhabit bodies kept handy for just such occasions. On the down side, losing a body means losing all the possessions of that body. This can be a major loss, since most deities will go into combat with an arsenal of artifacts and relics.

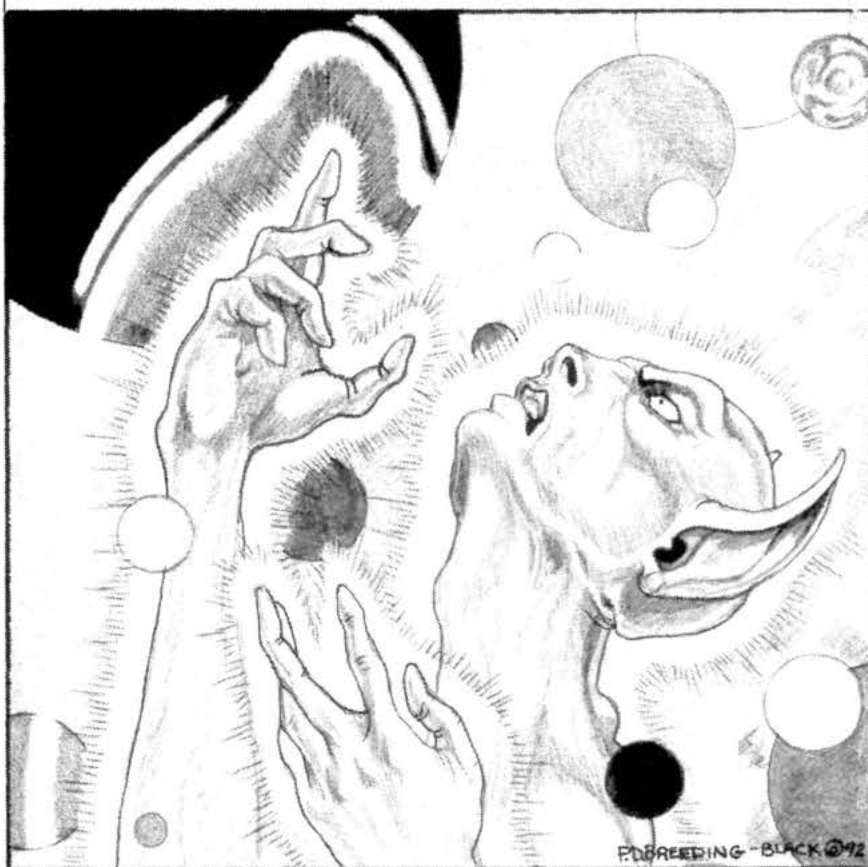
Deities also require regeneration if they somehow get cut off from their home planes. This cutoff would have to be more than just extensive distance separation; it would have to be something that prevents the deity from returning home. Remember when Joey fought Bob, the God of Laundry Baskets, for his home plane? Well, Joey arranged to access a little extra flux, and through treachery trapped Bob in a cage of intermium, a very rare substance that is

## Planetary Planar Problems

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## Variation

## Divine Regeneration



unusually resistant to primal energies. This cut Bob off from all of his alternate portions of base, so he had only his personal base and the flux he had on him to help him break out. Joey still had to provide extra power to reinforce the intermum trap so it could withstand any primal flux Bob could throw at it. Joey's underlings were kept busy making sure that planar travel was cut off so Bob couldn't pop himself out, as well as providing a mindwipe field to prevent Bob from separating his consciousness from his primal via Divine Spirit and escaping that way. With all of these options removed, Bob found himself at an extreme disadvantage.

Unfortunately for Bob, he was unable to escape before Joey had contested control of his home plane for a year. At the end of that year, Bob no longer controlled the plane, so his link with the plane was broken, preventing it from regenerating another Bob. Joey could then snuff Bob at his leisure. In four more years, Joey had complete control of the plane of the former God of Laundry Baskets.

We need to point out that this is a rather fabricated example, and might mislead you into thinking this sort of sneakiness will usually work. It's because of situations like this that there are very few solitary deities. In a real game, Bob would probably have a collection of divine assistants who would come immediately to his aid, and some allies who might choose to assist him to a limited extent. Most importantly, more than a few deities will go right after *Joey* as soon as he's weakened from spending such exorbitant amounts of his primal in defeating Bob. Note especially that while Joey had enough flux to counter Bob's personal flux, he didn't have enough to wipe out his *base* right after he trapped him, and that would have given Bob's friends time to get him out.



When primal beings become full deities, their home planes “link up” with their primal base. From then on, if the deities are banished from another plane, they will arrive on their home planes.

If deities’ primal base is killed or captured, then their home planes immediately begin duplicating the deities as they were at the time the link was cut. When the regeneration process is complete, the “new” deities will awaken with all of their memories and mental abilities intact, 75% of the primal base they used to have, and no physical bodies. The process takes a hundred years, regardless of the strength of the deity or home plane.

Imagine the goddess Ysabeau traveling to a place so amazingly far away that she passes through a mysterious rift and ends up outside the primal pocket in which her home plane lies. Her plane loses track of her, thinks she is dead, and immediately begins regenerating her. Ysabeau should come back as soon as she feels the link snap, but she’s young and gets lost. The big risk in being this seriously out of touch is that Ysabeau isn’t around to personally oversee her home plane. Ysabeau’s demigods and other servants now have to stick around for the hundred years it takes her to regenerate and ensure that the plane isn’t successfully contested in the interim. With Ysabeau temporarily gone, the plane is going to be easier to contest, and the morale of the remaining beings will probably suffer. In turn, the morale of the worshipers and churches will suffer if they hear about the unfortunate turn of events. Usually this sort of thing is denied or covered up by the more astute followers of the missing deity.

The home plane itself will appoint some member of the missing deity’s church, typically its most prominent demigod, chancellor, or military general, as the home plane guardian. Ysabeau’s home plane chooses her chancellor, Yngwie. If Yngwie is killed, it will appoint another, and so on. The guardian can act as the deity in many respects. Yngwie will be the gathering point for incoming primal flux and the distribution point for outgoing flux, with two exceptions:

- Ysabeau’s personal base no longer exists, so it doesn’t generate 10% of its value in flux.
- The primal flux from Ysabeau’s home plane is being used to regenerate her, so it isn’t available to the guardian.

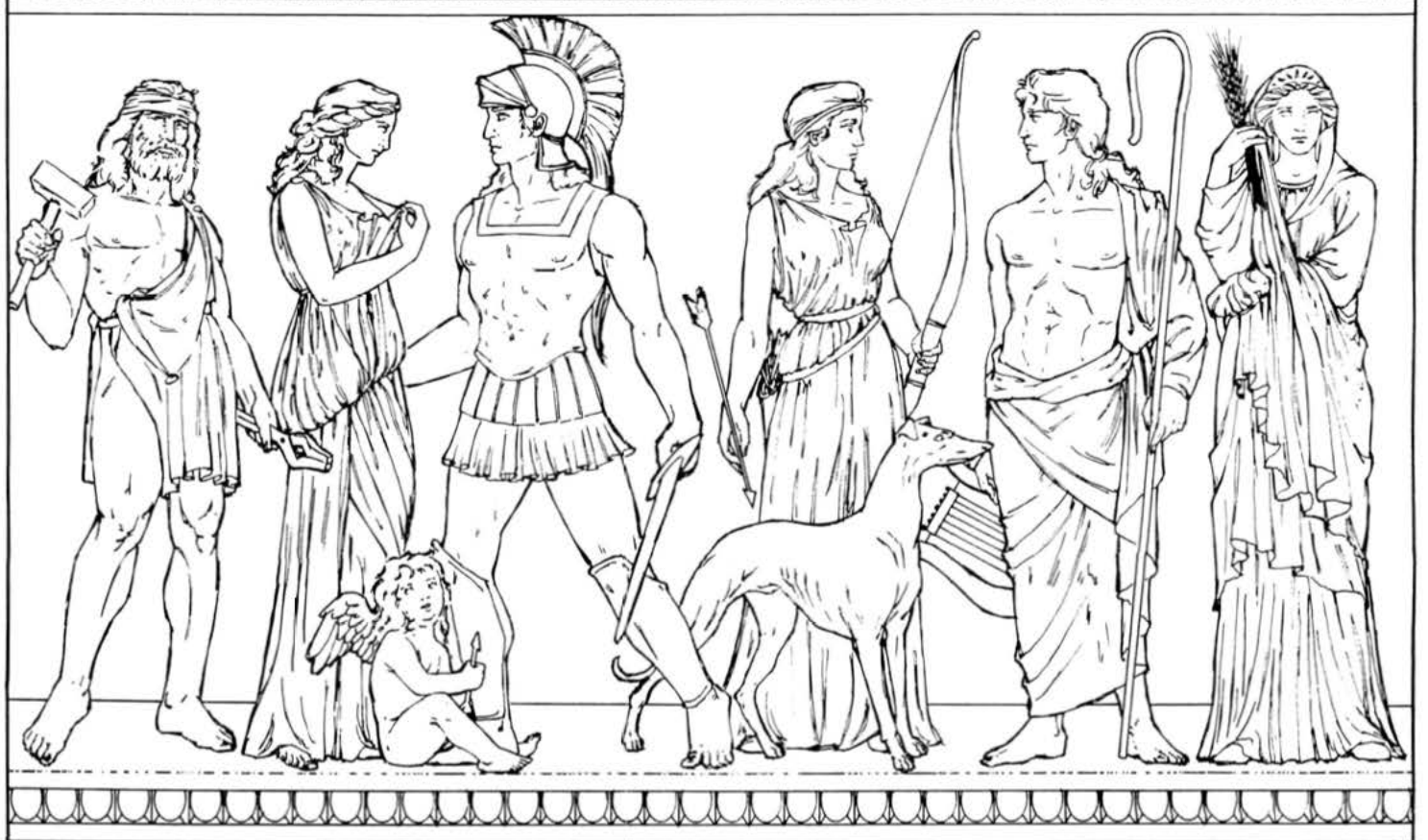
When the hundred years are finally up, a new Ysabeau, with memories intact, comes to life with a new primal base set to 75% of whatever it was when she passed through the rift.

Now if at this point the original Ysabeau finally figures out how to get back home, there won’t be two Ysabeaus. Instead, whichever of the two is weaker will vanish as soon as the original Ysabeau passes back into the primal pocket where her home plane can find her. Whichever Ysabeau is left had probably better give Yngwie and the others some pretty substantial rewards for their support in this crisis. Otherwise, next time Yngwie might not be so helpful.

*Lowering the maintenance cost for planes is a primary consideration for all manufacturers.*

—M. H. Greer,  
Boeing Commercial Airplane  
Company report  
TR-DC-36075216.

## How Does a Deity Regenerate?





## **High Society**



*Contests allow no excuses, no more do friendships. —Ibycus*

Most campaigns include more than one deity, for the simple reason that more deities are usually more fun. There are plenty of opportunities for divine-level wars, political maneuvers, and diplomatic intrigue when you've got several different deities running around stirring up trouble. In this chapter, we'll be talking about different kinds of deities, the types of relationships they have, the groups they form, and how they resolve their conflicts.

## Divine Ranks

First of all, let's cover in more detail the divine structure of authority. Deities naturally fall into varying levels of power that we call ranks. As deities gain power, take control of planes, and develop their religions and spheres of influence, they increase their rankings, and in this way gain more abilities and access to larger reservoirs of primal energy. As we described in Chapter Four, each increase in rank is associated with an increase in primal base.

## Godlings

Godlings are at the low end of the divine world. As deities, they have both primal base and primal flux, though in such small quantities that they must still exercise some caution when dealing with "mere mortals." In many ways, godlings have more ties to the mortal world than to the divine, since their abilities are too limited to give them much influence in divine affairs.

Usually godlings will move from their planes of origin to live on one of their deity's controlled planes. However, they often continue to meddle quite a bit in the affairs of their planes of origin, especially if they still have friends there, or are interested in the politics at home. Godlings are often used as intermediaries between their deity and church officials on various planes of existence. In divine combat, their function depends on the status and philosophy of their deity. Some deities will use them as cannon fodder, while others will try to protect them if possible, keeping a special eye out to ensure that none are captured and taken as hostages.

## Demigods

Once a godling develops a sphere of influence and masters at least one ability within that sphere, it becomes obvious that the godling is destined for greater things. In essence, the godling has begun to weave his or her presence into the fabric of reality. At this point, the godling becomes a demigod.

Demigods are generally considered too valuable to sacrifice lightly, and will typically be watched carefully by their superiors; it is fairly safe to assume that when a demigod is involved in a situation, there is probably a lesser or greater deity paying close attention.

Demigods take much less interest in their planes of origin, choosing instead to spend time on their deity's controlled planes. In keeping with their increased detachment from mortal affairs, they delegate many of their responsibilities to minions and godlings.

## Supported Demigods

A supported demigod has either acquired control of a plane of existence or is being supported by a higher-ranking deity. In the first case, the deity must continue to control at least one plane, though not necessarily the original one, in order to retain this status. Alternatively, a higher-ranking deity can choose to support a demigod by spending 100 points of primal flux on a daily basis. This expenditure must be met every day; if the primal flow is ever interrupted, the supported demigod is immediately demoted to demigod status. Support can be resumed at any time, perhaps even by a different deity.

Once demigods become supported, they typically begin to organize their religions in earnest. While godlings and unsupported demigods might have

some worshipers and a couple of minor temples, supported demigods are likely to begin large-scale missionary efforts to spread their religions to other cultures and planes. By the time they reach this rank, deities have few direct mortal ties, and should have attracted fairly elite cadres of minions, ordained warriors, and priests to help manage their growing religions.

At the moment a supported demigod successfully transforms a controlled plane into a home plane, he or she becomes a lesser deity. This rank provides the most significant increase in primal base; this reflects the deity's new role as an established peer in the divine ranks. Lesser deities may be outranked occasionally, but they are never taken for granted.

At this point, lesser deities will typically break all formal ties with any deities who may have been supporting them, and they will be offered places in any appropriate pantheons and divine councils. Lesser deities will also break any remaining direct ties to mortals, assigning these responsibilities to a godling or minion.

Once a lesser deity acquires control of five planes, he or she becomes a greater deity. Greater deities are the definitive authorities in their spheres of influence, at least within their pantheons, and at this point they can attain all the divine abilities available to deities. There is no restriction on how long these planes must have been controlled, so it is conceivable that a supported demigod who obtained control of four other planes while transforming his or her first plane into a home plane might jump directly to greater deity status.

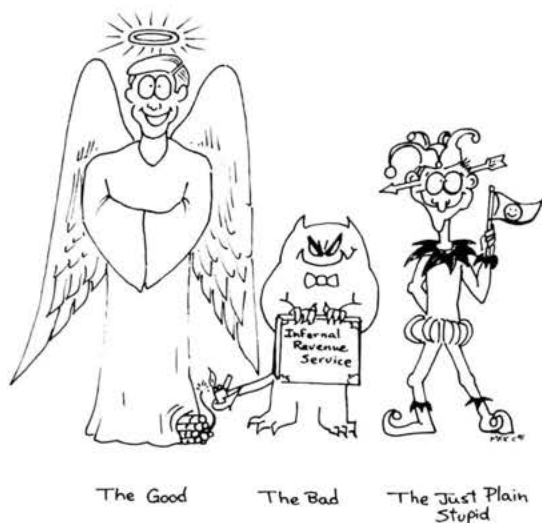
Needless to say, greater deities are respected and feared; even among divine beings, they are never taken lightly. By the time deities reach greater deity status, they will undoubtedly have several artifacts, minions, demigods, servitors, and planes, and will likely command vast armies and political power.

Supreme deities are greater deities who are selected to lead major divine-level political organizations such as pantheons or councils. This position can only be gained through the cooperation and support of other deities. The number of supreme deity positions will vary from campaign to campaign, depending on the number of deities you use and how involved they are in mortal and divine affairs. You may decide to have supreme deities for pantheons, alignment councils, groups with similar spheres of influence, or any combination of the

## Lesser Deities

## Greater Deities

## Supreme Deities





above. In any case, supreme deities should preside only over fairly large and universally significant groups—for example, those that have been around for at least a thousand years, and whose memberships include at least twenty deities of lesser deity rank or higher. The political ramifications of selecting a supreme deity reach the farthest corners of the known universe, since such a deity exercises incredible power and a great deal of influence.

The exact role of a supreme deity varies by campaign and by the type of political organization over which the supreme deity resides. Some supreme deities may demand total sovereignty over all deities in their organizations, requiring all members to answer to the supreme deity's bidding no matter what commitments to other organizations they may have. Others may handle things more democratically. As with all political systems, the nature will vary from group to group.

## Pantheon Leaders

A pantheon leader is a greater deity who has risen above the other deities in a pantheon by one means or another. Typically, the pantheon leader is the parent or originator of the pantheon, or its eldest member. Of course, with this position comes the responsibility of dealing with pantheon politics and guarding the interests and well-being of that pantheon. The pantheon leader is generally also responsible for the creation of pantheon-backed artifacts.

In some ways, pantheon leaders are like kings and queens; some have absolute power, some are mainly figureheads, and some had better beware of those who would dethrone them.

There are no primal bonuses for being a pantheon leader, unless you rule that the pantheon leader is also a supreme deity. In that case, use those rules.

*A Literal Translation  
of the Psphan Tablet*

*(success) (Mammanka) (control) (lesser) (gods) () (subsistence)  
(submission) () (acknowledge/awareness) (supremity/victory) () (crown-  
ing) (celebration) (accept/expect) (transfer of gifts)*

## Other Types of Deities

So far we've focused our discussion on deities who fit a rather traditional archetype. In this section, we'd like to introduce a couple of variants—deities who deviate somewhat from the norm.

## Magic-Based Deities

Just to spice things up a bit, you may opt to create other deities who are based ultimately on magic. These deities might have been powerful magical creatures in their mortal lives, creatures who wielded magic for so many centuries that they eventually took on a divine nature. Greater sphinxes, elder dragons, fairy queens, or royal unicorns could fall into this group. These deities would most likely be godlings or demigods, but they could conceivably become lesser deities in the traditional fashion.

These sorts of deities can serve as the ultimate fantasy monsters. Just imagine what the home plane of an undead titan would be like! Naturally these deities are going to behave somewhat differently from the more traditional deities; exactly how they behave will, of course, depend on what types of creatures they are. They will also be different from others of their species in that they will probably have higher intelligences than is typical of their species; it would be difficult for a creature with only animal intelligence to become a deity and then maintain that rank, unless the deity lived in a realm where there was no competition.

Aside from the standard divine abilities and abilities of their natural species, which will of course be in top form, these deities have no inherent advantages. They will typically develop spheres of influence having to do with their species, or an expansion of some ability of their species.

All deities can eventually learn to create entirely new creatures, but these are generally sterile, incapable of reproduction. *Creator deities* are those who can create self-reproducing life, and this talent puts them in a class by themselves.

Creator deities should be very rare, for a number of reasons. First, the creation of a self-reproducing race virtually guarantees a continual wellspring of worshipers, and hence a constantly growing flow of primal flux. Because of this, creator deities ascend through the divine ranks at a highly accelerated rate, which tends to make their fellow deities feel justifiably threatened and jealous. To survive at first, creator deities will have to ally themselves with more powerful sponsor deities, or exercise incredible wit.

This ability is not something that can be learned or granted; it is a gift that some deities are born with, like perfect pitch or photographic memory. They cannot teach it to others, for they don't themselves understand it completely. Some things are beyond even divine comprehension.

The ability does not cost anything additional in the way of primal flux or mana. When a creator deity creates life, it will automatically possess that spark that allows it to combine with others of its kind and produce new souls for the universe. There is a 1% chance that any new deity is a creator deity, although this will not be known until that deity creates life and observes whether it can reproduce.

*Ozo-ata, the wisest of the Vevials, was lonely, and in this loneliness, chose to stretch out a hand and place, in delicate splendor, the People upon the land. Pleased with the results, Ozo-ata taught the People how to hunt, and how to make fire, and the People prospered.*

*The other Vevials, jealous of Ozo-ata's creation, turned upon the creator, and destroyed Ozo-ata. Unsatisfied, they created voons to plague the People, and turned the animals against them, and turned them against themselves.*

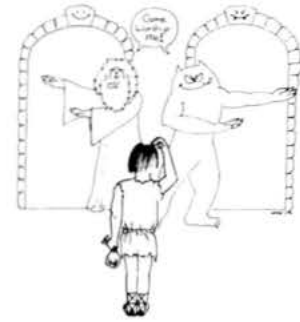
*This is why we war today, and why the animals hide from us.*

You are encouraged to come up with other categories of deities that are unique to your own universe. Note that these categories should not be confused with spheres of influence. The term *category* refers to the basis of the deity's history and existence, while *sphere of influence* relates to a discipline that the deity has chosen to master.

Whenever several people get together, they tend to organize into groups based on a common morality, history, goal, or interest. Deities are no exception; they form pantheons with deities with whom they share a common past, and councils to address shared philosophies or special interests. In the next couple of sections, we'll examine what these groups are like, how they develop, and their effect on divine society.

Throughout the history of divine development, two types of deities have been most common; the solitary divine soul who owes allegiance to no one, and the divine being who belongs to some kind of group based on a common history, otherwise known as a pantheon. There are several advantages to both routes. Solitary deities can make their own rules, side with whomever they like, and avoid the hassle of political pressure. On the other hand, deities who are part of a pantheon know that they have friends they can call upon for support. Taking a plane is much easier if you belong to a pantheon that includes a war deity, and if you're revamping a plane's ecology you might like having a friendly nature deity around.

## Creator Deities



*Selection from the  
Creation Myth of the Jignt*

8

## Other Categories of Deities

## Pantheons

## Pantheons vs. the Solitary Deity

Regardless of these possible advantages, most divine beings don't have the opportunity to decide which path to take. This is because the two most common ways to get a primal soul are to be ascended by some more powerful deity or to be born that way. In either case, the new deity is automatically associated with at least one other deity. If Divya, Goddess of Desert Warriors, was ascended by Todan, God of War, then by default Divya is already a part of Todan's pantheon.

For a deity to exist outside of a pantheon is far more rare. This could happen if the rest of the pantheon were wiped out, leaving one deity to carry on alone. Also, deities sometimes leave their pantheons, either of their own accord or by being kicked out. Probably the most likely way to become a solitary deity, however, is to become divine without any aid from a deity, either by controlling your own plane or by partaking of some magical food or elixir that bestows this rank. For example, Joey became a deity by spreading his cult out over his plane of origin to the point where he had control over the entire plane, and was thereby ascended. Since he had no parent or ascending deity, he became a solitary deity.

### Examples of Pantheons

History has provided many pantheons for you to adjust to suit your campaign. Many GMs already use the familiar Egyptian, Celtic, Greek, Roman, and Norse pantheons, and you can find plenty of equally fascinating deities in Chinese, Japanese, African, Hindu, and North and South American Indian mythology. In addition, there are numerous other historical pantheons that are somewhat more obscure, such as the Tahitian and Hittite pantheons. One look at the

mythology section in your local library will show you just how extensive the list of available pantheons is; those currently provided in the FRP market are far from comprehensive.

Although using historical pantheons is a great way to get lots of ideas, you don't have to limit yourself to pantheons that have found a place in actual earth history. Pantheons develop from cultures, so it is conceivable that for every culture there will be a pantheon of deities that culture serves. Elves, dwarves, orcs, gnomes, and dragons, for instance, could all have developed their own pantheons. In some cases it might be the other way around; perhaps the races sprung forth from a pantheon of deities.

If you want a flavor of originality, you might consider inventing your own pantheons. Start by deciding what things or ideas a given group of worshipers would value. For example, worshipers in a coastal area that does a lot of shipping might value the sea, weather, navigation, trade, contracts, bookkeeping, and luxury goods. At first glance, some of these might not seem to make good spheres of influence, but if you think of navigation as astronomy, bookkeeping as mathematics, and luxury goods as items of beauty, they might work after all. The concept of contracts might even inspire two po-



tential deities—one a faithful deity of integrity and justice, the other a shrewd deity of hard bargaining. Once you have a list of potential spheres of influence, you can choose which ones you want to work with and start assigning genders, personalities, abilities, and all the other trappings of divinity according to the culture's idea of what the embodiments of these spheres would be like. As soon as you have a good concept for each deity, you can give them all names; if you use names with similar sounds, it will be easy for players to identify them as a group. A dictionary of names can be helpful here, as can a telephone book from a large foreign city; such telephone books can be found in many metropolitan libraries. For example, when coming up with your own version of a pantheon with Japanese-sounding names, you might consult a telephone book from Tokyo or Kyoto.

Once you have decided which pantheons to use, you might want to set the stage for a little intrigue by considering the pantheons' histories. Again, the history of our own world provides a good model. Ancient humans believed in individual spirits of good, bad, and indifferent natures. These people lived in small, mostly nomadic tribes, and justified things they couldn't rationally explain by saying they were caused by spirits. People were highly superstitious and considered almost any unusual event an omen. For instance, a crow landing on a tree outside the hut of a woman giving birth might have been seen as a bad omen. As cultures developed from small tribes to larger communities to individual city-states, some people began to believe that the spirits were part of a supernatural world and that these spirits were merely servants of some higher being. The higher being would send good spirits to reward the people and bad spirits to punish them. Religions developed in order to appease these higher spirits, the first deities, so they would be pleased and send good spirits. As culture developed again to a more complicated level, so did the worship of these individual entities. As society developed into nations, the higher beings and their spirits developed into pantheons. When two nations merged cultures through conquest or proximity, their pantheons often merged as well. At this point, which is the stage into which most fantasy campaigns fall, people generally thought of deities as powerful beings with very human personalities. Sometimes heroic ancestors or great leaders would be worshiped as gods after they died.

In game terms, all this means that a good way to create pantheons is to have the group of deities have a similar starting point, or be from the same plane. For the Norse pantheon, the plane of origin would be Midgard. Perhaps Odin, when he was a mortal, developed a reputation among the people of Midgard as a controller of spirits. Once everyone on Midgard believed that Odin was a god who could wield divine powers, this collective belief allowed Odin to ascend to divine status and become imbued with primal base. Over the years, Odin spread his religion to many other planes, including the plane of Åsgard, which he made into his home plane. To help him in these tasks, he ascended several other mortals from Midgard, and the Norse pantheon was born.

It is not always possible to create campaign histories for pantheons that fit with both the "real world" history of the pantheons and the greater campaign scheme of things. This is particularly true since nearly every historical pantheon refers to its leader as the supreme entity; obviously Zeus, Odin, Mwari, and Osiris can't all be Number One. So, recognizing that something has got to give, you can let the deities claim whatever they want, but scale back the campaign facts to indicate that each pantheon has reigned supreme in only one part of the universe.

## Pantheon History & Evolution



### *Lineage of the Enken Goddesses*

*As we have mothers, so do the Holy Ones.*

*Unda is the mother of Qatis, the sister of mother's partner's partner, Trita. Trita has partnered Duenno, the mother of her sister's granddaughter, Sekist. Sekist has partnered Quillai, the daughter of Qatis, who claims Duenno as mother. Quillai is the mother of her partner's mother's sister, who has also partnered Duenno. Sekist has also partnered her partner's mother, and can claim Trita as granddaughter.*

*Thus know the round lineage of the Holy Ones.*

### **Pantheon Specialization**

If you play that each pantheon has a different cultural background or place of origin, then it would be logical to assume that different pantheons might specialize in the predominant ideas of their cultures. This doesn't mean that every member of the pantheon will have the same sphere of influence, just that the pantheon as a whole will have a definite personality.

For example, Norse deities are known for their numerous and varied exploits of war, while American Indian deities are known for being in tune with nature. Below is a chart that lists some of the various historical pantheons and some of the disciplines for which each was particularly recognized:

- *Babylonian*. Engineering and exploration.
- *Celtic*. Mysticism and nature.
- *Egyptian*. Death and mathematics.
- *Greek*. Strength and adventure.
- *Japanese*. Self-discipline and aesthetics.

Not all of the deities in the pantheon have to follow the pantheon's specialization. If Pele formed a pantheon in the future, she might well bring in deities of plants or occupations. It's just that they're going to feel a little outnumbered by the number of deities who are involved in violent natural events, since most of the other deities will preside over storms, earthquakes, tidal waves, floods, and so forth.

### **How to Play Pantheons**

If you decide to keep your world simple and have only one or two pantheons that don't see too much of each other, then how the pantheons get along is probably no big concern. But if you decide to have a large universe with lots of different cultures and deities to back them up, then you need to consider how all these divine beings interact, both within pantheons and across pantheon boundaries, since this will affect how their churches get along. Politics on our own earthly scale has yet to be fully understood and defined; imagine the politics of multiple planes, where all the cultures that exist on our own earth would be boxed into one and thought of as "that plane over there." This is the difference between mortal politics and politics on a divine level.

### *Pantheon Government*

In some ways pantheon governments are similar to national governments, but in other ways they are vastly different.

The similarities lie in the forms they can take. A pantheon government could be a dictatorship, with a pantheon leader at the top shouting orders to all of the subservient deities. Or there might be an established hierarchy or chain of command that is based on age or power, with older or more powerful deities holding sway over the younger or less powerful ones. Another possibility would be a discussion-and-vote system, in which the pantheon leader acts as the chair of a divine committee. Yet another pantheon government might be one in which the pantheon has no leader and makes decisions based on a consensus process in which all the deities have equal sway. These are but a few examples of the many possibilities.



Pantheon governments are different from national governments because they are formed of only a few people. Whereas a national government must consider millions of people, a pantheon government is set up to rule over only a small number of deities and therefore would probably not be as complex. Also, pantheon governments are composed of deities, not mortals, and therefore will not be subject to as many turnovers or retirements. In most cases pantheon governments will be very loosely defined because the government presides over deities, who will typically not stand for much bossing around, and because some of the deities will go off on their own and totally ignore the pantheon leaders.

Inter-pantheon politics can also quickly become complex. In a universe that was not limited to Norse deities, Loki would probably have a heyday playing practical jokes on deities from every pantheon around. Then if a deity from another pantheon got upset and killed Loki, this could lead to an interesting conflict of interest in which the original Norse deities would be torn between their hatred of Loki and their desire to avenge one of their own.

Also, deities from different pantheons who happen to have similar spheres of influence might be bitter enemies, each vowing to destroy the others and claim sole mastery of those spheres. Or such deities might ally and combine forces to further the cause of their spheres.

If you want to simplify things a bit but still maintain some variety, you could have single deities with several names. For instance, instead of using Ki and Mielikki as different deities, you could say they are the same goddess answering to different names. In some campaigns, there is only one pantheon, the members of which go by different names in different cultures. It's an interesting idea, and allows deities to present themselves in more than one way if they so choose.

Finally, remember that pantheons do not have to be stagnant; they can evolve, have revolts, have civil wars, and have new deities come and old deities go. Draw on government systems for ideas, but then try to consider the effects of having deities as subjects instead of other mortals, and remember that the divine population is rather small.

After the universe has been witness to various pantheons, and the members of these pantheons begin to interact in friendly or not-so-friendly ways, cross-pantheon political interest groups will most likely develop. These groups are referred to as *councils*.

The definition of a council and its purpose will vary from situation to situation. Typically a council will be formed to serve some common goal. For example, a group of nature deities from the various pantheons, including Silvanus, Mielikki, Ki, Prakriti, and Chicomecoatl, might all get together to form a council to coordinate activities involving the universal protection of nature. They could get together, possibly through minions, and discuss issues confronting them all and methods to present a unified front to any serious threats against nature that may arise.

Councils, as political bodies, will typically be a little more focused than pantheons. Pantheons share a common history and some deep feelings of friendship or hatred, but are more like social clubs than political action committees. Councils, on the other hand, are typically formed with specific goals and objectives in mind and members who support those goals. Councils usually get things done.

As with a pantheon, a council may decide to commission its own artifacts, designate a spokesperson or chancellor, erect a meeting place on some neutral ground, and even marshal armies. Some councils develop a serious amount of political clout and are respected far and wide.

### *Inter-pantheon Politics*

### *Multiple Divine Identities*

## 8

## Councils

### How to Play Councils



### Combining Pantheons and Councils

Since there is no history to bind them together, councils will often have less staying power than pantheons. A major squabble can split a council, making it become ineffective, break up, or simply not convene for a century or two. The problem with councils is that everyone must continue to support the same causes and methods. When its key members can't agree, the council is seriously put to the test.

Several pantheons and councils working together simultaneously can make for a very confusing universe politically. It's a rare GM who would really want to keep up with such a complex situation, and we don't recommend it for everyone. The key point to remember is that even if you don't want to sort it all out from the beginning, this stuff could be going on in the background and can be an incredible source of plot devices, providing motives for many strange situations as well as puzzles for PCs to figure out.

### Divine Warfare

Wars always seem to exist in some part of the world. War between two countries can devastate a planet, but a war between two deities can devastate the whole universe, depending on who gets involved.

Wars in our own world seldom involve only those who started the battle; likewise, wars on a divine level are prone to escalation. When deities go to war they call upon their friends, usually deities from their own pantheons, to aid them. If the deities at war are in the same pantheon, other members of the pantheon may not want to choose sides, but a fellow council member or other ally might be persuaded to lend a hand.

If you choose to have a campaign in which several different pantheons interact with one another, you need to be aware of the possibility of multi-pantheon conflicts. Imagine a full-scale war developing between Athena, Goddess of War and Wisdom, and Ares, God of Battle. Both are from the Greek pantheon, so they will likely look for aid from allies in other pantheons. If Athena calls on Ishtar and Sif and Ares brings in Huitzilopochtli and Set, then the remaining members of the Greek, Babylonian, Norse, Aztec, and Egyptian pantheons will undoubtedly be monitoring the fray and possibly preparing to enter it if circumstances warrant. Such a situation could easily lead to widespread destruction affecting many planes and perhaps the entire multiverse.

Thankfully, deities are aware of these possibilities. Few deities, except for Surtur perhaps, would like to see things expand to such a destructive level. They have worked too hard for what they have to throw it away in a flash. This protectiveness that deities feel for their own domains is the prime reason why most deities tend to avoid fully engaging in divine wars. If some allies were to become fully involved in a divine war, a deity might support them to a minor extent by sending a few demigods and perhaps some armies, but personal involvement isn't as likely as it may seem at first.

Divine wars almost always affect the mortal ranks of the church as well. If the high paladin of Athena knows that in a neighboring country lies a keep held by a paladin of Ares, he will not hesitate to attack it once he knows his goddess has declared war on Ares's church. In fact, his opponent is probably on her way over to attack him, too. This is just one example of how a divine conflict can spread to mortals who worship the warring deities.

Religious leaders will be the first to get involved as they begin planning to wipe out the other deities' churches, sack their temples, and capture their worshipers while protecting themselves against such onslaughts. Of course, different types of religions will work in different ways, some recruiting secular mercenaries and others conscripting common worshipers. Extremely pacifist churches might simply fortify themselves and let their opponents waste their resources on fruitless attacks.

Invariably, the church leaders will get the lay worshipers involved, and if the war lasts long enough even nonbelievers may be affected. As with any war, it's usually the innocent who suffer the most. Divine conflicts can, if the deities get involved personally, lay waste to a plane just as easily as a full-scale nuclear war. For this reason, consider carefully before declaring a huge-scale war in your multiverse. A cross-planar religious war can create an excellent backdrop for adventures in high fantasy, but the effects can be devastating and might have a profound effect on the morale of your players—or on you.

One of the most fundamental concepts of any society is its economic system. It is natural to assume that deities might have some sort of economic system for use in bargaining and trade between individual deities and divine factions. Some deities may even specialize in cross-planar trade.

Deities could use one of several different types of economic systems, depending on the campaign's level of sophistication. Some of the ones we describe below may seem a little un-mythic; feel free to ignore everything that doesn't suit your campaign.

