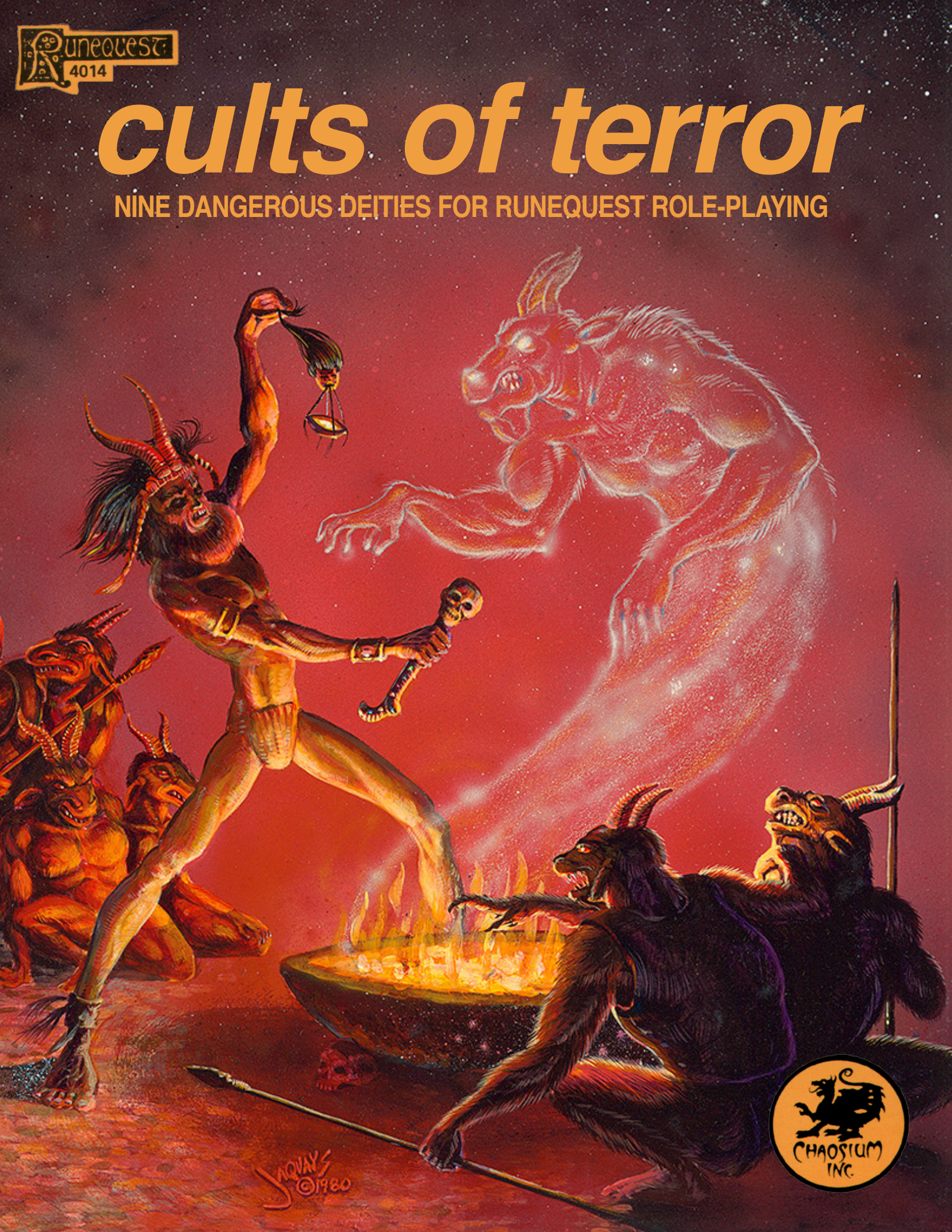
Runequest 4014

cults of terror

NINE DANGEROUS DEITIES FOR RUNEQUEST ROLE-PLAYING



CHAOSIUM INC.

cults of terror

NINE DANGEROUS DEITIES FOR RUNEQUEST ROLE-PLAYING

COVER PAINTING by PAUL JAQUAYS

HISTORY AND COSMOLOGY by GREG STAFFORD

PRIMAL CHAOS by KEN KAUFER

MALLIA by ANDERS SWENSON

BAGOG by CHARLIE KRANK and JOHN NATZKE

THED by SANDY PETERSEN

VIVAMORT by SEAN SUMMERS

THANATAR by PAUL JAQUAYS

THE CRIMSON BAT by RUDY KRAFT

KRARSHT by JOHN NATZKE, LYNN WILLIS, CHARLIE KRANK

NYSALOR/GBAJI by GREG STAFFORD

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS

PAUL JAQUAYS (pages 44, 65, 93)
RICK BECKER (pages 25, 32, 37, 73, 83, 86)

Classic Edition: Proofreading by Martin Helsdon and Sue O'Brien. Layout by Rick Meints and Nicholas Nacario.

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First Printing - December 2016 **ISBN# 978-1-56882-XX**
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May Arachne Solara bless and protect this book.

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May Arachne Solara Bless and Protect This Book

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION, CULT OUTLINE, COSMOLOGY, HISTORY, PAULIS

Cults of Terror is a book about the bad guys of Glorantha, the enemies of creation, the foes against whom every fight must be fought. These forces are worthy of fanatical opposition, for once they are loosed in a campaign they will be difficult to dislodge.

This book also investigates the Gloranthan concept of Chaos. This difficult subject only has been touched upon previously.

Preceding the actual cult descriptions is an explanation of the several Gloranthan Chaoses. They are presented in the mythical chronology to establish their place in the cosmos.

Although the cults detailed here are generally despicable in aim, it should be realized that not all creatures of Chaos are totally and automatically corrupt. The cult of Nysalor will give new insight into the behavior of certain Chaotic creatures, and also into the motives of the Lunar Empire.

The Blank Cult Outline is presented to explain the material which is included in standard cult write-ups. Two cults, Primal Chaos and Nysalor, are unique and do not follow the standard form.

IMPORTANT: ***the contributors, editors, and publisher categorically intend that these cults be used for Non-Player Enemy religions. Player Characters should not join these cults. We recommend that Player Characters who join these religions quickly be put to sacrifice by Non-Player-Character priests, to get them out of play.***

This is the second book of RuneQuest-related cults. With its larger companion, Cults of Prax, referees and players have a fair glimpse of religious practices and practical effects in the RuneQuest world, Glorantha. Readers will also get plenty of useful ideas and plot devices for religions in any fantasy world, from ancient Greece to Arthur's Britain, from Selucid Persia to Lankhmar.

Cults of Prax was devoted to cults in which players would conceivably want player characters to belong. Cults of Terror contains complete information about the cults described, but it is furnished more in the hope that referees will find it useful in creating believable NPCs than with the expectation that players want to role-play unbelievably brutal characters.

Important assumptions underlie the facts compiled for this book. Primary among them are the immanence of deity, the reality of workable magic, and relation of these to the way people live. The effects of these assumptions can be explained.

A cult is a vehicle which provides communication between those people living and the cosmic entities known as deities. A cult is a religion, and it provides for the many deep needs of any mortal being.

One deep need is assistance lent by the cult to the individual to protect his or her life during difficult times. Another need is some assurance or guarantee of immortality: death casts the weak and the strong alike into the powerful maws of the cosmic entities. Still another need is to provide worldly guidelines to the individual which will aid in the search for safety and preservation of identity.

In short, a cult supports the individual's way of life. It gives him focus to find balance within himself and with others, and with the world, and defines his relation with the universe.

A deity will be worshipped because of his attributes. His or her attributes were gained in the performance of significant actions during the mythical God Time. Such acts are related in the first sub-section of each cult, and in great respect the rest of the cult write-up describes how the mortal beings who came later accept and deal with archetypal acts and their equally archetypal consequences. Worshippers will imitate significant deeds and thereby magically partake of them. These mythic acts and the worshippers' lives will be similar.

The cults in this book illustrate in greater or lesser detail the effects of the Gods War and the Great Darkness, portraying some of the forces of Chaos which tried to seize the world-universe of Glorantha, and of the Great Compromise which froze the relations of the gods except on the mortal plane. These Chaos cults are published as part of the ongoing effort to fully depict a world in which magic constantly occurs, of both the everyday variety and of the astonishing.

Most players will not want to identify with the cults within, but the inclusion of such detail is integral to a rich and full campaign. What are vampires? What does that stack of heads indicate? Who is the Mother of the Broos? Players will want to understand the motivations of villainous non-player characters.

These cults are restricted for the most part to Genertela.

THE CAUSE OF TIME

The world of Glorantha is about 1600 years old. That many years ago, after a great and timeless Darkness, the Sun God rose in the east for the first of many days, instituting the new power of Time. Since then, dates in Time often have been written S.T., Solara Tempora. The year 575 S.T., then, would be the 575th year after the first sunrise.

Time is the most powerful of the gods of the New Age. We recognize Time in three natural forms (lineal, cyclical, and illusory), but Time did not exist in the God Time or the Great Darkness. The lineal relations imposed upon the myths and stories of those ages originate from our own temporal state of mind, since we mortals are a natural part of the Time flow of the New Age. Mythical events did not necessarily occur in the order we perceive them, and it can be difficult to reconcile conflicting versions of certain occurrences in Dreamtime. The difficulties with which we understand that age are illustrated by the words

we use for it— Dreamtime, Gods Age, Golden Eon, Non-time, and so on. Each word or phrase has some measurement of Time within it. It is interesting and perhaps important that the magicians of the Hero Wars period (when contact was greatest between men and gods) referred to the God Time as "the magic place" or "Godworld," even when referring to a prehistoric event.

Time was born in Hell, where the shadows of Chaos reigned and held sway over the heart of the universe. All of the universe was in confusion, elements blundered amidst each other, and devils ran amok, slaying and kidnapping gods and mortals alike, carrying them to the formless void. When the Lightbringers entered the Underworld and completed their great tasks, they forged a cosmic pact which bound all entities, living and dead, spiritual and physical, pure and unholy, intelligent and inert, into the Great Compromise. No beings responsible for the creation of the world had exemption from this final synthesis. In their pact, the deities settled their senseless and destructive wars which had precipitated the Chaos they now united against. They agreed to accept a common ground of existence in order to share responsibility for the protection of the realm and to uphold their present status in the universe. They thus bound themselves irrevocably to the spiritual matrix of the New Age.

Their vows are the source and cause of Time; the energies of this compromise provided the soul-essence of the New Age. The old deities created the will of the New Age and bound themselves to uphold it. The more powerful the deity, then the more numerous the commitments binding it into the world matrix, and the more effectively fossilized its role in the Time to come.

The lesser creatures of the world, especially the surviving mortal races, were free to grow, change, and develop within the new age. By utilizing their freedom and knowledge of the new Laws accompanying the New Age, the mortal folk could commune with the gods and powers of the universe.

KINDS OF TIME

The form of Time was a function of the Compromise. As stated, there had been horrible fighting and confusion before that agreement. Death and even parts of Chaos were well-mixed with the world. Time re-organized this confusion so that there was regularity between light and darkness, life and death, and other measures of Time.

Some cults believe in Lineal Time, maintaining that Time once began and that it will continue onward in an unbroken line into the future forever, or until the world ends.

Cyclical Time, supported by many cults, holds that certain events such as day and night, alternation of seasons, lunar cycles, tides, spiritual recycling, etc., actually are the same event occurring again and again. Minor, local, and mundane observable differences actually measure mortal removal from the primal sources, rather than marking any true change.

Illusory Time is that progression of events which seems to manifest itself as we glance backward to God Time myth, or upon the activities of Heroquesters performed in that realm of legend and magic. Cosmologically, the world of God Time exists only in stasis, beyond Time, and Chaos lies at the other pole. Reality stretches between them, and the non-existent realms are reachable only when individuals force Illusory Time upon God Time—causing immense philosophical and thaumaturgical ramifications.

CALENDRICAL TIME

Uniform dating in Glorantha is difficult, for many dates are based on local circumstance, such as "the third year after King Grozz defenestrated Harl Half-Ear." A universal calendar exists in many places, however, and it is used in the following manner for general dating.

Conventionally, chroniclers list the day of the week first, then the week of the month, then the month or season, and then the year ST (the number of years after the Sun first rose). Two ways commonly are used to record actual dates. One is inscribing the Runes appropriate to the day, while the other is to note the date numerically. Both ways are shown on the Calendar of Holy Days in the appendices.

In the latter system, Roman numerals have been used to show season: 5/2/I/1614 is the same as ⊙/III/⁂/1614.

LUNAR TIME

Lunar Time is the only important method of irregular dating. Some locales had other notations, but these rarely gained widespread importance, and are more confusing than interesting today.

The Red Goddess was born in Rinliddi (Peloria) in 1220 ST. Lunar chronomancers always start their chronologies from that date. The Red Goddess lived upon the surface world for 27 years before her apotheosis.

When she departed and took her place in the sky, the goddess was at the height of her power. Her possessions upon earth suffered a decrease in available mana for 27 years after her ascent, then increased again for 27 years to the levels available when the goddess had been on earth. This makes a 54-year period between the crests of power, with a central low point. This cycle is called a wane, since the power is at a wane during its center.

The wane is the primary number in Lunar calendar notation. If the first number is a 1, then the event was in the 1st Wane of the goddess; if it is a 7, then the event was in the 7th Wane, and so on. An occasional wane may receive a name or title:

Hon-eel's Wane, or the Hero Wars Wane. Events of the goddess' lifetime upon earth took place in the Zero Wane.

The second number of a Lunar date tells the year of the Wane in which the event occurred: any number from 1-54 is possible. Lunar daily and seasonal notation is as the S.T. calendar explained below.

SOLAR TIME

DAY

One day on Glorantha is the time needed for the sun to traverse the sky from east to west. One night is the time needed for the sun to traverse the underworld from west to east again.

WEEK

One week is made of seven days, named for the five elements, one Godsday, and one 'wild' day. Elemental influences vary in intensity by the day of the week. Windsday will have more airy energies available than usual, for instance.

Wildday is an unformed piece of time, often propitious to various Chaos magics. The influences vary widely, however, and depend on location, history, pre-arranged conditions, and more factors. The most powerful local deity may be worshipped on this day.

Godsday may see the most worship and meditation. The most important holy ceremonies may occur on this day. The deities will be more influenced to receive worship on Godsday.

SEASON

A season is made up of eight weeks, named after the eight Powers: Disorder, Harmony, Death, Fertility, Stasis, Movement, Illusion, and Truth.

Sea-season compares to our spring. This season follows the rebirth of the Sacred Time, and during it the young gods of the New Age are free to exert their influences on the world.

Fire-season is like our summer. This is a time of warming and ripening, when the plans and schemes of men mature and bear fruit, as do herds and fields. Energies are ripe for activities, intellectual pursuits, and outward expansions.

Earth-season compares with our fall, with harvest and food gathering against the hard weather to come. The forces of life draw to themselves, leaving the fields and pastures to the soon appearing cold and darkness, but this also is the time of the greatest plenty, and a period of festivity and joy.

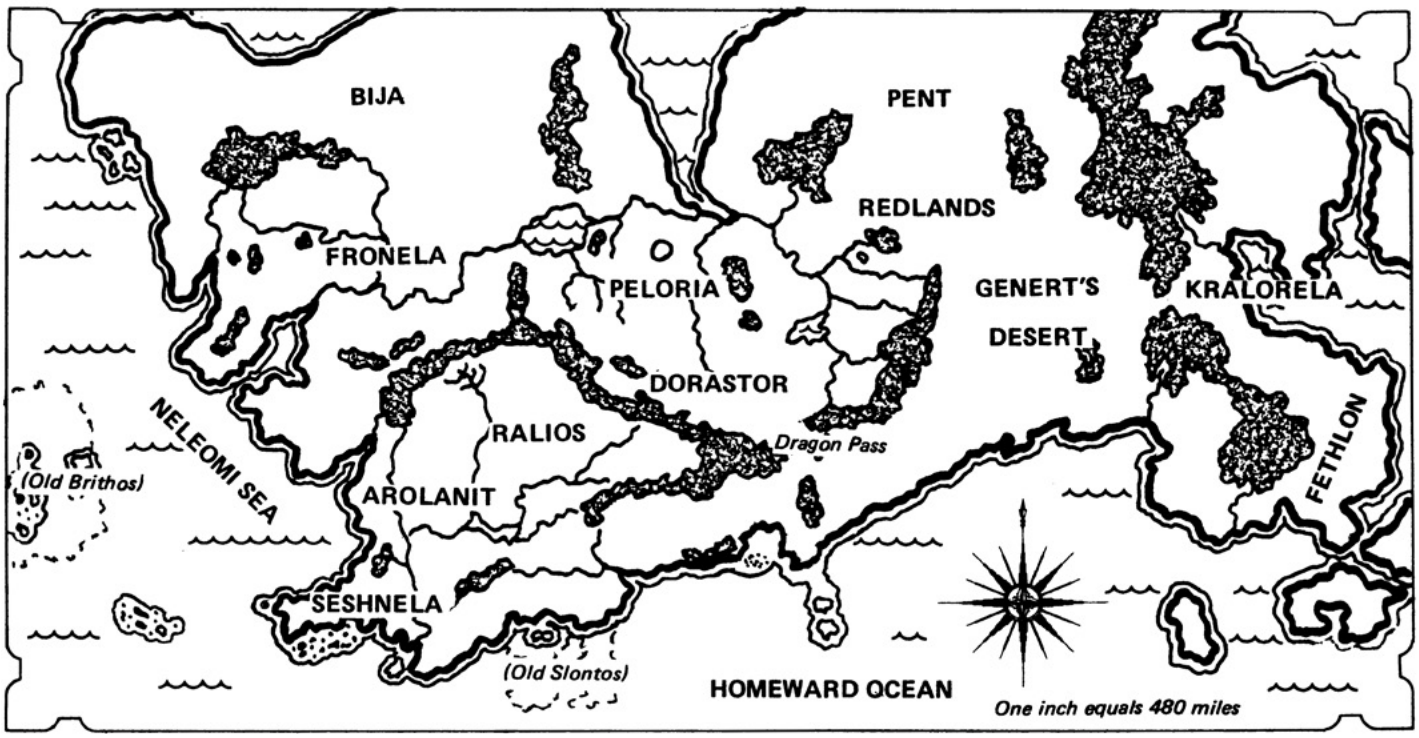
Dark-season is like our winter, and there is great hardship and gloom across the world. Weaker beings should hide now, hoarding their food and spouting cheerful stories before their crackling fires. Only the boldest go forth.

