



Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE



MAGIC OF GLORANTHA

RuneQuest



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credits and contents

Credits

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INTRODUCTION

To be a magician in the Imperial Age is to know, without a shadow of doubt, that you command the most powerful magic that can ever be harnessed by mortals. In reading through the pages of this book, Games Masters and players get the chance to see how the sorcerer-lords of the God Learners and the dragonspeakers of the EWF possess power far above that of the other Gloranthan cultures. This is as it should be in this era of Empires that threaten the stability of the world itself.

The Empire of Wyrms' Friends embodies the glorious, decadent rise of world-altering magic in the Second Age. Likewise, its eventual destruction is one of the most significant peals of thunder in the cataclysmic storm that

ends the era and opens the way for the Hero Wars. The rot is already beginning to set in as the Third Age nears, for despite grand designs, great lore and new boundaries of magic, the energies required for creating the Great Dragon To Come leech the Empire and its people of necessary resources. Though they will not discover the truth until it is too late, in building the Great Dragon the wyrmfriends are killing their Empire. The flaws in their plan are beginning to show and those with the power to do anything about it are the ones least likely to surrender the magical might they have amassed. It is this state that we find the Empire and its Dragonlord leaders – also called the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants – at the apex of their power in the Second Age.

A God Learner assaults a dragonspeaker rival



Opposing the Empire of Wyrms' Friends is a kingdom equally blinded by a glorious rise to ascension. The Middle Sea Empire, called 'God Learners' by their allies and enemies alike, share the guilt that will come when the Second Age finally ends in chaos. The misguided conceit of the EWF is internal: they seek to transform what is theirs into the Great Dragon, altering themselves to fit an otherworldly ideal. The hubris of the Gods Learners is external: they manipulate the faiths of other cultures in order to increase their own power, altering the world around them rather than themselves.

The Dragonlords will fall because they are parasites over their people, leeching belief and resources to fuel a doomed dream. It will be a grand failure but will seem as nothing compared to the toppling of the God Learners, who will fall because they are parasites over the faith of others, leeching power from the legends of myth and history, siphoning strength from the world itself.

Players choosing to portray characters tied to the dragonspeaker cults stand on the stage of a culture in its glorious twilight. They will be the magic-wielding imperial

nobility, following their cult of choice towards the Great Work, or they will be among the legion of mercenaries who sign on for a taste of draconic power. Players allied with the God Learners are trained and equipped to venture into the Hero Planes, violating the legends of immortal deities and plundering them of mythic wealth.

The stage is set for the death of Empires.

Chapter One: Draconic Mysticism

The first chapter reveals the hierarchical society and mystic arts of the dragonspeakers that oversee the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Though they are often reluctant to use their magic, the Draconic Mysticism of the Dragonlords is a discipline that offers almost unrivalled physical enhancement, complementing the dances and martial arts of the imperial leaders. The dragonspeaker cults that make up the pyramidal hierarchy of the EWF are locked in political infighting which spreads instability through the Empire. In this chapter, players will find all the rules they need to carve out their own slice of influence within the treacherous imperial courts.

Chapter Two: God Learner Sorcery

This chapter focuses on the Sorcery mechanics and spells of the Middle Sea Empire, which the God Learner magicians use to assert their dominance over Glorantha and infiltrate the Hero Planes. The spreading doctrines of the Zistorites – combining flesh, magic and machinery – is also detailed for characters with involvement in the great Machine City.

Chapter Three: The Old Ways

The two largest cultural faiths in the Second Age are detailed here: the Orlanthe faith in the Storm Tribe and the Dara Happan faith in the Sky Gods. Chapter Three provides guidance and new spells for players to portray characters channelling the Divine Magic of the Old Ways.

A Note on Game Balance

In this book, the rules provided for God Learner Sorcerers and EWF dragonspeakers allow characters to possess powers that will put them in positions of magical might and political influence that standard Gloranthan residents (and even other Player Characters) can only ever dream of. If some characters within an adventuring group follow these paths and others do not, the imbalance between party members can start to show during long campaigns.

The Second Age of Glorantha is not an era based on equal Empires and worldly balance. In fact, the exact opposite is true. The Imperial Age is an era where the two dominant Empires have divided most of the world between them through invasion and magical power. God Learner sorcerers and EWF dragonspeakers will demonstrate their cultures' respective achievements and incredible levels of power and may end up towering above those they meet in all political, military and magical respects. This imbalance is not a problem with the setting that Games Masters need to work around – it is an integral feature of Glorantha's doomed Second Age. If it creeps into your group's games, then run with it.

Enjoy the fruits of God Learner HeroQuesting. Command the power of the Dragonlord magicians. Revel in the decadence of these great magical cultures, as they begin their long falls from glory.

Chapter Four: HeroQuesting

Herein are the rules for HeroQuesting, which the God Learners practically hold the monopoly over in the Second Age. The bulk of this chapter is given over to assessments of the gods of the popular pantheons and their various deeds in mythology. In this light, God Learner players are free to enter these legends and emulate the actions of these 'primitive' gods.

Chapter Five: Magicians of the Imperial Age

Finally, the book rounds out with a chapter detailing some of the most powerful and influential God Learner and dragonspeaker magicians of the Imperial Age. From the legendary Vistikos Left-Eye to the Arch-Sorcerer Lurghalos himself, each is given a detailed description and notes on how best to serve these immensely potent figures.

DRACONIC MYSTICISM

In the Second Age, the Empire of Wyrms' Friends is in part a repressive, stagnating culture and part a mystical ideology founded on the principles of enlightenment and evolution for all. It is this clashing contrast in the imperial doctrine that makes the EWF such a volatile culture and what makes their magic so compelling. With restrictions on the Old Ways and the suppression of any 'false worship' of ancient gods, the Empire's burgeoning (if ultimately damning) draconic Mysticism is reaching incredible potency. And yet the rise of this magic at the cost of religious freedom is governed with the aim of benefiting every citizen within the Empire. As a final paradox in the Dragonlords' scheme, it is the devotees with the smallest portions of magical power that are the most inclined to use it, while the mystics commanding true mastery over the art are loathe to expend any power in the physical world, instead hoarding their energies for the Great Dragon To Come.

It is a cold ideology. The veneration of the Great Dragon is founded in a deep disgust at the world of flesh, regarding the mortal form as another imperfection in a world of imperfections. Dragons represent the pinnacle of physical, spiritual and magical evolution, and are therefore to be emulated. The Empire itself – lands, people, faith and power – are to be bound together in one great and glorious dragon that will be born perfect and whole on the day of the great transmutation.

In the ages to come, the staggering conceit of the Dragonlords becomes a parable to warn any who would fall prey to megalomania or delusions of godhood. In the Second Age, as the Empire of Wyrms' Friends devotes more resources and magical energy to the Great Dragon To Come, their seeds of folly are only now bearing rotten fruit. As they dedicate their lives to the grand plan of ascension, people are beginning to starve in the heartland of the Empire. Famine wracks the populace, yet the armies of dinosaur-riding soldiers march to bring new lands under the shadows of imperial banners. Citizens suffer and the magicians of the dragonspeaker cults see only more evidence of mortal imperfection. They turn from the real world and devote more time, energy and

effort into bringing about the Great Dragon. In the years to come all of their great achievements will be burned in the fires of insurrection, betrayal by their dragonewt allies and the storm of flawed magic.

This is how Empires die.

Draconised Faith

With the rise of the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants and the Empire from their base in Maniria over the past few centuries, the religious beliefs of the cultures they have conquered come under the increasing pressure of draconisation. The imperial faith is in the dragonspeaker cults: the groups devoted to the birth of the Great Dragon. This mandate leaves conquered populations in a dangerous position should they not desire to convert directly to the beliefs of their conquerors.

The choice they face is simple: adoption, conversion or destruction. If the culture adopts veneration of the Great Dragon and the dragonspeaker cults as the new faith, then the EWF achieves the best result possible from their point of view. Most conquered cultures do not agree to this, however. Their faiths must therefore either willingly change to meet the standards of their oppressors, become altered by deceit and dogma, or be destroyed completely. The victorious Dragonlords now have influence in several local religions that have been altered, even subsumed, by the territorial sweep of the EWF. The most notable of these is probably the faith of Orlanth the Dragon, a bastardisation of dragon lore and the mythology of the Storm Tribe which converts all major figures (especially the admirable gods) of orthodox Orlanthi worship into draconic beings.

Any religion or cult that is subsumed into the Empire of Wyrms' Friends has its mythology altered in a similar fashion and its holy symbols altered to portray dragon imagery. The dogma and doctrine of these faiths is converted to resemble the ideals of draconic ascendance and perfection. Any followers of the faith are still able to emulate their now-altered gods and gain Divine Magic but the deities they strive to resemble are uniformly

changed to display an air of dissatisfaction at the Middle World and exhort their followers to put faith in ways of leaving the mortal realm behind forever. Followers that rebel against the draconised faiths are not rare. It can harden the heart of anyone to see their precious beliefs warped into a veneration of dragons and the god-myths they once emulated mutated into the deeds of alien draconic deities. As the Empire of Wyrms' Friends closes its grip on the land it has taken so far, their intolerance drives more and more of the faithful into the Old Ways.

It is in this time of mounting chaos and imbalance that the dragonspeaker cults believe they are nearing the completion of their great work. Time will prove them wrong but until that day the highest Dragonlords wield a power in the Second Age unrivalled outside of the gods themselves.

The Importance of Purity

The Empire is ardent in the pursuit of what the dragonewts would consider *purity*. The EWF is composed primarily of human citizens but the teachings of the dragonspeaker cults (who are in turn taught by the dragonewts) shapes the majority of imperial doctrine and culture. For instance, almost every dragonewt is born left-handed. This is a notion followed by the dragonspeakers of the Empire today, who teach their own children to be left-handed and train to that end themselves. The flood of borrowed ideals does not stop there.

To the highest echelons of the dragonspeaker cults, metal is anathema. These great magicians believe that all the metal within the earth are the dried blood and broken bones of ancient, dead and utterly flawed gods. To use the bodies of these gods in any fashion is heresy; not because it is blasphemous against their dead faiths but because it promotes the acceptance of unsanctified, flawed and unholy material. The dragonewts have passed this belief down to the highest masters of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. It is a doctrine that has stuck fast to the perfectionist mystics that oversee the imperial culture.

Lesser draconic mystics adhere to this belief with varying fervency. Metal has obvious uses in weaponry, armour and any number of mundane objects. The lure of efficiency



overwhelms the spiritual purity of many dragonspeakers lower down the cult hierarchy. A great many take the belief very seriously, though. These are the draconic mystics that eschew metal arms and armour, and they cut a powerfully-intimidating sight because of it. Their armour is formed from song-shaped bone, decorated with charms that denote rank and accomplishments. Gripped in their fists are blunt-ended, sawtooth-edged chopping swords made of wood, obsidian and bone, known as klanths. A klanth is traditionally a dragonewt weapon but the imperial mystics have adopted their use on a mass scale, with a great many dragonspeakers wearing a klanth at their hip in the Empire's twilight years. Approximately the length of a human forearm, klanth blades are magically formed from dragon bones, with handles made of wood, studded with chunks of obsidian. For more details on EWF weaponry, see page 43.

As Above, So Below

The Dragon Mysticism movement is overseen by the Original Twelve, also known as the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants, the ruling body of the Empire of Wyrms'

Friends. Though no one throne exists within this elite order, the most influential, holy and powerful member of the Wyrms Eye Ascendants is Vistikos Left-Eye. It is he who studies at the feet of the Inhuman King, the dragonewt ruler responsible for the introducing the true concepts of ascendance to humanity. The oneness with the Cosmic Dragon, the Dragon of All, sought by the dragonewts has become the dream of an entire human Empire. Vistikos Left-Eye and the Inhuman King are detailed on detailed on pages 87 and 88 respectively.

The Original Twelve are not totally blind to the erosion of their culture, however they are immeasurably involved with the Great Dragon To Come and have little real influence over the running of the Empire. This responsibility falls to their bodyguards, advisors, apprentices and lieutenants, known as the Guiding Council.

Lately, as the EWF suffers the beginnings of a greater disorder to come, the Guiding Council are caught between working harder to bring about the birth of the Great Dragon, to act quickly in order to stabilise the Empire or to turn to the dragonewts and demand more answers. Some among their number believe that the Inhuman King is withholding valuable information that is hindering the great transformation – information vital to sustaining the Empire long enough for the dragon to be completed. The discord at the highest levels mimics that of the chaos below. The Empire of Wyrms Friends is slowly unravelling throughout all ranks of the dragonspeaker cults. When these cults fail, so will the Empire.

Ranks within the Wyrms Friends

As explained in *Glorantha – The Second Age*, the dragonspeaker cults are the pyramid-based schools of doctrine and magical lore that shape the Empire and work toward the creation of the Great Dragon. Divided into levels of magical rank, temporal authority and respect among the imperial system, these cults channel the energy ever-upwards to the Original Twelve in their task.

The Gathering of Power

When Gloranthan scholars detail the turbulent timeline of the Empire of Wyrms Friends, they use the most ink when detailing exactly why the pyramid structure of the cults is so important to the dragonspeakers. It is a complicated concept that is part-mysticism, part-metaphysical power and part temporal logistics.

Allow me to explain it simply.

The lowest ranks of the cults are necessary to fuel the works of the higher echelons. These lesser castes devote time, faith and money to the efforts of their betters. Their belief is the driving force behind the Empire's ability to shape the Great Dragon, for without the faith of the followers, the mystics themselves would doubt their own ability to succeed in the grand design. Their support is an invisible sustenance, used by the greatest Dragonlords to feed the gestating Dragon Yet To Be. This is but a small taste of the wondrous, reptilian unity in our future.

— Harukesh the Scaled, Wyrms Fang Exultant of the Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul

The following information adds detail to previously published material dealing with the cults of the Empire of Wyrms Friends. Players and Games Masters have the opportunity to use what follows as a look within the dragonspeaker cults, seeing the truth behind the facades seen by outsiders.

These mystic orders form the vast bulk of EWF leadership. The Throne Hands group, War Dragons and other political factions detailed in *Glorantha – The Second Age* are almost entirely comprised of dragonspeakers from various cults. It makes the imperial political landscape a horrendously complicated affair, with several cults set at each other's throats in military and political matters, while irrevocably entwined in matters of magic.

Each cult was founded by one of the Original Twelve, who are more commonly referred to as Wyrms Eye Ascendants given the fact that they now number far in excess of a mere dozen. Below the Original Twelve are the Wyrms Tongue Masters, many of whom serve on the Guiding Council and are individually much more powerful than most cultist Runelords. These worthies are served in turn by the Wyrms Fang Exultant members,

who are roughly equal in magical power to Runelords and the Wyrms' Hand Triumphant rank, who are of equivalent power and authority as Runepriests.

Players are much more likely to be involved at lower levels of the cult (at least to begin with) and will stand among the Wyrms' Claw Initiates, who are of equivalent rank and power to acolytes, and the Wyrms' Talon Disciples, who hold a rank contiguous with initiates. The lowliest members of the dragonspeaker cults are the Wyrms' Face Believers, who are akin to lay members.

As laid down in imperial law, cultists above the rank of Wyrms' Face Believer may not practice any magical orders beyond Rune Magic and Draconic Mysticism. All else is considered base, impure and could threaten the ascension of the Great Dragon To Come. A further limitation imposed on the magicians of the Empire, also in the name of purity of purpose, is the decree banning any member of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank from joining more than one cult. The dragonspeaker paths require complete commitment from their 'weak and impious mortal followers' if the great transformation is ever to occur. At least, so says the imperial dogma.

Wyrms' Face Believer

Requirements: Candidates must have a basic knowledge of the cult's doctrine and make a small donation of one to five silvers. It should be noted that the overwhelming majority of EWF citizens are Wyrms' Face Believers at least one cult.

Duties: Wyrms' Face Believers are expected to spread the word of the cult but to do so subtly by highlighting the spiritual path followed by members rather than speaking of the political gains usually associated with joining the dragonspeakers.

Benefits: The character will automatically be able to find tutors for any skills the cult teaches. They must still pay the normal rates for these services.

Wyrms' Talon Disciple

Requirements: To reach this rank, the candidate must succeed in five tests of cult skills and have initiated 50 or more imperial citizens as Wyrms' Face Believers. In addition, the character must have acquired the Advanced skills Draconic Illumination and Language (Auld Wyrnish).

Wyrms' Face Believer



Wyrms' Talon Disciple



Wyrms' Fang Exultant



Legendary Ability: Dragonlord

This trait replaces the Runelord and Rune Priest Legendary Abilities for dragonspeaker cult members. A Dragonlord may never become a Rune Priest or a Runelord in another cult unless he severs all ties to the EWF. Neither can a character with one of these two traits become a Dragonlord unless they surrender their cult ties and advance through the dragonspeaker ranks as normal.

Requirements: 10 Hero Points

Benefits: Many. See cult and rank descriptions.

Duties: Wyrms' Talon Disciples are free from donating income but must serve one month in every four at a cult temple as the assistant and apprentice of a more powerful member. This period is a time of instruction and contemplation, and is regarded as mandatory for further advancement.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by Wyrms' Face Believers, the Wyrms' Talon Disciple will have automatic access to tutors who can teach any spell listed in the Rune Magic chapter of *RuneQuest* whose Magnitude is no greater than 2. In addition to this, Wyrms' Talon Disciples can learn Dragon Magic spells up to a Magnitude of 4.

Wyrms' Talon Disciples pay half the normal price for being taught both Rune Magic spells and any cult skills. When in periods of spell-learning training, a Wyrms' Talon Disciple may learn up to two Dragon Magic spells at once. At this stage in their development, the cultist earns the right to call himself a dragonspeaker and may also learn the dances and martial arts of his cult.

If a character is a Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the cult, he is considered to be a Wyrms' Face Believer in all dragonspeaker cults without being required to make any donation. Once he has reached this point, a character may rise no higher in any other cult unless he leaves his current dragonspeaker path.

Dragonspeakers of this rank are notably more important than the general imperial populace and receive +10% to Influence tests with Wyrms' Face Believers.

Wyrms' Claw Initiate

Requirements: Candidates must have been a member of the cult for at least three years, must have four or more cult skills of at least 50% and must have inducted at least 100 imperial citizens as Wyrms' Face Believers. In addition, the character's Draconic Illumination and Language (Auld Wyrmish) skills must have increased to at least 50%. A gift must be made to the dragonspeaker cult of at least 500 silvers and the surrender of a rune to the order's highest-ranking members. The prospective Wyrms' Claw Initiate must then take a blood-sworn vow to see the Great Dragon rise, pledging his life and soul to that end.

Duties: Wyrms' Claw Initiates must donate 25% of all income to the cult and one rune in every three that they locate. They are assigned duties to teach and work with Wyrms' Talon Disciples for six months of every year, doing so in ways they see fit.

Benefits: As well as the benefits enjoyed by Wyrms' Talon Disciples, Wyrms' Claw Initiates may also learn Rune Magic spells up to a Magnitude of 4 and Dragon Magic spells up to a Magnitude of 8. At this stage of his advancement, a character undergoing spell training may learn up to four Dragon Magic spells at once.

Wyrms' Claw Initiates may also call for Divine Intervention from the Cosmic Dragon, though the process is somewhat different for the dragonspeaker cults than it is for traditional theist orders. Divine Intervention for dragonspeakers is detailed on page 23.

Dragonspeakers of this rank are worthy of renown among the imperial populace and they receive +20% to Influence tests with Wyrms' Face Believers and Wyrms' Talon Disciples.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphant

Requirements: Candidates must have been a Wyrms' Claw Initiate of the dragonspeaker cult for at least five years and must have at least five cult skills of at least 75%. In addition, the character's Draconic Illumination and Language (Auld Wyrmish) skills must have increased to at least 80%. At least 1,000 Wyrms' Face Believers must claim an affiliation with the cult through the actions of the candidate and finally, he must purchase the Dragonlord Legendary Ability.

Duties: Wyrms' Hand Triumphant are the senior leaders, preachers and magicians within the dragonspeaker cults. They each maintain a temple, shrine or place of worship, conducting the rituals of their order and instructing Wyrms' Claw Initiates and Wyrms' Talon Disciples in their development. With great power and influence comes a great dedication to duty. Wyrms' Hand Triumphants are expected to donate 50% of their income to the cult and serve as religious leaders and administrators at their own temple for nine months out of every 12. It is also worth noting that dragonspeakers of this rank are at the beck and call of the Guiding Council and are among the Empire's most powerful and reliable diplomats, emissaries, assassins and commanders on the rare occasions they are called upon to expend their power.

Benefits: Dragonspeakers of this rank have the resources of their entire congregation at their disposal and are the highest face of the imperial faith that most EWF citizens are ever likely to encounter. In addition to the benefits enjoyed by Wyrms' Claw Initiates, Wyrms' Hand Triumphants may also learn Rune Magic spells up to a Magnitude of 8 and Dragon Magic spells of any Magnitude. When undergoing spell-learning they may train to learn up to six Dragon Magic spells at once. Cult skills are learnt for free, while Draconic Mysticism spells are learned in half the standard time.

Dragonspeakers of this rank have attained great respect among the people of the Empire and receive +30% to Influence tests with Wyrms' Face Believers, Wyrms' Talon Disciples and Wyrms' Claw Initiates.

Wyrms' Fang Exultant

Requirements: The highest level of the dragonspeaker cults that remain attainable as the Great Dragon nears completion is that of the Wyrms' Fang Exultant. Once a cult leader has indoctrinated over 5,000 imperial citizens into the order, he will be groomed (or at least watched) for further ascendance. A character's Draconic Illumination and Language (Auld Wyrnish) skills must be increased to at least 100%. Candidates must also have been Wyrms' Hand Triumphants of the cult for at least five years and must have at least five cult skills of 80% or higher. Obviously they will therefore already possess the Dragonlord Legendary Ability.

Duties: The Wyrms' Fang Exultants are the eyes, ears and fists of the Guiding Council. In the Empire's spiritual matters the Wyrms' Fang Exultants watch over and

regulate the management of several temples and shrines all at once. They are expected to dedicate ten months out of every 12 to the guidance of their cults as well as donating 50% of any income they come by. In any grave threat to the Empire it is expected that the Wyrms' Fang Exultants expend their power to crush the danger, serving as a powerful line of defence that alleviates the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants from needing to become involved.

Benefits: The Wyrms' Fang Exultants may not be on the Guiding Council but many of them are the apprentices or former students of those who do serve on the Empire's highest conclave of power. This means that some cultists of this rank have an ear on the ruling body of the Empire in addition to their own vast cult-based resources. The magical benefits are the same as those of the Wyrms' Hand Triumphant rank, though Wyrms' Fang Exultants may learn Rune Magic spells of any Magnitude and are given a powerful draconic or dragonewt artefact (to study and use as they see fit), as a blessing for their great service to the Empire.

Dragonspeakers of this rank have attained enormous respect among the citizens of the Empire and receive +50% to Influence tests with Wyrms' Face Believers, Wyrms' Talon Disciples, Wyrms' Claw Initiates and Wyrms' Hand Triumphants.

Dragonspeaker Cults

Each of the cults listed here follows a different doctrine along the path to perfection though they all lead to the same inevitable goal. Games Masters should feel free to generate their own dragonspeaker cults as many have arisen in the past centuries. Below are some examples of several well-known imperial cults that have dealings across the Empire and notes based on the roles and duties of their ranked members.

Important Notes: A cultist of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank or above receives a +20% bonus to Persistence tests in order to resist revealing anything secret about the cult, even under torture.

Order of Crimson Purity

The Order of Crimson Purity believes that the mystical fluid flowing through dragon veins is much purer than human blood and that which beats through the hearts of mortals is the biggest limiting factor in ascension. Founded centuries ago by Merisian the Benevolent on

principles of self-sacrifice, the cult has degenerated in the years since its inception. They purge the Empire of internal enemies, especially Old Ways cultists, sacrificing them and offering their blood through rituals in veneration of the Cosmic Dragon. Through this they show their commitment to the Dragon of All and receive his blessings in turn. Their magic focuses on extrasensory perception, causing fear and the manipulation of blood into alchemical elixirs. Their symbol is a bloody hand print superimposed over a black dragon's claw.

To the average imperial citizen, a cultist of the Order of Crimson Purity is little more than an inquisitor or witch-hunter and the cult numbers many hired soldiers among its Wyrms' Hand Believers. The so-called 'Red Order' is more feared than admired as a general rule, though their fervency buys a serious stripe of respect among the citizens of the Empire. In cities where the Old Ways take greatest root among the populace, the Order sends cells of Wyrms' Claw Initiates and Wyrms' Face Believers to blend spell and sword in the name of annihilating any heresy that could interrupt the great transmutation.

Players have several ways of getting involved with the Order of Crimson Purity. The most obvious way is as an enemy of the cult but other dealings are certainly possible.

Any characters seeking to preserve the Old Ways or otherwise resist the draconisation of a local faith are likely to be a thorn in the side of the Order. Doing battle against inquisitor cells is not the best way to live a long and peaceful life, but there is no shortage of honour and glory for those that take a stand against the oppressors.

Characters might be hired to perform lesser tasks for the Red Order, such as scouting, infiltration or seeking out lost lore. It is likely that the PCs will either be accompanied by an attendant member of the cult as a guide and advisor, though any characters that are genuine members of the Order will not need such supervision.

Merisian the Benevolent is not dead. Although his cult has warped from its original founding, he now draws so much power from his followers that to disband them would be anathema to the Great Dragon To Come. Characters might have some contact with him as he wanders the world alone, seeking out dragon lore. He might ask Player Characters involved with the cult to

seek to change it from within, guiding it back to the original principles, or he might ask that they carry out some seemingly minor request to aid his current line of investigation. Like any of the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants, he is loath to use his own power.

Some remnants of the cult still align with the Converters but the overwhelming majority stand with the War Dragons faction.

Order of Crimson Purity *Inquisitors of the Dragonlords*

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. Many have an interest in the art of mystical alchemy, while others have sadistic or zealous attitude and serve the Empire as hired killers, bounty hunters and witch-hunters.

Cult Skills: Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrnish), Lore (Alchemy), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Martial Arts, Resilience.

Place in the Grand Design: Rooting out internal corruption to purify the Empire in time for ascension.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Babel, Befuddle, Countermagic, Cover of Night, Demoralise, Detect X, Fanaticism, Mindspeech, Oath of Ordeal, Thunder's Voice.

Special Benefits: A character of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank or above gains a +10% bonus to all Influence rolls involving intimidation with Wyrms' Face Believers of any dragonspeaker cult. Cultists of the order can also integrate themselves with Truth runes without a Persistence test. The cult has no unique martial art, though many masters of the Way of the Triumphant Roar often rise through the order's ranks.

Characters of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank and above can also track a human by a magical perception if they have tasted the person's blood. This ability is a weak form of sixth sense tied into the order's mystical affinity with blood. The cultist can sense the general direction of the person just by concentrating and receive a +20% bonus to all Tracking tests made to locate them.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants gain +40% to Perception tests to notice lies and falsehoods as they are uttered.

Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye

The Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye has fallen from favour lately. Their expertise has always lain in prophecy and soothsaying, using their meditative forms of Dragon Mysticism to scry into possible futures. The cult was established by Hela Blacktalon, named for her hands which were burned in magical fire and which she has refused to heal even hundreds of years after the supposed accident. She insists that the scars remind her of her own imperfections.

Recently, the prophetic spells of the cult have taken a dark turn. While their martial art, the Way of the Reptilian Predator, is still practised throughout the sect along with the magic that complements it, their spells focused on predicting the future no longer show images of the Great Dragon To Come. Instead the cultists are finding their visions and dreams plagued by images of war and fire, with dragons turning on the Empires of humans as well as each other. Seeing as how the Conclave have always known their magic to show potential futures rather than visions set in stone, this is not worrying all members of the cult. Those with the highest standing are focusing on achieving more, gathering more initiates, so that the grand transmutation can proceed without flaw.

The symbol of the Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye is a black-slitted round yellow eye, often tattooed onto the palms of its members and displayed as sign of authority. The Way of the Reptilian Predator focuses on many open-palm striking techniques that also display these tattoos.

Storylines dealing with the Conclave are likely to appeal to characters with an interest in the magical and spiritual aspects of the EWF, rather than military matters. Opportunities for outsiders to ally with the Conclave are rare but always worth considering. The secretive cult might not divulge the secrets of their prophecies as they apply to the Dragonlord Empire but they are not averse to teaching the Way of the Reptilian Predator to Wyrms' Face Believers in the hopes of luring them into full initiation. Hiring mercenaries to track down other potential forms of prophecy is perhaps the most common method of dealing with freelance adventurers, as the Conclave desperately seeks out what other seers can tell of the closing years of the Second Age.

As enemies, the Conclave are not the most overtly threatening of the dragonspeaker cults. The edicts Hera

Blacktalon set down at the founding focus her followers into working spiritually for the grand plan rather than attending to the mundane aspects of the Empire. Anyone who crosses this order is likely to be ignored for misdemeanours and punished by cults allied to the Conclave if the deed was heinous enough.

The Conclave's members are spread between the Above and Beyond faction and the Converters. Most War Dragons among the cult have recently changed their leanings since the omens began to darken.

Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye

Prophets of the Great Dragon To Come

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. The cult is populated mainly by scholars, seers and those with an interest in prophecy.

Cult Skills: Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrnish), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Lore (History), Lore (World), Martial Arts, Perception.

Place in the Grand Design: To understand the lessons of past, present and future so that ascension might be reached as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Dispel Magic, Dragon Breath, Emotion, Fanaticism, Fate, Glamour, Good Fortune, Light, Thunder's Voice.

Special Benefits: Cultists of the Conclave can integrate themselves with Luck and Fate runes without a Persistence test. Cultists also gain access to the Way of the Reptilian Predator martial art and its associated spells.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphant and Wyrms' Fang Exultants may cancel one test made by another character once per day, forcing a re-roll.

Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul

The Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul is the order founded by Vistikos Left-Eye himself. They practice an array of Draconic Mysticism powers; at least, they do when they unleash their magic at all. While not all cultists within the Siblings are restrained in their magic use, many of even the lowliest members of the order, the Wyrms' Claw Initiates, avoid expending their mystical power unless they see no other choice or the advantages

of doing so are irresistible. The symbol of the Siblings is a black roaring dragon's head, sporting great horns and bone ridges as well as a red eye. The pupil of the eye is a man's silhouette. In cities where the Siblings have great influence, it is considered a criminal offence to deface the symbol of the cult, punishable by imprisonment. As members of Vistikos Left-Eye's own cult, the Siblings are awarded great honour by their fellow imperial citizens.

The doctrine of the cult focuses on the improvement of the mortal form as a stepping stone to the immortal purity of the Great Dragon To Come. This means that even those who do not openly display their magic arts very often still have the capability to put their bodies through incredible draconic changes and reptilian enhancements. Those adepts who do favour the use of their Draconic Mysticism are among the most feared Dragonlords in the Empire's borders. When they march with the imperial armies, their powers to shapeshift into reptilian marauders and shake the earth with magic are capable of devastating enemy forces. Enemies that actually manage to overcome a Sibling in battle or magical conflict are in for a nasty surprise when the dragon mystic's regenerative spellwork heals his wounds in miraculous time.

The cult also numbers a great many bone-singers, those mystics responsible for forming the traditional weapons and armour of the dragonspeakers. It is believed that a splinter group of Sibling bone-singers were responsible for the initial founding of the Osseous Circle (described below). If evidence ever came to light regarding the truth of this rumour, the Siblings would assuredly suffer a powerful blow to their great prestige.

The Siblings of the Immaculate Flesh and Soul are the most likely wyrmfriends to hire outside adventurers, especially given the current political climate. With the Guiding Council suspecting that the dragonewts are withholding lore vital for the great transformation, the Siblings are seeking draconic knowledge and artefacts without alerting (and thus offending) the Inhuman King. Since the wyrmfriends' hands are tied in this matter they resort to hiring adventurers, paying handsomely for skilled mercenaries to track down rumoured sources of draconic lore, dragon antiquities and even to violate the sanctity of dragonewt temples in the hunt for useful artefacts.

As enemies, the Siblings are a ruthless and powerful organisation to face. The reach of any dragonspeaker cult

stretches across the conquered lands of the Empire but the influence of the Siblings carries that little bit further than the others and is that little bit stronger. The dangers of crossing the EWF are concentrated when it is Vistikos Left-Eye's own cult snapping at the Player Characters' heels.

The Siblings below the Guiding Council are split equally between the War Dragons and the Above and Beyond political movements within the Throne Hands.

Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul Scions of the First Wyrmfriends

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. The Siblings are mainly recruited from the upper echelons of society, with low-ranking and citizens rarely advancing higher than Wyrms' Talon Disciple status.

Cult Skills: Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrmmish), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Martial Arts.

Place in the Grand Design: Bringing about the Great Dragon To Come, no matter the cost.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Bestial Enhancement, Coordination, Dragon Breath, Endurance, Fanaticism, Glamour, Heal, Mobility, Strength, Versatility, Vigour, Water Breath.

Special Benefits: Cultists of the Siblings can integrate themselves with Dragon and Dragonewt runes without a Persistence test. Cultists also gain a +10% bonus on all Influence rolls with Wyrms' Face Believers of other dragonspeaker cults because of the respect attributed to the Siblings.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants feel no ill-effects from any natural temperature extremes. They may integrate themselves with any Cold, Heat, Infinity and Mastery runes without a Persistence test.

Adepts of Inhuman Mastery

The Adepts of Inhuman Mastery concern themselves more with the temporal business of the Empire in the hopes of speeding up the process of spiritual ascension. In this approach, they are among the most unusual of the dragonspeaker cults but enjoy great renown among the Empire's people. Among their fellow cultists, however,

they are often disregarded and shunned as base magicians fulfilling a lowly but necessary role in society and the grand plan.

The magic of the Adepts is focused on mystical control over dinosaurs and dragons. The spiritual aspects of this power should elevate the cult among the most respected dragonspeakers and the other cults with a similar focus do indeed enjoy the expected respect. The Adepts of Inhuman Mastery, however, do not share in this renown. The cult has a proud heritage of commanding dragons and dinosaurs in the Empire's expansion wars and was founded by a highly-regarded member of the Wyrms' Eye Ascendants by the name of Rakiva Beast-Talker. And yet the cult's star is waning as others rise. The Adepts' recent fall comes as the order's members find themselves ordered by the Guiding Council to accompany their invading armies into other lands in the name of 'expanding the Great Dragon's outline'.

Rather than focusing on the spiritual aspects of the grand design, the cult's magicians are pressed into military service and tasked with manipulating the dinosaurs and dragons used by the wyrmfriend soldiers. In the years before, this essential service was spread among the dragonspeaker cults. Lately it increasingly falls to the Adepts and no others. Some cultists ordered into depleting their magical energies are taking it as a necessary duty and bearing their new roles with as much honour as can be salvaged. Others, motivated by mixed amounts of spiritual devotion, jealousy and bitterness wonder just what politics within the Original Twelve has warranted this fall from favour.

The symbol of the Adepts of Inhuman Mastery is a bone-coloured dragon's skeleton in the palm of an open black hand.

Players getting involved with the Adepts are in for a world of trouble. The powers of the cultists were dangerous enough when the order was in a stable position and although the cult remains loyal to the Empire, its members are sliding into political infighting and deep mistrust.

As allies (or if Player Characters are members themselves) the Adepts represent a world of potential insurrection. Some of the cultists fight loyally for the Empire while others are beginning to move against the EWF in secret out of a need for revenge at their treatment. Still others

consider rebellion purely to restore their positions of honour. No matter what an insurrectionist's agenda might be, there are more and more examples of these cultists stooping to hiring adventurers to 'deal with their rivals' and hunt out information that can be used against their enemies in the other cults of the Empire.

As enemies, the Adepts represent a powerful magical arm of the EWF military. Their cultists serve as advisors and occasionally officers in the imperial army, leading up their own regiments of dinosaur cavalry capable of carving through the ranks of the enemy.

Politically-speaking, the Adepts are considered entrenched (if reluctant) members of the War Dragons.

Adepts of Inhuman Mastery *Beastmasters of the Empire*

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. The Adepts are made up of scholars and philosophers with a militaristic bent to their studies.

Cult Skills: Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wymish), Lore (Animal), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Riding.

Place in the Grand Design: To ensure that the armies of the Empire conquer enough land to create the outline of the Great Dragon.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Bestial Enhancement, Clear Path, Detect Dinosaur, Endurance, Mobility, Pierce, Slow, Speedart, Vigour, Water Breath.

Special Benefits: Wyrms' Talon Disciples can speak with dinosaurs and other reptilians, and are able to integrate Dragon and Beast runes without a Persistence roll. Cultists can also learn the Way of the Warring Lizards, the school of martial arts developed by the Adepts.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants are able to remain awake and aware for a number of days equal to their CON before feeling the effects of Fatigue (rather than 10+CON hours).

Children of the Ten Talons

The paradox behind the Empire's magic does not go unnoticed by the Dragonlords. While all but the least promising Wyrms' Face Believers understand that the rise

of the Great Dragon To Come depends on the hoarding of their collective magic, many among the higher echelons resent this limiting of their personal power in temporal matters. Some reason that while they amass their own vast reserves of Dragon Magic, they are actually more vulnerable to attack than practitioners of other magical orders because of their own reluctance to expend energy in actually wielding their Draconic Mysticism and endangering the Great Work. There is truth behind this: the God Learners have hired adventurers in the past to bring down prominent Dragonlords and such actions threaten the imperial ambition.

In response to this, the Children of the Ten Talons were created. Their purpose was to create a pool of talented (but ultimately expendable) dragon mystics that could serve as bodyguards and enforcers for the highest members of other cults. It is believed that these low-ranking cultists do not possess enough power of their own to truly contribute to the Great Dragon To Come, so it matters little if they serve now as necessary pawns in the consolidation of the Empire. In actuality, should a Child of the Ten Talons rise significantly high in personal power, he is immediately indoctrinated into a more 'worthwhile' cult, so the mystic-enforcers of the Empire remain no threat to the final transformation.