- **Barter System.** This is probably the standard divine system of exchanging goods: trading a specific valuable for another specific valuable. This is a great method when there aren't a lot of things being traded. After all, even deities have their prices.
- **Specie Circular.** In our world this method of economic exchange relies on the use of valuable metals, typically forged into the shape of coins, as a standard form of exchange. The problem with this form of economic exchange is that with primal energy, or even just high-level magic, deities could easily whip up a batch of the right metal and essentially create money. For this system to work among deities, specie circular would have to be limited to metals or raw materials that cannot be created artificially. One type of valuable raw material that would be impossible to counterfeit is primal base. Deities could make coins of whatever metal, put one point of base into each coin they make, and sell the coins, thus creating a guaranteed value coinage system.
- **Credit.** This would involve a divine-level banking system that would issue credit cards that could be used for typical banking transactions. Again, forgery could be a major problem if the bank isn't careful. A possible solution would require that all transactions occur at one of the bank's outlets, forcing a counterfeiter to go through a primal security system.

In any case, divine-level monetary systems are going to suffer the same problems as those in our own world. The implementers will be trying to design new ways to protect the system from those who would corrupt it, and there will be criminals wanted for taking advantage of some oversight. This is certainly an interesting area for a GM to explore in more depth.

## Involving Mortals

## Economic Systems



ÁRROSIC#0'92



## **The Do-It-Yourself Deity**





*Can it be fancied that Deity ever vindictively Made in his image  
a mannikin merely to madden it? —Edgar Allan Poe*

Now that we've told you almost everything you need to know about the primal energy system, you're probably eager to get started roleplaying deities. This chapter will tell you how to make a few PCs and NPCs into deities and get them going on their divine careers.

In the first section, we'll cover how you can just "make" a deity, usually an NPC. The second part deals with turning a player's character into a god or goddess. Here we consider ascension from the point of view of the GM, of the deity responsible for the ascension, and of the mortal being ascended. The third section is concerned with problems that "new" deities face when they arrive in divine society. These problems apply to both ascended PCs and NPCs whom you're walking through the process. And finally, to wrap things up, we'll give you a few ideas on how to GM divine-level play.

## The NPC Deity

This section assumes you just want to whip up a deity from scratch. If you want to ascend an NPC, the process will be similar; just skip the steps that deal with generating the deity's mortal template.

Creating a deity requires seven steps. For your convenience, we'll list them before describing them in detail:

- (1) Generate all the characteristics that the character had before being ascended, including physical attributes, classes or skills, and special abilities.
- (2) Generate the assets that the character had as a mortal, including economic wealth, magical items, and exotic materials.
- (3) Generate social information concerning the character, including political position, henchlings, friends, and enemies.
- (4) Give the character an amount of base appropriate to the level of deity you want to design.
- (5) Create or enhance the character's physical body using primal energy.
- (6) Note which divine abilities are available for a deity of this rank.
- (7) If the deity is of demigod or higher standing, develop the deity's sphere of influence.

As the deity evolves, you can use this reference material to expand the deity's abilities, create another physical body, or further develop the deity's sphere of influence. In addition to gaining primal abilities from time to time, the character will continue to advance in levels or skills according to the game system you're using in your campaign. This system will work best if you spend some time refining this procedure to tailor it to your own universe.

## Mortal Characteristics

Remember that you're not creating a mortal who just got started adventuring, but rather a seasoned veteran who will have a private arsenal of magic items, extreme wealth, an army, and/or several special abilities. This character will have to be impressive enough as a mortal to gain a deity's attention and warrant ascension.

## Attribute Scores

Most game systems propose a range of attribute values within which characters start, such as 3–18 or 1–100. This range is the range of values possible for mortals when they first start out; obviously deities can go beyond that. To

simulate this, generate attributes normally and increase each attribute by one third, rounded down, of the highest possible value minus the lowest possible value. For example, in a 3–18 system the maximum value is an 18 and the minimum is a 3;  $18 - 3 = 15$  and  $15 \div 3 = 5$ , so add 5 points to each roll. For an example of how this is done in your game system, refer to “Adjustments to Attributes” under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

For example, let's create Joey's assistant Rubia, Goddess of Waterproofing. In our imaginary game system, there are just three simple attributes: Mental, Physical, and Emotional. Rolling her stats, which are on a scale of 1–100, we get M=48, P=29, and E=76. One-third of the highest possible score minus the lowest is  $(100 - 1) \div 3 = 33$ , so we'll add 33 to each stat, coming up with M=81, P=62, and E=109. This makes Rubia a potential goddess of keen mind and not-bad acrobatic skills, with a passion for waterproofing.

The exact procedure for generating skills or classes for a deity will vary from game system to game system, and will also depend on the power level of the campaign. Since there is so much variation between campaigns, we can only advise you in a somewhat general fashion. There are roughly five categories of skill that a character can achieve in a given area of expertise:

- Amateur: The character is acquainted with the skill and understands the fundamentals.
- Veteran: The character has acquired some experience and a local reputation for this skill.
- Professional: The character is recognized as a professional at this skill and has a regional reputation.
- Master: The character is widely recognized as one of the foremost experts at this skill.
- Legendary: The character is recognized as exceptional even among masters of the skill. The character is known worldwide, and has probably even gained some recognition among various off-world factions.

These generic skill rankings will also be used later to generate henchlings, allies, and enemies, and are occasionally used in other places in this book.

For an explanation of how these skill categories equate to similar terms in your game system, refer to “Power Levels for Characters” under the appropriate game system in Appendix A.

Rubia is renowned for her skill at applying clay to wicker in a layer so thin that the wicker pattern is clear and so even that no reed shows through to be rotted by water. She is an accomplished weaver, a devastating Double Fanucci player, and respected for her thumb wrestling. This makes her a legendary waterproofer, a professional weaver, a master Double Fanucci player, and a veteran thumb wrestler.

Some characters may start off with special abilities that are beyond the standard abilities provided by the game system or class. Such abilities represent the effects of a blessing, an ability given by the deity while the character was a minion, an act of fate, or whatever. We recommend that you either give your NPC deity an ability you've made up yourself or generate something from the following chart, modifying the abilities below to suit your world and game system:

#### Roll Special Ability

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 01 | Blessed by fate; granted one wish every three years. |
| 02 | Communicate with inanimate objects.                  |
| 03 | Speak with the dead.                                 |

*Rubia, the Goddess of Waterproofing*

#### Classes or Skills

*Rubia's Mortal Skills*

#### Special Abilities

- 04 Danger sense; rarely ambushed or surprised.
- 05 Friends; bonus to reactions from all members of one race or species of animal.
- 06 Invisibility at will.
- 07 Ambidexterity.
- 08 Artful dodger; bonus to dodge rolls.
- 09 Sense poison within 100 feet.
- 10 Sense fear within 100 feet.
- 11 Magic intuition; bonuses on research and casting ability.
- 12 Unusually dexterous.
- 13 Unusually good stamina.
- 14 Nimble wit; can engage in mental activities at twice normal speed.
- 15 Natural musician; bonuses on all activities involving music and rhythm.
- 16 Quick learner; can learn new skills at twice normal rate.
- 17 Natural linguist; fluent in at least three languages, learn others quickly.
- 18 Doublejointed; bonuses on activities involving flexibility.
- 19 Hotblooded; resistant to cold.
- 20 Surefooted; excellent climber and dancer.
- 21 Natural archer; bonus with all bows.
- 22 Forestkin; can climb trees quickly, move silently in woods.
- 23 Very good looking.
- 24 Enemies; bonus to rolls against all members of one race or species of animal.
- 25 Night vision; can see clearly if any light at all is present.
- 26 Natural merchant; bonuses on all trading activity.
- 27 High pain threshold; will not be stunned unless rendered entirely unconscious.
- 28 Rapid healing; wounds and diseases heal at twice normal rate.
- 29 Plastic appearance; can alter appearance within normal limits for character's race.
- 30 Stoneshaper.
- 31 Can go without food for twice normal duration with no ill effects.
- 32 Alertness; bonuses to all sensory activities.
- 33 Powerful NPC patron; character will receive unexpected help and/or gifts.
- 34 Natural or enhanced psionic ability.
- 35 Military engineer; can design fortresses and find weak points.
- 36 Natural smith; bonuses to creation of nonmagical weapons and armor.
- 37 Resistant to magic; 25% chance of avoiding unwanted effects.
- 38 Resistant to psionics; 25% chance of avoiding unwanted effects.
- 39 Totally immune to magic.
- 40 Totally immune to psionics.
- 41 Seawise; tell tides, navigate, very stable when on ships.
- 42 Weather control.
- 43 Roll for one medium-level spell to be cast at will.
- 44 Nimble fingers; bonus on activities involving finger dexterity.
- 45 Very fast; bonuses to activities involving physical speed.
- 46 Good judge of character; bonuses to catch lies and predict others' general behavior.
- 47 Gaze onto any known parallel plane at will.
- 48 Intimidating; opponents attack only if the character attacks first.
- 49 Speak with plants.
- 50 Good with children, including baby animals.
- 51 Animal summoning.
- 52 Natural clairauidience.
- 53 Can go without sleep.
- 54 Ability to levitate objects.
- 55 Extremely high social or political status.
- 56 Bonus of 5–20% on an attribute of the character's choice.
- 57 Mental control of fire.
- 58 Naturally careful; character will never fumble.
- 59 Immune to disease.
- 60 See all things in their natural form.
- 61 Can resurrect the dead once per month.
- 62 Jeweler; can recognize type and value of gems and properties of magical gems.
- 63 Alchemist; can concoct simple mixtures for dyes, disinfectants, glues, etc.
- 64 Architect; can design and build shelters, bridges, and other useful constructs.
- 65 Military genius.
- 66 Miner; can locate valuable ores and gems, gains bonuses to underground activities.
- 67 Weaponmaster; bonuses to use of one weapon if all others are forsaken.
- 68 Photographic memory.
- 69 Painfinger; can cause agony at a touch.
- 70 Historian; knows political and military history of all nations on character's plane of origin.
- 71 Can move absolutely silently.
- 72 Herbalist; can locate and identify plants and knows their properties.
- 73 Biological clock; always knows the precise time.
- 74 Directional sense; always knows the way home.
- 75 Undetectable by magic; cannot be magically located, seen, heard, or otherwise sensed.
- 76 Mediator; can inspire warring factions to agree, if not a member of one of the factions.
- 77 X-ray vision; can see through solid objects at a range of five feet.
- 78 Can naturally travel to parallel planes.

- 79 Can reverse wear and tear and normal damage to inanimate objects.
- 80 Can go without breathing for up to three hours.
- 81 Charmer; anyone the character has not directly offended will react favorably to the character.
- 82 Ace of Swords; bonuses with all swords and knives.
- 83 Immune to all poisons.
- 84 Withering hand; can drain one attribute point on touch.
- 85 Can teleport at will.
- 86 Primary attribute raised by 25%.
- 87 Touch of Midas; can turn any single object to gold once per month.
- 88 Can summon any weapon character has touched and can call by name.
- 89 Escape artist; if not continuously guarded can escape any prison.
- 90 Business sense; all business ventures 20% more profitable.
- 91 Can only be affected by one opponent at a time.
- 92 Can telepathically contact anyone the character has touched.
- 93 Clothier; bonuses on all activities involving making, identifying, or working with cloth.
- 94 Scam artist; 75% chance anything the character says is believed.
- 95 Heroic; immune to fear and confusion.
- 96 Tinker; character can determine how to make any object closely examined.
- 97 Can temporarily perform any skill known by an opponent at an equal level of ability.
- 98 Can sense the presence of any artifact within ten miles.
- 99 You have two abilities instead of one; roll twice on this chart.
- 00 You have three abilities instead of one; roll three times on this chart.

Unknown to most, Rubia's skill at waterproofing has much to do with her uncanny ability to sense the slightest textural differences. She once read two thousand-year-old Tarkagamian inscriptions by feeling the variations in stone wear on a petroglyph that had been weathered to complete smoothness. The difference between clay and reed, even to clay-covered fingers, is trivial for her to detect.

A character of this level will naturally have access to almost any standard mundane equipment that is commonly available in the campaign, as well as some not-so-mundane toys.

Some characters are very stingy with their money, hoarding their wealth as a dragon would; others spend it as fast as they can make it. In order to account for this wide range of attitudes, we suggest that you roll percentile dice and multiply the value by 10,000; this is the amount of the most valuable type of currency used in common trade (gold pieces, credits, dollars, monkey toenails, or what have you) that the character will have. You should adjust this formula depending on your economic system. The intent is for characters to start off with anywhere from a decent amount of pocket change to an amount roughly equivalent to the GNP of a small nation. Characters can designate some, none, or all of this as cash assets and retroactively purchase palatial estates, guildhalls, shipping companies, or whatever their little hearts desire with the rest.

Rolling according to the above formula, Rubia gets a 73. This grants her 730,000 clarins, a significant fortune despite her humble lifestyle. Perhaps the aristocratic craze for serving wine in Rubian goblets is responsible for this prosperity.

Once again, there is wide variation on how magic is used in different campaigns. We tried to base this formula on what we subjectively felt was sort of the average for FRP campaigns. To use these tables, you should take the available magic items in your campaign and group them into three categories: lesser works, greater works, and artifacts or relics. Lesser works are common items such as potions and swords that only slightly improve one's chance to hit an opponent. Greater works are more exotic, such as vorpal blades or mithril armor. Artifacts and relics are items that are unique, existing only as single items or as a unique set, such as the Ten Rapiers of Kalibar. Once you've done this, select items from each category according to the chart below.

### *Rubia's Special Abilities*

### **Assets**

### *Economic Wealth*

### *Rubia's Money*

### *Magic Items*

*Rubia's Magic Items***Exotic Materials***Rubia's Exotic Materials***Social Background***Political Position*

Each column in the following chart reflects a philosophy. If a character is primarily interested in versatility, most of his or her efforts will have gone into collecting a wide range of magic items; more top-heavy characters will have used this enormous effort to collect just a very few extremely powerful items, and others will fall somewhere in between. Select the column that seems appropriate to the character.

Category	Versatile	Intermediate	Top-Heavy
Lesser works	10-20	6-12	0
Greater works	1-10	1-6	1
Artifacts/relics	0	1	1-4

The lesser and greater works could either be chosen individually or just rolled off a table if your gaming system has one. Artifacts and relics should be handpicked by the GM, and may be well-known items, or brand new ones you've created for this occasion.

Most of Rubia's magic has been won in Double Fanucci games or, occasionally, received as payment. This puts her in the Versatile category, from which we get 18 lesser works and 1 greater work, the natures of which we will leave to the imagination of the reader.

For every type of exotic material that exists on the character's plane of origin, there will be a 20% chance that the character has some of it; increase the percent to 30% if your list of exotic materials has five entries or less, or decrease it to 10% if it's over ten entries long. A sample list of exotic materials might include mithril, adamantite, black crystal, black lotus poison, extremely rare gems, rare alchemical materials, psionic amplifiers, uranium, or technological weapons.

On Rubia's plane of origin, possible exotic items include whisperjewels, Alaspinian miniature dragon skin, tea from the extinct blackmoss plant, and, last but not least, the incredibly rare food item xocoatl, which is more than tasty enough to be called food-of-the-gods even if the gods have an awful time getting it.

Since the list includes less than five entries, there's a 30% chance per item that Rubia owns it. Rolling, we find she has (oops) none of the above. Oh, well.

Once the character's personal attributes and assets are determined it is time to develop the character's social history, generating positions of power that the character may have held, henchlings, allies, and enemies.

For each character, roll on the following table to determine the political position the character occupied as a mortal. This will certainly impact the extent of the character's influence during those first few years as a deity.

Roll	Former Political Position
1	Ruler of an empire.
2	Sole ruler of a major country.
3	Sole ruler of a minor country.
4	Sole ruler of a spot on the map.
5	Prominent official in a major country.
6	Minor official in a major country.
7	Successful merchant or guildmaster.
8	Some random dweeb.



There is a ten percent chance that the character once held this position, but was deposed. Also, use your imagination when using this table, and apply fish/pond equivalence according to the old saying, "Sometimes it is better to be a big fish in a little pond than a little fish in a big pond." In other words, a roll of 6 might also be a major official in a minor country, or a minor prince of some piddly little island. Pele's husband comes to mind, actually.

Rubia's roll came up as 4. We'll say she won a kingdom from Prince Fathead in a Double Fanucci game, but he carved off a bit of his land for her instead of giving her his whole realm. Rubia regards the whole thing as a nuisance, but she isn't sure what to do about it.

The character will have 2-8 (2d4) amateur and 1-4 (1d4) professional henchlings in his or her personal entourage. These henchlings will tend to have skills similar to those of the character, but 10% of them will be exceptions.

The rolls provide Rubia with five amateur henchlings and one professional. The professional, one Ursusinian, saw one of Rubia's carafes, sought her out, fell hopelessly head-over-heels in love, and now follows her around like a lonely puppy, drooling. Again, Rubia regards the whole thing as a nuisance, but isn't sure what to do about it. And, of all things, one of the amateur henchlings is a lumberjack.

During a mortal's rise to power, he or she is likely to attract both friends and enemies. Roll 1-4 times on the following chart to create a list of close friends, and roll 1-4 times again to create a list of enemies. Do not reroll duplicate results; it is possible to have two governor friends and another governor enemy.

#### Roll Friend/Enemy's Position or Status

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 01 | A peer within your deity's church.  |
| 02 | Ruler of a major country.   |
| 03 | Ruler of a secondary country.   |
| 04 | Ruler of a tertiary country.  |
| 05 | A prominent official of a major country.  |
| 06 | A minor official in a major country.  |
| 07 | An ambassador.  |
| 08 | A thief guildmaster.  |
| 09 | A merchant.   |
| 10 | A mercenary.  |
| 11 | A legendary fighter.  |
| 12 | A legendary mage.   |
| 13 | A legendary thief or assassin.  |
| 14 | A legendary priest.   |
| 15 | The owner of a major brothel.   |
| 16 | A prominent cleric of another religion.   |
| 17 | A prominent ordained warrior.   |
| 18 | A <i>minion</i> of another deity.   |
| 19 | A random godling or demigod of another deity.   |
| 20 | The character has an influential spouse or ex-spouse. Roll again to determine what kind of status the spouse has. |

Rubia's important friends include a legendary thief, both the ruler and a prominent official of a major country, and the ruler of a very small country, whom she may have met at a Convention of Insignificant Rulers. Her enemies

#### *Rubia's Political Position*

#### *Henchlings*

#### *Rubia's Henchlings*

#### *Friends and Enemies*

#### *Rubia's Pals and Problems*

## Assigning Initial Primal Base

include another ruler of a major country and an ex-husband who now owns a major brothel. Oh, we bet there's a story behind *that* one!

The amount of primal base with which a divine character starts off will depend on the deity's rank. Most of the time you'll probably be generating stats for characters who just became godlings and thus have a starting base of 100 points. However, if you're rolling up a deity who is of a higher rank, it gets a little more complicated. To generate a perfectly accurate primal base level, you would essentially have to "replay" all primal activity throughout the lifetime of the deity, including all gains and losses and when they occurred. This is generally more work than it's worth, and we recommend using the following scale as an estimate instead:

Divine Rank	Starting Base
Godling	100
Demigod	300
Supported Demigod	600
Lesser Deity	10,000
Greater Deity	20,000
Supreme Deity	50,000

### Rubia's Primal Base

We'll drop our demigoddess Rubia in at about 325, since her background indicates she'd be cautious about spending base.

### Enhancing a Physical Body with Primal

Some deities may decide never to create physical bodies; they either beef up the ones they had as mortals and never lose them, decide they don't have any use for bodies at all, or they just possess bodies that belonged to others.

However, if a deity does create a physical body, then it will cost that deity primal base to do so. The cost to create a standard humanoid body is 50 points of primal base. The body created will have completely average stats, and will not have life; the deity must occupy the body with primal base to give it life.

A deity may enhance the attributes of an existing body through an expenditure of primal base. The cost is one point of primal base to increase an attribute by 5% of the highest possible rating for that attribute. Double this cost if the game system has four or fewer attributes, and halve the cost if it has eleven or more. See Appendix A for more information on how much 5% of the highest possible rating is for your particular game system.

### Rubia's Attributes

Since in Rubia's system attributes range between 1–100, her highest possible attribute rating is 100. Five percent of 100 is five, so one point of base would raise any one of her attributes by five points. This system has only three stats, so the cost is then doubled. Rubia decides to keep her mortal body and merely boost her Physical score by five points. This will cost two points of base, bringing her base to 323 and her Physical ability to 67.

## Divine Abilities and Spheres of Influence

The character now needs only a few primal abilities and possibly a sphere of influence before he or she will be ready to play. All the information you need to set these up can be found in Chapters Three and Five. Of course, while you're back there, you might review some of the other chapters and see if you feel inspired to create the new NPC's religious structure, or design a few planes to control, or have some other fun on your own.

## Player Character Ascension

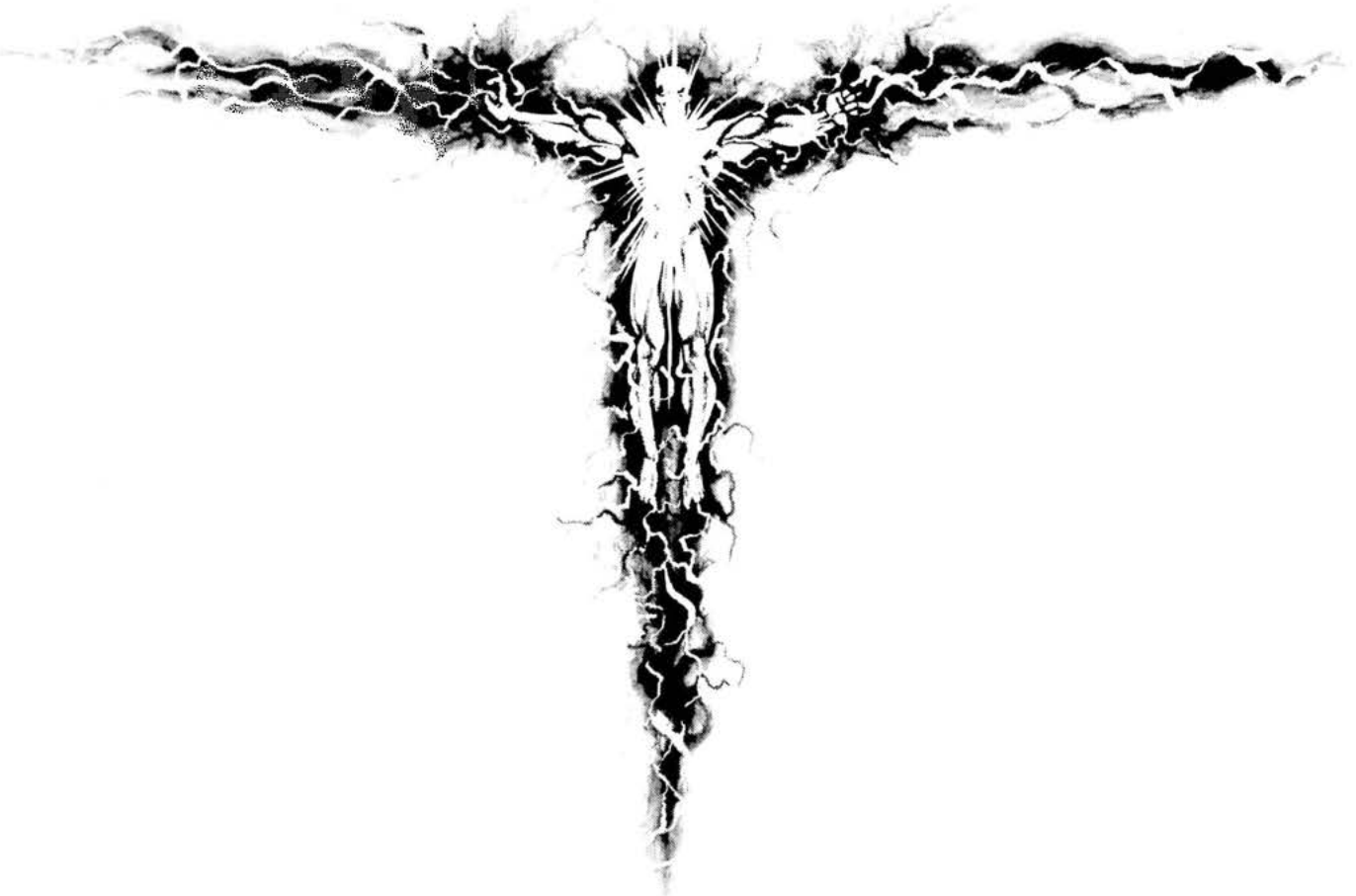
The most common way to become a deity is to be ascended by an existing deity. This requires a deity of at least lesser deity rank, referred to as the

*ascending deity*, to use 1,000 points of primal base to elevate a mortal, referred to as the *ascendee*, to divine rank. In the process the ascending deity loses this base forever, and the ascendee becomes a godling with an initial primal base of 100 points. After ascension, the new deity will feel a metaphysical bonding with the deity who provided the ascension. This will fade over a period of approximately ten years as the new deity's soul imprints itself onto the primal base, making the transfusion complete.

There are, however, other methods of ascension that you may consider using. For example, a campaign may have some sort of "food of the gods," a primal substance that elevates anyone who consumes it to divine status. It goes without saying that such food should be *extremely* rare and very difficult to acquire. There may also be some sort of relic, cosmic force, or sentient plane that occasionally ascends someone in the campaign. After all, the first deities had to come from somewhere.

Finally, there is one other way that a mortal may achieve divinity—by taking control of a plane. Any mortal who gains control of a plane is automatically ascended without requiring any assistance whatsoever from a more powerful deity. He or she advances immediately to supported demigod status, gaining all of the primal base for each advancement in rank, plus the primal base for the plane itself. Such supported demigods who subsequently lose their planes are reduced to demigod status if they have spheres of influence or godling status if they don't, losing the primal base both for the loss in rank and for the loss of the planes. They do, however, remain deities.

#### *Alternative Methods of Ascension*



## GMing Considerations

### When to Begin Considering Ascension

### Are the Players Ready?

### Avoiding Pressure by Players

### Respecting Religious Beliefs

Note that this method only works for mortals who take a plane by cunning or force; it does not work if the plane was just handed over for free. This rule is intended to prevent deities from freely ascending their own minions by cycling them through planes designated for such a purpose. The plane itself knows, and isn't going to ascend someone who hasn't earned it.

Since these alternative methods are used pretty rarely, we're just going to describe ascension by a deity in the rest of this section; if you want to use an alternative method, you can modify the process appropriately.

Before ascending PCs left and right, you should be absolutely certain that the characters being ascended are ready for such an important transition in their lives, and that you as a GM are prepared for the dramatic changes that will take place in the campaign.

One frequent circumstance that leads GMs to begin considering ascension for some of their player characters is when a character or group of characters has achieved a level of power that may influence an area of the campaign so strongly that there is a need to restore campaign balance. This leads us to the first consideration regarding ascension—whether or not the character has reached the appropriate power level. The character being ascended should have reached a significant level of experience and accumulated substantial political or religious stature. But level and position alone are not enough; the character also needs to have done something specific that has merited a deity's attention. There are many powerful people in the universe and there must be something special about this particular individual before a deity will even take notice. Years of service, while appreciated, are not enough.

Second, you must decide whether the players are ready for divine-level play. Convincing players to let their characters become deities will typically be about as difficult as giving away mithril in a dwarven temple; players are always looking for something new. Some players, however, might resist the idea, and for what seem to be very good reasons. When PCs have become deities the entire nature of the game will change forever. For the most part this change is a positive addition to a campaign, but the players may worry that the game will no longer be interesting or challenging. *Au contraire!* The game will now become very challenging since the PCs will go from being big fish in a small pond to small fish in a multi-planar ocean. Still, the players should feel that they are ready for playing deities, and you should try to judge whether the players have demonstrated sufficient wisdom to grasp the intricacies of divine-level play.

Once you have introduced the idea to the players, it is entirely possible that the players will get excited about the prospect and start pressuring you to hurry up and implement this new level of play. But it is crucial that you prepare for this exhaustively and not let players rush the situation. You should not feel pressured to ascend characters who do not deserve it. If you want to ascend some characters but not others, and want all the players to be able to play together, then you might consider having the other players roll up new divine-level characters using the guidelines set out in the previous section on NPCs.

Finally, we feel it is very important for you to make certain that none of the players have personal religious reservations about playing deities. The whole idea of playing deities may affront some people's sense of right and wrong, and no players should be encouraged to go against their religious convictions. We recommend that you talk to each player one-on-one to make absolutely certain that each is comfortable with the idea. If some of your players are children or if you feel they may not have a firm grasp on the difference between fantasy

and reality, you should carefully explain, or have their parents explain, that the deities in an FRPG campaign have nothing to do with real-life religious beliefs.

If after taking into account all of the above considerations you decide that ascension is in order for a PC, a tremendous amount of work must be done.

The first task is to sit down and thoroughly contemplate how the campaign is structured, in detail, at the divine level. This involves thinking about what pantheons and councils exist in the campaign, who the most dominant and active deities are, what divine-level wars might be going on, and how this segment of the campaign is evolving socially, politically, and technologically. You don't have to have everything catalogued on color-coded 3x5 cards, but you should be prepared to answer any questions your PC's devious little mind can come up with.

Next, you should sit down and thoroughly flesh out the infrastructure of the PC's ascending deity, from high-ranking clergy, saints, and minions all the way up to the deity's personal entourage. Also, you should begin to develop the various planes that the deity controls, planar constants on each, and a listing of the deity's artifacts and their general locations. Extra detail should be available about the specific plane where the newly ascended PC will be residing. The ascende will probably not have immediate access to all of this information, particularly in the sort of church structure in which people are more suspicious, but it is good to have it developed as a solid background. Making it up as you go is not a good idea at this level of play; arbitrary decisions can have far-reaching effects.

You should also design several other divine or semi-divine infrastructures to serve as a basis for new adventure scenarios, conflicts, or political and roleplaying interaction, although these probably do not need to be done in quite as much depth at first. Remember that PC activities at this level will have a dramatic effect on the campaign. If the PCs go out and kill some other godling or demigod, there will certainly be a reaction similar to the way our world would react if the Secretary General of the United Nations were assassinated. Many people will ask questions for years to come, some will seek revenge, and someone will have to take the victim's place.

Remember that campaign development must encompass many planes, many levels of power, and many factions in order to handle divine-level characters. Planar travel will typically be easy to come by, and several cross-planar scenarios should be prepared in advance. You can limit this somewhat by having the ascending deity severely restrict the scope of the character's interactions, either because the deity's godlings have highly specialized responsibilities or because the deity's political situation is delicate enough that the deity doesn't want to take the chance that the PC might screw up something that took centuries to set up.

When formulating divine infrastructures, you might want to take the time to become well versed in various political, social, and religious systems that exist in our own world. This will help you create plausible organizations with varying strengths and weaknesses. This is not as intimidating a task as it might sound at first. Just one Sunday afternoon browsing through the encyclopedia, school textbooks, or books titled *An Introduction to . . .* can do wonders. You can use your studying time most efficiently by avoiding too many details and just skimming the material to get an overall feel for it; after all, this is meant to be fun, so if you get bored, move on to another subject or another source of information.

Another thing to consider is that GMing divine-level play often requires a significant amount of paraphernalia: extra miniatures, lots of dice, huge expanses of table space for vast divine-level melees, and so forth. You may

## Preparation

*"Had I been present at the creation, I would have given some useful hints for the better ordering of the universe." —Alphonso the Learned (1221–1284)*





## The Ascending Deity's Perspective

### *Requirements for Ascension*

also need to expand many of the parameters and charts of the game system you use in order to cover divine levels of skill or godlike character attributes.

To use this system most effectively it's best to study this entire book, not just use it as a reference as you're going along. We're not suggesting that you have to design a campaign from this system verbatim, but there are many concepts within these pages that you should consider. We also recommend studying materials that deal with this area published by other game manufacturers as well as the more traditional books on mythology and religion.

Once you are prepared to ascend a PC, it's time to begin roleplaying the series of events that will lead up to the ascension. This preparation period itself might take months or even years of real time while the deity undertakes an extensive analysis to determine whether the character is ready for and deserving of such a high reward.

When considering an underling for ascension, a deity is going to look at more than just the character's level of power. The deity is going to want someone who will work well in the religious organization, who has skills that complement the skills of the deity's existing staff members, and who shows the necessary temperament to be a good team player; loose cannons typically do more harm than good. Consistency and quality throughout a long history of service are also highly valued; johnny-come-latelys and smooth talkers will not impress a deity. If the character falls short in one of these areas but the deity feels that the character has strong potential, then perhaps the deity will arrange for a series of tests or events to instill in the character that additional edge or discipline.

Characters who are crucial to religious events transpiring on their planes of origin might be passed over for ascension until someone can be groomed to replace them. In this situation you might find the character and the ascending deity working together toward this goal, or the deity might be doing this on the side. Ultimately the benefits of ascending the character should outweigh the possible repercussions.

### *Unready Characters and Rash Deities*

Remember that deities are typically quite intelligent; if the character is not yet ready to be divine, the deity will probably realize this and act accordingly. On the other hand, some deities are also sometimes capable of rash or emotional decisions. While most deities will never refer to themselves as "rash," preferring to label such actions "initiative" or "decisive decisionmaking," it is quite possible that at one time or another a deity will make a hasty decision.

### *Splitting the Cost*

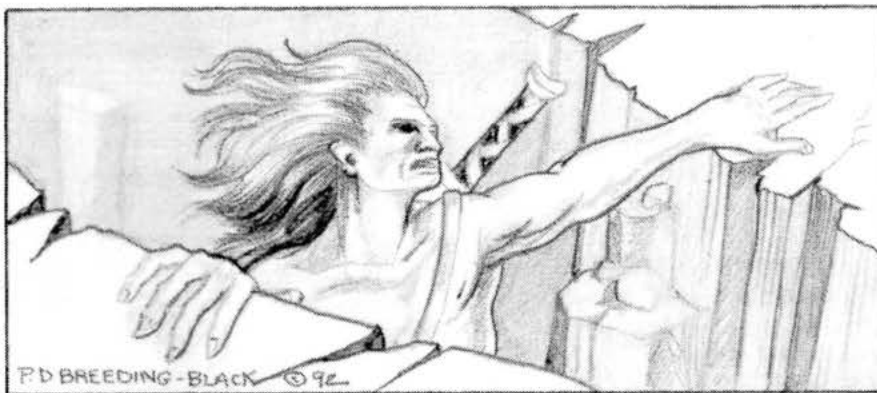
Typically a fundamental requirement for ascension is a long history of religious service to the deity. In cases in which the character has served an entire council or pantheon diligently, several deities may split the primal base "cost" of the ascension and assign one of their number the task of managing the new godling's responsibilities. Alternatively, the godling may be transferred around every year or so.

### *Ascension as Acquisition*

It is possible that a character with no religious affiliation might be ascended as a form of recruitment. This would only happen if there is something incredibly special about the character that the deity, pantheon, or council wants very badly. Such a character might be a military genius or the inventor of a new style of magic. Typically, the deity will first try some other form of incentive that will cost less primal base and provoke less jealousy among others in the deity's church. Even a deity might have trouble explaining to a holy warrior who has served faithfully for decades why he or she is being passed over in favor of some pagan.

### *Ascension as Remuneration*

In extremely rare cases, a deity might even sell ascension to someone in exchange for something that the deity really wants. In most cases deities would simply take what they want by force, but if they were worried about



intervention from another deity, or if the mortal were somehow hard to get at, ascension could be a more expeditious choice.

Quests often play a key role in preparing an underling for ascension. A quest should be a task that is slightly above the character's capabilities and designed to test his or her resolve and commitment. Quests can be used as tools to shape the underling's character or sharpen an edge of his or her personality. The ideal quest would accomplish something for the deity, expand the power of the character, and contribute to the prestige of the religion.

A series of quests can serve as an important tool in psychologically preparing the underling and the church for the great event. A dramatic, glorious public ascension in the deity's largest cathedral at the conclusion of the character's third successful quest will be remembered and talked about for decades. This extended effort will also make the underling feel like he or she has really earned the title, and the new godling will value the position even more.

Not all ascensions will be performed at the pinnacle of a mortal's glory. In some cases a deity may wait until the mortal is slain in service of the deity, thus allowing the mortal to live a full mortal life. This tactic is a bit risky, though; the mortal's brain must be intact at the time of ascension in order for knowledge and abilities to be properly transferred to the new godling's primal base. A quiet, low-key ascension might also be used to build up a mystique surrounding the character's departure.