Storm-season is the time of greatest violence and danger. The Air gods rule this season, and their energies always are of a violent and unpredictable nature. This time is like the War of the Gods; this bloody season can undo the effort of a whole year, and troubles begun here often inadvertently allow Chaos forces to slip into the world.

Sacred Time equals two weeks in length, but officially is days instead. Normal activity halts, and the world ritually and really re-enacts the death and rebirth of the cosmos in order to replenish the world, for incorporating the entropy of Chaos into the living world is agreed to in the Great Compromise. To live, one must descend into death and be reborn. The participation of all beings in these annual ceremonies and their commitment to them integrates the participants with an unconscious understanding of the cosmic balance—a major factor in the high level of mana generation and use in Glorantha.

7 days = 1 week
56 days = 8 weeks = 1 season
294 days = 42 weeks = 5 seasons + Sacred Time = 1 year

Days of the week	*Weeks of the Season*	*Seasons of the Year*
1. Freezeday	1.. Disorder	1. Sea-season
2. Waterday	2. Harmony	2. Fire-season
3. Clayday	3. Death	3. Earth-season
4. Windsday	4. Fertility	4. Dark-season
5. Fireday	5. Stasis	5. Storm-season
6. Wildday	6. Movement	6. (Sacred Time)
7. Godsday	7. Illusion	
	8. Truth	



CULT OUTLINE

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY
- *A. Before Time*
- *B. Since Time Began*
- *C. Life After Death*
- *D. Runic Associations*

II. NATURE OF THE CULT
- *A. Reason for Continued Existence*
- *B. Social/Political Position and Power*
- *C. Particular Likes and Dislikes*

III. ORGANIZATION
- *A. Inter-Cult Organization*
- *B. Intra-Temple Organization*
- *C. Center of Power, Holy Places*
- *D. Holy Days and High Holy Days*

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
- *A. Requirements to Join (race, birth, abilities, money, etc.)*
- *B. Requirements to Belong (offerings, sacrifices, hates, geases, codes of honor, etc.)*
- *C. Mundane Benefits (board, succor, healing, etc.)*
- *D. Skills*
- *E. Battle Magic*

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
- *A. Requirements for Initiation*
- *B. Requirements to Remain Initiated*
- *C. Mundane Benefits*
- *D. Skills*
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VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP
- *A. General Statement*
- *B. Requirements for Acceptance*
- *C. Restrictions*
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VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
- *A. General Statement*
- *B. Requirements for Acceptance*
- *C. Restrictions*
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- *E. Rune Spell Compatibility*
- *F. Cult Special Rune Spells*

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
- *A. Spirit of Reprisal*
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IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
- *A. Listed Singly*

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

SAMPLE CULT

The great portion of this book examines nine different cults according to the outline below, in turn followed by a number of appendices dealing with mechanics, cult relations, and background. The rest of this chapter discusses the elements of the outline structure in detail, so that readers will better understand how the remainder of the book is made, and so that those who wish to will have a guide for the creation of their own myths, legends, cults, and the fitting of the cults into a world at large.

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

The mythology of a religion is its recorded communications between the divinity and the divinity's worshippers. The mythological actions of the deity determine appropriate actions for the worshippers who wish to partake of their god's power. The primal actions of the deities determined their sources of power, and when individuals and societies imitate those deeds through worship, the worshippers partake of their divinity's conquests or creation by aiding in the primal acts.

These sections never relate all of the many tales of a particular deity, but only those of major importance. Each cult might have volumes of minutiae with which its Rune Priests would be intimate, but to relate such would be extravagant.

A. BEFORE TIME

This section tells of the deeds of the deity in the God Time, when the god had freedom of choice. The narrated myths relate the actions which gave the god its present powers and from which the people draw divine aid.

B. SINCE TIME BEGAN

The mortal races ruled the world since the first Dawning, and have called upon deities for aid, or commanded them to act. These events form the basis for the tales of the deities since Time began. Also occurring are the many legends of mortals who were able to immortalize themselves through their mighty deeds in the name of, or in defiance of, the godly immortals. Many cults worship the ancient heroes as subservient spirits.

C. LIFE AFTER DEATH

How cultists think they will die influences how they think they should live: the possibility of life after death and the quality of that life flavors cult beliefs, gives background useful in understanding the cult, and prompts ideas for adventures.

Funeral rites provide examples of cult belief, power, and action.

D. RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

All deities are associated with certain Runes of Power. Use of these Runes in cult functions will be an obvious mark of the nature of the deity worshipped. These signs may be understood as vehicles of Power, channels of definition, or foci to manifest symbolic abilities. Similar Runes will not mean an automatic friendship between cults, but at least may indicate a similar general interest or origin.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT
A. REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE
This explains the relation of the cult, its social context, and its significance within the cosmological scheme. These will determine the worshipper's priorities.

B. SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER
This varies immensely from place to place, even for the same deity, but will be explained here only in terms of general behavior.

C. PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
This section applies the previous section to show how they influence the ordinary behavior of the worshipper even when he is not in touch with his cult, concentrating on recognizable prejudices and enthusiasms.

III. ORGANIZATION
A. INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION
Some local temples or cults may be linked in terms of duties, hierarchies, taxes, or sacrifices to other temples, thereby forming a superstructure of command between otherwise isolated units of worship. As applicable, the structure will be defined.

B. INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
Local bodies, whether farmer or nomad, usually have a structure. The organization may be a disciplined hierarchy, like that of Krarsht, or arrogantly free, like Vivamort. There are no rules, except that there will be rules.

C. CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES
A cult may have one center of power or many, whether it be a specific altar or temple, or a Great High Priest. Particular locations may be linked to some special cult event. All such aspects will be known to the cultists.

D. HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS
Cults have special days of worship. Often it will be a day wherein all the worshippers attend special rituals, thereby letting them enter the magical world and partake of ceremonies blessed by the spiritual attendance of their deity.

Typical holy day worship requires lay worshippers to sacrifice 1 point of their Power. Initiates will sacrifice 2 points, and Rune-levels attend to the channeling of the Power to the deity. Worshippers regain the Power as if it had been used to power a battle magic spell.

On high holy days, worship requires sacrifice of all but 1 point of each worshipper's Power to their deity during a ritual sacrifice in which they commune directly with the immortals and are invulnerable to everything except that which might harm a god.

Each year begins and/or ends with a two-week Sacred Time. In that period the world is caught up in cosmic festivities and ceremonies. Great magical energies move the world, and each of the deities appears upon the world to relive their great deeds of creation, conflict, and compromise which brought about the world of Time. The rituals end with the creation of Time and with the birth of the Dawn and Spring, marking the start again of normal, mundane Time.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
A. REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN
To join, laymen will have to satisfy certain cult requirements, and these may be of birth, race, ability, money, or whatever.

Lay members will be required to join a cult each time they attend its services, unless they already belong. Lay members often belong to more than one cult, particularly if they have political aspirations; some cults are enemies, precluding this.

B. REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG
Some cults may have requirements for members wishing to remain in the cult, bypassing the necessity of paying the membership fee each time. This state is necessary also for persons preparing to become an Initiate of the cult, or desiring to learn battle magic from the cult. This section explains the relation of existence to the cult's basic beliefs and demands, at least so far as a lay member is concerned. Requirements generally are minimal; as the cult's attachment to its lay members also will be minimal.

Lay members typically will need to sacrifice 1 point of Power during worship on holy days.

C. MUNDANE BENEFITS
Some cults offer substantial benefits, such as room, board, free healing, and so on. Most benefits will be minimal.

D. SKILLS
Each of the deities worshipped specializes in something, and often these reflect in abilities noted in the rules. Because of their deity's proximity with the ability, cult members may be able to receive some training for less than normal costs. Likewise, the deity may have been restricted in regions, and this could mean that the worshippers must pay more for an ability or, in some cases, not be allowed to use it at all. Some deities will also have special abilities offered to members only, and often only to Initiates and Rune-levels. Skills will be divided into the following:

Half Normal Cost – 1/2 the normal price
Normal Cost - the normal price
Twice Normal Cost - 2x the normal price
Unique - unique to the particular cult
Prohibited - not allowed in a particular cult

E. BATTLE MAGIC
As with abilities, a deity's previous actions and present abilities in the magical world will affect the worshipper's access to magic. Thus battle magic costs may vary, and some cults may have unique spells for members only.

If joining a cult which prohibits some of the battle magics he already knows, the candidate automatically forgets the prohibited spell or spells within moments of acceptance into the cult. Should he later leave that cult, he will have to repurchase or otherwise reacquire the spell in some manner to know it once again. Battle magics are divided into the following:

Half Normal Cost - 1/2 the normal price
Normal Cost - the normal price
Twice Normal Cost - 2x the normal price
Unique - unique to the particular cult
Prohibited - not allowed in a particular cult

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

Initiation into a cult is a serious step, for individuals thereby pledge themselves to the focus of a single divine entity. Unlike lay members, who have free association with other cults, Initiates may partake only of rituals in their own cult and its associated and friendly cults. Pledges are serious, and if one wishes to quit a cult after initiation, there is a brief reprisal against the one who would deny his deity.

This reprisal is attempted each time by the appropriate spirit of reprisal, discussed in the subservient cults section.

Initiates need to be lay members in good standing, and they should have a sponsor—although this may be interpreted in a broad fashion. Some cults demand items, monies, or other tokens of sacrifice from the Initiate candidate.

Initiates will also have to pass a test. This may be done in the same way as related for Rune Lords in the rules, except that often the test is (POW + CHA divided by 2) times 5 or less on D100.

B. REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED

Initiates of cults must do more for the cult than any lay member. They must sacrifice 2 points of POW each holy day instead of 1 point. They will also be expected to uphold the cult likes and dislikes much more stringently than lay members, who may be able to quit when they wish. Initiates do not have such a simple option: they are pledged to the faith.

Initiates must attend cult functions, and may be called upon to do cult business. Most cults demand a tithe of income, usually 10%.

C. MUNDANE BENEFITS

In return for their work, Initiates get more benefits from their status than any lay member does. Initiates can lead the general congregation during ceremonies, and always receive preferred treatment in cult activities. Many cults offer food, healing, ransom, and so on to Initiates, though the particulars will be special to each cult.

D. SKILLS

Just as with lay members, special skills may be available to Initiates. In rare cases, Initiates will have a less expensive version of the same skill taught to them. Special cult skills more commonly will be available to Initiates than to lay members.

E. SPELLS

Initiates will more often have special cult battle magics than would lay members. Initiates may be able to purchase one-time use of cult Rune spells for use on cult missions, or receive them as special rewards.

> ***Example:*** *Igar the Ignorant is an Initiate of Thanatar and wants added help on his next mission. By agreement with his priest he sacrifices 3 points of POW to Thanatar, and his POW changes from 18 to 15, and his basic abilities also may change. In return he gets one use of Create Minor Head and will carry for a week thereafter the benefits from that head.*

To buy a one-time use of a cult Rune spell, the Initiate must permanently sacrifice the required Power points to the deity. The Initiate can then cast the spell with control and knowledge, but then must make another permanent Power sacrifice to learn the spell again. These points of sacrificed Power are known as Rune points. Initiates who know Rune magic when they become Rune Priests do not regain the POW so sacrificed, but do know the spell on a reusable basis if it was a reusable spell.

One-use Rune spells may not be purchased by Initiates. If a full Rune priest can use the spell but once, the spell usually is too important and powerful to give to an Initiate.

Divine Intervention is available to Initiates and those higher. There are risks involved. Initiates may try Divine Intervention once per week. To try to use Divine Intervention the Initiate must roll less than his current Power on D100. If the roll succeeds, then the call has been heeded and the plea fulfilled. The cost will be the sacrifice of as many points of Characteristic POW as was rolled on the D100.

Should the player roll exactly the POW of his character, then the soul becomes a spirit in the service of the god. But if the Divine Intervention was to have some effect on the world in addition to saving the character, the effect will occur, even though the character is still dead.

> ***Example:*** *Zazz the Vivamort Initiate has just been impaled by a grape stake. He prays hard, his player casts D100, and rolls 11 - he is saved! He finds that the grape stake shattered against the pendant he wears beneath his cloak and that he has been moved a hundred meters from the fight. Now, however, his POW 15 only 7 because of the 11 points taken by Vivamort in exchange for answering his call. Zazz slinks away from the fight.*
>
> *In the case of vampires, not only has his personal POW been reduced to 7, but so also has been his species maximum POW.*

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

A. GENERAL STATEMENT

The duality of the status of Rune Lord and Rune Priest lies in their focus. The Rune Lord is more concerned with exploring the physical nature of the world and excels in dominating upon the physical plane. The Rune Priest concentrates on the spiritual side of the world, preferring actuation of the subtle magical plane. (A Heroquester's actions attempt to unify both focuses.)

Not all Rune Lords will be fighters, though warrior abilities dominate in most cults.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

All cults require that Rune Lords have been Initiates for some length of time. Every cult has the same basic requirements for their Rune Lords:

1. at least 90% ability in five skills.
2. a POW of at least 15.
3. convincing the cult examiners.

Most cults specify required abilities. Some cults may be more stringent than as set forth above, and may require knowledge of certain spells as well, a higher POW, or allow other factors to influence the examination process.

C. RESTRICTIONS
Being a Rune Lord of a cult places a person very close to deity, and such proximity has many problems as well as benefits. Rune Lords may not be allowed to communicate with other cults, nationalities, or race. They may be required never to use certain weapons, tools, animals, or magics. They must fulfill many functions in the cult and accept many responsibilities. Cult details differ greatly.

D. BENEFITS
Closeness to the deity yields many benefits to the Rune Lord. Some or all of these may be manifested as mannerisms or abilities similar to those of the worshipped immortal, reflecting the deity's super-human power onto the physical plane. The obvious benefits to Rune Lords normally also include an allied spirit, Divine Intervention, and cult-appropriate combat skills. Cults may have special or unique skills and spells.

A Rune Lord is a natural leader of the cult, along with its priests, and will be respected even by those outside the cult.

As a reservoir of spell memorization and POW, an allied spirit benefits a Rune Lord. However, its greatest aid is its ability to sacrifice POW for Rune magic spells, just as Rune Priests do. The spirit must have 19 + POW, just as the priest must. The spirit has access to any Rune magic available to the cult priests.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
A. GENERAL STATEMENT
The cult priests are the source of magical communication between the deity and its worshippers joining the mundane world and the Other Side. The secrets of the deity in the form of spells, are revealed to the world through the priesthood.

Priests are even closer to their deity than are Rune Lords, and their attention is much concentrated upon their object of veneration. This direction of focus requires much time; many priesthoods have little or no time for physical maintenance, and therefore are reduced to DEX X 5 for all Dexterity-based skills. Neither do they have time to train a deficient skill up to that level, though they still may learn from experience. Some cults suspend this restriction on Rune Priests because of the natures of their particular deities. Such information will be found in this general statement section of the cult write-up.

B. Requirements for **Acceptance**
All priesthoods have the basic requirements:

1. know how to Read and Write in the native language.
2. have a POW of at least 18.
3. convince the examiners.

Given the dominant illiteracy in many parts of Glorantha, the phrase 'read and write native language' should be understood to include a symbolic language used in rituals, a secret (spoken) magical language, or some other arrangement.

All cults require service as an Initiate before an examination for priesthood can occur.

C. RESTRICTIONS
Priesthoods operate under divine restrictions. To ignore or violate the will of the deity is to deny the power of that deity, and thereby do damage to it. If a priest is tricked or forced to perform sacrilegious acts, then the cult spirit of reprisal is forced to visit the offending priest. Spirits of reprisal are noted in the subservient cults section in each write-up.