More commonly, dragonspeakers belonging to his cult have a plateau of enlightenment and illumination that they can reach, because although they fulfil a vital role in the Empire's goals, they are breaking the precepts of bringing about the Great Dragon To Come. What many members believe in order to reconcile their position in the grand plan is that their faith and efforts somehow count for more than the works of others, because of their adamant defence of the most important Dragonlords. Their sacrifices allow the most vital players in the Great Work to go about their lofty business and ensure the dragon eventually rises. Whether this is true or not is a philosophical matter and there are those among the cult that simply take the deception at face value, enjoying the financial, magical and temporal rewards now over spiritual oneness in the future.

Whatever a dragonspeaker of the cult believes personally, it is well-known that the Children of the Ten Talons are among the most dangerous (and least restrained) of the wyrmfriend magicians.

The symbol of the cult is two open red hands on a white background, with long black, curved claw-fingernails extending from each finger. In public, some members of the order have been known to wear painted wyrm-scale or wyvern-scale armour, though many traditionalists among the Empire consider this a grave insult to the lesser cousins of dragonkind.

Players can get involved with the Children as allies primarily by joining them. The cult is *always* recruiting. Membership puts a restriction on a character's freedoms because he must attend regular duties as a bodyguard for other dragonspeakers, but on the plus side, it means that Games Masters have less to worry about in regards to game balance. The Children are some of the few dragon mystics that feel no compulsion to horde their powers and can therefore get stuck in with an adventuring group like any other magician.

It is much more likely that adventuring groups will have to deal with the Children as enemies, especially if they cross the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The Order of Crimson Purity root out inner corruption and heresy within the imperial borders but it is the Children of Ten Talons that hunt down the enemies of the Dragonlords by any means necessary. If the players make a serious enemy high up in the dragonspeaker cults, they can bet that such a worthy dragon mystic has access to the expendable pool of killers represented by this cult.

As far as the Children can be considered to have any political leanings at all, they are generally considered to be attached to the War Dragon movement.

Children of the Ten Talons *Shields of the Cosmic Dragonspeakers*

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. Bodyguards, warriors, lieutenants and aides of greater dragonspeakers.

Cult Skills: Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrmmish), Lore (EWF), Martial Arts, Resilience.

Place in the Grand Design: To shield the most powerful dragonspeakers from harm so that they might bring about the Great Dragon To Come.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Bladesharp, Countermagic, Countermagic Shield, Darkwall, Dullblade, Endurance, Fanaticism, Shimmer, Slow.

Special Benefits: Cultists are free to learn the Way of the Enraged Wyrms, the martial art developed by the cult's warriors. They may also integrate themselves with Disorder runes without making a Persistence test.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants may make one Second Chance roll per day, without spending a Hero Point, for the purposes of attacking an enemy.

Scions of the Sacred Flame

This minor cult stands among the lesser-known orders of dragonspeaker mystics, with small temples scattered across the Empire, usually as temporary chapels in frontier settlements and recently conquered cities. In each of these separate shrines and humble stone-wall churches, the cultists attend to a single brazier that represents their connection to the holy flame of that is to become the breath of the Dragon Yet To Be. They believe that upon the completion of the Great Work, every flame burning in the Empire will bond mystically to become the first roar of fire that the Great Dragon exhales as it rises. To that end, they regard the element as precious and holy, and seek to always maintain their own fires burning in their shrines. Tradition states that if the holy flame of a shrine goes out, the cultists must abandon the cursed site and move their order elsewhere to begin again, watching over a new flame.

The Scions are perhaps the greatest wielders of fire magic in the entire Empire, purely because it occupies almost their entire mystical focus. The cultists wear clothing and robes of ash grey and dull, fiery orange, marking them distinctly wherever they go. Most also sport burns on their hands, faces and bodies, which the impious often misinterpret as the result of accidents. In truth, the Scions achieve meditative trances while scourging themselves with fire and regard the marks on their flesh as evidence of a purified soul within.

The dragonspeakers of this cult believe that by the time the Great Dragon is born and tears itself from the land, the Scions will have created enough shrines to provide all the fire the creature will need in life. Therefore, the cultists are not reluctant about expending their magic in creating fire spells, especially when facing enemies, though they are notably reluctant to tap into any other Draconic Magic. Cult doctrine states that although the magicians are allowed to generate fire without worrying it will be a detriment to the Dragon Yet To Be, expending

energy in frivolous shape-shifting is a violation of the Great Work.

Though the cult has relatively few numbers in comparison to the Order of Crimson Purity or the Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul, it is likely that players will come into contact with the Scions as antagonists more often than they might encounter the magicians from other dragonspeaker cults. This is because, as with the Children of the Ten Talons, the Scions are often pressured into work where a dragon mystic's powers are required without risk to the Great Work. The God Learners are especially familiar with the Scions, who they know as 'fire mages' on account of their destructive, flame-born power. On a related note, it is well-known among the other dragonspeaker cults that the Scions of the Sacred Flame are incredibly diligent in their quests to amass the largest resource of fire runes anywhere in Glorantha. Rumours speak of a colossal vault under the cult's main temple in Orin Jistrel where thousands upon thousands of fire runes lay in silence, waiting for the day when they shall provide the more power to the breath of the Great Dragon To Come.

The symbol of the Scions is a grey fist wreathed in red flames. Many wear this image as a tattoo on their skin, inked with a magical mixture of real ash and wyrms' blood.

The Scions are generally considered part of the Above and Beyond movement, though a significant minority ally with the War Dragons.

Scions of the Sacred Flame
Scarred Zealots Devoted to the Holy Element

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. Idealists, converters, zealots and preachers.

Cult Skills: Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrmsish), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Martial Arts, Resilience.

Place in the Grand Design: To ensure enough fire is burning within the Empire at the moment of the Great Dragon's birth.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Countermagic, Demoralise, Disruption, Dragon Breath, Firearrow, Fireblade, Ignite, Light, Shimmer, Warmth.

Special Benefits: Cultists are free to learn the Way of the Capricious Fire, the martial art developed by the cult's warriors. They may also integrate themselves with Fire and Heat runes without making a Persistence test.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants take no damage from non-magical fire and halve all damage sustained from magical fire.

Heralds of the Coruscating Halo

The Heralds represent the insidious push of draconisation into the religions and cultures of foreign lands. Their efforts are primarily focused in Dara Happa, where they seek to convert worshippers of the Sky God pantheon to following the dragonspeaker cults. With the Sun Dragon rightfully on the Dara Happan throne and the Great Dragon To Come nearing completion, all omens should lead the Pelorian people to wholesale abandonment of their old ways and into worship of the EWF doctrine. The Heralds of the Coruscating Halo established themselves within Dara Happa, born from the most talented members of the Golden Dragon Society that infiltrated the nation in years past. These mystics expected to see the people awed and swayed by the mile-long reptilian body coiled around the imperial palace, converted in masses by this colossal beast that rose to be their Emperor in defiance of their false gods.

Clearly that was not the case. The Heralds of the Coruscating Halo now plan to do something about it.

They believe that upon the Great Dragon's rise, the sun itself shall be the creature's halo. Its ascension will alleviate any need for Yelm and his Solar Court of sun gods because the sun will only fall on Glorantha where the Great Dragon turns its face. It is with this image in mind – the Great Dragon haloed by the sun – that the Heralds seek to reshape Pelorian faith.

The cult spreads out its influence in careful tendrils through the ruling class of Dara Happa. Dragonspeakers in favour with the order are in positions to play at politics with the highest and noblest Pelorian families, seeking converts among the nation's leaders. A secondary concern is that of the Sky God priests who must also be converted, though most dragonspeakers believe that the proud and haughty Dara Happan faithful are too resistant to the changes brought by the Heralds and therefore accept limited success in this area. It does not stop them trying, however.

A final pulse of influence is directed at the lower classes and the smaller cultures of Peloria, such as the Darjini people, the Pelandan culture, the nation of Carmania and the Rinliddi eagle-riding folk. The Heralds have had a great deal of success on this front, warping the traditional Sky God faiths of these cultures to resemble draconic ideals in many parts of Peloria. When adventurers travel among these folk, it is likely that they will be surprised at the density of dragonspeakers belonging to this cult that now make their homes among the Pelorian people.

As enemies, the Heralds are not immediately dangerous. They are not shy in expending their Dragon Magic and have a penchant for both shape-shifting magic and spells that blind their opponents, but overall the Heralds is a cult made up of fervent preachers, silver-tongued zealots and ardent idealists. They are not a combative order by nature. In fact, some of their small temples established outside Dara Happa serve as hospitals and hospices, tending to the sick, the injured and the dying. This is partly in order to present a nobler front to the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and partly because many Heralds are genuinely set on the path to helping others before it is too late and they are left behind when the Great Dragon rises.

In Dara Happa itself, some of the grand cathedrals of marble and gold are places of fervent and zealous doom-saying. The cultists there warn the masses of the sun's imminent death and its rebirth as the dragon's halo. In regions where such worship is the norm, converts to the EWF faith tend to be drawn to it out of fear.

The symbol of the Heralds is a black dragon's roaring head on a white circular background.

The majority of Heralds align with the Converter movement, with a small scattering among the War Dragons and the Above and Beyond faction.

Heralds of the Coruscating Halo *Preachers Warning of the Sun's Death*

Followers: Dragonspeakers only.

Cult Skills: Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrnish), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF), Persistence.

Place in the Grand Design: To convert the Dara Happans so they are not left behind in the ascension.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Bestial Enhancement, Demoralise, Emotion, Fanaticism, Glamour, Ignite, Light, Mindspeech, Thunder's Voice, Warmth.

Special Benefits: Cultists are free to learn the Dance of the Blackened Sun. In Peloria, the Heralds are considered above the law and cannot be arrested by the authorities.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants add +20% to all Runecasting (Fire, Heat and Light) tests and may integrate Fire, Heat and Light runes without a Persistence test.

Covenant of the Storm Dragon

Depending on whom one asks, the Orlanthi culture has either suffered great corruption due to EWF influence, or is adapting to reflect a previously-unknown truth. Unsurprisingly, the dragonspeaker cults take the second view. Draconised Orlanthi faith is spreading like wildfire among the tribal followers of the Storm God and the cult of Orlanth the Dragon is the prime example of just how malleable the religion is proving under EWF influence. For some dragonspeakers, the cult that calls itself the Covenant of the Storm Dragon, allowing converts to access their Divine Magic (no matter how altered the doctrine might be) is still a threat to the Dragon Yet To Come. They believe it shows a dangerous precedent of half-commitment. It is worth noting that the Covenant is practically alone in this belief, even among the dragonspeaker cults, but their numbers are many.

Rather than encourage Orlanthi magicians to channel the Divine Magic of their draconised pantheon, the Covenant of the Storm Dragon seeks wholesale conversion. Its goal is to unite all worshippers of Orlanth the Dragon under its banner, allowing them to access Draconic Mysticism for their magical desires rather than (draconised) Orlanthi Divine Magic.

The Orlanthi are oppressed in many regions by the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and resistance to the Covenant's ideals run hot, strong and deep within the culture. Even sections of the draconised masses show defiance against the increasing pressures to adapt further, for many wonder just where the adaptation ends and the oppression begins. In this light, it might be hard to see how the Covenant succeeds at all, if one ignored simple human greed.

Dragon Magic might lack the raw power of Divine Magic but it comes easier to practitioners and has many immediate and impressive effects. Combined with a very ardent belief in Orlanth the Dragon, possessing draconic power suddenly becomes an emulation of the great dragon god rather than a betrayal of his true, traditional magic. Dragonspeakers inducted into the cult through their greed or their faith in draconised doctrine, find significant respect and power among the ranks of the Covenant. They are the mystics who follow the faith of the Storm Dragon, using their belief in Orlanth and his draconic brood to channel energy into the Great Work. Their magic combines the thunder and lightning of Orlanth's faithful with the holy fire and reptilian grace of the imperial religion. They espouse that the Great Dragon's first roar will create storms that wrack Glorantha and that his first breath will be to exhale lightning. The Great Dragon itself will be the ideal of draconic perfection that Orlanth the Dragon tried so hard to be in the Storm Age.

The divide between orthodox Orlanthi and draconised Orlanthi is bitter enough without additional influence. Degenerating further, the animosity between orthodox Orlanthi and the Covenant of the Storm Dragon is outright fierce and almost always ends in bloodshed. In regions where the two factions oppose one another, members of the other dragonspeaker cults have had to step in and demand that the Covenant refrain from unleashing their magic any further, or risk censure. While the Storm Dragons are as conservative in their mystical dealings as any of the imperial orders, the exception to their prudence is when coming face to face with their traditional Divine Magic-wielding counterparts.

Orlanthi characters that refuse to bow to the new ways will find themselves making grave enemies if they draw the attention of the Covenant. Adventuring groups made up of dragonspeaker mystics may have to reign in any Storm Dragon members if their companion is unable to restrain unleashing his hatred for any powerful orthodox Orlanthi the group encounter in their travels.

The symbol of the Covenant is a dragon's claw surrounded by a ring of lightning.

The Covenant is generally split between the War Dragons and the Above and Beyond movement. Relatively few walk to the path of the Converters.

Covenant of the Storm Dragon

Followers of the True, Reptilian Orlanth

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. The most zealous Orlanthi converts.

Cult Skills: Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrnish), Lore (Draconised Orlanthi Theology), Lore (EWF), Martial Arts

Place in the Grand Design: To convert the Orlanthi by faith or by force.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Bestial Enhancement, Bladesharp, Demoralise, Dragon Breath, Fanaticism, Fireblade, Glamour, Strength, Versatility, Vigour.

Special Benefits: Cultists are free to learn the Way of Storm's Fury. They also receive a +10% bonus on all Influence tests with draconised Orlanthi. Wyrms' Talon Disciples can speak with eagles and other carnivorous birds. Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants ignore all penalties to their Riding skill tests.

The Osseous Circle

The principles of Evolution, as Draconic Mysticism alters a dragonspeaker's body and soul, are seen as signs of purity among the imperial cults, not signs of magical deviance against nature despite what critics and foreign scholars insist. One cult in particular devotes time and effort to the alteration of their physical forms, believing that by draconising themselves now, they speed the ascension of the Great Dragon To Come. Among the other cults, the mystics of the Osseous Circle are something of a regrettable joke. The Order of Crimson Purity has almost succeeded many times in wiping out the cult but new members spring up every few years. The other cults frown upon the expenditure of Dragon Magic in such futile pursuits but do not threaten the Circle because it is so insignificant in the Empire, with only a few thousand members at any one time.

Another reason that the Circle is allowed to exist – a reason whispered through the halls of power in the Empire – is that the Circle are responsible for a vast number of the magical klanths and breastplates worn by so many dragonspeakers. It is believed that the mystics of the Circle have tens of thousands of contacts among the other cults, to whom they provide bone-sung weapons in return for protection, runes and other payment.

The cultists of the Osseous Circle believe that strength lies in the bones of mortal creatures, more so than anywhere else in the body, even in muscles, organs or the mind. They believe that the Dragon Yet To Be will be born not with the mountains of the Empire as its bones, but the skeletal matter of every living being within EWF territory at the moment of ascension. To this end, they strengthen and alter their own bone structures, glorifying in their warped forms and finding strength in their deformities.

It is believed that the Circle is not above kidnapping disbelievers and converting them through bone-warping torture. This is absolutely true, but if it was confirmed as fact rather than hearsay, the Order of Crimson Purity would take great steps to annihilate the Circle from the face of the Empire. Powerless, the Circle is tolerated as an order of harmless deviants that contribute energy to the Great Work even through their incompetence and misguided ideals. If the Circle ever came to possess real power, it is likely that the more zealous dragonspeaker cults (which is most of them) would act to end the deviancy for good lest they draw power from the Dragon Yet To Come.

The symbol of the Osseous Circle is a black, jawless human skull in a red circle, surrounded by a ring of black finger-bones.

The Circle stands largely outside of politics. Those members that do indulge in the great imperial game generally fall in the Above and Beyond movement.

The Osseous Circle

Bone-shaping Priests Devoted to Perfection

Followers: Dragonspeakers only. Deviants, bone-carvers, armourers, weaponsmiths and torturers.

Cult Skills: Craft (Armourer), Craft (Weaponsmith), Dance, Draconic Illumination, Language (Auld Wyrnish), Lore (Dragons), Lore (EWF).

Place in the Grand Design: To purify themselves in order to purify the Great Dragon and to shape weapons and armour for the other dragonspeakers.

Cult Rune Magic Spells: Befuddle, Bestial Enhancement, Bludgeon, Disruption, Fanaticism, Golden Tongue, Heal, Repair.

Special Benefits: Cultists are free to learn the Way of Osseous Subjugation, the martial art developed by the cult's warriors. They are free of any financial restrictions to their cult, which is funded by covert benefactors.

Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants automatically receive klanths, dragon bone armour and other bone-carved items, created for them by the finest bone-carvers in the Circle.

Draconic Dances & Martial Arts

The dragonspeakers devote a great deal of their time and energies into the perfection of their unique performance arts. The advantages of the myriad combat styles are twofold: a spellcaster can literally channel his energies and bring about spell effects as he goes through the motions of combat, and even without expending his precious magic he is a formidable opponent in battle.

The advantages of the dance styles are less violent in nature but no less useful. Dragon-like dance is considered a high art form in the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and the dragonspeaker cults that stand above their follows with the most prestige are the ones that develop their own dance styles and performing troupes. Martial arts are recognised as the baser of the two options open to dragonspeakers and dancing is seen as the purer. Of course, most cultists seek to learn both out of practicality, the quest for enlightenment and the ability to impress the right people within the Empire.

Almost every cult fashions its own dance or martial art style in the years after its inception. Players involved in the EWF cults might have the opportunity of adding new moves to the established performances or even creating a new art altogether. The cults that lack individual styles of performance or combative art tend to fall back on older, established methods and either use them as they are or introduce minor refinements where they see fit.

Mechanically, each of the dragonspeaker martial arts functions the same as any use of the Martial Arts skill, including the ability to purchase the Slaying Touch Legendary Ability. Characters belonging to these cults also have the opportunity to purchase Legendary Abilities associated with their order's dance or martial art style.

Way of the Reptilian Predator

The Way of the Reptilian Predator is the martial art designed by the Covenant of the Third Reptilian Eye. In practice, the fighters use their hands as spell-enhanced claws to strike out in lightning fast slashes, tearing chunks from their opponents. It is a graceful martial art, founded on the principles of dance and movement, with experts ducking, dodging and weaving for minutes on end before leaping in to inflict telling strikes at the perfect moment. Those witnessing the combat style at work have described its practitioners as fighting with some kind of sixth sense, for nothing else can explain the speed of their dodges. In truth, many of the fighters use their mystic magic to enhance the dragon eye tattoos on their palms to detect and anticipate aggressive movement in their foes. This allows them to sense strikes and avoid them before they ever have time to connect.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of the Reptilian Predator practitioners is Graceful Blur of Movement.

Graceful Blur of Movement

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

When dodging, the character with this ability is perfectly balanced and sure on his feet as he moves his body away from harm. The dragonspeaker's chance of a Dodge critical success is doubled. In addition, the character never needs to Give Ground unless he decides to do so, representing his unfailing ability to maintain his balance and dodge at close-quarters.

Way of the Triumphant Roar

This is one of the most common styles in the Empire, used by many of the cults that for whatever reason have never developed their own martial art or dance style. It is a style involving a great number of rolls and backflips to avoid incoming blows, with even the dodges executed to allow the martial artist the chance to deliver a kick from another position a moment later. The most notable aspect of the Way of the Triumphant Roar is the fighter's well-timed and disconcerting howls as he does battle. In the past, the sound of the cries and roars of two martial artists battling one another have been compared to a pack of dinosaurs fighting over a kill. While the howls might seem comical on description, it is unnerving for any fighter to have each blow inflicted upon him accompanied by a crazed

martial artist's roar. Foes facing this style soon suffer the effects of temporary dizziness and deafness if the fight goes on long enough, creating plenty of opportunities for the dragonspeaker to finish toying with his prey and end the battle for good.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of the Triumphant Roar practitioners is Predator's Roar.

PREDATOR'S ROAR

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

Every time the character engages an opponent in close combat, he lets out a dragon-like roar designed to intimidate and distract his foe. Each turn that an enemy opposes a roaring dragonspeaker with this Legendary Ability in close combat, the enemy increases their chance to fumble any Weapon skill test by 1%. This fumble chance increases by 1% every round in which the target continues to hear the character's roar. All enemies in close combat with the dragonspeaker will be affected by the roar, unless they are deaf or immune to morale effects. These penalties represent the intimidation of the fighting style as well as the deafness and disorientation it causes.

For Example: Jedzo the dragonspeaker is fighting Scira, an armoured soldier in the God Learner's employ. During the first Combat Turn, Scira's chance to fumble becomes 99-00% rather than 00%. If he continues to engage the roaring dragonspeaker in close combat, Scira's fumble chance in the next Combat Turn is 98-00%.

Way of the Warring Lizards

Dinosaurs and dragons that fight on land are known for their lumbering, grinding battles where endurance and willpower play as much part as strength and claws. This slow and brutal style is practised by the Adepts of Inhuman Mastery, mimicking their dinosaur servitors. It is a martial art of grapples and throws rather than fist-strikes and kicks, with the practitioner always moving with reptilian precision, albeit relatively slowly when compared to other styles. Rather than dodge blows, a Warring Lizard martial artist will strike out at the limb or weapon as it comes toward him. Punches and kicks result in the attacker's arm or leg being grappled, then broken, numbed, dislocated or even bitten as the martial artist

tears chunks from his enemy with his spell-enhanced teeth. If the enemy allows himself to be grappled bodily (which is the ultimate aim of the dragonspeakers using this style) then he will suffer the agony of being torn apart by the cultist's jaws.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of the Warring Lizards practitioners is Defiant Endurance.

DEFIANT ENDURANCE

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

No matter the strength of a character's muscles and the thickness of his flesh, this mind-over-matter martial art teaches him how to take damage and absorb it throughout his body. His willpower is iron-hard to the point that his naked skin is capable of shrugging off damage. Dragonspeakers with this Legendary Ability have one armour point of natural armour on all hit locations. This bonus stacks with equipped armour and the Skin of the Bear Legendary Ability.

Way of the Infected Claw

Another relatively common style is the Way of the Infected Claw, practiced throughout the dragonspeaker cults and serving as the foundation of many other styles developed by the temples. The martial art is considered one of the more simple styles within the cults but is no less dangerous than its' more crowd-pleasing cousins, focused as it is on delivering 'claw' strikes to the eyes and mouth of opponents. Through the motions of dodging and weaving out of reach, the dragonspeaker will take chances at leaping into his opponent's guard in order to tear at his unprotected face and throat. The main disadvantage of the style arises when facing armoured enemies because without the disabling strikes to the head and neck that makes the Way of the Infected Claw stand out, practitioners are forced to rely on the more standard punches and kicks from other martial arts.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of the Infected Claw practitioners is Blinding Strike.

BLINDING STRIKE

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8



This ability allows a character inflict terrible damage to his opponent's eyes and face with deadly accurate finger-strikes. When making a precise attack to an opponent's face, the dragonspeaker may also bypass armour in the same attack. Many dragonspeaker masters of the Way of the Infected Claw also enhance their Blinding Strikes by casting spells on their hands to change them into claws, most often by using the Bestial Enhancement or Dragon Claws spells.

Dance of the Blackened Sun

This dance style was developed by the Siblings of Immaculate Flesh and Soul, with Vistikos Left-Eye himself heavily involved in its creation. It is said that the motions of the performance were derived from watching the Inhuman King spar with his warriors and summoning his own mystic magic when instructing the spiritual father of the EWF movement. The dance itself has a haunting, alien grace to every motion with the pace smoothly increasing and decreasing over time. The style seeks to emulate the terrible grace and perfection of dragons in flight and in battle, and expert dancers will spend hours in eerie silence going through the movements. The name

of the dance comes from the fear that strikes mortal hearts when a dragon flying overhead blocks out the sun.

The Legendary Ability available to Dance of the Blackened Sun practitioners is Dragon's Lethal Grace.

Dragon's Lethal Grace

Requirements: POW 17 or higher, Dance 90% or higher

Hero Points: 12

Characters have trained their bodies to such lithe perfection that their movements are beyond mortal grace. When the dragonspeaker is in close combat, any Combat Action made by an opponent that is *not* a Close Combat Attack (or involves a Close Combat Attack) leaves the attacker open to a free attack from the dragonspeaker. This represents the unprecedented fighting speed of these advanced dragonspeakers, able to find weakness in almost any fighting style.

Dance of the Dying Dragon

This style is practiced much less in the Empire today because of the superstitious belief that it could lead to the failure of the Great Dragon To Come. The whirling dance is a fast and energetic performance of leaps, spins and twirls, meant to emulate the fall of a dying dragon from the sky. In decades past it was considered an emotional piece of art, performed in the courts of the Empire much the same way as a bard might play a dirge. Now, although many practitioners still cling to the style and cite its place in imperial tradition, others have abandoned the Dance of the Dying Dragon out of shared superstition or simply a desire not to attract negative attention.

The Legendary Ability available to Dance of the Dying Dragon practitioners is Spinning Evasion.

Spinning Evasion

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Dance 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

The twists, spins, leaps and twirls of this complicated dance promote supreme agility. When a character with

this ability makes a dive Reaction against an area attack, he can use his Dance skill to replace his Dodge skill. If the Dance skill is used, failures are treated as successes, while successes are treated as critical successes (normally resulting in the dragonspeaker being unaffected by the area attack). Fumbles remain as disastrous as ever.

Way of the Enraged Wurm

Nothing on Glorantha strikes fear into mortal hearts like the anger of dragons. Many martial arts, especially the styles of the dragonspeaker cults, focus on dispassionate skill and ruthless detachment over hot-headed (and thus mistake-prone) fury. The Way of the Enraged Wurm is the exception that proves the rule. It focuses on a number of acrobatic leaps, spinning aerial kicks and numerous pulls to unbalance an opponent, leaving him open for a savage kick to the throat, face, solar plexus or other vital area. The style is impressive to see in action but any visual flair the martial art offers is usually counteracted by the merciless fanaticism of those that practice it. Like the Children of Ten Talons themselves, the martial style they perform is aggressively blunt and unpleasant to face if one happens to be an enemy of the Empire.

The Legendary Ability learned available to Way of the Enraged Wurm practitioners is Dolorous Blow.

DOLOROUS BLOW

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90%
Hero Points: 8

The Way of the Enraged Wurm teaches its pupils to finish their fights quickly and decisively, ending any threats to the Empire with no mercy. The dragonspeakers of the Children of the Ten Talons often work towards learning this ability, which allows the Martial Arts attacks of the character to inflict +1 damage. For the purposes of Knockback, the damage of the attack is considered to be doubled.

Way of Capricious Fire

The martial artists that practice this discipline focus their movements not on reptilian grace and draconic power but on the flickering, unpredictable motions of a burning flame. Strikes are not designed to be ponderous killing blows, but delivered as dozens of lesser injuries, inflicted in the space of only a few heartbeats. Each punch or kick is delivered with the aim of causing minor damage that builds up over time, with blows that land across

the opponent's entire body, progressively weakening the enemy and causing him pain all over as the fight continues. Dodges are incorporated into the movements of each attack, allowing the dragonspeaker to move aside from a blow and strike back with rapid ease.

This is a hard discipline to master. Human instinct in battle often falls down to a desire to inflict as much damage as possible in order to survive and end the fight. The Way of Capricious Fire teaches the exact opposite, so that when those who face this art are eventually beaten, they are covered in bruises, cuts and have a number of broken bones, all adding up to a relentless agony before they finally die. For those who master this patient discipline, the sadistic elements inherent in the style are rarely lost on its practitioners.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of Capricious Fire practitioners is Lethal Quickness.

Lethal Quickness

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher
Hero Points: 8

This ability allows the character to sacrifice hitting power for quickness and an increased number of blows. When the dragonspeaker elects to take the flurry action and uses only Martial Arts attacks, he may inflict an additional Martial Arts attack.

Way of Storm's Fury

Half of this style is drawn from standard dragonspeaker disciplines such as Infected Claw and Triumphant Roar, while the other half was developed in recent decades in emulation of Orlanthi battle dances. The focus of the martial art is on using the fists as brute clubs, almost like hammers, in order to crush the bones of enemies. Combine this show of force with dragonspeaker style grace, and the results are an effective – if loud and brutish – discipline that is formidable to witness and even worse to face. The Covenant of the Storm Dragon developed this style and its members remain the only wurmfriends to use it. Although every martial discipline used by the cults has its own traditional spells that accompany the moves and highlight the fighter's effectiveness, the Way of Storm's Fury considers such castings almost mandatory when the art is performed, frowning upon those who hold back their mystical energies when doing battle.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of Storm's Fury practitioners is Thundering Fists of Stone.

Thundering Fists of Stone

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Martial Arts 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

The character's punch attacks are weighted with incredible killing force, hitting hard and heavy, inflicting great damage to anyone unlucky enough to be on the receiving end. The character's chance of a critical success when using Martial Arts is doubled, but only when attacking (not parrying, for instance).

Way of Osseous Subjugation

For all their flaws in the eyes of the other dragonspeaker cults, the Osseous Circle have earned a reputation as the creators of a vicious martial art. The style is a vast collection of exact movements and strikes, with each attack designed to break or damage one of the opponent's bones in some way. A standard combination strike would involve the dragonspeaker snapping the wrist of his enemy, bending over backwards at an inhuman angle to avoid a returned blow and following up with a punishing hold that lasts long enough for the martial artist to dislocate his enemy's elbow joint and release him immediately.

Encounters where one of the fighters is using this style tend to end in agony if the victim cannot achieve victory quickly. Few people can suffer too much damage to their bones without either succumbing to unconsciousness from the pain or simply dying when the dragonspeaker snaps something vital, like the victim's spine. It is said that the Osseous Circle use this technique to torture their enemies when severe methods of interrogation are required.

The Legendary Ability available to Way of Osseous Subjugation practitioners of this discipline is Bone-Craft.

Bone-Craft

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Craft (Armourer or Weaponsmith) 90% or higher

Hero Points: 8

Dragonspeakers with this level of ability are able to create exceptional dragon bone armour and weaponry

with great ease. The character halves his Craft skill one fewer time when making a greater, exquisite, marvellous, surpassing or heroic bone-crafted item (see the Between Adventures chapter of the *RuneQuest Companion*). They may therefore make greater bone-crafted items without modifying their Craft skill at all. Wyrmfriends with this level of skill are likely to be in great demand by other dragonspeaker cultists who will go to great lengths and offer large rewards in order to secure the character's services. Player Characters developing this ability will find it very easy to acquire political favours in return for their craft.

Dance of the Divine Serpent

This style is practiced mainly by the Heralds of the Coruscating Halo, though it has recently spread to several other cults that admired its incredible lightness and grace, using it to replace the Dance of the Dying Dragon they had previously performed. The movements of the discipline seek to portray the grandeur of a dragon in flight, along with the looping twists and great breadth of aerial motion that such creatures are capable of. In some temples, much of the dance is actually performed while floating above the floors, though this is considered by many to be a needless embellishment despite all the beauty it brings to the movements.

The Legendary Ability available to Dance of the Divine Serpent practitioners is Effortless Flight.

Effortless Flight

Requirements: POW 15 or higher, Draconic Illumination 90% or higher, must know the Dragon Flight spell (see page 37)

Hero Points: 8

Characters with this ability have developed their skills in flying to the point where it feels as natural to them as walking does. This Legendary Ability allows dragonspeakers to add the Duration 10 trait to the Dragon Flight spell and remove the Concentration trait.

Divine Intervention

Times are changing for the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and the most dangerous mystical evidence comes in the form of the Cosmic Dragon's silence. It is said that Vistikos Left-Eye, guided by the Inhuman King, communed with this great and perfect spirit of all existence. The

revelations born of this communication formed the ideals of the Great Dragon in the minds of Left-Eye and his first apprentices. For centuries it has been a secret aspect of the Empire's strength that the spiritual father of the EWF has a direct way of communicating with the voice of the cosmos. There could be no greater evidence that the wyrmfriends followed the perfect path.

When a member of the dragonspeaker cults called upon Divine Intervention in the past, it was a cry for aid sent out to the universe itself and targeted at the draconic entity of perfection. If successful, whatever power the mystic had within him would somehow strike an accord with this infinite cosmic force and it would intervene much as if a named deity had exerted its influence.

Recently, that has gone wrong.

Divine Intervention no longer functions for the mystics of the Empire with the potency of previous centuries. The secret reports that filter through the highest levels of imperial society speak of the Cosmic Dragon's sudden silence. No dragonspeaker anywhere in Glorantha has been able to commune with the great entity in several months and the few prophetic cults in the EWF are now seeing dark omens in the future. Not even Vistikos Left-Eye – now a hollow shell of his former self – can contact the spirit of the universe... and the silence is a damning one.

Wyrms' Claw Initiates, Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants may request Divine Intervention at times of great need, channelling their inner perfection out into the cosmos through veneration of the Cosmic Dragon. Dragonspeakers may perform the action even if unconscious, though not if they have been killed. In previous centuries of the Second Age, the rules for Divine Intervention were the same as those of other cults. Now, many dragonspeakers do not hear a reply to their pleas at all.

- ☒ When Divine Intervention is requested by a Wyrms' Claw Initiate, roll 1D100 twice. If both rolls are equal to or less than the character's POW, the call for aid is answered.
- ☒ Wyrms' Hand Triumphants still manifest a stronger bond to the Cosmic Dragon even if they no longer hear its voice. They need only roll 1D100 once.
- ☒ Wyrms' Fang Exultants retain the strongest links to the cosmic dragon. They need only roll 1D20.

While the dragonspeakers are still able to connect their inner perfected energies with the wider universe, these rules clearly show how strained that connection is becoming as the Third Age nears. The invisible forces of the universe take their toll on the Dragon Mystic and the character will suffer a permanent loss of POW equal to the highest dice roll if he is successful. If the character's POW is reduced to 0 by this, his soul is dispersed, returning to the infinite energies of the cosmos, effectively killing the character permanently (though his request will still be granted).

The Art of Draconic Mysticism

Draconic Mysticism or simply 'Dragon Magic' is the dominant school of Mysticism in Second Age Glorantha. Its dominance arises not out of the number of practitioners (though the EWF has no shortage of capable magicians) but from the sheer power of the magic and the way it promises – or threatens – to reshape the world. It is a power that humans have never wielded before and one that threatens their very souls if they are not careful in its acquisition and implementation.

Mysticism itself is the practice of enlightenment through meditation, research and dedication to a mystical ideal. In the case of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and the host of dragonspeaker cults, the ideal they seek is that of draconic perfection: oneness with the world and the universe through transformation into the Great Dragon To Come.

To that end the magicians of the EWF look deep into ancient dragon lore, the myths and legends of the Empire's dragonewt allies and use this knowledge to meditate on their own place within the changing Empire and the Great Dragon. When they train physically, the magicians reshape their inner harmonies by chanting benedictions in Auld Wyrnish to perfect the body from the flawed human shape to something closer to the draconic ideal. When they undergo rigorous mental study, self-analysis and periods of contemplative meditation, they are musing on the place of their own consciousness in the Cosmic Dragon, which is the only perfect philosophical perception of the universe.

The more enlightened he becomes, the more power a Draconic Mystic gathers to himself. The more feats of

magic that he is capable of, the more he sees his own place in the Great Dragon To Come. The more he is assured of his place, the less inclined he is to use his powers in the human world, for to expend gathered energy is to bind oneself to the Now and not to What Is Coming.

Almost all other forms of magic, especially God Learner Sorcery, are universally perceived as misguided at best and worthless at worst. Note that few Draconic Mystics openly look down on Runecasting. In fact, almost all of the dragonspeakers practice both kinds of magic given the opportunity to do so. Rune Magic can provide access to abilities and powers that a magician would regret acquiring or using through Draconic Mysticism, since to do so would drain his personal commitment to the Great Dragon. In this light it is easy to see why so many EWF magicians become skilled at Runecasting as well as their more mystical leanings.

Unlike the Rune Magic detailed in *RuneQuest*, Draconic Mysticism is not available to everyone. A character must be a member of a dragonspeaker cult in order to acquire this magic and must prove his own enlightenment in order to rise through the ranks and progress further.

Draconic Mysticism – A Brief Summary

Draconic Mysticism (and Mysticism itself) shares many qualities with Rune Magic but the mechanics for using the power varies in significant ways. It is a path of learning and understanding; a patient road to power rather than one involving the simple collection and integration of runes. Before a spell can be cast using Draconic Mysticism, the following process must be followed:

- ☒ Draconic Mysticism spells are cast using the character's Draconic Illumination skill. This skill must therefore be learnt before any Draconic Mysticism spells may be cast.
- ☒ The character must learn the specific Draconic Mysticism spell that he wishes to cast.

Once the character has acquired the Draconic Illumination skill and learnt a Draconic Mysticism spell, he is ready to try casting that spell.

- ☒ To cast a spell, the character must make a Draconic Illumination skill test.

- ☒ If the test critically succeeds, the spell's effects take place and the spellcaster suffers from Losing the Path (see page 27).
- ☒ If the test succeeds, the spell's effects take place and a number of Magic Points are deducted from the spellcaster's total.
- ☒ If the test fails, the spell does not take effect and the spellcaster loses 1 Magic Point.
- ☒ If the test fumbles, the spell does not take effect and the spellcaster suffers from Backlash (see page 27).

Acquiring Draconic Mysticism

To gain Dragon Magic is to walk a path of meditation, patience and enlightenment. Once a character has reached the dragonspeaker rank required to learn Draconic Magic spells of various Magnitudes, he is free to study under the tuition of his cult's experienced members and draw upon the order's resources, gathered lore and its temple facilities necessary for meditation and martial arts training.