Different deities will have different strategies for dealing with such issues as the number of godlings and demigods appropriate to have in the organization, what skills these underlings should possess, how expendable they are, how mortal candidates are dealt with, and whether the deity will consult with peers on matters of ascension.

The number of mortals deities ascend is largely a matter of personal preference, but is also influenced by the amount of primal base that they have at their disposal. As a deity gains power and influence, more underlings will be needed to take on various tasks and filter demands on the deity's time; godlings and demigods are often chosen for such duties due to their obvious importance in the deity's church.

Some deities will want to ascend people with a wide variety of skills, thus creating diverse and well-rounded organizations. Other deities will prefer to be highly specialized and will ascend only people with skills similar to their own, thus creating godlings who can eventually refine the deity's sphere of influence and help maintain it.

How mortal candidates are dealt with will also vary from deity to deity. Some deities may not even announce the names of their godlings and demi-

## The Quest

# 9

## Ascension Strategies

### Quantity

### Variety

### Dealing with Candidates

	<p>gods to the various members of their churches; mortals in such religions may not even realize that ascension is possible. On the other hand, promoting this information adds prestige to the deity's religion, and may even draw in ambitious young worshipers. Many deities make it known that ascension is a possibility for those who are good enough; after all, the prospect of becoming divine can make a worshiper highly motivated.</p>
<p><i>Consulting with Peers</i></p>	<p>The ascending deity will also want to encourage the ascendeo to look upward to new divine heights. One of Joey's other demigods probably spent quite a bit of time making sure that Rubia understood she was no longer one of the most powerful people on the main plane, fearful of nothing, prepared to take on the worst that anyone could hurl at her, including some rather nasty moves in Double Fanucci. Instead she was the lowliest of a whole new power strata, equivalent to a very vulnerable second lieutenant.</p>
	<p>Some deities may consult with their peers before ascending a mortal, either to gain advice or because a pantheon or council of which they are a member might have stringent rules and stipulations regarding ascensions. Furthermore, deities might also discuss the situation with their own godlings, demigods, and trusted servants.</p>
<p><b>The Ascendeo's Perspective</b></p>	<p>Now that we've discussed ascension from the ascending deity's perspective, it might be helpful to explore how the mortal is going to react to the prospect of becoming a deity. Of course, if the mortal doesn't have any idea that this is even a possibility, the event will be a complete surprise and the mortal won't have much time to develop a perspective. Mortals who realize that ascension is possible, on the other hand, may either work extra hard to gain this prize or even try to avoid it once they start thinking about the prospect of outliving everyone they know and love. Those who accept this fate will soon have to contemplate how they should go about grooming someone to take their place, how to put their affairs into order before they leave, and how to get their own new churches started.</p>
<p><i>The Mortal's Reaction</i></p>	<p>Being ascended can be quite a shock psychologically. While some ascendeos will look forward to greeting new challenges and new power, others may have ego problems dealing with the transition from big fish to little fish; it's almost like starting up adventuring all over again. Ascension also requires a great deal of trust on the mortal's part; after all, the deity will be manipulating the mortal's very soul, and this can be a rather scary prospect. Also, depending on the specifics involved in the process, a mortal may feel apprehensive about losing contact with friends and family, and having to learn a whole new set of rules and establish an entirely new set of peers.</p>
<p><i>Resisting Ascension</i></p>	<p>Some ascendeos may resist ascension to the point that the deity may give them the option of remaining mortal or being ascended only after they die from natural causes. Other deities may only be so nice as to give ascendeos a certain amount of time to set their affairs in order. Still other mortals won't be given time to prepare or resist at all; for them it just happens one day.</p> <p>Given time to react, some characters might try to switch camps to avoid ascension. This will typically result in permanent damage to or destruction of the character depending on the deity's reaction. If a character tries to resist ascension by force of will, then the ascending deity will be required to dominate the character forcibly; this requires a successful possession attempt, as described in Chapter Three.</p>
<p><i>Settling Mortal Affairs</i></p>	<p>Mortals who know ascension is coming up will want to spend some time preparing for such a large lifestyle change. Most will have a number of loose ends that need to be addressed before the ascension is complete.</p>

Many new deities will have difficulty leaving behind what was the center of their existence, passing on to others the products of a lifetime of effort in order to embrace a great unknown. Depending on the circumstances of the ascension, the deity might not be forced to leave everything behind. He or she might be allowed to take along close family members, personal items of power, and perhaps some faithful henchlings or hirelings, who can look forward to even more hard work, greater rewards, premium positions in the new deity's organization, and perhaps some specialized training. The policy on this varies among ascending deities, with some insisting on a sharp, dramatic, thorough departure from the mortal's plane, while others may even allow ascendees to travel back and forth freely for a short period of time while they balance out their assets and wean their replacements. Joey allowed Rubia to retain one of her henchlings as a minion; she didn't pick Ursusian, for some reason. Now that she's a demigoddess, of course, her retinue has grown.

When mortals are ascended, they often leave behind gaping holes in the local power structure. After all, the sudden departure of someone with enough fame, prestige, and power to be chosen for ascension isn't going to slip by unnoticed. If the new deity leaves a weak leader or none at all to take his or her place, life is going to be rough for both the new deity and the replacement. To prevent this, Joey asked Rubia to spend quite a bit of time before he ascended her building up the abilities, confidence, and personal power of some of her trusted underlings. She was also asked to lead some raids with them to raise their prestige, provide more experience, and generate some extra funding for those in need.

As a soon-to-be-ascended mortal, Rubia also had to train a special group of people to start the Church of Rubia. Like most ascendees, she didn't choose immediate family or underlings for this task, since she thought they'd probably have a pretty hard time thinking of "the boss" as a Celestial Being To Be Worshiped, with the exception of Ursusian. Instead, she picked second- and third-generation henchlings who already revered her thanks to her reputation and hadn't had enough contact with her to disabuse them of that reverence. At first things were easy for the new church leaders; attendance swelled as nearby citizens decided to jump on the bandwagon. Hey, who knows what favors a Charter Member of a church might receive? But a few years later the church saw a decline in interest as people moved on to newer trends in religion and time began to fade the public's memory of Rubia. That's when her patient training and support really came in handy.

A cooperative ascending deity might be convinced to allow an ascendeed to integrate this new religion with the already established one. Rubia was chosen to be in charge of an aspect of Joey's sphere of influence, so minor shrines to her were added onto his existing temples and other places of worship.

At this point, one way or another, there's a new deity on the block. This section is concerned with divine etiquette, getting to know other deities, and some of the other issues that the newly divine might face.

Mortals worship deities because of their divine nature, because they believe that a deity is the personification of a philosophy, concept, or way of life. Deities have transcended the earthly or mortal realm, advancing to a higher form of being. While deities are still portrayed as having mortal emotions such as anger, love, or jealousy, these emotions take on epic proportions and are often used as justifications for natural or supernatural events such as earthquakes or visions. These mortal perceptions of divinity combine to create the concept we call *divine mystique*.

*Deciding What  
to Leave Behind*

*Filling the Power Vacuum*

*Starting up the New Church*

9

## After the Big Promotion

### Looking Back



*Establishing the  
Divine Mystique*

Everything new deities do should establish and reinforce this concept of divine mystique. Deities must be transformed from mortal to ineffably divine in the eyes of their former associates, families, henchlings, and hirelings, and this may not be an easy task. But it is critical because the divine mystique inspires people to worship by showing them a sacred image worthy of reverence and respect, and of course, deities want worshipers in droves.

To assist in establishing the divine mystique, the new deity should avoid direct intervention in mortal affairs. This would include restricting travel, forgoing direct control of mortal assets, and not communicating with mortals except through proper church channels. Bank accounts and real estate should either be turned over to the new church or left to family and friends. Direct intervention in combat is definitely frowned upon; going out and beating up the enemies of former henchlings is not considered at all proper.

The new deity should also try to work in mysterious ways. Instead of directly wiping out an army engaged in battle against the new church, the





deity could intervene more circuitously by arranging a convenient storm or a fortuitous fire. A vision or an omen could be used to warn a faithful henchling that doom is approaching, and there's no need to be explicit. If you keep telling your poor henchlings, "There's an ambush party in the third valley over," they'll start relying on divine guidance, get sloppy, and get dead. The objective for the player should be to get into the spirit of divine wonders; once this is accomplished it will be fairly obvious which actions are appropriate and which are not.

Of course, the propagation of the divine mystique is not a requirement for being divine; it just helps the deity gain worshipers. A new deity may choose to continue activities on the main plane just as before, but it will be difficult to inspire mortal worship by doing so. "Familiarity breeds contempt," as they say. On the other hand, the deity may not have a choice in the matter. Since Rubia was ascended by Joey, he expects that she'll be busy with church-related matters, and she probably just won't have the time to putter about on her former plane. There may also be campaign restrictions on divine intervention on certain main planes.

Once new deities get the hang of the divine mystique, it's time to make their debuts in divine society. Meeting other deities, finding a place in the divine scheme of things, and learning how to use primal energy will keep new deities occupied for quite some time.

Being ascended into an existing deity's organization is like joining a club. There are lots of new people to meet and places to go, and politics runs rampant. While the new deities may not be aware of it, many will be closely watching every move they make.

The first people new deities meet will likely be administrative members of the ascending deity's organization, such as military officers, bureaucrats, financiers, and high-ranking members of the clergy. Reactions to the new deities will vary widely, depending on the general philosophy and leadership style set up by the ascending deity. New deities will probably be approached by many, including leeches looking to ride on their shirrtails, special interest groups looking for someone who has their boss's ear, and manipulators who are simply looking to climb the stairway to heaven by backstabbing whomever they must in order to gain their boss's attention. There will also be rivals who are simply jealous of all the attention these newcomers are getting; even in a laid-back organization competition can be fierce. In more vicious groups, new deities might not even be able to trust their personal entourages.

Eventually, the new deity will begin to meet the other godlings, demigods, and chancellors in the organization. The new deity may be expected to provide support for these other individuals, and it's certain that for the first few years they will observe the new deity closely to analyze any strengths and weaknesses that show up. But regardless of the level of cooperation that is expected, a fierce competitive streak will often arise among these peers. After all, these are the *crème de la crème* of the entire organization—people who are ambitious, powerful, accustomed to respect, and all vying for the deity's favor. While the competition at this level can easily break out into arguments, hostilities, or worse, the tone is usually very much influenced by the management style of the deity in charge.

In a more *laissez-faire* religion, the head deity may look the other way, figuring that this competition is a good way to keep ambitious underlings on their toes. This tactic is also a most effective way of keeping them too busy to unite in an attempt to challenge the deity's authority. Increased competition also serves very well to remind new godlings that they are not necessarily the invincible conquerors their mortal fame led them to believe.

## Looking Ahead

### Meeting New People

### Administrative Support

### Other Godlings and Demigods

More moderate deities might step in to break things up, but only when the rivalries threaten to interfere with the underlings' ability to complete their assigned tasks. This kind of approach retains many of the benefits of the previous method while ensuring that all duties get done and no expensively ascended godlings go missing.

And, of course, there are deities who actively promote an aura of cooperation and harmonious interaction, creating a unified, cohesive, functional group. Such increased organization and support leads to a broader base of information and resources that can be applied to any given problem. This also tends to keep underlings working together and focused on their jobs, which can help get things done more efficiently.

#### *The Ascending Deity*

While the relationship between the ascending deity and the ascendeed will naturally change a great deal after the ascension, the ascending deity will try to make sure that it doesn't change too much. When Joey ascended Rubia, he let her in on his secret technique for growing Wonder Wicker, a type of wicker that is flexible when freshly cut but turns hard as steel when it dries. But to keep his divine mystique intact, he kept the rest of his tricks to himself. This approach let him keep his relationship with Rubia from growing too casual while letting her ponder what other wonders might be in store for her if she kept up the good work.

#### *Other Deities*

The way any other deities in the pantheon treat the new deity will most likely reflect the political situation. This will depend upon the degree of intra-pantheon rivalry and the nature and strength of the pantheon's leadership. The reaction of deities in other pantheons is likely to be much less conciliatory; oftentimes when a mortal is ascended you can almost hear the cry of "Fresh meat!" floating across the æther. New godlings from different pantheons will often come into conflict with each other as their ascending deities treat them as pawns or bargaining chips to be used, sacrificed, or simply collected as insurance against hostile actions by others. Some more powerful deities might even try to subvert or lure a new deity over to their side. After all, you can save a lot of base by recruiting disgruntled godlings other deities have already ascended.

#### *Fitting In*

Once new deities have been introduced around and assigned lists of responsibilities, they will probably work in earnest on developing their entourages. They might include servants from their mortal days, if the ascending deity allowed any to come along, and minions or servitors of the ascending deity. As time goes on, new deities will attract additional henchlings, friends, and allies, putting together a broad group with as many different classes, skills, and power levels as possible.

The new deity will also want to start researching a sphere of influence in order to continue ascending through the ranks. Selecting a sphere of influence is an important decision, so important that most godlings are well advised to consult their deities in this matter. Some godlings may not even have a choice; their deity may assign one to them, as happened to Rubia. In any case, the sphere of influence will likely reflect some special talent the godling showed as a mortal, especially if this is what convinced the deity to ascend the mortal in the first place. Once the sphere of influence is chosen, the godling will be expected to spend significant amounts of time in primal and scholarly research. This research will not just help the godling become a demigod; it can also help the godling carve a personal niche in the ascending deity's organization. Godlings who prove themselves particularly good at such research may be given special assignments or other chances to earn recognition.

To the newly ascended, it may seem as though primal energy lacks finesse. After all, won't the victor of a primal battle be whoever has the most primal energy? Not so. The use of primal energy is an art that can take centuries to master. Deities who enter combat blasting away at everything in sight will find themselves low on energy when the real battle is joined. New deities will soon learn that in many battles experienced deities use less than fifty percent of their available flux, always preferring to keep large amounts in reserve in case things get sticky later on.

There are also many "sneaky" uses for primal. One example is putting a primal shield around an illusion; since the primal will stop any sort of detection spell or device, an enemy won't know whether something encased in primal is real or fake. The creative use of skin-tight and internal primal shields can be a very important tactic for godlings and demigods who typically don't have much primal to waste. We don't want to say too much here and ruin the fun you'll have exploring the system, so we'll just say that new deities will soon learn that a few points spent here and there will often gain much more point-for-point than huge primal blasts or the expensive omnis.

In the course of divine events, it may become necessary for a godling to dissolve the political bands that have connected him or her with the ascending deity. There are many reasons why this may happen. Philosophical differences might develop between the two of them. The ascending deity may decide that the ascende is too powerful to manage and suggest a breakup before the relationship gets hostile. The ascending deity may allow the ascende to leave the nest as a reward for exceptional service. The two might be cut off from each other for some time, forcing the ascende to take some extra initiative. The ascende might be recruited by another organization that offers, or at least seems to offer, more reward for service. Or perhaps the ascende is simply struck by greed; maybe he or she has discovered a new plane and doesn't want to share it.

Depending on the circumstances of the breakup, the two deities may or may not continue to associate with one another. If the ascende was released as a reward, the deities will probably maintain a close alliance, but if the breakup came about less agreeably the situation could turn very violent, in which case the ascende had better have a pretty good plan of action in order to survive.

If the newly independent deity chooses to remain within the pantheon, he or she will now face the challenge of convincing the other pantheon members to accept him or her as a peer. The politics at this level will be much more complex than anything else the character has experienced to date, and establishing a niche will certainly pose a long, arduous task requiring extreme finesse, prowess, and political skill. Becoming entrenched within the pantheon might require gaining the support of deities who have wildly differing philosophies and may also require supporting pantheon goals that are not always congruent with the deity's personal goals.

Now that you know all about how ascending deities, ascendes, and everyone else in the universe manages to survive the ascension process, there is one last person to consider—you! What follows is a suggestion for GMing PC deities, some miscellaneous roleplaying information, and some scenario ideas.

At this level of play, the PC is no longer special. If you've always played that PCs were those special one-in-a-million types who were destined for greatness, you need to stop and realize that their new peers and opponents are in the same category. From here on out the PCs should not be able to rely on NPCs to make stupid mistakes or be unprepared. Each encounter will be with people who

## Strategies and Tactics for the Use of Primal

### Going Solo

9

## GMing Philosophy

### No More Favors

## “Mundane” Roleplaying Information

are survivors, who have survived numerous impossible situations and close calls to get where they are. These people have no intention of losing a conflict and have as many aces up their sleeves as PCs do.

Eventually such questions as “Do deities eat?” and “Do deities sleep?” are going to come up. For this reason we thought we’d put in some miscellaneous information about the more mundane habits of deities.

No, deities don’t *need* to sleep, eat, breathe, exercise, or go to the bathroom. Often they will, simply because they are used to it or enjoy it, but as they grow older deities will usually eliminate such purely physical pursuits from their busy schedules.

One thing that many deities do continue to do, however, is reproduce—or at least go through the motions of doing so. Deities have offspring in the normal manner, but with two exceptions. One is that there is no need of either fertility drugs or birth control. Conception will occur if both deities agree that it should; if either doesn’t want to be a parent, no child will be conceived. More importantly, if, at the point of conception, both deities agree to have their child born a godling, they may ascend the newly created child at a cost of only one-fourth the standard amount of primal base—250 points. It should also be noted that this extra little boost of primal, at this most opportune moment, also gives some additional enjoyment to the process, a fact that has not been lost on such deities as Aphrodite and Ishtar. Also, it wouldn’t be too difficult to set up an extra body to act as a primal incubator so that the goddess wouldn’t have to go through the nine-months-get-fat-throw-up-a-lot routine. A godling born into divinity will have 100 points of primal base, but will not have any church to provide additional primal flux until he or she grows up and starts one.

If neither deity chooses to ascend the offspring, then the offspring will still be born with much higher attribute scores and a special ability. You can generate these as we suggested at the beginning of this chapter; just increase each attribute by one fourth of the highest possible value minus the lowest possible value, instead of by one-third as you would for a divine character.

## Scenario Ideas

The introduction of divine-level play opens a whole new gamut of scenario ideas. We’ll eventually be publishing some modules to help you out with this, but for now here are a few to get you started:

- *Quests for Ascension.* Before PCs can become divine, their deities may require them to perform several quests. These quests should be epic in nature and slightly above the PCs’ level of skill, requiring extensive planning, daring exploits, and great resolve and commitment. A perfect example would be the recovery of an artifact, or the vanquishing of a powerful enemy of the church.
- *Attacking a Divine Being.* Divine PCs could have quite a time taking out a rival godling, a servitor, or perhaps even a demigod. Another perfect target would be an elemental-based or magic-based divine creature. This shouldn’t be just a go-to-plane-and-slash setup; journeys across vast meta-planar expanses, hunting the fleeing foe, skirmishing with minions and champions, avoiding traps of previously unknown cleverness and lethality, and so on should be the rule of the day.
- *Exploring Space and Planes.* Exploration would be a common task for minions, godlings, and demigods. PCs could be leaders of an extremely long and dangerous mission assigned by a more powerful deity, or perhaps the PCs are sent out to investigate the disappearance of a less-powerful mortal party.

- *Reconnaissance in Force.* Such a scenario would involve the investigation in force of an enemy plane or other defensive position. The PCs might just be told to go and create havoc, test out defenses, and see how far they can get before things get rough. A more powerful deity might use this tactic as a feint, a political statement, or a prelude for a larger full-scale attack.
- *The Feint.* This scenario is similar to the one above, but is designed to draw the attention of a rival deity to some false target while another strike team prepares to hit the primary target. PCs are ordered to make as much noise as possible and will be sent to threaten a strategic objective that a rival would consider important.
- *Taking a Plane.* Nearly all godlings and demigods are going to have in the backs of their minds the hope of someday taking their own planes. This idea could lead to an epic series of adventures dealing with roleplaying, politics, warfare, and strike team combat as the PCs strive to attain this ultimate prize. Then once it's taken, the PCs have to resolve the question of who gets it. And, of course, the plane must be held—not an easy task.
- *Divine Wars.* This scenario idea revolves around full-scale warfare between one or more deities. Perhaps the PCs are part of the entourage of a more powerful deity who is about to go into battle with a rival; the PCs, of course, are expected to keep the other deity's entourage busy.
- *Attacking Mortals.* Mortals can be such pests at times—arrogant, disrespectful, and haughty. Sometimes a deity has to go down personally and show them who's boss. But lower-ranking deities must be careful; some mortals have nasty surprises up their sleeves, and there's typically too many to kill them *all* with primal blasts.
- *A Night on the Town.* If deities are social creatures, as the Greek deities are depicted in mythology, then perhaps there's some cosmic bar where they go for drinking, socializing, and the occasional bar-room fight. Obviously someone pretty nasty's going to have to run this bar or it's not going to last long. In any case, a bar-room brawl pitting Gilgamesh against Angerboda is guaranteed to light up the sky! And if there's no one worth punching, perhaps some trade or a bit of spy work could liven up the evening.

There's nothing quite like having a custom-made pantheon to drive the political and sociological behaviors of an entire civilization. A couple of well-crafted NPC deities can provide motivations for an incredible number of adventurers, whether it's because the players are devout members of a religion or its sworn enemies. Ascend even one of the players, and you've literally opened up whole new worlds of possibility for gaming.

Even if a group of adventurers never hear of the gods, the fact that there is a consistent, rational reason for behind-the-scenes behavior means that the players may sense that there's more here than meets the eye. However you apply these rules, the ability to deal quickly and easily with formerly puzzling questions should provide more than enough motivation to convert from divine chaos to *The Primal Order*.

"Grama, what makes thunder?" "That's the gods bowling, dear."

9

## Divinity for Fun and Profit





## Afterword

*The author who speaks about his own books is almost as bad as a mother who talks about her own children.*

—Benjamin Disraeli

I never have been very good at conclusions—a curse of being able to talk forever, I guess. My editor tells me I’m to “re-mention all of the key chapters, show how they all come together into a coherent system, wax philosophical, and emphasize the parts I like best.”

Well, I’ve been waxing philosophical throughout this entire book. It’s hard to talk about deities for any length of time without getting a little weird. So, I don’t know, but I think I’ve covered about all the philosophy that I want to, at least in terms of philosophies of deities. I have tried to avoid discussing philosophies of play, but perhaps I should do a little of that.

I have difficulty talking about such things as GMing style, playing styles, and so forth because, frankly, I grow weary of seeing people discuss the subject in print while trying to levy their opinions on everyone else. My philosophy about GMing, which should be clear to anyone who has read this book completely through, is that there is no “wrong” way to play the game, as long as you’re having fun (number one requirement, and I could possibly stop here) and supporting fair play. If you want to be completely historically accurate, fine, enjoy yourself, but don’t tell me that I have to adhere to some historical accuracy in a world that I made up myself. If you feel that PCs should never become deities and never get access to most of the spells and items that are in “the books,” fine, run your campaign that way, but don’t look down your nose at people who give their PCs a little more leeway. And if you think that hack-n-slash is the only thing worthwhile in the game, fine, but don’t disrupt a game in which people are having fun roleplaying for hours on end every single little detail of a nobleman’s courtship of a princess.

As I said before, and I’ll say it until I die, the wonder of this game, the *magic* of what so many great industry authors have shared with us, is that this hobby can be anything we want it to be. Your imagination is the only limit. If you ever see a WotC product that tries to dictate a playing style that others should adhere to, sit me down at a convention and demand to know what is going on. Take this very quote and say, “What happened, Adkison, thought you said that there were no hard and fast rules? You ‘wizards’ sure fumbled your spell on this one!” Hopefully we’ll never lose sight of this philosophy.

Lessee, I’m supposed to emphasize the parts I like best. Primal. Without trying to toot our own horn, I must say that I think that primal really explains many things and allows GMs to do things that they probably wanted to do all along, but didn’t have an excuse for. Now a GM can justify nearly anything, and, well, I think that’s good. I personally enjoy being consistent with some set of rules. Even if they’re a bunch of house rules that I’ve made up combined with stuff that I’ve acquired from nearly every game system under the sun, I still like having some sort of set guidelines that I can refer to, and primal makes for a great foundation upon which to explain things like ascension, godsfire, artifacts, and so forth. It certainly brings back respect for demigods and those old NPC favorites like Asmodeus and Orcus.

I guess I can tell you a little bit about where the idea for primal came from. The concept was initially developed back around 1983 by Russ Woodall. I

know that another gaming friend of mine, Melvin "Butch" Van Dyke, added on to it a bit, but I'm not sure what direction he ended up going; when I moved away to "the big city" (Seattle) I sorta lost track of what he was up to. I was quick to incorporate the idea of primal into my own campaign of *Chaldea*, and have been using it and refining it ever since. When we decided to develop this into a book, Steve Conard was the natural choice for heading up this project. To put it bluntly, Steve really goes for this sort of thing; power gaming is what you'd call "his bag." And, I must certainly admit, he does it well. As near as I can tell, there are no non-intervention planes in his campaign—there are gods *everywhere*.

When we sat down to put this all on paper, we found that there was a significant amount of differentiation among the ways that different GMs in the group had been running things, so we had lots of interesting discussions about how it all should fit together in a consistent format. Then, of course, as we started showing it around everyone else got their chance to throw darts at it and the finished product doesn't look at all like how we were playing it years ago. I do know that the changes have been very positive ones, and Steve and I have jokingly commented that even if no one else in the world ever buys this book, it will sure be nice to get all this straightened out for our own campaigns!

So many people have helped on this book that it is really incredible. I'm resisting the temptation to dive in and point out what each person did, and how we just couldn't have done this if it weren't for so-and-so. But, alas, to do this properly would take several pages and my editor insists I must keep this short so I better not even get started. I think the reason the development took so long was because we were all amateurs when we started out, but we resolved not to go to print until it was perfect. It then took quite a bit of work and rework and re-rework to get the text to settle down the way we wanted. And production wasn't any easier; only weeks away from press we decided on a completely different feel for the book and ended up having to scrap some truly wonderful artwork that no longer fit into the direction the book was going.

In case you're curious about what's coming down the pike, I'll share with you a bit of what we're currently planning. None of these are promises, just best guesses at the time of this writing. We are basically going in two directions with the capsystem idea from this point; one direction is to take *The Primal Order* and provide a series of supporting products. Nigel Findley is writing a bestiary, Jonathan Tweet is writing a module, Steve Conard is writing a supplement on the Norse pantheon, and we have a churches supplement, a planes supplement, and a table game also in the works. The other direction we're moving involves the development of other capsystems. The next one will probably be *The Military Order*; I've already submitted a proposal on it to WotC, which has been accepted, and I'm currently under contract to develop a design document and a couple of prototypes. Personally, I'd like to be involved in *The Economic Order* and *The Governmental Order* as well, but we'll have to see where things lead.

Obviously I hope you enjoy *The Primal Order* and that you will find it useful in fleshing out the top end of your campaign. I've been told that the era of thorough, hard-core campaign development is a thing of the past, but I don't believe that. When I was in college a friend of mine named Linda Johnston, who was an art major, told me in all seriousness that she considered the work involved in creating a campaign a *legitimate form of art*. This statement changed my life by lending me a deeply needed justification for the considerable volume of time I was spending on my campaign. I am convinced that there are thousands of other artists out there who are as intrigued with the canvas of imagination as I am; if you're one of these kindred spirits, then know that these capsystems are written with you in mind.

PETER ADKISON

## Appendix A

### How to Use TPO With Other Game Systems

Here are the suggested integration notes to assist you in using *The Primal Order* with your game system. Many of the most popular and some of the traditional game systems on the market are represented. If the system you use isn't represented here, we suggest reading the others to see if some other set fits well enough, and dropping us a line to let us know what you wanted to see. For that matter, we recommend you read all the sections anyway. More than once, our playtesters told us that the integration notes for one game or another sounded so interesting that they wanted to play that system! We've included the addresses of the various game system publishers in a separate appendix in case you want to write for more information about a system that interests you. Another good reason to read all of the sections is that you might find a rule you prefer in a different system.

The reason that we are providing these integration notes for you, instead of publishing our own game system and designing *The Primal Order* around it, is because we feel that there are many excellent game systems on the

market, and we want to support them instead of competing against them. Do you really want to see yet another fantasy roleplaying game system, or would you prefer that we take the system you already know and love and possibly make it even better? Yes, that's what we thought.

Now for some legal stuff. Except where noted, these integration notes are *not* to be considered official rules for their respective gaming systems, and were not developed in cooperation with the publisher of that game system. Furthermore, the publication of these suggestions should not be interpreted as an attempt to usurp or contest ownership of these game systems or their trademarks. All trademarks belong to their respective owners. For details on which trademarks and game systems belong to whom, we direct your attention to the back of the title page, where this information is laid out in detail.

The game systems are arranged alphabetically, and the order does not reflect any preference on the part of the authors or Wizards of the Coast. Now, on to the good stuff.



#### The ARDUIN Grimoire

ARDUIN is a level-based system from Grimoire Games and Dragon Tree Press in which characters advance in skill within one or more classes.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with ARDUIN, the following rule changes are suggested: Allow deities to advance in any number or combination of classes, except obviously contradictory ones like bounty hunter and saint. Remove level limitations, and increase attribute limits to 25.

##### Resistance Rolls

The ARDUIN equivalent to a resistance roll is a saving throw. Each rank that a deity advances awards the deity a +1 on all saving throw rolls. Conversely, losing a rank causes a deity to lose that previously gained +1.

##### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in this system is from three to eighteen. When *The Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, this equals one point in ARDUIN. When generating a divine-level character, add six points to each attribute.

##### Power Levels for Characters

The term amateur in *The Primal Order* is equivalent to 1st to 5th level, veteran is equivalent to 6th to 15th level,

professional means 16th to 25th level, master means 26th to 50th, and legendary means 51st and above.

##### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no to hit roll is required and armor class and saving throws are irrelevant. Each point of primal flux used does five points of damage.

##### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. In addition, primal shields stop non-offensive things like detection spells, true seeing, and divinations. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal for every five points of physical damage or five levels of spells.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus armor class 10. If the shield is breached without using up all the damage of the attacking weapon or spell, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If successful, the remaining damage is applied.

Versus a skin-tight shield, roll to hit as normal. Damage is applied to the shield instead of the character. If the shield is breached, remaining damage is applied directly to the character; no additional to hit roll is necessary for that attack.



Versus an internal shield, damage is done to the character except when the character has less than ten hit points, at which point the primal shield is treated exactly as a skin-tight shield. An attack that would bring a character to below ten hit points simply brings the character to exactly ten hit points, with the remaining damage applied to the shield. All attacks against the mind, spirit, soul, or essence impact against an internal shield regardless of how many hit points the character has remaining.

## Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is an amount of flux equal to the highest level of spell that the priest or holy warrior can throw. Supporting a 5th level cleric whose highest level spell is 3rd would cost three points of primal flux per day.

## Throwing Spells Primally

In ARDUIN the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of primal flux per five points of mana needed.



## ARS MAGICA

*Special thanks to Bryan J. Maloney for writing these integration notes, and also to David P. Martin, Michael Minotte, Lisa Stevens, and Richard G. Tomasso for providing suggestions.*

ARS MAGICA is Wizards of the Coast's game of legendary magi and magic in a "mythic Europe" analogous to the historical Europe of the thirteenth century CE. It explicitly states that the God of Christianity is the supreme force in the world. However, this God is neither a meddler nor a high-fantasy deity. He is beyond the affairs of this mortal world and His power and wisdom transcend any other. That is, He is beyond the scope of *The Primal Order* to address, since you really don't need rules for a being who truly is omnipotent and omniscient. The God of the Christians in ARS MAGICA is the all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing being He is generally portrayed as. However, He is also an aloof God, leaving His mortal creations to find redemption or not on their own.

Therefore, primal deities might be allowed to exist in an ARS MAGICA setting. The Church would, of course, consider them demons. In fact, it would work very well to treat demons as *The Primal Order* deities, the most powerful of which would have adopted appropriate spheres of influence. In ARS MAGICA, these would be spheres related to deceit and corruption rather than physical destruction. ARS MAGICA demons gladly grant physical pleasure to mortals, all the while leading their immortal souls to corruption.

ARS MAGICA does not address whether the God of the Christians is the God of Islam or whether He has any correspondence to the transcendent divine figures of other non-European religions. This is something for you to decide. A pertinent point, however, is that divine miracles are granted on the basis of individual faith and virtue, not adherence to Church political doctrine.

In addition, in ARS MAGICA the soul of any being is impervious to any and all outside forces. If you are using *The Primal Order*, this means that the soul cannot be damaged, altered, or even touched by primal energy, since it resides above and beyond even primal. The spirit is another matter altogether, and can be altered by mortal

magics.

To distinguish between "soul" and "spirit," you need to understand the medieval dichotomy between essences and accidentals. The essence of an object is its internal reality, while its accidentals are external characteristics that do not change the object's true nature. For example, the essence of water is not changed by the accidental status of being ice, liquid, or steam. In any form it is still water. Medieval thought extended this to all things.

The soul, therefore, is the essence of a being, while its spirit, often identified with the mind, is an accidental, no more important to identity than the length of one's fingernails.

Magi characters will know nearly all of the above and may be aware of some of the information contained in *The Primal Order*. They will, for the most part, recognize the transcendence of the soul and the power and transcendence of the God of the Christians. They may also, especially if of legendary status, have some inkling of the true relationship between this God and the pagan deities who can be described by *The Primal Order*. That is, there is no direct relationship, and the pagan deities exist entirely on the sufferance of the One True God. Why God should allow them to exist is a matter of debate, but the following theories are popular:

These "deities" are actually servants of Hell who assume pleasant guise to tempt the unwary. This is the official word of the Church.

These "deities" are best considered very powerful faeries or nature spirits and should be treated as such. Appropriate treatment depends on one's outlook as a magus.

These "deities" truly possess some Divine spark and their existence is part of God's mysterious and wonderful plans for the universe. This is popular among magi of house Ex Miscellanea and those Cramon magi who follow pagan deities.



These “deities” are tolerated by God since they keep the faithful on their toes by providing competition for the word of the Church.

These “deities” are part of or partake of the *Reshimu*, which is the residue of God left in the universe when He withdrew part of himself to create the void. This last theory is part of the proto-Cabbalah and is generally only known to Jewish magi, who are not within the Hermetic Tradition.

ARS MAGICA uses a three-tiered system of determining the power of a character. Characters can be classified as either ordinary folk, talented, or gifted. A person's ability within this classification then depends primarily on how long he or she has been around to learn. Characters are originally generated by choosing their classifications, randomly determining character age, and choosing skills and powers on the basis of that age. Primal energy cannot be gained by these means. Primal can only be earned as outlined in Chapters Three and Nine.

### Resistance Rolls

ARS MAGICA uses Confidence (Cnf) to simulate luck. Deities gain three Cnf points per level in addition to any gained from normal means while still a mortal, with no maximum limit.

Some characters have True Faith instead of Cnf, which *Primal Order* deities or their followers cannot have, since it stems from faith in the God of the Christians. Furthermore, high-fantasy deities tend to be more impressed by self-confidence than by faith in any event.

	Common Folk	Talented	Gifted
<b>Amateur</b>	Birth - Age 24	Birth - Age 14	Never
<b>Veteran</b>	Age 25+	Age 15 - 25	Never
<b>Professional</b>	Rare	Age 25+	Birth - Age 25
<b>Master</b>	Never	Rare	Age 26 - Age 100
<b>Legendary</b>	Never	Never	Age 101+, Arch-magi, Rare non-magus

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast automatically hits its intended target and bypasses all armor and magical defenses, including *Parma Magica*. It cannot be successfully dodged, parried, or blocked. A primal blast does +5 damage per point of primal flux invested in it. This damage may only be Soaked with a Stm+Size roll. Optionally, you may want to rule that a magus may also add the Vim form score to this Soak roll. This puts magi on a greater footing than other mortals and preserves the game's basic dichotomy between magi and mundanes.