D. BENEFITS
Many benefits offset priestly restrictions. The obvious benefit is Rune magic, discussed in the next sections. Other benefits to priests may range from special weapons training to priority meal service.

Priests have access to Divine Intervention through the intercession of their allied spirits. In this case the allied spirit casts the spell and (for game purposes) acts as an Initiate of the cult to do so. They must roll D100 for less than their current POW to succeed, but lose a number of permanent Power points equal to the number rolled.

E. RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
Here are listed deviations from the standard Rune magic spells table in the rules. The powerful cults will have all the standard spells available, but lesser cults and smaller deities cannot muster as much Power, thus being weaker in Rune magic. Some cults might not be able to learn 3 point spells from their god; others also might not know 2 point spells, etc., or have even limited access to 1 point spells.

F. CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS
Many cults have special Rune level spells available to its priests (and sometimes Initiates). These will parallel certain aspects of the deity's nature and aspects. The spells will be listed under this section.

G. CHIEF PRIEST
The term Chief Priest may appear in these descriptions to denote a priest who has satisfied requirements to become a High Priest (15 points of Characteristic POW sacrificed for renewable Rune magic), but cannot or chooses not to so become, remaining under the authority of a High Priest. Their skills and loyalty may give them positions of authority in the hierarchy; if they command other priests they are called Chief Priests.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
Major religions always include the worship of minor spirits and/or dead heroes. Such minor deities depend completely upon the central deity for existence: they will not be worshipped outside the cult.

Subservient spirits will be mentioned who are important teachers of abilities, skills, or battle magic to worshipper and hierarch. Figures lacking cults may be in section I. B of the write-up. Subservient spirits may serve ritual functions or act for the deity. The most common and interesting are noted.

The spirit of reprisal, or retribution, is a common feature to most cults. This is a spirit, monster, or curse which falls upon Initiates who quit the worship of their deity, or upon Rune Lords or Rune Priests who offend their deity by violating major cult rules. The deity, without excuses, is striking out at those who

deny it. Such spirits will, unless stated otherwise, doubly attack Rune Priests or Rune Lords who abandon their cult, usually by having two of the things attack at once or successively. These reprisal spirits do not, of course, come into action when Initiates transfer to an associate cult.

Exploration of any religion will doubtlessly reveal many more lesser spirits. Players are urged to do so in their campaigns.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS

If the deities of sub-cults are worshipped also outside the central cult, those sub-cults are called 'associated cults.' An associated deity always takes part in the mythos of the central cult. The overlap of worship indicates some of the complexities of the personal, social, and cosmic interactions which occurred.

The deity will be mentioned and, if not listed elsewhere, will be briefly explained. Following that will be any Rune spells learnable from that sub-cult without having to join the central cult, etc. The listed spell or spells are the only ones which may be learned that way. Most borrowing from associated deities is for only one Rune spell, and may even be only special skill training.

In Cults of Prax, the Eiritha cult (an ancient earth cult) has much more powerful associated spirits than do other cults. This indicates the previous power of the Earth, and is a sign of its broken strength.

When a priest wishes to join a second cult, as indicated in the rules, it is easier for them to join an associated cult. The standard rules are used, but only the roll to join the second cult must be made.

If a priest wishes to join an outside, non-associate cult, his task will be much harder. He can only join a friendly or neutral cult, as defined in the appendices. In this case the priest must convince his Head Priest to let him go, and then convince the other cult to accept him.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

This section contains random or unclassifiable information about the cult. Sometimes there will be no such notes.

DEVISING RUNE SPELLS

Rune magic stems from the generosity of a god, who allows a mortal to wield on the material plane a fraction of the godly attributes. Such spells can create results (such as death) which even Divine Intervention could not normally accomplish, since that would directly involve the god in the affairs of the material world, possibly precipitate godly participation in mortal affairs, and perhaps lead to a new war of the gods.

Lending Rune magic to mortals is the rough equivalent of one country sending another country arms and supplies with which to fight a war, rather than sending its own troops into battle. This fine line is crucial to the gods of Glorantha.

With that idea in mind, consider what sort of spells a referee should create in building a new cult for his campaign:

Create spells appropriate to the god. In a cult of Apollo, for instance, the spells should have to do with music, light, healing, perhaps heat, and hunting and poetry. Apollo would not be associated with storms, the sea, or fire. In Cults of Prax Humakt is concerned with death and fighting, Kyger Litor with people, darkness, and spirits, Orlanth with air and movement, and so on. In this book, Thanatar centers around death, darkness, the consequences of the severance, and ruthless acquisition of knowledge. Some idea of cult emphases will come from the Runes which describe it, and it is a good idea to figure out first what combination of Runes the cult has, and then determine the cult characteristics. Remember that certain Powers, such as Life and Death, are diametrically opposed, and that only a Chaotic and tradition-shattering cult like the Red Moon could combine them.

Always check the proposed magic against the premier god of the area, power, or attribute. In Cults of Prax, Humakt, the premier Death god, has the reusable spell Sever Spirit available for a sacrifice of 3 points of Power. Therefore no Death or War god should be able to do Mass Death with a 2 or 3 point spell. In fact, Humakt is the only Death god able to give his worshippers this as a reusable spell—this is true even for Thanatar, the Severed God, in this book.

The gods of Glorantha rarely perform material creation, preferring to work with energy, especially magical energy. Any spell should affect only one person or, at most, a small area. No spell should cover more area than the influence of an elemental of similar sacrifice can cover, and it should cover less area and/or cost more to use it if it does more damage than an elemental. Finally, few spells cause large or permanent change, except for the immediate damage.

The gods are as bound by Time as any mortal: the gods can change neither history nor predict the future. This is because of the Great Compromise, and is fundamental to Glorantha.

Those who play the board-game *Dragon Pass* (formerly *White Bear & Red Moon*) may wonder about the powerful, army-destroying spells of that game, but they should remember that the magician units in play are not single entities (not even Cragspider) but regiments of magicians. Open warfare between the proponents of different gods may bring the patrons a bit more into the open, and that combination makes for the vast destruction possible in the board-game. During the course of normal adventuring, this scale of intervention never should occur.

COSMOLOGY

BEFORE CREATION

In analyzing the mythos of Glorantha, four streams of belief prevail. They sometimes mingle and sometimes flow in separate channels, but they all flow in the same direction. Each is a preferred way to reach an understanding of the cosmos. In choosing one stream as a guide, a person finds a cohesive and unified view of reality useful to their individual development. Though one might assume that a particular viewpoint or way of existence is correct and that the others are somehow wrong, as often happened in Gloranthan history, we must warn the reader. Such a limited point of view will only further confuse a difficult subject.

During the Second Age of Glorantha, a very powerful people came from the island of Jrustela. They managed to create a world-wide view combining all the popular philosophies which they encountered across the world. They were called the God Learners, and from their studies developed Jrusteli magicians and militarists to dominate the coastal lands of Glorantha for much of the Second Age, before nature sprang back and destroyed

them. Despite their effective condemnation, the God Learners gave a coherency to the confusing cosmologies, and the Jrusteli understanding remained popular long after the Jrusteli demise. Their views underlie most of the discussion which follows in this chapter.

The four philosophies of Glorantha are the mystical (whereof the forces and the real knowledge of the world are unknowable except by unusual experiences normally beyond the ken of mortal people), the theistic (whereof the world was brought about by the actions of great and powerful entities known as gods and goddesses), the humanistic (whereof the world is a natural process conquerable and usable by conscious manipulation by the mortal races), and the natural (whereof the cosmos devolved into the material and spiritual world).

The God Learners developed an order to these four modes. They insisted that they were, in fact, one non-understandable concept evolving from one form into another as part of the creation. They are presented here in order of evolution.

The Void is the mystic origin of the universe. This pre-existence is said to be indescribable. "It is less than Nothing, Formless beyond Emptiness," says a Kralori poem. The mystics claim that the dragon-powers manifested themselves in the void by becoming committed and entangled with the world which was yet to come, and in those actions created the barrier shimmering between the perfect void and our understanding of it.

The Kralori religion (which is based on Draconic belief) suggests that the void is a state of bliss which should be sought after in every way possible and that even the briefest experience of it will bring about belief, though not understanding, thereby incorporating the individual harmoniously with the cosmos. This unknowable force is nowhere presented as hostile. If a label must be attached, then it is neutral.

The Prime Mover originates the humanist universe. Nowhere is it personified or otherwise given any attributes of being. This strictly impartial force can be tapped and/or exploited by the dominant mortal races of the world through manipulation of Knowledge and Power. The Malkioni religion primarily supports this belief, and since it further supports active human dominance of the universe there is a corresponding belief that the secrets of this prime mover were discovered by their god and passed on to the people. The Malkioni race founded the Wizards, who think they can shape the universe without consent from gods who are elsewhere believed to rule everything.

The Silence is the origin of the theist universe. This is a great dormant and impersonal force which is said to contain "everything within it, still One, the wonder of the universe which would come after it." The theists sometimes personify the silence and call the silence "it," a being without beginning and without end who is credited as the mother of Glorantha, Queen of the Universe. Always seen as a wondrous and awesome being, this entity has intelligence and benevolence without limit. An anonymous Dragon Pass poet says, "the wondrous Source, the egg of life, the source of wonder." After creation this is rarely mentioned as important; the intermediaries who stand between it and the worshippers both are closer and more likely to reply to worship.

The Primal Plasma is the final source of the universe. It is popular with naturalists. Their paintings often depict the plasma as the Well of Wonder, producing the rest of the world. The Well contained a miraculous material which separated into those parts of the elements recognizable as the material world and those spirits which guard and tend them. The plasma is not claimed to be intelligent or to have done any active task.

The Jrusteli philosophers said that their research brought order and synthesis to these divergent origins, and that each was a finer or grosser representation of the umbilical cord stretched between the unknowable and the real. To quote a poet:

The void, unknowable, never knew.
The mover touched and made touching, but never knew.
Silence woke, and wished up the world, and hoped to know.
Plasma sang, and entered in, and knew the world at last.

Every tale or concept of origin was popular in the Dawn Ages among some population. The differences sometimes caused conflict, as they had in the Gods War, both before and after the God Learners. Mystics concentrated in the eastern lands, especially Kralorela. The theists dominated the central lands of Genertela and the oceans. The humanists began in the western lands of Genertela, while the naturalists were found wherever the others were not, especially among animals, savages, and in the lands of Pamaltela.

THE CELESTIAL COURT

A body of deities, the Celestial Court, are said to have made the world. Mystics say that since the deities were the first misconceptions concerning reality, they set the pattern for misunderstanding existence. The naturalists claim the powers presented as entities on the court were actually inert Runes which established the formats for further interactions between the emerging patterns of creation. The naturalists and theists agree that godly beings made up the Court.

The Celestial Court was made up of three distinct parts: the Council of Pairs, the elemental deities, and the Elder Gods.

The gods of the Council of Pairs also are called the deities of Power. Each of the eight gods were associated with one of the ancient Power Runes:

Acos (⌓), god of Law & Stability,
Larnste (ᘏ), god of Change & Motion,
Uleria (⧗), goddess of Love,
Kargan Tor (†), god of Conflict & War,
Orenoar (ϒ), goddess of Truth,
Tylenea (∴), goddess of Illusion,
Harana Ilor (Ⅲ), goddess of Harmony,
Ratslaf (⧗), god of Disorder and Confusion.

The elemental deities provided the mundane stuff of the universe. The eldest elementals are prodigious entities composed of much matter and little intelligence or spirit. These primal Elementals then entered into a self-exploration of potentials which was called devolution. In this process the entities divided and subdivided themselves in a manner which isolated portions of their internalities as recognizably separate beings. Some of these lesser beings were mostly material, while others were

highly spiritually developed. This process formed the elemental pantheons of the naturalists.

Although each of the elementals underwent the same devolutionary activity, their internal devolvement differentiated their natures. The humanists showed that some devolved upon mathematical lines, propounding that the divine genealogies are merely ignorant personifications of derivable mathematical formulae.

There are always at least four elementals, and a fifth usually is added:

Nakala, or Dame Darkness (●), goddess of Dark and Cold,
Zaramaka, or Sir Sea (≋), god of all Waters,
Ga, or Empress Earth (□), goddess of all Earths,
Aether, or Lord Light (⊙), god of Light and Heat,
Umath, or King Storm (ᘓ), god of Air and Storm.

The Elder Gods are impersonal entities whose existence is basic to Glorantha, but who failed to attain any personal status in the cosmos. The deities who came afterward absorbed or mimicked their attributes and functions. There are, for instance, entities called the Maker and Grower, or the Great Mother and Witness.

The Celestial Court combined their powers and together built the center of the world. This 'center' is called the Perfect Palace on its interior, and its exterior was called The Spike. The Spike was the cosmic mountain, and it got its name from Mostal the Maker, who engineered the mundane construction. Mostal loved tools, and so called the place The Spike because it was the thing which nailed together all of reality and held it in place. The Perfect Palace was a place of harmony, beauty, and singularity. It housed the firsts of everything in the world and maintained everything in perfect order. Within its fastness the powers of creation expanded until they spread beyond the protection of the mountain of The Spike. Younger deities left the unchanging mountain with its secrets and filled the universe with variants of the ancient schemes. Thus the world grew.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The Golden Age of the gods was a time when dreams were true, then stored for later generations to use as they might. In those days there was nothing but peace and harmony, and all of the cosmos expanded in love. Innocence was everywhere. It was impossible for anything to go wrong.

This era saw new types of beings. The Form Runes were introduced and the Young Gods were born. Said to be creations of the Celestial Court, each deity made a Form Rune by contributing to it. All the elements then tested the Form, each by its own evolving nature. First made was the Dragonewt Rune, and all the world was trod by races now extinct, whose lives and kinds must be guessed. Then came the Green Age, when the world was covered by vast forests and fields as the gods experimented with the Plant Rune. Next the world knew creatures modelled upon the Animal Rune. Finally came the Man Rune, and humanoid races spread across the world.

These Form Runes cause lively debate between the humanists and the theists. The theists claim that there were entities or beings which embodied these Forms. Grandfather Mortal, also commonly called Old Man, is the best-known of these. The humanists call those explanations fairy tales, and suggest that the so-called Forms resulted from natural forces which developed impersonally. Both arguments depict the same result— the population of the world.

The formation, or possibly recognition or usefulness, of the Spirit and Chaos forms did not come about in this era.

When the elemental deities and power gods grew to the limits of their fulfilment and filled their natural realms, the Young Gods were born. Here, at the borders of the elements, they discovered each other. There was such creative abundance in the world that the natural divisions of the world between elements did not hinder further expansions. The deities and spirits combined their beings and produced new entities.

At first only the least of the nature spirits engaged in this sort of breeding, and from these unions spring the least of the nature spirits. Joinings between more powerful entities produced increasingly powerful children. These Young Gods were the delight of the Celestial Court, who nurtured their strange powers and taught them ancient knowledge.

Many races and beings grew in the Golden Age, filling all of creation with their existence and bustle. All lived in peaceful harmony, overseen by a benevolent bureaucracy embodying the tranquility of the age.

The Sun God, Yelm, is said to have been the Emperor of the Universe when he ruled the world. He was advised by his elder brother, Dayzatar, and aided by his lusty younger brother— Lodril. Yelm wed Ernalda, the Earth Mother, and many other deities were counted in his pantheon.

During this time many cities and nations were made. There was no need to work, for the earth brought forth its own food, all water was pure and healthful to drink, and anything was willing to offer any aid or assistance. Peace was said to be Yelm's Cloak, and so the world lived beyond Time.

THE GODS WAR

The peace of the Golden Age slowly turned into the strife of the Gods War. The process was long, and came in small steps. Viewed with afterthought, the process seems inevitable.

The birth of the god Umath started the Gods War. It was no fight or conflict, yet it immediately led to violence. Umath's first recorded activity was to demand a realm of his own to be equal to those of his parents. When none was available, Umath made one for himself by ripping asunder his father and mother. Thus the sky was separated from the earth forever. This perennial violence set the pattern for the children of Umath as well.

Umath devolved violently, producing a brood of unruly entities bent on taking or making their own realms of influence. They were joined by many other ambitious or frustrated Young Gods. A long period of growth, change, and movement followed in the cosmos, as these new forces found their places. The power of the Storm gods rose at the expense of other pantheons.

During this time the institution of worship spread as the lesser races sought protection and support from the greater entities. Sometimes the peoples could tame the violence of the gods, but more often not. As the fighting worsened, the races became more dependent for survival upon the gods.

When deities began competing for the worship of lesser races, the trouble spread rapidly. The Golden Age eroded. Imperial Yelm contested as an equal with barbarian Orlanth.

The power of Death was either the first of the New Powers or the last of the old. It came first to the hands of Humakt (who used it on Grandfather Mortal) and then to Orlanth (who used it on Yelm). The death of the Emperor of Light felled the last strongholds of the age, and instituted a new reign.

THE STORM AGE

Philosophers also call the Storm Age the Lesser Darkness. It began when Yelm was killed, and left the world of the living to follow Grandfather Mortal into the land of Death. Other gods of Light also failed: Dayzatar the Sky God drew further away, Lodril was first buried and then imprisoned by a god of Darkness, and lesser gods (like Yelmalio) were wounded or hid themselves away.