- ☒ Wyrms' Face Believers will not be taught Dragon Magic spells, though they will be taught Draconic Illumination.
- ☒ Wyrms' Talon Disciples can be taught any Dragon Magic spells (up to a Magnitude 4).
- ☒ Wyrms' Claw Initiates can be taught any Dragon Magic spells (up to a Magnitude 8).
- ☒ Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants can be taught any Dragon Magic spells, of any Magnitude.

The sinuous, dance-like martial arts are a key aspect to the understanding of Dragon Magic, as the cultist learns the limits and strengths of his own imperfect body, along with techniques to bring it closer to perfection. Dance is considered a purer form of physical meditation and training among many of the more prestigious dragonspeaker cults and is likewise vital to the development of the Dragon Within. The reptilian dance performances of the various cults are dizzying to behold when displayed by master practitioners, though few would ever consider performing their meditative art for something as base as payment.

Important Note: As noted in the sidebar on page 27, a Dragon Magic spellcaster can never have a Draconic Illumination score that exceeds either his Dance or Martial Arts skills, depending on which one is higher (which he obviously devotes the most time and effort to).

Learning Dragon Magic Spells

Every spell in Draconic Mysticism is graded by its Magnitude, a score that indicates its relative power. Magnitude 1 spells are the weakest and easiest to learn while Magnitude 10 represents some of the mightiest magic possible in the Glorantha Second Age. Learning Mysticism spells takes much longer than Rune Magic, representing the trials of meditation, research and understanding. However, they are cheaper to master, with the costs representing access to the cult's library of tomes and scrolls as well as time in the isolation of meditation cells, membership in the dance troupes and training in the martial arts arenas. The cost is low because the Empire of Wyrms' Friends actively encourages the citizenry to progress through the dragonspeaker cults – all in the name of the Great Dragon To Come. See the Learning Dragon Magic Spells table for the exact prices and times to learn spells. It is important to note that the learning time need not be uninterrupted effort for the entire duration but that at least six hours a day must be spent in training and study if the spell is to be learned.

What makes Draconic Mysticism unique is that despite its gruelling learning times, it is possible for cultists to learn more than one spell at a time. Provided that the character pays the money for individual spells and stays the course, he is able to learn a number of spells based on his rank in the cult.

- ☒ Wyrms' Talon Disciples can study up to two Dragon Magic spells at any one time.
- ☒ Wyrms' Claw Initiates can study up to four Dragon Magic spells at any one time.
- ☒ Wyrms' Hand Triumphants and Wyrms' Fang Exultants can study up to six Dragon Magic spells at any one time.

Learning Dragon Magic Spells

Magnitude	Cost	Time to Learn
1	50 silver	1 week
2	100 silver	2 weeks
3	200 silver	3 weeks
4	400 silver	1 month
5	800 silver	5 weeks
6	1,600 silver	6 weeks
7	3,200 silver	7 weeks
8	6,400 silver	2 months
+1	x2	+1 week

Casting Draconic Mysticism Spells

A list of spells useable by practitioners of Draconic Mysticism starts on page 32. Others will appear in further Glorantha supplements for *RuneQuest*.

To cast a Dragon Magic spell, a character must be free to chant and will require the freedom to move his limbs through the motions of mystical dance or martial arts. Since Draconic Mysticism spells may only be cast one at a time, the character chants benedictions of perfection in the growling language of Auld Wyrmesh appropriate to the effects of the spell. For instance, a character casting Lesser Regeneration might chant blessings of healing and perfect flesh in the ancient dragon tongue. A character casting Blood Alchemy would instead chant mantras of the impurity of his blood and his desire to purify it.

Moving through the motions physically either through dance or martial arts is strictly necessary but not necessarily complex. To cast Dragon Claws, a caster might perform a short movement mimicking a dragon snatching prey from the ground as part of a graceful dance, while a caster summoning the energies for the Become Draconic Wyrms spell might display near-inhuman contortions in his dance to show how hard he tries to rise above his mortal limitations.

In order to cast any Draconic Mysticism spell, the character must succeed on a Draconic Illumination test, much the same as a Runecaster would use the appropriate Runecasting skill to draw on his magic. Where Runecasting represents an attuned affinity with a particular rune, Draconic Illumination represents the character's understanding of the cosmic principles he is bringing into effect.

Whenever a spell is cast using Dragon Magic, there will always be a sight and sound that nearby creatures can detect, almost certainly taking the form of something reptilian or draconic around the caster. A magician's shadow might warp to that of a winged, dragon-headed creature or the caster's eyes will become yellow and slitted for a moment while the sound of a hundred snakes hissing fill the immediate area. The exact effects are up to the Games Master and player to decide for any given spell. It is worth noting that as with Rune Magic, any such effects will automatically be detected by creatures within ten metres times the Magnitude of the spell.

New Advanced Skill – Draconic Illumination (INT+POW)

Draconic Illumination is classed as an Advanced skill and is purchased and increased normally. It represents an increasing understanding of the mysteries of the wyrmfriend faith and an awareness of the magical potential therein. As such, Draconic Illumination is used to cast Dragon Magic spells.

Cultural Backgrounds: All Cultural Backgrounds (with the exception of Primitive) may include Draconic Illumination in their list of selectable Advanced skills.

Special: A character's Draconic Illumination score may never exceed his score in Martial Arts or Dance (the higher of the two).

If the Draconic Illumination test is successful, the spell takes immediate effect and a number of Magic Points equal to the spell's Magnitude are deducted from the caster's total. The rules for critical successes (Losing the Path) are detailed in the adjoining column.

If the test is unsuccessful, the spell does not take effect and the character still loses one Magic Point. The rules for fumbles (Backlash) are detailed in the adjoining column.

Situational Spellcasting Modifiers

Situation	Skill Modifier ¹
Spellcaster is unable to vocalise the chants at all	Automatic Failure
Spellcaster is gagged or silenced	–40%
Spellcaster is unable to perform Dance or Martial Arts	Automatic Failure
Spellcaster is restrained but still able to perform Dance or Martial Arts	–40%
Spellcaster is on unstable ground	–20%
Partially obscured target	–20% ²
Heavily obscured target	–40% ²
Totally obscured target	Automatic Failure

¹ These modifiers are cumulative – a gagged spellcaster casting at a partially obscured target decreases their Draconic Illumination skill by –60%.

² These modifiers only apply if the spell has a target other than the spellcaster, his immediate location, his carried possessions or a touched object/individual.

Critical Success - Losing the Path

The mystics of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends are loathe to expend their energy without good reason, citing that it binds them in the Now and risks pulling them from the path of the Great Dragon To Come.

If the Draconic Illumination test is a critical success, the spell is successfully cast – but the caster also loses a point of Draconic Illumination. This represents the spellcaster immersing himself and his magical energies in the mortal world rather than saving his powers

for the Great Dragon. The dragonspeaker realises his grip on the grand design is slipping somewhat and his Draconic Illumination correspondingly diminishes.

Draconic Illumination lost from Losing the Path can never fall below the character's base INT+POW and can always be regained with improvement rolls as with any other Advanced skill.

Important Note: When determining the critical score for Dragon Magic spellcasting, the critical score is always based on the spellcaster's *unmodified* Draconic Illumination skill. This is unlike every other critical score, which is based on a character's modified skill total.

Fumble - Backlash

Draconic Mysticism is a path of magic that is powerful and in many respects alien to the human body and mind. In centuries to come, when the Second Age is a legend of conceited Empires and world-altering sorceries, Dragon Magic will largely fade from use by humans. In the current age, mystics commanding Dragon Magic put their very souls at risk each time they manipulate the energies within themselves, balancing the risk of destruction with the hope of becoming more like the draconic ideal.

If the Draconic Illumination test is a fumble, rather than simply a failure, the caster suffers the effects of Backlash.

It has been argued that humans are not meant to harness this great power. The evidence is no more compelling than when one examines the damage to the mystics

who have suffered for their magic, becoming warped due to Dragon Magic Backlash.

When a player fumbles the Draconic Illumination test for spellcasting, the character is at the mercy of the draconic powers he has tried and failed to channel into being. He suffers a change within his flesh as the inhuman mystic power floods his system, seeking a way of release into the universe. Lacking any natural release, the gathered energies dissipate by flowing through the spellcaster's body, inflicting wracking pain in his mind, his muscles, his organs and his bones as the energies he sought to bring forth backfire and turn upon his own form.

Characters suffering the effects of Backlash permanently lose 1 point from one random physical Characteristic (1 or 2 = STR, 3 or 4 = DEX, 5 or 6 = CON) and are incapacitated for 1D4 Combat Actions. In addition, all Draconic Illumination tests made by the character fumble on a roll of 96 to 00 (instead of the usual 00) for the following 2D10 hours, as the unleashing of magical forces has put his inner harmony into flux.

Casting Time

Unlike Rune Magic, Dragon Magic spellcasters *can* take Combat Actions while casting a spell, provided that the action is a solely a use of the Dance or Martial Arts skill. As such close combat attack actions using Martial Arts are fine but dodging, parrying or using a sword are not.

More powerful spells take longer to cast as the character seeks to channel the innate power of creation. As with Rune Magic, such spells will always have the Casting Time (X) trait, where X signifies the number of Combat Actions is takes to cast the spell.

A spell's effect takes effect at the end of its last casting Combat Action. Note that spellcasters draw possible free attacks from enemies adjacent to them every Combat Action they spend spellcasting.

All This Power...

...would be a shame to waste. What fun would it be to play characters that never access the great magic they have learned? What fun are enemies who are so reluctant to use their powers that Player Characters can run roughshod over them?

Games Masters and players alike should always bear in mind that it is only the highest echelons of the dragonspeaker cults who are set against expending their amassed energies. Wyrms' Talon Disciples and Wyrms' Claw Initiates are much less adamant about restraining themselves because they have the freedom to be that way. To the minds of many lesser wyrmfriend mystics, their own contribution to the Dragon Yet To Be is so minor that surely *they* can use their Dragon Magic without risking the Great Work? Ultimately, whether this is truth or folly will never be revealed. When the Empire crumbles and falls in on itself, perhaps those who expended their powers on the mortal plane will regret their lack of prudence. Or maybe they will recognise the plan was doomed from the start; justifying their use of magic that way.

Distractions or attacks on the spellcaster as he casts will either automatically ruin the spell (if the spellcaster is prevented from chanting or suffers a Serious Wound or Major Wound) or require Persistence tests to maintain concentration on the spell.

Dismissing Spells

Ceasing to cast a Concentration spell or dismissing Permanent or Duration spells (that the character has cast) is immediate and not a Combat Action.

Overcharging Spells

It is possible to feed more Magic Points into the casting of a spell than is normally required, empowering the spell above and beyond its normal parameters. Such spells are much harder to counter or resist and also last longer, if they are normally of limited duration. The decision as to whether to overcharge a spell is made before the casting Draconic Illumination test is made.

For every additional Magic Point the spellcaster decides to spend on the spell, apply a -5% penalty to the Draconic Illumination test and any Persistence tests required due to distractions or damage during the casting period.

If the spell is successfully cast, every additional Magic Point expended in casting a spell above and beyond its normal Magic Point requirement has *all* the following effects:

- ☒ The spell's Magnitude is considered to be one higher for the purposes of countering it (such as with the Rune Magic spells Countermagic or Dispel Magic).
- ☒ If the spell possesses the Resist trait, the target's Resist test suffers a -10% penalty.
- ☒ If the spell possesses the Duration trait, its duration is increased by +1.

Note that a character cannot pick and choose from the above list – all of the effects will automatically occur if appropriate.

If the spellcasting fails, the spellcaster loses one Magic Point (as normal), plus one Magic Point for every additional Magic Point the intended spell was overcharged by.

Triggered Spells

One of the great strengths in the dragonspeaker approach to spellcasting is their tendency to prepare far in advance. Dragonlords leaving their halls of contemplation and research in order to enter EWF society might not expect to encounter violent resistance to their presence when among their own people, aside from the general clashes of the dragonspeaker cults moving on their political agendas. When a wyrmfriend mystic travels in newly-conquered lands or in disputed territory, his ability to rely on the awe and respect of imperial citizens is impeded. Resistance to the Empire's expansion is spreading as the Dragonlord plan begins to fail. Whether a mystic wishes to use his magic or not becomes a moot point when the only alternative is death.

To counter attacks, many practitioners of Dragon Magic cast their spells far in advance of ever needing to use them. Upon rising from sleep, a dragonspeaker might perform an hour or more of dance or martial arts training, casting a number of spells as he goes through the movements. These spells are cast so that they are ready to be triggered in a moment of need, so a dragonspeaker can call upon his magic in an instant. This is another example of how Dragon Magic as practiced by the EWF is more flexible and more powerful than Rune Magic.

Almost all Dragon Magic spells possess the Trigger trait. A dragonspeaker can go through all the motions of casting a spell (as detailed by the description and Casting Time) but hold back the final movements, refraining from unleashing the spell. During the preparation time its basic

parameters are decided, such as its Magnitude (if it is a Progressive spell).

The number of spells a dragonspeaker can store prepared in this fashion is not infinite. The total Magnitude of all prepared Dragon Magic spells may not exceed the character's total POW + Draconic Illumination critical score.

For Example: Deepspike the Wyrms Claw Initiate has a POW of 14 and a Draconic Illumination score of 46% (critical score of 4). As such he may prepare up to 18 Magnitude points of Dragon Magic spells.

The Draconic Illumination casting test only occurs at the time the Dragon Magic spell is released (and thus any modifiers at that time are applied). Equally, the targets of the spell are determined at the time of the spell's release, along with expenditure of Magic Points (as such, the decision to overcharge a spell is made at this point too).

The trigger for all Dragon Magic spells performed in this manner is simply the caster's desire, coupled with a final gesture and a few words. In other words, a single Combat Action (that can grant free attacks to adjacent enemies). However, any number of prepared Dragon Magic spells may be released simultaneously, in the same Combat Action.

This makes Dragon Magic very powerful. As with the God Learners, the Dragonlords that command certain powers are simply not balanced with the rest of Glorantha's denizens. That is how the EWF has managed to attain such mastery over their rivals, after all. The powers available to them are colossal, far above what others can command. Even with costs such as the difficulties to learn the magic, the rigidity of the cults' doctrines and the associated drawbacks of Backlash, imperial Draconic Mysticism is a mighty art. This is a perfect example of how the world falls into imbalance and why the Second Age is regarded in future eras as an age of Empires commanded by mortals with god-like powers.

Draconic Evolution

Draconic Mysticism offers much to those who would master its secrets. Spells can be cast even as the magician moves and attacks his enemies; there is no need to locate and integrate runes; no need to emulate any god in order to summon divine power, yet it is not a path that comes

Draconic Evolution



without a price to pay. The level of discipline and study required to achieve any more than the most basic spells is intensive to say the least. Outsiders have no chance of learning the secrets of the Dragonlords unless they adapt their lifestyles and become true citizens of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Lastly and most importantly, the risks to the magician's soul are very real. These risks are played out through the concepts of Backlash (when a draconic mystic's powers go wrong) and Draconic Evolution (when a draconic mystic's powers alter his body and mind over time). Backlash has already been described; Draconic Evolution is discussed below.

As a dragonspeaker gathers more knowledge and power regarding the draconic ideal, his demeanour and physical appearance undergo changes that make him ever more beautiful and compelling to his fellow believers. Curiously, the acquisition of Draconic Illumination has the opposite effect when the dragonspeaker interacts with outsiders, who find the cultist increasingly eerie, cold and ever more inhuman as his powers increase. This effect is

known to the cults as Evolution. It is considered a natural part of the process towards the Great Dragon To Come.

The positive effects of Draconic Evolution are already handled in the dragonspeaker rank descriptions earlier in the chapter. Each rank gains increasing respect and admiration for their prowess and their increasing appeal to believers (represented by a weighty Influence bonus). However, the negative aspects of Draconic Evolution also apply.

For every Dragon Magic spell that a dragonspeaker mystic learns, he suffers a cumulative -1% penalty on Influence tests dealing with Gloranthan residents that are not of Wyrms' Face Believer rank or above. This penalty applies to humans and all other races, as the unnatural magic at work crosses racial divides and raises the hackles of any mortal being. The penalty is minor at first but will soon begin to affect the dragonspeaker's day to day life if he deals with people outside the Empire. It is yet another sacrifice the wyrmfriends must make for their grand design: one they make willingly and with few regrets.

For Example: Deepspike the Wyrms' Claw Initiate knows seven Dragon Magic spells. As such he suffers a -7% penalty when making Influence tests with non-wyrmfriends.

The effects of Draconic Evolution are subtle at lower levels but still noticeable under many circumstances. The dragonspeaker has moments of cold-hearted and ruthless behaviour, eerie distraction and might slowly begin to care less and less about the feelings and plights of others not bound into the wyrmfriend cults. At the earliest stages these moments are flashes of what will come in the future, enough to make outsiders uncomfortable.

Then the physical effects begin to manifest as the dragonspeaker acquires more draconic power. As they first begin to take their toll, the mystic energies might alter a dragonspeaker priestess's skin so that under the moonlight she appears to have lightly scaled hands and fingertips, or pupils that thin to slits when she is in the sunlight. Likewise, a male cultist might find his knuckles becoming slightly lumpier as the bones harden and swell or the 'S' sounds in his speech becoming more sibilant

Over time our flesh begins to adapt to the changes within our souls. We become less human, less flawed and more draconic, more divine. These are subtle changes but telling ones. It is this evolution that shows us we walk the right path. Only a fool, a jealous one at that, could ever think otherwise. Those with no faith in the Great Dragon To Come fear me because my part in the coming ascension frightens them. Such ignorance is to be pitied.

— Urish Mensien, Wyrms' Talon Disciple of the Adepts of Inhuman Mastery

and pronounced. To anyone of Wyrms' Face Believer rank or higher, these changes are captivating and beautiful, making the dragonspeaker seem serene, enlightened and touched by destiny. To those outside the cult system of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, these alterations can seem threatening and unnerving.

As the cultist gains significant power with Draconic Mysticism, the changes become increasingly noticeable. The mystic's eyes might have one or both irises change colour to orange, yellow or red, with a slitted black pupil. Teeth can become slightly jagged (sometimes also uneven in the gums) and sharp to the point of drawing tiny quantities of blood from the dragonspeaker's lips on 'F' and 'V' sounds, and his tongue on 'L' sounds. Scales may begin to coat the parts of the body where bone is close to the surface of the skin, such as the forehead, cheekbones, chin, collarbones, elbows and knees. These areas are also prone to slight bone protuberances, either as the bony ridges grow in mimicry of a reptilian skeletal structure or as small spines pushing up through the skin such as on some dinosaurs' backs.

The personality continues to change as well. To outsiders, dragonspeakers at this degree of Draconic Evolution border are frequently cold, dispassionate and distant – 'cold-blooded' is how companions are described by their fellows when the wyrmfriend reaches this level of alteration. To the believers, the cultist is clearly enlightened and dedicated to the grand design and his words and gestures are accordingly charming and admired.

The physical changes can only go so far, however. Despite the initial similarities, Draconic Evolution does not transform humans into dragonewts. The most powerful dragonspeakers display incredible draconic features, such as scaled, bony crests grown in eerie resemblance of crowns from their scalps and foreheads, as well as black-nailed claws and even scales of various colours marking their entire bodies. Yet for all intents and purposes, the dragonspeaker is still human.

Since Draconic Evolution occurs at varying rates for different mystics, no rigid system would represent the changes very well. The emotional and social distance from non-believers is covered by the Influence penalties as the mystic acquires more and more Dragon Magic but the physical alterations are another matter entirely. As a rule of thumb, Games Masters might want to consider selecting a single reptilian feature to manifest on a character for every five Dragon Magic spells the mystic learns.

These features should be subtle at first, gradually increasing in severity but never making the mystic appear completely inhuman. Games Masters should also think very carefully before allowing any of the features to offer bonuses or improvements to any tests. This is a strange and not-entirely-natural transformation resulting from wielding inhuman magic, not a reliable way of crossing the racial divide between human and dragonewt. For obvious reasons, the effects of Draconic Evolution do not apply to dragonewts that practice Dragon Magic.

Spell Traits & Descriptions

This section details a few dozen examples of what Dragon Magic is capable of. The truly powerful spells tied into Draconic Mysticism are the province of Wyrms' Eye Ascendants and other exalted imperial leaders and as such will rarely be encountered by characters. This section deals with the kind of Dragon Magic that Player Characters are more likely to experience, either as victims of Dragonlord antagonists or as dragonspeakers themselves. As such, a great deal of it is focused on the draconic martial arts, which are the lowest (and therefore most common) forms of Dragon Magic in Glorantha.

Draconic Versions of Rune Magic Spells

Games Masters should bear in mind that almost any spell possible with common Rune Magic is achievable at a similar Magnitude with Draconic Mysticism, though the dragonspeakers might use a different name for the casting.

The runes with spells especially tied to Dragon Magic are Air, Beast, Dragon, Dragonewt, Earth, Fate, Fire, Harmony, Infinity, Magic and Mastery. Games Masters should consider any spell drawn from these when it comes to converting Dragon Magic spells.

Something to bear in mind when describing the spells in-game is that no dragonspeaker would say 'I cast Universal Deflection'. Instead he would refer to chanting the Three Descants of Protection, in order to quench the power of his enemy's magic. Games Masters and players should not feel restricted in sticking to the listed spell names; they are only listed as such for ease of reference. Adopt the Skin of the Lesser Draconic Being might sound superbly Gloranthan but it is of no use to a person who is not familiar with each and every spell in the setting. The spells presented here are listed with their draconic titles underneath their generic names.

Every Dragon Magic spell is defined by a series of traits that tells you what kind of spell it is and how it is used in the game. A description then follows describing the spell's precise effects. The traits used by Draconic Mysticism spells are detailed below.

Area (X): The spell affects all targets within a radius specified in metres.

Casting Time (X): The spell takes the indicated number of Combat Actions to cast.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character concentrates on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spellcaster to continue to chant benedictions in Auld Wyrnish, perform his dance or martial art and ignore other distractions.

Duration (X): The spell's effects will stay in place for the number of minutes indicated.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears.

Magnitude (X): The strength and power of the spell. Also the minimum number of Magic Points required to cast it.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed.

Progressive: This indicates that the spell can be learnt and cast at greater levels of Magnitude than the minimum.

Ranged: Ranged spells may be cast upon targets up to a maximum distance of the character's POW x 10 in metres.

Resist: The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spellcaster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting.

Trigger: Almost all Dragon Magic spells are deemed to have this trait. See the box text titled Triggered Spells on page 29 for details.

Become Draconic Wurm

Adopt the Skin of the Lesser Draconic Being

Casting Time 10, Duration 15, Magnitude 4, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's body warps and shifts, swelling with muscle and developing thick scales, altering to become that of a serpentine beast.

This is a common spell among dragonspeakers that expect to be attacked by weak foes. By chanting the Sixteen Precepts of the Flesh's Evolution, the caster turns into a wurm, using all the physical Characteristics and traits of a 40-year old wurm as detailed in *RuneQuest*. While in wurm form, the spellcaster's skills are subsumed by his new form's skills – as such, no spellcasting is possible (as the character has no access to the skills necessary to cast spells), though magical items that are feasibly usable by the new form may be used. The dragonspeaker's INT, POW and CHA are unaffected.

Note that a dragonspeaker's equipment does not grow or enhance in any way to account for his new form. The spellcaster will literally burst out of his armour and clothing as he becomes the wurm.

Any use of the Become Wyrms spell automatically results in a the character losing one point of Draconic Illumination, in the same manner – and for the same reasons – as Losing the Way. If the spellcasting test also results in the spellcaster Losing the Way, then two points of Draconic Illumination are lost.

A lesser version of this spell, Become Draconic Wyvern, is known to exist (Magnitude 3). Rumours persist that there is also a Become Dragon version, though no one has ever witnessed its use within living memory.

Blood Alchemy (X)

Purify the Flawed Lifeblood

Casting Time 5, Magnitude Varies, Permanent, Touch

The water, once mixed with the mystic's blood, transmutes into a new colour. As the scent of the alchemical potion rises into the air, the magical fluid becomes warm to the touch.

The dragonspeaker calls upon his inner power to transmute a mixture of water and his own flawed mortal blood into an alchemical potion. He must shed at least three drops into a standing body or container of water for the spell to take effect. Depending on the nature of the alchemical substance the caster wishes to create, he must consult the Blood Alchemy table.

The power to create each potion is considered a separate spell, so a character with Blood Alchemy (Poison) has no ability to cast Blood Alchemy (Regeneration) unless he learns the other spell as normal.

The caster can alchemically transmute one handful of water per casting of the spell, which is enough for a single

use. Once transmuted, these concoctions are commonly stored in vials either on the dragonspeaker's person or in his cult's temple – Blood Alchemy concoctions will remain potent indefinitely once created. Some of the concoctions are also given traditional names based on their colour.

Blood Alchemy Poison

Type: Ingested or smeared

Delay: 1D4 Combat Rounds

Potency: Magnitude x 10

Full Effect: Applies –1D6 penalty to victim's STR, DEX and POW

Duration: 3D10 minutes

Blood of Lava

Concentrate the Lifeblood's Potency

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 4, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's skin flushes red with heat and his eyes leak tears of hissing, bubbling blood.

This spell transmutes the dragonspeaker's own blood into burning hot fluid that renders him immune to non-magical heat and fire. The primary bonus of the spell is revealed in combat, when each injury inflicted against his flesh releases a hissing jet of steam and almost white-hot blood. Dragonspeakers of the Children of the Ten Talons are notoriously fond of this spell.

Any successful attack on the dragonspeaker causes boiling blood to spray across any creature that is adjacent to the hit location struck. Hits to the Right Arm or Leg will spray anyone adjacent to the dragonspeaker to his right, while hits to the Left Arm or Leg will spray

Blood Alchemy

Alchemical Concoction	Magnitude	Effect
Healing – 'Dragon Blood'	Progressive	Heals one hit point of damage per point of Magnitude, to a single hit location.
Poison	Progressive	Creates a virulent, scentless, tasteless poison.
Rage – 'Dragon Bile'	3	Adds +30% to all Weapon skills for one hour, though drinker suffers a –30% penalty to all INT, CHA or POW-based skill tests for the period. Once the hour has elapsed, the drinker drops two Fatigue levels automatically.
Fate	1	+10% to all skill tests for 1D10 minutes.
Regeneration	4	Restore a lost limb, as if the Divine Magic spell Regenerate had been cast upon it (including the time it takes to regrow the limb). This potion will not help a limb reattach – it can only regrow a limb.
Vitality	2	+50% to all Persistence and Resilience tests for 1D10 minutes.
White Acid – 'Dragon Phlegm'	5	Creates acid that deals 2D6 damage to anything it hits. Dragon Phlegm is normally kept in glass vials and thrown at enemies (using the Throwing skill).

anyone adjacent to left. Head, Torso and Abdomen hits spray forwards (unless, of course, the dragonspeaker was struck from behind).

Any creature caught in a blood spray suffers 2D4 magical heat damage to a random hit location (though a successful Resist (Dodge) test will halve the damage).

Bone Ridges

Manifest the Sign of Physical Evolution

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 3, Duration 10, Touch, Trigger

The target's body grows bony protuberances, like knobbly bone spines and spikes extending from the dragonspeaker's knuckles, elbows, shoulders, kneecaps, chin, cheekbones and forehead.

The bony spines make getting a grip on the character in battle a difficult task to say the least. When making the Defender's Roll in a Grapple test, the caster counts any success as a critical success, allowing him to riposte as he sees fit. When striking with the bony spurs that have bloomed on his knuckles, the dragonspeaker adds another dice to his Martial Arts or Unarmed strike. This latter bonus does not stack with the benefits gained from any magical claws.

Bone-Singing

Shape the Holy Weapons

Casting Time Special, Instant, Magnitude 4

The ritually-prepared dragon bones twist and extend, shaped by the mantras chanted by the dragonspeaker.

The mystic must ritually prepare the relevant quantity of dragon bone, depending on what he wishes to create. A simple blessing is all that is traditionally required to bless dragon bone, though some dragonspeakers compose poems of thanks to the creature that died to provide this material. Through chants, songs or mantras, the mystic 'sings' the bone into a new shape, visualising the end result and willing the bone to alter to meet his desire.

This spell is cast throughout the process of creating the bone-crafted item, though it is normally cast by one dragonspeaker as another actually creates the item. The magic of Bone-Singing enables the dragon bone to be moulded and yet retain its resilience. It also speeds up the

entire crafting process – it only takes half the normal time to create armour and weapons through Bone-Singing.

Actually constructing the bone-crafted item out of the shaped bone is a separate task. Dragon bone armour will require a Craft (Armourer) test, while klanths will require a Craft (Weaponsmith) test. If the spellcaster is performing these tests himself (on top of maintaining the spell), they suffer a -40% penalty. On top of the normal base material costs, klanths will also require 200 SP worth of obsidian pieces and either a Fire, Dragonewt or Dragon rune.

Brand Traitor

Scar the Way-Breaking Heretic

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 2, Touch, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

The dragonspeaker calls down the powers of the Infinite Dragon to mark the flesh of one who has endangered the birth Great Dragon To Come. A burn scar, in the shape of faloned hand, covers the target's face from chin to forehead and from temple to temple.

This spell is used only on those enemies or traitors that have truly earned the ire of the dragonspeaker cults, such as betrayers who fled with secrets or artefacts and adventurers who have caused enough trouble to warrant a witch-hunt called against them.

If the victim fails the Resist test, he suffers a painful burn to his face, causing 1d3 damage to the Head location. This damage can be healed normally and in the scar will vanish in time. However, every time the branded creature returns to EWF territory, the burn mark will return (causing 1D3 damage again). The damage will recur every hour the victim remains within EWF territory.

Cold-Blooded

Subsume the Mortal Nature

Area 5, Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

After chanting any section of the Principles of Draconic Evolution as laid down his cult, the Dragon Mystic can chill the heart and mind of those nearby. A cold sense of distance comes over the target and he finds it harder to feel his emotions.

The Draconic Evolution that takes hold of dragonspeakers is as much a curse for their powers as it is a blessing. With this spell, popular amongst many cults, the draconic mystic can deaden the emotions of those around him just as their own emotions can seem subdued to others. If the targets fail to resist the spell's effects, their strength of their emotions are at the mercy of the wyrmfriend who can partially drain them or blank them out completely on a whim. Note that the dragonspeaker cannot add emotions – he can only deaden or remove those already present.

Combat Meditation

Heighten Battle's Devotion

Casting Time 5, Concentration, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's moves become even more fluid and graceful, representing the harmony of body and mind in his martial arts.

This spell increases the caster's Martial Arts by +5% for each Combat Round that he maintains the spell. It is often used to humiliate captured foes in pit-fights, as the caster becomes increasingly more powerful as the spell progresses.

Command Reptile

Command the Lesser Reflections of Divinity

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

With a momentary dullness in its slitted eyes, the dinosaur obeys the caster's telepathic orders.

The dragonspeakers achieve mastery over the dinosaurs that accompany their armies by use of spells such as this. Though the effects of the spell are limited, Command Reptile allows the caster to demand that the reptile or dinosaur obey a single command. The order given must be one that the beast is able to carry out and finish immediately. For example, 'Eat the intruders!' will work perfectly. 'Patrol my estate until nightfall' will not work.

Once the command has been obeyed, the reptilian reverts back to its own will. If the creature fails to complete the task, it will only try again if the circumstances force it into acting, such as a failed attack provoking a group of adventurers into retaliation.

This spell only works on reptiles and does not function on dragons or wyrms. Wyverns gain a +50% bonus to their Persistence tests to resist this spell.

Deafening Cry

Shriek of the Earthbound Dragon

Area 10, Casting Time 5, Magnitude 2, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

The Dragon Mystic howls a dragon's roar up at the sky, threatening to puncture the eardrums of anyone nearby.

Any character within the Area of the spell that fails the Resilience test loses his next 1D4 Combat Actions and becomes prone. In addition, whether a character passed the Resilience test or not, everyone in the area of effect suffers a –10% penalty on all Acrobatics and Perception tests for one hour, due to the angry ringing in their ears affecting their hearing and balance.

Disease Resistance

Purify the Mortal Shell

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

The signs of disease on the subject lessen and fade as his body displays a sudden surge of health. The only hint of supernatural energy at work is a fine sheen of pinkish sweat that covers the subject as his body warms up a few degrees.

Dragonspeakers prepare this spell for themselves and their allies who might fall prey to disease. A successful casting adds the spell's Magnitude x 20 to all Resilience tests to resist disease (or Magnitude x 10 if the disease is magical in nature).

Dominate the Reptilian Mind

Dominate the Lesser Reflections of Divinity

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 5, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

As the dragonspeaker chants, the reptile ceases all voluntary actions, moving only to the tune of the spellcaster's mantra.

This spell is among the more powerful magical means of commanding the loyalty of dinosaurs and reptiles, binding the creature to the caster's will for as long as the Dragon Mystic chants a mantra known as the Five Precepts of Draconic Loyalty. The dinosaur or reptile

under the caster's sway can be commanded to perform any action, even at great risk to its own life. Dinosaurs can be tamed by repeated use of this spell, with dragonspeakers casting it over and over again on the primal minds of the monstrous beasts, until obedience becomes ingrained in the reptilian brain.

This spell only works on reptiles and does not function on dragons or wyrms. Wyverns gain a +30% bonus to their Persistence tests to resist this spell.

Draconic Prophecy

Tread the Cosmic Dragon's Scales

Casting Time 20, Magnitude 4, Touch, Trigger

The dragonspeaker dreams images of the future, remembering fragments and misfired recollections upon awakening.

This spell's effects fall almost entirely under the influence of the Games Master rather than the fate of a dice roll. When the spell is cast, it only takes effect the next time the target falls asleep for longer than an hour. During this rest period, the subject of the spell dreams of their own future *as it applies to the Great Dragon To Come*. This is not a spell that offers specific or delineated prophecy. It only lays out the subject's future in the EWF's Great Work. In this aspect, the spell is powered by the dragonspeaker's faith in the Great Work and reveals the future along these lines. In short, it is why the spell is called Draconic Prophecy, rather than simply Prophecy.

The images gained through this slumber are fragmentary and vague. Games Masters can describe flashes of scenes, conversations, events or omens that could apply to the character almost immediately or up to years and years in the future. A few subjects using this spell have seen their own deaths, though such a sight represents a possible death, not a certain one. Nothing laid out by the spell is certain – such is the nebulous nature of prophecy.

If they wish, players affected by this spell can choose to ignore any dream imagery from the Games Master and simply gain a Hero Point, which is only usable the following day and can only be used to gain a Second Chance, a Glancing Blow or Luck of the Heroes. In these instances, the character has dreamed something minor that applies to his immediate future and senses the way fate could go once he encounters the moment in time he has seen in his dreams.

Most dragonspeakers with access to this spell find its use addictive. It is not uncommon for members of the Covenant to use Draconic Prophecy each night before they sleep. The cost for lay members to have this spell bestowed upon them is 100 SP. The Covenant sees no shortage of Wyrms' Face Believers willing to pay this sum.

Draconic Regeneration

Quicken the Reptilian Blood

Casting Time 1, Concentration Special, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch

The dragonspeaker is able to channel his energies into fuelling the body's natural healing process, regenerating minor injuries such as sword wounds, burn scars and broken bones that deal closed, fade into fresh skin and click back into alignment respectively.

This spell must be cast upon a wounded hit location. The spell heals 1 point of damage immediately. As long as the spellcaster maintains his chant, the location will heal an additional amount of damage equal to the spell's Magnitude every minute. The healing will continue for as long as the caster concentrates.

Draconic Strength

Summon Draconic Blood's Thunder

Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's muscles swell and harden with new strength and the veins under the skin change from blue to a deep, dark red that visibly pulse in time to the caster's heartbeat.

For every point of Magnitude, the target of this spell gains +2 to his STR Characteristic.

Dragon Claws

Manifest the Talons of Divinity

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

Chanting the Whispered Words of Hunter and Prey, a dragonspeaker poem composed by Visikos Left-Eye, the mystic's hands swell slightly with bunched muscles, scaling at the knuckles and with fingernails resembling the wicked black talons of a dragon.

This spell transforms the recipient's fingernails into the thick, black, sharp claws of a dragon. These claws are considered Formidable Natural Weapons and can be used with the Unarmed or Martial Arts skills (with a +30% bonus). They inflict 1D6+3 damage and have AP 4 for the purposes of parrying.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Fire Claws or Infected Claws.

Dragon Flight

Soar Across the Heavens

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 6, Trigger

The caster tenses his body, slowly levitating off the ground and hovering in the air.

This spell gifts the caster with the ability to fly. Dragonspeakers that are unafraid of expending their energies often favour spells such as these and the mystics that accompany the imperial army often employ the spell for scouting, overseeing the battlefield and sometimes to rain attack spells down on enemy troops.

The Dragon Mystic can levitate himself, his equipment, plus anything he can physically lift, moving at a rate of ten metres per round in any direction he desires.

Dragon Teeth

Jaws of the Divine Dragon

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Trigger

After roaring his rage as he performs his martial art, the mystic's teeth swell and lengthen, stretching his jaw wide open. With an elongated jaw and a mouth full of wickedly sharp fangs, the dragonspeaker can inflict horrendous damage when biting.

This spell transforms the mystic's teeth, mouth and jaw into a dragon's maw. The recipient may make a bite using his Unarmed or Martial Arts skill. This bite attack inflicts 2D6+3 damage but cannot be used for parrying.

Speech becomes understandably difficult, giving the caster a -50% penalty on any tests reliant on speech (including further Draconic Illumination tests).

Earthquake

Tremble the World-Skin

Area 10, Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 2, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

A Dragonspeaker casting the Earthquake spell



The ground shakes under the dragonspeaker's punch, splitting and quaking in a radius out from the mystic's clenched fist in the earth.