There is one exception to the above. A character who has True Faith is impervious to primal blasts. Someone with True Faith draws upon the transcendent power of the

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute and skill range is from -5 to +5. A 10% increase is equal to one point for attributes and skills. When generating a divine character, add 3 to all attribute scores. Many characters also have Virtues, abilities others do not have. *Primal Order* deities automatically possess the Piercing Gaze, Jack-Of-All-Trades, and Charmed Life Virtues. In other words, they are able to make mortals feel uneasy with a sharp look, and suffer no undue penalty for attempting mortal tasks of any sort. Furthermore, they are less subject to the whims of cruel fate than mortals.

### Power Levels for Characters

As has been stated, ARS MAGICA divides characters into three groups: ordinary folk, talented, and gifted. Ordinary folk include grogs, peasants, and other mundane mortals. Nobles, well-educated priests (both Christian and pagan), companions, and other highly skilled but otherwise more-or-less normal folk would be among the talented. Gifted is reserved for those rare individuals who wield powers well beyond mortal ken. This includes magi, true saints, and perhaps the most powerful servants of *Primal Order* deities.

Within these classifications, the best guide to power is a character's age. The following table relates the relationships to *Primal Order* terms. Note that “rare” individuals are at least 40 years of age and should only be considered of this level when dealing in their specialties.

Creator to make a shield immune to the assaults of “false gods.”

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield blocks all types of attacks, physical and magical. Furthermore, it defeats all magical attempts at divination or detection. The shield can be made effectively impervious to all senses simply by not allowing any sort of energy to pass out of it, but this makes the shield rather obvious, since it becomes a perfectly black object. A primal shield loses one point of primal flux for every 5 points of a damage roll. Magic eliminates one point of primal flux for every 5 points of Penetration rolled on any sort of spell.

An external shield is targeted as any object with the

same Size. If an attack is aimed at something within the shield and the shield is breached, that target is hit if the original attack roll would have hit the interior target without the shield. If the shield is “black,” one occupant is randomly targeted and is attacked at +0. Dodge and Parry, of course, can be applied to this attack.

Against a skin-tight shield, an attacker must attempt to hit normally. All damage is absorbed by the shield until it is knocked down, at which point remaining damage is applied to the character.

An internal shield prevents any body level loss below Heavy Wounds; a character with an internal shield is never brought to Incapacitated via combat damage or magic.

### Spells, Divine Miracles, and Granted Powers

When using *The Primal Order* with ARS MAGICA, you need to distinguish between true miracles granted by the One True God and “miracles” granted by primal deities. True miracles have no absolute limit on power, and are usually only limited by the faith of the mortal who requests the miracle and the circumstances of the request. Therefore, any character with True Faith who wishes to perform a miracle should be handled by the ARS MAGICA rules dealing with miracles.

A follower of a primal deity has powers closer to a limited version of those of Hermetic magi. Such priests would be able to learn Hermetic arts and spells that are in keeping with their deity’s sphere of influence. Supporting these priests costs primal flux points equal to the total of the arts known plus one-fifth of the level of the highest level formulaic spell known to the priest. These costs are doubled if the priest is also able to cast spontaneous spells. However, the cost is not doubled if the priest is only able to cast spontaneous spells and is unable to learn formulaic spells.

Such a priest would have a +5 Virtue supported by a pagan deity if he or she is able to cast either formulaic or spontaneous spells in the allowed arts. The Virtue would be +7 if the priest is able to cast both formulaic and

spontaneous spells in the permitted arts. These priests would also have the Arcane Talent Mystic Knowledge, which functions the same as Magical Theory but only within the priest’s specialty. No such priest should be able to learn more than two Techniques and two Forms. These priests may take Hermetic Virtues and Flaws, except for Hermetic Prestige, which is not available. These priests also have a Level 1 Reputation with followers of their deity. Typically these priests will be at the companion level, not the magus level.

A primal deity may also bestow non-Hermetic Virtues upon followers, paying 100 primal flux points for every +1 value of the Virtue permanently bestowed.

It is theoretically possible for a magus to become a priest of an appropriate primal deity, especially Mercury, if he exists in the campaign. However, the only net effect would be that the magus has a Level 1 Reputation with followers of that deity, since training in Hermetic Magic would overcome most magical limitations. This would be a +1 Virtue that also counters the effects of the Gift when dealing with fellow followers of that deity.

### Throwing Spells Primally

In ARS MAGICA the suggested rules for throwing spells with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, are as follows:

All deities in ARS MAGICA should be able to cast spontaneous spells within their spheres of influence. All spontaneous spells they cast should be fast-cast spells.

Formulaic spells cost 1 point of primal flux per rank (5 levels) of spell. Spontaneous spells cost twice the normal amount, and *vis* costs 1 point of primal flux per point of *vis*.

Thus, to extend the duration of a formulaic spell or cast a ritual spell, both of which would normally require *vis*, costs double the normal amount of primal flux (2 primal flux/rank). To cast a spontaneous or ritual spell with extended duration costs 3 times the normal amount of primal flux (3 primal flux/rank).

Ritual spells take the same amount of time as normal (15 minutes/5 levels).



## CASTLE FALKENSTEIN

*Special thanks to Sean Barrett for writing these conversion notes.*

CASTLE FALKENSTEIN, by R. Talsorian Games, Inc., describes high adventure in the Steam Age™ Watchwords of this time and place are *invention, creativity, industry*—and gods are neither expected nor allowed to contribute. The inhabitants of this world all *know* that *anything* is possible to them: they have only to learn the Sorcery or build the Engine, and the primal forces of the cosmos are theirs to command, the gods are within grasp. Deities visiting this plane are advised to exercise caution. Infernal Weapons, Astounding Engines, and Amazing Formulations are not

common, but they do exist, and rival even primal energies in their potency, albeit only briefly.

Attempting to rigorously define and specify the interaction of deities and romantic heroes in a world of Dragons and Faeries might be considered a task of quixotic madness. Fortunately, *Castle Falkenstein* is not a mechanics-intensive game. One overriding rule makes most others unnecessary: *The Rule of Common Sense*. Gods have little part to play, if any, in Victorian melodrama, and should be discouraged when they attempt to interfere.

## Resistance Rolls

A character's passive resistance to Sorcery is expressed as an increase in the Thaumic Energy required to cast a spell. (Minions are treated as their base races.)

Definition	Requirement
Godling	8
Demigod	12
Lesser deity	16
Greater deity	20
Supreme deity	24

## Adjustments to Abilities

The range of Abilities in this system is Poor, Average, Good, Great, Exceptional, and Extraordinary. A 5% change is not perceptible on this scale; an accumulated change of 25% is considered one step.

The Abilities of divine characters can exceed any level possible for mere mortals—or even mere mundane immortals. The range of their Abilities extends to *primal*, with a value of 15. A character using a primal Ability in a Duel need never rest, and touches are resolved by extensions to the results chart. A Poor, Average, or Good Attacker scoring a single touch has *no* effect on a primal defense, and a double touch causes a Push Back. A Great, Exceptional, or Extraordinary Attacker getting a single touch Pushes Back a primal opponent and causes a Partial Wound with a double. A primal Attacker, on the other hand, inflicts Wounds as shown.

Defender	Primal Single	Attacker Double
PR, AV, GD	I	I
GR	WH	I
EXC	WF	WH
EXT	WP	WF
PRI	P	WP

Mundane characters cannot have primal Abilities.

When designing a beginning divine character, or when an experienced character attains apotheosis, raise all Abilities two ranks; thus, a beginning deity has one Extraordinary Ability, four Exceptional ones, and one Good one, while all others are merely Great. For every additional Extraordinary Ability taken, a Great Ability must be lowered to Good. For every primal Ability, two Greats must be lowered to Good or one to Average.

## Power Levels for Characters

The overall capability of a resident of the world of *Castle Falkenstein* is not easily ranked. In general, a character termed “amateur” in *The Primal Order* has only the beginning Ability levels. A “veteran” will have raised a few Abilities from that starting point, while a “professional” will have raised several, perhaps by more than one ranking.

A “master” has at least one Exceptional Ability, and a “legendary” character has at least one Extraordinary Ability, with other Abilities at appropriate levels.

## Primal Blast Effects

Primal blasts always succeed and hit their target, have no Harmonics and never go wild, and disregard all armor. Each point of primal flux used does 4 points of Wounds.

## Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any Attack, physical or Sorcerous, and completely blocks non-offensive Magicks such as scrying or divination. All Attacks striking the shield reduce it by 1 point of primal for every 7 points of damage. Spells that do not cause physical damage drain a primal shield by 1 point for every 10 points of Thaumic Energy used to cast the spell, exclusive of added spell definition requirements. Extra Energy may be spent that serves no purpose but to increase the drain on the shield.

An external shield is Attacked in the same manner as any other large, slow-moving object. If the shield is breached, the Attack is refigured, using the same Attacking skill and cards played, against the target(s) within the shield.

A skin-tight shield is hit by any melee or Dueling Attack that penetrates all armor and other defenses. A Dueling result of Incapacitated reduces a skin-tight shield by 1 point; Wounds can still be converted to Disarms by the Attacker, but no other result has any effect on the deity's body. (Hits that do not penetrate the shield will have grievous effect on the god's garb, however.) If the shield is breached, any further damage is applied as Wounds.

An internal shield comes into effect when a deity has only a single point of Health remaining. The shield is then handled in the same manner as the skin-tight shield above. All Sorceries that would affect the mind or spirit are stopped by an intact internal shield.

## Spells

One point of primal flux may be converted into 5 points of Thaumic Energy, which may be used by the deity to cast spells. Thaumic Energy cannot be converted to primal flux.

Deities can alter the Abilities (for better or worse) of chosen mortals and Faerie, at a cost of 15 points of primal flux per level per day. Deities can also grant or remove any Faerie capability: the “ability” of a being who is utterly unable is 1 level below Poor and costs the above amounts to change.

Deities can aid Sorcery in any of three different ways.

Individual spells' Thaumic Energy requirements can be lowered: 5 points of Thaumic Energy cost the deity 1 primal flux point. For instance, if Heimdall were to grant one of his servants the Ability to cast True Vision for 3 points instead of the full 6, he would have to

supply 3 points of flux every five times that spell was cast. Round fractions up.

A reserve of Aspected Energy can be granted: a point of primal flux creates a point of Energy for a day; e.g., for 10 points each day, Ilmarinen can grant the equivalent of a permanent, virtual Ten of Clubs for Sorcerous purposes. His favored mortal will find that the Requirements of all Physically Aspected Spells are lowered by 10 points of Energy, and all Spells of other Aspects by 1.

Favored Sorcerers or Sorceresses can be “attuned” to a particular Aspect: drawing *two* cards every turn from the Sorcery Deck and discarding whichever is less desirable when casting a Spell of the preferred Aspect. This “tuning” costs the deity primal flux equal to the face value of the discarded card. For example, Yarilo tunes a favored priest to the Heart Aspect. While cast-

ing Mental Barrier, the priest draws an Trey of Hearts and a Jack of Spades. He discards the Jack (worth only 1 point, and likely to cause Harmonics), and Yarilo loses 11 points of flux. (In the case where both cards are equally undesirable, the Spellcaster *should*—but is not required to—discard the card of lower face value.)

Deities can expend primal flux to “age” artifacts. Each point of flux is the equivalent of repeated use for one year. Thus, 100 points of flux will increase an artifact’s Thaumic Energy by 1 point.

### Throwing Spells Primally

The cost to throw a spell with primal energy is 1 point of primal flux per 5 points of Thaumic Energy needed. Primal Energy is always of the correct Aspect.



## CHIVALRY & SORCERY

*Special thanks to Warren E. Taylor and Christophe R. Tretz, who helped with the development of these suggestions.*

Chivalry & Sorcery (C&S) is a level-based system in which characters advance in skill within one or more classes.

First of all, the use of *The Primal Order* with C&S may be tricky to manage. C&S was designed for roleplaying in the age of chivalry, amidst a Christian background. In this setting the Christian God is assumed to have infinite power and thus should not be characterized through primal attributes. *The Primal Order* assumes that even deities have limits, but this assumption is not accurate in Christian mythology. However, primal base and primal flux would be nice enhancements when considering angels, high-ranking demons, powers, demon princes, or dragons. Furthermore, a C&S campaign could easily be expanded to include scenarios in which other deities of mythology are real. How these deities interact with the Christian God could be an interesting avenue to explore. We’re also including the integration notes for C&S because certain of the authors have fond memories of this system, and if you can find a use for these notes then we’re happy to have helped.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with C&S, the following rule changes are suggested: Allow magick users to progress beyond 22nd level. You had also better decide what that “mysterious council of the wise” mentioned in the last paragraph under Alchemy in the C&S reference book is.

### Resistance Rolls

Deities always defend versus spells as superior defenders, with an additional penalty of 35% on all targeting rolls versus them.

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in this system is from one to twenty. When *The Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, that equals one point in C&S. When generating a divine-level character, add six points to each attribute.

### Power Levels for Characters

The term amateur in *The Primal Order* is equivalent to 1st to 4th level, veteran is equivalent to 5th to 8th level, professional means 9th to 12th level, master means 13th to 16th, and legendary means 17th and above.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no to hit roll is required and the defender does not consider shield, parrying, dodging, or armor bonuses, nor is the TAC matrix used. Each point of primal flux does five points of damage.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. In addition, a primal shield stops non-offensive things like detection spells, true seeing, or divinations. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal for every five points of physical damage or five levels of spells; the level equivalent of a miracle is considered half of its miracle number. An active philosopher’s stone, which is capable of infinite wishes, can tear down a primal shield at a rate of twenty-five points of flux per turn; admittedly,



this is quite arbitrary, for the C&S system provides no clarification of what the parameters are for this item.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus armor class 0 versus an inferior opponent, with no dodge, parry, shield, or tac matrix modifiers. If the shield is breached without using up all the damage of the attacking weapon or spell, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If successful, the remaining damage is applied.

Versus a skin-tight shield, roll to hit as normal. Damage is applied to the primal shield instead of the character. If the shield is breached, remaining damage is applied directly to the character; no additional to hit roll is necessary for that attack.

Versus an internal shield, damage is done to the character except when the character has less than ten hit points, at which point the primal shield is treated exactly as a skin-tight shield. An attack that would bring a character to below ten hit points simply brings the character to exactly ten hit points, with the remaining damage applied to the shield. All attacks against the mind, spirit, soul, essence and so forth impact against an internal shield regardless of how many hit points the character has remaining.



## CORPS

*Special thanks to Greg Porter for writing these conversion notes.*

CORPS is a simple roleplaying system that has expanded from its conspiracy gaming roots to a genre-independent system suitable for almost any type of roleplaying background.

Since CORPS is now a generic system, these conversion notes for *The Primal Order* make certain assumptions about the nature of the afterlife and about other planes of existence. These can be considered "official" only in the sense that they match the perspective the author of the game wants to present.

### Basics

A deity in CORPS is a being who has died and ascended to or created a different plane of existence. In game terms, a deity is an intelligent being with a staggeringly high Power (pow) attribute, able to generate paranormal effects more or less at will, similar to a *Primal Order* deity who does not manifest in a material way.

Any sentient being with a pow of 10 or more has enough potential to push themselves into an alternate plane of existence upon death of the body. This results in the character becoming a godling, with 100 points of primal flux. Assume that pow and primal convert by squaring pow to get primal base, or, in other words, pow is the square

## Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is an amount of flux equal to the number of miracles the priest or holy warrior has divided by four (round up). In addition, the spell Wrath of God in C&S could be considered an actual primal blast, with the priest only apparently wielding it. What actually happens is that the deity personally gazes down at that time and fries the target with, say, a 10-point primal blast. However, the priest is going to have to have a very good reason for going to this extreme, or the deity may decide to blast the priest instead for showing such presumption!

### Throwing Spells Primally

In C&S the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is typically one point of primal flux per level of spell. However, there are a couple of exceptions. Ancient lore and demonology should cost one extra point of flux to cast. To calculate the cost of primally casting a basic magic combination spell, take the level of the highest level spell in the combination and add to that one point for every other spell. For example, a three-spell combination with the highest level spell at 4th level would cost 6 points of flux.

root of primal base. For example, Ter-Eqwa has 19,600 points of primal base, or a CORPS POW of 140.

Note: Beings with a pow of less than 10 can't ascend on their own; however, if they are aligned with a deity, they can be "pulled" up into the afterlife to serve, endure punishment, weave baskets, etc. While any self-respecting wizard can manage to get a pow of 10, it doesn't mean much. A 100-point primal godling is little more than a convenient snack for most long-term denizens of the afterlife, so such a godling would do well to find an ally, employer, or protector. A common mortal tactic is to develop a large number of followers before dying who will send you sacrifices and willing followers as fast as possible.

If a being has already sworn allegiance to a higher power, he or she generally becomes a servitor of that power. Assume the primal of the ascendant being is that used to fuel the servitor creation process. Fifty points of primal base go toward the basic process, and any leftover amount is applied toward the abilities of the servitor.

A non-sentient being with a pow of this level can neither choose to ally with a higher power nor create an existence of its own. Powerful non-sentient beings can sometimes be sacrificed to a deity, in which case the deity gets some fraction of the essence. In general, a high-powered non-sentient being continues to inhabit the plane on which it formerly lived, mindlessly doing the things it did during life (munch ethereal grass, migrate, sleep, etc.).



Since they are incorporeal, they go mostly unnoticed. Most of the time, these animal or nature spirits have a finite half-life, using their primal reserves in a non-recoverable manner when threatened (i.e. primal blast). Eventually, they weaken and fade, leaving only legends to mark their passing. Those that are worshipped as nature spirits may gain primal from this worship, but they do not have the ability to intelligently direct their worshippers. This task is often left to shamans, who try to interpret (with varying success) the will of the spirits.

### *Abilities of the Deity*

A deity may use CORPS powers to gain a body if it so chooses, using the normal rules to generate one (use the Create or Shapeshift powers). Without a body, a deity has only its AWR, WIL and POW attributes, nominally set at the level the deity had as a mortal, although these can be boosted by using the appropriate power. CORPS deities retain the memories and knowledge of all the followers that have become one with them. While this technically means that they have all the skills ever possessed by their followers, at the level of the highest follower, in a practical sense they only have the average level of these skills, plus any time spent practicing. For example, because Krackemheads, god of bullies, encourages intimidation among his followers, he is pretty good at it too. A few of his followers are good negotiators as well, but they sort of get lost in the shuffle.

Many of the best effects in *The Primal Order* are difficult to implement in CORPS, so the best way to use it is to figure the best system for a given effect. For instance, limited omniscience is easier to handle in *The Primal Order*, so you could use that system and charge the deity an appropriate amount of primal or POW, depending on which system you are using for measurements.

### *CORPS to The Primal Order*

Deities gain primal by absorbing the souls of their followers. The act of swearing sincere allegiance to a deity puts a lien on the character's soul and nets the deity the equivalent of 1 POW's worth of primal (1 point). When the worshipper dies, he or she goes to the home plane of the deity. What happens to worshippers then depends on the personality of the deity; they may play harps, writhe in torment, etc. The deity can "call home" such a soul at any time to gain the primal equal to the cost of the POW that the worshipper had at death. At that time, the personality and memories of the soul become part of the deity's consciousness, and so deities tend to look for worshippers who reinforce the personality traits they approve of. Gods of war don't want wimpy worshippers for fear that they will someday dilute the gods' own courage. Of course, the more followers a deity has absorbed, the less impact each individual soul contributes to the whole. But godlings and other new deities need to be *very* careful about who they let into their collective psyches.

CORPS deities use their POW attribute much as they did in life, and most deity effects are simply the long-range use of POW. You can get primal equivalents based on the POWs used, but note that POW is not normally lost in the CORPS universe.

### *The Primal Order to CORPS*

Converting this way is much the same, but while primal can be spent permanently, POW usually is not. Creating primal blasts and permanent objects with one's own essence are the primary exceptions. As a result, deities generally prefer that the permanent work be done by underlings ("build your own damn cathedral!"), although they will sometimes use quasi-permanent effects that are actually the result of POW being continually allocated to an effect ("You'll stay a statue until I need the power elsewhere. . .").

The equivalent POW of the deity can be figured from its primal base, as described earlier, and should be done after it has been determined what the deity has "built" in terms of planes, worshippers, etc.

Worshippers absorbed into a deity provide the Attribute Points their POW cost them, which add directly to the point cost of the deity's POW. Technically, a deity could just keep getting bigger and bigger indefinitely, but the permanent cost of maintaining and expanding a divine empire against other divine contenders tends to level things out. Lesser deities try to stay out of the way of greater ones, or else form political alliances of dubious reliability.

For example, normally, Krackemheads has a POW of 200, which has a cost of  $200 \times 200$ , or 40,000AP (quite a lot). His heavenly vista holds ten thousand bullying followers, who spend their days quibbling over the pecking order and cheering Krackemheads efforts to badger lesser divinities. But one fine day, Krackemheads gets bushwhacked and decides he needs some permanent reinforcements. He calls a thousand of his bullies "home." Each of the bullies has a POW of 5, and thus would have cost 25AP, so each one contributes 25AP to Krackemheads' total. This raises it enough to give him a POW of 255, enough to spend a lot of primal base wreaking havoc without ending up weaker than when he started.

Note: Each soul in "heaven" is technically its own quasi-divine entity. The souls wouldn't be there had they not been loyal to their gods, but it is possible for them to squander their own tiny primal reserves to do things they thought were in their deity's best interest. The power is then unavailable for the deity if the worshipper is called home, and so most deities strongly discourage that practice. A common tactic is for a deity to draw off so much of a worshipper's primal/POW that he or she doesn't have any reserves to squander without risking dissolution and being forever separated from his or her god.

### *Uses of POW*

Deities are assumed to have complete control over the laws of nature within their domains, so when they use their

pow for paranormal effect, they automatically succeed at the attempt. Non-recoverable primal energy automatically bypasses the defenses of any being not native to that domain and is considered primal lacing. Primal lacing causes permanent loss of 1 or more primal base from the being responsible for it. A person with a primally laced defense provides normal defense against the full attack if the amount of primal base spent by the defender is equal to or greater than that of the attacker. For example, a primal-laced fireball ignores material, magical, and energy defenses, burning a hole through the desired target. A primal-laced force field negates the primal lacing of the fireball, making both the force field and the fireball normal.

A being native to a particular domain is assumed to have its own minuscule pow of a primal nature, which it can use much as a divine being can. (One might suggest that magic in our plane is the manipulation of our own small, inherent divinity.) For example, each of the Hellrats poking around the dumpsters of Infernal City has 1 point of primal pow to its names. Of course, if it's used, the Hellrat's pow drops to zero and dissipates, but it still makes the Hellrats dangerous to corner.

A point of primal base has a DV of 1. Since primal base is equal to the Attribute Points that make up the pow of the deity, they are spent carefully. Most deities have a surplus "lying around." For example, if a POW of 100 requires 10,000 Attribute Points (AP), then a deity with 10,009 AP has 9 points of primal base to put into primal blasts or primal lacing without dropping its pow to 99 (plus 198 extra primal base).

A point of primal base will also render "permanent" the effects of any spell, so a Create power with a point of primal base dedicated to it negates any time limit on the duration of the spell. The item created is permanent and real. If the item itself is to have a pow attribute, the creator must lose the appropriate amount of Attribute Points from his or her own pow to pay for it. Other attributes are taken care of by the spell and made permanent by the use of primal base. When deities create objects themselves, they possess the exact characteristics desired (loyalty, Psych Lims, etc.). If the work is delegated to another being because the creating deity lacks the personal skill to adequately define the item ("Make me the Sword of the Ages with the Essence I now bestow upon you!"), well, bear in mind that mortals do make mistakes. ("You said you wanted a blade capable of injuring the mightiest deities! You didn't tell me you wanted yourself left off the list!")

Normally, a deity can't create something it has not the knowledge to make ("Uh, yeah, I'm gonna make me an atomic bomb, yeah.") If the pow of the item or being is lost, the deity loses the investment. However if the item/person

dies or is properly sacrificed, the deity retrieves the primal. If the item/person is sacrificed in the proper manner, someone else could get the primal back, a minor coup and generally regarded as an unforgivable insult to the original deity.

Most other uses of pow can be described as uses of the normal set of paranormal powers, such as creating a body, moving between planes, etc. The main thing to remember with CORPS powers is that you can spend your pow Aptitude (1/4 your pow, round nearest) on effects constantly without draining yourself. For example, Barghozian Bogstalker has a pow of 200, which means he can devote 50 POW just to keeping up prior commitments, like the spell that lets him see through the eyes of all the vipers in his domain, the one that creates a poisonous miasma wherever he goes, the one that lets him hear whenever his name is spoken, etc.

If these special abilities cannot be reliably duplicated by a CORPS power, then give them a pow cost based on their *Primal Order* equivalents.

### *Dance of the Spheres*

Most alternate planes are considered to be non-contiguous parallel to each other, with limited departure sites from one plane to another, depending on the "distance." That is, the same spot on one plane will always move you to the same spot on another plane; however, a spot right next to the first might have a destination a thousand kilometers away from the first.

For purposes of ultimate evil, we usually suppose there is one plane that has only an entrance point but no exit (i.e. hell). This is where the mightiest of the deities chuck all the really hard cases who want to destroy the universe, take total control, etc. As you might expect, this plane not a very nice place, and everyone there wants to get out. Occasionally someone thinks they have discovered a way to escape, and wastes a lot of effort into escape plans, which have the unfortunate side effect of allowing all the other inmates to escape and wreak havoc as well. . . .

Furthermore, while some weak spots between planes were created for ease of travel, others are a natural side effect of parallel universes. Most of these open into random areas of other planes, whether those be planetary crusts or interstellar vacuums.

To use paranormal powers across planar boundaries requires that a deity be able to perceive its target on the other side. A deity can achieve this by using a spell of clairvoyance or by using the senses of one of the beings it has created. In any case, such spell effects are treated as normal magical effects unless primally laced, and can miss, be deflected, or have unintended side effects.



## EARTHDAWN

*Special thanks to David R. Henry for writing these conversion notes. FASA Corporation has reviewed these notes and believes they will be useful to Earthdawn players, but advises the reader that this is one writer's view of how to integrate deities into a specifically non-divine setting, and is not to be considered "official" background for the game.*

EARTHDAWN is a combination skill- and class-based gaming system from the folks at FASA, recreating the Age of Legend on ancient earth, in which players try to reclaim the world from a magical apocalypse called the "Scourge," which has recently claimed it.

Players take the part of magical adepts, ranging in their abilities from First to Fifteenth Circles, in a campaign world that is much richer in magic than many fantasy RPG worlds. The Theran Empire casually levitates entire cities and sends them soaring across the countryside to hunt down their enemies. Archer adepts can create arrows from thin air and capture control of their enemy's shots in mid-flight to control where they land. At only Tenth Circle, perfectly mortal spellcasters are capable of raising the dead, blocking out the sun across entire countrysides at will, and creating forms of life never before seen on the planet. And great dragons are capable of rearranging reality around themselves at a whim.

In short, it's not that a god wouldn't fit into the Earthdawn world, it's just that he or she would have a pretty hard time getting noticed. Varludach, a great warrior deity from another roleplaying game, whose fame was founded on his immortal ability to bring himself back from the dead and continue fighting, wouldn't get much attention in Earthdawn when every Sixth Circle Warrior can do the same. Gods of the sky and storms would find their authorities being constantly usurped by the wide variety of adepts, creatures, and Horrors capable of changing the weather to suit their mood. And so on.

Perhaps the closest things in Earthdawn to traditional deities are the Passions, and even they share a lot of limitations that the usual deities in *The Primal Order* don't have to bother with. No one really worships the Passions in any traditional sense anyway. Of course, three of the Passions were driven insane by the Horrors that caused the Scourge, so perhaps some of the most powerful Horrors, like Verjigorm or Ristul, should be considered deities. And if you're going to include Verjigorm as someone worthy of primal, then you probably should include the great dragons as well. But aren't some of the higher Circle characters nearly as powerful as the great dragons? And what about that mysterious entity, neither Passion nor Horror, known as Death, tied up under Death's Sea? Where would the primal stop in a *Primal Order* version of Earthdawn?

### Primal Earthdawn

Earthdawn makes a great place for players to experience every kind of adventure, all the way up to the godling or demigod levels (as per the *Primal Order* designations). But the very nature of the excessive amounts of magic and the

unusual strictures on magic in the Earthdawn universe make it unlikely that there will be any more powerful deities running around.

The first thing you have to realize is that in Earthdawn there are no gods in the traditional sense of "creating deities innately associated with their sphere of influence." You could include them in your own campaign, of course, but deity-crazed GMs should perhaps consider a few of the points about the Earthdawn setting given here before diving in headlong and creating nifty beings full of base and flux.

First off, in Earthdawn the Universe runs on Patterns and belief. Check out the optional rule in *The Primal Order* on "Hero Worship" under "Alternate Methods of Ascension," because it describes a the magical paradigm very close to the one at work in the Earthdawn world. Furthermore, the magic in Earthdawn is subject to a few laws that not even a Horror or Passion can break. For instance, astral forms cannot pass through the physical bodies of human beings. Magic can override many of the laws of the physical universe, but the constants of the magical one are part of the great way of How Things Are, and, well, that's How Things Are. Any deity you introduce into Earthdawn has to learn to accept limitations on its power, which may annoy a few of the newcomers with designs on omnipotence.

But wait a moment. Didn't I introduce this piece as saying Earthdawn is almost obscenely overloaded with magic? Well, yes, it is. But all of Earthdawn's magic follows a set of rules and guides, backed by laws of astral space that even the "gods" of Earthdawn (the Horrors and Passions) cannot break, with the end result that divine level roleplaying is even more limited than mortals'. For instance, the major sign of the primacy of the universal laws (or "the greater planar constants," to use *Primal Order* terms) over the gods within them is that the magic of Earthdawn ebbs and flows in the physical world in roughly five-thousand-year cycles. During the up cycle, dragons fly, wizards scheme, and magical swords defend the innocent. During the down cycle, well, we get prime time television, fast food, and ozone depletion. Earthdawn takes place some time after the peak of the last mana cycle, leaving hundreds of years for mortal players to adventure in, but leaving prospective deities with only a few scant thousand years of immortal life. This limitation is furthermore depreciated by the fact that with less mana to go around, the higher level magical expressions on earth become impossible to sustain. Such as, oh, you know. . . gods.

Faced with these limitations in the game setting, it's probably not too feasible to run a *Primal Order*-style primal campaign featuring players as Earthdawn gods. Maybe you could play that they retired to a faraway netherworld to escape the mana depletion, but if they're not interacting with the physical world to begin with, why bother claiming Earthdawn as your setting of choice? Maybe the more survivalist-minded among us could think up an interesting variation on players struggling to scrap up that last bit of



mana or building “magical bomb shelters” on the physical plane, where divine beings could last out the five thousand plus years until magic fully returns to the world again.

Despite these limitations, the Earthdawn milieu is fascinating and certainly worth exploring by means of the Primal paradigm. The following notes will show you how to integrate *The Primal Order* into the Earthdawn game system. The “deities” referred to in the conversion notes signify either *Primal Order*-style deities you add to the Earthdawn milieu, or Passions, Horrors, or high-circle characters you decide to interpret as *Primal Order*-style deities. See the section entitled “What Should Be Primal?” following the system notes for guidelines on which elements of Earthdawn you might filter through *The Primal Order*.

## The Basics

Earthdawn's game system is based on steps and Values, with three Values to each step of ranking. For simplicity's sake, consider each 5% *Primal Order* increase (or decrease) equal to a one step change in Earthdawn.

Power levels are easily transferred for both legendary status and skill competency. For legendary status, an amateur hero in *The Primal Order* is equal to a Level 1 hero in Earthdawn, a *Primal Order* veteran is a Level 2 hero, and so on up to legendary *Primal Order* hero being a Level 5 hero. Likewise for skill ratings, see the section in the Earthdawn rules about choosing difficulty numbers for talents and skills, where the competency of the person being tested is broken down from Class 0 (or untrained) to Class 4 (utter mastery). This breakdown is easily transposed onto the *Primal Order* scale of amateur to legendary.

There is no set stat increase for deities in Earthdawn, given the wide variety of magic across the world. Give ascendant deities thirty extra Attribute Values to split among their Attributes as desired and 10 extra points to be split up among their Defense Ratings as needed. Deities all have Karma and increase their maximum Karma Pool by 20 when ascended. A deity can spend a Karma point on any action or test and regenerate 1 to 5 points of Karma a day with no legend point cost to the god (GM's call on the rate). Deities can also award their Karma Points to their priests, as a form of primal wish for each awarding of Karma, at the cost of one base and one flux (see “Primal Costs,” below). Deities who are also Horrors can use their more effective Horror Tap ability for no primal cost.

There is no set resistance roll in Earthdawn, although various spell effects use tests based on various Attributes (usually Willpower) to throw off effects. Deities get no special resistance bonus in Earthdawn beyond those granted by their higher Attributes.

## Primal Costs

The physical and astral planes of Earthdawn are not non-intervention planes, but they are immensely resistant to deities and magics that would muck up their fundamental

laws. We're speaking true fundamentals, here, like trying to spend primal to change reality to the way you want it, not just levitating mountainsides to hunt dragons on. To reflect this, any use of any primal power by a deity costs at least 1 point of base. If the cost in *The Primal Order* is already greater than 1 base, then this is already covered, and the poor god doesn't have to spend any more base. Yes, this includes primal shields and blasts. The 1 point of base doesn't do anything but overcome the natural Earthdawn's two main planes' resistance to changes in their natural law. Primal effects on the deity's home netherworld plane do not cost any extra primal base.

Primal blasts will do one step of damage for each point of flux spent (and don't forget the 1 point of base additional cost). As always, primal blasts penetrate all normal forms of Physical and Mystic Armor, although at the GM's option great dragons may get their usual Mystic Armor against them.

To figure primal shields, total the flux spent on making the shield, and roll the step Value equal to that amount of flux. The result is the amount of armor the deity created with that spending of flux, which can be split between Mystic and Physical Armor as the god sees fit. Such armor ablates after being hit, even from non-primal attacks, so that a 30-point primal shield that stops 10 points of damage is only worth 20 points next time around. All primal shields are immune to normal armor-defeating hits and usually have Defense Ratings equal to those of their gods. External shields protect deities from all forms of annoying combat effects and spells but have a Physical Defense of 2. Skin-tight shields do not protect the deity from Knockdown Attacks but do greatly reduce the chance of getting Wounds because of their high armor levels. Internal shields will not stop any combat effect, including Knockdown, Wounding, or normal damage, but do protect against “mind attacks” like Mind Dagger, and an internal shield will keep a deity from slipping above its Death Rating so long as the shield holds out.

Primal shields protect a deity from magical social talents such as Taunt, as well as from the skills that reproduce such talents, but such protection requires spending flux (and don't forget that 1 point of base) for each individual Defense. Total the flux spent on social talent Defense, and use that number as a step number to try an “avoid blow”-type test against the talent in question. If the deity's roll equals or exceeds the offensive social talent's roll, the social effect has been shrugged off. Using a primal shield in this way does not degrade any armor that was created under normal primal shield rules, and gods may add this primal social Defense to any Resist Taunt or equivalent abilities they already possess. The same process can be used to represent a primal shield against the various possession and tainting abilities of a Horror.

## Home Planes

There are a number of netherworlds in Earthdawn, each of them perfectly suited for deities to hang out in whenever they tired of the physical and astral planes. Unfortunately,

most of the netherworlds already belong to the Horrors. It may be tough convincing prospective worshippers that a deity is not a Horror, especially if it's well known what neighbors they keep.

Having one's home plane surrounded by Horror breeding grounds is no small worry for any deity; after all, the Horrors managed to destroy the entire world and drive three Passions mad in only five hundred years, and they weren't even trying very hard. The thing that saved the planet wasn't divine action or brave heroics. It was the natural magical law of the Earthdawn world of the mana cycle, which eventually sloped too low to support most of the really terrifying Horrors on the physical plane. A lot of effort is spent keeping the home plane's borders safe from other Horror-infested planes, and the resultant cost may make having planes just too expensive for a lot of gods. And having multiple planes simply exaggerates the problem. Of course, deities who are Horrors themselves wouldn't have this problem.