More than Darkness spread across the age, for life followed the light into the lands of the dead. Spirits of plants, animals, and minerals took the path of the dead and were lost to the world. Without light the earth soon slept, and the world seemed barren when compared to the Golden Age.

The gods fought when they wished. The Storm gods dominated, but the Darkness pantheons and Sea deities also fielded powerful forces. Glorantha became a broad, barren land swept by angry storms, crushing ice, brutal volcanoes, and pieces of the sky tumbling dead to the earth.

During this time new races of humans were born in the world, and sometimes the old ones adapted or survived as slaves. Despite the hardships, cultures throve, and grandly barbaric societies gladly and grimly fought for existence.

Unchanged in all this was the Celestial Court. They had held aloof from the petty squabbles changing the face of their world and lent themselves impartially to anyone capable of wielding the powers, even remaining unattached when their powers were used in new ways by exploitive intelligences. As the crisis grew, the Court could not act to halt their own abuse. Instead they engaged in "immortal discourse, celestial debate, and the scribbling of scrolls." The world disintegrated around them, at last straining the immortal strength of the Court beyond endurance. Imagine the dilemma of Kargan Tor, the god of War, when he was forced to face himself in battle, or when Uleria, goddess of Love, impregnated herself, or when Acos, god of Law, made a ruling and found himself unjust. It was as if an illness came upon the gods. Tremors shook the immobile Spike, and the cosmos weakened.

THE BIRTH OF CHAOS

The growing instability worsened conditions for gods and men who craved peace and security. The initial disruptions were hastened by Ratslaf, god of Disorder, and his race of creatures called boggles. Some blame everything on Ratslaf and his followers, but such blame only shifts attention from the real culprits, the gods themselves, who persisted in acting against their own welfare.

Gradually there came to be other things in the world. At first these creatures seem to have seeped through cracks in the world's logic, oozing through and infecting the surface and the interior of reality.

One such creature is well-known in tales. Its true name is unknown but it is always called Krarsht. Krarsht may have been the creature which Larnste once saw, "a small squirming thing, foul to sight and smell, which lay on the ground and turned the dust to ash." The god of Motion stamped upon it, hoping to destroy the thing with his divine trampling, but the slimy thing bit him and pierced the skin. Larnste was immediately infected and ever afterwards limped when he moved. Worse, his blood was infected. Wherever his blood dropped to the earth it left a foul cesspool. The place where the monster had been was drenched in polluted ichor, and never has healed itself. The place is called Foulblood Woods, in the Holy Country.

There were other such minor invasions as well, but they failed to do more damage to the world than the gods did to themselves.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE UNHOLY TRIO

One god who lived at this time is said to be the last born of the Young Gods. He was called Rashoran, and none know his parentage. At first Rashoran went about calming the frightened gods, teaching them to be unafraid. It is said that of all the cosmos only he did not fear what he did not know. He taught this knowledge to some of the other gods; most of them succumbed to the Darkness without a struggle after learning from Rashoran, though a few seem to have been fortified, such as Humakt and Uleria. Three others found that they were not afraid, and that they could use the fears of others to their own ends. One of the first things they did was to destroy Rashoran to keep his secret to themselves.

These murderers were the Unholy Trio. Hatred, selfishness, greed, and jealousy motivated them. These short-sighted emotions are now considered to be symptoms of Chaos in the world, and they were originated by the three, who concentrated their forces and wills to create something new.

The first of the trio was Ragnaglar, whom some call kinsman to Storm Bull, driven to hatred by jealousy and dishonorable acts. The second was Thed, said to have been wife to Ragnaglar at one time. The third was Mallia, another goddess, who had great properties to aid birth and growth. These three joined together and perverted their natures to make their weapon of hatred and vengeance.

The Unholy Trio made the end of the world. They wove a great magical ritual of potency far greater than anything before accomplished, for they had discovered the wonder and power of Primal Chaos, and used it magically to strengthen themselves for what was to come. They then engaged in their rituals of Chaos-birth. When it was done, the world was changed, and new forces roamed the world.

THE DEVIL: WAKBOTH AND KAJABOR

The product of the ritual was the Devil, the product of poisoned souls. Documents and oral memories from Storm, Darkness, and Earth cults name the product Wakboth. After that, more deities and spirits of Chaos and destruction were born into the world.

Wakboth the Devil is the moral evil of the world. This senseless and terrifying entity is caused by wanton disregard for life, and he supports continuous brutal destruction. Twisted and foul, Wakboth is the world defiler. His existence was pure insult, since the world was doomed anyway, and he worsened the pain for all involved.

The terror spread by such foulness gave the incentive for individuals to fight on and win the I Fought We Won battle

and helped even gods (like the Lightbringers) to take heart and attempt the impossible, but in the short run Wakboth offered immense advantages to his followers, and in their fear many of the world joined him, swelling the strength of Chaos and bringing all creation to a crisis.

Kajabor is another major enemy in this age. Kajabor is mistakenly called 'the devil' in some older documents, confusing him with Wakboth. They are similar, for both were great gods for a short time, and had many worshippers, and both turned on their followers. But you must know that Kajabor did it because he had to, and that Wakboth did it for delight.

Kajabor wields entropy in the world. Often called God-Killer or Black Hole or Great Fear, he destroys all vestiges of matter or energy, annihilating all possibilities of individuality or unity:

Entities slain by Kajabor have never returned, and often even their names have been lost after being pulled from the universe.

Kajabor is the Great Fear, and this motivator was important to the actions of the gods. Some say the Great Fear drives people or gods to follow such corruption as Wakboth. For those reasons Kajabor is as much an enemy as true evil, even though it is utterly impersonal and, some say, as natural as the forces of creation.

THE GODS' LAST STAND

Several locations are believed to be original sources for the Chaotic armies which began overwhelming the world. Most of these places are on the far edges of Glorantha, where the forces of order were weakest. Genertelan legend says that the major Chaos army approached from the north, and that Kajabor led it.

The survivors of the gods were notable warriors and leaders, and were inured to the rigors of war and death. A great alliance of deities met upon the Fields of Plenty to fight these new enemies. Genert led the gods' army. This earth god was the ranking spirit there, though not the greatest fighter. Others with him included Splendid Yamsur, who was a son of the Sun, and Seolinthur, river god for Genert's realm. They were disappointed that others did not come, such as their allies Storm Bull and Tada, and their friends from the Celestial Court.

The forces of Chaos fought to utter victory. The gods disappeared in a maelstrom of previously unknown forces. Their bodies were changed to gorp, and their souls were scoured by the Fatal Screaming. Forever polluted, the Fields of Plenty are now called the Krjalki Bog. The mortal races who sought to escape the rout were saved by Genert, who turned many into a stinging cloud of copper which protected the survivors. Their sacrifice is still visible in the wastes of Genert, when the Copper Sands are seen.

Though inured to death, the Storm Age was shocked the way the Golden Age had been shocked. True Death, divine entropy, sent some gods into flight, some into inertia, and some into more rabid defense. Many gods sought refuge in The Spike, relying upon the ancient Celestial Court for protection.

From all sides the armies of Chaos were drawn toward The Spike. The inhabitants prepared a spirited if hopeless defense. The once-impregnable Spike was rent by cracks, and it groaned with misuse. The most ancient powers of the cosmos were decrepit and indifferent. The Young Gods did their best and did it well, delaying Chaos and learning some secrets to fight it. But Kargan Tor abandoned his post and the hordes of Chaos slid through his faults and into the heart of stability. The gods fought fiercely, desperate in their fear, but the armies of Chaos soon swept down the corridors and into the chambers where the Celestial Court prepared for their end. The Chaos forces burst upon the powers of creation, smashing the ancient Runes and scattering them to the winds. The gods and goddesses collapsed and were hacked to pieces or otherwise abused by their foes.

The final struggle unbound anxious energies which had been bent and twisted by eons of divine misuse. A cosmic explosion freed the pressure, vaporizing The Spike and its inhabitants. A great vacuum opened in the center of the world, from which stepped the gods of Chaos. This began the Greater Darkness.

THE AGE OF TERROR

The Age of Terror is another name for the period known as the Greater Darkness. This was the end of the world for most Gloranthan entities, and a period of pain, fear, and misery for the rest. Parts of the world vanished. Parts were isolated and set adrift in a shapeless existence without hope. Nothing was tenable, and even change was unreliable.

The destruction of The Spike begins this era, for the explosion rocked the world to its foundations and determined the final struggles of many gods.

At first the vacuum at the center of the world threatened to swallow everything. However, many deities sacrificed themselves by leaping fanatically to combat the void, and their acts filled it, rather than leaving a hole into emptiness. The gods who sacrificed themselves that way were changed by it, though many of them managed to survive the death of their universe through their actions. Prominent was Magasta, a sea god who rallied almost all the waters of the world to aid him in filling the hole. From that time on, all rivers have flowed downhill, toward Magasta's Pool, rather than continuing their creeping invasion of the land.

The struggles were rarely so successful. Death and entropy raged across the land, leaving it barren and rotting. Reigning Young Gods were now fugitives. Places became empty of air, water was broken or jelled, and the earth began to lose solidity. Gods died. Races vanished. Life flickered.

Gods of terror in this age included Kajabor and Wakboth as leaders. The Unholy Trio continued their rampage, so that the names of Ragnaglar, Thed, and Mallia became synonymous with fear. There were other invaders, too, such as Tien the Headhunter and Krarsht the Hungry One. Beings who had once been Gloranthan in nature, but had turned to Wakboth's ways for their selfish ends (such as Vivamort) prowled the lands. Conquered areas were filled with slime by a giant malevolent ooze called Gorpgod. New races of creatures, born from Chaos or mutated from traitorous things, crawled over the land. The wildlife once opposed to the invasion, such as the Crimson Bat, was overwhelmed and enslaved.

Resisters still held out. Where there was a fight there would be help, meager though it might be. Starcaptains fell from the sky and saved their tribes. The Lowfires were freed; Oakfed became a great weapon to scorch away all impurities. Found Child came then and taught people to hunt for food to sustain themselves.

The destruction of the world and its people left less and less for the gods and monsters to prey on, and they hungrily turned on each other. The ragged survivors eked out a shaky existence amid the warring forces of their enemies; the awesome unity which

had stormed The Spike was revealed to be either an accident or a misconception.

At one point the armies of Kajabor and Wakboth began to devour each other, but philosophers dispute which one was killed, for no one alive or sane could know such things.

Prevalent belief says that Kajabor was killed by Wakboth, leaving the world defiler to face the Storm Bull and the god of entropy to face the forces of the dead. This theory has much strength, since the mundane world (reconstructed later) was usually held to be the origin of immorality, while the combination of entropy and existence seem to synthesize into the God Time, who later rules the cosmos.

THE FINAL BATTLE OF MORTALITY

The tattered remains of the world seemed to have no chance for unified action against the forces of Chaos. They were isolated by unbridgeable gaps. For instance, though there was a staunch fortress of elves who doggedly defended their sterile forests, aided by Arroin and Yelmalio, they were unable to close the gulf of Chaos between themselves and the trolls' Castle of Lead, another redoubtable fortress.

There was a unity between them in their wish for survival, and this unquenchable desire brought individuals across time and space, order and Chaos to confront the final dissolution of the world. It did not matter from whence they were drawn or where it occurred. They fought their last desperate fight against overwhelming odds, motivated by their survival and determined to do their utmost. In this way they combined forces and unconsciously aided each other against their own fears. They were alone, yet found themselves with others like themselves and gained strength. They also consciously aided each other, such as when Kyger Litor told Zzabur how to overcome the Silence which plagued him, and Zzabur showed High King Elf how to enchant away the gorp. The fight joined, the forces of Chaos were destroyed, neutralized, or dispatched.

This is called I Fought We Won, said to be responsible for the preservation of the world. Notable among those who claim this are Kyger Litor and the Darkness deities, and also Zzabur the Sorcerer Supreme. For instance, Zzabur says that he was able to create a great magical spell which harnessed the forces of anti-life (entropy) and sparked off a new reaction of Powers in the world to generate a new creation.

During the period following the death of Kajabor, the Chaos forces dissipated and weakened. Some deities were still capable of action: foremost among them was the raging Storm Bull.

Storm Bull mustered its forces to fight the Devil in Prax. He was the destructive desert storm which leaves ruin in its wake and whose touch scours flesh from bone. He was backed by righteous outrage and strengthened by compassion, two things of which Chaos has little. Though his kin and his friends were slain all about him, he still fought on, aided by all of the world. When he was thrown to earth, the earth gave him power, and when he was held in the air he drew power from his breath. Fire aided him and so did cold, and when he had run out of allies the cosmos responded to his cry. A massive block of Truestone, a piece of Law cast adrift when the Spike exploded, crashed to earth and struck the Devil, grinding him and spreading him and his strength about. Afterwards other forces and beings further lessened it and destroyed its unity in the world forever.

Without leadership, the forces of Chaos further fell back. Gods, people, spirits attacked and began the arduous righting of their world. Daka Fal came, and taught people how to tell the living from the dead. Heroes appeared among the people, and taught survival and compassion. Slowly the world knitted into place. The survivors rebuilt, strong in their new-found hope.

THE LIGHTBRINGERS' QUEST

Orlanth always was a leader among the gods of storm. Like the rest he was wild and unruly, powerful and violent. But each god grew differently in the Gods Age, and Orlanth is one who changed and held his own.

When Orlanth realized the doom of the world, he determined to seize his responsibility for its destruction and forge a new means of righting the wrong. He cast aside his old bonds and sought new ones, voluntarily dooming himself for the good of the world.

Orlanth had been a chieftain king among the storm gods, and the Lightbringers were his councilors. Once they had agreed to accompany Orlanth on his quest to Hell, each was pushed to the edge of his knowledge and endurance, and beyond into unknown challenges. They trod unlivable plains, forded rivers of acid and hatred, met their worst foes, their deadliest nightmares, and faced their own doomed selves who tried to bar the way before them.

The whole of their tale is beyond the scope of this essay. They worked, fought, and suffered mightily for their labors, all of them losing parts of themselves forever. Yet they succeeded, and they entered live into the lands of the dead, and found their way to the King of the Dead.

In Hell, then, Yelm the Emperor and Orlanth the King came to terms. Each swore great vows of truth and honor to bind themselves to the task. The goddess Arachne Solara laid great schemes and plans between them, and they swore to those plans also, joined by the other gods in death who yearned to survive. There came the most terrible test of Orlanth's honor, in the Fire of Ehlim, and other gods found the key to life.

They stood fast as Chaos reached the land of the dead, to confront the empty powers of life for the last time.

ARACHNE SOLARA

Arachne Solara is the nickname of an otherwise unnamed deity who may be the goddess of Nature in Glorantha. Her origins are mysterious and subject to speculation, but there are strong indications that she is the ghost of Glorantha, the Mother of the Universe.

Arachne Solara first comes to notice in the tale of the Great Compromise, wherein Orlanth, Yelm, and the other deities in the Underworld swear pacts and oaths to preserve themselves. The plan upon which they agreed is said to have been created by Arachne Solara, based upon mutual support between all of the remaining world.

The goddess constructed a great and magical web made of many things no longer found in the world, and then she gave the web to all of the gods to hold ready between them. When Chaos entered into their realm, the gods cast the net upon Kajabor and held him tight while the goddess leapt upon him with vengeance and a strength of desperation and mystical splendor. She

enwrapped the Chaos god in her legs and struggled mightily, and at last devoured him alive.

Then the goddess carefully collected her net and used it to conceal the birth of her child. The child is the Pledge of the Gods, and all existence swore by it to uphold their agreements. This is also called the Great Compromise or the Immortal Pact, and it is the oath which recreated the world.

Yelm and Orlanth and the other deities prepared to leave their home of death. There was still a struggle for them, for they were held in the Underworld against their will, and even the victory of Arachne Solara did not bind the Holders of Hell. But nothing could hope to stand against the liberated forces of Light and Life, and so they surged on into victory and beyond.

The reborn gods reached the edge of the world at the place now called Dawngate. There a star waited for them, and even the Darkness was glad to see them. The flush of Dawn, the rosy goddess, came. Arachne Solara stood upon the Gate of Time and cast her net across the universe, catching each surviving thing and binding it into the new world. Her child was born then, concealed by the net and protected by the strands. The child was called Time. The gods marched across the barren world, bringing warmth, light, and flower to awed survivors.

The new world was created. Time reigned. History began.

HISTORY

CHAOS AND COMPROMISE

History in Glorantha is the sum of events occurring since Time began. Mythical events prior to Time were non-sequential and simultaneous actions happening without the benefit of orderly lineal time.

Time is the Cosmic Compromise. The world of Time is bound by certain laws which the world must follow. If the laws of Time are broken by the world then the impossible has occurred and Chaos will re-enter the world. The most impressive display of this came in the Gbaji Wars which concluded the Dawn Age, as detailed later.