The caster completes the spell's chants and punches a fist into the ground, causing the earth to shake in response to the channelling of mystical energy. Anyone within the area of effect that fail the Resilience test are immediately knocked prone.

Though the spell cannot do any significant damage to buildings, windows might smash and loose tiles will fall off a roof. The most powerful Dragonlords are believed to possess a variant of this spell that is capable of shaking the earth even up to the point of razing entire cities but very little would ever persuade such a Dragon Mystic to expend such power.

Eye Membranes

Wear the Eyes of the Dragon

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Duration 20, Touch, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's eyes appear to milk over with a film of some cataract-like substance, shielding the caster's eyes with a thin magical membrane.

With this power, the recipient enjoys all the benefits of Night Sight, allowing the dragonspeaker to treat partial darkness as illuminated and darkness as partial darkness. In addition, he gains a bonus to Perception tests equal to the spell's Magnitude x 5.

A character blessed with this power becomes immune to any magically-inflicted blindness, so long as the Magnitude of this spell exceeds that of the blinding magic being cast at him.

A variant of this spell (Magnitude 1) allows the character to behave as if he has the Dark Sight trait, treating pitch darkness as darkness, instead of the Night Sight trait.

Fire Claws

Manifest Divinity's Fiery Claws

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

In speaking the second of the Seven Praises of Flame, the dragonspeaker's clawed hands flicker with white-hot fire.

This spell alters the recipient's fingernails as the Dragon Claws spell but the claws are aflame with small lickings of blue-white fire. These claws are can be used with the Unarmed or Martial Arts skills (with a +30% bonus). They inflict normal damage for the character's Unarmed or Martial Arts strike, plus 1D6 magical fire damage.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Dragon Claws or Infected Claws.

Flamesight

Witness the Fire's Visions

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's senses warp and alter. His eyes glow a dull orange for several minutes, pulsing brighter in time with his heartbeat.

This spell allows the mystic to use any nearby fire (from infernos to candle flames) as a conduit for his sight. The caster can 'see' from any fires within the spell's range as if he were present within the flame himself.

Flay Soul

Sever the Bonds of Soul and Flesh

Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 8, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

The Dragon Mystic channels his hatred for the mortal world and all its imperfections into a single psychic assault.

A disconnected, invisible force of mystic energy unerringly strikes the intended target. If the victim fails the Persistence test, he dies immediately with his soul torn from his body. If the victim is successful in the test, he still suffers 1d3 damage to every hit location.

Any use of the Flay Soul spell automatically results in a the character losing one point of Draconic Illumination, in the same manner – and for the same reasons – as Losing the Way. If the spellcasting test also results in the spellcaster Losing the Way, then two points of Draconic Illumination are lost.

Incinerating Breath

Channel the Breath of Perfection

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Resist (Dodge), Trigger

In speaking the first of the Seven Praises of Flame, the mystic's tongue and teeth heat up considerably as his throat swells for several seconds. As if expelling breath, the caster can exhale pure magical fire from within.

Calling on his connection to the Dragon Yet To Be, a dragonspeaker can use his mystic arts to breathe a stream of semi-liquid flame at his enemies. This attack, if it is not dodged, inflicts 1D6 + its Magnitude in points of magical fire damage to a random hit location.

Infected Claws

Manifest the Death-bringing Talons

Casting Time 5, Duration 10, Magnitude 3, Touch, Trigger

After murmuring several lines from a number of Dragonewt poems in Auld Wymish, the dragonspeaker's claws are sheathed in milky venom akin to snake poison.

This spell warps the recipient's fingernails into three-inch long curved reptilian talons that drip with trace amounts of white, viscous venom. These claws are can be used with the Unarmed or Martial Arts skills (with a +30%

bonus). They inflict normal damage for the character's Unarmed or Martial Arts strike, plus every time the character inflicts damage on an opponent with the claws, his foe must take a Resilience test or suffer the effects of paralyzing venom in the location struck.

Injected Claw Venom

Type: Smeared

Delay: 1 Combat Round

Potency: 30

Full Effect: Location struck is paralyzed for the poison's duration. Treat the location as useless, if it is a limb. If the location is the Head, Chest or Abdomen, victim is knocked unconscious for the poison's duration.

Duration: 1D10 Combat Rounds

Magnitude 5 and 7 equivalents of this spell exist, creating poisons with a Potency of 50 and 70, respectively.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Dragon Claws or Fire Claws.

Inspiration

Reveal the Face of Purity

Area 10, Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's draconic features seem more pronounced and inhuman, appealing more to the senses of faithful cultists and reminding them of their place in the Great Work.

All allies of the caster who are at least of Wyrms' Face Believer rank within range of this spell receive a bonus equal to the spell's Magnitude x 10 to any Resist test to defy spells that would affect their emotions (both negative, such as fear, and positive, such as morale). If any target is currently under such a spell, they may immediately make an appropriate Resist test to shake off its effect.

Many imperial commanders prepare this spell before leading their troops into battle, readying themselves to use it at the moment it should ever become necessary.

Lesser Fire Resistance

Immunity to the Holy Element

Casting Time 5, Magnitude 3, Concentration, Trigger

The caster's skin darkens to resemble onyx, oil or obsidian and reflects the heat of any flame that comes close.

Dragonspeakers with this spell active may reduce the damage taken from any fire (mundane or magical) by half. The protection lasts as long as the caster continues chanting passages from the Thirteen Thankful Blessings of Holy Flame.

A greater version of this spell, Greater Fire Resistance, is known to exist (Magnitude 6), rendering the caster utterly immune to mundane and magical fire for as long as the chant is maintained.

Mystic Sight

Open the Eyes of the Soul

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

The dragonspeaker's eyes take on a black sheen as he sees the influence of magic in the mundane world.

This spell reveals one true statement about the function or abilities of a single magical item, entity or substance that the caster regards for at least one Combat Round. This spell may be cast multiple times upon the same item, but the information gained may repeat and is not always relevant.

Poison Resistance

Purge the Mortal Shell

Casting Time 5, Duration 20, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch, Trigger

The subject's body jerks and sweats, as the sickening substance within it is drawn out through its pores.

Dragonspeakers prepare this spell when they believe they may be poisoned. A successful casting adds the spell's Magnitude x 20 to all Resilience tests to resist poison (or Magnitude x 10 if the poison is magical in nature).

Royal Grace

Manifest the Aura of Destiny

Casting Time 10, Duration 30, Magnitude 2, Trigger

To the faithful of the Cosmic Dragon, the dragonspeaker carries himself with the power and authority of those who will one day change the world. His eyes burn with ambition and confidence, his movements bold and assertive. To the enemies of the wyrmfriends, the Dragon Mystic becomes increasingly remote and alien in aspect.

As long as the caster is of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank or higher, their Influence bonus when dealing with lower-ranking wyrmfriends is doubled. The caster's Influence penalty due to Draconic Evolution is also doubled.

For Example: Deepspike the Wyrms' Claw Initiate knows seven Dragon Magic spells. While under the effect of Royal Grace, he has +40% to Influence test with Wyrms' Face Believers and Wyrms' Talon Disciples but suffers a -7% penalty when making Influence tests with non-wyrmfriends.

Scaled Skin

Assume the Armour of the Divine Form

Casting Time 10, Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Trigger

The mystic's skin grows an outer layer of thick, dense scales, becoming armoured like a dragon's hide, conforming to whatever colour the caster desires.

The caster gains a number of additional hit points to every hit location equal to the spell's Magnitude. These hit points will be lost first in any attack upon their location, as the scales absorb the damage and shed. However, the scales are restrictive – apply a Skill Penalty (as if the character were armoured) equal to half the spell's Magnitude (minimum of -1% penalty).

Scaled skin may be used in conjunction with normal armour, though the Skill Penalties in this case stack.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with True Dragon Scale.

Sense Surface Thoughts

Ascertain the Intent of the Flawed Being

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 2, Ranged, Resist (Persistence), Trigger

The dragonspeaker forms a fragile psychic bridge with the power of his mystic arts, leeching thoughts from the target.

This spell allows the caster to read the surface thoughts (an inner monologue) of any sentient mortal being for ten seconds. The target of the spell is struck by a sharp pain behind his eyes, which he may or may not recognise from previous experiences under this spell's effects. The mystic cannot sense information that the victim is not

thinking about or has forgotten, only what the mortal is thinking during the spell.

Sight from the Marked Palms

Aspect of the Cosmic Dragon's Awareness

Casting Time 5, Concentration, Duration 10, Magnitude 2, Trigger

The tattoos of dragon's eyes inked on the dragonspeaker's palms move with eerie haste, watching the movements of the caster's opponent.

The eye tattoos detect every movement made by the dragonspeaker's enemy, allowing the martial artist to react to attacks even before the attacker has fully committed himself to the blows. This spell increases the caster's Dodge by +20% and may dodge one additional attack per Combat Round (over and above the normal Reaction allowance).

Skeletal Erosion

Erode the Osseous Foundations

Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 7, Touch, Resist (Resilience), Trigger

The dragonspeaker whispers a curse upon the mortal form and weakens the bones of his enemy, watching as they break down and dissolve within his body.

This spell inflicts horrendous internal damage to a target, causing 1D4 damage to all hit locations and the permanent loss of 1 point of STR and CON as the subject's bones corrode.

Skeletal Strengthening

Reinforce the Osseous Foundations

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 7, Touch, Trigger

The dragonspeaker chants his devotion to rising above his flawed mortal form, as he goes through the motions of his martial art. Underneath his skin, his bones harden significantly but do not impede his movement.

This spell bolsters the recipient's toughness to a supernatural degree, adding +7 AP to every hit location. The recipient also gains +5 STR and CON, as well as the Formidable Natural Weapons trait.

Snake Fangs

Manifest the Asp's Bite

Casting Time 2, Magnitude 3, Progressive, Trigger

The caster's incisors extend to an inch in length and become hollow, connected to a small, swollen venom sac that develops in the roof of his mouth.

The recipient may make a bite using his Unarmed or Martial Arts skill. This bite attack inflicts 1D6+2 damage but cannot be used for parrying.

Speech becomes understandably difficult, giving the caster a -20% penalty on any tests reliant on speech (including further Draconic Illumination tests).

Snake Fangs Venom

Type: Smeared

Delay: Immediate

Potency: 60

Full Effect: 1D10 hit point damage to location struck

Duration: 1D10 minutes

Speak with Reptiles

Project into the Reptilian Mind

Casting Time 1, Duration 10, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

Staring deep into the dinosaur's eyes, the wyrmfriend communicates in clicks, whistles, snorts and screeches, interrogating the creature in a primal tongue.

This spell allows the dragonspeaker to converse with any reptile, dinosaur or dragon through partly physical, partly telepathic means. The 'speech' involved is a series of images and sensations that make sense to the creature's inhuman brain, combined with physical noises and imitations. Casting this spell does not guarantee the beast will obey the caster and attacking the being while communicating with Speak with Reptilians will shut down the link immediately.

This spell works on all reptiles, including wyverns, dragons and wyrms.

Summon Dragon's Fire

Summon the Purifying Flame

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 6, Ranged, Resist (Dodge), Trigger

The Dragon Mystic caster channels the raw energy of magical dragon flame through his body, releasing it through his fingers to lash out at a target.

The fire that is unleashed is a short stream of super-intense magical flame that inflicts damage (and ignites) as a large fire (2D6 damage). This damage is applied to all locations of the target.

A greater version of this spell, Summon the Eternal Dragon's Fire, is known to exist (Magnitude 10), which inflicts damage as an inferno (3D6 damage).

Summon Flame

Create Natural Flame

Casting Time 5, Instant, Magnitude 1, Ranged, Trigger

A lesser manifestation of the holy fire appears where the Mystic desires, quickly setting aflame that which it touches.

As seekers of the draconic ideal, the element of fire is beloved by the dragonspeakers. This spell is one of the first that most mystics of the imperial cults ever learn. Summon Fire channels the universe's energies to generate flame near the caster, setting fire to anything flammable within range. The fire called into being is considered to be a large flame (D4 damage). Skin or flesh cannot be the source of the summoned flame and if the target is attached to a living being (such as hair, fur or clothes) then the spell gains the Resist (Resilience) trait. This is the weakest of the fire magic practiced by the mystics of the EWF and is accordingly limited.

Greater versions of this spell, Summon Lesser Fire (which creates a small fire, 1D6 damage, Magnitude 3), Summon Greater Fire (which creates a large fire, 2D6 damage, Magnitude 5) and Summon Inferno (which creates an inferno, 3D6 damage, Magnitude 7), are all known and commonly used within the Empire.

Summon Wraithfire

Channel the Ghost-Breath of the Unborn Dragon

Casting Time 10, Duration 20, Magnitude 3, Trigger

Intoning his faith in the Dragon Yet To Be, the caster performs the ritual movements of his dance or martial art. The caster is soon surrounded by shimmers in the air, as if radiating incredible heat. Anyone using magical sight can perceive translucent ghost-flames raging around the dragonspeaker, like a silent storm of roiling liquid fire.

While this spell is active, any Dragon Magic spell the wyrmfriend casts that implements heat or fire is transmuted. The flames created are ghostly, translucent and almost invisible to mortal eyes. These spells cause inflict double damage to spirits, ghosts and any other incorporeal beings. Such spells will still inflict normal damage to corporeal targets.

True Dragon Scale

Mastery over the Divine Form

Casting Time 10, Duration 10, Magnitude 9, Trigger

The caster's skin thickens into stone-hard dragon-scale hide but does not hinder his motion like conventional heavy armour.

The ultimate form of dragonspeaker armoured metamorphosis, this spell alters the character's skin, mimicking the feel and toughness of real dragon skin. This halves the damage received from all non-magical sources, after AP has been deducted. The caster also gains complete immunity to magical and non-magical fire and heat for the duration of the spell. Lastly, the character's natural attacks gain the Formidable Natural Weapons trait and any natural attacks receive a +2 bonus to damage.

This spell cannot be cast in conjunction with Scaled Skin.

Universal Deflection

Counter the Impure Work

Casting Time 10, Concentration, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Trigger

The mystic chants the Three Descants of Protection, twisting his body through his dance or martial art and trusting to his inner perfection to nullify any impure and harmful magic around him.

The dragonspeakers use this spell to quench the magic of other magicians, whether it is Sorcery, Rune Magic or another discipline. It may be cast in one of three fashions: to dispel magical effects currently afflicting an object or person; to counter an incoming spell; or to shield a recipient from magical harm. Note that these are not separate spells – a character that learns Universal Deflection at Magnitude 7 may use it as a dispel, counter or shield version, at his whim.

Dispel: Universal Deflection is normally cast upon an enchanted object or person. It will eliminate a combined Magnitude of spells equal to its own Magnitude, starting with the most powerful affecting the target. If it fails to eliminate any spell (because the spell's Magnitude is too high), then its effects immediately end and no more spells will be eliminated. A spell cannot be partially eliminated, so a target under the effects of a spell whose Magnitude is higher than that of Universal Deflection will not have any spells currently affecting it eliminated.

Counter: This version of Universal Deflection may only be cast if it has been prepared. If the wyrmfriend notices another spell being cast, Universal Deflection may be released as a Reaction, as long as the other spell is cast within Universal Deflection's Range. A successful Universal Deflection disrupts the other spell and nullifies it. As long as Universal Deflection's Magnitude equals or exceeds the target spell's Magnitude, the target spell is countered.

Shield: This version of Universal Deflection gains the Duration 10 trait. It does not affect enchantments currently placed upon the recipient, instead, it resists any further spells that attempt to affect him. The spell matches its Magnitude against the Magnitude of the incoming spell. If Universal Deflection's Magnitude is greater than the incoming spell's, the incoming spell has no effect. If the incoming spell's Magnitude is equal to or greater than the Magnitude of Universal Deflection, the spell affects the target normally. This version of Universal Deflection remains in place for the entirety of its Duration – spells that successfully breach the spell do not dispel it. However, it does not discriminate between incoming spells – a comrade attempting to magically heal the recipient of Universal Deflection must overcome it in order to successfully use a healing spell.

Unseen Presence

Walk the Tread of the Silent Hunter

Casting Time 5, Duration 5, Magnitude 5, Trigger

The caster silently mouths the Single Benediction of Silence when concealed by shadows, supernaturally merging with them as they shroud him like a black sheep.

This spell renders the mystic virtually invisible and silent in any shadow or darkness. This spell grants a +50% bonus

to the dragonspeaker's Stealth tests, while imposing a -50% penalty on any Perception tests made to attempt to locate the dragonspeaker. Even if spotted, the character gains the benefit of being partially obscured (-20% to most attempts to target or strike the character). Should the character leave the shadows, the spell immediately expires.

Dragon Magic Items

Bone-Sung Armour

Dragonspeaker armour is distinctive, to say the least. In many cases, the armour worn by the imperial mystics can seem like they are shielded by exoskeletons, wearing the bones of dragons on the outside of their bodies.

The standard armour for low-ranked dragonspeakers is a bone breastplate. This breastplate resembles nothing so much as a bone-white ribcage, formed of several thick 'ribs' around the mystic's torso and over his shoulders. The bones that make up dragonspeaker armour are stronger and lighter than true bone, able to withstand a great deal of force. Additionally, many dragonspeakers customise their equipment by scrawling mantras, benedictions to the Cosmic Dragon, poetry from their cult and runic symbols across the white surface of the beautiful armour.

Wealthier and more influential Dragonlords have access to better armour or the powers to shape their own. Curling, elegant dragon bone vambraces sheathe their forearms, spiralling, reinforced bone shin- and thigh-guards protect their legs and exquisitely-shaped helms of roaring dragon

heads cover the mystic's entire skull. Characters wearing a full suit of bone-sung armour receive +10% on all Influence tests to persuade or intimidate citizens of the EWF.

Bone-sung armour cannot be acquired on the black market except in the rarest of circumstances and will demand a price several times that listed. Dragonspeakers of Wyrms' Talon Disciple rank and above are entitled to an initial bone-sung breastplate from their cult at half the listed price, though future replacements will cost the usual price.

Klanths

A klanth is a chopping sword shaped from dragon bone. The wooden handles are traditionally made to be gripped in the left fist, as all dragonewts are left-handed and the dragonspeakers honour their allies' natural racial proclivity. The blade itself is made of shaped bone, featuring spell-enhanced obsidian on both edges of the chopping blade. Classically, the obsidian forms a row of teeth, in the manner of a saw, though some newer variations use the obsidian as a single slicing edge. The wooden handles are also often capped by an obsidian pommel stones, most often a Fire, Dragonewt or Dragon rune, allowing the wielder to use the rune as if he was integrated with it.

Klanths are exceptionally durable because of the spell that shapes them. However, once they are broken the enchantment that enhanced them is shattered and they cannot be repaired.

Klanths are only rarely purchasable and any such deals are likely to be on the black market since the dragonspeakers

lay claim to all klanths in the Empire. If a character does is not in a position to ask for a klanth from his cult superiors (and any dragonspeaker over the rank of Wyrms' Face Believer is entitled to do just that) then it might be possible to track a klanth down on the black market at a price close to 2,000 silver pieces. Cultists that need to replace a lost klanth are expected to donate 500 or more silver pieces to their cult as penance.

Dragon Magic Armour

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Bone-Sung Breastplate	6	2	Abdomen, Chest	4,000 SP	-6%
Bone-Sung Greaves	6	1	Legs	2,000 SP	-6%
Bone-Sung Vambraces	6	1	Arms	1,000 SP	-6%
Dragonhead Helm	6	1	Head	2,000 SP	-3%
Full Bone-Sung Suit	6	5	All	9,000 SP	-21%

Dragon Magic Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Klanth	1H Sword	1D6+2	7/7	1	5/12	2,000 SP

GOD LEARNER SORCERY

Though Third Age scholars will shake their heads at the colossal vanity of the megalomaniac Middle Sea sorcerer-lords, in the heady and turbulent years of the Second Age, the God Learner star is ever on the rise – even until the last moment. The cracks in the dragonspeakers' plan are beginning to show through. That failure is already coming to pass and the God Learners see it clearly. Meanwhile they remain untroubled by their own acquisition of power and their manipulations over the foolish mythologies of lesser cultures.

To be a sorcerer among this Empire is to have the beliefs of thousands of mortals at your fingertips, in your palm

and at your mercy. For centuries the myths of Gloranthan cultures have played out in the mystical Hero Plane and brave adventurers have received great magical rewards for emulating these flawed beings. Now it is time for that emulation to become manipulation; power lies ahead for those with the magic to reshape the Hero Plane as they see fit. In an age of warring Empires that have grown ripe on decadence and might, the God Learners tower above all other kingdoms.

The Invisible God

The God Learners do not offer worship to flawed, human-like deities. Their reverence goes to Malkion, the Invisible God, He who exists but does not act, expecting mortals to discover their own paths to power. The Malkioni faith teaches the Empire's citizens to govern their lives by mastering the world around them rather than by emulating mythical gods for magical rewards. It is this divine mandate of self-reliance that fuels the Sorcery-born ambition of the Middle Sea Empire.

The Invisible God created everything, from its thoughts and inventions sprang the runes that shape the elements and aspects of the universe itself. The exact details of the creation history tied into Malkioni faith are in *Glorantha – The Second Age*. What is important to bear in mind is that in creating the world and allowing itself to be understood as the entity Malkion, the Invisible God is not a god, he is God.

This belief in the one true God, with the evidence of his mortal birth, death and divine resurrection, creates the underpinning of Jrusteli Sorcery. As

A God Learner Sorcerer Studies



Christianity had the Bible, Malkionism has the *Abiding Book* – a text written by unknown magical forces thought by the God Learners to be the work of the Invisible God himself. The God Learners need answer to no-one, for they are unwavering in their faith that only misguided mortals emulate the deeds of false gods. No plunder of the Hero Realm can be considered a crime when God himself has decried the religions of other cultures.

As the Empire rises further from its primitive roots in antiquity, founded on castes and restrictive worship, the Jrusteli people are swept up in the unprecedented changes gripping their kingdom. Now God Learner schools of magic are open to any citizen with the money and inclination to study Sorcery, rather than simply being hoarded as a privilege of the ruling classes. The elitism of the past did not die from social reform, however. It was necessity. As the Hero Plane is mapped and quested-through over and over and over, the God Learners require an ever-increasing number of sorcerers with the skill necessary to achieve the Empire's ends. The true nature of this cultural shift is apparent to any with the sense to look. It will ultimately harm the Empire that such reforms came about through greed and ambition rather than justice and equality, but in the great failure ahead, such will be the least of Glorantha's problems. As it stands now, the Second Age offers incredible opportunities for peasants and commoners of the Middle Sea Empire to advance beyond their station in the cause of the nation.

The 'rags to riches' tales of ascension from the gutter to the highest echelons of society are paralleled neatly in another aspect of Malkioni culture. A number of recognised saints act as intermediaries between mortals and the Invisible God. These worthy souls are heroes drawn from Jrustelan history and it is their deeds that the God Learner magicians of today imitate in the mortal world, following their magical disciplines and their doctrines of plundering the Hero Plane. Malkion Himself is far above such emulation. God cannot be contacted directly by mortals and it is here that the Malkioni are served by their saints. The Empire's enemies compare the veneration of saints to their worship of their own pantheons and loathe the God Learners for perceived hypocrisy. Meanwhile the God Learners wield unique powers over the other cultures of Glorantha and sneer down at the barbaric beliefs of others. It is an endless cycle.

The Goddess Switch

The most audacious and colossal piece of magical manipulation ever to take place under the influence of mortals is part of the great mystery often referred to as the God Learner's Secret. One part of this secret – a secret which will never be known outside the God Learners themselves – is the divine violation called the Goddess Switch.

Inika and Einhorn, two lesser grain goddesses of Wenelia and Slontos, were the victims of the Goddess Switch. Through repeated HeroQuesting, the murder of other minor deities and the gradual deception of the goddesses involved, the God Learners altered the mythology of two separate cultures and created variant legends to compensate for the alterations. Over time, the cultures began to venerate their new goddesses exactly as they had worshipped the originals.

The God Learners had succeeded where magical and metaphysical laws deemed they must fail. For the first time in the history of Glorantha, the actions of mortals had changed the Hero Plane.

Only now, several years later, is their plan beginning to show signs of decay. The sorcerer-lords of Pythos University who had overseen the Goddess Switch are well aware of the current corruption spreading throughout the two regions. The land of Slontos is plagued by failing crops that die in the fields before every reaching maturity and no marriages – sworn as they are to the grain goddess – last longer than a year. Wenelia suffers likewise, with grain and fruit blighted so as to poison the populace if it passes their lips.

The God Learners do not know that they have doomed their Empire. At this stage, the sorcerer-lords are focused on damage control, surrounding the affected areas with legions of soldiers. Armies commanded by God Learner magicians stand poised to kill any who would carry news of the dying cultures and their plights out to the rest of the world, and are equally violent when it comes to letting anyone within the perimeter of the 'quarantined areas'.

Ultimately, the God Learners have damned themselves as well as Glorantha. The Third Age is not born of the Great Dragon's failure to achieve birth but is instead the result of the God Plane lashing back to stability, eradicating the meddling changes made by mortals. Reality itself and the

universal laws reject this Sorcery-born warping and the devastation that follows paves the way for the Third Age. The God Learners of the Second Age still believe their manipulations are as permanent as they are powerful. They are wrong and time will show them just how wrong they are.

While the Goddess Switch is one of the most significant facets of the God Learner's interference with the natural order, it is not the only aspect of their power to cause great impact on the Imperial Age. Perhaps the second greatest of their machinations is the creation of Zistor. In their unending hubris, the God Learners have not only broken metaphysical laws once to exchange two goddesses, they have also established a way to violate the natural order again. Their sorcerers have found a way to bring about the birth of a new god: Zistor, the Machine God.

The Machine God

Just as the God Learners steal the god myths of other cultures, they also wrest the magical secrets of any culture or discipline that can be of use to them. The prime example of such thievery is the acquisition and subsequent alteration of the mostali magic that has been turned to the creation of the Machine God.

Zistor is not a true god. The God Learners as a whole are not aware of this, though individual sorcerers are likely to have their suspicions. The initial founding of the Zistorite faith began when God Learner sorcerers developed the theory of the 4th Plane. These sorcerers theorised that the Mortal Plane, the Spirit Plane and the God Plane were not the be all and end all of Gloranthan metaphysics. These mages disregarded the Hero Plane as the 4th Plane, relegating it to a bastardisation of the Spirit and God Planes. Using stolen mostali lore and spells, these God Learners established new magic arts based around the development of machinery. It was postulated that these new powers drew from the true 4th Plane – a world of 'magical science.'

The argument could be made (if anyone had the knowledge to argue) that the God Learners have developed this theory entirely as yet another shortcut to power. This is exactly true. Zistor is a false god, though a great many God Learners point to his existence and insist that if it behaves like a god and provides power like a god, then all criticism against the Machine God is flawed.

The Zistorites are a significant presence in God Learner society. It is their arts that create the vast number of magical weapons and armour that the God Learners use (and award to adventurers that serve them) and they are also responsible for all of the biotechnological enhancements many God Learners implant within their bodies. Their influential operation is carried out from their base in the region called God Forgot, where the sprawling metropolis known as Zistorwal noisily powers the God Learner war effort.

There is a compelling lie permeating many Gloranthan cultures that Zistorwal is ruled by a gigantic automaton of flesh, bronze and iron, and that this is Zistor the Machine God himself. The awe-inspiring automaton certainly exists. It is seeing a great deal of use in the Siege of the Machine City and becoming a focal point for the rising hatred of the God Learner's enemies.

It is not Zistor, though. The truth of the matter lies in the construction of the city itself and it is a secret that will never be known. The God Learners take it to their graves when the Imperial Age ends and their so-called 'Clanking City' is finally destroyed.

ZISTORUAL: The Machine City

Depending on whom one asks the city of Zistorwal is either a technological marvel that represents a breakthrough in the metaphysics of Glorantha or an abomination against the world that must be destroyed. Currently the city is loosely ringed by a motley siege army made up of mostali that want vengeance for the theft of their secrets, Old Ways Orlanthi, trolls that seek nothing more than the spread of disorder and EWF opportunists that simply want the God Learners to be crushed. Trade in and out of the city still occurs because the siege lines are not drawn up tightly yet, though the besieging army are not shy about attacking trade caravans. Preying on the God Learner trade traffic is relatively ineffective anyway, since the sorcerer-lords of the city have more than enough power and skill in their arts to teleport anything truly valuable to where it needs to go.

The twisting metal spires of Zistorwal pierce the sky, while the high walls of bronze, iron and stone black out the sun if one stands before them. The Machine City is a hive of awe-inspiring and ugly noise as well as incredible but ugly architecture. Huge steam vents shriek as they expel clouds of white smoke, solar-powered generators hum and throb as they charge up, making the very air

The Clanking City - Zistorual



god learner sorcery

vibrate painfully in the ears and eyes of those nearby, and the engines of a thousand machines roar as they stamp out meticulously-designed magical artefacts.

The ultimate threat presented by the Machine City (at least as defined by the besiegers) is that the mass-production of magical items threatens the balance of magic in Glorantha. To harness and shape such a vast amount of magical energy will eventually upset the Great Compromise that keeps Glorantha free of true Chaos. The God Learners populating the Machine City shake their heads at such perceived naivety – at least for the time being.

The gigantic automaton of flesh, iron, bronze and magic that the invaders believe to be Zistor is in truth simply the only real part of the city's great machinery that outsiders ever see. Zistor, the false god itself, lies under the surface of the city. It is a great series of interlinked machines, bound together by copper and bronze cable-veins that

pump lightning and magic for blood. The machines are powered by Sorcery, clockwork and steam, grinding and shrieking as they in turn power the factories of the city above. This collection of vast machinery, built from stolen mostali lore, false faith and experimental God Learner Sorcery-physics, is the real god. The automaton above is no more than a golem avatar.

The mostly-automated factories of the Machine City are well-known for their manufacture of magical weapons. God Learner sorcerers and soldiers are often equipped with these low-grade magic weapons from mass-production lines. Many outsiders might consider laying siege to the Clanking City for that alone, in order to prevent the Middle Sea Empire from achieving even greater mastery over Glorantha by putting an end to their supply of magic items. The God Learners consider these factories to be a useful but lesser aspect of the Machine City's significance, however. The real arts of the Zistorites lie in their creation of biotechnological devices that fuse

with their bodies and run on a mixture of Sorcery and the body's own energy. The God Learners of Zistorwal are following their god's example, altering themselves from fully human to beings that are half-mortal and half-machine.

The Art of God Learner Sorcery

God Learner Sorcery represents the highest form of magical power in Glorantha. Rune Magic is easier to learn, individual Divine Magic spells might be more powerful and Draconic Mysticism has a hundred advantages over other forms of magic but ultimately it is God Learner Sorcery that exceeds all other disciplines in terms of power and versatility. It is this power that has shaped Glorantha in the Second Age, setting so many other cultures firmly under the boot of the Middle Sea Empire.

While Rune Magic has clear and notable uses, practically all other magic is considered laughable by the God Learners. Sorcery has allowed them to create the art of magical manufacture in the Machine City, it has birthed the creation of mechemagical implants, and it has opened up the Hero Planes to God Learner raiding parties.

A great many God Learners come by their magic through personal research and/or apprenticeship under a master, rather than via traditional cult means. Since Sorcery is so dependent on the commitment and talents of the caster, it allows for a much freer way to learn the magic. As long as these individual God Learners work with the established cults and dedicate their powers to the Empire's goals, then they are neither punished nor rewarded for learning Sorcery outside of the traditional path.

The rules for Sorcery can be found in the *RuneQuest Companion*. This section discusses the differences between generic Sorcery and God Learner magic.

Minor Adjustments

Important Note: Readers will notice that some minor aspects of the spells listed here have been altered from previous books, such as the *RuneQuest Companion*. This is to represent the Glorantha-specific spellworkings of God Learner sorcerers in the Second Age. The magicians of the Middle Sea Empire have had centuries with which to perfect their art and refine spellcasting procedures to

stripped-down versions that offer incredible speed of casting. The fact that the God Learners are so skilled with their magic is an advantage born of their devotion to the Art and their own methods of magical manipulation. It is also another factor that sets them apart from other Gloranthan magicians.

Games Masters dealing with sorcerers who are not God Learners should feel free to use the base Sorcery rules as detailed in the *RuneQuest Companion*. The rules provided below are altered to provide the God Learners with an edge in magical dealings, especially when compared with their greatest rivals, the imperial dragonspeakers of the EWF.

In nearly all cases, the spell's Casting Time has been reduced from the Sorcery norm (to represent the fast-casting of the God Learner method) and the Touch trait has been removed, since the God Learners have long been able to inflict their spells over a distance.

Spell Traits & Descriptions

The following section details a few dozen spells commonly used by the God Learner Alliance. More will appear in future *RuneQuest* supplements but Games Masters should bear in mind that almost any spell possible with common Rune Magic (and even most Divine Magic) is achievable at a similar Magnitude with God Learner Sorcery. This type of magic is the most versatile in all Glorantha and Games Masters dealing with sorcerer characters should be aware that the players can possess nearly any spell imaginable provided they can research it first. Other God Learner spells can be found in the *RuneQuest Companion* and *Cults of Glorantha*.

Games Masters and players may consider any spell drawn from the 34 runes listed in *RuneQuest* as having an equivalent Sorcery spell when it comes to converting and creating God Learner Sorcery spells.

Every God Learner Sorcery spell is defined by a series of traits that tells you what kind of spell it is and how it is used in the game. A description then follows describing the spell's precise effects. The traits used by spells are detailed below.

Casting Time: The spell takes the indicated number of Combat Actions to cast. God Learner Sorcery is almost always faster than other types of magic – a major advantage in spellcasting combat.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character concentrates on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spellcaster to continue to gesture with both arms, chant and ignore distractions. This trait overrides the normal Sorcery spell default Duration.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears. This trait overrides the normal Sorcery spell default Duration.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed. This trait overrides the normal Sorcery spell default Duration.

Resist (Dodge/Persistence/Resilience): The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely. Note that Resist (Dodge) spells require the target to be able to use Reactions in order to dodge. In the case of Area spells, the Resist (Dodge) trait requires the target to dive (see *RuneQuest*) in order to avoid the spell's effect.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spellcaster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting. This trait overrides the normal Sorcery spell default Range.

Trigger: The spell will lie dormant until an event stated in the description takes place. The spell then takes effect and is expended.

Blindness

Casting Time 1, Instant, Resist (Resilience)

The target's eyes milk over as if covered by cataracts, rendering him totally blind.

This spell renders a target blind, completely eliminating his ability to see. Only spells capable of regenerating organs, such as Regrow Limb and Regenerate, can restore the victim's sight.

Break HeroQuest

Casting Time 2, Instant, Touch

The sorcerer vanishes from the Essence World with a thunderclap and a rush of air filling the space he occupied.

This spell allows a God Learner sorcerer to voluntarily leave a HeroQuest on a whim, without completing the myth or deviating from it. If successfully cast, the

spellcaster has a percentile chance (equal to the spell's Magnitude x 10) of returning to the exact place he entered the Hero Plane, just as if he had completed the HeroQuest normally (though he gains no completion benefits). If the spellcasting test or the percentile chance fails, the character is forced to remain on the HeroQuest.

Cast Back

Casting Time for God Learners reduced to 1.

Compulsion

Casting Time 2, Resist (Persistence)

The affected subject is unable to resist doing as he is bid, following the caster's desires for the duration of the spell.

This spell forces the target to perform a single action as directed by the sorcerer. The compulsion can be no longer than a single sentence (the spell's Magnitude in words) long and must be achievable by the end of the spell's duration, or the affected subject will be free again. For instance, 'defend me', 'surrender' and 'leave your sword in the chest' are all acceptable. 'Serve me for the next year' will work for the spell's Duration, but no longer.

Compulsions must be a conscious action on the part of the target. 'Die' will not work, though 'fall on your sword' would. Any spell that obviously counteracts a target's survival instincts (be it ordering to commit suicide or fight a barbarian horde single-handed) grants the target +30% on its Persistence test to resist the spell.

Diminish (Characteristic)

Casting Time for God Learners reduced to 1.

Enhance (Characteristic)

Casting Time for God Learners reduced to 1.

Enhance Weapon

Casting Time 1

The chosen weapon glows with a pulsing white light, hissing as it cuts through the air.

This spell can be cast on any weapon. For every point of Magnitude, it increases the chance to hit with the weapon by +5% and deals one point of extra damage. This extra damage is magical and will affect creatures which can only be hurt by magic. The weapon's base damage remains non-magical.

Firebolt

Casting Time 1, Instant, Resist (Dodge)

A streaking bolt of white-hot flame shoots from the sorcerer's palm, with a humming drone as it superheats the air around it.

This spell conjures a small bolt of magical fire that causes horrendous burns to a target. For every two levels of Magnitude, the spell does 1D6 points of magical fire damage to a single randomly rolled hit location.

Lacerate

Casting Time 1, Resist (Resilience)

Hideous rents in the target's flesh appear as his skin splits open under the touch of an invisible blade.

This grim spell is used to cause intense agony in enemies of the God Learners without killing them. It inflicts painful wounds that deal one point of magical damage to three random hit locations and increases the target's Fatigue level by one step (from fresh to winded, for example).

Open HeroQuest Gate

Casting Time 2

After tracing arcane symbols in the air, the God Learner tears open a rent in the planes, allowing him access to the Hero Plane without needing to perform a cultural ritual.

This spell is one of the patented God Learner ways of breaking reality's rules. The spellcaster uses sheer magical might to pull open a gate into the Hero Plane.

If successfully cast, the spellcaster has a percentile chance (equal to the spell's Magnitude x 10) of ripping open a fresh (and temporary) gate to the Hero Plane, just as if he had performed a ritual to access the actual gate. If the spellcasting test or the percentile chance fails, the temporary gate fails to open.