This is not to say that every netherworld is crawling with Horrors. The elemental planes, for instance, are rather well-behaved, and one can assume that other planes are likewise calm and quiet. The trouble is, every deity in Earthdawn will be wanting these prime planar grounds, and competition for home planes and the flux and base they grant is going to be fierce. The best way to handle this may be to team up (see the "sharing a plane" rule in *The Primal Order*), which would allow for a pantheon of elemental gods, say, to share the responsibility for keeping the elemental planes free of elder spirits. The pantheon would probably eschew mortal worshippers and rely instead on their own cooperation to keep the plane secure, but they would still retain the benefits of having a home plane.

Most likely the planes that are Horror-free are that way because the deities burned a constant into the plane that said "No Horrors." If that's the case, they are most certainly not going to share their plane with any upstart player gods. They can go clear out of their own Horror thicket. A "No Horror" constant is a greater constant in Earthdawn, doubling all primal costs and the time to effect them. That means that on a plane that has a "No Horror" constant in effect, at 1000 flux per day to enforce a deity gets *no* extra flux. Don't forget to double the roll on the coercion table as well to see what the long-term costs in primal are for making such a constant.

What if the deity just wants to eliminate Horrors from their plane once and for all instead of bothering to constant them away? Use the coercion table as an estimate: each day it costs (2d10) x 100 flux to kick away the Horrors. That means that on some days, you'll have extra flux, while on others, you'll have less.

Finally, no deity may claim the physical plane or the astral plane as a home plane. Doing such would mean they could change the constants of those two planes, and such things just can't be done in Earthdawn.

## Possession

So far, the only time possession happens in Earthdawn is when mortals develop the magical technology to pull it off or when Horrors do it. If your deity is neither a mortal or a Horror, it does not have access to the possession power, although perhaps an ascended wizard could primally lace a possession spell.

## Spells

Speaking of spells, a deity in Earthdawn cannot cast a spell that does not relate to its sphere of influence. Remember, the magic of Earthdawn runs on "sensible belief," so if you're the Lord of Ducks, no one is going to believe that you know how to cast a fireball. Deities support their priests at a cost of one flux per the highest circle of spell they can cast per priest—plus the one extra base per bestowing, like any other primal interference in the material world. Obviously, it's cheaper to give all the spells to your priests in one lump flux sum and only pay one base. It may even be cheaper in the long run to just burn base and make the priests spellcasters in their own right. Passions get a special discount on this due to the unusual nature of their questors (see below for more fun on Passions).

## Spheres of Influence

Deities have access to every sphere of influence in Earthdawn except Death, which is already more than adequately covered. However, it's unlikely that any deity would make any headway against the well-ingrained public acceptance and belief of the traditional spheres of influence of the Passions, so double all flux, time, and base cost for any deity trying to move in on the Passions. This leaves deities with only a few spheres of influence to choose from, and very little time to get established in them. Most will be content with a small sphere of influence in some out-of-the-way concept.

## Souls

All who die in Earthdawn are snared by Death, although after having once been captured in Death's Sea, Death cannot prevent someone from being resurrected. Death is about as powerful an entity as any in Earthdawn. Deities get flux from their worshippers only when they're alive; once they're dead, they belong to Death, and there's no contesting of the matter unless the deity wants to spend primal. So long as Death is trapped beneath its Sea, another deity can try to pull a soul away from Death for its own use as dead worshippers. Death will not contest this, since Death knows that eventually all souls return to Death. Still, at a cost of one flux and one base per soul, it's probably more cost-effective for deities to help their worshippers stay alive. If a soul is not resurrected, kept instead as a dead worshipper, the deity has to repay the one flux and one base for each dead worshipper once every year and a day. Deities, usually the Horror-type, do gain flux from



mortal soul sacrifices as per *The Primal Order*, but such gains occur once only, for, unless otherwise contested, the soul then goes to Death.

### Wishes and Other Expressions of Will

No Earthdawn deity can overcome the natural order of the magical universe. Deities can cause local variations, even levitate whole mountain ranges, but they can't make a universal change in the law of gravity, for example. Given the belief-backed magic in Earthdawn, no deity could wish for anything outside of his or her sphere of influence. The Lord of Ducks cannot do much about the volcano that is threatening his Holy Flock except warn them away. No Earthdawn deity is completely omnipotent or omnipresent and omniscient (the Passions are a special case on this—see below).

### Changes to Primal Acquisition

The only plane that can supply worshippers who count for flux in Earthdawn is the physical one. This means that all recruitment of worshippers by all deities takes place on the same planet, earth. A good marketing campaign is thus vital to an Earthdawn deity.

Just to make things harder, the mana level of the two “main planes” of Earthdawn (the physical and astral) is rather low as the world is on the downward slope of the mana sine wave. It isn't getting any lower (for reasons that have not yet been revealed), but of course it isn't getting any higher either. To reflect this, deities do not have access to primal base evolution in Earthdawn. If they want more base, they fight for it to take it from other deities or artifacts. For the most part, if you're a 1000-point deity, you're going to stay a 1000-point deity. Deities do regenerate spent base at the usual base evolution rates (1% a year), which represents the worshippers' continued belief that the deity is usually at the same power level year after year and that regeneration cannot take them above their original base level.

Because deities regenerate spent base at such a slow rate, they are extremely unlikely to spend base to pull off anything like primal wishes since it's going to take them a long while to regenerate it. This also means ascension, which invests 1000 points of base a pop, would rarely be used by Earthdawn deities.

By now you probably have a pretty clear picture of the *Primal Order* life of Earthdawn gods. They're extremely protective of their worshippers yet too paranoid to spend any more primal than necessary to protect them from other religions. Pantheons with control over netherworlds hold on to them jealously. With limits on the number of planes and spheres of influence, few deities ever manage to achieve a lesser deity rating, much less a supreme deity rating.

### What Should Be Primal?

Now that you know how to handle deities (of whatever sort) in the Earthdawn milieu, what elements of the game should be deific? The merits of adding *The Primal Order*-style deities have been addressed earlier. This section examines the ways and worth of governing Passions, Horrors, and high-circle Characters using the *Primal Order* capsystem.

#### Passions:

The Passions are the incarnations of the emotional and natural drives of humanity and the physical and astral planes. When taken together, they closely resemble the *Primal Order* example of the sentient plane, and each one has a number of spheres of influence which are usually closely related (see the Earthdawn rules for examples of the spheres of influence of the twelve Passions).

The Passions cannot force a mortal to feel their power. If you're the nicest person in the world, filled with love for humanity, there's nothing Dis, Passion of Slavery and Bureaucracy, can do to get you to enslave another person. One cannot call the Passions to them, either: if you aren't feeling terribly romantic, pleading with Astendar, Passion of Love and Art, won't do any good. The Passions are big on the idea of helping those who help themselves.

On the other hand, the laws of the Earthdawn universe allow the questors of the Passions to affect even those the Passion cannot. You can see the attraction for having questors to the Passions. For instance, the terminally friendly chap mentioned above could boldly ignore Dis manifest, but a questor of Dis could force him, through the powers Dis granted her, to fall under the influence of Dis (these are the sort of rules that the *Earthdawn Companion* covers on questor powers). The Passions are immediately aware when anyone in the world feels their particular Passion, but when they manifest their physical power is limited compared to other deities. All twelve Passions, working in concert, managed to trap Death, but none of them lifted a finger to stop the Scourge.

In *Primal Order* terms, the Passions don't quite fall into any of the normal deity definitions. They don't have control over a home plane (at least so far as can be told), so they can't be lesser deities, but they're certainly more universal than mere demigods. It's probably best to call them lesser deities of 5,000 base and be done with it. In *The Primal Order* capsystem, the Passions would suffer all the unusual penalties of *Primal Order* deities in Earthdawn as described above, but get a few discounts due to their popularity in the public mind of mortals (which is how you get anything done in the Earthdawn world). Passions are *not* required to pay extra base to support their questors. Instead, they're charged one flux per highest rank of questor ability for each questor to support them. If they want to give their questors more typical spells, however, they have to spend base as usual. Passions pay only 100 flux daily to gain limited omnipresence (to become aware of everyone who feels their Passion). Passions need not pay one base to enact a wish, and may even use limited omnipotence (at

double *Primal Order* base costs). However, they can only perform such wishes in matters within their sphere of influence, and then only for a mortal who is experiencing a truly overwhelming amount of the Passion in question at the moment. Passions cannot change constants on the physical or astral plane, nor will they attempt to interfere with the natural order of things, though they may help mortals survive or avoid a catastrophic event.

Passions may also spend flux (at no base cost) to hide their actions from other Passions. For instance, Raggok, Passion of Disease and Corruption, could spend flux so that Garlen, Passion of Health and Home, will not notice the nifty plague he's spreading around a village. Treat this flux spending as equivalent to contesting a soul in *The Primal Order* rules. Since all Passions are equal in primal, whoever spends the most flux wins. Passions are allowed to just set out a daily "counter-intelligence" flux spending (however much they feel is necessary) to oppose any attempts to hide anything from their omnipresence, which is then spread equally against all attempts to hide things from them during the day.

Passions don't have worshippers per se, although they do have shrines and other holy sites. Instead, anyone who is feeling a Passion strongly is considered a worshipper for that particular day. Obviously, this requires a bit of GM adjudication to decide how many people are inspired by thoughts of justice, love, etc. on a given day. The best thing to do is assume the Passions get x amount of flux per day, where x is sufficient to match your view of how Passionate mortals are. Questors always count as fanatic worshippers of their Passion (see the fanaticism rules in *The Primal Order*). Furthermore, those who have been "taken over" by a questor to feel the effects of a Passion count as worshippers for that day. That means those slave-driving questors of Dis can bring in a lot of flux to the Passion of Slavery and Control by using their powers over, say, a whole slave galley. If this seems too unbalanced in favor of the three Mad Passions of Slaves, Corruption, and Deceit, consider that, on average, more people are hopefully more likely to feel the effects of the more kindly Passions in their day-to-day lives when there are no questors interfering with things. Then again, I'm an optimist.

### **Horrors:**

If the Horrors could drive three Passions insane, doesn't that mean that the more powerful of them should be primal as well? Horrors range in power from the pathetic to the world-stomping, and lots of them have cults of mortals who worship them either for favors or for protection from the very Horror they're worshipping. If you want to make some of the more impressive Horrors primal deities, go

ahead. Given the limitless amount of Horror types, though, you're on your own. It's also true that an Earthdawn GM really doesn't need to add any primal abilities to the greater Horrors to make them any more powerful; giving Verjigorm primal powers is rather like tacking machine guns on the Death Star, but if you're going to make the Passions primal it's almost unfair to not adjust the Horrors the same way. Take a close look at what this will do to the power levels in your campaign, however, and remember that a lot of Horrors don't need help to chomp their way through obstacles.

### **Dragons:**

The great dragons probably count as demigods at best, and then only if you insist on making the Horrors primal. The comments about the Horrors apply to the great dragons as well; since the great dragons already have game stats that effectively make them gods, adding primal may seriously change the balance of power at higher levels of your campaign. Once again, think it over—twice—before primalling up a Dragon or Horror, even though they can obviously count in importance and power as equal to any *Primal Order* demigod or godling.

### **Death:**

Death is stuck under the Death's Sea and is probably the only deity of greater status in Earthdawn. Death is neither an evil deity nor a greedy one. Death is in no rush to get anywhere since it knows that even the Passion-wrought prison it's in will die eventually. That also means that no deity or Horror is in a rush to let Death free either. Death gains flux from the souls of all dead mortals. In fact, Death gains all the flux from those dead mortals, each of whom counts as a worshipper of Death once dead. There are no questors or priests of Death because, well, why should Death bother recruiting worshippers when everyone is going to end up a worshipper in the end anyway.

### **Characters:**

Finally, there's the legendary player characters. Earthdawn is an RPG where the players can end up with truly godlike abilities independently of *The Primal Order* rules. To make an already godlike Fifteenth Circle wizard an actual god, in an Earthdawn/TPO mix, is certainly a big GM call. It's doubtful that the players would ever count for anything above godling. But if you want to play a system where its possible for players to take mortals all the way up to godling or demigod status, and *then* decide whether or not to primal them up, Earthdawn is certainly the one.



## GENERIC UNIVERSAL ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

*Special thanks to Mark Phaedrus for writing these integration notes, to Malcolm Campbell for revising them for the second printing, and also to Allan Baraz, Bryan J. Maloney, Russell Wallace, Frederick D. Marshall, and John Dallman for providing suggestions.*

The Generic Roleplaying System (GURPS) is a system of rules published by Steve Jackson Games that can be used to support roleplaying in a huge range of settings and genres. The GURPS *Basic Set* contains basic rules, including minimal rules for psionics and magic. The rules are expanded by many supplements supporting different genres.

Characters are given a starting allotment of character points, which are used to purchase and improve attributes, advantages, and skills, including powers in some sourcebooks. Additional points can be gained by adding disadvantages and personality quirks. During play, characters receive character points both for adventuring and for good roleplaying.

If you plan to use primal deities in your GURPS campaign, there are several supplements you may wish to consider. GURPS *Supers*, Second Edition, contains rules and powers that are applicable to deities, and these conversion notes refer to rules in that supplement. GURPS *Religion* is an excellent guide to religion and deities in any roleplaying game and also provides rules for using priests in GURPS. GURPS *Psionics* and GURPS *Magic* describe psionic powers and magic in a much greater depth than the *Basic Set* does.

When designing deities, we recommend that you do not attempt to balance the point total of mortals against immortals; the advantages given to primal deities would be worth thousands of points in GURPS. Primal energy cannot be bought with character points, but must be earned as described in Chapters Three and Nine.

Primal deities may use the Enhanced Magic rule from GURPS *Supers*. This allows more than three Magical Aptitude levels to be bought; the fourth level and all subsequent levels cost 15 points each. This rule does not limit the number of fatigue points put into attack spells such as Lightning Bolt, Deathtouch, etc., which allows deities to have powerful magical abilities without automatically being ridiculously intelligent as well. Deities should also be allowed to have a certain level of Magic Resistance without interfering with their Magical Aptitude or spellcasting, as described below. Magic-using deities cannot increase their Magic Resistance beyond the levels described in the following section.

### Resistance Rolls

A deity's inherent resistance to extraneous energies and effects may be best represented by Super Advantages from GURPS *Supers*, for example: Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison, Invulnerability, Passive Defense, Regeneration, Regrowth, Resurrection, or Unaging.

The Immortality advantage is a combination of Instant Regeneration, Immunity to Disease, Immunity to Poison and Unaging. This may be particularly appropriate.

Primal deities should also have some form of the Luck advantage to represent the reduced effects of random chance on them. The following levels are suggested:

Level	Luck
godlings	Extraordinary Luck
demigods	Extraordinary Luck
supported demigods	Ridiculous Luck
lesser gods	Ridiculous Luck
greater gods	Ridiculous Luck and Super Luck
supreme deities	Ridiculous Luck and Super Luck

Ridiculous Luck is like Extraordinary Luck, but usable every ten minutes, and Super Luck allows the player to dictate the result of any one die roll per hour made by or on behalf of his or her character.

For each rank of advancement, deities should receive one level of Magic Resistance, which does not interfere with their Magical Aptitude or spellcasting.

### Adjustments to Attributes, Skills, etc.

The attribute range of this system starts at 1 and is open-ended at the high end; the normal adult human attribute range is roughly 3–18. A 5% increase in an attribute or skill is equal to 1 point. When designing a divine-level character, attributes should start from a base of 15 instead of a base of 10. For example, IQ 15 costs 0 points, IQ 20 costs 60 points, and DX 10 costs –40 points.

When primal deities have an attribute greater than 20, default levels for skills based on that attribute should be computed as though the attribute level were 20. Skills for which characters points are spent should be calculated based on the real attribute level.

The GURPS *Supers* Enhanced Strength rules should be used when designing deities with ST higher than 15. Increasing ST beyond 15 costs 10 character points per point of ST from 16 to 23; 5 per ST points from 24 to 30; and 1/2 per point of ST from 31 up. The table on *Supers*, page 39, can be used as follows: simply subtract 60 points from the costs given there. Characters generated this way have a fatigue of 15, +1 per 5 points spent on ST. Extra fatigue points can be purchased for 3 character points each.

To make deities physically tougher, you should also let them use the *Supers* Extra Hit Points advantage (page 39), which lets a deity's hit point total be raised beyond his or her HT for 5 character points per extra hit point.

Normal costs should be paid for high levels of IQ, DX, and HT. You should consider carefully whether you wish to allow deities to have IQ in excess of 20, since a character that intelligent can be difficult to roleplay.



## Power Levels for Characters

The term “amateur” in *The Primal Order* applies to those with fewer than 50 character points; a veteran is one who has 50–99 points; a professional is one with 100–199 points; a master has 200–399 points; and a legendary is one with 400 points or more.

## Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no targeting roll is required, and defenses of all sorts are irrelevant. Each point of primal flux used does 5 points of damage and is not reduced by DR, Toughness, or any other modifier except for a primal shield. This is general damage, not damage to any specific body area. Do not roll for knockout, but do check for shock, knockdown, and stunning (see *Basic Set*, pages 126–127). Blowthrough does not apply; the full damage is always taken.

## Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with an attack of any sort, and it will stop non-offensive magical and psionic effects such as divination or mind-reading. Attacks hitting the shield damage it, reducing the shield by 1 point of primal per 5 points of physical damage. Non-offensive magic and psionic effects reduce the shield by 1 point of primal for every 5 full points of basic skill (modified by mana level) with which a spell was cast, or per 5 full points of Power in a psionic effect.

If a physical attack reduces a primal shield to zero, first subtract 5 points of damage from the attack for each primal flux point by which it reduced the shield, then apply the remaining damage to the target character. A magic spell or psionic attack that strikes a primal shield is always stopped and never affects the target character, even if it reduces the shield to zero.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an weapon skill roll, taking into account any modifiers for the size, range, and speed of movement of the shield. No active or passive defenses are used. If the attack succeeds, the damage is applied to the shield as described above. If the shield is reduced to zero without using up all the damage of the attack, the attack is recalculated based on the same attack roll, using the size, range, and speed modifiers for the target within the shield. In this event, the target may use active and passive defenses. If the attack is still successful, the remaining damage is applied to the target as normal.

When attacking a skin-tight shield, roll the attack as normal for that target. If the attack succeeds, first apply any DR given by armor and other external equipment (unless the attack would normally ignore these), then apply any remaining damage to the primal shield. If the primal shield is reduced to zero, apply any remaining damage to the character, taking into account any inherent DR of the target character (again, unless the attack would normally ignore these).

To hit an internal shield, attacks are handled normally, and damage is assessed to the character normally, unless the character has 5 or fewer hit points remaining. At this point, the internal shield is treated exactly as a *skin-tight* shield, except that incoming damage is reduced by the target's DR before the remaining damage is applied to the shield. If the shield is breached by an attack, any remaining damage from that attack is applied to the target character, who does not get the benefit of DR since that was already applied before the attack hit the shield. An attack that would bring a character to less than 5 hit points instead brings the character to exactly 5 hit points, with the remaining damage applied to the shield. Attacks made against the mind, spirit, or soul, or that try to drain the character's attributes or fatigue levels impact against an internal shield regardless of the character's hit point total. In the advanced combat system, attacks that would do damage to the vitals, brain, or eyes always strike the internal shield.

## Spells

One point of primal flux may be converted into 5 points of mana, which can be used by the deity to cast spells, create magic items, and so forth. Mana cannot be converted back to primal flux.

In GURPS, clerics, holy warriors, and other religious personnel are created when characters are granted advantages such as Blessed, Divine Favor, and Power Investiture. Note that Clerical Investment is an advantage coming from the social standing of the priest and does not need to be supported by a deity. See *GURPS Religion* or *GURPS Magic* for more details on these advantages and on how priests can wield magic.

A deity can grant a mortal such abilities by paying a daily flux cost of 1/5 of the cost of the advantages. A high priest with 40 points of divinely granted abilities would need to spend 8 primal flux points daily.

If worshipping a deity or being a deity's priest imposes some incidental disadvantages (for instance, if a priest of the God of Water is vulnerable to fire), you may wish to allow these disadvantages to be included in the package of abilities granted to followers, thus reducing the character point cost of that package and reducing its primal flux cost. However, the point total of such incidental disadvantages should never exceed one-half of the point total of the positive aspects of the package. If a deity temporarily stops supporting a priest in order to allocate flux elsewhere, the priest still retains the disadvantages but does not have access to the advantages.

A deity can choose to lower the casting or maintenance costs (or both) of spells he or she grants to mortals. If a deity does this, then for every 5 points of reduced cost to mortal casters, the deity must pay 1 primal flux point. For instance, if the goddess Serafina grants one of her clerics a Mind-Reading spell with a casting cost of 3 instead of the standard 4, then for every five castings of that spell Serafina pays 1 primal flux. This flux is automatically deleted from Serafina's total at the time of the first of the

five castings. If the deity does not have enough primal flux, or if the deity specifically chooses not to spend it, the spell automatically fails.

### Throwing Spells Primally

In GURPS the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is 1 point of primal flux per 5 points of mana needed.



## HÄRNMASTER

*Special thanks to Ken Le Mere and Loren J. Miller, who helped with the development of these suggestions.*

HÄRNMASTER is a skill-based system in which characters gain bonuses in various skills through experience. These bonuses are added to an appropriate attribute, after being multiplied by the necessary multiplier, to calculate a mastery level (ML) for determining success rolls on percentile dice.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with HÄRNMASTER, the following rule changes are suggested: The maximum skill ML can now advance beyond 100 + skill base for divine characters; for divine characters, any experience roll (D100 + SB) that totals over 100 will raise the skill ML. In addition, divine characters in HÄRNMASTER receive a bonus of two points to their Aura attribute per divine rank advanced.

### Resistance Rolls

There is no equivalent to luck in HÄRNMASTER, other than the players' luck in rolling the dice, so no resistance rolls apply.

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in this system is from three to eighteen. When *The Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, this equals one point in HÄRNMASTER. When generating a divine-level character, add six points to each attribute.

Primal points:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	etc.
All Body:	E1	E2	E3	E4	K3	K3	K4	K4	K5	K5	K6	K6	etc.

Injury points are calculated as 10 points, plus 3 per point of flux used in the attack.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons, magic, and divine intervention. If a deity were to intervene on behalf of a character trying to penetrate a primal shield, the deity would have to make a primal energy attack or exercise a sphere of influence ability as described in this book. In addition, it would stop

### Power Levels for Characters

HÄRNMASTER does not have a convenient measuring stick for characters. For the purposes of *The Primal Order*, however, we can define rough equivalents. An amateur would have the bulk of his or her skills at or below 30%, with a few frequently used skills ranging up to 60%. A veteran would have most skills at or below 60%, with a few ranging up to 90%. A professional would have most skills at or below 90%, with a few above 90%. A master would have quite a few skills above 90%, and a few over 120%. A legendary character would be an experienced master with at least five skills over 120%, and several attributes that exceed 20. Note that this is only a satisfactory measuring stick for warriors, generalists, sorcerors, and other characters who specialize in skills. Shamans and priests have magics and other abilities that are not amenable to easy quantification; the best way to handle them is probably to base their *Primal Order* power levels on any skills they may have that are quantifiable, modifying this if it seems appropriate. Deities, by definition and achievement, are legendary.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no to hit roll is required, and armor protection and defender tactics are irrelevant. To resolve a primal flux attack, jump immediately to the following injury table created specifically for primal blast attacks, which are not location specific, but impact against the entire being. The numbers at the top refer to the number of primal points used in the attack.

non-offensive things like detection spells, true seeing, or divinations. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal for every five impact points.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus the With a Defender column using the Ignore tactic on the appropriate melee attack, grapple attack, or missile attack matrix. Armor protection is assumed zero, and every five impact points will negate one point of primal flux shielding. If the shield is breached without using up all the damage of the attacking weapon



or spell, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If successful, the number of impact points used to breach that primal shield are subtracted from this attack as if it were armor protection and the rest of the damage is applied to the target character.

Versus a skin-tight shield, roll to hit as normal. Impact points that breach the armor protection of the defender apply toward damaging the shield according to the above five for one ratio. If the shield is breached, the remaining impact points, if any, are used on the injury table to determine results.

When using an internal shield, the defender must establish exactly what parts of the body the shield is protecting, and to what extent. This is best done by photocopying the injury table and checking the boxes or columns protected. Then the primal shield will only apply versus attacks that result in appropriate hits of the chosen

severity; it will negate impact points until the hit is reduced to an unprotected level of severity. Again, one point of primal flux shielding is expended for every five impact points negated. In this case, fractions should be rounded up to prevent characters from negating four impact points "for free."

## Spells

Each miracle that a priest throws costs the deity one point of primal flux per level of the miracle.

## Throwing Spells Primally

In HÄRNMÄSTER the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of primal flux per level of spell.



# The HERO System

*Special thanks to Warren E. Taylor for writing these integration notes, and also to Loren J. Miller, Richard G. Tomasso, and Kevin Walker for providing suggestions.*

The HERO system is the system of rules that forms the basis for the CHAMPIONS™, FANTASY HERO™, WESTERN HERO™, NINJA HERO™, STAR HERO™, and DANGER INC™ games by Hero Games and Iron Crown Enterprises Inc.

The HERO system is a point-based system in which characters spend points to buy attributes, skills, powers, talents, and perks. As characters advance they gain experience points that can be used to increase their scores in these areas. Primal energy cannot be purchased with points, but can only be earned as outlined in Chapters Three and Nine.

## Resistance Rolls

In the HERO system, luck is a talent that is measured in dice. Each rank that a deity advances will allow the deity to have one more die of luck. Conversely, whenever a deity loses a rank, he or she will lose a die of luck.

## Adjustments to Attributes, Skills, Etc.

The normal human attribute range in this system is from 0–20. A 5% increase is equal to one point if it refers to an attribute, 2 points if referring to a skill, 5 points if referring to a power, and with talents simply means that the character now has that talent. When generating a divine-level character, assign initial attributes with a score of 16 instead of 10.

## Power Levels for Characters

The HERO system has a convenient set of terms that are easily equated to the power level terms used in this book. The term amateur in *The Primal Order* is equivalent to the term normal in the HERO system, veteran is equivalent to skilled normal, professional to competent normal, master to hero, and legendary to either standard or high-powered superhero.

## Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast is considered an energy killing attack, and is also considered an AVLD (attack versus limited defense). The one defense that hinders it, of course, is a primal shield. Refer to Chapter Three for an explanation of the effects of a primal blast versus a primal shield.

A primal blast always hits. No to hit roll is necessary. The damage of a primal blast is five points of body per point of primal flux. Energy defense, powers, shields, or armor have no effect in reducing the potency of a primal blast.

## Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including all AVLD attacks and mental or ego attacks. However, all types of attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal for every five levels on the damage class table that impact against it.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus a zero defense combat value. Any damage is applied to the shield until it is breached; once the shield is down, attacks must still get through the character's normal defenses before they will damage the character.

To hit a skin-tight shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus the character's normal defenses that are outside the shield; in this case, they are defending the shield and not the character. Attacks that make it past the character's normal defenses will do damage to the shield until it is breached, after which the damage is applied to the character.

Internal shields absorb damage when an attack is keyed to the specific hit location the internal shield is protecting; they also apply versus mental or ego attacks. In other cases, use an activation number based on the amount of body protected.



## KULT

*Special thanks to Malcolm Campbell for writing these conversion notes.*

*Kult* is Metropolis Ltd.'s game of contemporary horror, in which reality is an illusion, created to keep us imprisoned. The true world is ruled by creatures who control our world: prison wardens and torturers. The characters are dark heroes, who must face this true reality when the illusions shatter around them. The structure of reality in *Kult* is well-defined, and a GM who wishes to introduce primal deities will have to plan carefully how they fit into the structure. Adding primal to the existing supernatural entities is one possible approach. Astaroth and the departed Demiurge could be considered lesser deities, and the Archons and Death Angels could be considered supported demigods, although the Archons are probably no longer supported now that Demiurge has departed. The Gods of Metropolis could be considered supported godlings who are also no longer supported now that Demiurge is gone. Most other entities are probably minions.

### Resistance Rolls

Resistance rolls in *Kult* are usually Ego rolls. Since primal deities normally have an Ego attribute considerably higher than that of most mortals, no additional bonus on resistance rolls is required.

### Adjustment to Attributes

*Kult* attributes range roughly from 1–20 for normal humans, although the range is open-ended. When *The Primal Order* calls for a 5% increase in an attribute, that corresponds to 1 point. When generating divine characters, add 6 to each attribute after allocating points.

## Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is an amount of primal flux equal to 4% of the active cost of the most powerful spell (in terms of active cost) that the priest or holy warrior can throw. If you want to take disadvantages into account, you could use 4% of the average of the active cost and the final cost instead.

### Throwing Spells Primally

In *HERO* the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of primal flux per ten points of active cost. Again, if you want to account for disadvantages you can substitute the average of the active cost and the final cost for the active cost in the above formula.

## Power Levels

There is no convenient method for measuring power level in *Kult*, so this is left to the GM's discretion when generating NPCs. As a rough guide, beginning player characters should be considered to be at the professional level.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; blocks, dodges, and maneuvers have no effect, and armor is of no benefit. Damage is assessed using the following effect chart.

Weapon	Sc	Lw	Sw	Fw
Primal Blast	1–4	5–9	10–14	15+

Each point of primal expended after the first adds +5 to the effect number.

### Primal Shield

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including a magical one. In addition, a primal shield stops non-combat magic that would interfere with the target, such as the *Manipulate Senses* spell. All attacks that impact the shield damage it. A scratch causes no loss, a light wound causes 1 point of lost primal; a serious wound, 2 points of lost primal; and a fatal wound, 3 points of lost primal. Every full 5 points of effect beyond that needed for a fatal wound causes an additional point of primal to be lost. If a primal shield cannot absorb the full impact of an attack, any remaining effect beyond what it can absorb is applied to the target as normal. Versus an external shield, the attacker may claim the bonuses for large size, if appropriate, and the defender's dodge or other defensive maneuvers are

not applicable. If the attack penetrates the shield, the defender may apply defensive maneuvers and armor to the remaining effect if appropriate. Versus a skin-tight shield, the attack is resolved as normal: the defender may use defensive maneuvers or armor to reduce the effect of the attack before it impacts the shield. The remaining effect is applied to the shield, and only if this is penetrated does the target suffer a wound. Versus an internal shield, the attack is resolved as normal. The shield does not come into play unless the wound inflicted would be a fatal wound, or accumulated damage would make it a fatal wound. At this point, the shield comes into play and absorbs as much of the effect as is needed to drop the wound level to a non-fatal level. Only if the shield is then penetrated does

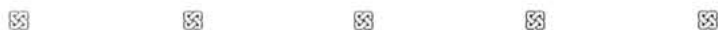
the character suffer a fatal wound.

### Spells

To support minions, deities must pay 1/5 of the total of the Lore ratings granted to them. To reduce the Endurance cost for a spell costs 1 point of primal flux for every 5 Endurance points granted towards the spell.

### Throwing Spells Primally

Throwing a spell primally, as described in Chapter Three, costs flux equal to 1/5 of the Lore rating required to cast the spell.



## PENDRAGON

*Special thanks to Michael McAleese for writing these integration notes.*

PENDRAGON is the system of rules by Chaosium for roleplaying in the times of Arthurian legend. PENDRAGON is a skill-based system in which a character's personality traits are extremely important. Characters are invariably knights in a pseudohistorical setting. Players can choose the knight's main personality trait and assign skill values to individualize the character.

Since PENDRAGON is not simply a game system but also an environment, we felt it would be interesting to include some suggestions on how the PENDRAGON campaign setting could be evolved to include divine-level encounters. Since all magic and divine acts are exclusively the province of the GM, they are not even detailed in PENDRAGON. Those who wield magic can do anything the GM wants, but the effects are supposed to be mysterious and of lesser power than in most fantasy settings. Divine-level characters could be either deities of the land of faerie intent on keeping magic in Britain, or saints and angels of Christianity working to keep the Holy Grail sacred. Perhaps some pagan deities have resurfaced and Arthur is forced to direct some effort toward Scandinavia, Iceland, or the continent.

### Resistance Rolls

There is no equivalent to luck in PENDRAGON, other than the players' luck in rolling the dice.

### Adjustments to Attributes

PENDRAGON attributes are assigned by the player and can range from a low of one to the racial maximum, which for humans appears to be 18 + racial modifiers. For example, the Cymric people have a +3 Constitution modifier, giving them a racial maximum of 21 for Constitution. When *The Primal Order* refers to a 5% increase in these stats, give the character a +1 modifier. When creating divine characters,

increase the beginning points by six per stat, giving the character 90 points to distribute, not 60. In addition, the racial maximum for divine characters is 25.

### Power Levels for Characters

PENDRAGON has a power level system that rates how excellent knights are by the amount of Glory they have attained. An amateur in *The Primal Order* translates to a Non-Knight in PENDRAGON, veteran translates to Ordinary Knight, professional translates to Notable Knight, master translates to Famous Knight, and legendary translates to Extraordinary Knight.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast does 5 hit points of damage per point of primal flux. It bypasses all armour, including the Armour of Chivalry. Note that it is extremely easy to inflict a grievous wound with a primal blast.

A primal blast always hits, no targeting roll is necessary. It cannot be dodged or defended against by anything except a primal shield.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield acts as armor in every way, save that it also protects against falling damage and that it in no way impairs a character's actions. Thus characters with only a primal shield can gain the same +5 modifier to all combat actions as a character wearing no armour.

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal for every five points of damage.

While an external shield is up all attacks will be directed at it instead of the character. To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus a

defenseless target. If the shield is breached without using up all the damage of the attack, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If successful, the remaining damage is applied.

Versus a skin-tight shield roll to hit as normal. Damage is applied to the shield instead of the character. If the shield is breached, remaining damage is applied directly to the character; no additional to hit roll is necessary for this attack.

Versus an internal shield, damage is done to the character except when the character sustains a grievous wound, at which point the primal shield is treated exactly as a skin-tight shield. All attacks against the mind, spirit, soul, or essence impact against an internal shield regardless of how many hit points the character has remaining.



## ROLEMASTER

*Special thanks to Ryk Spoor for writing these integration notes, and also to Loren J. Miller, Michael Smith, Christophe R. Tretz, and Andy Young for providing suggestions.*

ROLEMASTER is a system of rules for fantasy roleplaying by Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE). It is mostly compatible with the SPACEMASTER system, also by ICE, and a simplified subset of the ROLEMASTER rules make up the MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING SYSTEM.

ROLEMASTER is a level-based and skill-based system. This makes it one of the few systems that straddle the border; it also straddles the skill-based versus class-based border. Characters who go up in levels gain a certain number of development points (devpoints) per level, and can spend these devpoints on a wide variety of skills. The character classes in ROLEMASTER (and there are many, many classes) are distinguished by the costs for the skills; fighting types pay less for combat skills and more for intellectual skills, and so on.

### Resistance Rolls

ROLEMASTER does not have a constant sort of saving throw; there are, in some cases, resistance rolls (RRs) against certain spells and things like disease and poison. However, these things are often either capable of being overcome by training or strongly affected by statistics. It is recommended that deities have large bonuses (+50 to +100) to their RRs in all areas.

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in ROLEMASTER is 1–100, with PCs occasionally able to attain 102 or so. When *The Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in an attribute, this equates to 5 points. When generating a divine-level character, add 30 points to all stats.

## Spells

While all spells are at the GM's discretion, the PENDRAGON environment suggests that character abilities be subtle. Faerie magic is most often of an illusory nature, while Christian miracles tend to be few and far between. Indeed, a Christian character, perhaps a saint, might not be allowed to use magic overtly at all.

### Throwing Spells Primally

PENDRAGON has no rules for magic, so assigning a primal point cost for PENDRAGON magic is silly. It's up to the GM to assign a point cost or ignore the whole thing when a divine character creates a magical effect.

### Power Levels for Characters

The term amateur in *The Primal Order* is equivalent to levels 1–4; veteran is equal to 5th to 10th level, professional to 11th to 18th, master to 19th to 29th, and legendary to 30th and above. Please note, however, that this is a very rough approximation. The vast differences in the number of devpoints that any given character can gain can make one 4th-level character far superior to many others of 10th level.