Time permanently separates the gods and their world from the destruction to which they had submitted in the Gods Age. They formed the pact to ensure their survival, and the world opted to become stagnant rather than non-existent. The gods sacrificed all of their freedom in return for immortality. The balance between the extremes of creation and destruction was moderated by cyclical sharing of extremes by the participants. Everything which had been killed in the Gods War had to remain dead one-half of time, yet also was alive one-half. Thus the world which made up the gods' bodies was subject to those changes, and the magical energies of the world also followed the flow and pattern. Thus in the winter, the earth and fire deities are weak, but in summer the fire gods are most powerful.

Within the world of Time live other beings, though, who did not share in the Compromise. These are the mortal races who survived. Unlike the gods, the mortals maintained their freedom. They can impose themselves upon the world and change it to a small extent.

The Chaos things surviving the Darkness and Dawning fall into the second category of entities. Few Chaos spirits survived enough to become worshipped as deities. The more important of those who did are outlined in this book. Thus there are few gods of Chaos left.

The mortal races of Chaos are more prevalent. They managed to hide in the forgotten places of the world, or to shore themselves up in a few strong points.

One of the clear distinctions made in the Compromise is that Chaos is not of the world. The deities and powers of the world had touched it, and were still afraid of it, and their continued existence required that they remain apart from Chaos. Chaos became the enemy which must be fought and suppressed. With one enemy recognized by everyone, the squabbling deities found a common theme for unity.

THE DAWN AGE

The years following the first sunrise saw the surviving races of the world grow and flourish. Lands broken and ruined by the Gods War and the Greater Darkness were rejuvenated as the deities reaffirmed themselves within the cold matter of the world. The Dawn Age began with a calm and wonderful growth reminiscent of the Golden Age.

After a time of peaceful growth, many cultures collided violently upon their borderlands. Ancient races renewed their primeval conflicts and there was war between trolls, dwarves, and elves again. Human cultures also clashed, as in Peloria between the sun-worshipping horse nomads and the storm worshipping First Council.

During this time there is no mention of incursions from Chaos except for a couple of monsters which were uniquely immense entities. For instance, the Crimson Bat, already a glowing red spot of horror in the world, was active and making havoc throughout Genertela. It is known at different times to have been driven away by heroes from many civilizations.

Four primary cultures survived the Darkness to establish dominant cultures. Each originated in one or two places, or were liberated by someone from those places. Each place can be identified as the homeland of one of the four thought-modes mentioned as propounding a view on what Chaos was before creation.

Western Genertela was the source of the humanists. The culture began in the land of Brithos, and was ancient even before Time began. It was so old that it had schisms within it even in the Dawn Age. For instance, the Old Malkioni religion was long forgotten, dead when the god was killed, and instead the wizards' secrets gave spiritual mastery and fulfillment for the people, but the dawning of year 2 established the New Malkioni religion—the spiritual support of the Hrestol knights. The two extant cultures expanded into the darkened lands and drove away or absorbed the savages who lurked there. They were a sea-going race, thanks to intimate contact with the race called Waertagi (who tried never to set foot on land). They dominated the regions around the Neliomi Sea, the trade routes into Fronela and Tanisor, and the coasts of Slontos.

Central Peloria gave birth to the theistic way of life. There the people entered into formal and powerful relations with the intelligences of the universe, and the worshipped gods gave great magics in return, according to the patterns established in the Great Compromise. The Lightbringer peoples led the liberation of Peloria from Darkness, meeting the sun-worshipping horse barbarians first, and then the sun-worshipping Dara Happan

Empire. Wherever the Lightbringer agents went, these agents of civilization woke the gods and spirits of a region with their worship and magic.

The god-worshippers also had another source of power in the oceans.

The vast spiritual empire of eastern Genertela clung to the mystic secrets of the universe as being the most important. This was another ancient seat of culture whose list of kings was long at the Dawning. These peoples say they were untouched by the Great Darkness, because their powers kept them an island of safety amid the fears of Chaos. The dragons are said to have been their teachers; the dragons of Dragon Pass were either worshippers of or proof of the mystical way.

The naturalists followed the most widespread way of life in Glorantha. They paid worship to local spirits, objects, places, or vague, impersonal, powerful forces. Naturalism is the religion of animals, plants, and spirits. In Pamaltela, the southern continent, this way of existence dominated, and the natives of all races sought to live in a close and simple harmony with their world. In that continent, even many thousands of elves followed this quiet path.

The expanding cultures of Genertela often encountered indigenous peoples whom they labelled savages and ignorant natives. Despite observer prejudice, these inhabitants were usually spirit-worshippers of similar outlook to the naturalists, though frequently that outlook would be incomplete or limited.

In the Dawn Age, these cultures had little contact. Though the borderlands were regions of conflict and synthesis where people broke away from stereotypical world views and integrated new knowledge and experience, there was little penetration of new thinking into the strongholds of belief. The west remained godless and practical, the central lands stayed a land of magical beings and places, and the east was a realm of mystic peace and strange studies. The rest sank in savagery.

But Dorastor was a different land. Government moved there from Dragon Pass so that the leaders could use the remnants of a civilization discovered there. With its secrets men gained new insights, and many from across the world went there to study.

They unearthed what they thought to be the secrets of the universe, and a way to determine the truth of the matter. After many debates, the leadership decided to attempt to return the Gods Age to the world by making a god, perfect in every way for all people, to be named Osentalka—the Perfect One.

As the project began, contention arose with those who were not consulted or ignored; swords flashed in the Hall of Inquiry, regiments clashed in Dorastor, and war broke out in distant provinces. The trolls and dragonewts were especially disgruntled, but their opposition was not sufficient to disrupt the project. Great rituals aided the project, and many spirits were summoned while the gods looked on. Thousands joined in from many countries to lend their power to the project, and the rites went forward with less trouble than theorized.

Everyone was sure it would be a success.

THE SUNSTOP

The year 374 was critical for Glorantha. At that time many synchronous events of tremendous magnitude culminated to force an impossible act to occur.

In central Genertela, the great Genesis of the Perfect One reached a climax.

In Fronela, the wizards engaged in a thaumaturgical contest with a powerful heathen god, promising a great sign of their strength to destroy their foes.

In eastern Genertela, in the land of Kralorela, the latest of the Dragon Emperors meditated upon a potent symbol, whose consequence and inner working was unknown. Without realizing it or not caring about it, he called upon the Dragon's Eye to shine upon him.

In Pamaltela, a hundred thousand elves, led by their god of nature called Pamalt, sent their energies coursing through the world to call upon a good spirit to come to their jungle to help combat a virulent rot besetting their inner fibers.

The sun stopped in the sky.

No-one knows how long it stood there, for that act halted all normal Time. Manuscripts from the west claim that Time was different before and after the Sun Stop, but this is not verified. All the mortals of the world looked skyward; the sun did not move from its place, though the people went about their business.

At first nothing happened, but then dark strands grew bolder in the sky, like huge loops of rope from the western edge of the world, hooked over it tautly. Soon a great dark net was visible, straining to pull the sun back to its path. Strands snapped and unearthly shadows were cast upon the world.

Then a great dark spot rose into the sky upon the net. This huge bloated shadow flickered with a smoky glow. The shadow crept across the face of the sun, blotting it out and making all the world cold for a moment. A snapping moment of terror pierced the world, then the dark sky-web vanished, and the edge of the sun crept past the shadow. The shadow disappeared and the sun brightened, but everyone thought it looked paler than it had before. Some said it moved differently, too.

In Pamaltela, the heat strengthened the many spirits of that realm. They entered into the jungles, plants, and elves, and combated the rot in their fibers.

In Kralorela, the Dragon Emperor realized the secrets of the symbol, and was liberated from another stage of consciousness.

In Fronela, the invading god was struck with weakness; the wizards used their magic to destroy his army, and the soldiers fled in panic, never again to be a great force.

In Dorastor, there was a birth. Born was Osentalka, the Perfect One. Most called him Nysalor, the White Light, and worshipped him by that name. He was a wonder and a miracle to behold, and the peoples who helped to make him accepted him as a god, and instituted his worship.

The cult of Nysalor grew peacefully and benevolently; it spread eastward from Dorastor into Peloria, and westward across Kartolin Pass into Ralios. The spread of the cult was kind, and in Peloria many elves developed great fondness for this god of Light.

Against the trolls and dragonewts the cult was harsher. The god Nysalor's armies carried war to the gates of the Castle of Lead, but instead of storming that impregnable fortress, the god cursed his foes, and the light of his curse shriveled their children. The descendants of Kyger Litor everywhere afterwards suffered the Trollkin Curse. The dragonewts were conquered and became mercenaries for the rulers in Dorastor.

In the west, Nysalor's proselytizers encountered the monotheists and humanists of the Seshnegi and Brithini cultures,

and the new cult was not well-received. But when a plague broke out in Tanisor and spread into Seshnela and Arolanit, the Riddlers of Nysalor were able to heal the plague, and so were often accepted among those peoples.

ARKAT AND THE GBAJI WARS

Arkat came from the western land of Brithos. This hero led a long and successful war against the cult of the god Gbaji.

Some say Arkat's father was Humakt, the god of war, but the Brithini claim the hero's father was a barbarian warrior. Whatever the truth, Arkat possessed a powerful weapon before he left the island: the weapon was called God-Cleaver, reputed to be the Unbreakable Sword.

His mother was driven from home by outraged parents, though none now know why. Arkat grew up among the Aldryami of Brithos. He was raised in his grandfather's soldier caste, and proved himself a prodigy in combat. Later, in his youth, he saw the dark side of the foreign cult Gbaji, 'the Deceiver.' Because of this Arkat fought well on his island and helped drive the vile religion from the cities. It was here that his life-goal of eradicating the Gbaji cult began.

As one of the leading soldiers, Arkat accompanied a Brithos expedition attempting to liberate their provinces in Arolanit from the Gbaji influences. Here, though known as the cult of Nysalor, the Gbaji cult gained wide acceptance by curing previously unknown diseases for free. The Brithini wizards discovered, though that the cult actually had planted the diseases in the first place. Such treachery earned Nysalor the new name of Gbaji, and so all his enemies called him thereafter.

Once freed, the Arolanit city-states volunteered forces to follow Arkat's army against foreign centers of power, especially in the kingdom of Tanisor. They set off with hope and cheer, but a vampire attack slew many leaders, and the Brithini effort collapsed when routed in one sharp battle. Arkat had no forces to fulfill his vow to destroy the cult. He realized that the Brithini caste structure made impossible efficient use of the forces available. He found new allies in Seshnela.

The Gbaji cult plagued the powerful kingdom of Seshnela at the time. Arkat raised and organized strong local forces to resist and drive off the cult.

There he also began to train to become a full Knight of Hrestol. In these years he uncovered the first clues to Heroquesting, though making no great advance in the art. He became a great knight quickly, and led a splendid army against Tanisor.

Tanisor was a traditional enemy of Seshnela. When the Gbaji cult was driven out of Seshnela, they found refuge in Tanisor and swelled the army there, but to no avail. After several years of fighting, the capital was besieged and taken, and even the famous Vampire Legion was destroyed by Arkat.

Moving deeper into Ralios, Arkat and his army found that many barbarian nations and non-humans had embraced the cult. Since non-humans were uncommon in Seshnela and Brithos, the invaders called the forces arrayed against them the League of Monsters, using the word Krjalki to describe their non-human enemies as a single group. In their ignorance, much of the army thought that the Krjalki were mutated monsters who had long sold themselves to Chaos.

During Arkat's struggle in Ralios, diverse forces aided him. Wizards obeyed him, contrary to their tradition for mistrusting knights. Many tribes of heathens followed too, despite their dislike of Malkioni monotheism. One by one the strongholds fell until the forces were concentrated in the eastern part of Ralios, especially the City of Wolves and the fortress of Kartolin.

The Telmori nation, which worshipped wolves, ruled the City of the Wolves. In taking a taint of Chaos to strengthen themselves, they had become a race of werewolves. They commanded the High Llama Pass between Ralios and Fronela. Kartolin fortress commanded the Kartolin Pass between Ralios and Dorastor. Though his efforts against Kartolin failed, Arkat did storm the City of Wolves and put everything to the sword. Though pockets of survivors still hide there and the place still has their name, the Telmori as a people were driven from the land, and afterwards too from Fronela, this last by Talor the Laughing Warrior. They then began their long trek across the continent, to end only when they reached the edge of the impassable deserts.

While in Ralios, Arkat learned much of the Heroquesting art. This method of spiritual conquest and growth was known previously, but none had the knowledge and power to explore and exploit the possibilities. Arkat made many incursions into the spirit world to gain magical tools and allies against the cult he had sworn to eradicate. Sometimes he failed and suffered greatly from these quests, such as when a poisoned magical spear was turned in its flight and struck him in the foot. This wound plagued him long after. After many years of effort and thousands of lives and souls wasted, Arkat left an army before Kartolin and sought a new approach to the strongholds of the cult in Dorastor.

Peloria knew Gbaji as Nysalor or Osentalka. There this god was widely known and accepted as a benevolent god of Light and Power by the natives, and their worship of him had gained them peace and plenty in return. The Pelorians afterwards would view this period as the Golden Peace. As the wars drew closer, they gladly provided money and soldiers. Those armies were first used against the races which had betrayed the council and walked out on the creation of Gbaji, especially the trolls (who suffered the tragic Trollkin Curse from Nysalor and the dragonewts [who had been humbled and forced into servitude]). Some humans also fought against the cult, especially at the fringes of his influence, such as Dragon Pass or the northern horse steppes.

In one great journey through the quavering realms of mythology in search of a liberator, a band of Lightbringers eventually found their way to Seshnela and to Arkat. They convinced him that he could approach Dorastor through Dragon Pass, and that he could find powerful allies there to help him. They also provided him important details about his magical sword and who had made it. Arkat decided to break with his knightly position and to join the cult of Humakt, the god whom people said was his father. These acts endeared him to many residents of the lands he approached.

Arkat and a western army landed in the Shadowlands, later called the Holy Country. There they were aided by many islanders, and a great army of trolls rose to help him. Surprised by this inhuman aid, he took it immediately and it was well that he did, for the troll anti-Chaos powers were instrumental in breaking the army flowing out of Snake Pipe Hollow against him. The region was cleared after much pain and blood, as a year

later the cult of Gbaji/Nysalor was driven from Dragon Pass. An army of dragonewts joined to help.

The further struggles in Peloria were painful and difficult, and Arkat lost as many battles as he won. His western allies dwindled, replaced by Orlanthi barbarians and trolls. Arkat noted the troll successes and chose to align himself with them more closely. He first joined the cult of Kyger Litor, taking the name Kingtroll, then joined Zorak Zoran as well to bring mighty devastation against his foes.

This last act horrified many, especially the Lightbringers who had brought him to central Genertela and who now saw their quest a failure since they had brought Darkness instead of Light. The survivors set off again to find proper help. The Humakti were shocked to see their once-revered leader acting trollish, ordering the devastation of cities and fields to destroy his enemy. Already depleted and demoralized, many westerners returned home with sad and fearful stories of their leader becoming a bloodthirsty Krjalki like the foes he once had fought to eradicate. But all the while Arkat's army inched forward, taking land, city, and fortress, devouring life and leaving little behind.

Arkat left no part of Dorastor untouched. His remaining armies dissolved in the increasingly awesome struggles that broke the land and drove Chaos from it. Both Arkat and Nysalor summoned mighty heroes and demigods to aid in their last fight. Finally, atop the Tower of Dreams, amid the City of Miracles, the two opponents met in single combat as all existence seemed to shatter around them. The city was turned to dust and poison, killing many of the greatest still surviving. From the ruins only Arkat emerged, and the downfall of Nysalor was complete, and he now was known only as Gbaji the Deceiver. The defamed god was dismembered, and his parts were buried in different places beneath many tons of rock and much powerful magic.

After the battle Arkat was no longer a troll, or so said his friends, and so did many trolls. The war against Gbaji had lasted 75 years; now Arkat retired to quiet lands in Ralios which he had admired in his younger days. There he cleared a simple farmstead and kept the area around it under his watchful eye for his other 75 years. In Ralios the region is known as Arkat's Peace.

After the war was over and people talked about the events, they always wondered how Arkat could be so lucky against the various cult spirits of retribution, and they wondered where his sword went, and they agreed that he was strong-willed and severe in his dealings.

People in Peloria said that Nysalor's reign was a wonderful time, and thought it had been much like the Golden Age. But when people tried to sacrifice to the god to help him with prayers, there was no response, and so they also said he was dead.

The cult of Gbaji was ended. Those of Peloria who had revered Nysalor returned to their simpler, older gods, but ever afterward held bitterness against the demigod Arkat, who had destroyed a friend.

THE SECOND AGE

The years of the Second Age are ca. 500 S.T. to 1100 S.T. The final years of this age vary by region, most concluding with whatever local disaster overthrew their civilization. Despite the cataclysms at the end of the Age, there was little at its start to forebode doom ahead.

The forces of Chaos enjoyed little success at this time.

Two great schools of investigation existed in the Second Age. One originated in the far east and became a popular mystical religion which created new horizons of magic. The political form of this religion was the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, the Dragonlords. The vast energies for maintaining this type of magic severely oppressed many peoples, and after a time they no longer believed that their leaders could return the Golden Age to them, and began revolting. Aided by foreign gods, the rebellions spread, and destroyed the Empire of the Wyrms Friends in 1042.