This spell must be cast near a pre-existing HeroQuest gate (the gate must be within the spell's Range) – the particular aspect of the Hero Plane accessed will be the same as the nearby HeroQuest gate accesses.

Reconstruct Implant

Casting Time 3, Concentration (Special), Instant

The God Learner's machine implants crackle and whirr as they self-repair.

This spell functions much like the Regenerate spell, in that it will cause a severed or maimed mechemagical limb to repair itself or reattach. Reconstruct Implant cannot return a character from the embrace of death.

The Magnitude of the spell must equal or exceed the maximum hit points of the mechemagical limb. This spell will cause a mechemagical limb severed by a Major Wound to repair itself, or if the detached limb is still present, for the limb to reattach itself to its stump.

Reconstruct Implant takes a number of Combat Actions equal to the target's SIZ to reattach a limb, during which time the caster must maintain concentration on the spell. The hit location is immediately restored to 1 hit point at the end of this period.

Reconstruct Implant takes a number of minutes equal to the target's SIZ to reform and rebuild a limb, during which time the caster must maintain concentration on the spell. The hit location is immediately restored to 1 hit point at the end of this period.

Regenerate

This spell does not have the Touch trait for God Learners and the Casting Time is reduced to 2.

Repair Implant

Casting Time 2, Instant

This spell must be cast upon a wounded mechemagical hit location. It institutes a natural healing rate into the target location. If more than one mechemagical location is damaged, the spell must be cast once for each wounded location.

For every point of Magnitude of this spell, the caster can repair one hit point of damage to the hit location. Repair Implant cannot reattach or regrow a severed limb and will not work on any hit location suffering from a Major Wound.

A God Learner casts the Siphon Life spell



Siphon Life

Casting Time 2, Resist (Resilience)

A thin, red-tinted mist manifests between the sorcerer and the victim of this spell. This mist has a coppery scent to it, though it is not thick enough to obscure vision at all.

This spell drains the life force of the target and transfers it to the caster, restoring his health. This spell inflicts its Magnitude in damage, split evenly between every hit location of the target creature (roll randomly if necessary). This damage cannot be reduced by armour. For two points of damage an individual target sustains, the caster can heal himself of one point of damage to a hit location of his choice.

Slumber

Casting Time 1, Resist (Persistence)

The targets are rendered unconscious and collapse where they stand.

This spell is a less harmful way of guaranteeing victory in a battle. More compassionate God Learners have used it to gain entrance to other cultures' HeroQuest gates, though it is also used to take prisoners alive for interrogation.

If the spell is successful, the victims fall asleep for the spell's Duration. Any attempt to awaken the slumbering victims will instigate another Persistence test on the part of the victim – this test will suffer a penalty equals to 10 x the spell's Magnitude.

Spell Resistance

Casting Time for God Learners reduced to 1.

Spell Sense

Casting Time 1

The caster's eyes glimmer with soft, white light.

This spell allows the recipient to literally see the ebb and flow of magic. By augmenting the recipient's natural vision, the spell allows him to see a creature's Magic Points, as well as enchanted items with their own Magic Points or spells. The recipient must be able to actually see the creature or object for this spell to work.

Sense HeroQuest Gate

Casting Time 1

This spell allows the God Learners to detect the presence of a nearby HeroQuest gate. Mechanically, it functions the same as a Sense (Substance) spell (detailed in the *RuneQuest Companion*). God Learners casting this spell divine the exact locations of any HeroQuest gates within the spell's range. It is common for sorcerers on scouting missions to imbue the spell with a significant Duration and keep this 'sense' active for long periods while exploring.

Sense Rune

Casting Time 1

This spell allows the God Learners to detect the presence of any runes nearby. Mechanically, it functions the same as a Sense (Substance) spell (detailed in the *RuneQuest Companion*). The sorcerer learns the exact locations of any runes within the spell's range, though he will not know the rune types. As with Sense HeroQuest Gate, it is common for sorcerers on scouting missions to imbue the spell with a significant Duration and keep this 'sense' active for long periods while exploring.

The recipient of the spell will only know roughly how many Magic Points an object or creature has: Few (1 to 5), Some (6 to 10), Plenty (11 to 20), Lots (21 or more).

By looking at a spell effect, a recipient of Spell Sense will automatically be aware of its magical origin (Divine, Rune, Mysticism, Sorcery).

By increasing the Magnitude of Spell Sense, the caster can learn more about what he is seeing. Compare the Magnitude of Spell Sense to the Magnitude of any spell that the target is either casting or under the influence of. As long as Spell Sense's Magnitude exceeds the other spell's, the caster will be able to precisely determine the general effects of the perceived spell, including whether it has been overcharged.

Telepathy

Casting Time 1, Resist (Persistence)

This spell allows for telepathic communication between the caster and one other person – the spell therefore requires a minimum Targets of 2. A number of words may be mentally spoken per Combat Action equal to the spell's Magnitude – mentally speaking via telepathy is not considered a Combat Action in itself, however.

Those with whom the caster is attempting to establish contact may resist the intrusion with a Resist (Persistence) test.

Words exchanged between the sorcerer and those he converses with are audible by anyone with the capacity to read minds, such as dragonspeaker casting the Sense Surface Thoughts spell.

The caster can, during his Combat Action, choose to mentally speak to one, some or all of the contacted targets. Those the caster contacts may not mentally speak telepathically to anyone other than the caster (they may not speak to one another, for instance).

Telekinesis

Casting Time 1, Resist (Resilience)

With an outstretched hand, palm facing the target, this spell lets a mage move objects and beings around with the power of thought.

The sorcerer can levitate or manipulate one point of SIZ per Magnitude of the spell, moving it at a rate of up to one metre per round in any direction he desires. The whole of an object must be targeted with Telekinesis – a caster cannot simply target a creature's arm, he must target the whole creature if possible.

For the purposes of lifting, throwing or affecting objects, the telekinesis spell is considered to have a STR equal to the spell's Magnitude.

Teleport

Casting Time 2, Resist (Resilience)

The sorcerer vanishes in a burst of silent magical light, instantly appearing where he desires.

The God Learner can teleport to any spot within Range that he can see. The spell carries the caster and up to his SIZ in ENC worth of gear. Every point of Magnitude above 1 allows the God Learner to transport an additional 10 ENC worth of gear.

Other targets can be brought along with the spell, provided the caster invests in the Manipulate (Target) skill. Each target will only be able to take up to its own SIZ in ENC worth of gear. Unwilling targets are allowed to resist if they wish.

Treat Wounds

This spell does not have the Touch trait for God Learners.

Mechamagics of the Clanking City

The machine elements that Zistorite God Learners are incorporating into their bodies enhance their senses and heighten other capabilities. These biotechnological enhancements provide spiritual closeness to their deity as well as making the sorcerers' bodies stronger, more resistant to damage and undoubtedly intimidating to their enemies.

Mechamagical Implants

God Learner mechamagic is not an exact science. In truth, it is not science at all as we would understand it. Rather, it is a fusion of biology and primitive industrial technology

that functions entirely because of Sorcery. Without magic, these implants are dead metal in the body. With magic, they become methods to maintain permanent spells and benefit from the effects of sustainable Sorcery. Almost all limb replacements have their nerves deadened somewhat, which reduces pain in mechemagical implants.

Armoured: These implants are made of incredible mystical alloys and base metals alike. This means that all mechemagical implants (other than eyes, heart and lungs) have 6 armour points and do not impart a Skill Penalty as most armours do. Normal armour may not be worn over mechemagical implants.

Note that a mechemagical skull is all that is required to gain 6 armour points on one's head – a mechemagical jaw is not necessary (nor will a mechemagical jaw alone provide any armour points).

Cost: The price of each implant represents the base cost of the augmentation's component, the automaton staff, the sorcerer operators and the magical work-lab materials used in the surgery.

Electrical Susceptibility: Mechemagic implants that replace entire limbs suffer double damage from electricity-based attacks, such as magical and non-magical lightning. This does not apply to smaller implants (such as eyes or organs) only those that replace entire hit locations (such as skulls, legs and arms).

Healing: These implants do not heal naturally as real limbs do. The only spells known to repair mechemagical implants are the Reconstruct Implant and Repair Implant spells (see page 50). Other spells (such as Heal, Heal Body, Heal Wound, Regenerate, Regrow Limb and Treat Wounds) will not affect a damaged mechemagical hit location.

Inhibited Spellcasting: Mechemagical implants, while constructed of a number of metals and alloys, will always contain significant amounts of iron. While the Zistorites have come a long way in neutralising the negative effects of Gloranthan iron, their implants will reduce the number of Magic Points available to a character. The character's POW is considered to be reduced by the implant's Magic Point Loss statistic, for the purposes of determining maximum Magic Points and regaining Magic Points only.

Obvious: All of these implants make some degree of noise in their normal function, with the whirring of gears and servos being difficult to disguise, coupled with occasional bursts of smoke or steam and crackles of electricity. The relative obtrusiveness of the implant is registered in its Stealth Penalty.

Each of the following implants is usually only available to Zistorite cultists of Initiate rank or higher. Duplicating these feats of mechemagic is next to impossible by non-Zistorites – even the Runelords and Runepriests of the Clanking City generally only have access to the archives and schematics of the magical machinery rather than an immediate and intimate knowledge of how to create new implants.

Here are descriptions of the most common mechemagic enhancements used by the Zistorites and increasingly shared among the God Learners.

Mechemagical Arm

As with hands, these limb replacements are created from a combination of bronze and iron, with hydraulics and clockwork gears serving as the conduits through which the caster's Sorcery powers the arm.

Characters with one or more mechemagical arms gain +10% (per hand) on Athletics tests when climbing or applying brute force. Additionally, a character with a mechemagical arm can choose to either a) parry weapons as if they had the Formidable Natural Weapons trait, or b) inflict +2 damage with all close combat attacks (as long as the attack is made with that arm or with a weapon held in that arm). This choice must be made at the beginning of a character's Combat Action and lasts until their following Combat Action – though a character with two mechemagical arms can employ both benefits simultaneously.

Each mechemagical arm also increases the character's STR, CON and SIZ Characteristics by +1.

Cost: 4,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -2

Stealth Penalty: -10%

Mechemagical Eye

God Learners that have sustained damage to their eyes or wish to enhance their ocular perception replace one or both of their eyeballs with gemstones or crystal lenses.

This operation often involves some measure of skull reconstruction, with shaped metal reinforcing the area around the eye socket and with thin metal wires carrying electrical impulses from the brain.

Characters with one or more mechamagical eyes gain +10% (per eye) on visual Perception tests and the eye permanently confers the effects of the spell *Spell Sense* at Magnitude 5 (see page 51). Additionally, a character with two mechamagical eyes gains Night Sight.

Cost: 2,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -1

Stealth Penalty: -5%

Mechamagical Hand

These hands are created from a combination of iron and bronze bones with copper cables serving as veins of a sort. The joint at the wrist is often reinforced by a short vambrace of iron covered in Malkioni scripture acid-etched into the metal.

Characters with one or more mechamagical hands gain +5% (per hand) on Athletics tests when climbing. Additionally, a character with a mechamagical hand can choose to either a) parry weapons as if they had the *Formidable Natural Weapons* trait, or b) inflict +1 damage with all Unarmed or Martial Arts attacks. This choice must be made at the beginning of a character's Combat Action and lasts until their following Combat Action – though a character with two mechamagical hands can employ both benefits simultaneously.

Cost: 2,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -1

Stealth Penalty: -5%

Mechamagical Heart

Some Zistorites have their internal organs enhanced by mechamagical implants, though the practice is extremely rare. One of the only manipulations that have managed to succeed and remain stable in the

years after the implants were activated are mechamagical hearts, with stimulator machinery feeding energy to the organ at all times, along with minute wires threaded through the sorcerer's body and muscles.

God Learners with this implant halve all Fatigue penalties. A debilitated God Learner therefore only applies a -25% penalty to skill tests, movement is three-quarters normal speed, Strike Rank is reduced by -3, DEX is considered to be only 5 points lower for the purposes of determining Combat Actions. Should the debilitated God Learner fall unconscious, he will only remain unconscious for 1D6 hours. A God Learner with mechamagical lungs and a mechamagical heart does not apply this benefit twice, though he can persist for twice as long before requiring Athletics tests (2 x CON in minutes for medium activity, 2 x CON in Combat Actions for heavy activity).

Three Zistorites



A mechamagical heart also increases the character's CON Characteristic by +1.

Cost: 4,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -2

Stealth Penalty: -5%

Mechamagical Jaw

This is a common implant for sorcerers with mechamagical skulls, though some have this enhancement separately. The God Learner's jaw is replaced by either a fixed or hinged bronze jaw, which features metal teeth (if the jaw still moves) or a magic-sensitive vibrating crystal in the throat that vocalises the sorcerer's words in a metallic drone (if the jaw is fixed in place). Neither implant applies a spellcasting modifier.

God Learners with this implant receive +20% to all Influence tests with other Zistorites, as it is seen as a pious devotion to Zistor who possess a similar jaw.

Cost: 2,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -1

Stealth Penalty: -5%

Mechamagical Leg

These replacement limbs are almost always implanted in pairs because humans find balancing on one mechanical and one natural leg to be troublesome without a great deal of adjustment time. Formed from an iron and bronze outer shell shielding pistons, cogs, hydraulics and cables that mimic human muscles, mechamagical legs are incredibly powerful and resistant to damage.

Characters with a pair of mechamagical legs gain +20% on all Athletics tests.

A pair of mechamagical legs also increase the character's STR, CON and SIZ Characteristics by +2.

Cost: 8,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -4

Stealth Penalty: -20%

Mechamagical Lungs

This implant, like replaced or enhanced hearts, is one of the most complex operations performed by the God Learners. It involves implanting flexible coatings of

strengthening metal on areas of the lungs, as well as regulating machinery and stimulators that feed oxygen more efficiently to the bloodstream. Sorcerers with these implants can go much longer without becoming breathless as these implants constantly regulate their breathing through artificial means. Though this is the most uncomfortable of all implants – even with nerve-deadening – there are several advantages. Combined with filters in the throat and chest, the Zistorite is able to breathe poisonous gas without ill-effect and can even breathe underwater, absorbing the minute traces of air present.

God Learners with this implant halve all Fatigue penalties. A debilitated God Learner therefore only applies a -25% penalty to skill tests, movement is three-quarters normal speed, Strike Rank is reduced by -3, DEX is considered to be only 5 points lower for the purposes of determining Combat Actions. Should the debilitated God Learner fall unconscious, he will only remain unconscious for 1D6 hours. A God Learner with mechamagical lungs and a mechamagical heart does not apply this benefit twice, though he can persist for twice as long before requiring Athletics tests (2 x CON in minutes for medium activity, 2 x CON in Combat Actions for heavy activity).

In addition, the Zistorite can breathe underwater and reduces the Potency of all inhaled poisonous gases by 50.

A pair of mechamagical lungs also increase the character's CON Characteristic by +1.

Cost: 4,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -2

Stealth Penalty: -10%

Mechamagical Skull

This enhancement replaces much of a sorcerer's skull, encasing the brain in a shield of bronze and iron. In many cases, the implant features sound-sensitive crystals inserted in the ear canals and connected to the brain that conduct sound better than human ears. This adds +20% to all aural Perception tests.

Cost: 4,000 SP

Magic Point Loss: -2

Stealth Penalty: -10%

THE OLD WAYS

While the Old Ways are still significant in the notable magic arts of the Second Age, they are lesser aspects in the face of Draconic expansion and God Learner plundering. To the dominant cultures of the era, these old theist faiths are considered heresy and delusion (by the EWF) and nothing more than a source of mystical power (by the God Learners).

This chapter provides the rules for playing Orlanthi and Dara Happan spellcasters who channel the energies of their respective pantheons: the Storm Tribe and the Sky Gods. Its primary focus, however, is to provide rich myths and legends for Player Characters associated with the God Learners to plunder for power. Games Masters should be able to find guidance and ideas in order to establish HeroQuests for their players, whether the Player Characters serve the God Learners or not, as well as a measure of insight into the two major pantheons of the Old Ways.

In the sections detailing individual gods, some sample deeds and rewards are suggested as examples for Games Masters to work from. Obviously the many hundreds of tales surrounding the deeds of each god are fodder for HeroQuesting adventures but a few examples are provided in order of difficulty – whether for Novice, Seasoned, Master, Hero or Legendary-level characters. These are guidelines as to the rough challenge level of the HeroQuest, not hard and fast rules limiting characters of a certain competence from even trying. The only true ‘prerequisite’ for HeroQuesting is being able to enter the realm of the gods.

The Storm Tribe Pantheon

The Orlanthi belong to one of the dominant cultures of the Second Age. Worship and veneration of the Storm Tribe has always been popular across the face of Glorantha and the legends of the Storm Tribe are told as tales across campfires and sermons in temples alike.

The faith is theist, its practitioners using Divine Magic as they emulate their gods and call down their holy power. As such, despite widespread popularity in the past, the

Orlanthi faith is caught between the two warring Empires of the imperial age. God Learners prey upon the mythology of Orlanth and his tribe, plundering the old stories for power. The wyrmfriend influence is more temporal but no less insidious. As the Empire spreads across the world expanding the outline of their Great Dragon To Come, the dragonspeakers spread the false word of Orlanth the Dragon. While the God Learners violate the legends of the Storm Tribe, the wyrmfriends convert the worshippers by conquest. To be a traditionalist Orlanthi in the Second Age is to be between a rock and a hard place: you must suffer the violation of your faith from one mighty power and endure conversion to draconic ideals by another.

Yet ironically it is the faith that will outlive the duelling Empires. Diminished perhaps, but the worship of the Storm Tribe will continue on in ages when the hubris of the God Learners and the conceit of the Dragonlords are long gone.

Belief in the Storm Gods

To follow Orlanth is to follow the God of Kings, born in God Time and ascended to greatness through deeds and challenges unmatched by the deeds of any other deity. Orlanthi culture is founded on respect for his actions and his beliefs, with the greatest respect given to the type of heroism that is earned through redemption and atoning for one’s mistakes. The Storm Tribe is not a pantheon of perfect beings, nor is Orlanth himself regarded as divinely infallible. What the Orlanthi people see in their god is a being that does the right thing, fighting for freedom over corruption and stagnation. When Orlanth makes a grave error, he works hard to redeem himself and repair the damage he has done to the world and the lives of others. There is much to admire in his actions and tenacious urge to do good.

Orlanth is a proud god and often a violent one; his people follow this example within their culture. The god’s desire to do battle for his cause was sometimes tempered by the other deities of the Storm Tribe but the mythology is full of stories where Orlanth defeated his enemies in war. His deeds teach that battle for the right cause is just and noble, and that blood shed in the name of freedom and honour is a noble sacrifice. If there can be considered any one unifying cause in Orlanthi worship, it is never to

bow and shame oneself in the face of oppression, tyranny or evil.

There is no stereotypical Orlanthi worshipper. The plains-dwelling barbarians of the Orlanthi culture make up the majority of his followers but they are by no means the only ones who venerate the Storm Tribe. Many clans and bloodlines have moved into the ever-expanding cities of the Second Age, with some keeping close to their faith, others adapting it to suit their region and others falling under the bastardisation of Draconised worship.

Adventurers from across Glorantha working for any faction imaginable will still find a great sense of purpose in the veneration of Orlanth and the Storm Tribe. As a pantheon of wanderers, questers, treasure-seekers and warriors, the Storm Gods are the perfect match for the ideals of mercenaries and adventurers in this tempestuous age of glory, imperialism and myth. Adventurers with no cultural ties to the traditional Orlanthi way of life are not prevented from following the Storm Tribe. The opposite is actually true, for any RuneQuesting wanderers adhering to the ways of the pantheon are often admired for doing so. The Storm Tribe offer great power to those who would emulate their ancient deeds and adventurers are among the most ardent in doing just that.

In truth, most adventurers emulate at least one Orlanthi deity simply by living their own life as they see fit, but perhaps the most obvious aspect that naturally unites adventurers with Storm Tribe patrons is the nature of RuneQuesting itself.

Orlanthi Magic

Rune Magic is the most popular form of magic in Orlanthi culture, for reasons stated above. Divine Magic, the power of priests and holy warriors to call upon the Storm Tribe for direct blessings, is also highly regarded among the people. Cults dedicated to both runecasters and divine spellcasters are rife among Orlanthi lands and adventurers should have little difficulty finding places within such groups if they meet the requirements. Few are outwardly against recruiting non-Orlanthi because the culture is founded on the principle that anyone who venerates the Storm Tribe is actually an Orlanthi himself. To be one of the people of the Storm Tribe is not to be born a barbarian but to respect the God of Kings.

Shamanism once held a greater portion of the culture's attention but between the expansion of cities, the

relocation of bloodlines and the invasive actions of the warring Empires, this part of the old ways is in decline. Traditionalist Orlanthi settlements are the most likely places to find one of these rare spellcasters. There he can be consulted on the matters of spirits and long-dead ancestors but beyond these matters shamans wield little power. It is a path of great respect to wise men and little use for adventurers.

God Learner Sorcery and Draconic Mysticism are both considered anathema to the Orlanthi faith. The former allows upstarts and defilers of heritage to leech strength from the holy stories. The latter is an unnatural channelling of powers no mortal was meant to possess and is responsible for the corruption of a great many Orlanthi. What galls the traditionalists so much is that the Dragonlords did not need to conquer and convert all of the Orlanthi at the tip of a sword. Vast numbers of the now-draconised faithful amended their beliefs because they saw truth in the teachings of the EWF's legend of Orlanth the Dragon. It sits heavy in the hearts of traditionalists who grieve for their brethren being so blind and submitting to conquerors without a fight. Conversely, the draconised Orlanthi either remain faithful to the new order out of fear, pay it lip service without believing a word or genuinely pity their orthodox cousins for not seeing the draconic elements hidden within the Storm Tribe legends all this time.

Runes

Storm Tribe followers put great stock in runes. Rune Magic is practiced all who find the chance to do so, be they the greatest priests or the lowest thieves across the length and breadth of Orlanthi culture. It is believed that the runes mortals find and integrate are the physical representations of Orlanth's own blood. In the old stories that tell of Orlanth's wanderings and wars, he sustained many injuries. Where the God of Kings bled onto the land of Glorantha, his divine lifeblood changed that which it touched into physical shards containing a fragment of his power. Other runes found across the world are the results of other wounded gods, some of whom are among the Storm Tribe and took injuries alongside Orlanth, some of whom were slain by Orlanth's blade.

The Sky God Pantheon

The only religion that comes close to rivalling the widespread worship of the Storm Tribe is that of the Pelorian faith in the Sky God pantheon. Though the faith

of Peloria and its Dara Happan people can seem to lack the immediate appeal to adventurers that Orlanth's god-brood enjoys, the religion itself is founded on principles of the purest nobility. In veneration of the God-Emperor Yelm, the Dara Happans worship a deity that stands above all others in power and influence. Throughout the previous ages of Glorantha, the Dara Happan Emperor himself was revered as a mortal incarnation of the Sun God, blessing his people with his presence through mortal bloodlines as well as with his brightness in the heavens.

As with the Orlanthi faith, the worship of Yelm also suffers under the duelling factions of this tempestuous age of Empires. Now the royal throne is claimed not by a descendent of the God-Emperor but held instead under the scaled grip of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Many Gloranthans might never believe it without witnessing it first-hand but the horrifying rumours which have spread across the land are true – a dragon now claims the Pelorian throne.

The Sun Dragon passed the Ten Tests of Empire and ascended to leadership because of the insidious actions of the Golden Dragon Society – an EWF cult that the previous Emperors tolerated within Dara Happa because they believed the alliance would allow them to extend the Pelorian borders to their Golden Age territories. The wyrmfriends' deception rings painfully in the hearts of Peloria's people. No one likes to be confronted with evidence of their own gullibility.

This grave insult to the honour of the Dara Happans (in violation of their oldest traditions) would be grave enough even without the accursed God Learners plundering the legends of Yelm for their own benefit. While the religion itself is not threatened by the mass conversion that warps the Orlanthi faith, the worship of the Sky Gods still suffers under great uncertainties, temporal invasions and spiritual violations as the Second Age draws to a close. The glory days of the Dara Happan Empire are long behind it, though there is always the chance such an era will come again in a future age. The seeds of rebellion are certainly being sewn, if the rumours of the rightful mortal son of the last Emperor are to be believed.

Belief in the God-Emperor of the Sun

The Dara Happan perception of Yelm does not entirely align with the god that the Orlanthi regard as Orlanth's greatest rival. To the Pelorians (and the Dara Happan

people specifically) Yelm is the Father of the Gods, ruling from a golden throne atop a gigantic ziggurat in the heavens. He was the one chosen by the Creator Gods to watch over Glorantha, selected because of his power and purity.

Yelm supposedly looks on with pride at his people's insular elitism and their subjugation of others, respecting their strength and the purity of their zeal in enlightening rival nations and cultures. Most adventurers find Yelm to be a distant god, separated from mortals by arrogance and power. His relatives in the Solar Court, such as his sons Yelmario and Antirius, are renowned for qualities more commonly considered noble by other cultures, such as martial prowess and defence of the innocent. It is in cults that idolise these deities that adventurers tend to be found.

When Pelorians turn to the Sky Gods for magic, they also look instead at the God-Emperor's lesser relatives who have the authority to dispense their divine blessings as they see fit. To worship Yelm directly is considered a grave affront by all but the true Emperor and his highest noble allies. The cults that are open to Dara Happans and adventurers alike venerate Yelm's sons, daughters and those mortal Emperors that have ascended to full divinity upon their death. Of course, a great many Pelorian cults are only grudgingly open to adventurers (if at all) because of the cultural prejudice that runs against wandering vagabonds that disregard their place in the family and society. There is great power in the Dara Happan faith for those outsiders who are not afraid to suffer this prejudice. Understandably few are willing.

Dara Happan Magic

Rune Magic is common in the spellwork of the Dara Happan faithful, though it is not regarded as highly as it is among the Orlanthi. To the Pelorians, runes are the blood-drops of the gods that warred in the True Darkness but never the holy lifeblood of Yelm. It is said that the God-Emperor shattered bloodlessly when he died in his grief, therefore runes are honoured for their power and lesser divinity but not revered as a blessing from Yelm in the way Divine Magic is recognised.

Dara Happan Divine Magic is practiced primarily to bring about the lost golden age of Dara Happa, when the Empire ruled over all of Peloria and did not suffer under the intrusions of God Learner magic and Dragonlord invasion. The quest of every Yelmite priest, of any true

The Spark spell



Sky God worshipper, is to drive out the influence of foreign impurities and cleanse the Empire. It will come as no surprise to consider that God Learner Sorcery is reviled as an affront to the gods and Draconic Mysticism is seen as little more than a futile path to corruption, more worthy of pity and ridicule than fear or awe.

The light and pure magic wielded by the Dara Happans does not spread across the entirety of Pelorian culture. The subject nations still cling to their own faiths, though all Pelorian magic not drawn from runes is divine in nature. The increasing draconisation of several lesser Pelorian cultures means the Dara Happans cling to their own Old Ways with increasing desperation and tenacity.

Old Ways Divine Magic

When the mortal followers of the Orlanthi and Dara Happan faith need magical aid, they can call upon both the power of the runes they possess and the direct intervention of the Storm Tribe and the Sky Gods. The *RuneQuest Companion* contains all the rules and mechanics necessary to channel magic directly from the two pantheons and cast Divine Magic.

The chance to cast any Old Ways Divine Magic spell is based directly on the character's Lore (Theology) skill, just as Rune Magic is cast with the appropriate Runecasting skill. This represents the character's familiarity with the

gods and goddesses of his pantheon, knowing their deeds and myths from the God Time. The skills normally used are Lore (Orlanthi Theology) and Lore (Dara Happan Theology).

Spell List

The following section details common Orlanthi spells drawn from the Storm Tribe and the Sky Gods. They are listed as follows:

Area (X): The spell affects all targets within a radius specified in metres.

Concentration: The spell's effects will remain in place so long as the character concentrates on it. Concentrating on a spell is functionally identical to casting the spell, requiring the spellcaster to continue to gesture with both arms, chant and ignore distractions. The caster does not regain Dedicated POW until he ceases concentrating on the spell.

Cults: The type of cult that offers this spell to worshippers. If the cult is listed as 'All', the spell is a utility spell available in all cults.

Duration (X): The spell's effects will stay in place for the number of minutes indicated.

Instant: The spell's effects take place instantly. The spell itself then disappears.

Magnitude (X): The strength and power of the spell.

Permanent: The spell's effects remain in place until they are dispelled or dismissed.

Progressive: This indicates that the spell can be learnt and cast at greater levels of Magnitude than the minimum.

Ranged: Ranged spells may be cast upon targets up to a maximum distance of the character's POW x 5 in metres.

Resist (Dodge/Persistence/Resilience): The spell's effects do not take effect automatically. The target may make a Dodge, Persistence or Resilience test (as specified by the spell) in order to avoid the effect of the spell entirely. Note that Resist (Dodge) spells require the target to be able to use Reactions in order to dodge. In the case of Area spells, the Resist (Dodge) trait requires the target to dive (see *RuneQuest*) in order to mitigate the spell's effect.

Touch: Touch spells require the character to actually touch his target for the spell to take effect. The spellcaster must remain in physical contact with the target for the entire casting.

Trigger: The spell will lie dormant until an event stated in the description takes place. The spell then takes effect and is expended.

Bloodlust

Duration 15, Magnitude 4, Resist (Persistence), Touch
Cults: Any Storm Tribe deity or Sky God whose portfolio includes War (such as Babeester Gor and Shargash)

The character's turn blood red and a savage howl erupts from his throat. Under his skin, veins visibly pulse with magical energy.

This spell overrides any caution and cowardice the subject might have (as well as any reason or tact...) and reduces him to a state of passionate, berserk fury. Blood is the only thing that will sate him. Priests of warlike cults use this spell on themselves and occasionally their companions in the moments before battle is joined.

Characters affected by this spell will automatically succeed any Resilience test for the duration of the spell. They will also automatically succeed at any Fatigue tests and cannot be rendered unconscious. Their Close Combat skills receive a +50% bonus for the spell's duration. In addition, the affected characters gain +4 to STR and CON for the duration of the spell, are immune to Knockback (though they may cause it themselves) and gain +1 AP on every hit location.

Characters affected by this spell must do all they can to engage enemies in close combat. The subject may not parry, dodge or cast any magic spells while under the influence of Bloodlust. If a character wishes to perform any other action apart from engaging in close combat, he must first pass a Hard (–40%) Persistence test. A fumble on this Persistence test means the character immediately attacks the nearest person, ally or foe.

Normally, the characters remain in the Bloodlust state for the entire 15 minute duration of the spell, but Games Masters may allow a them to shake off the effects with a Hard (–40%) Persistence test. At the end of the spell, the recipient immediately drops two Fatigue levels.

Bloodlust may not be combined with Berserk or Fanaticism – Bloodlust will always take precedence in such cases.

Spark

Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged, Resist (Resilience)
Cults: Any Storm Tribe deity

A small arc of electrical energy leaps from the caster's outstretched fingertip, burning the skin of whomever it touches.

This minor spell inflicts a single point of magical electrical damage per point of Magnitude to a random hit location of the target. It is rarely used as a combat spell – it is more often a warning or a means to start fires in the wilderness at night.

Sunflare

Instant, Magnitude 2, Ranged, Resist (Dodge)
Cults: Any Sky God

A bolt of white light that pains the eyes streaks from the caster's hands towards his opponent.

A magical missile of light inflicts D6 magical fire damage against the target, applied to a random hit location. Anyone hit by a Sunflare must make a Difficult (–20%) Resilience test to avoid being blinded for 1D3 Combat Rounds.

Thunderclap

Area 20, Instant, Magnitude 3, Resist (Resilience)
Cults: Any Storm Tribe deity or Sky God

The spellcaster slaps his palms together in one loud clap which rings out with the force of a huge peal of thunder.

Any character within the Area of the spell that fails the Resilience test loses his next 1D4 Combat Actions and becomes prone. In addition, whether a character passed the Resilience test or not, everyone in the area of effect suffers a –10% penalty on all Acrobatics and Perception tests for one hour, due to the angry ringing in their ears affecting their hearing and balance.

HEROQUESTING

HeroQuesting is the method by which the God Learners are cementing their dominance over Glorantha. What was once a traditional ritualistic practice performed by the most devout followers of the gods is now a way for the Middle Sea Empire to achieve mastery through blasphemy. In centuries past, HeroQuesting was a wondrous way for mortals to touch the gods and receive divine blessing to benefit their communities. Now, thanks to God Learner Sorcery, it has become a path leading to personal and imperial power. Worse, with the God Learners' Secret, the act of HeroQuesting now threatens the entire world. The Jrustelan sorcerer-lords have pushed mortal influence in the Otherworlds one step too far.

The rituals surrounding HeroQuesting itself are deceptively simple. Mortals enter the Hero Plane and emulate the deeds of the gods during prehistory and the God's War. If they follow the myth closely enough, living up to the standards of the deity they are emulating, they are returned to the Mortal Plane with a magical reward of some kind. The reward always matches the deeds – a HeroQuester emulating the challenges faced by Orlanth facing Yelmlio in battle might receive a mystical helm that protects the wearer from blindness, but would never receive an eldritch cup that grants prophetic powers.

Until recently, it was an implicit Gloranthan law of metaphysics that no permanent changes could occur in the Hero Plane. The actions that occur there are magical representations of the ancient God Time and altering these events has no effect on the world of today. The God Learners have found a way of breaking that law, at least for the time being.

God Learners and HeroQuesting

The God Learners first discovered that they could enter the lands of myth in the city of Ralios. The first God Learner mages entered the Hero Plane almost by accident. They were unprepared for what happened and were slaughtered – only two returned to the Inner World – before they could achieve anything of real worth.

The Jrustelan imagination was afire from that moment on. Using the words and teachings of Arkat, the God Learners worked tirelessly to secure their own sites.

These places were dedicated to Malkioni saints, great priests and renowned ancestors. God Learners entered the Hero Plane, emulating the deeds of their great heroes and returning with gifts from the Otherworld.

This was merely the beginning. They recognised the Hero Plane as a magical reality between the Mortal Plane and the true God's Plane, and saw the powers that could be gained from manipulating this realm. In the years that followed, small groups of sorcerers sought out sacred places where other cultures contacted the Otherworld. They catalogued comprehensive accounts of a great many such sites all across Glorantha, paying special heed to those that were situated near Jrustela and the territory of the Middle Sea Empire.

Teams of sorcerers commanding regiments of Jrustelan soldiers began to storm these holy sites soon after they were discovered. If the culture had been studied enough, these fledgling God Learners would simply conquer and kill the natives of the area, claiming their sacred site in the name of the Middle Sea Empire. If the site belonged to a culture or a faith that the sorcerers had not studied extensively, the natives were forced to perform their rituals to welcome the Otherworld and the God Learners violated the sanctity of the rituals by entering the Hero Plane instead of the true worshippers.

As the Second Age draws to a close, the God Learners are in control of a vast array of these 'gates' into the Otherworld. The highest-ranking sorcerers (equivalent to Runelords and Runepriests in Malkioni cults) are even able to enter the Hero Plane without gates. The concept of HeroQuesting has reached the point where it is now integral to the power base of the God Learners. Hundreds upon hundreds of adventuring groups and mercenaries serve the Jrustelan sorcerers now, entering the Otherworld and bringing back items of power from the God Time for the God Learners to use. Thousands of sorcerers still enter the Hero Plane themselves, either alone, in teams or alongside these adventurers, receiving the gifts of the Otherworld and increasing their personal power by orders of magnitude undreamed of in the Inner World.

The Middle Sea mages have also discovered other types of HeroQuest, where the participants would never

physically enter the Hero Plane. These are disregarded on the whole as weak and inefficient versions of the true rite. ‘Full’ HeroQuests are the only version performed by the overwhelming majority of God Learners. The dominant Empire of the Imperial Age is focused on real routes to power, not the dances and ceremonies of misguided pagans.

Initiating a HeroQuest

To actually enter the Hero Plane requires a character or group to ‘invite’ the Otherworld into an area, causing an overlap in reality that allows travellers to walk from one world into the next. The ritual to open the path into the Hero Plane must be conducted at a location termed by the God Learners as a ‘gate’.

In some cases, this description is a literal one. The ancient temples to Malkioni saints contained actual portals carved from precious metals and marble, set into the walls of great inner chambers that were hidden away from the eyes of the masses. In these rooms, scrolls hung on the walls detailing the deeds and accomplishments of Malkioni saints and worthy ancestors. Mosaics and paintings decorated the walls, depicting scenes from the lives of these long-dead Jrustelans. Here, through emulation and prayer, the magicians drew the Otherworld close and their doors into the Hero Plane were opened. A mage walked through the portal and right into his legends.

The sites of other cultures tied into their myths. Orlanthi gates would often be located in the wilderness, where communities would gather in the winds of great storms and watch a band of HeroQuesters perform a ritual dance or chant that would call down Orlanth’s attention. In these open clearings at the heart of forests or at stone circles atop huge hills, the Hero Plane would overlap the mortal world and the community would watch their heroes vanish on a journey to interact with the echoes of the gods. The limitation to these established cultural gates is

that they only tie directly into the culture’s mythologies. It is exceedingly difficult to raid the myths of other pantheons through an Orlanthi gate, for example.

No matter what the culture, as long as it had theist leanings and the capacity for Divine Magic, then it had access to the art of HeroQuesting since time out of mind. The practice used to be a religious observance more than anything else. The God Learners have changed all that. They use their Sorcery to force gates open, plundering the mythologies of other cultures. Once they learn of a particular legend from a faith or culture, they open a gate and enter into the myth, following it through over and over, mining it for information and power.

Gates are not uniform in appearance, nor are they uniform in power. A hallowed Orlanthi stone circle that has seen generations of use by communities and HeroQuesters is a significantly more powerful gate than a wild node in the wilderness where a sorcerer detects the barriers between the words are simply a little thinner than usual.