### Primal Blast Effects

Primal blast effects are calculated using the primal blast attack chart. Each point of primal above the first adds +50 to the attack roll. Include only whatever primal actually gets to a primally shielded target.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any sort of attack or effect directed at the shielded target, unless the shield is keyed to admit that kind of effect. Thus it interferes with weapons, magic, psychic powers, and so on, as well as stopping non-offensive things such as detections and analysis spells. All attacks that hit the shield do damage to the shield, with physical attacks doing only 1/10 their normal damage. A critical, if not listed as doing additional concussion hits, does one point to the shield per level of the crit; a hit doing a 10C would do 10/10 + 3 or 4 points of damage to a primal shield.

This is also true for magic, with two points of exception: Arcane magic, appearing first in the *RMC I*, and Proto-Elemental Material (PEM), from the *Elemental Companion*.



Arcane magics do a full 75% of their damage, plus five points per crit level, if any, for they are a fusion of all three fields of magic and are very close to being primal themselves.

PEM attacks do 25% normal damage, plus an additional 1% damage for every two percent of PEM purity; thus 100% pure PEM would do 75% damage. For every full 10%, it does an additional 1 point per critical level, if any, as well.

External shields are treated as the best AT versus the attack, with no (or a very low) DB.

Skin-tight shields only take on attacks after the attacks have penetrated any other defenses. Attackers must make another attack roll versus the shield in this case, versus the best AT against their attack, with the defender's *full DB* applied, along with an additional 25% for every point of primal in the shield beyond one. In addition, any damage already absorbed by other defenses is subtracted from the damage of the second attack if it hits.

Internal shields negate all criticals done to a protected area and can only be damaged by concussion points, not by criticals. All attacks versus the mind, spirit, and so forth will impact against an internal primal shield no matter what the targeted area is.

## Spells

Supporting a spellcaster will cost the deity a number of points of flux equal to the number of base spell points the caster gains per day divided by ten. Thus a tenth-level priest who gets 2 points per level per day would gain 20 points per day, and would cost 2 points of flux to support.

## Throwing Spells Primally

In ROLEMASTER the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of primal flux per five levels of spell (always round up). Arcane spells should cost one point of flux per two levels, and PEM should cost one point of flux per three levels.

## Primal Blast Attack Chart

01-05	-	151-155	260G
06-10	6A	156-160	270G
11-15	12A	161-165	280G
16-20	18A	166-170	290G
21-25	25A	171-175	300G
26-30	32B	176-180	310H
31-35	39B	181-185	320H
36-40	46B	186-190	330H
41-45	54B	191-195	340H
46-50	62B	196-200	350H
51-55	70C	201-205	360I
56-60	78C	206-210	370I
61-65	86C	211-215	380I
66-70	94C	216-220	390I
71-75	103C	221-225	400I
76-80	112C	226-230	410I
81-85	121D	231-235	420J
86-90	130D	236-240	430J
91-95	140D	241-245	440J
96-100	150D	246-250	450J
101-105	160E	251-255	460J
106-110	170E	256-260	470K
111-115	180E	261-265	480K
116-120	190E	266-270	490K
121-125	200E	271-275	500K
126-130	210E	276-280	510K
131-135	220F	281-285	520K
136-140	230F	286-290	530K
141-145	240F	291-295	540K
146-150	250F	296-300	550K

## Critical Explanations

F = A & E  
 G = B & E  
 H = A & C & E  
 I = B & D & E  
 J = C & D & E  
 K = A & E & E  
 L = C & E & E





## RUNEQUEST

*Special thanks to Loren J. Miller for writing these integration notes, and also to David P. Martin for providing suggestions.*

RUNEQUEST is Chaosium's system of rules that forms the basis for a family of games, including RUNEQUEST 3™ (published by Avalon Hill), *ELRIC®* and *CALL OF CTHULHU®*. It is a skill-based system in which skills improve by experience, and characters advance by getting better at various skills, by learning magic spells, and by joining organizations or cults of like-minded beings. Primal energy cannot be purchased or gained through training, but can only be earned as outlined in Chapters Three and Nine.

Though RUNEQUEST is not strictly tied to any one environment, it is nonetheless closely associated with the world of *Glorantha*. We felt it might be interesting to include some suggestions on how Gloranthan characters might encounter divine-level beings.

The deities and heroes of *Glorantha* are described extensively in publications by Chaosium, Avalon Hill, and others. One of the major factors in Gloranthan mythical history is the ability of mortals to enter into the GodPlane—the place outside of the world, the time outside of chronology, the mythic land—in order to gain superhuman powers and emulate their deities. This procedure is called the Hero-Quest. Characters are likely to encounter divine-level characters, for good or ill, when they are on a Hero-Quest. This is the only way that most characters will encounter the gods, since the agreement that saved the gods and the world from ravenous Chaos also locked them outside of time, preventing them from developing their spheres, or interfering with mortal affairs on *Glorantha*.

*Glorantha* is considered a non-intervention plane, and deities follow the optional *Primal Order* rules for Mutable Size and Temporary Avatars, which are found in Appendix B. Gloranthan dragons, who are lesser and greater deities, are famous for their dream dragons, which follow the optional *Primal Order* rules for Dream Avatars.

Mortals in *Glorantha* can follow the optional rules for Mythic Exploration and Hero Worship to gain the use of primal energy. Such self-created Immortals are not necessarily subject to the rules against non-intervention; if they were they would be unable to return from Mythic existence to their living bodies. They are the primary method that deities use to bypass the rules against divine meddling in mortal affairs.

Finally, the divine power levels in RUNEQUEST are powerful spirit, demigod, minor god, and major god. They are equivalent to, respectively, godlings or demigods, supported demigods, lesser deities, and greater deities. Some GMs might want to treat the leaders of pantheons as supreme deities, but our opinion is that Arachne Solara is the only supreme deity in *Glorantha*.

### Resistance Rolls

There is a RUNEQUEST game term called a Luck roll, but it is a characteristic roll based on Power, not a special magical ability. Since deities have an incredibly high Power characteristic, equal to their primal base, they will have very good Luck rolls. All their other characteristic rolls will be good, as well.

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in this system is from 3 to 18 (8 to 18 for Intelligence and Size), but can range up into the hundreds or thousands for powerful beings. When *The Primal Order* calls for a 5% increase in one attribute, that is equivalent to one point in RUNEQUEST. When generating divine-level characters, add six points to each attribute, record favorite attributes and skills at legendary levels, and use the deity's primal base as his or her Power attribute.

Note that the greater deity Waha has been reported by some scholars to have a Power around 80,000, which would mean that a primal base of 80,000 is well within the range for greater deities in *Glorantha*.

### Power Levels for Characters

RUNEQUEST does not have a convenient measuring stick for characters. For the purposes of *The Primal Order*, we can define rough equivalents. *The Primal Order* amateurs would have the bulk of their skills at or below 30%, with a few often-used skills ranging up to 60%. Veterans would have most skills at or below 60%, with a few ranging up to 90%. Professionals would have most skills at or below 90%, with a few above 90%. Masters would have quite a few skills above 90%, and a few over 120%. Legendary characters would be experienced masters with at least five skills over 120%, and several attributes that exceed 20. Note that this is only a satisfactory measuring stick for warriors, generalists, sorcerors, and other characters who specialize in skills. Shamans and priests have magics and other abilities that are not amenable to easy quantification; the best way to handle them is probably to base their *The Primal Order* power levels on any skills they may have that are quantifiable, modifying this if it seems appropriate. Deities, by definition and achievement, are legendary.

### Primal Blast Effects

Primal blasts are treated as combat magic spells that do 4 hit points of damage per point of primal flux, to a randomly determined hit location, if the deity defeats his or her target on a POW versus POW roll. Deities can choose to target a specific hit location, at no penalty, if they so desire.

## Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. In addition, it stops non-offensive spells including clairsenses, detect object, divination, and so on, much as countermagic would do. It provides a tough but unarmored membrane with 4 HP per point of primal flux spent. This membrane takes full damage from physical attacks, one HP per magic point of spirit magic or sorcery, and two HP per point of divine magic. This is not normal armor, and is not ignored by critical hits.

When attacking through an external shield, attackers have double the usual chance to hit, since they are attacking a large wall-like target that can't really dodge, even though it can move. If the shield is breached by an attack and the attacker makes a second, successful attack (no attack bonus this time) that is not dodged or parried by the target, the remainder of the damage is applied to the target's armor or body. External shields may protect additional people and objects at one additional flux point per ten SIZ of people and objects besides the deity to be so protected.

Against a skin-tight shield, attack as usual. Damage that penetrates the deity's shield and worn armor, if any, is applied to the primal shield. If it penetrates the primal shield, then it must penetrate any armored skin possessed by the deity. If any damage remains from the attack, it is taken as damage by the deity.

Internal shields protect chosen hit locations beneath any armored skin possessed by the deity. If damage penetrates all the other defenses of a deity, including armored or tough skin, it must penetrate the internal shield in order to inflict real damage to the deity. Deities may choose to protect only certain hit locations, typically those locations that would impair them if severely damaged; in

this case only attacks against protected hit locations would encounter an internal shield.

## Spells

It takes one point of primal flux to power one point of a divine magic spell. All other spells cast by priests and initiates of a deity are powered solely by the mortal casting the spell. Initiates may sacrifice for divine magic, but they tend to hoard their magic until they need it, so the cost to support Initiates, including the cost for divine interventions, would average two flux points per year. All of this would be paid back, with interest, with sacrifices for initiation, or to gain divine magic. Priests get a better deal on magical power, but they also bring new worshipers to the deity, making this a good trade for both sides. Non-initiate worshipers, *Lay Members* in RUMQUEST parlance, are pure, primal profit for the deity. Priests can be expected to use half the number of divine spell points they have each week. Since a priest is required to have a minimum of ten spell points of divine magic to become a priest, this costs deities between five and twenty points of primal flux per priest per week.

## Throwing Spells Primally

In RUMQUEST the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, would be one point of primal flux per power for divine spells, enchantments, and other spells that require sacrifice of permanent power, and one point of primal flux per two magic points for sorcery and spirit magic spells that do not require sacrifice of permanent power.



## SHADOWRUN

"There's a new corporation in town; it's called  
Loki Acquisitions Unlimited . . ."

—A Billboard in Seattle, circa 2050

*Special thanks to Richard G. Tomasso, who helped with the development of these suggestions.*

SHADOWRUN is a skill-based system in which characters select an archetype as a starting point, and then add skills to individualize the character. Since SHADOWRUN is also an environment, we felt it would be interesting to include some suggestions on how the campaign setting could be evolved to include divine-level encounters. Deities are a natural evolution of the plot line. Now that magic, faeries, ogres, and dragons have returned, the next logical appearance would be figures from mythology, and imagine their surprise when they discover technology! One could easily see Daniel Coleman being ascended by some American Indian deity. The increased cultural interaction and communications would certainly bring in some interesting cross-pantheon interactions as well.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with SHADOWRUN, the following rule change is suggested: Cyberware does not inhibit magic for deities. Deities who learn about cyberware might come up with all sorts of interesting variations of their own, such as cyberware that connects directly into their primal reservoirs, or a cyberware artifact.

## Resistance Rolls

In SHADOWRUN deities will gain bonuses to their karma reflecting the changes to their primal base. Every time a deity gains primal base, the deity gains an amount of karma equal to 1% of the amount of primal base gained. In addition, deities gain a one-time bonus of 25 karma points when they are ascended.

## Adjustments to Attributes

The normal human attribute range in this system is from one to six. When *The Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, that equals one-half of a point in SHADOWRUN. Fractions are ignored for all game purposes, and are only retained for possible accumulation with future fractional gains or losses. When generating a divine-level character, add two points to each attribute.

## Power Levels for Characters

There does not seem to be a simple, elegant way of assessing a character's rough order of power in SHADOWRUN. Therefore we are forced to recommend that GMs simply apply their judgement when generating appropriate NPCs.

## Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target. Success rolls aren't even used, and armor and dodge pools have no effect. Every point of primal flux used in the primal blast does  $XPDYS$  damage, where  $X = 2$  plus flux used, and  $Y = 1$  plus flux used. Flux may be spent for either power or staging. Power may be increased at a 1:1 ratio; staging is increased at a ratio of 2 flux:1 staging. Thus spending one point of flux on the attack does 2d1 damage. Two points (one extra) does 3d1. Three points (two extra) can do 4d1 or 2d2. Four points (three extra) can do 5d1 or 3d2.

## Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including unarmed combat, firearms, melee weapons, and magic. In addition, it would stop non-combat spells like detection spells, illusion spells, or manipulation spells. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield. If the attack is a physical attack, every point of flux

spent acts as three points of armor that affects everything, including primal blasts.

Versus an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack against the shield, which suffers the -1 targeting modifier for attacking a target that is standing still. The shield has no dodge pool. If the shield is breached, the attack may be made again, only this time against the target within the shield. This attack is made as normal, but the number of successes it took to take down that external shield must be subtracted from this next attack.

Versus a skin-tight shield, the attacker rolls as normal with the defender gaining the typical benefits of armor, dodge pools, movement modifiers, and so forth. The primal shield negates ten successes per point of primal flux the same way that armor does, except that once used it is gone. Furthermore, a primal shield is fully accumulative with the character's existing armor; a primal shield is not considered armor for the purposes of the rule against applying more than one set of armor at a time.

Versus an internal shield, the defender selects a box on the physical monitor. While the amount of damage accrued is less than that, the shield is ignored. Once the amount of damage accrued reaches the determined box, the shield kicks in and works exactly like a skin-tight shield. Note that this translation can take place in the middle of an attack, so that the shield would start negating successes after some damage has already been applied to the character.

## Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is an amount of primal flux equal to the number of force points of the priest's highest force-point spell.

## Throwing Spells Primally

In SHADOWRUN the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of flux for each point of force for the spell.



## SYNNIBARR

*Special thanks to Raven McCracken (the game designer for SYNNIBARR), David McDougal, and Bryce Thelin for assistance in writing these rules.*

SYNNIBARR is a class-based system system of rules by Real Dream Inc. (RDI), oriented toward power gaming and what Mr. McCracken refers to as *adventure wargaming*. Characters have numerous character classes from which to pick, begin with some very powerful abilities, and can advance to extremely high levels of power.

These integration notes are quite short since, frankly, SYNNIBARR already has a considerable number of rules that address deities. In many instances these rules parallel each other so nicely you don't even need integration notes

but can simply use the established SYNNIBARR rules while sprinkling in an occasional TPO gem to help expand one area or another. In fact, SYNNIBARR even includes a concept similar to primal energy in what SYNNIBARR labels *god points*. To make TPO's primal energy compatible with SYNNIBARR's god points simply divide the TPO primal energy scales by ten (*i.e.*, every TPO primal energy gain or loss that you decide to use should be divided by ten). This is because, point for point, SYNNIBARR god points are roughly ten times as powerful as TPO primal flux points. We also recommend using a SYNNIBARR concept analogous to primal base, called *core god points*. Again, if you divide all the TPO scales by ten it will be pretty close to compatible.

To retain the SYNIBARR divine ranking scheme with 1st to 30th level demigods and 1st to 50th level gods, ignore the TPO primal base gains for advancing in ranks and instead award one core god point per level advanced as a demigod, and ten core god points per level advanced as a deity.

Also, the *The Primal Order* rule about primal energy being a quantum effect does not apply in SYNIBARR. In SYNIBARR, fractional points of god power may be used.

### Resistance Rolls

The SYNIBARR equivalent to a resistance roll is a *fate roll*. SYNIBARR already has built-in bonuses for deities in that deities gain levels and levels affect fate rolls. The current rules are sufficient and should not be modified.

### Adjustments to Attributes

When TPO calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, this should be equated to three points in SYNIBARR—unless you're talking about strength. In that case it should be equivalent to ten points. When generating a divine-level character, add 20 points to each attribute except strength, to which you should add 65 points instead.

### Power Levels for Characters

The term amateur in TPO is equivalent to 1st to 10th level, veteran is equivalent to 11th to 20th level, professional

means 21st to 30th, master means 31st to 40th, and legendary means 41st and above.

### Primal Blast Effects

For primal blasts, simply use the *god point blast* rules that already exist in SYNIBARR.

### Primal Shield Effects

For primal shields, simply use the *god point shield* rules that already exist in SYNIBARR. GMs should feel free to integrate some of the additional TPO primal shield attributes into the god point shield.

### Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is a number of god points equal to the highest level spell that the priest or holy warrior can throw divided by ten. For example, supporting a cleric whose highest level spell is third would cost 0.3 god points per day.

### Throwing Spells Primally

In SYNIBARR the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is one point of primal flux per level of spell, divided by ten to convert to god points.



## TALISLANTA

*Special thanks to Glenn Andreas, Jeff Goldman, and George Lowe, who helped with the development of these suggestions. Approved by Stephan Michael Sechi, the game designer.*

The TALISLANTA game system is the system of rules that forms the basis for the TALISLANTA product line. The TALISLANTA series was originally published by Bard Games, is owned by Stephan Michael Sechi, and is licensed for publication through Daedalus Games. It is a skill-based system in which characters gain experience points that can be used to advance their skill rating in their primary profession (archetype) or purchase skills in other areas. Primal energy cannot be purchased with experience points, but can only be earned as outlined in Chapters Three and Nine.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with TALISLANTA the following rule changes are suggested: Divine characters are not prohibited from simultaneously having the Primary Magic and Primary Combat skills, are not limited to four+INT extra-curricular skills, and never have major mishaps.

### Resistance Rolls

Deities gain an extra +2 per divine rank on all Action Table rolls.

### Adjustments to Attributes and Skills

The normal attribute range is from -6 to +9, with 0 as the "average" for the game system; actual averages vary from race to race. A bonus of 5% is equivalent to +1 point of attribute, or +1 skill rating.

### Power Levels for Characters

In TALISLANTA, amateur characters will have up to a +5 skill rating in their primary skills, veterans will have from +6 to +8 in their primary skills, professionals will have from +9 to +12 in their primary skills, masters will have from +13 to +17 in their primary skills, and legendary characters will have 18 or higher in their primary skills.



### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no to hit roll is required and armor protection is irrelevant. Each point of primal flux used does five points of damage.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. In addition it stops non-offensive things like detection spells, true seeing, or divinations. All attacks that impact against the shield will do damage to the shield, reducing it by one point of primal flux for every five points of physical damage or five levels of spells. A spell cast at a skill rating of +9 is treated as nine levels of spells.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack versus a combat rating of zero. If the shield is breached without using up all the damage of the attacking weapon or spell, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If successful, the remaining damage is applied.

Versus a skin-tight shield, roll to hit as normal. Damage is applied to the shield instead of the character. If the shield is breached, remaining damage is applied directly to the character; no additional to hit roll is necessary for that

attack.

Versus an internal shield, damage is done to the character except when the character has less than 75% of his or her original archetype hit points remaining, at which point the primal shield is treated exactly as a skin-tight shield. An attack that would bring the character to below 75% of the original hit points simply brings the character to exactly 75% of the original hit points, with the remaining damage applied to the shield. All attacks against the mind, spirit, soul, essence, and so forth impact against an internal shield regardless of how many hit points the character has remaining.

### Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is equal to his or her Magic Rating divided by two (round fractions up).

### Throwing Spells Primally

In TALISLANTA the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is an amount of primal flux equal to the Magic Rating at which the spell is to be cast divided by two.



## TORG

*Special thanks to Richard G. Tomasso for writing these integration notes.*

TORG ("That Other Roleplaying Game") is the system of rules by West End Games that has formed the basis for the TORG roleplaying system. TORG is a skill-based system in which characters adventure on earth in the near-now. Earth has been invaded by High Lords™ from other planes who possess an extremely potent energy called possibility energy (PE). An extremely interesting aspect of TORG is that every gamemaster's campaign is considered part of a larger infiniverse™. After you run a module you can mail in the results of the adventure to West End Games and they will integrate your adventure into the infiniverse™ history.

The primal energy of *The Primal Order* is very much like PE in TORG. You spend PE to get everything from success in combat to new skills. Primal energy transcends physics, as does possibility energy. Primal energy allows you to do anything you can imagine and have enough power to perform; possibility energy is the existence of such a "possibility." The High Lords are a likely analogy to divine characters; they are certainly powerful enough. Some characters in the game may gain a level of power on par with that of the lesser gods.

Each cosm™ is governed by axioms, which define the cosm's level of achievement and/or advancement in society, technology, magic, and spirituality. Our earth is fairly high socially and technologically, but low in magic and spirit.

Divine home planes would have high spirit axioms, and the other axioms would reflect the deities' aspects and what they want to allow in their cosms. There are also some world laws that govern certain actions and events. For example, in the pulps cosm there are laws of morality, action, and dialogue. In the techno-spy-thriller-corporate cosm, there are laws of profit and intrigue. In the horror cosm, there is the law of fear. Together the axioms and world laws define the cosm in which the characters are adventuring.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with TORG, you have a decision to make: where do deities and primal energy rank in the TORG universe? There are two basic choices:

Since PE is very similar to primal energy, you should strongly consider the possibility of throwing out the entire concept of primal and sticking with PE, and then just strip from *The Primal Order* whatever you think might add a bit of flavor.

The other possibility is to treat deities as the ultimate, as they are in *The Primal Order*, and treat primal energy as slightly more powerful than PE.

If you use the first option, you can probably still find enough inspiration from this book to get your money's worth, but there's really not much we can provide for you in terms of "integration notes;" mileage will vary. For the



rest of this section, then, we'll address those who elect to use the second option.

The following rule changes are recommended when using *The Primal Order* with TORG:

Do not restrict the number of PEs that a divine character can use at once; divine characters can continue to apply PEs to a die roll indefinitely.

Allow deities to convert primal flux to PEs at a rate of three PEs for every two points of primal used. However, PEs generated this way must be used within 24 hours or they are gone forever, thus preventing deities from stockpiling ungodly amounts of PEs. The reverse does not apply; deities may not convert PEs to primal flux.

### Resistance Rolls

The possibility system is ready-made for this. Use the above conversion rules for converting primal flux to PEs in order to get another roll to add to your previous one and get a higher total. This could sometimes be used to ward off the effects of attacks or setbacks against you.

### Adjustments to Attributes, Skills, Etc.

We'd suggest that divine characters in TORG start out with 70 points for stats and 20 adds for skills. Every 5% increase is equivalent to one point of stat or one skill add. All deities are considered reality rated.

### Power Levels for Characters

The total of characteristics and skill adds would make a good approximation for power level, with starting

characters at 66 stats + 16 adds = 82. So amateur might start at 80, veteran at 95, professional at 110, master at 125, and legendary at 140. This assumes certain considerations, such as that not all the points are spent on stats. Divine characters get a +1 to their reality skill for each rank advanced, and lose +1 to their reality skill for each rank lost.

### Primal Blast Effects

As always, primal blasts ignore all armor except primal shields and always hit. The effect/damage value would be 20+1 per primal flux spent. This could easily kill an ord, but a possibility-rated character might live through it.

### Primal Shield Effects

Assuming the resistance roll rule, each point of primal flux spent on a primal shield adds 1 to a character's base toughness for resisting damage. Additionally, deities can always convert flux to PEs and use the standard PE methods for negating damage.

### Spells

The cost to support a spell thrown by a priest is half the cost of throwing the spell yourself. See below.

### Throwing Spells Primally

The easiest way to do this in TORG is simply to convert the primal flux to PEs and use the existing rules on spellcasting with PEs, which are more than adequate.



## TRI TAC SYSTEMS

*Special thanks to Charles Keith-Stanley for writing these integration notes.*

The Tri Tac System is the basis for the *Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic*, *Fringeworthy*, *FTL: 2448*, and *Incursion* roleplaying games. In *Bureau 13*, characters are members of an ultra-secret government agency dedicated to investigating the supernatural and avoiding general panic by hiding that knowledge from the populace. *Fringeworthy* is set in the near future, where one person in a hundred thousand has the ability to explore alternate dimensions via long-abandoned alien technology. *FTL: 2448* is set in the twenty-fifth century, when humans, expanding into the galaxy, have encountered numerous alien races. *Incursion* places ordinary people aboard a lost UFO after their abductors are slain during a mutiny.

The *Bureau 13* game world is essentially identical to present-day earth, only with inimical supernatural agencies. We recommend you treat it as a non-intervention

plane with several pantheons, most of which cooperate loosely. Although Hell and its minions often bedevil agents of the Bureau, this alone does not imply warring pantheons. However, the presence of long-forgotten gods of ancient religions who wish to regain their "rightful places" provides opportunities for divine conflicts played out on *Bureau 13's* earth.

*Fringeworthy* posits an infinite number of parallel universes, each slightly different from the others. Every conceivable variation of earth's history can be found here, including worlds with a single, dominant pantheon. There are also alien races throughout the parallel galaxies, whose religions differ radically from any present-day ones. We recommend you treat the infinite collection of parallel earths as a set of non-intervention planes, usually with no dominant pantheon. Alien worlds, also replicated across the parallel dimensions, give GMs free rein in devising deities and their religions.

FTL: 2448 and *IncurSION* are both set in a single galaxy with many alien races competing for resources. In FTL: 2448, earth has begun colonizing the nearer stars, while in *IncurSION*, earth is an insignificant backwater planet, useful only as a source of kidnap victims. Most alien worlds will be single non-intervention planes; alien colonies may be extensions of the home world's mythos or (like some of the North American colonies in the eighteenth century) freedom-seeking cultural and religious variants. As in *Fringeworthy*, the option of direct divine intervention among certain alien species opens new gaming possibilities.

The Tri Tac System is a level-based system in which most character attributes and all starting skill levels are determined by random dice rolls. Other attributes are computed from the basic attributes. As characters gain experience, they receive points which can be used to increase skills and selected attributes, or to purchase new skills. Psionic talents (and in *Bureau 13*, magic skills) are rare but not unheard of. Primal energy is not available to starting characters and cannot be purchased with experience. It can only be earned as outlined in Chapters Three and Nine.

### Resistance Rolls

In the Tri Tac System, Luck is a character attribute which ranges from 1–20. For each rank a deity advances, add one to Luck. In *Bureau 13* there is also a Magic Resistance attribute which determines the percentage chance to avoid non-friendly, damaging magical attacks. For each rank a deity advances, add 10 to Magic Resistance. (Normally one would add only 5 to a character statistic that ranges from 1–100. However, because a starting character's Magic Resistance is determined by rolling a single six-sided die, we recommend advancing Magic Resistance by 10 points per divine rank.)

### Adjustments to Attributes, Skills, etc.

The normal human range for most attributes and all skills is from 1–20. Mental Stability and certain other attributes in the various games using the Tri Tac System range from 1–100. A 5% increase is equal to 5 points of Mental Stability or similar percentage-based attribute, and 1 point of skills and the remaining attributes. When generating a divine-level character, add 10 to Magic Resistance, 5 to any other percentage attributes, and 6 to all other basic attributes. Recalculate all computed attributes.

Characters with psionic talents have an additional computed attribute, Working Psi (wkp); those with magical skills have a similar attribute, Working Magic (wkm). Each is calculated in the same way. For divine-level characters, instead of the standard computation we recommend using 10 times the character's primal base as the wkp or wkm value.

Characters in the Tri Tac System start with a number of skills based in part on their intelligence. The normal

range for skills is from 1–20, although higher values can be purchased for 10 times the normal point cost. When generating a divine-level character, add 6 to all skills. In addition, since the character's intelligence has risen by 6, he or she may be eligible for additional skills; select these from those most pertinent to the deity's area(s) of specialization, adding 6 to the starting skill level. Characters also receive 1 additional skill point for each year of age beyond twenty-one. Since a divine-level character is almost certainly older than this, distribute 10–40 skill points among the skills the character would have used most often.

### Power Levels for Characters

Although the Tri Tac System is level-based, we recommend equating power levels in *The Primal Order* to the character's overall skill levels. An amateur has one or two skills at the 6–10 level, with the rest below 6. A veteran has several skills above 10 and many between 6 and 10. A professional has at least three related skills above 15 and many above 10. A master has at least two skills at 20 and several related skills in the 15–19 range. A legendary character has at least one skill above 25, at least three related skills above 20 and most other skills above 15.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no accuracy roll is necessary. The blast bypasses armor, psionic shields, and magical circles of protection. It cannot be dodged, parried, or blocked. Each point of primal flux used in the blast causes 10 points of whole-body damage. This is general damage, not specific to any body area. The target of a primal blast receives all of the blast's damage; there is no "punch-through" effect. Primal blasts do not cause hydrostatic shock, but have a Knockdown modifier of 10 plus the number of primal flux points used.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with all physical, mental, psionic, or magical attacks. It further stops non-offensive psionic and magical effects like divination, scrying, leeching, tapping, and so on. Unlike conventional armor, a primal shield imposes no penalties to accuracy or agility. Attacks which hit the shield damage it, reducing the shield by 1 point of primal for each 10 points of wkp or wkm used in a psionic or magical attack, or each 20 points of damage from physical or energy attacks.

An external primal shield is hit with a normal roll using the attacker's accuracy, dexterity, throw, or adjusted magic/psionic skill. The shield will not dodge the attack, but the shield's size and movement may modify the attack roll. If the shield receives damage in excess of its strength, make a second attack roll against the character being shielded to determine whether the extra damage is applied to the target. Use common sense: a hand-to-hand attack

that breaches a ten-foot shield is unlikely to strike a character at his or her center.

A skin-tight shield is hit as usual, but the shielded character may dodge, move and take cover normally. The shield does not penalize accuracy or agility, but armor worn outside the shield will do so. Defenses outside the shield take damage first, then the shield. All remaining damage is applied to the character without an extra hit roll.

A character with an internal primal shield is hit and damaged as usual, until the character has only 10% or fewer hit points remaining. At this point, treat the shield as if it were skin-tight. Any attack that would reduce the character's hit points to fewer than 10% of the original amount, instead reduces the character to exactly 10%, with the remaining damage impacting the shield. If the shield is then breached, apply excess damage as normal. Attacks that would strike the character's brain, eyes, or vital organs always strike the internal shield instead, regardless of the character's current hit point total. Likewise, magical and psionic attacks that target the character's mind, soul, or spirit instead strike the internal shield.

### Spells and Psionic Effects

One point of primal flux may be converted to 10 points of WKP or WKM, which can be used by the deity for psionic talents or to cast spells. WKP and WKM cannot be converted

back to primal flux.

Priests, holy warriors, and other characters who exemplify a deity's aims may be supported for a cost on 1 primal flux point per day for every 10 points of the character's WKP or WKM, rounded up. If the character has not previously manifested psionic talents (or magical aptitude, in *Bureau 13*), treat the character as having gained induced psionics at the onset of divine support; ignore the induced PSI Result table. Select d4+2 psionic abilities pertinent to the deity, or roll randomly d4+4 times. All abilities may be chosen, and their starting skill level is d4+4. (In *Bureau 13*, if a character or deity would more likely use magic, choose d4+6 spells—equivalent to having studied for ten years under a magical being with a magical creature's assistance. These spells all start with a skill level of 1.)

### Throwing Spells or Psionic Effects Primally

In the Tri Tac System, the cost of a psionic effect or magic spell thrown with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is 1 point of primal flux per 10 points of WKP or WKM, rounded up. The excess WKP or WKM provided by rounding up may be used to intensify the effect or increase the effect's duration, as applicable. Additional primal flux beyond the effect's basic cost may also be spent, at the same 1:10 ratio.



## WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

*Special thanks to Andrew Akins for writing these integration notes, and also to Brian A. Hixon for providing suggestions.*

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, referred to as WFRP, is Games Workshop's system for roleplaying in a grim fantasy world.

When you are using *The Primal Order* with WFRP, the following rule changes are suggested:

**Careers:** Deities are allowed any number of careers, in any combination. Normal restrictions as far as race or requirements do not apply.

**Chaos Gods:** Deities who are allied with the forces of Chaos *must* purchase the Chaos sphere package detailed below. This gives them access to Chaos Magics. No deity may use or grant Chaos Magics without purchasing the Chaos sphere. Note that most Chaos deities will have at least one additional sphere of influence, which is typically their main sphere.

**Insanity Points:** Whenever a mortal is exposed to any sort of divine power, whether an actual deity, a spell cast by a diety, or whatever, the mortal receives one insanity point and must immediately make an insanity check. Deities can choose not to have this effect on a mortal, if they so desire.

**Luck Points:** Deities cannot possess luck points. However, they can grant luck points to mortals. When you are using *The Primal Order* it is recommended that luck points be defined as an agreement between a deity and a mortal. When a luck point is spent, the deity who gave the mortal the luck point is expected to spend a bit of primal flux to assist the hapless mortal, though not necessarily in the manner that the mortal wants! While this makes luck points more complicated, it adds quite a bit of color to a campaign; now characters really have to pay attention to their deities, or they won't get help when they need it.

### Resistance Rolls

The WFRP equivalent to a luck roll is a test. Each rank that a deity advances awards the deity a +5% on all test rolls. Conversely, losing a rank causes a deity to lose that previously gained bonus.

### Adjustments to Attributes

The normal attribute range in this system varies for some attributes. Some are rated from 0-100, while others have no

limit. When *Primal Order* calls for an increase of 5% in one attribute, that equals 5 points in the standard attributes and 1 point in the other attributes. When generating a divine-level character, add 30 points to the standard attributes and 6 points to the others.

### Power Levels for Characters

The WFRP system has no clearcut system for defining power levels. The simplest way to describe character power is to examine the number of careers the character has held, although this is not very exact. Refer to the following table:

TPO Power Level	Number of Careers
Amateur	1–2
Veteran	3–4
Professional	5–6
Master	7–8
Legendary	9–10

Due to the relative power of spellcasters in the WFRP universe, spellcasters should be treated as one level higher than the table states, although legendary is still the maximum power level in the *Primal Order* system.

### Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast always hits its target; no to hit roll is required, no dodging is allowed, and armour points and tests are irrelevant. A primal blast inflicts 5 wounds per primal flux spent, unless the deity has the Chaos sphere. Chaos sphere deities inflict d4+1 wounds per primal flux spent.

### Primal Shield Effects

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including weapons and magic. In addition, it stops non-offensive things like detection spells, sense spells, or divinations. All attacks that impact the shield will damage the shield, reducing it by one point for every five points of physical damage or each level of spells.

To hit an external shield, the attacker must successfully make an attack as if against a defenseless opponent. If the shield is breached without using up all of the attacking weapon or spell, a subsequent to hit roll may be made against the target character. If it is successful, the remaining damage is applied.

Versus a skin-tight shield, roll to hit as if attacking the character normally. Damage is applied to the shield instead of the character. If the shield is breached, any remaining damage is applied directly to the character; no additional to hit roll is necessary for that attack.

Versus an internal shield, damage is done to the character except when the character reaches 0 and begins receiving criticals, at which point the primal shield is treated exactly as a skin-tight shield. An attack that would bring a character below zero wound points simply brings the character to exactly zero wound points. All attacks

against the mind, spirit, soul, or essence impact against an internal shield no matter how many wound points the character has remaining.

### Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or holy warrior is an amount of flux equal to the highest level of spell that the priest or holy warrior can throw, plus one point per number of spell groups from which the priest or holy warrior can cast.

What follows is the details on the Chaos sphere of influence for WFRP.

### Chaos

Research Cost: 100 flux per day.

Research Time: 2 years.

Backing Cost: 100 base.

Deities with this sphere of influence have allied themselves with the Lord of Chaos, the Great Unnamable One, He Who Must Not Be Named, The Great Abomination, The Unspeakable Shapeless Beast, etc.

Chaos is the quick path for deities, an easy way to get power fast. However, there are prices to pay.

### Advantages

Immunity to Chaos Magics.

Access to Chaos Magics.

### Disadvantages

Affected by Anti-Chaos magics.

Bound to the Chaos Lord. Must pay a "primal tax." This tax is 10% of the deity's daily primal flux.

### Abilities

This sphere includes the following abilities:

**Reward Follower:** Research Cost: 10 flux per day. Research Time: 2 years. Backing Cost: 20 Base. Activation Cost: 20 flux. This ability allows the deity to permanently bestow a chaos reward, either gift or mutation, upon a follower. The deity picks the reward bestowed.