In three generations the peoples of the world took upon themselves the eradication of the dragonewts and their kin, in vengeance for their oppression during the Empire. In 1100, the True Golden Horde entered the nesting ground of Dragon Pass. There they met a world full of dragons, come to their home from across space and Time for the sake of their souls. Few humans escaped from this Pelorian disaster, which brought new respect to the ancient races.

The second line of investigation was from the God Learners. Their secrets were a synthesis culled from many diverse cultures which brought about new types of magic. Cleverly exploiting the similarities and differences in all that they found, creating grand and grandiose devices or magical spells, they wove the four modes of magic into one etheric cloth of powers and energies which seemed to envelope the cosmos.

They achieved special freedom not available before to god or mortal, making new realizations, and devising measurements and recordings, and computing and testing their results among the world of the gods. The two accompanying texts show some examples of their thinking and cast further light upon some of the mysteries of Chaos.

The God Learners pioneered our understanding of the spirit plane. They knew of the travels of Arkat, and of others before him who did not often realize what they did. The God Learners standardized many myths and methods for reaching to the secrets of the gods. They went into the mysterious Other Side to retrieve legendary artifacts or to view cosmic events which had been forgotten. They were accomplished mages, and several among them were noted as heroes of later ages.

Analogous to the God Learners in the political sphere was the Middle Sea Empire, also called the Jrusteli Empire for the fishland from which they emerged. They dominated the sea after driving off the Waertagi shipbuilders. They rarely took a region, but seized individual cities or established colonies, then let their overwhelming culture infiltrate and take advantage of whatever outlets were available. They ruled almost all of the important coastal regions of Glorantha in the Second Age.

They fell because they bent Nature too much to their own ends. The forces of the old world and the old gods made abrupt changes which destroyed the newcomers. The brooding Waertagi struck suddenly and sank not only ships but lands as well. The Kralori lands mustered great mental powers and drove their oppressors into the ports first, then flushed them from the land altogether. The lands of Seshnela, Jrustela and Slontos were sunk beneath the sea, and Brithos disappeared also.

A curse swept across the sea, making it impossible to pass over the surface of the oceans. This also destroyed much of the Waertagi strength; they claim this treachery was by Zzabur, ancient wizard of Brithos. Coupled with the great lands lost to the sea, this was a mortal blow to civilization, and the coasts

...of high crown [major importance] concerning the hordes of the Divine Fear may be that the Four Horrors of the long night [the Great Darkness] could have been the Four Origins turned into and through themselves, as a glove may be when first It is sewn and then it is worn. Mark that the inside of a glove may be smooth, yet the outside be rough. So might it be that this Plane is the same and yet different, perhaps not just once but many times, for all things will have a start, a stop, and a new beginning. The forces do set well in balance.

The Void less than nothing, formless beyond emptiness, became the Wasteworld, the concealer of demons.

The Prime Mover, that natural force never mining, dissolved to Kajabor God-Killer.

The Silence, the wonder of the world to come, became the Howling Rage, the Mountain Stabber.

The Well of Wonder [the Primal Plasma faded from a butterfly to the worm, then to the grey Gorpgod, whose waves lapped upon creation and ate it away.

This I see as tragic, but not tainted with the evil which came but from Wakboth the Devil at origin; the tears of the world come in this way: that which was beautiful and good outside this Plane became foul and fearsome brought once to us.

-fragment from the lost book of Salonar Tamaskil, trans. by Greg Stafford

[Our] philosophers deduce Chaos to be the passionate refusal to recognize the limits of the natural and moral universe. It is part of the mortal condition that this limitation should be vital to a decent life for any of us, but in extreme it is manifested in the so-called Chaotic creatures in whom it is virtually the sole passion. Chronic discontent with the limited world therefore causes the Chaotic creature to ... despise life and the limited happiness it yields when compared to the possibilities of transcending the world. The Chaotic are arrogant: they want to be in the world, but not of it.

This passionate refusal has odd consequences. Whereas a man might decide to commit murder for financial or moral reasons, the Chaotic being will consider murder because it is forbidden, and he cannot endure being forbidden to act. This refusal of the Chaotic to so submit allows him to draw upon the Power of primordial Chaos, and thereby partially transcend the rules of the world. Yet those rules still determine the Chaotic's actions: you or I must obey the laws, because they are the laws; the Chaotic must disobey the laws, because they are the laws. Since even the most powerful Chaotic cannot defy all laws at once, they feel forever enslaved by all those checks on their freedom. The true Chaotic, such as the two-headed dragonsnail, must be then both miserable on Glorantha and a menace to the societies of it, and a warrior does both the afflicted being and all of us a favor by killing it.

...Chaotic features are the consequence of a particular combination of feelings and ... philosophy characteristic of a Chaotic spirit, and could not be induced in you or I by anything less than attunement of a cursed crystal. Less intimate connections, such as the ability of some to converse mentally may allow thoughts and feelings to be known, but does not alter the personality structure....

translation by Ray Turney

were abandoned. Power shifted to the interior of the continents for the next age.

Where Arkat settled and retired, there developed a powerful and dangerous country, called the Kingdom of Arkat by its peoples and the Dark Empire by its foes. The nation deserved both names. It conquered with quick success or used horrible magics to subdue, punish, and destroy. Though benevolent when untroubled, the Dark Empire was cruel when provoked. The Jrusteli helped conquer the Empire while aiding their relatives, the Seshnegi. The Jrusteli were quick to share in the plunder, and many saw afterwards parts from the Dark Empire in the Jrusteli secrets.

The memory of the Dark Empire survived in parts of Ralios. That is often a land of city-states strung along the fertile rivers, and they revere the name of and worship Arkat. But to many afterwards, the name and memory of Arkat was considered a curse, and they looked upon the Gbaji Wars as the thrashings of two detestable foes.

No cry of Chaos or uprising from the ooze dismayed the world. The great lands were sunk, Brithos' curse swept the seas clear, and then the dragons slew thousands in self-defense. The Second Age was over.

THE THIRD AGE

The coasts soon became abandoned and mysterious. The great ports became darkened and ruined troll haunts. Though rivers were friendly, no sailor could bear to sail the sea.

In the west, Tanisor ruled in the south, heir to refugees from broken Seshnela and mistress of the great river system into Ralios. The kingdom of Loskalm prospered in Fronela, controlling a great peaceful bay. The city-states squabbled, fought hill barbarians and Krjalki, or temporarily united against Tanisor. In Peloria, the tired eastern duchies trembled before mounted barbarians, while the west knew peace. In Kralorela, the ancient mystics lived on, spreading benevolent peace for the submissive farmers and stirring unspoken passions among the richer classes.

In 1220 S.T., great stirrings in the world centered in the land of Peloria, presaging an event which would utterly change the spread of Chaos across the world. It was the birth of the Red Goddess. The birth was a long-wrought magical spell completed with the extraordinary event. Some say that the goddess was a shattered spirit from the Gods Age who was resurrected by the Seven Mothers. No one knows her parents.

The unearthly powers of the Red Goddess stirred fear and mistrust from the peoples and deities about her, and her early life was a time of battle and victory. Her battle was temporal at first, then she entered into a great Heroquest to find herself and her secret inner powers. She was gone for years; her lands

fell into disrepair as enemies slowly crushed them. At last she reappeared, this time leading the Crimson Bat, and she spread terror before her. Afterwards, with the Bat and her army, she spread her conquests.

Because her growth was unprecedented and because she was blatantly connected with Chaos, the Red Goddess' growth stirred the ancient powers of the Elder Gods. After destroying the kingdom of Carmania, she warred with a race of magical beings at a place called Castle Blue. The old gods were drawn into the conflict, mustered to dispel this eruption of Chaos from the universe. The world seemed torn apart, but when it was remade the goddess was victorious. In mystic struggles and arcane judgements she had proved herself a part of the world of Glorantha, unable to be cast out by the greatest powers and magics. Shortly afterwards she took upon herself the great piece of earth which is now the Crater, and ascended into the sky, where she is now visible as the Red Moon.

The Red Goddess met and overcame some strange deities in her Heroquest, and these are said to be part of her source of odd powers. These gods include Arachne Solara and Nysalor, and philosophers say she also is intimate with Time. These are all strange powers to the gods of the world, and many still fear and mistrust her.

Happily the Red Goddess in no way condones the widespread worship of Chaos entities which follow the ways of the Devil and fall into moral depravity. The religion and state do not forbid it, either, as required by their philosophy. The rulers are adroit at manipulating the results if people do fall into the ways of Chaotic gods. Lunar history contains lessons of generals and priests gone bad, and point them out as bad examples.

By its faith, the Lunar Empire must accept Chaos in philosophy and make use of it as necessary. The Crimson Bat is an example of how this can be done, as may be the vampire regiment rumored training in the mountains. Yet many Lunar heroes gained fame by killing vampires or smashing the slave heads of Thanatar. The awareness of the educated or sensitive concerning the proximity of Chaos makes them acutely aware of their dire responsibilities. The teachings of the Red Goddess, though passionate and fierce, strongly admonishes against certain temptations.

The Lunar Empire has grown powerful and effective. It has conquered most of Peloria, and nibbles the borders to push beyond, but the final effect of its cults and temptations is yet to be seen. Foreigners are uncertain about what has been brewing inside the imperial borders. Lunar citizens, content in the fruitfulness and peace of the Empire, are often blind to what they might see. Even the Red Goddess, known as the Mistress of Time, is blind to the future.

Philosophers say it is time for a new cataclysm to end the world age, as seems to occur every 500 years. Others see the gods and spirits drawing closer, as the powers of certain men attain godly stature.

It is the start of the times when the world is pushed to excess and it is time for hard reckonings. Powers are stirring to make a stand. Old foes have strength for new troubles.

It is the start of the Hero Wars.

THE REMINISCENCES OF PAULIS LONGVALE

Set apart from the main text throughout this book are the reminiscences of Paulis Longvale cousin of Chief Hahlgrim of the Bilini and companion to Hahlgrim and Ketil Ericsbane

PAULIS

Paulis' father sent his son to Hahlgrim for a summer's seasoning on the frontier before the youth assumed a bureaucratic position deep within the Lunar Empire. The father had been converted to Lunar ways years before, but kept close clan ties. That summer stretched into several adventure-filled years, as young Paulis rode the turmoil of a typical buffer kingdom both as an educated young man of the Empire and as a blood cousin of a powerful family of the little kingdom.

At that time Paulis was an Initiate of Irrippi Ontor, and he kept to the ways of his faith even as he developed a cosmopolitan respect for the gods of his cousins, taking notes and setting down impressions. Many years later the cult commissioned him to create a narrative from the deposited materials, which he did after much prodding.

A bright, humorous young man, Paulis grew colder and more sardonic as the years passed, and his first version of the events which follow frequently was both cruel and inaccurate. To his credit, his work finally repelled Paulis, and upon retirement he created a new version of events to which later historians refer as much for its deft portraits as for the light it casts upon events. It is from this latter version that the translations have been made.

Paulis affected to be a man of letters, though the work which he left behind is mostly unread today. He wrote in an older Pelorian dialect which was sometimes quaint to read even then; the translators have attempted to render that element of his style as well.

THE BILINI

Four kings of the Bilini are important to the narrative. The first is Eric *, whom Ketil killed in 1611 S.T.. After Eric came Hakon the Swimmer, who was slain by Hahlgrim. After Hakon came Bolthor Brighteye, whose death occurred during the period of Paulis' narrative. The last of the four was Oddi the Keen, priest of Storm Bull and brother to Hahlgrim.

Ketil had slain Eric in single combat during a battle, but the Bilini nobility swore blood feud upon him, and the king slayer fled to the Orlanthi temple at Oxhead, and there served for many years, gaining the respect and friendship of the powerful, even among the Bilini.

Hahlgrim was a noble chieftain of the Bilini who long feuded with the royal household. Though not present at the battle where Eric died, Hahlgrim was already an enemy of Hakon the Swimmer when that lord ascended the throne, for both came from rival families jealously struggling for control of regional trade.

Having taken power, Hakon persecuted Hahlgrim's kin and took away their trading position. Hahlgrim held his honor, and Orlanth Rex found against the king for a large sum, which was paid. With part of the bloodpain debt Hahlgrim took his immediate family into exile with the neighboring Skanthi hillmen. Hakon resumed his persecutions of Hahlgrim's clan, so Hahlgrim returned, slew Hakon and burned the now-confiscated

PROPER NAME GUIDE

ACOS [*AY-cose*] – member of the Celestial Court; god of Law.
AETHER [*AY-ther*] - member of the Celestial Court; god of Primal Fire.
ALDRYA [*AHL-dri-uh*] – goddess of the forests and elves.
ARACHNE SOLARA [*ah-RAK-ni so-LAHR-uh*] – goddess of nature.
ARKAT [*AR-kat*] – First Age hero; enemy and destroyer of Gbaji.
ARROIN [*ar-ROIN*] – god of Healing.
ATYAR [*AT-yar*] – chaos god; devourer of Knowledge; a skull.
BAGOG [*bah-GOG*] – Chaos god; queen of the scorpion races.
BOLTHOR [*BOLE-thor*] HAIRYBREEKS – a Bilini king.
CHALANA ARROY [*chah-LAHN-uh ahr-ROY*] – Lightbringer goddess of Healing.
CRIMSON BAT – Chaos god; monstrous mutated bat.
DAKA FAL [*DAH-kah FAHL*] – god of the dead; founder of all ancestor worship.
DAYZATAR [*duh-ZAY-ter*] – god of the sky.
DELECTI [*di-LEK-tie*] - necromancer hero of Vivamort who lives in Dragon Pass.
EIRITHA [*I-REE-thuh*] – goddess of herd-beasts.
ELLISIF [*el-LIS-if*] – Rune Priestess of Chalana Arroy, Oxhead temple.
ERNALDA [*er-NAHL-duh*] – mother goddess of the Earth.
ETYRIES [*eh-TEER-iez*] – Lunar goddess of trade.
EURMAL [*IR-mal*] – a Lightbringer; the Trickster god.
GATA [*GAH-ta*] – member of the Celestial Court; primal Earth goddess.
GBAJI [*guh-BAH-ji*] – "the deceiver"; malevolent aspect of Nysalor.
GINNA JAR [*GIN-nuh JAR*] – mysterious force sometimes counted as a Lightbringer.
GLORANTHA [*glor-AN-thuh*] – goddess of Compassion and source of the universe.
HAHLGRIM [*HAWL-grim*] THE MIGHTY – Rune Master of Orlanth; Bilini tribesman.
HAKON [*HAY-kawn*] THE SWIMMER – a Bilini king.
HIGH KING ELF – elf leader of Protectors.
HRESTOL [*HRES-tul*] – the first knight; popular in Western belief.
HROTHMIR [*HROTHE-meer*] – the Horned Hero; beheader and first victim of Tien.
HUMAKT [*HEW-makt*] – god of War and Death.
HYKIM [*HIE-kim*] – god of all animals.
IRRIPI ONTOR [*er-RIP-pi ON-tore*] – one of the Seven Mothers; god of Knowledge.
ISSARIES [*i-SAHR-ies*] – Lightbringer god of trade, communication.
JALAKEEL [*jah-lah-KEEL*] – one of the Seven Mothers; goddess of Darkness and Witchcraft.
KAJABOR [*kah-shzah-BORE*] – a Chaos god; sometimes called the Devil; god of Entropy.
KARGAN TOR [*KAR-gan TORE*] – member of the Celestial Court; god of Conflict.
KETIL [*KET-uhl*] ERICSBANE – priest of Orlanth, Oxhead temple.
KRARSHT [*KRAR-sht*] – a Chaos goddess of Hunger and Traps.
KYGER LITOR [*KIGH-gore LEE-tore*] – goddess of trolls.
LARNSTE [*LARN-stay*] – member of Celestial Court; god of Change.
LODRIL [*LOW-dril*] – god of Volcanoes and Heat.
LOWFIRE – tripartite deity of Fire.
MAGASTA [*muh-GAE-stuh*] – god of Conflict, Change, and Death in the oceans.
MALKION [*MAL-ki-own*] – god of the West claiming omnipotence.
MALLIA [*MAHL-lee-uh*] – Chaos goddess of disease; one of the Unholy Trio.
MONNIE [*MON-i*] – a Bilini queen; wife to Bolthor Hairybreeks.
MOSTAL [*MOSS-tahl*] – god of Dwarves and Builders.
NAKALA [*nuh-KAHL-uh*] – member of Celestial Court; primal goddess of Darkness.
NYSALOR [*NIGH-suh-lore*] – "The Bright One," or "White Light;" the benevolent aspect of Nysalor/Gbaji.
ODDI [*OD-di*] THE KEEN – a Bilini king; brother to Hahlgrim.
ORENOAR [*oh-REEN-oh-ar*] - member of the Celestial Court; goddess of Truth.
ORLANTH [*ORE-lanth*] – a Lightbringer; god of Chieftains, Storms and Justice.
RAGNAGLAR [*rag-NAG-lar*] – a Chaos god; the Mad God; father of the broos; member of the Unholy Trio.
RASHORAN [*RAHSH-ohe-ran*] – the last-born deity of the Gods Age, or the first of the Chaos gods, slain in the Great Darkness.
RATSLAF [*RATS-laf*] – member of Celestial Court; god of Disorder.
RED GODDESS – the Lunar goddess of the Red Moon.
SEOLINTHUR [*see-ohe-LIN-ther*] – extinct god of Rivers; friend of Genert.
STORM BULL – god of Berserkers and the Desert Storm.
STYX – goddess of the River of Death.
THAN – a Chaos god; the Headless God.
THANATAR – a Chaos god; the Severed God.
THED – a Chaos goddess; Mother of Broos; one of the Unholy Trio.
TIEN [*TEE-yen*] – a Chaos god; enemy of Lhankor Mhy.
TREACK MARKHOR [*TREE-ak MAR-kor*] – priest-founder of the Atyar cult.
TY KORA TEK [*TIE KORE-a TEK*] – Earth goddess of the Dead.
TYLENA [*tie-LEE-nuh*] – member of Celestial Court; goddess of Illusion.
ULERIA [*yoo-LERE-i-uh*] – member of the Celestial Court; goddess of Love.
UMATH [*YOO-math*] – member of the Celestial Court; primal god of Air.
WAKBOTH [*WAHK-bawth*] – Chaos god; called the Devil; god of Evil.
YAMSUR [*YAHM-soor*] – called "The Splendid"; an extinct Light god.
YELM – the god of the Sun.
YELMALIO [*yel-MAHL-i-ohe*] – god of Light in the Hills.
ZARAMAKA [*ZAH-ruh-MAH-kuh*] – member of the Celestial Court; primal god of Waters.
ZORAK ZORAN [*zohe-RAK zohe-RAN*] – god of Darkness and Death.
ZZABUR [*zah-BOOR*] – the first wizard.