The power of a gate is a deciding factor in whether the Otherworld opens up to the mortals who wish to enter it. At the aforementioned Orlanthi stone circle, HeroQuesters might be able to get away with a rough ritual emulation of their gods’ deeds in order to open the way into the Otherworld. At a weaker gate, the HeroQuesters would need to act out legends with meticulous accuracy in order to open the way, for their ritual requires considerably more investment from their end of the metaphysical connection.

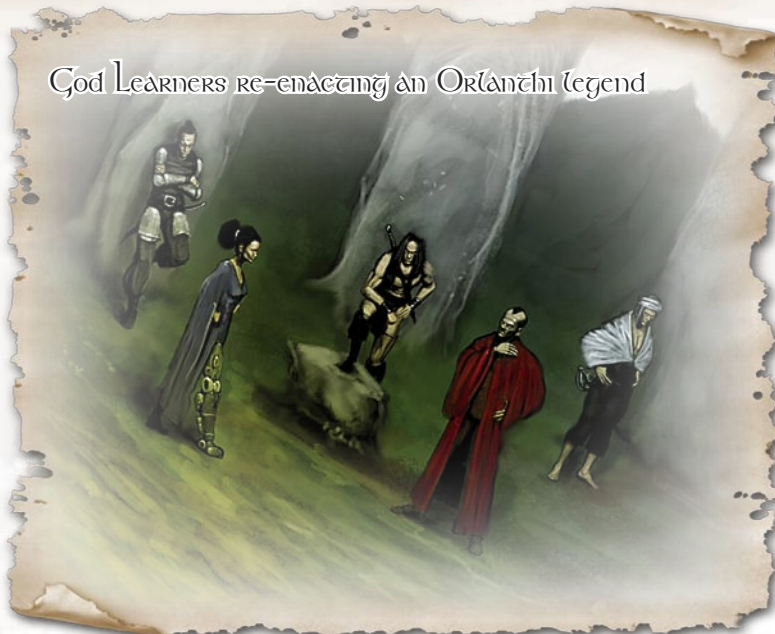
Game Mechanics

To enter the Hero Plane, the characters must be at a gate appropriate to the faith whose myths they wish to interact with. At least one member of that faith must be present for the HeroQuest to work. Other methods of calling down the Otherworld involve religious ceremonies

HeroQuesting Rituals

Myth Performed	Gate Strength	Lore (Specific Theology) Modifiers
Worldwide renown (Lightbringer Quest)	The greatest holy sites	+20%
Popular legend (Orlanth marrying Ernalda)	Well-known temples or sites	+10%
Cultural tale (Yelmali’s duties in the Darkness)	Locally frequented site	—
Specific god’s tale (Heler’s weapon-making)	Rarely-used site	–10%
Rarely-told story (Valind fighting winter spirits)	Disused site	–20%
Rediscovered or unknown legend	Undiscovered site	–40%

God Learners re-enacting an Orlanthi legend



bound to the culture that maintains the gate, which vary by region, tribe, family and cult. An Orlanthi religious method might be to sing of the Storm Tribe's deeds for an hour, while backed by chanters intoning blessings in Orlanth's name. A Pelorian custom might be to perform a dance honouring Yelmlio under the light of the sun, while being beaten by sticks – emulating the suffering and dedication the son of the God-Emperor displayed in the God Time. Literally thousands of rituals exist.

Any characters wishing to open a way into the Otherworld must make the appropriate Lore (Specific Theology) tests in order to begin accurately emulating the actions of their gods as a way of opening the gate. Alternatively, a character may make a general Lore (Theology) test, albeit with a –40% modifier. Each of these tests normally takes at least ten minutes to complete

No matter which skill is used, apply the modifiers in the HeroQuesting Rituals table. Any character that fails the skill test does not adversely affect the ritual – but they do not successfully access the myth and therefore do not enter the Hero Plane, though their comrades may. The normal time period for this test is ten minutes.

For Example: A group of Irustelan mercenaries led by a Malkioni sorcerer wish to enter the legends of Orlanth and plunder the Hero Plane for powers tied to the Storm God. To this end, they infiltrate an Orlanthi cult temple and make

their way to the Summer Statues room – this room is used once every year by the cult for an annual ritual of blessing, but sees no other use. Therefore it imposes a –10% bonus on the Lore (Orlanthi Theology) test. If the cult used it more frequently, even for other rituals, it might be considered a more powerful site for the purposes of HeroQuesting. The power of the sites is directly tied to the amount of appropriate cultural rituals that take place there.

To compensate for the gate's penalty, the group act out a major legend – Orlanth baffling Yelm before the Celestial Court. This adds +20% to the Lore (Orlanthi Theology) roll, representing the power such a legend has in the Hero Plane. This bonus more than cancels out the penalty for using a weak site as a gate.

The sorcerer and his mercenaries now all make Lore (Orlanthi Theology) tests with a total +10% modifier. Any that succeed feel the pull of the gate as it opens and the world around them alters to become the God Time legend they were emulating.

Any that fail simply see their successful comrades fade from view as they enter the Hero Plane. These unlucky souls are now merely down in a cult's cellar, pretending to be gods.

Note that while repeated attempts can be made to access a myth through a particular gate, this will not mean that a previously initiated Quest is automatically joined. Normally, a new HeroQuest is started. However, adventurers have been known to accidentally meet each other on the Hero Plane, even when involved in separate Quests (sometimes, even separate myths). Such chance encounters are entirely within the remit Games Master, however.

In the Hero Plane

Once on the Hero Plane, the characters are free to interact with the myth they are now part of. Once they arrive, all their senses are immersed in the surroundings and the myth begins to play out around them. Games Masters are free to run with the staggering and incredible vistas of the God Time, letting players use their own skills to compete with the gods.

The myths of a HeroQuest are based on the souls of the mortals interacting with them. God-Emperor Yelm will be an amazing spearman no matter who faces him, but he will be as a demon with a blade when duelling a veteran mortal soldier, and merely a skilled fighter when facing a young man with little combat experience. The legends alter to fit the souls and psyches of those that intrude within them. In this way, a HeroQuest remains challenging for mortals of any skill level.

As the characters live through the legend, they are faced with many choices regarding their behaviour. The only true way to succeed at a HeroQuest is to follow the mythology closely, winning where the god triumphed and failing where he failed. Wild deviations from legendry result in expulsion from the Hero Plane or a magical misalignment that pushes the HeroQuesters into another myth – perhaps even separating them across several legends. It might be much easier for a God Learner sorcerer imitating Urox to simply blast Wakboth with magic energy but the legend tells the story of how the Devil was crushed under a mountain... and that is what must be done to receive a portion of Urox's power. Nobody said this was easy, after all. When in doubt about massive deviation, Games Masters should allow players the appropriate Lore (Specific Theology) tests to stay on track with the myth they are part of. It is quite possible for HeroQuests to stretch over multiple gaming sessions.

All injuries sustained over the course of a HeroQuest are recorded as normal, but they are spiritual in nature and erased upon returning to the real world. However, death in the Hero Plane is another matter. Characters slain in the Hero Plane must make an immediate Persistence test.

If the test is successful, the character feels a moment of sickening dread at the severity of the mortal blow and is instantly transported back to the Inner World, shaken but none the worse for wear.

Characters that fail the Persistence test are locked in the legend and die in the Hero Plane, his body swiftly absorbed by the realm's magic. The only way for a character to avoid death in these circumstances is to spend a Hero Point to force a re-roll of the Persistence test.

The only way to voluntarily leave a HeroQuest without Sorcery is to complete a legend or deviate from its intended path. The God Learners have, of course, developed a

way around this with their magic (see Break HeroQuest on page 49). Upon leaving a HeroQuest, a character is returned to the location where he originally entered the Hero Plane. There have been rare cases of HeroQuesters being deposited elsewhere upon an unintentional failure of a HeroQuest but if the God Learners know why this happens, they are characteristically silent on the matter.

RuneQuest Sight

To enter the Hero Plane, the sorcerers of the Middle Sea Empire had to first track down the locations of gates. This is where the revelatory power of RuneQuest Sight comes into play. RuneQuest Sight is a secret power coined by the God Learners in centuries past and is directly responsible for their current dominance. No other race or culture shares any inkling as to the truths of RuneQuest Sight and the God Learners mean to keep it that way. It is not some minor state secret – it is the lynchpin by which the Middle Sea Empire means to conquer the world.

RuneQuest Sight is not a simple power to describe. Many of its aspects are metaphysical, philosophical and magical in nature, for the power itself is tied into detecting the ebb and flow of magic and faith. Any magical discipline or divine worship, from Sorcery and Mysticism to shamanism and theism, leaves an imperceptible trail from the mortal involved to the Otherworld Plane he draws faith or magic from. RuneQuest Sight breaks this cardinal rule: it allows sorcerers to perceive the imperceptible trail. It also allows the Justelans to see the myriad connections between various Gloranthan faiths and magical arts, interpreting how they all connect and flow to and from the various planes.

Some characters will find this as fascinating as the God Learner archivists and researchers do. Others will see it as being, for all intents and purposes, an absolutely useless fact. In regards to the practicality of RuneQuest Sight for adventurers, it is a relatively useless power. It only becomes useful to most adventuring groups when they consider how it can benefit them on a practical level. God Learners have used their culture's development of RuneQuest Sight to shape spells that allow sorcerers to do two incredible things: The first is to sense the presence of nearby rune stones. The second is to detect the presence of areas in the Mortal Plane where the barrier between the physical world and the Otherworld are thin. In some places, where cultures have erected sacred HeroQuest sites, these 'thin' places are obvious. In others, far

removed from (or forgotten by) mortals, sorcerers detect potential gates that can be exploited without having to butcher the natives first.

These powers are mechanically represented in the spells Sense Rune and Sense HeroQuest Gate on page 51.

Rewards of HeroQuesting

Upon successful completion of a god-myth, a mortal receives some aspect of that deity's power. The choice is ultimately down to the Games Master to decide what the character deserves, based on his actions and the myth itself. Sometimes the choice is obvious – a character as Orlanth killing Yelm with Humakt's sword Death is likely to receive either a portion of the Storm God's sword prowess or have his own plain blade enhanced into a magical weapon that deals immense damage to fire-beings.

Games Masters should always bear in mind that HeroQuesting is a significant challenge that comes with significant rewards. Minor skill bonuses and weak magic items are acceptable rewards for the least impressive god-stories but the overwhelming portion of God Time legends are grand in nature and should offer grand rewards for managing to complete them. Repeated HeroQuests are likely to make an adventuring party incredibly capable at dealing with almost any challenges on the Mortal Plane. While it takes no small amount of time and effort to make it to such levels of mastery, there will always be those that manage to attain it eventually. Perhaps such characters could even have sway over the spiralling, doomed dance of the two warring Empires of the Second Age.

Skill & Characteristic Enhancements

Skill enhancements are possibly the most common advancement to receive at the end of a HeroQuest and Games Masters may wish to tie it in to other rewards as well. Whatever skills are commonly associated with the god (and whichever skills the god displays in this particular legend) are ripe for a boost. For relatively easy HeroQuests, consider a boost of 10% in total (either in one skill or over several skills) as a standard. For increasingly difficult ones, raise the spread to 20 to 40% total, leading up to the hardest HeroQuests which can take days or weeks, earning perhaps 60% across a host of skills. Something like the Lightbringer Quest would be several dozen (or several hundred) quests joined together, ranging in difficulty from the easy to the incredibly difficult.

Characteristic rewards are rarer and earned only through significantly hard HeroQuests. These represent the character returning with an aspect of the god's power or personality, such as a CHA bonus for a character that commands with an air of Orlanth's fearsome aura about him, or a POW bonus for a sorcerer that spent many hours casting healing magics in emulation of Chalanna Arroy. These rewards should rarely be more than +1 or +2.

Transmuted Items

A popular favourite among players is to have a mundane (previously non-magical) weapon altered into a powerful magical magic-enhanced version at the end of a HeroQuest. This need not always be done with weapons but given the conflicts that raged between the gods in ancient eras, it will come as no surprise to learn that most such transmutations are weapons of some kind. Games Masters should let their imaginations run wild when it comes to the alteration of mundane items into magical ones. These rewards are supposed to be significant and powerful when wielded on the Mortal Plane.

In the stories of Yelmlio, fighting demons as he fled from the eyes of Chaos, he brought the warmth and light of the sun to those mortals he encountered on his travels, as well as protecting them from creatures of darkness. A character HeroQuesting through a few short battles with lesser demons might find his plain metal sword altered into a weapon with a bound Fire rune in the pommel and a golden blade that can cast a Magnitude 2 Bladesharpen on demand. This is a lesser reward for a lesser achievement.

If the HeroQuester endured his way through one of Yelmlio's legends concerning the defence of a small caravan of fleeing mortals and lighting their way in the night as he battled demons assaulting them, it would not be unreasonable to bestow a much more powerful magic weapon in light of all the effort put in. In this case, the reward might be a sword that could cast Magnitude 8 Light spells and Sunflare spells on demand, with Fire and Light runes etched into the blade.

There are no solid laws to determining HeroQuest rewards. As long as they are significant and generally match the deeds performed, the Games Master is on the right track. In the case of the more powerful magic sword mentioned above, the character has earned a weapon that princes might envy. Bear in mind, however, just how hard he had to work in order to get it. It is no easy feat to learn Yelmlio's legends, find an appropriate cultural gate

and fight demons for thirteen nights while keeping over a hundred humans alive. The HeroQuester *earned* that sword. The rewards would have been lessened if he had partially failed, such as if some of the humans had died or he had been almost defeated, since the legend in question cited that Yelmlio did not bleed once in this battle. Even so, the rewards are still great. Games Masters should be more worried about cheating characters out of well-earned rewards by being cautious, rather than fretting about game balance because they were too generous. In the Second Age, there are *always* more powerful enemies waiting to be faced.

Legendary Abilities

An unusual (but not invalid) choice might be to reward characters with a Legendary Ability appropriate to the god emulated. At most, a single Legendary Ability will be earned, at no Hero Point cost. Given their exceptional rarity, this will rarely coincide with other HeroQuest rewards.

Runes

Another common reward are runes. Characters returning from a HeroQuest receiving one or two runes tied into the god's abilities are very well rewarded indeed. These rewards might be coupled with skill increases or simply offered alone as reward for the least impressive HeroQuests.

Spells

Lastly, spells remain a popular reward, especially for magicians focusing on Divine Magic. In the case of theist mages and priests, spells can be the best reward possible. They are also extremely appropriate given the spellcaster is likely to be emulating his own favoured deity and can justify new spells as a direct blessing for a successful HeroQuest. God Learner sorcerers would likewise be happy to manifest knowledge of new spells tied into the powers of the god they have emulated but such a bonus might simply come under skill increases.

The Storm Gods

The Storm Tribe itself is a large gathering of deities, each with their own personality, temperament and a host of legends detailing their exploits in the ancient ages. The following section details many of the gods and goddesses related to (or allied with) Orlanth, focusing on the details of their mythologies. This presentation is set out to offer

players and Games Masters alike easy access to learn and interact the myths of the Storm Tribe through the power of HeroQuesting.

Chalana Arroy

The Goddess of Healing

Cults centred around Chalana Arroy revolve around her principles of kindness and benevolence, which can put great strain on her followers. In the mythology surrounding the goddess, she laid aside her passive nature and acted to heal the world in the True Darkness but the stories tell further of how she returned to her non-confrontational ways immediately after Yelm's resurrection. In emulation of this, Chalana Arroy's followers must risk their lives to heal others, to heal the world, to heal anyone and everything that requires their aid. In the decadent imperialism of the Second Age, such altruism is a rare and blessed occurrence, especially amongst the increasingly bitter Orlanthi who see their culture under assault from all sides.

The goddess herself forswore the use of weapons even on the Lightbringer Quest and her cultists follow her will in this. It is cult doctrine that no follower of the goddess may ever wield a spell or weapon that would harm the world in any way. The exact meaning of this law is always debated in the hospices, chapels, battlefield medical tents and hospitals of the cult's members but the common interpretation is that violence of any kind is forbidden.

The stories of Chalana Arroy are among the hardest to emulate on the Hero Plane. Tale after tale focuses on the goddess enduring great pain, suffering and hardship in her duty to heal the other gods during the True Darkness. While gods and demons warred around her, she used her gifts to save those that she could. A heartbreaking myth that defeats many HeroQuesters is born from the evening in hell when Chalana Arroy nearly gave her own life to heal Flesh Man of his madness. In the end she was stopped by both Ginna Jar and Flesh Man himself but in her despair at the Chaos befallen the world she was willing to sacrifice herself to heal the mortal prophet of his suffering.

Sample Deeds

Healing the other Lightbringers while they are embattled by hordes of demons at the mouth of the Underworld (Seasoned); Enduring torturous pain and the onset of madness while trying to heal Flesh Man (Hero).

Daka Fal

Judge of the Dead

The God Learners are currently devoting a great deal of focus on the deeds of Daka Fal, purely because the sorcerer-lords of the Middle Sea Empire are having so much trouble finding any at all. The god is revered by the Orlanthi as he who stands trial over dead souls and judges where they deserve to spend eternity. Any characters that come forward with solid evidence of Daka Fal HeroQuests or mythology concerning the god are likely to be rewarded above and beyond even the usual generosity of the God Learners.

Rewards

Obviously, healing skills and spells are common rewards for Chalana Arroy's HeroQuests, as are Harmony and Fertility runes.

For Example: Healing stones (function as single-use Regeneration or Healing spells, Magnitude 4 to 8, no Magic Point cost); any healing spell; CON and POW Characteristic bonuses Resilience and Persistence bonuses; permanent protection from or immunity to madness, poison or disease; First Aid or Healing bonuses.

Daga

God of Starvation

Daga is a necessary evil among the deities of the Storm Tribe. It is said that Orlanth keeps him chained somewhere in the Gods Realm, with the myths varying from a cage in the centre of a great storm to a man-sized black-clay jar under the Storm God's bed. When humanity forgets the gods, Orlanth reluctantly releases Daga – a skeletal and unpleasant little god with hungry eyes – into the world in order that he might spread famine among the faithless.

At least, so it should be. Followers of Daga know of many legends that tell of how their deity escaped his various prisons on a number of occasions and created havoc on Glorantha. The rivalry between Heler and Daga is legendary among the cultists of both gods but few facts exist to explain how the eternal grudge began. HeroQuesting has revealed myths detailing that both gods may have had the same parents while others conflict this, focusing instead on how Heler and Daga are polar

opposites in regards to their attitudes for life on Glorantha and loyalty to Orlanth.

Sample Deeds

Bringing starvation to an Orlanthi settlement (Novice to Hero, depending on the size of the village or town); Fighting Heler to a standstill and managing to flee (Master).

Rewards

God Learners rarely HeroQuest in Daga's deeds. It is occasionally seen as a punishment or proving ground for inexperienced sorcerers, since the level of malice in his deeds can be difficult to stomach for many people, and the rewards are – by the standards of HeroQuesting – relatively mundane.

For Example: Earth and Death runes; Stealth and Resilience bonuses; CON Characteristic bonuses; resistance to starvation (doubling, tripling or quadrupling the time a character can survive without food).

Elmal

The Loyal Sun, the Sky Fire

Elmal is best-known for the weak light he gave to the world in the Storm Age, when he turned his back on the slain Yelm and followed the charismatic Orlanth through the Lesser Darkness. At first, Elmal was as intractable as any fire god allied with the God-Emperor would be but Orlanth bargained for a greater bond between fire and storms, and the deal was struck. Even now, when lightning strikes set fire to trees on the ground below the storm, it is the result of the bond between Elmal and Orlanth. During the True Darkness, Elmal's light faded from the sky and it is said that he was one of the first gods to die at the hands of the Devil. While myths do play out on the Hero Place that show his first (and last) confrontation with Wakboth, several legends exist detailing Elmal's escape and flight into hiding, whereupon he worked against Chaos in secret.

At the beginning of the Lightbringer Quest it was Elmal that awarded the Mirror Shield to Orlanth, though whether it was created before Elmal's death and set aside as a later present or made in the days before the Storm God began the quest depends entirely on the legends of the Sky Fire's demise. The mythology behind the Mirror Shield tells how that to gain the wisdom necessary, Elmal had to walk the world and see fire reflected in the eyes of

one mortal from each natural species. Only then, armed with such perspective, could he fashion a shield that would reflect the evils Orlanth would encounter on his great journey.

Sample Deeds

Surviving a battle with the Devil (Master); creating the Mirror Shield for Orlanth (Master); using fire magic to light the Glorantha sky for an entire day (Hero).

Rewards

Enhanced shields, Fire and Light runes are the most common rewards sought by the God Learners involved in repeating Elmal's deeds.

For Example: Magical shields that automatically intercept incoming blows (adding to a bearer's AP on every hit location); shields that are resistant to certain types of magic or against demons; shields that increase the bearer's CHA Characteristic or Influence; Light, Fire, Infinity and Heat runes.

Ernalda

The Earth Mother, Wife of Orlanth

The benevolent mother-goddess is venerated and honoured by all life. She is considered by the Orlanthi to be the pinnacle of selfless love and prosperity, though she does not suffer the occasional ridicule that, for example, Chalana Arroy does for her pacifism. Cultists of Ernalda are generally popular and respected wherever they go, and a great many spells benefiting the home or the harvest are performed in Ernalda's honour each year.

While the goddess is not the most popular choice for adventurers, HeroQuesters have a great many myths of the Earth Mother to work through if they are so inclined. Once she was the Earth Empress, consort to God-Emperor Yelm, until she was rescued (or stolen, depending on the myth in question) by Orlanth. In the Darkness, Ernalda lost much of her power to the encroaching evil that swept the land, though in her weakened state she walked the world in a lesser avatar known as Voria, the Spring Maiden. Other myths, notably those of the elf and Yelm pantheons, say that Voria was Ernalda's daughter from her union with the God-Emperor but Orlanthi myths paint the Spring Maiden as a reflection of the Earth Mother in a greatly weakened state, travelling the world to give hope to the demon-plagued mortals. The truth, as always in such matters, is hazy at best. What is known for certain

is that Ernalda died in the True Darkness, slain by Chaos gods, and that she was in hell with Yelm at the end of prehistory.

The strange and unknowable spider-goddess responsible for binding the heart of Chaos in hell, Arachne Solara, was said to be born with the help of Ernalda who stood with Orlanth and so many others in the Underworld at the culmination of the Lightbringer Quest.

Sample Deeds

Protecting mortal settlements from uz, broo and demons during the Darkness (Novice to Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners regularly plunder Ernalda's mythology for Earth, Fertility, Harmony and Light runes. Most of her other rewards are based on assisting communities to prosper and the God Learners generally regard these benefits as irrelevant.

For Example: Healing spells; nature spells; any runes associated with the forces of good and the natural world; spells and transmuted items to benefit communities; the Tireless or Empathic Wound Legendary Abilities; First Aid or Healing bonuses.

Erumal

God of Selfishness and Trickery

At best, Erumal earns a grudging, uneasy respect from the Orlanthi because of his role as a Lightbringer. Beyond this, he is generally regarded as foolish, obscene and almost always malicious in intent. Because of his followers' penchant for thievery, adulterous seduction and general mischief, they – as with the god they follow – are regarded as necessary evils in society. A common saying explaining their role among the culture is: 'Tricks and pranks keep the prideful humble and the ignorant aware.'

Erumal's deeds reflected in the Hero Realm are diverse and plentiful. Just about every god in the Storm Tribe (or opposed to it) has felt the sting of the Trickster's dark sense of humour at least once to their detriment. Tales do exist of times when Erumal has assisted a fellow deity, such as when he tricked Yelm into hiding his blazing-hot face for a day and a night so that Heler could summon his powers and end a drought. It is not known what Erumal demanded in return for aiding Heler, however.

Much more numerous are the tales where Erumal hindered the other gods out of boredom or spite. These pranks generally involve one or more of the following deceptions: disguising himself as a lover, disguising himself as an ally or enemy, stealing prized possession or objects tied into a god's duty and on at least three occasions, impersonating another god in order to start a conflict between cults.

Just as with Erumal himself, his followers tend to be staggeringly self-indulgent. A love of good food, fine drink and the company of the opposite sex characterises the lives of many cultists, with most considering overindulgence as a part of their worship. In that sense, it is easy to see why Erumal has more followers than might be initially expected.

Sample Deeds

Thieving an item of power from a lesser god (Master); stealing an item of power from Orlanth or Yelm's palace (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners making a habit of plundering Erumal's mythology return with skills and knowledge that allows them to better deceive and manipulate others – making Erumal's legends a popular point for all Jrustelans seeking to advance in the God Learner hierarchy.

For Example: Spells focused on deception; Stealth, Perception, Dodge, Influence and Sleight bonuses; DEX and CHA Characteristic bonuses; artefacts representing those stolen from the gods by Erumal, such as Orlanth's weapons or Yelm's armour.

Gargath

The Savage Hunter

Where Odayla is the god of all the noble aspects of hunting, Gargath is the lord of all that is primal and savage in bringing down prey, be it for food or pleasure. He is known to hunt spirits as well as mortal beings, taking great joy in the death of all creatures.

His deeds focus mainly on the acquisition of his eight-legged demonic horse, a fire-maned creature that he stole from Chaos in the True Darkness and the stealing of his long, barbed spear of meteoric iron which he took without payment for the Heler's forge, following a victorious duel with the Rain God.

Sample Deeds

Stealing the eight-legged steed from the forces of Chaos (Master); Duelling Heler for the spear of meteoric iron (Hero).

Rewards

Gargath's deeds and rewards mimic Odayla's in many respects, though most transmuted weapons have an overly violent or malicious edge to them.

For Example: STR and CON Characteristic bonuses; Death, Earth and Beast runes; Dodge, Spear and Resilience bonuses; the barbed meteoric iron spear (counts as an integrated Metal rune with no POW loss for the caster and deals an additional 1D8 damage with each hit); transmuted arrows that cause a target to bleed 1 point of damage every turn until the arrow is removed.

Heler

God of Rain

Along with Yinkin and Mastakos, Heler is often praised for his loyalty to Orlanth, though his own cults remain comparatively small. HeroQuesters going through the deeds of Heler will find him alongside Orlanth in many adventures and battles before the Lightbringer Quest but his most renowned legend is based on the creation of the magical weapons and armour he forged for the Storm God.

Lacking the ability to create fire to heat the forges, he asked Orlanth for a week-long storm that would set fires in a forest where the lightning touched the trees. Using these flames, Heler forged a suit of armour from meteoric iron and a sword of blood-cooled bronze. Craftsmen that display the skill required to match the deed are few and far between but the rewards are great.

Cultists of Heler constantly oppose the followers and actions of Daga and the two gods have done battle several times, usually but not always with no clear victor emerging. These myths are also among the most-often emulated by the followers of both gods.

Sample Deeds

Adventures with Orlanth before the Darkness (Novice to Hero); fighting Daga to a stalemate (Master); capturing Daga and returning him to his prison (Hero); Creating Orlanth's weapons and armour (Hero).

REWARDS

The God Learners return from these HeroQuests with enhanced weapons in a near-constant stream. The HeroQuests themselves are usually difficult but the rewards are scattered throughout the armies of the Middle Sea Empire and on the sword belts of many Brustelan nobles.

For Example: Persistence bonuses; Craft bonuses; enchanted weapons that do massive damage to one particular creature (usually broo); enhanced armour that leaves the wearer resistant or immune to poisons, elemental extremes, magical attacks or damage from demons.

Humakt

Honourable Bringer of Death

Another son of Umath and elder brother to Orlanth, Humakt is worshipped with a mixture of respect and fear. He severed his ties to the Storm Tribe after the killing of Yelm, though still stands among the pantheon for the purposes of Orlanthi faith.

Humakt is the Orlanthi God of Death, supporting all wars and battles founded in honour and nobility. Since the death and resurrection of Yelm at the hands of Orlanth, Humakt has despised pointless bloodshed, believing death brought about through ignoble reasons is futile and impure. As the God of Death, Humakt wields the power that Orlanth once used to kill the Sun God. Tales appear on the Hero Plane showing scenes of conflict between Orlanth and Humakt, where the Storm God yielded the power of Death to his older brother after Humakt bested him in battle. Other tales play through that Humakt manipulated Erumal into stealing the sword Death back from Orlanth after Yelm's murder. Whatever the truth might be, Humakt has been entrusted with the secrets and powers of death since God Time. His followers and those that emulate him on HeroQuests see him as a stoic but sorrow-worn figure, bent under the pressures of his role but defiant in upholding his duty.

The myths associated with Humakt are few compared to those of his relatives in the Storm Tribe. Though he remained largely apart from the conflicts during the True Darkness, several stories abound of instances where the god destroyed sorcerers and demons that manipulated the bodies of the dead to do their bidding. Humakt and his followers are noted for a zealous intolerance of the

undead, destroying such abominations wherever they are found.

To worship Humakt is to worship the force that ends all life. Cultists following his ways insist that death through righteous bloodshed need not be feared, for the noble dead are given preferential treatment to cowards and weaklings in the Underworld. Many of Humakt's followers are accomplished blademeisters in their own right, though such allies make often make stoic, grim companions on the road of adventure. Making matters worse for adventurers seeking friendly companions, some of the death god's devotees even take a vow of silence, for it is said among some cults that Humakt himself has not uttered a single word since the God's War.

Sample Deeds

Killing a minor demon while fighting in total silence, emitting no grunts or cries of pain (Novice); Destroying a powerful vampire sorcerer that preys upon a city during the Darkness (Seasoned); Destroying a conclave of vampires that prey upon a city during the Darkness (Veteran); Destroying a Chaos sorcerer with an army of dead bodies he is manipulating to hunt sun gods in the True Darkness (Master); Duelling Vivamort the vampire god and surviving until the inevitable stalemate (Hero).

REWARDS

HeroQuesters emulating Humakt's deeds often return with greater insight and skill in dealing with the undead, also earning death and undead runes, and magical weapons that specifically sense or damage the undead.

For Example: STR or POW Characteristic bonuses; silver sword that deals +1D8 additional magical damage to undead; a Death rune made from a dead broo's horn (that can also be used as a dagger); +30% to all Perception tests to detect undead nearby; a blindfold that allows the character to see ghosts and spirits (but nothing else).

Issaries

The Talking God, Lord of Travel, Communication and Trade

Issaries is renowned as one of the Lightbringers, accompanying Orlanth into hell to return Yelm to the sky. He is a deity with a well-noted wanderlust, with many myths telling of his travels across Glorantha and the planes, interacting with gods and mortals alike.

On the Lightbringer Quest, Issaries was responsible for the protective magic that guarded the companions while they rested and prepared for the next night's battles. The great lesson Issaries learned on the journey was the power of stillness compared to motion and the resonance of silence over speech. When his magic failed to protect the companions, he learned these lessons and emerged stronger for them. Scholars and HeroQuesters alike note that these lessons may have changed the Talking God but made him no less loquacious.

The myths that deal with Issaries after the True Darkness relate his travels across Glorantha, meeting with the scattered tribes of humans and re-educating them back into the more civilised ways of pre-Darkness existence. Many stories tell of his impassioned lectures and debates to this end, with leaders from different cultures and regions.

Though he was a Lightbringer alongside Orlanth, Issaries is generally regarded as a peaceful god by the Orlanthi. His name is spoken in blessings of peace, alliance and other matters of prosperity, while his cultists travel the length and breadth of Glorantha seeking to learn more of its inhabitants or to settle disputes between rival factions. Worshippers of Issaries are likely to be responsible for stopping wars, binding trade agreements, settling warring family disputes and a whole host of other disagreements and unions over the course of their lives.

Much of the worship dedicated to Issaries is founded on the promises made by the god to his followers. The more good one does in mortal life and the more peace brought about through one's actions then the higher the cultist's station will be in the afterlife. It may not be true altruism but it comes close enough for those who benefit.

The notions of generosity and sharing are close to the Talking God's heart, though many tales from the Hero Plane show that Issaries is no stranger to war, both as a distracted observer and in rare cases an instigator if a greater peace could be found at the end of the struggle. Above all, the god respects a mortal with a ready wit and the capacity for lively, meaningful talk. It is because of such fondness that many Orlanthi storytellers venerate Issaries rather than the more obvious choice of deity: the secretive God of Knowledge, Lhankor Mhy.

Sample Deeds

Settling a dispute between two noble families (Novice); Spin a story to entrance an encampment of nomads (Seasoned); Reconciling an argument between Orlanth and Ernalda (Veteran); Travel non-stop for a year and a day (Master); Settling a war between two warring Orlanthi tribes (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners plunder legends of Issaries over and over in the quest for runes, skills and spells that aid travel and communication.

For Example: Communication runes; CHA or INT Characteristic bonuses; Influence bonuses; +40% Influence specifically for settling disputes; any travelling or Motion-based spell; Lesser Staff of Issaries (counts as an integrated Communication rune with no POW loss for the caster and the ability to cast any spell employing a Communication rune once per day at Magnitude 6); magical instruments that add bonuses to specific Play Instrument tests.

Kolat

The Great Wind

Kolat, Father of the Winds, receives very little individual worship from mortal cults but enjoys a respected place among the Storm Tribe for matters of his god-bloodline, which is responsible for the birth of the air-spirit race known as sylphs.

When a mortal goes to the Hero Place to emulate the deeds of Kolat, he is faced with various tasks almost always based on interacting with lesser air spirits and forcing them into obedience. Unsurprisingly, a great many Orlanthi spells based on wind magic are named after Kolat or call on his blessing as they are cast.

Sample Deeds

Subduing various air elementals through unarmed combat and magic (Novice to Master).

Rewards

God Learners seeking to plunder Kolat's mythology commonly take stones with them into the Hero Plane, which are often converted into Air runes upon the completion of subduing air elementals of various strengths.

For Example: Air and Motion runes; spells tied to wind, storms, gas, smoke or air; Dodge bonuses; reduced damage from falling.

Lanbril

The God-Thief

Lanbril was not a full god. Though he had divine blood, he was denied respect by the rest of the Storm Tribe. To exact his revenge for being spurned, Lanbril conducted an elaborate series of thefts and deceptions, stealing items of power (and often lovers) from the other gods, all of which he either enjoyed himself or used to stage even more elaborate and daring escapades on his next victims.

The God Learners are spoilt for choice when it comes to Lanbril's mythology. He has pulled pranks on every god in the Storm Tribe as well as dozens of other gods the Orlanthi refuse to place in their pantheon. Whether it involved sneaking into Yelm's palace to steal a spear tipped by a star or relieving Orlanth of Ernalda's company for several nights, HeroQuesters performing Lanbril's deeds can expect a wealth of rewards for their efforts.

Sample Deeds

Stealing the Star-tipped Spear from Yelm's armoury (Master); Stealing the Amulet of Erumal (Hero); Seducing Ernalda while disguised as Orlanth (Hero).

Rewards

The items of power stolen by Lanbril make up the majority of his HeroQuest rewards, which suits the God Learners just fine. The difficulty of the HeroQuests means that the rewards are generally very lucrative.

For Example: Star-tipped Spear (that has a critical score of 20% of the character's Spear skill, rather than 10%, and does double damage to demons); Erumal's Amulet (counts as an integrated Communication rune with no POW loss for the caster and adds +30% to Sleight, Dodge, Stealth and Disguise tests while worn); practically any lesser magical artefact of the gods.

Lhankor Mhy

The Knowing God, Guardian of Literacy and Lore

Lhankor Mhy was also one of the Lightbringers and his deeds on the journey earned him a place among the highest ranks of the Storm Tribe pantheon. During the quest

The Beard Thing

All dedicated cultists of Lhankor Mhy wear a beard, honouring the image of the god himself. Even women adopt false beards, many of which are elaborately constructed from a variety of materials. It should be noted *right away* that this tradition need not be all about bushy extravagances or something equally comedic. The cultists of the Knowing God care about their appearance as much (or as little) as any other Orlanthi. Men can obviously wear their beards short in a goatee or vandyke if they prefer. The false beard adopted by women can be a misrepresenting term, since they more often resemble half-masks of wood and metal that cover the lower half of the face.

it was the Knowing God that guided the companions' direction for most of their travels, informed of the names and weaknesses of their adversaries and counselled Orlanth on his actions. However, Lhankor Mhy did not join the Lightbringers out of a keen sense of honour or duty. Instead, the Knowing God allied with Orlanth in the hopes of finding his lost consort, a light goddess who had died with Yelm when the sun went out.

Lhankor Mhy's mythology is a tangled web of tales mired in half-told prophecy and riddles. Many times in such tales the god has revealed information to another being that ultimately proved only half the truth, leading to misfortune down the line. The Knowing God is a jealous guardian of all Gloranthan lore, acknowledging that while he has the divine capacity to know everything, mortals will ultimately fail to follow in his example. Yet for all this potential coldness and his friendly rivalry with Issaries (who dispenses knowledge freely and willingly) the worship of Lhankor Mhy is a popular one among the Orlanthi. The cults based around worship of the Knowing God are founded on the same principles of learning and lore that Lhankor Mhy practices himself. Lore is to be acquired for the benefit of the individual, not shared among the unworthy. The neutrality of sects devoted to the Knowing God is legendary, for they take sides in nothing, owe allegiance to none but themselves and are incredibly insular. With their god's attitude as their primary doctrine, this is not in the least surprising.

Worshippers of the god are torn between the traditional method of keeping the secrets of literacy in an almost entirely oral culture and the increasing practice of writing

lore down to be passed among the god's cults. The former ensures that lore does not reach outside ears and means that any who seek out knowledge must dedicate themselves to finding it. The latter offers greater acquisition of lore among the god's followers but is balanced by the risk of exposure. A rent seems to be appearing in the cults as to which method will be the one followed in the future, with dreams of secrecy colouring the ideals of one sect and dreams of colossal libraries colouring the ideals of the other. It is even rumoured that the splinter faction have already set up hidden libraries across Glorantha.