**Create Warp Portal:** Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 5 years. Backing Cost: 100 base. Activation Cost: 600 base. This ability allows the deity to open a warp portal, allowing a real connection between the material world and the Realm of Chaos. Note, however, the incredible base cost to use this ability. Such a portal allows the deity to send his or her minions into the material world.



## Throwing Spells Primally

In WFRP the cost to throw a spell with primal energy, as outlined in Chapter Three, is 1 point of primal flux for petty

magic, 3 points for 1st level spells, 5 for 2nd, 7 for 3rd, and 9 for 4th. Furthermore, necromancy and daemonology spells cost one extra point of flux to throw unless thrown by a Chaos power.



## WORLD OF DARKNESS

*Special thanks to Malcolm Campbell for writing these integration notes.*

*The World Of Darkness* is White Wolf's setting of contemporary Gothic horror in which vampires, werewolves, mages and other supernatural entities move behind the scenes, out of the sight of most mortal humans. The Storyteller system is the game system used to support this setting. Currently available games are *Vampire: The Masquerade*, *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, *Mage: The Ascension* and *Wraith: The Oblivion*. GURPS versions of *Vampire*, *Werewolf*, and *Mage* are available and others may follow. For those, use the GURPS conversion notes.

In *Vampire*, player characters have been Embraced: killed and brought back to life as vampires. They are now part of a society that lurks in the shadows, controlling much of the life of our cities. It's a game of personal horror, where each vampire faces the horror of the Beast within. In *Werewolf*, player characters are werewolves; creatures capable of incredible rage and brutal violence, yet also creatures of great spirituality. The characters battle against an evil that seems destined to overwhelm the world. In *Mage*, player characters are mages, mortal humans who have Awakened—discovered the true nature of reality and learned to bend it to their will. They quest for Ascension, the awakening of all souls, but different factions battle for control over who will control that eventuality. In *Wraith*, player characters are dead, restless spirits who have lost their way on the road to Oblivion or Transcendence. Clinging to their pasts, their memories, their unfulfilled deeds, they cheat Death. Trapped in the Underworld, a spiritual half-world between the lands of the living, known as “the Quick,” and an unknown destiny, they are doomed to wander forever, bound by Passions and Fetters to their lost lives. A fifth game, *Changeling*, is planned for publication in August, 1995. (These integration notes cannot cover *Changeling* since it is not available at the time of writing, but the principles established here should apply equally well to that game.)

How primal deities and primal energy might fit into a World of Darkness campaign is very much up to the individual storyteller. Some suggestions follow, which may require to be tailored to your individual campaign.

The closest concept to primal energy in the World of Darkness is Quintessence, the raw magical energy that mages have some limited control over. One way to model *Primal Order* deities would be to simply assume that primal energy and Quintessence are one and the same. In this case, primal deities would still manipulate primal energy as in *The Primal Order*, but human mages would be largely

limited to manipulating the flows of primal flux they know as Quintessence. With this approach, when a mage laces a spell with Quintessence, it is exactly equivalent to a primally laced spell. A primal blast, however, is beyond even the limits of Prime 5. Another way to model primal would be to consider it a higher order energy that can be converted into Quintessence.

The true primal deities of the World of Darkness would be entities such as the Celestines, the Triat. The Umbrood Lords might be minor deities. Even Caine may now be a primal deity. These entities rarely intervene directly, tending instead to act through lesser entities or minions. Other entities may exist in the Deep Umbra or even on earth.

The power in vampires' blood might be a diluted form of the primal force that runs in Caine's blood. Gnosis may be Gaia's way of supporting her chosen priests, the Garou.

### Resistance Rolls

Primal deities have a greater resistance to supernatural powers than other entities. They have 1 resistance dice per divine rank to any supernatural power in addition to any normal resistance the power allows.

Primal deities should also be considered to have the Charmed Existence merit. This allows them to ignore the first 1 rolled on any dice roll.

### Adjustment to Attributes

The human attribute range is 1–5, with most normal humans falling in the 1–3 range. Some supernatural entities may have attributes as high as 10. Typically an attribute and an ability will be rolled together, giving a pool of 1–10 dice for an action. A 5% increase is not meaningful on this scale. A single step would be a 10% increase.

Deities may have *Mage*-style Spheres, *Vampire*-style Disciplines, *Werewolf*-style Gifts, *Wraith*-style Arcanos, or whatever is most appropriate to the campaign.

If you are considering primal and Quintessence to be the same, note that deities should have a high rank in the Prime Sphere (possibly 5 or even higher). They should also have a high Arete score, and the only way for a deity to obtain primal flux is as described in Chapters Three and Six of *The Primal Order*.



## Power Levels

Most World of Darkness characters are supernatural entities in their own right, and there is no convenient measuring stick for power level. The following is suggested as a rough guide of power level for *The Primal Order* purposes.

<i>The Primal Order</i> Power Level	World of Darkness equivalents
Amateur	Most humans.
Veteran	Exceptional humans <i>Vampire</i> neonates young Garou (rank 0–1) <i>Mage</i> Disciples <i>Wraith</i> Enfants, etc
Professional	<i>Vampire</i> ancilla experienced Garou (rank 2–3) <i>Mage</i> Adepts <i>Wraith</i> Drones and Thralls, etc
Master	<i>Vampire</i> elders powerful Garou (rank 4) <i>Mage</i> Masters <i>Wraith</i> Lemures and Domem, etc
Legendary	<i>Vampire</i> Methuselahs legendary Garou (rank 5+) <i>Mage</i> Oracles <i>Wraith</i> Gaunts, etc (or anything more powerful)

## Primal Blast Effects

A primal blast does 4 levels of aggravated damage per point of primal flux expended. It automatically hits its target and cannot be dodged. It can be soaked normally with Stamina (Stamina + Fortitude for vampires).

If primal energy and Quintessence are being considered identical, mages with the Prime Sphere may attempt

countermagick, with each success on the countermagick roll canceling 1 level of damage before the Soak roll.

## Primal Shield

A primal shield interferes with any attack, including supernatural Disciplines, Gifts, magic, and arcanos. Furthermore it defeats all supernatural attempts at scrying or divination.

A primal shield loses 1 point for every 4 full damage levels inflicted, or 1 point for every level of the Discipline, Gift, or Sphere impacting it.

An external shield is targeted as any object of the same size. If the shield is breached, the target is hit if the original attack roll would have hit the target without the shield. The attack, of course, can be dodged.

Against a skin-tight shield the attacker must hit normally. If the attack penetrates the shield, then the remaining damage is applied normally.

An internal shield prevents any damage below Mauled. A character with an internal shield never becomes Crippled or Incapacitated unless the shield is penetrated.

## Spells

The cost of supporting a priest or minion is equal to the highest level of Gift, Discipline, Sphere effect, Arcanos effect, or equivalent that the minion can use.

The cost of transferring Gnosis to a minion is 1 point of primal per point of Gnosis granted. The cost of transferring Quintessence to a minion is 1 point of primal per point of Quintessence transferred.

## Throwing Spells Primally

The cost of throwing a spell primally, as outlined in Chapter Three, is 1 point of primal per level of Gift, Discipline, Sphere, or Arcanos involved in the effect.

## Appendix B

### Optional Rules and Variants

*Special thanks to Loren J. Miller, Ryk Spoor, and Kyle Hall, who wrote or at least inspired most of these optional rules and variants.*

#### Long-Term Base Increases

##### A Shortcut

You probably recall the rules for increasing primal base through evolution; this allows deities to increase their primal base by 1% per year. Cool enough. Unfortunately, if you want to do fifty or a hundred years at once, either because there's a huge time jump or because you just want to play around with the system, multiplying numbers by 1.01 over and over can get a bit tedious. However, there is a shortcut formula if you're willing to try out a couple of those funny keys on your calculator. This formula is as follows:

$$(\text{new base}) = 1.01^{(\text{years})} \times (\text{original base})$$

On a calculator, you'd use the  $(x^y)$  key to do this. Simply take the number 1.01 and use the  $x^y$  function key to raise it to the power of the number of years for which you want to do the calculation. Then take the result and multiply it by the amount of base with which the deity started out, and you're done. So, referring back to the example of Doofur we were using in Chapter Three, let's say we want to find out what Doofur's base will be in fifty years based on the original 10,000 points. On most calculators, we would use the sequence

$$1.01 \ (x^y) \ 50 \ \times \ 10,000 =$$

If this was done correctly, you should see a result of about 16,446.

##### Weighted Averaging

Instead of taking a year-end total for primal base, you might wish to consider using an averaging system in order to account more accurately for deities whose primal base increases or decreases over the course of a year. For example, take a deity who begins a year with 11,000 points of base and uses 1,000 points to create an artifact, say, 280 days into a 365-day year (see Chapter Four for a discussion of artifacts). The deity should get partial credit for the base he or she had before creating the artifact. In this case, you would average out the amount of base the deity had during that year:

$$\frac{(11,000 \times 280) + (10,000 \times 85)}{365} = 10,767$$

The deity would then gain 1% of that figure, or about 107 points of base. This is certainly better than only getting 100 points for the year. Seven points doesn't sound like much, but over the course of ten years, those seven points

will grow to 7.7 points. Okay, it still doesn't sound like much, but when you're talking about millennia, it can add up. Whatever the case, you should decide on an approach and use it consistently, particularly when PCs are involved.

For the perfectionists out there, we should note that these calculations have an error in them induced by the quantum nature of primal. If you want to do it exactly right, every year you would calculate the gain and then throw away the fractional part. While this is technically the only correct method, it's such an incredible pain that we think you should use one of the methods above and not worry about these little teeny extra bits of primal sneaking into the equations.

#### Beyond Deities

Throughout this entire book, we've talked about deities as the ultimate beings of the universe, with primal energy as the ultimate source of energy. The definitions described in this tome should work well for most GMs, particularly those with traditional campaigns. But some of you may not agree with this philosophy, and that's fine; you are the ultimate master of your own campaign. Some of you may feel that there should be beings who are beyond the scope of the deities outlined here, that there should be energies in the universe that are more powerful than primal.

Examples of beings beyond primal-based deities might include cosmic deities, the Fates or Norns of Norse mythology, an ultimate deity who created the universe, and so forth.

The primal energy system can easily be defined recursively to account for additional energies that are more powerful than primal. For example, let's say that you have cosmic deities in your universe and cosmic energy is more powerful than primal energy. You could use the primal rules for cosmic energy, and simply add in an energy exchange ratio for primal to cosmic, such as 10 to 1. Therefore, it would take ten points of primal to take down one point of cosmic shielding, and a cosmic blast would go right through a primal shield like it wasn't even there. Furthermore, another suggestion would be to allow an energy of a higher rating to blast the base of a lower-rated energy directly even when it is occupying a material form; remember that in the standard rules a deity must destroy another deity's physical body before he or she can directly target that deity's primal base. For example, a cosmic blast could always attack primal base directly, bypassing a primal deity's physical form, and each point of cosmic flux would destroy ten points of primal base.

You might also want to write up new rules on what the sources of these higher-rated base and flux energies are. Continuing on with the cosmic energy example above, a cosmic deity might not gain cosmic base from planes or natural evolution, but only only by destroying another cosmic deity.

## Temporary Avatars

This rule allows deities to create temporary avatars by using primal flux instead of primal base. Through playtesting we found this ability a bit unbalancing in some regards, which is why we made the rule that creating living organisms required primal base, but you may not want to do it that way. When you are using this rule, the cost is the same but in flux instead of base, and it must be spent each day that the avatar is to be maintained.

## Sleep, Dreams, and Dream Avatars

*The Primal Order* postulates that deities never sleep. This makes sense given the nature of primal energy the way we've defined it, and it also makes sense that deities wouldn't have a need for it. However, there is certainly fantasy literature that supports the opposite view. So having deities who sleep, perhaps for very long periods of time, certainly is an idea worth considering. Here are several possible explanations for why deities might need to sleep:

Perhaps having all that power wears them out somehow.

Maybe sleeping increases the rate at which deities gain primal base through the natural evolution process, say from 1% to 2%.

It could be that sleeping allows the deity to regenerate primal base that was lost due to some unforeseen circumstance.

Or perhaps the deities get bored with immortality every now and then and decide to take a nap until a new and more interesting age arises.

In any case, if you allow deities to sleep, you need to decide whether or not they will dream while they are sleeping. If deities do dream, and if primal energy is the extension of the deity's will, then perhaps these dreams will start having interesting effects on reality.

One particular interesting possibility is that as a deity dreams of going out and doing things, his or her primal power creates an avatar of the deity who actually goes out and does those things. These dream avatars would be like the temporary avatars described above.

## Alternate Methods of Ascension

### Hero Worship

You may also wish to consider the possibility that the deities within the campaign are the product of the "creative collective unconscious" of a populace. This is a concept not unlike the self-fulfilling prophecy. The people who worship a deity actually cause the deity they worship to exist.

It works like this: every person who strongly holds a belief unconsciously gives an infinitesimal portion of his or her soul energy to support that belief. If a large population

holds a belief strongly enough, they would collectively donate a large amount energy to that belief. The object of that belief would literally come into being, created by the collective unconscious of the population. The power, strength, or energy of the belief-created being would be proportional to the number of people who believed in it and the strength of their belief.

In this kind of campaign, because these deities are created by the society, they would behave exactly as the society expected them to. Since people's subconscious beliefs tend to manifest in broad terms, such as good and evil, love and fear, and law and chaos, this will create deities who clearly exhibit a few human traits, but generally do not have fully rounded personalities. The deities may or may not understand that they are products of the creative collective unconscious. They may not realize their complete dependence on the populace that believes in them.

Whether they understand their own nature or not, the deities will desire to increase their number of worshipers. Every worshiper adds a small bit of energy to the belief-created deity, so the more worshipers a deity has, the more powerful the deity will be.

The creative collective unconscious will tend to produce deities who are more powerful if they represent concepts desirable to societies. This is especially true for deities who represent basic human needs or desires. For example, the Earth Goddess, deity of springtime, planting, harvesting, and good rains would probably be very powerful. This is due to the large body of worshipers who follow her because she provides a service necessary to the continued existence of the populace. Joey, God of Basketweaving, will never be powerful because his services, although useful, are not essential. If, on the other hand, the campaign world is besieged by dragons that have a terrible allergy to wicker, Joey will become important and therefore powerful.

It is not impossible for a deity representing something harmful to become powerful. This can happen in two ways. The first is if the society believes that the concept or attribute represented by the deity is not bad. For example, many religions in human history did not view death as an ending, but as a door to another life. If the people strongly believe in this afterlife and think it is better than this current life, then the deity representing death could become very powerful, offering a service that is strongly desired.

The second way for a "harmful" deity to become powerful is for the creative collective unconscious to create what is called a feedback loop. Normally, this can only be accomplished by a deity who represents something strongly feared by the worshiping populace. It must be in a situation in which the populace offers worship to a deity if the deity will *not* perform some expected service. Feedback loops most often occur when that deity or the deity's followers have had unusual success in their ventures. The populace prays or sacrifices so that the "evil" deity will not hurt them. All this attention makes the deity more powerful and more dangerous. Even more people are now threatened, so they also start to sacrifice. As this cycle



continues the evil deity gets stronger and stronger.

For example, Icky, the God of Sickness, has been trying to spread the common cold around the countryside, as he is expected to do. A particular city fails its health roll badly and the sniffles turn into a virulent flu. Icky suddenly finds himself with a city enthusiastically offering worship in the hopes of stemming the flu epidemic. Icky, as an intelligent deity, does not kill off the city with the flu. He does, however, use his new power to transform the flu into an extremely nasty and ugly bleeding disease, which is not as virulent but creates a great deal more fear. He places this bleeding disease in a few strategic places within the city and watches the fear and the number of his worshipers mount. In a little while, when the population's fear has become feverish, he'll send his little bleeding disease to other nearby towns.

Deities created by the creative collective unconscious of a culture will cultivate the sphere of influence and skills that the society believes they have.

If you choose to use the concept of deities produced by the creative collective unconscious and choose to have the deities understand that they are a product of the belief of the populace, then the deities face a decision about having underlings. If the deities wish to have underlings, they must either recruit their help from already existing resources such as worshipers, priests, resident souls, and so forth, or they must make the worshipers believe in particular underlings. In the latter case, the underlings will be brought into existence by that belief. The danger of this second option is that the worshipers may start to worship the underlings for themselves. In this case, the deities would lose power to underlings that they helped to create.

Some deities, disliking this possibility, will choose to go it alone and not bother with underlings. They will try to support their churches and worshipers singlehandedly. These deities will have to severely limit the focus of their attention. Their areas of interest and spheres of influence will be narrow. For example, Joey, God of Basketweaving, might not wish to risk sharing his worshipers with underlings for macrame, sweater knitting, and sock darning. Instead, he chooses to try to answer all calls for weaving-type assistance himself. He just hopes that too many people will not ask for help at the same time.

If you use the creative collective unconscious option, then you must decide whether ascension of a mortal is possible and how this occurs. If ascension is possible, there are two likely ways it will occur. The first way is for the mortal to be ascended by the belief of the populace. Just as the society's belief creates a deity, so their belief that a particular mortal has become divine actually raises that mortal to divinity. The pharaohs of Egypt and the emperors of ancient Rome or medieval Japan would be good candidates for this.

An alternative to this method is similar to the first, but with a nasty twist. The society's belief in a deity creates the deity, so when a society believes that a particular mortal has become divine, a divine likeness of that mortal is produced. This divine doppelgänger may believe it is the original or it may understand its true nature. Either

way it must now quietly eliminate the original before the populace becomes confused. That mortal is in serious trouble, considering that there is now a copy of him or her with about the same intelligence and skills and also access to primal energy. Assuming the mortal is able to survive or avoid the encounter with this divine doppelgänger, the only way to really solve this problem is for the character to somehow arrange for a ruin of reputation in the eyes of the populace. If the people stop believing, the likeness will fade away. The mortal would have to understand the nature of divine beings to implement this last idea.

### ***Ancestral Cult Worship***

This option is like hero worship, but its object is a powerful ancestor who is worshiped when grandparents tell stories around the family hearth about the ancestor's wonderful accomplishments. The worship is directed through the bloodline, and eventually the spirit or soul of the dead ancestor begins to acquire primal abilities, but at a very nominal level. The main justification for this is that the descendants who form the cult can use a form of magic that is a crucial part of the stories they tell about their ancestor. This magic comes from the fact that the ancestor's death has opened a link between the family and the supernatural forces of the afterlife. The family stories keep the link open, and the descendants' belief keeps the ancestor's spirit "alive."

This line of reasoning could also be used to deify founders of cities, nations, or professions.

### ***Mythic Exploration***

This method for ascension assumes that there is some plane, referred to as the mythic landscape, which is beyond space and time. On this plane, the great myths of the mortal world are enacted over and over in infinite variations, and the stories that are lived here are reflected in the legends and beliefs of those in the mortal world. If characters can get to this plane, they can enter the immortal story and participate in mythic quests, find mythic artifacts, and interact with mythic beings. Since many of these mythological events happen in an environment in which there are no mortals, other deities on this plane may not recognize the characters as mortals, and may accidentally kill them by doing something that wouldn't kill other mythical beings, such as burning them in a pit of coals that would merely have toughened their skin if they were truly deities. On the other hand, they might also give the characters something valuable. If the characters manage to survive on this plane long enough and participate in enough of its stories, they will have become part of the myths of the mortal world when they return to it. And as mythic beings, they will possess primal energy.

### ***Mutable Size***

This variant rule would allow deities the ability to enlarge their physical forms to the size and proportional strength

of whatever it is they are facing. This would allow deities to face Norse-style giants without flinching. This ability is available only to supported demigods and above at a cost of 500 points of primal flux.

### *Variable Damage for Primal Blast*

In most of the integration notes the damage caused by a primal blast is a fixed amount. This is the preference of the authors, but there is no reason why this couldn't be changed. You might try taking the amount of damage that the blast does and rolling dice in such a way that the average would come out about the same. For example, if a primal blast is supposed to do 5 points of damage for every point of flux, you could say that it does 2d4 points of damage instead, since the average roll on 2d4 is 5. In fact, one interesting alternative would be to incorporate the law versus chaos concepts in here, with lawful deities doing straight damage (like, say, 10 points for each point of flux in the blast), neutral deities doing varied damage as a bell curve around the average (like 3d6), and chaotic deities doing varied damage as a straight line curve around the average (like 1d20).

Note that if you're going to use the above law/chaos schema, you can keep the chaos example chaotic even when calculating more than one flux point's worth of

damage by rolling 1d20 and then multiplying by the amount of primal used, instead of rolling 1d20 for each point of primal and adding the results together.

### *Improved Primal Shields*

In the design of *The Primal Order*, one of the questions we analyzed most was whether or not attacks should do damage to primal. The argument against it went something like this: there are spells in some systems that can withstand an infinite amount of physical damage. If primal is more powerful than magic, then primal should be able to do the same. The counterargument was that there should be some sort of conservation of energy, and that the reason that these spells can sustain all this damage must be because they can draw magical power from some sort of power source and use it to deflect the attack. This reasoning led to the idea that since primal comes from the deity, the deity has to supply this energy.

The other reason that we went the way we did is because having a primal shield that is immune to all damage except that from a primal blast really unbalances the game in the playtesting that we did.

However, you may wish to change this, perhaps making primal shields invulnerable to damage from mundane weapons or from spells below a certain power level.



## Appendix C

### Ter-Eqwa, Lesser Deity of Equine Creatures

This appendix is intended as a fairly detailed writeup of a creator deity's church, including a detailed description of the deity, the amount of primal the deity possesses, and how these primal totals were derived. It also includes information on the deity's demigods, chancellors, artifacts,

servitors, planes, cults, and sphere of influence. The deity chosen for this sample is a hermaphroditic deity named Ter-Eqwa, a completely fictional creator deity whose sphere of influence is equine creatures.

#### Ter-Eqwa's Primal Attributes

##### Breakdown of Ter-Eqwa's Primal Base

Source	Amount	Notes
Planes	8,000	<i>Sole control over four planes</i>
Miniplanes	0	
Rank	5,600	<i>Through lesser deity</i>
Spheres	-2,385	<i>One sphere and five abilities</i>
Ascensions	-4,000	<i>Has ascended four people</i>
Artifacts	-3,000	<i>Has created four artifacts</i>
Burned Base	-2,000	
Evolution	24,785	
Servitor	-100	
Minions	-500	<i>Has created 50 minions</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,400</b>	<b>Points of Primal Base</b>

##### Breakdown of Ter-Eqwa's Primal Flux

Source	Amount	Notes
Base	2,640	<i>10% of 26,400 primal base</i>
Worshippers	2,805	
Souls	1,403	
Conscr. Grnd	1,000	<i>500 consecrated grounds</i>
Sanctuaries	10	<i>2 sanctuaries</i>
Rivals	1,000	<i>Holdings of rival elements</i>
Minions	-500	<i>Supporting 50 minions</i>
Chancellors	-100	<i>Supporting 5 chancellors</i>
Demigods	-300	<i>Supporting 3 demigods</i>
Planes	4,000	<i>Sole control over four planes</i>
Planar Constants	-1,200	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,758</b>	<b>Points of Primal Flux</b>

#### About Ter-Eqwa Personally

*Spur not an unbroken horse. —Sir Walter Scott*

Ter-Eqwa manifests itself in many forms. Since Ter-Eqwa always appears in the semblance of one of its creations, the deity's true form is a subject of much debate. While some call it "The Mother of all Horsekind," and others refer to it as "The Father of All Equiforms," most simply say "Ter-Eqwa." Ter-Eqwa is both male and female and is responsible for the creation of nearly all equine life forms, from the seahorse beneath the waves to the pegasi who soar the skies and even the mounts of hell.

Ter-Eqwa builds one recurring theme into all of its creations: service. From mules and draft horses who were created as beasts of burden for the mortal races to the noble valtanya whose loyal companionship is reserved for the most deserving of champions, all of Ter-Eqwa's creations were intended to serve others.

Ter-Eqwa's primary allies include Odin, Mielikki, and Haun-ti, while its enemies include Set and Loki. Ter-Eqwa has created several dozen new species, and through cross-breeding has created thousands of intelligent races and non-sentient breeds.

#### History

Ter-Eqwa is the only known survivor of an ancient confederation of primitive nature and animal deities who never advanced sufficiently to be taken seriously as a pantheon. This quasi-pantheon was destroyed by the Norse deities during their rise to power.

In this pantheon Ter-Eqwa served as a godling under Marseth, the Beast Lord. Under Marseth's tutelage, Ter-Eqwa flourished, often displaying wisdom that far exceeded that displayed by the Beast Lord's other godlings. Because of this wisdom Ter-Eqwa was placed in charge of equine creatures, the most highly evolved life form in that area of the multiverse. However, things changed for the worse when the fledgling deities were discovered by Loki, who immediately claimed sovereignty over their domain.

The ensuing war was brief; within a short time most of the animal deities were destroyed. Realizing that desperate times call for desperate measures, Ter-Eqwa informed Odin, the Norse All-Father, that a very special mount named Sleipnir was being created for him. This piqued Odin's curiosity to the point that he began watching Ter-Eqwa to see what this new deity might do for him.

When Odin discovered his present was about to be denied him through the maneuverings of his own son, he became understandably annoyed, and intervened to save Ter-Eqwa's life. Odin told Ter-Eqwa that he expected it to dedicate its existence to serving the gods and mortals through the application of its special gifts. Odin recognized a creator deity when he saw one, and valued such power. Ter-Eqwa accepted this mandate since the alternatives were rather frightening.

Realizing he had been tricked, Loki attempted to lure Ter-Eqwa into traps and humiliate it in front of its fellow deities, but failed each time. It was this continuing problem with Loki that prompted Ter-Eqwa to create the Shoes of Aristan, one of its most powerful artifacts.

Ter-Eqwa knew that it could be quite dangerous to be a solitary deity, especially a solitary creator deity, in the complex political environment between pantheons. To curry favor, Ter-Eqwa created some special steeds as favors for other deities. In addition Ter-Eqwa helped out the mortals by creating several varieties of mounts. For Apollo, Ter-Eqwa created the solar steeds, and for Huan-ti the pegasi were created from the blood of Medusa. Bellerophon

received a special variety of pegasus, and in exchange for a personal favor from Odin, Ter-Eqwa created pegasi for all of the valkyries. Ter-Eqwa's popularity increased rapidly as the gods began to desire the children of Ter-Eqwa for themselves.

Things were going smoothly until Ter-Eqwa ran across Set. Since Set had the head of an ass, Ter-Eqwa assumed that it would be possible to control Set to do its bidding. The attempt at control was unsuccessful, and Set slew Ter-Eqwa for this audacity. Although this was a serious setback, Ter-Eqwa was able to reform on its home plane because many of Ter-Eqwa's fellow deities were amused enough by the deed that they were willing to shield its recovery. Things have been tense between Ter-Eqwa and Set ever since.

Eventually Ter-Eqwa created the hellmounts for the Crowned Princes of Hell as a means of assuring immunity from their persecutions; no prince would give up the beautiful and spirited Hellmounts just for the chance to harm Ter-Eqwa. With this agreement, Ter-Eqwa pacified the last of its potential enemies other than Loki and Set.



## Sphere of Influence

### Equine Creatures

Research Cost: 200 flux per day.  
Research Time: 12 years.  
Backing Cost: 750 base.  
Total Flux Cost: 876,000 points.

Ter-Eqwa's sphere of influence lies in the creation, understanding, and control of all equine beings.

### Advantages

Ter-Eqwa cannot be harmed by any equine being.

### Abilities

This sphere includes the following abilities:

*Evolve Equine Species:* Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: 60 flux. This allows Ter-Eqwa to take a male and female of some equine species and alter them in such a way that their offspring will be a new species of equines. The advantage of this sphere of influence ability is that Ter-Eqwa can create a new species without having to go

through the usual procedure of creating servitors with primal base.

*Evolve Equine Breed:* Research Cost: 50 flux per day. Research Time: 8 years. Backing Cost: 60 base. Activation Cost: 40 flux. As *Evolve Equine Species*, except that Ter-Eqwa creates a breed instead of a species.

*Roam:* Research Cost: 150 flux per day. Research Time: 25 years. Backing Cost: 750 base. Activation Cost: 150 flux. This ability allows Ter-Eqwa to escape immediately from any location where it would be impossible to roam freely. Roaming freely requires at least 10,000 square miles of terrain that would allow virtually uninhibited movement.

*Summon Equines:* Research Cost: 100 flux per day. Research Time: 15 years. Backing Cost: 500 base. Activation Cost: 150 flux. This ability allows Ter-Eqwa to summon any or all equine creatures on the plane where Ter-Eqwa is currently located, or on any plane that is parallel to that plane. Summoned creatures appear instantly at any location or locations desired within half a mile of Ter-Eqwa.

*Summon Unicorn Horn:* Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 250 base. Activation Cost: 50 flux. This ability allows Ter-Eqwa to summon any severed unicorn horn. Ter-Eqwa must know that the horn exists, but it doesn't have to know where it is.



## Ter-Eqwa's Planes

### Sogamore

Sogamore is Ter-Eqwa's home plane and creative playground. On this plane there are literally thousands of different equine steeds, mounts, and specialty creatures. Several dozen mentalic species, a couple of races that can draw on planar energy, and a variety of unique equiforms all live in complete happiness under the benevolent eye of their creator and master.

Sogamore is removed from every plane in existence with the following exceptions: it is connected to Equinius, which is one of Ter-Eqwa's controlled planes and is described below; it is adjacent to Åsgard, due to Ter-Eqwa's strong alliance with Odin; and it is adjacent to one of the controlled planes of Mielikki. This makes Sogamore extremely difficult to attack, provided Ter-Eqwa stays on good terms with Odin and Mielikki.

Planar constants:

All non-equine races are unable to create, summon, or manipulate magical energy.

All non-equine races are unable to create, summon, or manipulate mentalic energy.

### Falgus

Falgus is Ter-Eqwa's training plane. On this large multi-terrained plane are a vast array of military training compounds. Huan-ti himself is said to have granted several

of his finest military minds to this operation in its early days. Every type of equine from standard war horses to pegasi are trained here in the arts of warfare. The higher intelligence of the pegasi, hellmounts, and valtanya allows them the opportunity to learn magical attack and support skills, as well as the tactics of marshaling forces for strategic advantage. The fully trained equines from this plane are highly prized, and an extensive backlog of clients eagerly await their chance to acquire the finest combat steeds available anywhere. However, Ter-Eqwa has grown so picky about to whom he grants these equines that some people are beginning to wonder if they will ever get their steeds.

Planar Constants:

The strength of all non-equines is reduced until they are barely able to move around.

### Equinius

Ter-Eqwa modeled Equinius to be similar to his ally Odin's Valhalla. The souls of all sentient equine species who die performing service for their master will come to this plane upon death. The more advanced equine races believe that those who make it to Equinius will be permitted the glory of assisting in the research of new ways to expand the equine bloodlines. This plane is connected to Sogamore, and is removed from all other planes. In other words, access to Equinius is available only from Sogamore.

This plane does not currently have any planar constants.



## Ter-Eqwa's Demigods

### *Jephthah, Demigod of Pegasi*

Jephthah serves Ter-Eqwa as the lord of the flying equines, the pegasi. Jephthah works closely with Azora, chancellor of the skies, to watch over the pegasi. The pegasi are a chosen race of Ter-Eqwa and Jephthah will always guard them closely. It is Jephthah's duty to see that they are not bound against their will, for a member of one of Ter-Eqwa's chosen races can only be made to serve if it is that member's desire to do so. It was Jephthah's firstborn whom Ter-Eqwa gave to Bellerophon, and as a result Jephthah is always in the vicinity if Bellerophon is on the main plane. Jephthah often spends time in the presence of a pegasus herd and it is said that he knows the name of every pegasus in existence. Jephthah was granted the Petosian Barding of Indestructibility as a reward for slaying Sarius the Trickster, a demigod of Set who attempted to steal a mated pair of valtanya from the stables of Falgus.

### *Adria, Demigoddess of Seahorses*

Adria is the mistress of all aquatic equines. She spends her days watching over her friends in the sea. She takes particular care to see that the seahorse population does not shrink, for the lifespan of a seahorse is the shortest of all equiforms. Adria is a fiercely protective seahorse and will defend her kindred viciously against any who would enslave or harm them without Ter-Eqwa's blessing. Adria has at times granted the rulers of the various seas and oceans the use of her seahorses to support their armies when they are protecting themselves from the advances of their enemies. For this reason, the nobility of the seas hold Adria in great respect. She bears a special primal artifact helm called Sefinor. Adria holds Grand Marshal rank in the military order of Ter-Eqwa and will be found in the waters of Falgus or Sogamore most of the time.

### *Tryphena, Demigoddess of Earthbound Equines*

Tryphena is a royal unicorn. She roams the lands of her master overseeing the various races and species that

comprise the family of Ter-Eqwa. Since Tryphena has so many more races of equines to watch over than Ter-Eqwa's other demigods, she has three chancellors appointed to her service. Tryphena shies away from all humanoids because she considers them greedy and self-serving,

and is the epitome of kindness and virtue. She is the guardian, defender, trainer, and older sister of all the various land-based equiforms. Tryphena was given the Icon of Interlinking, a primal artifact of great power, for her loyal service over the centuries.



## Ter-Eqwa's Chancellors

### *Azora, Chancellor of the Skies*

Azora is the liaison between Jephthah and Ter-Eqwa. She handles the administrative and operations portion of the avian wing of the organization. Azora usually identifies any problems that Jephthah needs to handle. Azora is one of the few kirin actively involved in the functions of the order, as they are the most reclusive of all the equiforms.

### *Kerense, Chancellor of Unicorns*

Kerense is an immortal unicorn. It is his duty to care for all of his kindred. The unicorns, an exotic variety of equine, form Ter-Eqwa's royal guard. There are very few of them compared to the other equines, and they are considered nobility in Ter-Eqwa's ranks.

### *Dane, Chancellor of Horses*

Perhaps the most overworked and least appreciated of the chancellors is Dane. He is responsible for horses, mules, donkeys, and the like. This is a tremendous workload, so to ease his burden the Equine Order was formed. Dane is the head of the order, and oversees its operations. Ter-Eqwa is quite fond of Dane, and often invites him to Sogamore for companionship.

### *Domonic, Chancellor of Centaurs*

Tryphena was quite pleased when Ter-Eqwa assigned Domonic, one of the wisest of his race, to assist her in overseeing the centaurs. The centaurs are a fast-growing race whose deep-rooted appreciation of nature has produced a bonding between the centaurs and the priests of several of the more prominent nature deities allied with Ter-Eqwa. They are protected by a variety of churches and are the founders and operators of the Equine Ecology Corps. Domonic is the head of operations for the corps.

### *Merwynne, Chancellor of Seas*

Merwynne is the most remote of the chancellors. She is also the only ranking non-equine in the entire order. Merwynne is a sea elf from the Immortal Ocean, a body of water on the former home plane of an elven deity who was destroyed several centuries ago. All of the races and species living in the ocean were immortal, and as a consequence there was constant warfare in order to supply more room for the ever-increasing population of a finite ocean. For this reason, Merwynne is well versed in the arts of underwater and naval combat. Merwynne reports to Ter-Eqwa on an infrequent basis, and has been loaned out to several water deities over the years as a tactical and logistical expert. She has an excellent memory and has studied the favorite strategies of the greatest military minds in the multiverse, especially those she believes may one day challenge her. She also possesses legendary skill as a mage, and many a demigod has regretted crossing her path.



## Noteworthy Organizations

### *The Equine Order*

Formed by Dane, the chancellor of horses, the Equine Order is a group of powerful mortal humanoids who have banded together to see that all equines are cared for. They are nomadic bands of travelers who offer their services to the owners of any equiform in return for a donation to the order. The order gives 25% of its income to Dane, who passes it along to Ter-Eqwa.