…Finally Bolthor arrived. Hahlgrim had told me this would happen, but I had not believed that any man of honor in time of need would seek to humble he whose aid he sought. The king was arrogant and portly, his well-fed richness contrasted sharply with the poverty outside his gates. About him hung a white Eubuck cape. The cape was rather shorter than fashionable, and he looked a little like a snow capped hummock. A gold circlet, shining with a glow of its own, held his long hair. His shaggy trews looked poor, but he was famous for them (Bolthor Hairybreeks was one of his appellations; others held less compliment.) At his side, as token of the disturbed state of the kingdom, he wore Ironbreaker, the sword first wielded by Distan, general for the legendary Arkat the Destroyer. Many tales portrayed its magical power, far greater than suggested by the dwarf-wrought silver matrices circling the hilt. This sword had been in Bolthor's line for generations, and it was as much to see it as to see Bolthor (my first king in the flesh) that I had asked to accompany Hahlgrim.

Only Hahlgrim was seated when Bolthor entered, and he rose in a casually polite manner once the King had come to his attention. Bolthor belonged to many cults, as rulers often do; as an Orlanthi layman he exchanged the tedious alliterative poetry with Hahlgrim which it pleases Orlanth to have spoken. Why a god should choose such an old fashioned, repetitive mode has never been clear to me—why one cannot say a thing and have done with it slides beyond my understanding.

The two leaders then spoke some Stormtongue which I did not understand, and the conference began.

Or should have, Bolthor even here could not bring himself to actually make his request, though his chamberlain had made the matter clear beforehand. First the King called for wine. Then he fussed with the fire. Then he asked for paper and ink, and made dubious scratches on it, though Hahlgrim had told me that this foolish man could neither read nor write. At last, though, his voice trembling, the King made the Lightbringers' summons:

Chaos stalks my world.
Broos have bruised me, the Hand has pawed me.
I have taken up the impossible path,
And seek those who must aid my task.
You are not the first of my friends.
Others walked with me to Heal.
The Devil took them, they died.
I failed to save them, Chaos grows.

Any master of a Lightbringer cult must answer the legitimate call of the summons, or lose all power and benefit of their god. Even though a formality at times, it is nonetheless always binding, and one may escape it only by providing another type of divine assistance. Hahlgrim would have been the last to deny the challenge.

"I hear and stand before you," Hahlgrim replied, "But I am only one. What would you have of me?"

Again Bolthor found it hard to speak, and silence grew. He cleared his throat several times. Rarely have I seen a man of noble blood whose guilt sat so clearly.

"I have returned your lands to you, kingslayer," Bolthor said at last, "though I am loathe to seek your aid. My men die; my people suffer. The horrors of Dorastor creep beyond their ancient borders."

Hahlgrim nodded.

"I know that you have allies among the Skanthi, who fight well against creatures of Chaos. You and I would be enemies on other ground, but peril stalks us both here. By Orlanth, I tell you that the dead walk freely upon the earth, that the trees scream and bleed when cut, that the very air has sometimes been poisoned. How foul the world is when the very essence of the Storm Bull can be made impure and sicken the great Bull's worshippers."

"Such things are true," Hahlgrim agreed. "It was not always so." It seemed to me that Hahlgrim referred to the days when his family had been powerful at court, before the fear grew and the land was ruined.

"As a final gift, to aid your battle, I offer you this." The King rose, and unbuckled Ironbreaker, with its rich scabbard and belt, and held it out in his palms. There were gasps from his coterie, and several nobles rushed part way to him. A general crowding-forward of the watchers then occurred, and I had to retreat to the side of the chamber to stand upon a bench, for I could not see over these long-legged warriors.

Hahlgrim told me that he was surprised by the offer of Ironbreaker, and that the utter seriousness of the gift gave him full token that victory would come in the end. Of course we did not know then of the fates which overtook both these lords, so different and yet joined to make a desperate struggle.

"I am unused to such price, King Bolthor," Hahlgrim said.

"I ask your fealty in return, Hahlgrim," the King replied. "I may ask of you your life. Are you used to that price?"

"Men are dead but once," Hahlgrim said.

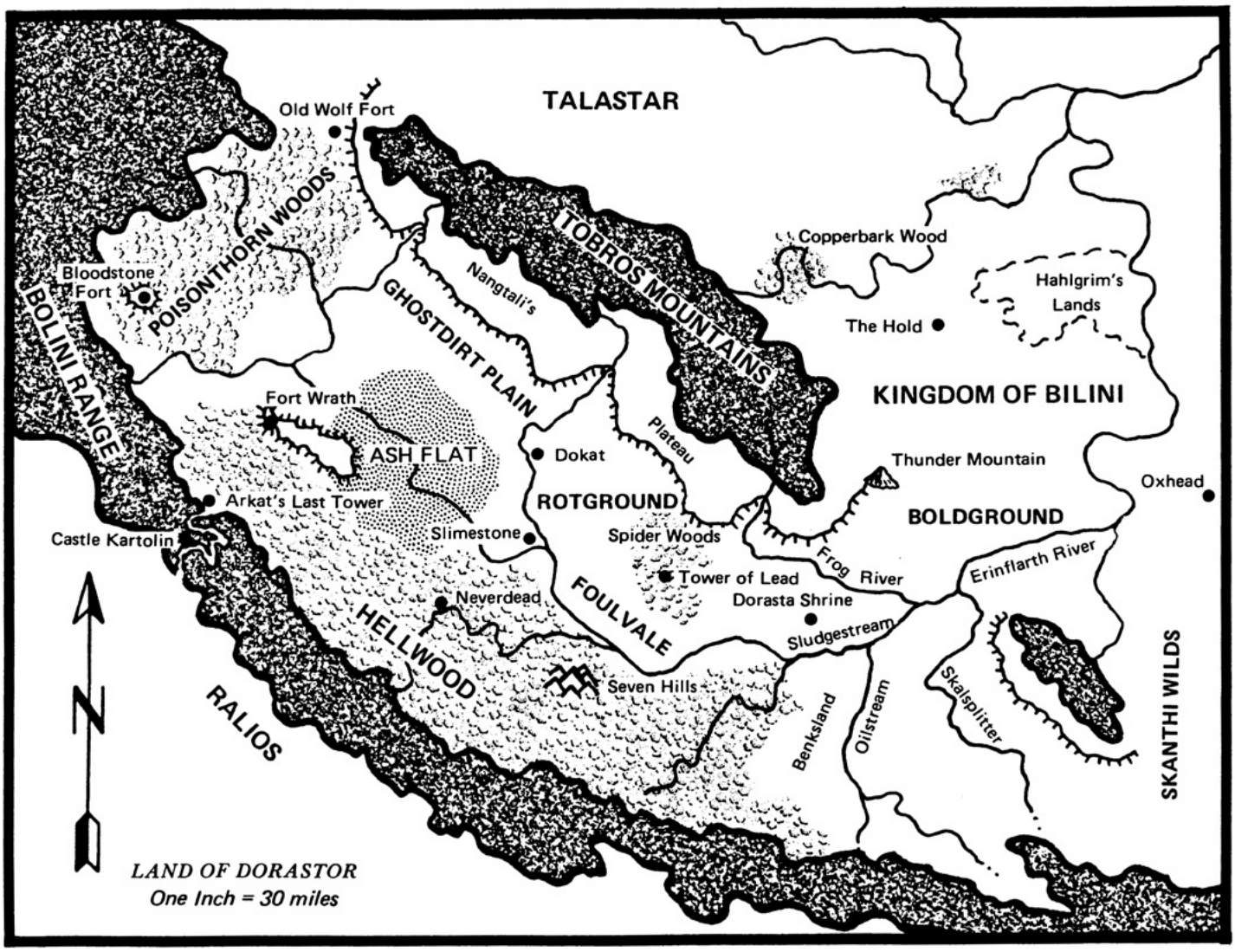
Then Bolthor seated himself, and Hahlgrim laid Ironbreaker across the King's lap, and swore him fealty and honor, and the alliance was made.

home of his childhood. Returning to the Skanthi, he became a Rune Lord at the Oxhead Orlanth temple.

Hahlgrim and Ketil met at the temple and became friends.

The kingdom of the Bilini drifted under the rule of Bolthor Brighteyes, who acted as little more than a Lunar caretaker for many years. But Bolthor's neglect led to increasing encroachment by the forces of Chaos from the ruined land of Dorastor. As the kingdom deteriorated, the Lunar regional command became worried, and ordered Bolthor to put his house in order or be replaced; Bolthor was enough statesman to know where to ask for help— from Hahlgrim.

**** Eric was a son of Norall of Oakstead, who was famous for the wild mountain cats he bred; they often became temple familiars. Norall was son of Killer Garril, who had slain all his kinsmen who had dared join the Lunar religion. Garril had held his lands on the favor of King Hrodar Grizzlebeak.***



PRIMAL CHAOS

THE CHAOS OOZE

All Chaos cults are based upon this cult, and all have it as an associate cult. It is possible for a Chaos creature to belong only to this cult, but there is no obvious advantage to do so.

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

Primal Chaos is the untainted power of random change. It first entered the world through the cracks in the universe caused by the Gods War. It is the source and mother of all later Chaos things. Primal Chaos is only an associate cult; a member can become a priest of Primal Chaos only if he belongs to another Chaos cult first.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

Worshippers of Primal Chaos commit less to a cult organization than they do strengthen their individual belief in the power of the ooze. There is no temple structure; worship is performed at any place of Chaos strength, and officiated by the most powerful worshipper there. Worship occurs on any day of the year, begun either at sunrise or sundown.

IV. LAY MEMBERS

Any being or thing worshipping any cult of Chaos is automatically a lay member of primal Chaos. No skills or spells are taught.

V. INITIATES

Any creature accepting the mark of a Chaotic feature is an Initiate automatically of Primal Chaos. Initiation is permanent; there is no easy way to remove the Chaos taint. There is no spirit of retribution for the cult save the vengeance of other members.

VI. RUNE LORDS

There are no Rune Lords in the cult of Primal Chaos.

VII. PRIESTS

Creatures in the other Chaos cults who reach 18+ POW can become priests of Primal Chaos.

Priests gain two benefits. First, they have control over the unintelligent things which crawl from the Chaos ooze, such as gorp, dragon snails, etc. The priest must give the creature one point of his own permanent POW for every 10 points of POW that the creature has. Before the transfer of Power, the priest must overcome the POW of the creature with his own Power. If successful, the priest gains limited control over the creature. "Control" is defined as ability to instruct the creature in the same way that other magicians control elementals. It takes one melee round to give the creature simple instructions: attack ahead, follow me, do not attack, etc.

Priests also gain access to the following Rune spell:

Chaos Feature **3 points**

Duration instantaneous and permanent, Range touch, not Reusable, Non-stackable

This spell bestows upon the target a Chaotic feature. Targets must be willing to accept the feature or the spell will not work and the Power will be lost. Once affected, the target always will be tainted with Chaos.

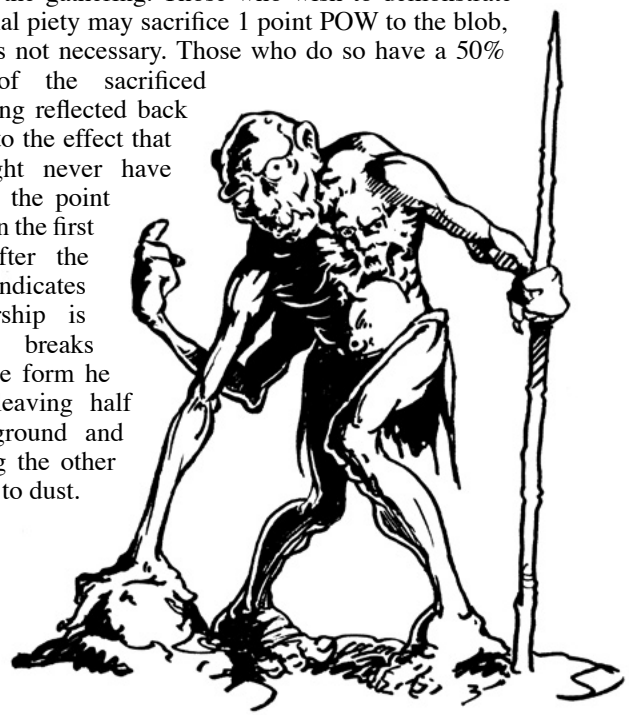
A successful cast means that the target must roll any die. An odd number means that the Chaotic feature is rolled on the Curse of Thed table in that cult. An even roll means that the Chaotic feature is rolled on the standard Chaotic Features table.

For each Chaotic feature a worshipper accepts, he adds another 10% to his accumulating chance of turning into a broo. This transformation may not be resisted or altered, and is permanent once it takes effect. The probability for the transformation must be rolled immediately upon the assumption of another Chaotic feature.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

THE CHAOS ALTAR

The leader of the worship shapes an irregular blob from any mud available, preferable Chaos ooze, then places the form in the center of the gathering. Those who wish to demonstrate exceptional piety may sacrifice 1 point POW to the blob, but this is not necessary. Those who do so have a 50% chance of the sacrificed POW being reflected back to them, to the effect that they might never have sacrificed the point of POW in the first place. After the leader indicates that worship is over, he breaks in two the form he shaped, leaving half on the ground and crumbling the other half back to dust.



MALLIA

MISTRESS OF DISEASE

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY
BEFORE TIME
Mallia grew from the Darkness, in the waste and destruction of the Gods War. She found nourishment and life amid the fallen foes, the wreckage and destruction, and the blood of everything that died in that age. She became a corruption of Death itself, tainted and degraded from the swift brightness which Humakt and Orlanth used, becoming a lingering and festering dimness. As beings fell before her, she became fearful that her food would completely fail, and she changed the way she ate, from lightning plagues which depopulated entire nations to the spread of slow death by disease, so that the misery she caused would last forever, as befitted a goddess.

During the Darkness she became mistress to Ragnaglar and friend to Thed. The children of Ragnaglar, the broos, gave Mallia worship, and she in turn aided them and provided special magics and spirit allies so that they could further the spread of her diseased dominion.

From love, respect, and fear, other Chaos creatures came to worship her. Men, elves, trolls, and dwarves came to her also, rarely from love, but all praying to Mallia not to infect their tribes. Many survived the touch of disease in the Darkness from their association with her.

SINCE TIME BEGAN
Mallia has three aims: to increase the forms and types of disease, to avenge her lover's death and her friend's dispersal against the lawful gods by diminishing and confounding their mundane works with sickness and death, and to cajole, frighten, or otherwise convince worshippers of other gods (lawful or Chaotic) to give their Power to her.

LIFE AFTER DEATH
Mallia's faithful know there will be no reincarnation for their spirits, and that all they can hope for is a safe eternity in Hell. Dead Initiates in the cult may be kept for a time as a spirit of disease before they, too, gain the final rest.

Funeral rites are simple. The body is placed into the earth so that Death and Darkness become one in the worshipper. Initiate and Rune Priest bodies are infected with at least one disease, and only the ignorant or foolish will disturb their unmarked graves.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS
Mallia is associated with the Runes of Death and Darkness, her foundations and heritage. Where she is worshipped by broos she also is associated with the Chaos Rune.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT
REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE
Mallia's diseases are everywhere in Glorantha. Some glory in the worship of such pervasiveness, as the entire race of broos dedicate themselves to her worship. Most beings, though, make propitiatory worship of the Mother of Disease, sacrificing their Power so that she will not appear.