Sample Deeds

Keeping a secret while tortured (Novice); Using magic to slay demons (Seasoned); Uncovering the secret, magically concealed lair of a powerful demon; Interpreting a demon-set riddle prophecy with perfect accuracy (Master); Entering the Underworld to find a loved one (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners that move through Lhankor Mhy's legends do so to increase their knowledge, skills and in the hunt for new stories pertaining to the other gods.

For Example: Any runes; POW or INT Characteristic bonuses; significant bonuses to Perception or Lore skills; virtually any spell imaginable; the Loremaster Legendary Ability.

Mastakos

Orlanth's Charioteer

Though Mastakos is never worshipped on his own merits, some cults have been known to venerate him alongside Yinkin and Heler for their loyalty to the Storm God. HeroQuesters emulating the deeds of Mastakos are not exactly spoilt for choice. Most of Orlanth's adventures before the Lightbringer Quest feature Mastakos as a quiet and loyal ally at the God of Kings' side but his individual deeds are few and far between. The most popular is the creation of the chariot he gifted to Orlanth when the great god ventured into hell, which took the Charioteer a month to fashion from the bones of 70 demons he slew with his bare hands.

Sample Deeds

Slaying the 70 demons (Master); creating Orlanth's chariot (Hero).

Rewards

The rewards from Mastakos' HeroQuests are rarely noteworthy, reflecting the 'sidekick' nature of the god.

For Example: STR and DEX Characteristic bonuses; bonuses to Engineering and Crafts skills; Persistence bonuses; spells associated with travel; in the rarest cases, the HeroQuester might be awarded with a prodigiously enhanced chariot.

Maran Gor

Goddess of Earthquakes

Once a benevolent deity like her sister Ernalda, Maran Gor's legends really take shape during the Darkness, when her divinity twisted and she was enraged by the horrors overtaking the world. Her rage would take the shape of quakes that would shake the ground and open great rocky rents in the planet's flesh. Most HeroQuesters involved with re-enacting Maran Gor's actions during this time are put through myths of the fallen earth goddess expressing her anger at demons and seeking their destruction.

Now the worship of Maran Gor tends to be an aspect of the veneration of Ernalda. It is frequently believed that in praying to Maran Gor as an entity alongside her sister, there might yet be hope to reunite them in benevolence or at the very least divert the fallen sister's world-shaking rage by honouring her.

Sample Deeds

Slaying demons with magic of the earth or other elements (Novice to Master); tracking demons, broo or uz across Glorantha in order to destroy them (Seasoned to Master); killing a powerful demon while unarmed (Hero).

Rewards

Runes associated with violence or the natural world are commonly retrieved from these HeroQuests, as are spells tied into earthquakes and enhanced weapons made from fire-blackened wood, flint and stone rather than metal.

For Example: Axes that deal additional damage to broo, uz or demons; spells which shake the earth or focus on manipulating rock; Earth and Death runes; 'stone age' weapons that are magically durable and cause additional damage; Persistence and Resilience bonuses; CON and STR Characteristic bonuses; the Decapitating Swing Legendary Ability.

Odayla

Hunter Son of Orlanth

To the Orlanthi, Odayla is one of Orlanth's sons with a great love of the hunt. The legends told of Odayla feature the god tracking, stalking and eventually bringing down every imaginable type of animal. It is said that his bow is carved from the wooden bones of the earth and his bowstring is an unbreakable strand of white hair from a beautiful tree-spirit called Lydishia. Odayla watered the roots of Lydishia's great oak tree with the heart's blood of a demon-possessed bear, in order to keep the tree-spirit alive. In return, she offered him one of her hairs for his bow.

Sample Deeds

Hunting any animal or mortal being (Novice); hunting lesser legendary creatures such as manticores and griffons (Seasoned); hunting legendary creatures such as dragons (Veteran); preserving the life of Lydishia by slaying the demon-possessed bear that stole her water (Master).

Rewards

To the God Learners that pillage his mythology, this hunting god is also known by several names in various pantheons, perhaps most notably as Zong, the troll god of hunting prowess. Physical hunting skills and magic weapons are the rewards most often sought and received.

For Example: Enhanced bows and arrows; Stealth, Bow, Survival and Tracking bonuses; DEX and STR Characteristic bonuses; spells dealing with animals and the natural world; Beast and Earth runes.

Orlanth

The God of Kings, Chieftain of the Storm Tribe. Orlanth is the child of Umath and Kero Fin. His father was the First God of Storms and Strength, his mother a mountain goddess.

The Demon War

His rise to ascendancy was over the body of his father, who was slain battling his rival gods that tried to suppress him, and the other new gods of the young world. From a lineage of such strength and nobility, the God of Kings grew into his father's role. His siblings Kolat, Urox, Vadrus and Humakt fought the Predark Demons and Old Gods alongside him but it was clear who among the five brothers

which of them had inherited the greatest portion of their father's strength. Orlanth led them into battle in prehistory, taking his father's place as the God of Storms.

Challenging the God-Emperor of the Sun Victorious over his foes, Orlanth went to the higher gods and demanded recognition. Lord Yelm, overseer of the higher gods, refused Orlanth's demands. The God-Emperor of the Sun believed Orlanth to be an upstart and a barbaric deity. In turn, the Storm God resorted to challenging Lord Yelm to a series of contests. In the contests of song, dance and magic, Yelm was nominated by the other higher gods as the victor. They disdained Orlanth's unorthodox war cries, applauding the beauty of Lord Yelm's ballad. They frowned upon the Storm God's battle dance, smiling upon the Sun God's graceful arcing ballet in which he leapt across the sky. Orlanth's world-wracking thunderstorms wrought from magic earned him derision, while the gods marvelled instead at the glamour of Yelm illuminating the entire world below, eliminating all shadows for several hours. Then followed the race where Orlanth's winds were outpaced by Yelm's chariot of sunlight, then the trial of stealth where Yelm hid behind the blue moon and Orlanth could not find him in the darkness.

In all these tests, whether due to the disdain of the old gods or his own mistakes, the Storm God failed.

Death of the Sun God

The last contest was one of weaponry. Yelm fashioned arrows out of shafts of sunlight, piercing the Storm God and making him bleed rainwater. Enraged at the gods' disregard for his prowess so far, Orlanth used a sword fashioned from the way a storm wind would cut through the air of the world below. At the last moment, the weapon was blessed by Erumal the Trickster God, a sometime ally of Orlanth. In his rage, the Storm God cared nothing for the dangerous trickery that often came from accepting Erumal's assistance. In this final contest, after Yelm's arrows were spent, Orlanth struck the Sun God with his wind-sword. The blessing of Erumal had been to create the concept of Death within the blade and when the blade fell, the sun went out in the Gloranthan sky.

The First Darkness

With the death of Yelm, the world fell into what is variously called the Storm Age, the Lesser Darkness and the First Darkness. It was an age of thunder, winds and grey skies, considered a great time in Gloranthan

Orlanth



prehistory by the Orlanathi but few others. Gods and Goddesses of light had followed Yelm to the Underworld with the Sun God's death but this did not concern the Storm God. During the First Darkness, Orlanth quested in a thousand different endeavours. He ended a drought by killing the great dragon Aroka in a battle up in the clouds. In the aftermath, he sliced the rain god Heler from the dead dragon's scaled belly. Orlanth also battled the gods of other races for dominance in the heavens, several times besting the twisted troll god Zorak Zoran in arm wrestles, wrestling and weapon battles.

He prevented an earthquake from razing an unknown city by destroying a horde of demons that tunnelled under the earth, hoping to shake the land above. In fire-lit caverns under the surface of the world, Orlanth butchered hundreds of these demonic beings.

It was in the First Darkness that Orlanth bargained with Elmal of the fire gods to light the sky in Yelm's absence, promising that when lightning struck the trees of Glorantha, fire would erupt in homage to their alliance.

It is also in this age that the Storm God rescued Ernalda the Earth Goddess from the palace of the God-Emperor where she had been imprisoned for some time. Before

she would be his consort, Ernalda demanded a number of tasks from Orlanth. Some records say 13, others 33, but the true number is unknown with more of Ernalda's trials coming to light every decade through the efforts of HeroQuesters.

The most important lesson was the Trial of Judgement, where the god sat enthroned in the sky and listened to the prayers of 1,000 worshippers, answering each in turn with his wisdom and never once advocating war for his people. Through coming to understand that righteous violence could be balanced by fair judgement, Orlanth learned the concept of justice.

Taking Ernalda as a wife, the Storm Tribe began to grow with the birth of their children.

The First Darkness came to an end when Orlanth duelled Prince Yelmlio, the son of God-Emperor Yelm. As Orlanth left the injured son of his greatest enemy to lick his wounds in peace, Zorak Zoran injured the sun god even further, almost killing him. Orlanth sought out the uz god to wreak revenge but Zorak Zoran was long gone and the world grew even darker as Yelmlio fled into hiding. It was at this time that the darkness permeating Glorantha allowed the so-called Unholy Trio to bring Chaos into the world. Yet again, Orlanathi learned from his mistakes as the True Darkness gripped Glorantha.

The True Darkness

The Orlanathi legend concerning the True Darkness is renowned across Glorantha as The Lightbringer Quest. The Devil, Wakboth, entered the universe through the machinations of the Unholy Trio and the demons flooding the darkened world. Gods died, regions were destroyed and cities ruined as the people of Glorantha starved. Among the slain deities were Orlanth's own children and his wife.

Seeing that his own actions against Yelm had precipitated these events, Orlanth entered the Underworld in the hope of bringing God-Emperor Yelm back from the dead. A hundred and more legends exist chronicling the events of the Lightbringer Quest.

Lhankor Mhy, Issaries, Chalana Arroy and Erumal were the other Lightbringer Gods, though they did not all join on the quest from the beginning. To convince Lhankor Mhy to accompany him on his journeys was the easiest, for Orlanth had only to tell his friend the true reasons for

the epic undertaking. It was harder to convince Issaries, for the Talking God required that Orlanth make a case for their alliance that would convince him it was worthwhile. With an impassioned speech, the Storm God did just that.

Flesh Man and Ginna Jar are confusing fragments of the legend. Flesh Man was a human, a grandson of Grandfather Mortal – the first human – and was driven blind and insane by the horrors of the True Darkness. As a prophet, he saw only pain and suffering in the future unless Orlanth was successful in his quest. He followed the Storm God out of a desperate need to aid him if he could, after Orlanth convinced the seer that he was dedicated to atoning for the death of Yelm.

Ginna Jar is variously described as the pained spirit of Glorantha itself made manifest, a demoness that followed Orlanth out of love, a genderless entity outside of current comprehension or another mortal possessed of great magical power. The stories describing how Orlanth won her (or in fact, *his*) favour are myriad and twist upon themselves repeatedly. Some tell of how he had to prove his sincerity by offering her a handful of his blood, either to help give her solid form or as a component in a magical ritual. Another tale states that she wanted to bear Orlanth's child as reward for her assistance, while yet another tells of how she was an interference on the journey, not a quester herself, and sought to end Orlanth's life before he could succeed. The answer may be all or none of these but they play out into infinity on the Hero Plane among many other possibilities.

The recruitment of Erumal was one of the greatest trials on the quest to hell, though details are scarce outside of experience on the Hero Plane (which has been known to create more questions than provide answers anyway). It is commonly believed that the God of Tricksters was captured and plagued by demons when the Lightbringers encountered him. Whether the Storm God had to battle to free Erumal or deceive the demons into letting him go is uncertain. What is known is that Orlanth had to swear friendship to the god he held the greatest grudge for. This was necessary because in swallowing his pride, the Storm God could ally with the only being that knew the way into the parts of hell where Yelm and the dead gods now resided.

West across the demon-infested world they marched, fighting battles against monsters and gods alike. It is

After nearly damning the world through his pride, Orlanth came full circle through hell and back to save it.

You can ask for nothing more in a legend. You could want nothing more from a god.

— Shia Bernasson, Orlanthi Priest

said that on the course of this journey, Orlanth learned the lessons that could be found in crushing defeat. This tale is tied into the Battle of the Three Demons, beings who ruled over a human city and demanded sacrifice. The Lightbringers brought the creatures' reign of terror to an end before finally entering the chaos of hell. Another myth deals with Orlanth losing his precious double-handed war maul, Foebreaker. Stolen from him by Zorak Zoran while the Lightbringers slept, Orlanth had to hunt down the troll god and battle him barehanded while the evil deity wielded Orlanth's own hammer.

Within the Underworld, the final trial of Orlanth was to agree with Yelm. In re-enacting this part of the legend, many HeroQuesters have failed at this last challenge. Yelm was placid and docile in his death, ruler of what stories call the End of All Things. He was reluctant to return to the heavens of Glorantha and it took days of debate, persuasion and convincing by each of the Lightbringers to entice the God-Emperor to return. In the end, Orlanth and Yelm tested one another again as they had before the First Darkness. Proving equal to one another, they agreed what is called the Great Compromise: an agreement that allowed a union of the gods to defeat Wakboth and restore order to Glorantha.

Sample Deeds

Battle a single demon after three days of sleepless journeying (Novice); Succeed in one of the trials to win Ernalda's heart (Seasoned); Recover Foebreaker from Zorak Zoran while unarmed (Veteran); Defeat God-Emperor Yelm in a duel with the sword Death (Master); Restore passion and dedication to duty in the dead God-Emperor Yelm (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners have plundered an obscene amount of material from Orlanth's legends. Mundane swords are converted into magical weapons that no factory in

the Machine City can match, rocks transmute into runes, armour becomes infused with storm-associated spells or flashes with magical brilliance and offers enhanced protection. Teams of HeroQuesters moving through the various incarnations of the Lightbringer Quest bring back magically-charged all manner of items, while dedicated individuals playing out the battles of Orlanth and Yelm bring back spell-wrought weapons and musical instruments, as well as stories of new contest legends between the two gods. Practically any magic item, rune, spell or skill the Games Master can imagine can be learned or acquired through Orlanth's legends.

For Example: Mastery runes; any Characteristic bonuses; a magical hammer, scored with Orlanthi runes and with a solid silver haft (increases the wielder's 1H and 2H Hammer skills by +20% and inflicts an additional +4 magical lightning damage with every hit); a black-bladed sword (that has a critical score of 20% of the character's 1H Sword skill, rather than 10%); a Luck of the Heroes ability usable once per day (at no Hero Point cost); skill bonuses when fighting demons; skill bonuses when fighting in pitch darkness.

Urox

The Storm Bull, the Hot Wind, the Devil-Slayer

If one faith in the Orlanthi pantheon can be considered to have fallen from grace, it is most surely the worship of Urox. Brother to Orlanth, Urox joyously waged war against Wakboth in the True Darkness and his worshippers did much to drive the demons back. In the physical world it was Urox who finally dealt the death blow to the Devil, sending Wakboth into the Underworld where he could be trapped forever.

Since this epic war, the headstrong and violent nature of Urox has found him little worship. Even among the warlike raiders that make up the rural Orlanthi, Urox's cults are small and filled with social outcasts getting by on the god's favour and their own fists. Ironically, HeroQuesters following through the legends of Urox emulate some of the greatest and bravest deeds of the Darkness, living as Urox while the Storm Bull butchered thousands of demons, even burying the Devil under a vast block of stone. However, each conflict is tainted by the innate, dullard cruelty behind Urox's actions.

Cultists traditionally wear a red cloth around their forearms announcing their rank and faith, though more

often than not this serves as a rag to wipe saliva or blood from the cultist's lips after he gets into a bar brawl.

The most common HeroQuesting beyond the battle with the Devil revolves around more modern legends featuring Urox. It is said that even now in his disregard for the world and relative disgrace among the other gods, Urox never lets the souls of his dead followers fall into Chaos and travels into the ends of the earth to save them from that fate.

Sample Deeds

Single-handedly battling a dozen demons (Veteran); Retrieving a soul from the clutches of a Chaos god (Master); Pinning Wakboth under a mountain of stone (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners pay sincere attention to Urox, monitoring the changes in the god's faith over the centuries and looting the Hero Plane for magical items transmuted through Urox's HeroQuests. Runes and altered items appear to be the most common rewards.

For Example: Beast, Disorder, Fire, Man and Motion runes; transmuted bludgeoning weapons that deal increased damage and create thunderous noises; Resilience bonuses; STR, DEX and CON Characteristic bonuses; spells dealing with wind and storms; bonuses to Weapon skill tests when combating demons; weapons that specifically harm Chaos creatures; resistance or immunity to magic cast by Chaos creatures or demons.

Valind

The Hated God of Winter

Born of the dead storm god Vadrus, Valind is a powerful figure in the Orlanthi pantheon, revelling in destruction and violence just as his father once did. It is Valind's power that turns the seasons cold, inexorably bring winter to Glorantha. Worship of Valind is not common as the god himself is not well-loved, though cults in his name do exist among the orthodox Orlanthi. HeroQuesters emulating his deeds have several epic adventures to choose from, many of which deal with Valind's quests to avenge his father's death by capturing and torturing the scattered demons that slew him. Another popular myth is that Valind had to subdue the element of winter itself, battling the spirits of the element after his father's death in order to master them.

Sample Deeds

Capturing demons of various strengths (Novice to Master); Overcoming and subduing a hundred spirits of winter (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners have looted thousands of Cold, Water, Air and Darkness runes from emulating Valind's deeds. Many of these take the form of rune-marked ice crystals that never melt but remain freezing cold to the touch. Exceptionally wealthy God Learners have been known to make these beautiful runes into earrings and brooches for high society parties, earning the respect and jealousy of their peers for such displays.

For Example: Cold, Water, Air and Darkness runes; resistance or immunity to cold weather conditions; any magic spell related to wind, cold, water or storms; weapons made of magical ice which deliver double damage to creatures of flame or those integrated with Fire runes.

Vinga

Warrior-Daughter of Orlanth

With gender divisions mattering little to the followers of the Storm Tribe, Vinga is still held up by many Orlanthi as the exemplar for women among their culture. It is said that in times of peace Vinga was capable of managing her affairs without the need of her brother gods and in times of war she feared no foe. Like her father, Vinga was an adventurer, a wanderer, and adopted a lusty attitude along her journeys.

Sample Deeds

Scaling a mountain in half the time it would take most men (Veteran); Leading an Orlanthi tribe to victory against a horde of trolls (Master).

Rewards

HeroQuests featuring Vinga often focus on the trials of journeys of great distance, many of which find her travelling alongside Yinkin, who tailed her primarily out of curiosity (and perhaps a somewhat deeper emotion). The God Learner sorcerer-lord known as Shithen Ironhand, one of the commanders of the Machine City's defence, possesses an enchanted double-handed sword with a jade hilt and a gold blade that she received for completing a month-long HeroQuest involving Vinga's scaling of a mountain range and facing a demon at the top of the final peak.

For Example: Any elemental runes; bonuses to any physical skills (especially Resilience or Weapon skills); Influence bonuses; STR and CON Characteristic bonuses; any spell connected to wind or storms; enhanced weapons that deal additional damage to demons; the Battle Fury legendary ability.

Yinkin

Loyal Companion to the Storm God

Yinkin is venerated as a minor deity, somewhere between Orlanth's sidekick and a genuine God of Loyalty. It is said that while Orlanth ventured into the Underworld, his half-brother Yinkin remained on Glorantha, helping the humans of the era to escape the reaches of Chaos. In his guises as an alynx and an alynx-headed human, Yinkin's mythology details hundreds of harrowing tales where the cat-god led groups of scared humans through dark forests and across black deserts, always struggling to keep one step ahead of the demons that plagued the world. HeroQuesting through these myths is not easy but they are some of the best ways to walk across the world in that era, for Yinkin travelled a great deal to avoid capture.

A great number of myths also stem from immediately after the death of Yelm, when Orlanth and Yinkin travelled the realms during the Storm Age. Any legend featuring Orlanth before the Lightbringer Quest almost certainly features a role for another HeroQuester to take the place of sly, cunning Yinkin.

Sample Deeds

Evading a powerful demon and remaining undetected by it for an entire week (Veteran); Evading a powerful demon while protecting a group of humans (Master); Accompanying Orlanth in the slaying of the dragon Aroka (Hero).

Rewards

Any enchanted items, skills or runes that deal with evasion, stealth or movement.

For Example: Bonuses to Stealth, Dance, Dodge or Athletics; the Wall-Leaping legendary ability; Cloak of Concealment (inflicts a -40% penalty on all Perception rolls made to spot the character); DEX Characteristic bonuses; the supernatural ability to move silently at all times (adds +40% to all Stealth rolls).

Draconised Orlanthi

The Old Ways are under threat from without and within, and neither the God Learners or the Dragonlords shed any tears over the erosion and manipulation of traditional Orlanthi culture. Not yet, at least. The cataclysmic results of their hubris will touch the EWF first when the Empire collapses under rebellion, but as it stands now, the rot is only beginning to set in.

The Empire of Wyrms' Friends is primarily made up of Orlanthi that have turned their back on the old faith and embraced the new. Much in the same way Christianity subtly altered pagan religions in our own world, the faith of Orlanth the Dragon sweeps inside and through the traditionalist beliefs of Glorantha. At the point of a sword, believers are 'offered' the chance of conversion. The conversion is not wholly radical or alien and this makes the choice that much simpler – or at least a more attractive option than death at the hands of a conquering army.

The spread of the Draconised faith spreads by maintaining the core beliefs of the religion it subsumes but altering them in generally inoffensive ways. Orlanth and the Storm Tribe are to be revered as draconic beings, each seeking perfection through their errors, replacing the belief that the deities were flawed and barbaric gods to be admired for their mistakes and tenacity in overcoming mythical challenges. The alterations are relatively subtle but the change is a distinct one once the conversion is complete. Now the traditionalists are in the minority. The imperial faith is regarded as the true religion. For all intents and purposes, the Empire of Wyrms' Friends and the faith of Orlanth the Dragon have won, at least for the time being. This is a major factor in the decadence of the Second Age.

The key to playing through the HeroQuests of Draconised Orlanthi mythology is to twist certain aspects of any traditional tale so that draconic elements become paramount. This sounds easy enough but can prove a challenge with many of the legends. For instance, nothing overtly draconic springs to mind in the legend of Orlanth duelling the God-Emperor of the sun and plunging the world into the Storm Age. Yet the Empire of Wyrms' Friends has had centuries to pervert the traditionalist faith to their own ends...

Any aspect of Storm Tribe legendry that can be subtly shifted to seeking perfection, disassociation with the mortal world or a tie to hidden dragon imagery is perfect fodder for conversion. In the example concerning Lord Yelm, the faith of Orlanth the Dragon states that it was not out of stubborn pride or uncontrolled rage that led Orlanth to slay the Sun God, but a cold-hearted curiosity at whether the world could become closer to the draconic ideal without the influence of the sun in the sky. As with any good mystic or theist magic-user, Orlanth learned from his error and sought to amend it, preventing future errors. The new dogma is rife with such examples: The Loyal Sun was a lesser dragon that Orlanth placed within the sky, demanding that the Sky Fire breathe out his divine flame during the Storm Age to light the grey heavens. The Loyal Sun agreed, with the promise that Orlanth would offer up some of his own mystical flame to fuel the weaker dragon's fire. This myth neatly replaces the 'lightning and fire' deal struck by the two gods in the First Darkness as told by orthodox Orlanthi.

When dragons have the size and power of gods, there is little they cannot do. Many converted Orlanthi may follow the new faith because there is no choice to resist but many more adhere to the new ways because they *make sense*. The sense of discovery and reinterpretation in going through the old ways and shedding new light on the legends, is a powerful lure for many scholars and priests.

The Sky Gods

The Sky Gods of the Solar Court are a conclave of deities answerable to God-Emperor Yelm of the Sun. The following section details the majority of these gods and goddesses, focusing on deeds adventurers can emulate through the power of HeroQuesting.

Donadar

God of Minstrels and Performers

Donadar is a beloved figure to the Sky God faithful. There are many tales of him walking the world in the Age of Sun-Death, bringing joy and song to the fearful mortals of the era. It is said that he often travelled alongside Yelmlio, though the majority of his legends cite that he was a wanderlust-struck loner. Some of the tales even relate how Donadar was able to charm demons and Chaos gods with his words and music, though the Orlanthi are understandably sceptical about such Pelorian claims.

Sample Deeds

Aiding Yelmlio in battles against demons (Novice to Master); Charming the creatures of Chaos into ceasing their attacks (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners that plunder Donadar's deeds do so for powers and items that will increase their social graces and status, as well as more privately seeking out enchanted instruments for personal use. These latter items feature prominently at many parties and gatherings of the Jrustelan nobility, where owning one is considered prestigious.

For Example: Communication and Illusion runes; bonuses to Sing and Play Instrument; enhanced instruments that create spell effects or add significant bonuses to Play Instrument tests; Influence and Survival bonuses; CHA Characteristic bonuses; spells that deal with altering the mind or music in any way.

Golden Bow

Son of Yelm and God of Archers

In the Age of Sun-Death, Golden Bow walked alongside Yelmlio many times, lending his magical bow and flaming arrows to his brother's cause. Many are the legends of the two brothers battling the forces of Chaos,

though just as many portray Golden Bow as an arrogant, lofty deity who cares nothing for morality and only for martial skill.

Sample Deeds

Any one of a hundred and more battles against demons (Novice to Hero).

Rewards

As with Yelmlio, Golden Bow's rewards run along similar lines to those of the God-Emperor's HeroQuests. In addition, many God Learners return with powerful transmuted bows, with Golden Bow's legends seen as the ideal place to find them.

For Example: See Yelm. Golden Bow's 'sun' weapons often take the form of bows which serve as integrated Light runes, many of which fire golden arcs of bright energy (standard damage but count as magical fire damage, plus the ammunition is normally limitless).

Gustbran

God of Smiths and Torchfire

Gustbran is revered for the light and warmth he brought to mortals in the Age of Sun-Death. Though rarely confronted the forces of Chaos, his deeds tell of his great skill in evading the Devil's minions and his courage in giving the blessing of small fires to mortals when the world was at its blackest. It is also said that he travelled often with Yelmlio, tending to the sun god's wounds and creating weapons for him when his others broke against Chaos demons.

Sample Deeds

Keeping the fires in a hundred hearths from dying (Seasoned); Salving Yelm's wounds (Veteran); Creating a hundred magical spears for Yelm, while the battle rages around (Hero).

Rewards

Gustbran's rewards are normally related to the protective and warming effects of fire, along with crafting and even healing elements.

For Example: Fire, Heat and Metal runes; any spell involving protection or magical crafting; bonuses to First Aid and Craft; magical weapons capable of harming Chaos creatures.

Hyalor Horsebreaker

God of Man's Dominance over Horses

Hyalor is an example of a rare mortal who ascended to godhood because of his deeds in life. The tales told about him primarily revolve around how he tamed a Goddess of Horses (or a spirit that represented all horses).

Sample Deeds

Taming a representation of the first wild horse (Novice to Seasoned); Taming ever more wild and fantastic creatures of myth and legend (Veteran to Hero).

Rewards

God Learners that manage to reign in the powerful creature in this HeroQuest are likely to receive rewards based directly on horseriding or the control of beasts. Beast, Man and Mastery runes are also common.

For Example: Magical replica of Hyalor's saddle (counts as an integrated Mastery rune with no POW loss for the caster and adds +40% to Riding and Lore (Animal) test while mounted); DEX and POW Characteristic bonuses; bonuses to Riding, Driving, Lore (Animal) and Unarmed; +30% to Riding tests when mounted on a horse.

Lokarnos

God of Trade and Travel

Another mortal who ascended to godhood, Lokarnos is the deity who oversees all aspects of trade and travel. It is said that Lokarnos invented both money and the wheel, allowing mortals to trade with one another and understand the principles of value. In the aftermath of Yelm's Glorious Second Ascension, some stories say that it was Lokarnos that led the lesser gods on hunts through the still demon-plagued world looking for the remains of slain deities for Yelm to revive. Other tales state that the travel god was merely part of the group, though his contributions were valuable since he was the one carrying the god-corpses back to Yelm.

Sample Deeds

Leading carts of dead god-bodies back to Yelm (Seasoned); Fending off demons (Master).

Rewards

The rewards for Lokarnos' mundane, workhorse deeds are relatively minor by the standards of many HeroQuests, focusing on travel, negotiation and trade.

For Example: Communication, Motion and Man runes; CHA Characteristic bonuses; Influence, Evaluate, Survival and Resilience bonuses; +40% to Influence specifically for haggling; any spell dealing with travel.

Lux

Father of Angels

Pelorian faithful have thousands of tales dealing with the actions of angels in the Age of Sun-Death, generally describing scenes where the divine beings sought to protect humans from harm. Though Lux himself is as characteristically distant as many of the Sky Gods, in emulating the actions of his servants – the angels – many God Learners have managed successful HeroQuests.

Sample Deeds

Any possible action of an angel protecting a family or a mortal against accident, disease or Chaos forces during the Darkness (Novice to Hero).

Rewards

The rewards are almost always minor, even for the most difficult HeroQuests. As blasphemous as it sounds, God Learners perform these adventures for prestige and the romance elements involved in emulating an angel, often seeking to impress lovers and return with angel-given rune stones.

Oakfed

The Wild Fire

In the God Time, Oakfed was responsible for the destruction of vast forests and the palaces of many other gods. Each culture and many individual regions have their own tales of out a local deity tamed the god of wild fires and restrained him so that he could do no more harm.

Sample Deeds

Limited, to say the least: Destroying forests and woodlands (Novice to Master, depending on the size of the forest and the tenacity of its defenders).

Rewards

The rewards for HeroQuesting through the simple and violent myths of Oakfed generally involve returning with runes or spells somehow tied with flame.

For Example: Fire, Heat, Light and Earth runes; any spell involving flame; resistance or immunity to damage from fire or extreme heat.

Pole Star

God of Armies and War

Pole Star (or Polaris) commanded legions of mortals, gods and spirits in the Age of Sun-Death, rallying them against Chaos. His victories were few because of the overwhelming odds he faced, despite his incredible military genius. At many of the greatest battles that raged during the God's War, Polaris stood overlooking the fields of war, using his magic and tactical insight wherever he could. It is said that he protected many weaker gods and demigods during the Age of Sun-Death and even offered support to Yelmlio on more than one occasion. Nowadays, Pole Star is worshipped by generals and military commanders across Glorantha, who regard the brightness of the star on the eve before a battle as a sign of how the following day will play out.

Sample Deeds

Duelling individual demons at the head of armies (Veteran); Protecting wounded Sun Gods from Chaos attacks (Master); Leading Dara Happan armies against Chaos forces (Hero).

Rewards

God Learner generals and commanders are keen plunderers of the Pole Star's myth-battles, taking back with them insight into massive conflicts as well as magic that can be used in epic warfare.

For Example: Bonuses to Lore (Military Tactics) and any Weapon skill; spells based on enhancing intelligence or strength at arms; INT Characteristic bonuses; the red-iron blade of Polaris (counts as an integrated Luck rune with no POW loss for the caster and deals double damage to Chaos beings).

For Example: Man, Luck, Infinity, Stasis, Law and Light runes are generally the rewards for these HeroQuests, usually taking the forms of pearls and milky-white gemstones. These

are greatly prized as jewellery by wealthy and powerful God Learners, which is one of many blasphemies against the Sky Gods performed by the Jrustelans of the Imperial Age.

Yelm

God-Emperor of the Solar Court, Father of the Gods

The Shattering of the Sun

Brother to Lodril (the Volcano God) and Dayzatar (the Star God), Yelm was the deity chosen by the First Gods as the one to watch over the world of Glorantha. In his eternal wisdom, Yelm saw that the great kingdom of Dara Happa was given over to Muharzam, his son, to rule as Emperor of mortals in reflection of Yelm ruling as Emperor of the sky. The age of perfection that followed came to an abrupt end when the renegade god Rebellus Terminus made war upon Yelm's pantheon, killing Muharzam with the concept of Death. In his grief, Yelm shattered his divinity into many pieces and the world fell dark without his holy light. The Orlanthi speak of this time as the Darkness. To the Dara Happans, it is the Age of Sun-Death.

A succession of false God-Emperors and lesser divinities ruled over Peloria as the world turned black in the Age of Sun-Death. Fragments of Yelm took the forms of his children and these lesser light-gods battled against the Son of Evil, known as Wakboth the Devil, but Glorantha slipped further into Chaos as the calendar of years played out. Antirius and Yelmlio, the greatest and brightest sons of the dead solar lord, finally fell to the influx of Chaos gods. The remaining gods fought valiantly or sought to preserve their lives in hiding. Thousands of deeds play out on the Hero Planes showing the battles and flights of the solar gods in this dark age.

It seemed the whole world would be eclipsed in shadow, until the actions of one man – a mortal Dara Happan – changed everything.

The Glorious Second Ascendancy

Possibly the most emulated HeroQuest is that of Avivath Sunspear standing against the Son of Evil. Avivath wielded a fragment of Yelm in the form of a golden spear, which he used to slay the Devil in the sun god's name. This reawakened the broken shards of Yelm, restoring the divided Sun God to a semblance of sentience. In the years that followed, a mortal would finally pass the Ten Tests of Empire and ascend to the throne, succeeding over a long

line of false Emperors. The Rebuilding Emperor devoted his life and soul to reclaiming all that was once great in the lands of Dara Happa. With newfound stability and glory among his beloved people, Yelm was restored, ascending to the heavens. The Orlanthi tell legends regarding the so-called Lightbringer Quest. The Yelmites know these stories to be nought but black-hearted lies to lionise themselves while making the Dara Happans look weak.

The Glorious Second Ascendance was more than just a resurrection. It was the beginning of the God-Emperor's work to reunite the Solar Court. Yelm walked the heavens and the world below seeking out the slain and hidden solar gods, restoring them with his divine light. He fought demons and Chaos gods alike during this time, though once he had reawakened Lokarnos and several other gods, he allowed them to travel the rest of the way and locate the remaining dead deities. Even in glory, Yelm was distant.

Sample Deeds

Any one of a thousand battles between Yelm-children and the forces of Chaos (Novice to Hero); beating Orlanth in any of the trials (Master or Hero); standing against the Son of Evil with the golden spear (Hero).

Rewards

The rewards of Yelm's HeroQuests are almost always great and grand in nature. The God Learners pillage these myths mercilessly, almost as much as they do those of Orlanth.

For Example: The Sun Spear – or any other 'sun weapon' (counts as an integrated Communication rune with no POW loss for the caster and inflicts double damage to all Chaos creatures); massive Influence bonuses; CHA Characteristic bonuses; the Heroic Aura Legendary Ability; any spell involving heat, fire or sunlight; magic armour that protects against spells of darkness, poison or disease; practically any bonus to skills used in the Tests of Orlanth; the ability to see perfectly in pitch darkness.

Yelmalio

The Martial Son of Yelm

Yelmalio is greatly revered by many Dara Happans. During the Age of Sun-Death, he was the brightest of Yelm's fragment-children, travelling the world to bring light and warmth to the mortals who fought Chaos. In

return, he brought his righteous anger and fire against the forces of the Son of Evil, battling the dark gods wherever he found their influence.

Endurance and tenacity feature prominently in almost all HeroQuests based on Yelmalio's deeds. Though he was a great warrior, his true strength lay in his refusal to abandon Gloranth to Chaos. This drive was fuelled by his relentless willpower and courage, and even now to be named as 'stubborn as Yelmalio' is considered an earnest compliment among the Dara Happans, representing unflinching resolve in the cause of what is right.

HeroQuesters emulating Yelmalio can expect to face a thousand and more demons during their time on the Hero Plane. One of the most notable tales in Pelorian history concerns a battle in the ruined, blasted forests of the world, where Yelmalio buried himself under the dry soil to escape a horde of rampaging demons heading to a mortal village, emerging after they had passed in order to strike them from behind. Several similar tales of heroic self-sacrifice and near-martyrdom are common enough but a great many of his retellings also feature the god struggling under grave wounds. In these HeroQuests, the pain that his emulators must endure can be staggering



as they walk from one blasted region of Glorantha to another, avoiding the eyes of Chaos while they seek time to heal.

Sample Deeds

Duelling Orlanth and surviving (Master or Hero); Protecting mortal Dara Happans during assaults by Chaos forces (Seasoned to Hero); Overcoming a Chaos army of a hundred creatures while gravely injured (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners that plunder Yelmlio's myths retrieve similar rewards to those that focus on Yelm, with weapons and runes aplenty awaiting any HeroQuesters brave and skilful enough to suffer through these difficult legends. This is unsurprising given that Yelmlio is technically a fragment of the God-Emperor of the Sun.

For Example: See Yelm.

The Unholy Trio

The reviled Unholy Trio – Ragnaglar, Thed and Mallia – are the three gods responsible for the secret ritual that brought the Devil and the hordes of Wakboth to the world in the True Darkness.

Ragnaglar

Dead God of Madness

Tales concerning Ragnaglar show him as a vain and headstrong god, guided by random desires rather than focused ambition. The myths on the Hero Plane dealing with his actions in the ritual of darkness suggest that he acted out of crazed curiosity rather than informed malevolence. Yet, for these actions, his fate as one of the Orlanthi's most hated figures is sealed.

Though Ragnaglar was slain by his own half-brother, Urox, for his vile actions in the True Darkness, the god still receives some worship even today. This faith is offered to the Unholy Trio, or Mallia and Thed, rather than directly to the deceased god himself. Ragnaglar's name is spoken as a curse more often than as a point of scholarly interest. To be compared to the slain God of Madness is to be considered evil and loathsome by whoever makes the accusation.

Sample Deeds

Cursing the light gods with spells that cause temporary insanity (Seasoned to Master); discovering and performing the ritual that opens the way for Wakboth to enter Glorantha (Hero).

Rewards

HeroQuesters emulate his deeds for powerful mind-altering magic, most often with two companions taking the roles of Mallia and Thed.

For Example: Spells which cause madness or distortion of perceptions; Death, Mastery, Darkness, Illusion, Moon and Chaos runes; INT and POW Characteristic bonuses; bonuses to Influence when dealing with Chaos creatures.