### *The Equine Ecology Corps*

This organization was created by Domonic, the chancellor of centaurs. The corps provides defense and support for those who plant and cultivate new forests and work toward the restoration of environmentally damaged lands. The



most prominent alliance the corps has is also the oldest; for some 250 years the corps and the Church of Mielikki have been the closest of allies. Over the years, Ter-Eqwa and Mielikki themselves have grown to share a close friendship

as well. It is estimated that the corps has over 50,000 centaurs among its ranks.



## Ter-Eqwa's Artifacts

### *Petosian Barding of Indestructibility*

Known for its lightweight properties, the Barding of Indestructibility was originally created for Petosia, Ter-Eqwa's first demigoddess, who returned it to Ter-Eqwa when she left its service. The barding grants immunity to physical damage from any weapon, and has a power rating of 93. It covers the wearer's full body and is hermetically sealed. This primal artifact has never been successfully penetrated by any physical object. The barding will adapt to fit any size or shape of equine.

### *Sefinor, The Great Helm*

This intricately designed helm allows the wearer to fly at will, at the rate of 75 miles per hour. The wearer can also call all equiforms within a 20-mile radius to his or her bidding. Land- and sea-based equines remain in their respective habitats, and avian creatures will fly to the closest point. No equiform need ever make a morale check in the presence of the wearer of this helm. This item has a power rating of 83.

### *Icon of Interlinking*

This orb of power is known throughout the heavens. The orb continuously circles the entity with whom it is linked.

The orb perpetually monitors all activities in a 500-foot radius of the owner. The orb possesses multidimensional and multiplanar vision. Anything invisible, out of phase, noncorporeal, or otherwise concealed from normal senses will be noticed and identified. Anything that has been shape-altered by magical or mental means will also be detected. The orb immediately informs the possessor of anything it encounters that its owner would consider suspicious. This artifact has a power rating of 84.

### *Shoes of Aristan*

This artifact is the most powerful of all horseshoes. The shoes allow mount and rider to co-exist on five planes simultaneously. These five planes are always the plane on which the mount and rider are located and the four closest adjacent or connected planes. The mount and rider can choose to "phase out" of any one of the five planes at any given time. They cannot take any actions on that plane, but neither can they be affected on it. The most powerful property of the shoes is that for the rider or mount to be killed through the accumulation of physical damage, the final 10% of the damage taken must come from a simultaneous attack originating on more than one plane of existence. The mount and rider can be attacked on any of the five planes on which they are not "phased out." This item has a power rating of 99.



## Ter-Eqwa's Servitors

### *Farrowood Canter, Veterinarian*

Farrowood is Ter-Eqwa's top medical practitioner and the "house" expert on all of Ter-Eqwa's chosen children. He is constantly on the go, hopping from one plane to another seeing to the maladies of his master's children. Farrowood

is a unicorn, but he usually takes the form of whatever race has called upon his services in order to reduce tension. Farrowood only provides care for the pegasi, unicorns, kirin, and valtanya, because these are the chosen children of Ter-Eqwa.



## Ter-Eqwa's Minions

### *The Gedalia, Keepers of the Service*

The Gedalia are the official hipparchs of the order. They are ambassadors, couriers, guards, and entourage members for the upper echelon, and are drawn from a variety of

equine races.

The Gedalia are supported minions and are also empowered with the following abilities: translocation at will, personal shields with a power rating of 65, and fluency in all equine tongues.



## Appendix D

### Velnimach, A Lesser Deity

Velnimach, in a word, is a politician. Velnimach personally wields comparatively little individual power, preferring to advance his cause through the manipulation and direction of others. He rules supreme in understanding others' motives, goals, and objectives and in using their ambition to fulfill his own purpose. This purpose he so avidly pursues is a universal balance of power, a cosmic equivalence between good and evil, law and chaos.

This makes Velnimach very different from most traditional deities. Velnimach does not have churches or an organized religion serving him. While he certainly is a

powerful deity, he does not have worshipers or demand sacrifices. However, he does have a highly organized support infrastructure, which is based primarily on trade and mercenaries instead of temples and shrines.

Velnimach is provided here to illustrate how some deities might break away from the traditional divine archetypes and to illustrate one concept of how a GM might extrapolate from the rules within this book to create an interesting circumstance that is not specifically covered in the rules.



### Velnimach's Primal Attributes

#### Breakdown of Velnimach's Primal Base

Source	Amount	Notes
Planes	8,000	<i>Sole control over four planes</i>
Miniplanes	2,000	<i>Sole control over ten miniplanes</i>
Rank	5,600	<i>Through lesser deity</i>
Spheres	-815	<i>One sphere and five abilities</i>
Burned Base	-500	
Evolution	2,465	
Minions	-10,000	<i>Has created 1000 minions</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,750</b>	<b>Points of Primal Base</b>



### About Velnimach Personally

Velnimach's most fundamental goal is that of absolute neutrality—universal balance between good and evil, law and chaos, and also between various divine and non-divine factions. His manipulation is usually seen only at the highest level, however, because he does not typically work toward balancing out political factions on individual planes. He is much more focused on cross-planar balance.

Velnimach's handiwork is rarely recognized for what it is. There are full deities who don't even know of his existence. He prefers to work through intermediaries who influence or control organizations without knowing they are being manipulated.

Velnimach uses two primary methods to accomplish his goals:

**Supply and Demand.** Through his extensive research, exploration of the universe, and contacts with most deities of the cosmos, Velnimach has learned of sources for nearly every valuable substance that exists. No matter how exotic or rare a material may be, Velnimach either has it or can get access to it fairly easily. Almost all deities have plenty of something

#### Breakdown of Velnimach's Primal Flux

Source	Amount	Notes
Base	675	<i>10% of 6,750 primal base</i>
Rivals	1,000	<i>Holdings of rival elements</i>
Minions	-250	<i>Supporting only 10 of his minions</i>
Chancellors	-20	<i>Supporting 1 chancellor</i>
Planes	4,000	<i>Sole control over four planes</i>
Miniplanes	2,000	<i>Sole control over ten miniplanes</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,405</b>	<b>Points of Primal Flux</b>

that is of value to others. Velnimach is an expert at finding out what these things are, purchasing them, and then selling them to someone else. These sales can serve as a good lever for influence.

**Coordinating Goals and Objectives.** Whenever Velnimach wants something done, there is nearly always someone else who wants to see the same thing happen. When this is the case, Velnimach merely has to provide the right sort of incentive to get the other person going. Sometimes this can be merely a leak of information or a rumor of an insult. For example, there was the time when the lesser deity Nodah was getting a little too powerful for Velnimach's taste, and was just about to conquer her fifth plane and become a greater deity. A mysterious person claiming to be a refugee hero from one of Nodah's other planes showed up on the doorstep of a Chaos Lord with detailed information about the location and defenses of one of Nodah's planes—one that was very poorly defended and ripe for the taking because few knew of its existence. The right information dropped in the right lap

can do wonders, and Velnimach is a lap-dropper of consummate skill.

Velnimach has numerous tricks and devices that he uses for persuading people to do what he wants, typically in a very covert way. “What difference does it make as long as they are getting what they want?” he reasons.

Velnimach can personally be quite charming. Since he is such a premium manipulator, few if any know the “real” Velnimach. Some may know him personally and claim he is their friend, but it is more likely that he is using them to accomplish his goals or working to align them with his side of an issue.

One of Velnimach’s favorite tricks is to use his minions, the Elan, to infiltrate organizations and gain the trust and friendship of potentially powerful people. His scouts on every plane watch for rising factions and analyze the personalities heading them to try to determine what sort of creation would fascinate the leader of each faction. Velnimach and a minion then design a scenario to allow the minion to develop comaraderie with the leader. In the years that follow, this minion will continuously help and befriend his or her target until he or she becomes an invaluable aid and source of information. More information on how the Elan operate is available later in this appendix.

In the area of personal skill, Velnimach is an extremely accomplished mage. Velnimach originally rose to power as a mage, eventually going so far as to declare magic as his sphere of influence. After a while he became much more interested in trade, and decided to become a deity of trade. Once he decided to give up magic as a sphere of influence, he contacted the Egyptian deity Isis and convinced her to pay a handsome penny to have one less competing deity in this sphere. By doing so, Velnimach was able to get a very high price for doing what he was already going to do anyway, a typical maneuver for Velnimach. Ultimately, his sphere of influence in trade gave Velnimach more cross-planar influence, connections, and knowledge than nearly any other deity. Velnimach began manipulating this information to accomplish his ends and decided that politics was where his sphere of influence ultimately should reside.

Even though he gave up magic and trade as spheres of influence, he has continued to pursue these areas feverishly. He likes magic for its power and its nature. But even more than this he likes trade for the connections, opportunities, and bait that it provides him.

Velnimach always carries himself as one who is middle-aged in appearance and wears the most stylish clothes

appropriate to the culture with which he is dealing. The small touches to his appearance show that he has done extensive research on what is appropriate and what is not, and on how to maximize the effect of his presence; this is his trademark. A side effect of his wealth and knowledge of magic is that he is extremely learned in matters of philosophy, religion, culture, psychology, and history. He is an accomplished sage and also a bard.

A down side of Velnimach’s personality—one that is not known to anyone except Doomreaver, his chancellor and closest friend—is that Velnimach is extremely paranoid, and would prefer a hermit’s existence. This is why he has given up having an actual church, although he rationalizes that he doesn’t really need one and has sold off each piece for tremendous gain while essentially retaining control of everything he’s sold. His centuries of study as a mage have made him a master at disguising his appearance and at making magical duplicates of himself, which he uses for all personal confrontations. In actuality, Velnimach has not left his personal lab and quarters in thousands of years; he never sees the glory of the sun or the wonders of nature through his own eyes, but rather relies on his vast network of magical communications, working through proxies, telepathic nodes, mentally connected duplicates, and so forth. Doomreaver has hypothesized, although not aloud, that it is this extreme paranoia that has driven Velnimach to seek balance in the universe. In this way Velnimach can be assured that any potential foe has potential enemies who are equally powerful.

As you can imagine, Velnimach is exceedingly wealthy. He even considered wealth as a sphere of influence at one time, but thought that it was simply too tacky. This wealth is measured not only in terms of money and rare materials, but also in terms of artifacts, relics, and exotic creatures. Many of Velnimach’s agents and armies are recruited from races and groups with very small populations, and he prides himself on having at least one agent of every sentient race he has been able to discover.

Velnimach has successfully avoided joining any specific pantheon even though he has been invited to join more than one, since he prefers to remain uncommitted politically. This has enabled him to deal with deities from nearly every faction, even ones who are warring with each other.

Velnimach is quite old, predating most of the established pantheons. He has been around to see each of the pantheons develop and in one form or another is friends with influential deities or people on every important pantheon or council in existence.



## Velnimach’s Sphere of Influence

### Politics

Research Cost: 400 flux per day.

Research Time: 30 years.

Backing Cost: 400 base.

As a deity with this sphere of influence, Velnimach has mastered the strategies and intricacies of politics and manipulation.

### Abilities

This sphere includes the following abilities:

**Understand Goals:** Research Cost: 40 flux per day. Research Time: 4 years. Backing Cost: 40 base. Activation Cost: 40 flux. This ability allows Velnimach to know the ultimate goals of a particular organization, faction, religion, political party, nation, or other group. This ability can be maintained so long as he remains within line of sight, even through scrying, of any member of the organization.

**Understand Objectives:** Research Cost: 40 flux per day. Research Time: 4 years. Backing Cost: 40 base. Activation Cost: 40 flux. This ability allows Velnimach to know the specific objectives that an organization may have. Note that the difference between goals and objectives is that a goal is a fundamental or philosophical ideal, such as becoming wealthy, while an objective is a specific, measurable target that would support a goal, such as discovering a mithril mine. This ability can be maintained as long as Velnimach

remains within line of sight, even through scrying, of any member of the organization.

**Understand Needs:** Research Cost: 20 flux per day. Research Time: 2 years. Backing Cost: 20 base. Activation Cost: 20 flux. This ability allows Velnimach to know what particular needs a specific organization requires—whether it needs money, better management, exotic raw materials, a more experienced labor force, or political influence. This ability can be maintained as long as he remains within line of sight, even through scrying, of any member of the organization.

**Understand Personality:** Research Cost: 30 flux per day. Research Time: 3 years. Backing Cost: 430 base. Activation Cost: 30 flux. This ability gives Velnimach a complete personality profile of any one person within line of sight, even through scrying. This personality profile is very extensive, including things like needs, desires, motivations, loyalties, ethics, morality, phobias, and pet peeves.

**Recognize Potential:** Research Cost: 75 flux per day. Research Time: 10 years. Backing Cost: 75 base. Activation Cost: 75 flux. This allows Velnimach to primally theorize very accurately about the possible potential of any person, place, or thing, either as an object of trade, a political ally, or an aid to his personal power.



## Velnimach's Allies

It's possible to group Velnimach's allies into two groups. Overt allies are those who agree with Velnimach's goal of balance in the universe and support him openly in those goals. Indirect allies are those who don't really realize that they are allied with him, and are simply manipulated through his efforts.

Overt allies include cross-planar factions that were formed by Velnimach. One of these factions is the Gray Mages, an elite guild of magi from various planes, races, and alignments who are dedicated to studying the art of magic. This guild is non-political and Velnimach keeps active here pretty much as a hobby. The other faction with

Velnimach's backing is the Gray Council, a faction whose entire purpose is maintaining balance in the universe. In fact, the Gray Council is essentially the formalized extension of Velnimach's own organization. He chairs the Gray Council and is able to manipulate it to his ends quite easily.

Indirect allies are difficult to identify since nearly every deity in existence has at one time or another served Velnimach's bidding. His minions and multiple personas have infiltrated every pantheon and every important council in the universe. Nary a war or plot takes place without his knowledge, usually before it even gets started.



## Velnimach's Controlled Planes

Velnimach has one home plane, another controlled plane, and a special type of indirect control over twenty other planes. This indirect control of these other planes is the result of a special ruling by the gamemaster, who has determined that each plane ruled in this manner counts as one-tenth of a plane for purposes of primal gains, thus giving Velnimach control of the equivalent of four planes ( $2 + (20 \div 10) = 4$ ).

This special case of indirect control involves the enforcement of a non-intervention policy on these twenty planes, which use the political justification for non-intervention as discussed in Chapter Seven. Velnimach

enforces the non-intervention status on these planes and, unbeknownst to other deities who would probably never allow this if they had a clue as to what was really going on, Velnimach subtly controls these planes indirectly, in a manner of speaking, by preventing others from controlling them. In exchange for this grand manipulation, the GM has ruled that each of these planes should count as one-tenth of a plane, which gives Velnimach the equivalent of controlling two planes. This goes against the rules, but the GM has made an exception in the face of extreme cleverness.



## Chancellors of Velnimach

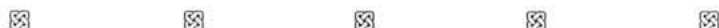
Velnimach has one chancellor who is his spokesman and enforcer; his name is Doomreaver.

### *Doomreaver*

Doomreaver is an immortal human warrior and psionist whose skill is legendary in both arenas. Doomreaver also has an extremely well-rounded and extensive arsenal of toys: magic, poison, alchemical elixirs, special abilities, and all manner of exotic accouterments. As Velnimach has advanced in power over the thousands of years of his existence, he has always worked on improving Doomreaver's personal gear, as he has little personal need

for magic items. Nearly everything Doomreaver carries is of artifact or relic power, and there are no weaknesses in his defense. He has trick upon trick up his sleeve, and is never caught off guard.

If Doomreaver were ever slain or captured, there is no extent to which Velnimach would not go to recover this loss. Doomreaver is Velnimach's oldest friend and companion and the only person whom Velnimach completely trusts, for Doomreaver is 100% loyal and would never compromise Velnimach in any way. Velnimach continuously watches Doomreaver through magical methods and there is practically no chance of ill befalling him without Velnimach's immediate knowledge.



## Minions of Velnimach

### *The Elan*

The minions of Velnimach are each individuals with their own specific forms, powers, and abilities, but are collectively referred to as the Elan.

The Elan are a "race" of magical creatures. The first of this race, called the Mougica, were created by Velnimach to serve as magical servants and aid him in his research and execution of magic. Eventually, Velnimach refined the Mougica into a higher order of being and assigned a group of wizards the task of creating more as they are needed. Since the Mougica were designed by Velnimach, they serve

him faithfully.

Select Mougica are chosen to become part of the Elan. Each Elan is modeled after a particular individual, typically a member of an organization Velnimach wishes to infiltrate. The Elan's intelligence is removed from its former body and inserted into a body that has been created to exactly duplicate the individual's body, down to the cellular level. This makes the Elan impossible to detect by anyone who cannot see souls. The Elan is then usually substituted for the original person, though it could also be used as a double, depending on the situation.

## Appendix E Addresses

Would you like more information on the game systems described in Appendix A? Maybe you bought *The Primal Order* first, and now you need a game system with which to use it? Well, we wouldn't want to leave you high and dry, so what follows is a list of the companies that produce products that we've mentioned.



### The ARDUIN line.

Dragon Tree Press  
118 Sayles Blvd.  
Abilene, TX 79605

Grimoire Games  
P.O. Box 4363  
Berkeley, CA 94704



### ARS MAGICA and related products

Wizards of the Coast, Inc.  
P.O. Box 707  
Renton, WA 98057



### BUREAU 13: STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC™ FRINGEWORTHY™ and related products

Tri Tac Systems  
P.O. Box 61  
Madison Heights, WI 48071-0061



### CASTLE FALKENSTEIN and related products

R. Talsorian Games, Inc.  
2998 San Pablo Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94702



### CHIVALRY & SORCERY and related products.

Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1082  
Gilbert, AZ 85234



### CORPS and related products

BTRC  
1925 Airy Circle  
Richmond, VA 23233



### EARTHDOWN and related products

FASA Corporation  
1100 W. Cermak Suite B305  
Chicago, IL 60608



### GURPS and related products.

Steve Jackson Games  
P.O. Box 18957  
Austin, TX 78760



### HÄRNMASTER and related products.

Columbia Games, Inc.  
Box 581, 810 West Broadway  
Vancouver, B.C. V5C 4C9



### The HERO system, FANTASY HERO, CHAMPIONS, ROLEMASTER and related products.

Iron Crown Enterprises  
P.O. Box 1605  
Charlottesville, VA 22902



### KULT and related products

Metropolis, Ltd.  
P.O. Box 57083  
Washington, DC 20037



### PENDRAGON and related products.

Chaosium, Inc.  
950-A 56th St.  
Oakland, CA 94608



### RUNEQUEST and related products.

The Avalon Hill Game Company  
4517 Harford Road  
Baltimore, MD 21214



### SHADOWRUN and related products.

FASA Corporation  
P.O. Box 6930  
Chicago, IL 60680



### SYNNIBARR and related products.

Real Dream, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1256  
Renton, WA 98057



### TORG and related products.

West End Games  
RD3 Box 2345  
Honesdale, PA 18431



### WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY and related products.

Games Workshop  
8920 Route 108  
Columbia, MD 21045



### VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE, WEREWOLF: THE APOCALYPSE, MAGE: THE ASCENSION, WRAITH: THE OBLIVION, and related products

White Wolf  
780 Park North Blvd. Suite 100  
Clarkston, GA 30083



## Appendix F Helpful Tables

These charts are provided as a quick reference and summary of many of the important numbers in *The Primal Order*. For more information on these subjects, please see the appropriate sections.

### Sources of Primal Flux

Source	Points of Flux
Base	10% of base points/day
Converted Base	1 per point of base
Plane	1,000/day on average
Miniplane	typically 100/day
Worshippers & souls	see table, next page
Place of worship	
Consecrated ground	2/day
Sanctuary	5/day
Temple	10/day
Greater temple	20/day
Sacrifices	
Rival worshiper	1
Rival holy warrior	2
Rival priest	3
Rival minion	5
Rival ordinary artifact	10
Rival chancellor	20
Rival godling	20
Enemy of the church	50
Gifts of flux	Amount given – 1d20
Captured artifact	5% of base/day
Captured deity	2.5% of base/day

### Sources of Primal Base

Source	Points of Base
Evolution	1% per year
Controlling a plane	2,000
Controlling a miniplane	typically 200
Gifts of base	Amount given – 1d20
Advancing in rank	
to godling	100
to demigod	200
to sup. demigod	300
to lesser deity	5,000
to greater deity	10,000
to supreme deity	25,000

If a deity loses control of a plane or drops in rank, the corresponding amount of base should be subtracted.

### Cost to Support

This table covers the costs to assist or support various underlings.

Underling	Daily Cost in Flux
Priest	depends, see Apdx. A
Minion	10
Chancellor	20
Servitor	10% of servitor's base
Artifact	10% of artifact's base
Godling, assisted	20
Demigod, assisted	20

### Primal Signature Sensitivity

The distance at which primal signatures can be sensed varies by the rank of the divine being doing the sensing:

Divine Rank	Range
Godling	100 feet
Demigod	1 mile
Lesser deity	100 miles
Greater deity	1,000 miles
Supreme deity	planewide

A deity on a plane he or she controls can immediately sense the presence of any primal signature on that plane.

### Detonation of Base

This is a chart outlining the effects of the detonation of a deity's base.

Base Detonated	Blast Radius	Chance of Planar Rift	Chance of Chain React.
100	1 mile	1%	N/A
1,000	10 miles	10%	1%
5,000	50 miles	50%	5%
10,000	100 miles	100%	10%
50,000	500 miles	100%	50%
100,000	1,000 miles	100%	100%

**Direct Expressions of Will**

Effect	Flux Cost	Base Cost	Min. Rank
Wish	varies	0	none
Omniscience			
limited	100	10	lesser
enhanced	1,000	20	greater
Omnipotence			
limited	500	15	lesser
enhanced	5,000	30	greater
Omnipresence			
limited	1,000	20(+1,000)	lesser
enhanced	10,000	40(+10,000)	greater

**A Sample Power Rating Chart**

Energy or Item	Rating
Physical forces	1–30
Mentalics	20–35
Lesser magic	30–50
Greater magic	50–70
Non-primal artifacts	60–75
Relics	70–80
Primal artifacts	75–99
Primal energy	100–∞

**Divine Aura Effects**

Target	Effect
Lesser deity (or higher)	no effect
Godling or demigod	awed
Master or legendary character	dazed
Other mortals	overwhelmed

The specific results of these effects are:

**Awed:** Experiencing an aura generally has a very positive effect on a deity's worshipers; usually this manifests as a surge in morale and generally heightened activity. If non-worshipers fail their resistance rolls, they immediately lapse into a state of awe. They can no longer make any offensive moves. In addition, if a character is somehow philosophically opposed to the deity (of an opposite alignment or opposing political party, for instance), the character will become completely enraptured, and will be unable to do anything as long as the aura is in effect.

**Dazed:** If the characters fail their resistance rolls, they pass out. Characters philosophically opposed to the deity must make another resistance roll, or experience heart failure and possibly death.

**Overwhelmed:** If the characters fail their resistance rolls, they die immediately of heart failure. If they manage the first resistance roll, they must make another or pass out for a full day. If they make it past

that, they must make yet another roll or flee for a full hour; there is no magical counter for this. Characters philosophically opposed to the deity die of shock immediately, with no resistance roll.

The above chart should be used only for lesser, greater, or supreme deities. For godlings and demigods, downgrade the effect by one level of severity—awed would become no effect, dazed would become awed, and overwhelmed would become dazed. Deities may project a lesser effect if they so desire.

**Variant for Evolution of Base**

This chart is for those using a variation of the method of calculating a deity's increase in base from year to year.

Divine Rank	Gain Per Year
Godling	2 per year
Demigod	5 per year
Supported demigod	10 per year
Lesser deity	100 per year
Greater deity	250 per year
Supreme deity	500 per year

**Flux from Worshipers**

Worshipers	Flux	Worshipers	Flux
<100	0	2,000	44
100	10	3,000	54
200	14	4,000	63
300	17	5,000	70
400	20	6,000	77
500	22	7,000	83
600	24	8,000	89
700	26	9,000	94
800	28	10,000	100
900	30	100,000	316
1,000	31	1 million	1,000

If you can't stand using a calculator for square roots, or are stuck far from calculatortown, this expanded version of the chart should see you through. Note that 10,000 has the same result as 100, just increased by 10. In the same way, 40,000 worshipers would generate the same as 400, but multiply the result times 10, which would be 200 flux points. 700,000 worshipers would generate 830 flux, and so on.

**Planar Constants**

Planar Constant	Time to Establish	Cost/Day to Sustain	Base Cost of Side Effects
Minor	3 years	100	20–200
Major	5 years	250	40–400
Greater	10 years	500	200–2,000

The cost of side effects applies only to ecologically sensitive planar constants.

### *Cost to Change Planar Connections*

<b>Present Connection</b>	<b>Desired Connection</b>	<b>Non-Primal Travel</b>	<b>Primal Travel</b>
Iso. or Rem.	Adjacent	200	1,000
Iso. or Rem.	Parallel	200	1,000
Iso. or Rem.	Connected	250	1,000
Adj. or Par.	Connected	50	100

### *Controlling a Plane*

To establish control of a plane:

- Contest plane.
- Defeat resistance on plane.
- Control all factions.
- Hold for five years.

To maintain control of a plane:

- Defeat uprisings within one year.
- Force contesting deities to remove base from plane within one year.

To contest control of a plane:

- Must place at least one point of base into the plane.

## Bibliography of Suggested Reading

Here we have provided a list of books we found interesting and useful when developing deities and religions for this book and for our campaigns. Some are more helpful than others, and not all are scrupulously historically accurate, so you might browse them a bit before taking them home from your local library or bookstore.

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## Glossary

**Alignment.** A character's general philosophical or moral outlook on life, typically expressed in terms of good and evil, and optionally in terms of law and chaos. Definitions vary from game system to game system and from culture to culture, and many GMs don't even bother with using alignments.

**Artifact.** In the English language an artifact is anything that is made or constructed; in *The Primal Order* the word refers to an extremely powerful magic item, usually one that is backed by something other than magic alone, such as primal energy, planar energy, or alignment energy.

**Ascension.** The process of converting a mortal soul to primal base, resulting in an elevation from mortality to divinity.

**Avatar.** A mortal physical form of a deity. An avatar does not usually have primal energy, but does have all of the non-primal powers of the deity and can be slain through normal means.

**Bleeding Primal.** The process by which a deity draws primal flux from imprisoned primal base. The primal base is typically from a captured or sacrificed artifact, but it doesn't have to be.

**Burning Primal Base.** The process by which a deity expends some amount of primal base to alter some constant in the universe, essentially creating an independent force or energy in the cosmos that will actively promote some concept or alteration of reality.

**Canon.** A body of ecclesiastical or religious law.

**Chancellor.** A mortal or divine being who manages the administration of a divine organization.

**Conflict of Intent.** When you are using the power rating system, a conflict of intent occurs when two items, spells, or effects are trying to produce conflicting or contradictory results, such as light and darkness or levitation and increased gravity.

**Consecrated Ground.** An area associated with a deity where a significant event has occurred in the past. Examples of this might be the place where a deity was born, a place where a special event in the deity's mortal life occurred, or a place where some event took place that resulted in a crucial turning point for the religion.

**Control.** A deity who controls a plane is now master of the plane, ruling it in every respect. A plane must first be controlled before it is eligible to become a home plane. To gain control of a plane the deity must have ruled it successfully for at least five consecutive years.

**Council.** A group of deities who have come together to form some sort of political body based on common goals or interests. Councils may cross pantheon boundaries.

**Deity.** A being whose soul is composed of primal base.

**Demigod.** The rank of deity between godling and supported demigod. A godling becomes a demigod by acquiring a sphere of influence.

**Detonation of Primal Base.** The process by which a deity ignites his or her primal base, which destroys the

deity's very existence and creates a massive amount of damage. Also known as *divine suicide*.

**Direct Expressions of Will.** "Direct expressions of will" is a category of primal abilities by which deities force a change in reality through the use of primal energy without paying attention to efficient methods of application. The deities simply pump in enough primal to do the job. This category includes wishes and the omnis.

**Divine Spirit.** A primal ability by which deities temporarily separate their consciousnesses from their physical bodies and their primal base.

**Friendly Discussion.** A lively conversation in which opposing parties politely state their cases and supporting rationales and begin throwing things when that doesn't work.

**FRPG.** Fantasy Roleplaying Game. If you're not sure what that is, head down to your local gaming store and check out a few of the available game systems.

**Gamemaster (GM).** The referee or storyteller in an FRPG. The GM is responsible for developing the playing environment, narrating the scenes, roleplaying the non-player characters (NPCs), arbitrating the results of an action, and maintaining story flow.

**Godling.** The lowest rank of deity. Godlings start out with 100 points of primal base.

**Greater Deity.** The rank of deity between lesser deity and supreme deity. A lesser deity becomes a greater deity by controlling at least five planes.

**Greater Temple.** A large and highly significant place of public worship.

**High-Level Adventuring.** An adventuring context in which most of the PCs involved are reasonably seasoned veterans with a fairly extensive arsenal of skills and toys; typically these characters have, or have access to, most of the more advanced spells and magic items in the game system.

**Holy Days.** Holy days are days on which religious events are held and a large number of sacrifices are typically performed. Deities declare holy days so that they will know when they can count on receiving increased primal flux from sacrifices.

**Home Plane.** A plane that has been controlled by a deity for at least one hundred years and contains at least one point of the deity's primal base. A deity can have only one home plane, and the home plane will regenerate the deity's primal base if some mishap should occur.

**Ju-ju.** Jungle Juice. A tropical punch drink, heavily sugared, that was at one time the staple of many of the wizards from Wizards of the Coast. This drink, sold for a time by the Walla Walla College Dairy, was loved so much that it inspired rituals in which its consumers would bow to the Holy Ju-Ju Factory when opening a carton and recite various chants to properly anoint the carton. While this activity sent some of our more "concerned" friends into apoplectic fits, we are quite certain that

no particularly supernatural powers were invoked, and have not been able to detect any long-term ill effects other than perhaps to our waistlines. Besides, the dairy eventually quit making it; we suspect that the Ju-ju deities found out that this elixir was being made illegally on the main plane and put a halt to its production.

**Keying.** Altering a primal shield so that certain predetermined types of matter or energy can pass through the shield.

**Linking.** Connecting a deity's primal flux reservoir with an established primal shield.

**Lesser Deity.** The rank of deity between supported demigod and greater deity. A supported demigod becomes a lesser deity by acquiring a home plane.

**Low-Level Adventuring.** An adventuring context in which most of the PCs involved have limited power and experience and have access to only the most basic of the various items, spells, and skills of the game system.

**Main Plane.** The plane on which a campaign originated, or where most characters base their operations.

**Metaphysician.** A philosopher who deals with metaphysics.

**Metaphysics.** A branch of philosophy that studies the nature of existence. A natural scientist deals with the fundamental properties that involve matter, whereas a metaphysician studies the basic properties that make things the way they are.

**Metaplane.** A place with distinct boundaries that contains one or more planes.

**Metaplanar Constant.** An effect enforced on all the planes contained in a metaplane and on any space between planes.

**Miniplane.** A smallish plane that does not quite satisfy all of the conditions of a controllable plane but is nevertheless worth some amount of primal if controlled. Only the GM can decide how much primal a miniplane is worth, and a miniplane cannot be made into a home plane.

**Minions.** Mortals who have been granted additional special abilities and honor above those typically granted to holy warriors or members of the clergy. A deity often selects someone from the ranks of his or her minions to be ascended or made into a servitor.

**Multiverse.** The collection of planes, realities, dimensions, and so forth that collectively form a campaign.

**Non-Intervention Plane.** A plane of existence where the presence of deities and the use of primal energy is prohibited or severely restricted.

**Offering.** A gift that is freely bestowed upon a religious organization or deity at regular intervals.

**Omnis.** An abbreviated term used to refer collectively to omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. In standard usage the omnis refer to all-encompassing power, presence, or intelligence, but in *The Primal Order* the omnis refer to powers that deities often *claim* to have, and actually can only approximate.

**Omnipotence.** All-powerful, able to do anything. In *The Primal Order* deities have only limited forms of this ability.

**Omnipresence.** All-present, able to be everywhere at once. In *The Primal Order* deities have only limited forms of this ability.

**Omniscience.** All-knowing, able to know everything in the universe. In *The Primal Order* deities have only limited forms of this ability.

**Pantheon.** A collection of deities who have a common heritage and background and are typically from the same plane, culture, family, or corner of the multiverse. Pantheons are rarely entirely cohesive organizations since they nearly always have members who war upon each other.

**Pantheon Personality.** A characterization of a pantheon based on the disciplines in which it specializes. For example, the Norse pantheon is known for its exploits of war, while the Egyptian pantheon is known for its fascination with death and understanding of mathematics.

**Planar Constant.** An effect that is enforced by a plane. Planar constants are powered by the planar energies of the plane itself and are broken into minor, major, and greater planar constants.

**Plane.** Any location or set of locations that has distinct boundaries and can be reached from other places only through very specific points or via metaphysical travel. A controllable plane must satisfy the conditions of significant size, significant boundaries, and significant importance.

**Player Character (PC).** A character played by a player in an FRPG, as opposed to a non-player character (NPC), who is played by the gamemaster.

**Possession.** The process by which a deity controls a non-primal being through force of will and primal flux.

**Power Rating System.** A system for arbitrating energy conflicts of intent or conflicts of power. This system is based on the assumption that events powered by a given energy source should have a better than average chance of overpowering or overriding events that are backed by a less fundamental power source with a weaker tie to reality.

**Primal Base.** Primal energy in its stable, inactive form. Also, a deity's soul.

**Primal Energy.** A type of energy that is unique to divine beings and is considered superior to any other form of energy. The term collectively refers to both primal base and primal flux, and is often abbreviated as "primal."

**Primal Flux.** Primal energy in its active form. Also, a deity's will.

**Primal Pocket.** A pocket of primal energy that contains primal planes and is surrounded by an area in which magic and primal energy do not work. This concept works well in universes in which fantasy and science fiction settings exist side by side.

**Primal Shield.** An application of primal energy in which a deity uses primal flux to protect an area by constructing a forcefield composed of raw primal energy.

**Primal Signature.** The unique characteristics associated with a given deity's primal energy. Each time a deity expends primal flux, other deities within range will

detect the use of primal energy and can detect a signature. If they are familiar with the signature then they will know who is using the primal energy.

**Rank.** A deity's relative power level within the hierarchy of deities. The ranks are as follows: godlings, demigods, supported demigods, lesser deities, greater deities, and supreme deities.

**Resistance Roll.** The escape hatch most game systems provide so that characters can escape some untoward event. System-specific terms for this include saving roll, karma, confidence, and luck.

**Sacrifice.** A freely given gift from a worshiper to a church or deity; this gift must be of extreme value to the giver. Sacrifices differ from offerings in that offerings are day-to-day donations and sacrifices are special rare gifts that represent a significant loss to the giver.

**Sanctuary.** A small place of public worship that is also sometimes used for secular activities.

**Servitor.** A divine being who is created by and directly controlled by a deity.

**Soul.** The essence or spirit of an individual. If the individual is a deity, the soul will be composed of primal base.

**Sphere of Influence.** An area of primal research, emphasis, and specialization for a deity; what a deity wants to be known as "god of" or "goddess of."

**Sphere of Influence Ability.** A divine special ability associated with a deity's sphere of influence.

**Supported Demigod.** The rank of deity between demigod and lesser deity. A supported demigod is a demigod who has either acquired control of a full plane or is

gaining daily primal support from a higher-ranking deity.

**Supporting.** Expending primal flux to support the abilities of worshipers, clerics, holy warriors, artifacts, godlings, demigods, subject deities, minions, or champions.

**Supreme Deity.** The highest rank of deity. A greater deity becomes a supreme deity by becoming the leader of a council or pantheon of deities who support the deity in his or her position.

**Temple.** A place of public worship that is used solely for religious activities.

## Index

The keen-eyed will note that there are three different kinds of numbers in this index. *Italic numbers* indicate examples and **bold numbers** indicate an especially important reference. If an entry has a bold number, that's probably where you should start looking for information.

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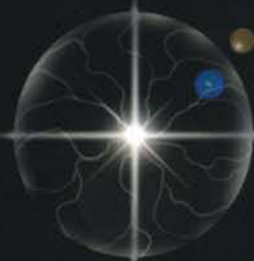
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