Thed

Goddess of Rape, Mother of the Broos

Wife to the slain Ragnaglar, Thed is generally regarded by the Orlanthi as the goddess who encouraged her insane husband to create the great ritual to bring about Chaos. As such, she shoulders much of the blame for the True Darkness in the eyes and faiths of most Storm Tribe worshippers.

As Goddess of Rape, she has always held regard in the eyes of a few twisted outcasts from Orlanthi culture but little in the way of organised worship. However, because of her foul offspring – the broo – she is never short of veneration among the evil races even if she is loathed by humans.

The mythology of Thed is generally concerned with her goading of the crazed and ignorant Ragnaglar, urging him to use his powers in order to end the world. Other tales deal with her confronting Urox several times with the aim of avenging her husband's death but each seems to be a battle she lost, many of which end with her barely escaping with her life.

Among the broo, she enjoys a thousand and more fertility rituals and blessings in her name. Among the Orlanthi, there is no fouler curse than wishing Thed's attention on a woman.

Sample Deeds

Challenging Urox and escaping alive (Master); discovering and performing the ritual that opens the way for Wakboth to enter Glorantha (Hero).

Rewards

Spells which involve the sexual subjugation of others are common rewards, which are of little value to most God Learners working towards the glory of the Middle Sea Empire. Few humans HeroQuest in Thed's image, leaving such perversion to the broo beastmen.

For Example: Fertility runes; Persistence and Resilience bonuses; STR, POW and CON Characteristic bonuses; magically-enhanced items resembling broo artefacts or weapons; resistance or immunity to poisons.

Mallia

Goddess of Disease

Mallia is a corruption of Death, born from the True Darkness sweeping over the face of Glorantha. The stories detailing her birth are legion but the Orlanthi most often tell of her forming whole in a decaying city, where the citizens were wracked with plague. It was here the corruption of Death first came into full being, born as a tainted form of Humakt's power. Mallia's presence guaranteed a slow, agonising fall into death rather than the clean ending promised by Humakt. The exception to the mortal beings that hate her is of course the broo, who hold great, shrieking rites in her honour, braying her name to the night sky. The honour the beastmen pay to her only infuriates the Orlanthi faithful all the more, for she is hated alongside Thed and Ragnaglar as one of the Unholy Trio that capitalised on Orlanth's prideful mistake in slaying Yelm.

The only worship she receives among the Orlanthi is that which seeks to appease her and turn her attention elsewhere. Many cults dedicated to the Storm Tribe actively hunt down the human followers of the Unholy Trio, with Mallia's servants suffering the greatest assaults. Ragnaglar had the somewhat thin excuses of insanity and of being manipulated, while Thed is a perverse being that has suffered many times at the hands of Urox, which at least points towards some shred of lawful vengeance. Mallia, however, is more dangerous than Thed because of her primary influences and has never truly been humiliated by the Orlanthi – which matters a great deal to their proud faith.

It is said that Chalana Arroy achieved the greatest victory over Mallia to date but this is a bittersweet victory for the Orlanthi because the Goddess of Healing failed to harm the Disease Goddess and instead only countered

her deeds with benevolence. Still, it is the blessing of Chalana Arroy which is prayed for when a community is struck by disease.

Sample Deeds

Bringing disease and plague to an Orlanthi settlement (Novice to Master, depending on the size of the town or village); Discovering and performing the ritual that opens the way for Wakboth to enter Glorantha (Hero).

Rewards

The God Learners have little use for the foul sorceries and transmuted items of Mallia's HeroQuests. Those sorcerers that do venture into her deeds do so primarily to acquire more lore about the Chaos gods, not to celebrate the acquisition of disease-spreading power.

For Example: Spells focused on causing disease; resistance or immunity to diseases and poisons; significant Influence bonuses when dealing with broo; ability to shapechange into a broo; the ability to cause various diseases by touch or breath; CON and POW Characteristic bonuses; Resilience and Persistence bonuses; magic items sacred to the broo that cause disease in mortals.

Other Gods

The Storm Tribe and Sky God pantheons are not the only divine orders raided by the God Learners, though they do offer the most plunder because of their accessibility and popularity. However, the God Learners seek out *all* god-stories as paths to power, and that means their sorcerers are forever hunting new myths and legends, no matter what belief system creates them.

The following section deals with several examples of the Chaos gods that the God Learners frequently emulate, as these dark beings make up the third-most plundered mythology behind the Dara Happans and Orlanthi. This list is by no means exhaustive but it should give Games Masters and players an idea of just what depths the God Learners will sink to in their drive for knowledge and power. No pantheon is safe from their parasitic quest.

These deities tend to offer bonuses such as Chaos runes, Darkness and Death runes; all Characteristic bonuses; a host of Weapon skill bonuses (including Unarmed); innumerable malicious spells used by dark Chaos cults; any number of transmuted weapons; demonic familiars

that follow successful God Learner plunderers around as companions, whether the sorcerer wishes them to or not.

Gark the Calm

Chaos God of Immortality

Gark has never been one of the more overtly malicious of the Devil's minions. Though both Yelmario and Orlanth foiled Gark's deeds in the True Darkness, the God of Immortality was never destroyed. The stories told of Gark generally focus on his luring hordes of mortals away from their communities and into his underground temples, where they were transformed into a population of walking dead. Many of the zombies that swarmed the surface of Glorantha in the Age of Sun-Death, dragging at the flesh of gods with their dead hands, were the servitors of Gark. The Orlanthi have a legend of Orlanth cleansing an entire under-city of the walking dead, while Gark looked on and laughed. To many Orlanthi, this god is called Smiling Gark in honour of that moment.

The Gloomshark

Chaos God of Hunger

God Learners seek out the deeds of this colossal, demon-warped shark not to emulate its actions in the True Darkness but to find out all the cultural references to the various gods that fought this creature and bested it. Many island and coastal regions have their own unique legends pertaining to this demonic, tentacle-mouthed ocean predator, many of which cite its defeat at the hands of different gods. It is said that the dark god was reborn after its death, brought back by its own hunger for flesh.

The God Learners then enter into these legends, defeating the Gloomshark again and again in the roles of various deities. Hane Ratask, a sorcerer in command of Zistorwal's western wall defences, once killed the Gloomshark with a mundane blade through its eye. When he pulled the sword free, it had transmuted into a bone-handled sword of a very heavy scarlet metal that reeked of fish guts. Despite these limitations, the blade was now capable of cutting through any material, even stone and iron, as if it were air.

Gorakiki

Troll Goddess of Insects and Vermin

During the True Darkness, one of the most hated and feared threats in the Chaos army was Gorakiki, the

matriarch of insects. She would adopt the form of a giant insect and prey on human settlements until she was either sated or driven off. Orlanth and Yelmario both fought her on several occasions, though she managed to flee each time. God Learners either take the roles of the gods fighting her, or the goddess herself – as long as they have command over a spell that allows them to change shape.

Kyger Litor

Matriarch of Trolls

Considered by many to be the progenitor of the uz race, Kyger Litor has an impressive list of gods and heroes rendered lifeless by her wicked claws. She led her people to the surface world alongside Xentha and claimed the lives of many weaker gods before Yelm was finally returned to the heavens. Combative God Learners receive many gifts from emulating her deeds.

Seseine

Chaos Goddess of Temptation

Though considered a lesser power among the pantheons of darkness, Seseine was responsible for seducing many mortal souls into serving Chaos. There are also tales of the goddess using her wiles to lead sun- and light-gods away from the people they illuminated and protected. Female God Learners tend to follow these HeroQuests more often than males.

Sikkarnos

God of Harsh Desert Winds

A god of the Pamalt pantheon, Sikkarnos is a deity that hates mankind and wishes all mortals death from exposure in the vast Gloranthan deserts. It is said that Sikkarnos indirectly opposed the Lightbringers in their travels, sending terrible hot winds to erode their strength but never manifesting personally.

Xentha

Goddess of Night

Xentha was one of the leaders commanding the Chaos forces when Yelm fell from the sky and darkness reigned over Glorantha. She is considered the equal (and opposite) of Yelm in many pantheons and tales of her personally slaying his scattered children in the True Darkness are among the most common tales told by uz priests.

MAGICIANS OF THE IMPERIAL AGE

In this age of unrivalled magic, the movers and shakers of Glorantha are found in the two warring nations of the Middle Sea Empire and the Dragonlords. These men and women (and those who are no longer truly either gender) work endlessly to forward their personal agendas and the overreaching aims of their respective Empires.

This chapter allows Games Masters to see into the dealings of these magicians and witness what they are capable of. It also provides ideas and hints as to how these powerful figures might interact with groups of characters. It is worth bearing in mind that despite the colossal powers of these characters, they are active participants in the highs and lows of the Imperial Age. Accordingly, they take great pains to maintain vast networks of contacts, of which any adventuring group could be a part provided they display signs of allegiance to the relevant faction.

Empire of Wyrms' Friends

Of the two Empires, it is the EWF that suffers most. Though it is many years yet before fires of insurrection burn and the Empire dies under the flames of treacherous dragons, the decline is apparent to the highest echelons of the dragonspeaker movement. These souls sense the end is coming and are either unwilling to face up to their impending failure or committed to doing all they can to avert it.

Vistikos Left-Eye PATRIARCH OF THE ORACONIC IDEAL

A slender man sits hunched in a bare room, smiling contentedly and occasionally drooling upon his bare chest. Upon shoulders that once bore clothes fit for a prince, only the projecting bones of near-starvation now show. Talking to him gives you the feeling that whoever is behind those eyes is not the man responsible for so much greatness within the Empire. Instead you are being watched by someone else – someone smiling at some secret you are not sure you ever wish to know.

The charming, insightful and fiendishly intelligent scion of the dragonspeaker movement is dead. In his place is a happy and bemused man who does little but meditate and chuckle to himself when his advisors come with questions. The passionate visionary who held counsel with the Inhuman King has been altered, either by some outside influence or his own incredible illumination, leaving him a hollow shell of a man so removed from the world that he seems half-ascended from it already.

The only recent sign of his former personality manifested months ago, when he told of the Cosmic Dragon's silence. Since that moment he has been as he appears now. The effect on the other Dragonlords (or at least those who are aware of this change) is less one of alarm and more one of outright fear. To go near Vistikos Left-Eye now is just plain creepy.

Characters entering the presence of Vistikos Left-Eye are almost certainly going to be dragonspeakers, which means that they are probably in for a shock when they confront the greatest of their number, reduced to the position of an eerily-amused skeletal figure, clad in rags, with little care for the Empire.

Darfostalabos, also known as Dragon's Eye, is the Dragonewt stronghold where Vistikos Left-Eye resides. Characters must first journey through this reptilian-inhabited inhuman city to reach the Dragonlord patriarch. Once there, Games Masters should bear one thing in mind or risk a rather anticlimactic scene. *Vistikos Left-Eye is not stupid.* He is eerie and there is something clearly wrong with him but he is not an idiot. He is still talkative at times and will converse without appearing idiotic or retarded. In fact, he seems to have retained all his wisdom and insight but lacks the desire to use it for matters relating to the Empire. The reasons for this are ultimately unknown, though theories spread like wildfire through the Guiding Council, the Original Twelve and the rare dragonspeakers that receive the now-dubious honour of standing before their patriarch.

A final note in regards to unsettling players with this mysterious, faded visionary is to remember that Vistikos Left-Eye no longer displays the signs of Evolution. The most powerful dragonspeakers have allegedly discovered ways to hide their physical alterations from others without resorting to illusion spells, so Vistikos is either doing the same (but for what reason?) or has somehow lost his draconic features in a way no other dragonspeaker has experienced before.

Serving Vistikos Left-Eye
Games Masters may find themselves dealing with players who wish to heal Vistikos Left-Eye. This is a noble gesture and could make for an excellent storyline. The patriarch is likely to be amused at the notion and graciously refuse such an offer but he will not actively stop anyone from this course of action.

It is not entirely unknown for Vistikos to ask visiting dragonspeakers to perform tasks for him. These are almost always incomprehensible or seemingly minor matters that do not serve the Empire in any obvious way – such as scouting the temple of the Sun Dragon and bringing back a fist-sized chunk of gold chipped away from one of the statues there. The patriarch's meditation chamber has a side room filled with random piles of such curios. Even with little offer of reward or any idea *why* they would be required to do such a thing, few dragonspeakers would turn down the colossal prestige offered them for performing a task under the instruction of Vistikos Left-Eye himself.

The Inhuman King

Lord of the Dragonewts

A reptilian man sits on his throne of carved dragon bone, seemingly armoured in gold and bronze jewellery. Every clawed finger is bound in shining rings, every inch of muscled and scaled arm is ringed with golden bands inscribed with runes. His face is hidden behind a dragon-mask made from solid gold with opals for eyes. His armour is made from shaped jade and bronze, with even

The Inhuman King



the slightest motions – even his breathing – making this icon of grandeur rattle with a soft, jewelled percussion.

It is said that humans weep in awe the first time they witness the majestic perfection of the Inhuman King. In many cases, this is perfectly true. In some instances he will be found clad in the resplendent jewellery described above, but this is an affectation for the eyes of others – an honour he does those not of the dragonewt race that he deems worthy of honouring. Among his people and trusted outsiders, the Inhuman King appears as any other dragonewt ruler. He is a scaled reptilian man, though his massive wings are thin-veined and wrinkled, his leathery skin is faded grey-green and his dark eyes have lost much of their shine. He is old now. It shows.

The Inhuman King is unlikely to discuss the higher matters of draconic perfection with any characters, though

if they are ardent enough to impress him it might not be impossible. What is far more likely is that the Inhuman King will evaluate whether the humans before him are truly dedicated to the draconic ideal, how closely their values lie with the EWF and decide whether they can be trusted with a very grave task.

Serving the Inhuman King

The Inhuman King is aware of certain factions within the dragonspeaker cults striking out against dragonewt holdings in the quest for secret lore and magical artefacts. Ideally, a band of dragonspeakers loyal to him would be a valuable asset indeed. The dragonewt ruler is not entirely ready to give up on the EWF but his faith does seem to be greatly shaken of late. The cultists, for their part, are unsure if the dragonewts' recent secrecy is born of an order from the Inhuman King himself, revealing doubts about the chances of the Empire's success in bringing about the Great Dragon To Come.

Any characters offered the chance to be the eyes and fists of the Inhuman King will have quite the philosophical and moral quandaries to ponder. Who has the best interests of the Empire at heart, the dragonewt lord responsible for the initial teachings or the new cult leaders that see treachery in the dragonewts' actions? A nasty little game of 'who is betraying who' lies ahead, with the characters caught squarely in the centre.

His loyal human allies can expect to be uniquely rewarded. The Inhuman King possesses all of the knowledge that is supposedly being held back as secrets from the EWF and will reward his servants for their diligence and shrewd allegiance by arranging for them to spend time with dragonewt philosophers and magicians who can instruct the characters in spells, dances and martial arts only rarely seen by the increasingly distant dragonspeakers of the Empire. Artefacts – powerful weapons and icons of mystical significance – are also occasionally rewarded for the most noteworthy accomplishments.

Arene Whisper-Hush

Head Councillor of the Above and Beyond Faction

A woman appearing in middle-age, marked by her use of Dragon Magic so that her eyes are yellow and black and the edges of her body, from cheekbones to knuckles, show chunky, pinkish scales. Her voice is soft and measured, sounding like the intonation of a much younger woman.

Her body language denotes the humility she is famous for, with her eyes downcast and her white-haired head nodding at the words of others. Her robes are simple yet elegant and some say they conceal a red-scaled tail under their trailing folds.

Arene is a powerful yet humble figure and it is far more likely that she would turn out to be a valuable ally or mentor than an enemy. Her influence lies in ending conflict, not starting it. As such, Arene has few enemies and she likes it that way. She dwells in a fortress-monastery in Bevjarn, the City of the Second Eye, and has close ties to several dragonspeaker cults, most notably the Order of Crimson Purity and the Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye, the latter of which she is rumoured to have founded.

Serving Arene Whisper-Hush

Any dragonspeakers dedicated to cooling the rising fires of insurrection within the Empire could potentially attract Arene's favour and attention. She sees the turmoil flooding the EWF and senses a breaking point in the future. As such, she is doing all she can to stabilise the EWF before it tips from the fulcrum upon which it perches. Characters associating with Arene would gain a powerful and influential political patron, as well as having access to the thousands of diplomatic contacts she has throughout imperial territory. Dragonspeakers allied with her might serve as her bodyguards, emissaries to other imperial leaders or even advisors if they display the kind of tempered, even-handed wisdom she seeks in her councillors.

Characters that cross her agenda, perhaps by provoking war within the Empire or using their powers to destabilise portions of the EWF, are likely to attract her attention if not her ire. She will almost always listen to a character's convictions and reasons, admitting where they are for the betterment of the Great Work but also discussing where they endanger it. Only in the rarest cases would she ever resort to violence, and certainly not unless she was threatened first. She believes the best way to avoid the destabilisation of the Empire is to placate the stronger insurrectionists and simply ignore any weaker dissident elements.

Her agents are despatched as agents of balance, sent into tumultuous regions in order to quell the flames of EWF infighting. These groups are usually balanced themselves – political arguments in the courts of the nobility are the specialty of some members, while others walk a more

'assassination without witnesses' path. No matter the methods used, each group is given specific orders of which region to tame and are expected to succeed by any means necessary or die trying. The rewards for success are considerable, given that Arene holds the respect and admiration (if not the affection) of almost every ranking leader in the dragonspeaker cults. She can send her agents to be trained in cult-specific martial arts and learn secret spells as 'personal favours,' as well as using her influence over the Empire to issue land and titles to especially successful followers.

Inganna Willowhair High Priestess of the Converters

To the people sworn into the dragonspeaker cults and stirred by the Great Work, she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

Before you is a slender creature, graceful in stillness or motion, clad in the finest silks of crimson, scarlet and blood red. Her eyes are almond-shaped and bright blue, her lips are full and red without enhancement, and she bears a tiny beauty spot above the corner of her pouting lips. Silver necklaces tinkle as she moves, as do the tiny charm bells she wears on her wrists when she absently runs her fingertips through her lightly-curled blonde hair.

To those with no faith in the Great Dragon To Come, Inganna Willowhair is an inhuman monster.

Before you is a fearsome creature, alien in stillness and motion, clad in expensive silks that look as if they are drowning her frail figure in their folds. Her eyebrows are ridged by dark red scales, with a crest of bony spines extending up from her forehead and up the parting in her blond hair. Her lips are beautiful but cold, with her black tongue flicking across them like a snake's every few seconds. Like a hungry animal, she rapaciously stares at any signs of movement around her, darting her head this way and that, causing her silver jewellery to rattle alarmingly.

Inganna is currently locked in a stalemate with the rest of the Guiding Council and her fellow Wyrms' Tongue Masters. As leader of the Converter movement, she ardently believes that many of the powerful Dragonlords should be walking among the Empire's people, healing

them and using Dragon Magic to provide food, comfort and alleviate their suffering. She believes this with all her heart and recruits dragonspeakers who share her ideals, charging them with the duty to help the imperial populace in this dangerous time.

The problem with her stance is that while she recognises how unpopular it makes her with the other imperial leaders, she does not wish to leave the Guiding Council lest other changes she disagrees with take place in her absence.

Serving Inganna Willowhair

Characters allied with Inganna will find her a passionate, devoted patron – but one conflicted by the difference between her ideals and the reality of the Empire's political landscape. Additionally of interest to characters who might fall under her patronage, she commands an incredible amount of healing magic and is said to know every single draconic dance in any of the imperial cults.

Her wards are often sent out into the Empire to heal the folk and bring comfort to the people, especially newly-converted regions or the victims of the Two-Year Winter starvation. She rarely advocates inaction among her hirelings and loyal servants. She is always grateful to groups that place themselves at risk to help the people of the Empire, especially those that attempt to make peace with the Old Ways traditionalists and perhaps even convert them, rather than immediately seek their destruction.

Tarkala Wyrmsdottir Administrator of the Throne Hands

This lady has a weary intensity about her, born from sustaining herself with magic instead of rest and sustenance. Though she would be an attractive young woman without her tired eyes and slow movements, the toils of fuelling her body with Dragon Magic are evident. At various moments in the day, her eyes or ears will leak trails of blood, staining her formal white robes and her white-blond hair. Sometimes days will go by without her changing her clothes, purely because she is so busy. It shows all too clearly in her wearied appearance. Yet as she regards you, even as you realise the stories about her living off magic instead of food and drink are all true, you see a definite hard edge of competency in her eyes. She is a woman seeking to hold an Empire together through sheer force of will. For the moment, it is working.

Tarkala Wyrms's Daughter is a woman on the edge. She has long abandoned her own meditative reflection in order to take a firm hand on the reigns of the Empire, which she recognises as spiralling into doom unless something can be done about it. Her days consist of endless reports from a thousand spies – a secret cult called the 'Eyes of the Wyrms's Daughter' – and hundreds of documents pertaining to the running of the Empire. She sees the divisions within the Throne Hands and seeks to reunite the faction by any means possible. To date, she has been unsuccessful. The others are too dedicated to what they perceive as the true paths to success.

Characters meeting Tarkala see a woman with the weight of the world on her shoulders. Her attention to the temporal world is shredding her enlightenment as she binds herself further to the 'false reality' of the Mortal Plane. Coupled with this is her continued use of Draconic Mysticism and Rune Magic to stay awake and aware for months at a time, and it becomes easy to see what a knife-edge she lives on.

SERVING TARKALA WYRMSDOTTIR

As a patron, Tarkala has immense political influence. Her servants and subordinates are ambassadors, diplomats and force commanders alike, many of them maintaining authority roles in the EWF. She also counts on the services of the so-called Eyes of the Wyrms's Daughter, who serve as infiltrators, spies, couriers and occasionally assassins, all in one woman's bid to keep the Empire stable. Games Masters might like to note that of all the dragonspeakers, Tarkala is convinced the EWF is doomed if they do not instigate massive change in the near future. In her dealings with characters, any passionate idealists seeking to preserve the wyrmfriend way are likely to earn themselves her sincere (if weary) favour.

As a mentor in magic, however, Tarkala is less helpful. In truth, she has lost the way so many times through her spellcasting and recent actions that she barely remembers half of the spells she once knew intuitively. To date she has avoided any social gatherings because she fears her rivals, enemies and allies alike bearing witness to the graceless movements that her dancing and martial arts have become.

Varankol the Mangler

Force Commander of the Machine City Siege

Outside the towering walls of the Clanking City, a man stands in full battle armour. For one of his rank, the armour is unusually plain, bone-sung for smoothness and simplicity rather than ornate presentation. In his left hand is a klanth, bound with magic so potent that the souls of the blade's past victims can be heard shrieking in the distance whenever the weapon is drawn. The dragon-head helm, the breastplate of dragon-rib and the bone gauntlets of his armour are stained pinkish-red from decades of being spattered with the blood of the Empire's enemies.

Many men are driven by idealism, ambition, love, duty or even fear in life. Varankol is driven by hatred: it dictates every moment of his existence. He hates the God Learners above everything else in the world, since his wife and children were killed by sorcerers using his family to threaten him into submission. Now he serves as Imperial Force Commander at the siege of the Clanking City and he swears a blood-oath at each sunrise that he will use his klanth to hack Shingallion, the overseer of Zistorwal's God Learners, into a hundred pieces.

Most of the siege is sea-based due to the nature of the island Zistorwal rests on but what little land is available has become a fortified beach-head under the flags of the EWF. Varankol despises the mostali, uz and Old Ways Orlanthi that are allies of opportunity in the siege and uses his tactical genius to ensure that any assaults on the city always bleed his 'allies' far more than his own forces. He wants his own valuable soldiers and dragonewt fighters to be fresh for storming the breaches when the walls finally fall.

SERVING VARANKOL THE MANGER

Characters allied with Force Commander Varankol benefit from the friendship (or at least the respect) of one of the most well-known generals in the world and are practically assured a place in the armies laying perpetual siege to the Clanking City. Varankol has allies elsewhere in the Empire, of course, and characters wishing to act as agents of the Mangler will find few patrons with reputations as 'colourful' and feared as Varankol's. Such characters could ensure that Varankol has a steady stream of information from his interests in the Empire, such as

other force commanders, the behaviour of the Guiding Council and the actions of High Commander Hargrath.

As far removed as he is, Varankol likes to keep an eye on the Empire as much as possible. He is an uncomplicated soldier and prefers not to get involved with politics but he is not above funding groups of adventurers to serve as personal enforcers, either as bodyguards or as wanderers left to their own devices, entrusted with fighting the God Learners when the opportunities arise. His rewards in the latter instance are directly tied into how much his agents harm the God Learners and often take the form of magical weapons such as spell-enhanced klanths or longswords of song-shaped wyrm-, wyvern- or dragon bone.

Amarkia Bloodtongue

High Warrior-Priestess of the Children of the Ten Talons

This imposing woman is covered from collarbone to toes in armour made of treated wyvern skin. While her attire was originally covered in a thick patina of onyx paint, it now shows chips and burrs from months blow-takings and hard campaigning. With even her slightest movements, the lizard skin over her body creaks softly. In gauntlets that sport bone spikes projecting an inch from the knuckles, she clutches a well-used klanth with several broken obsidian teeth. Her voice is stern and businesslike, with a touch of repressed anger when she is forced to repeat herself.

Amarkia Bloodtongue is the current High Warrior-Priestess of the Children of the Ten Talons. The other cult leaders regard her as efficient and ruthlessly competent in her work of training disposable draconic mystics and serving the 'true' dragonspeaker orders. As such, she is entrenched in a position where she is unable to rise higher in the EWF hierarchy. Fortunately for her, she is exactly where she wishes to be, having ascended to leadership of the Children by a series of bloody murders and flashy magic exercises. Three years ago she took the reins of command from the previous High Warrior-Priest, Mezakiel, who had developed severe Evolutionary traits and was found to be insane, believing himself to actually be a dragon. Amarkia Bloodtongue, having successfully spared the leader of the Scions of the Sacred Flame from Dara Happan assassination, was nominated as the new leader. Her only bitterness arises from the fact that the Children of the Ten Talons are barred from choosing

their own leader; instead the position is voted on by the Guiding Council.

Amarkia is a woman very much in love with death. While she does not enjoy or dislike violence any more vehemently than most trained fighters, she is excited by seeing the life fade in the eyes of her enemies. Her vocal appreciations for macabre pleasures rarely sit well with her colleagues. All manner of unwholesome traits are secretly ascribed to her, such as necrophilia and a host of deranged behaviours such as blood-drinking and eating the flesh of the dead. No matter how good she is at her duty, she is generally disliked and feared by her subordinates and superiors.

Serving Amarkia Bloodtongue

Characters working for the High Warrior-Priestess are almost certainly either members of the Children of the Ten Talons, allied with the cult or in its indirect employ. As such, their duties are likely to be along the lines of protecting dragonspeaker nobility, investigating suspected assassination plots and killing the Empire's enemies. In the case of failure for any of these actions, Amarkia is not above exiling cult members or simply ordering their deaths. Outsiders and mercenaries working for her are considered utterly expendable. It is said among the upper echelons of the other cults that Lady Bloodtongue also kills a minority of her hirelings after their successful work purely in case they have learned something they should not have.

Her rewards are simple and practical, usually in the form of money, runes or items from the armoury in the cult's main temple in Orin Jistrel. Her political influence is virtually nil and no favours she promises to carry to the Guiding Council are worth the breath she uses to offer them. To counterbalance this, her physical rewards are usually extremely generous.

Delecti the Inquirer

Traitorous Sorcerer

A bald man stands by a large desk, stroking his short-cut blond beard and moustache as he peers out of the window at the city below. His shaved head is covered in spiralling arcane symbols related to his magical art and he wears fingerless leather gloves to hide burn marks from a demon-summoning failure several years ago. He keeps these scars now as a reminder to be cautious in

all things. Though partial to black jackets and white silk shirts, the main piece of couture that the traitor is famous for is a pair of black dragon-skin boots that reach his knees.

Delecti is a defector from the Middle Sea Empire, working now as an advisor to the Guiding Council and other dragonspeaker hierarchs. He hopes to be the first of the draconised God Learners, believing that the powers of Sorcery can be 'purified' and applied to the Great Dragon To Come. The main rumours around Delecti are that he has taken Inganna Willowhair as a lover; that he has a laboratory atop a tower in Orin Jistrel where he breeds new forms of hybrid life; and that he regularly employs dragonspeaker adventurers to perform missions for him. All of these rumours are true.

The life he seeks to create is a fusion of human and draconic elements, though he has experimented with mostali and aldryami as well. Perhaps not surprisingly, none of his test subjects leave his tower alive. Despite the sinister aspects of Delecti's work, he is not a malicious or spiteful man. He does not enjoy what he does but he believes it will be worth it if he can perfect a new strain of living being. Characters running across Delecti will find him a devoted patron who keeps them in constant employ... or a deadly enemy. The God Learner is not restrained in the use of magic and he knows spells that could shatter buildings in the time it would take to breathe a single breath. As an enemy, there are few more dangerous men in the EWF.

SERVING DELECTI

As an ally or a patron, Delecti regularly sends out dragonspeakers and mercenaries to acquire certain 'components' for his experiments. A typical job might involve bringing back a sample of a still-living nobleman's blood, a dragonewt artefact that has never seen sunlight and the saliva of a tyrannosaurus rex that has taken no injury in the past month. He is *incredibly* specific about these things. Luckily for any interested characters, Delecti pays huge rewards to his reliable servants, whether they ask for money, magic or Sorcery-enhanced weapons. Adventurers bearing a Delecti-ensorcelled blade are wielding one of the deadliest weapons in the Empire. The sorcerer takes great care to ensure his hirelings are rewarded very well for their difficult efforts.

Games Masters should note that allying with Delecti is one of the few realistic ways an EWF-loyal character can ever learn God Learner Sorcery. The traitor is more than willing to teach others, though of course dragonspeakers above Wyrms' Face Believer rank are barred from learning other magical disciplines. A character that does not advance in the dragonspeaker cults (among an adventuring group that do) would make an excellent student of Delecti, especially in regards to game balance and storyline opportunities.

God Learner Alliance

Though the end is still distant, the God Learner Empire is beginning to crumble. These sorcerers are in positions that allow them to see the end in the far-off future and offer them enough insight as to how it could be avoided. It is not the way of the God Learners to pay heed to doomsayers. Ultimately, whether these sorcerers are stubborn, naïve or something else entirely is a moot point, though it could be argued some of the actions taken by these figures are contributing to the Empire's downfall.

Lurghalos

ARCH-SORCERER OF THE GOD LEARNER ALLIANCE

This is a man who is only beautiful when completely expressionless, for any emotion usually twists his handsome face into a sneer. The greatest sorcerer of the God Learners was never a warm-hearted man but his temperament has turned even sourer of late in the aftermath of the Goddess Switch. His slender fingers are rarely without a wine glass held between them and his long, black hair is tousled from restless nights rather the straight, oiled display of previous years.

From a palatial spire sanctum in Frowal, the architect and mastermind of the God Learner project no longer dreams of new ways to reshape the world according to his will. Now he pours over reports, diagrams and magical theorems, desperately seeking some way of stabilising the perilous after-effects of the successful Goddess Switch. He knows he has failed somewhere along the line and it pains him intensely.

Lurghalos used to spend most of his time either advising Emperor Ilotos or planning new violations of the God's

Realm. Now he is a whirlwind of activity, managing teams of agents, his personal spy network and covering up the disastrous blights affecting the areas that fell victim to the Goddess Switch.

Roleplaying-wise, Games Masters should be aware that it is an unspoken secret within the highest tiers of the Empire that Lurghalos is an alcoholic and prone to drunken rages. In such states, he is not above killing messengers for bringing him unfavourable information.

Serving Lurghalos

God Learner characters and those aligned with the Empire (by ideal or for profit) will find him a harsh patron, offering incredible magical rewards but demanding absolute perfection in their actions.

Politically, few God Learners have social influence that could ever rival Lurghalos, especially considering he has the direct ear of the Emperor. Characters will find any dealings they have with the Arch-Sorcerer to reveal truths about the state of the world that few mortals in the Imperial Age will ever discover. Commonly, Lurghalos's agents are sent to the areas blighted by the Goddess Switch – to keep the population in, keep intruders out and uncover any lore that could explain why things went wrong. The Arch-Sorcerer also has a sizeable number of agents working continually in HeroQuests, as well as a small army of subordinates opposing the EWF through various magical and underhand means.

The rewards for serving Lurghalos as a member of his vast network involve tuition in any Sorcery or Rune Magic spell imaginable. He makes a point of meeting his most important or successful agents in person, though because of the pressure he is under recently he rarely makes a charming impression. Usually his agents are controlled and ordered by chosen lieutenants, all of whom answer to the Arch-Sorcerer in person.

Vesharios

High Ecclesiast of the Makhoni Church

A tall, muscled man clad in grey-white vestments, with a perpetual look of condescension on his face as he stares down a hawkish nose. You notice he has a curious habit of nodding to himself every once in a while, as if what he sees confirms something he was expecting. He has a deep and calming voice well-suited to calling out loud in temples and leading the masses in prayer.

The High Ecclesiast is primarily concerned with mediating the more fanatical factions within the Church. He fears that the hot-blooded conversion movements threatening to sweep out from the Empire will damage social stability, invite insurrection and perhaps even threaten the balance of the Hero Plane, altering it as the old myths are disregarded and new ones arise in their place.

Serving Vesharios

Vesharios knows all too well that the millions of pagans across Glorantha will never be warped into a unifying body of worship, praising the Invisible God. It will never happen and he knows it is the purest folly to think otherwise. What he prefers to focus on instead is the attempt to convert those pagans with the capacity and will to be enlightened. To that end, he hires adventurers and secures the service of trusted God Learner sorcerers who can seek out potential converts and take the faith to them.

A cautious and clever individual to say the least, Vesharios is a daunting patron. He has an eidetic memory, allowing him to recall everything about every single one of his agents and he is overly fond of long, passionate preaches to those in his employ, especially if they have suffered a recent failure. The rewards Vesharios offers to his hirelings and loyal servants are usually financial or societal in nature, such as money or positions of authority within the church for particularly pious characters.

Shingallion

Mech-Lord of the Machine City

The man before you can no longer truly be called a man. From the waist down, he is a bronze skeleton sheathed in iron armour plating. Both of his arms are likewise replaced with mechamagics, whirring, grinding and humming with power as they move. What remains of his face is little more than his nose and upper lip – the rest is coated in dark metal or bright bronze plating. Two ruby lenses focus and zoom where his eyes once were. His jaw no longer moves since it was replaced by an iron implant, instead emitting a tinny, metallic drone (serving as his voice) between slow, heavy breaths. It is hard to believe that anything is alive in this mess of humanity but curiously his movement is in no way impaired and he moves as naturally as any normal human.

Shingallion is the most 'enhanced' Zistorite who ever lived. Even the unreliable, experimental organ replacements have a place within his body and only perhaps 10% of his current form is natural human flesh. The rest is mechamagics: he has devoted more passion for personal reconstruction than any other God Learner to date. In truth, the others do not know how he still lives, given how little is left of him.

The Mech-Lord of the Machine City is not technically its ruler (rule falls to a council of hierarchs in the Alliance). However, he is the leader of the Zistorite God Learners present within the factory-fortress and does shoulder a great deal of the city's defence since the great siege began. He is a shrewd judge of character, appointing those he deems as trustworthy and competent to honoured roles of responsibility. Those he does not trust or that manage to earn his disfavour are likely to be simply ignored. Though he says he has no time for malice, his colleagues believe there is not enough brain left to feel human emotion and this is why Shingallion is so merciful to his enemies. He simply cannot hate them. He cannot feel anything.

A year ago, one of the other Zistorite leaders confronted Shingallion with the accusation the Mech-Lord was seeking to become the avatar of Zistor. Though Shingallion laughed metallically and seemed to enjoy the 'jest', the accuser was never seen again after a private meeting with the Mech-Lord later that evening. Games Masters might want to play up the creepy aura surrounding this machine-man, who no longer talks, acts or even thinks as a true human.

Serving Shingallion

As a patron, Shingallion remains in the Machine City unless he teleports outside to his palace in Brustela. This is something he has not done for many years, since he always seems to be on the cusp of another mechamagical discovery. Characters could either meet him as they undergo their own surgery (Shingallion still performs many such operations

personally) or could serve him as advisors, bodyguards and outside agents, seeking to put an end to the siege of Zistorwal.

Shingallion might even consider working with traitors among the EWF or his own hired assassins in order to kill Varankol and various other notables in the siege armies. The rewards for faithful service are the fruits of the Machine City, such as mass-produced magic weapons and other items. Shingallion never hesitates taking up an offer to graft mechamagics onto a willing subject of that is the chosen reward, though he will only perform it upon God Learners. Serving Shingallion in a significant and loyal manner potentially earns a character his mechamagic implants at no cost.

Shingallion



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Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE

MAGIC OF GLORANTHA

Glorantha in its Second Age is a world steeped in powerful magic. From the common incantations of the runes, to the reality-breaking spells of the God Learners and the warped mysticism of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, magic permeates every layer of Gloranthan life.

The abuse of these mighty powers is accelerating Glorantha toward apocalypse, yet the two greatest culprits - the God Learners and the wyrmfriends - refuse to mitigate their acts of corruption and blind zealotry. Yet while they are ascendant, their magical prowess is without challenge.

Magic of Glorantha explores the most essential of these eldritch practices, providing detailed explanations and rules for Dragon Magic, God Learner Sorcery and the mysteries of HeroQuesting. Additional information is also provided on the subtleties of wyrmfriend society, dragonspeaker cults and the mechamagical enhancements of the Zistorites. Lastly, Magic of Glorantha provides character assassinations of the major Dragonspeakers and sorcerous lords of the Middle Sea Empire, including vital advice on how to deal with and serve these prodigious magicians.



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To use this supplement, a Games Master will require *RuneQuest*,
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