Under the terms of the Great Compromise, Mallia is the necessary bane of the mortal races, and at last will lead them to the halls of Hell even if they avoid every other fate. In popular terms she is the Keeper of the Cart which carries souls to the Sundering Stream. This means that not even her greatest worshipper is safe from her embrace if he outlasts the span of years allotted to his species.

Mallia is also the janitor of the gods, providing the corruption which turns flesh and bone back to dust. Without her work in this regard, there soon would be no room for the living. She is a natural ally of the child Time, yet she schemes for the dispersal of the Compromise and the end of Time. She may be so entwined with Law and with Chaos that the ultimate victory of either side will spell her own annihilation. But her worshippers naturally worry about today, not the end of Time.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER
Mallia's temples exist only to encourage the sacrifice of Power to her. The spread of disease reminds the people of her presence and of her need for Power.

All Gloranthan civilizations outlaw the worship of Mallia. If discovered, Initiates are killed immediately and their bodies, possessions, and properties are burned as a safeguard against the outbreak of disease.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
Mallia's minions generally support other Chaotic cults. Her propitiatory worshippers fear and hate disease, and most of them despise Chaos. Devoted Mallia worshippers (Malliants) take pleasure in the suffering of others, and delight in collecting Power for their goddess from sacrifices to her by devoutly lawful beings.

The Malliant hates all devotees of the Chalana Arroy cult and all Healers of Arroin for their devotion to abolishing disease.

III. ORGANIZATION
INTRA-CULT ORGANIZATION
Mallia has no set structure or function for temples, and there are no standard communicational or decisional lines between temples. Most actions of a temple will be independent.

INTER-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
The Mallia temple is the body of her Rune Priest, the Disease Master, who has an independent ministry and absolute sway over his Initiates. Any Initiate must defend the Master and perform his orders without fail. There is no shrine or ark before which worship must occur, but worship must always occur in a place susceptible to disease.

CENTERS OF POWER, HOLY PLACES
The spread of disease and corruption is a continuous process; there are no special centers of power for the cult. A pit near the base of the Rockwall Mountains is said to be the site of the First Infection, but its location is no longer known.

Any open wound, locus of infection, or running sore is a holy place to Mallia, and makes more likely the presence of her influence.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS
Malliants worship on the same days as do followers of Chalana Arroy—Wildday of Fertility week. A random day during the Sacred Time will be chosen by each Disease Master as the High Holy Day for his temple.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN
Mallia accepts worship and Power from anyone. Her worship is ingrained in the broos, and all of their kind automatically are lay members at birth, with immunity to all diseases. Other beings must sacrifice 2 points POW on each holy day to gain increased resistance to one disease. There are no other requirements for acceptance.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG
Lay members must sacrifice Power each holy day to maintain protection from a disease.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
The lay worshipper gains protection from a specific disease by sacrificing POW to it (and thereby to Mallia). This occurs in the form of increased resistance to infection by the disease, and a person so protected will defend against infection by the disease with their species maximum affected characteristic rather than their personal affected characteristic. A person may sacrifice for such protection anywhere disease could exist. But if a worshipper sacrificed for protection from Soul Waste, Shakes, and Chills, he still would be subject to Brain Fever or other diseases, and would defend against them with rolls against the relevant characteristic.

SKILLS AND BATTLE MAGIC
The cult teaches neither to lay worshippers.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
The Initiate is the lowest-ranking Malliant whose worship is taken seriously. While anyone can become a lay member, to become an Initiate requires special devotion to the Mother of Disease and familiarity with a disease. There are two methods of initiation. A candidate in either case must have been a lay member for at least a week before becoming an Initiate.

A layman can undergo Involuntary Initiation. If he becomes infected with a disease, he may call upon the power of Mallia to save him. His sacrifice of 2 points of permanent POW will halt the effects of one disease, but it will not restore lost characteristic points nor take the disease culture from him. Rather the worshipper will become a carrier of the contracted disease and will expose to it anyone they contact. Carriers can rid themselves of the carried disease by means of Cure spells available through

Hahlgrim traced the tip of his dagger along a crack in the tabletop. "First we must weaken the Chaos close at hand," he said. "Bolthor's people are healthy, yet their Chalana Arroy priestesses are paupers. I suspect that the minions of the Mother of Disease are here, though her priests might stand within spear-thrust of us and we would not know it." We all glanced around the sleepy inn.

"Ketil, you prepare a party of only the healthiest men, and guard old Torvald the Healer. Seek with him the work of Mallia—he will know the signs."

Ketil departed, taking with him Oddi the Keen, Hahlgrim's brother. Hahlgrim replaced the dagger in its oiled sheath, and we left also.

We gathered the peasants of the area before him. They were a sorry lot, exhausted, and with fear-haunted eyes. Hahlgrim related his history and origin.

"In my land," he said, "the people do not tolerate the slow death, for we know the power of the Healing Mother and uphold her. You must foreswear your sacrifices to Mallia. Rely upon the Healers." The crowd had been shuffling, as uncouth peasants will, until he spoke Mallia's name. Then they fell as silent as stone.

"Easy for you to say," scowled an old hag at last, "but for us there is life to be lost and life to be gained; why should we forsake one who keeps her filthy word, for the White Goddess, who seems weaker?" And many nodded at this, yet without passion; the pride of these farmers had been hobbled.

Hahlgrim studied the hag. Her wares were baskets, and under his gaze she shrank a little behind them, as though they were a wall which could dim the blaze of his eyes.

"It is the duty of the old to speak wisdom," he replied, "not fear," and she shrank back a little further. "What worth are your offerings, Basket Woman, when broos hobble past your doors with plague dripping from spear points? Your prayers and offerings strengthen the broos, and Ralzakark their king fattens his folk on your power!" Not a few in the crowd made signs to ward off that King of the Broos, of fearful Dorastor.

"You speak that name lightly, O mighty Lord from Far Away," the old woman said sorrowfully. "Whom would you have us strengthen?" She paused. "It may be there is little difference between the kick of a broo and the kick of a nobleman."

"So it might seem, yet I will show you differently. Hear me: each who trades for a spell from Chalana Arroy will receive a small pig from my temple, or its equal value in barley or beer. From my own purse will I in addition pay for each spell you gain from the priestess of the White Goddess, whether one or many, nor will I demand you use of these great cures. All this is yours if you promise never again to worship Mallia, and that I swear by the mighty Air itself!"

either Chalana Arroy or Mallia. Involuntary Initiates gain no benefits unless they seek and find a Disease Master for training.

The voluntary Initiate will seek out a Disease Master, who will then infect the applicant with a disease potion, and the applicant must sacrifice 1 point of permanent Power to gain immunity.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
The voluntary Initiate must sacrifice 2 points of temporary POW on each holy day, and devote 90% of his time and money to the cult. He will be expected to obey the commands of his priest without question or delay.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
A voluntary Initiate will be provided with such room and board as is available to the Rune Priest.

SKILLS
An Initiate can learn from his Disease Master only those skills which the Master actually knows. Skills normally taught include any Bow, Dagger Attack, Dagger Throwing, Dart Throwing, Identify Disease, Prepare Disease Potion, Rapier, Short Sword, Spear Attack/Parry, Spread Disease, Trap Set/Disarm, and Treat Disease.

TREAT DISEASE
This skill allows the user to treat a disease so that the course of a chronic or acute disease will stop after taking 1 point from the affected characteristic. The victim needs total bed rest and the treater can do nothing else while treating the victim until the disease is halted. A critical hit with this skill will restore 1 point to the affected characteristic. The skill costs the nominal price of 400/800/1600/2000 L.

The crowd gasped at his gifts, and so they were gifts, for never in all their lives could these poor pay back half of what Hahlgrim would give them that day.

"My gracious lord," the old woman said, trembling, "may all the mercies of the gods be yours for your promise. Forgive me that I spoke harshly," and Hahlgrim did there forgive her.

"This is more than our own king, Burpey Bolthor, ever would swear. I see truly why you displease him, and know why your people wait upon your word," said a burly youth, and the crowd came near.

Three places of festering plague were found. Hahlgrim gave orders for their removal, then called for wine. I write this description that all may know of his great generosity and believe it, for even Ketil could not understand at first the gifts of our lord to these humbled people.

"Giving farmers gold?" he cried. "How should anyone give a thousandth of that for the promise of a peasant?"

"There is a time for sacrifices," replied Hahlgrim, studying the sweep of the valley beyond. "I have no need of gold if what I cherish grows freely and proudly."

Hahlgrim left soon thereafter, to seek a shaman in the wilds who could protect the farmers permanently. To let Ketil learn humility and charity, he ordered him to administer the giving of the gold to a hundred whining farmers. While Ketil counted gold and swore, I played the flute outside, in the warmth of the afternoon.

PREPARE DISEASE POTION
With this technique the Initiate can prepare substances which, when applied to an open wound or imbibed, will expose the victim to the disease and will require current CON x 5% rolls on D100 to resist. This skill cannot be purchased but is learned for free from the Disease Master. Once the general techniques are known, the Malliant can brew potions for any disease of which he is a carrier. Preparation time depends upon a skill roll for success after a week of work. If the first roll fails, roll again daily, subtracting 10% from the success probability for each failure. When the probability reaches zero or below, the potion is ruined and must be restarted with new materials. A fumble indicates immediate fouling of the potion. Materials for the process cost 100 Lunars and result in 1D4 doses. This may be applied as Blade Venom. Training times for the skill are at the nominal rate of 400/800/1600/2400 L.

SPREAD DISEASE
With this skill, a small district can be infected with a sickness without resorting to a spirit of disease. This non-magical attack is recognizable only by a Healer of Arroin who is a master (90%+) in the treatment of disease. Quantities of the appropriate potion are implanted in often-trafficked areas such as wells, pantries, silos, cribs, etc. Inhabitants and visitors to the district will have to make their resistance roll or contract the disease.

One worshipper of Mallia can infect a square kilometer area per season, and die rolls are made seasonally to determine success. Each failure to spread a disease reduces later attempts by 10% per failure until a year's time is allowed to go by without any attempt at all. At the end of that time, a new infection or re-infection can be attempted at the initial training rate.

Training is free to Malliants, never taught to non-worshippers, and has the following nominal rates: 300/ 600/1200/2000 L.

IDENTIFY DISEASE
This is a knowledge skill for recognizing the type of disease and the infecting agent (spirit of disease, potion, or Rune magic), and determining if an area is infected. Three D100 rolls against the percentage level known of the skill are needed for this skill to function completely. The first roll tells whether disease is present, the second roll tells the specific disease type and symptoms, and the third roll tells the method of infection. This skill is available through either Mallia or Arroin, is taught for free to Malliants, and is learned at the following nominal rate: 200/400/800/1600 L.

SPELLS
Initiates will be taught spells from the standard battle magic spell list for the standard costs. In addition, they have access to one-use Rune magic available from Mallia, and also the following cult special battle magic spell:

Sneeze **2 points**
focused, passive, instant, 80m
The caster must overcome the POW of the target. If so, then the target will begin sneezing the strike rank following casting, and

will continue sneezing for 1 Dl 0 strike ranks. During the time spent sneezing, the target will be nearly incapacitated, and only defends and parries, and that at one-half normal effectiveness. The number of strike ranks sneezing must be added to weapon or spell use strike ranks.

VI. RUNE LORDS
The cult of Mallia has no equivalent status.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
GENERAL STATEMENT
Priests of Mallia are called Disease Masters, and are the prime source of disease in Glorantha. Their duty is to spread infection throughout the world, and their main tools in this effort are the spirits of disease which they learn to bind and to control.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
The applicant must have been a voluntary Initiate of Mallia for at least a year. He must have mastered one weapon which impales, must have a POW of 18+, and must have 90% ability in Spread Disease, Prepare Disease Potion, and Identify Disease, plus any one other Mallia skill. Within two months of his application to his Disease Master, a number of Mallia's Rune Priests will assemble and he must then convince them of his worthiness by attempting to ally one of his Disease Master's controlled spirits of disease. Determine random spirits of disease on the chart below:

D100	*Power*
01-10	2D6
11-35	3D6
36-85	3D6+6
86-95	4D6+6
96-00	5D6+6

D100	*Type*
01	roll twice and combine (POW and symptoms)
02-10	Brain Fever
11-25	Creeping Chills
26-50	Wasting Disease
51-75	The Shakes
76-00	Soul Waste

After determining the Power, type and INT (the INT is always 3D6), the applicant must try to ally it. He must engage the spirit in spirit combat. If the spirit fails an attack when the character succeeds, then he may try to bind the spirit to him. He must overcome the spirit once again, therefore, and if successful must give the spirit some of his own characteristic POW, at a ratio of 1 point permanent POW per 10 POW points or fraction thereof. These points are permanently lost to him, as if sacrificing for Rune magic. In return for the loss of POW, the spirit will be bound to the Mallia worshipper and will act on his commands.

RESTRICTIONS
Mallia's priests must strive continually to spread disease in order to stimulate the worship of the goddess. They must aid and train loyal Initiates, and must give qualified Initiates their first spirit of disease when they attempt to become Disease Masters.

BENEFITS
The Mallia Disease Master has an increased chance of gaining POW. Instead of the normal roll, the priest may subtract his Power from 25 rather than 21.

He may use the INT and POW of controlled spirits for remembering and casting of spells.

He may be assured that the goddess will answer a call for aid. Unlike other cult's Divine Interventions, the intervention for Mallia will summon a random spirit of disease from the chart contained in the requirements for acceptance for priesthood, just above.

If the priests can find them, buy them, or steal them, they may attune and use iron weapons and armor.

Like Rune Lords, priests of Mallia can progress past the normal 100% level of ability, by grace of the goddess.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
Because the cult has little systematic organization, a Disease Master may not have the opportunity to systematically learn the standard Rune spells. To simulate a normal Disease Master, the referee should randomly pick six Rune spells, then choose two more to complement them. The priest of Mallia can only summon a Darkness elemental, of those elementals available. All Rune spells will be 1 point.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS
Mallia priests (and Initiates on a one-use basis) may sacrifice permanent Power for the following Rune spells. These disease causing spells may not be dispelled; the victims must be cured. Effective cures for the disease types are listed on the chart at the end of this cult.

Cause Shakes **1 point**
variable, touch, reusable, stackable
Targets resisting this spell will contract the mild form of the Shakes if his POW is overcome by the caster's. Voluntary targets automatically contract the disease. The severity will range from mild to terminal, and may increase normally. A 2 point stacking of the spell automatically begins the target at the 'chronic' degree of severity, 3 points at the acute, and 4 points at the terminal. The spell may not be stacked higher than that.

Cause Brain Fever **1 point**
variable, touch, reusable, stackable
The mechanics of this spell are the same in all respects as Cause Shakes, above.

Cause Chills **1 point**
variable, touch, reusable, stackable
The mechanics of this spell are the same in all respects as Cause Shakes, above.

Cause Wasting Disease **1 point**
variable, touch, reusable, stackable
The mechanics of this spell are the same in all respects as Cause Shakes, above.

Alter Spirit of Disease **1 point**
permanent, touch, non-reusable, stackable
Before using this spell, the caster must have made a potion for the disease desired in the spirit of disease. He then must bind the spirit to the potion container and use this spell. The spirit will lose the old disease and begin to carry the new one. Stacking this spell increases the number of diseases that the spirit may carry, all of which must be in potion form first. There is no limit to the number of diseases that a spirit may carry, though there is nothing to be gained by using the same disease twice.

Minor Infection **1 point**
variable, touch, reusable, non-stackable
A priest of Mallia can effect minor vengeances and warnings by infecting a target with one of the many minor diseases of the cult. Often this spell will be self-targeted by the caster. He then sacrifices 1 point permanent POW to obtain Mallia's immunity and can then make potions for the disease.

Minor infections are contagious, but not virulent. Even the terminal stage of such diseases are rarely fatal.

In casting the spell, the target's POW must be overcome if the target is resisting the spell. If the Disease Master overcomes the target's POW, the victim has contracted at least the mildest form of the disease. Determine randomly the type of disease. If the disease is cast at a willing target, the mildest form is automatically given. If a disease is rolled to which the target already is immune, re-roll until an infection is achieved.

Referees wishing to create their own diseases should pattern them after the ones described and add them to the list.

Roll D100	*Kind of minor infection:*
01-20	Sniffles
21-35	Sneezing
36-50	Blotches
51-60	Fever
61-70	Joint Rot
71-80	Creeping Crudd
81-85	Thunder Lung
86-90	Brittleskin
91-95	Convulsions
95-98	Slow Withers
99-00	Bleeding Disease

All of these diseases have exactly the same spell characteristics, as given in the description for Minor Infection.

Sniffles - infected targets will continually sniffle until the sickness is thrown off. This is a short-term illness. The first resistance roll is CON x 1%, the second is CON x 2%, etc., up to CON x 5%. Make the roll once a day; no rest is needed. This disease occurs in the mild form only.

Sneezing - this disease has all ranges of severity, but instead of removing characteristics, the character sneezes instead. If a character had terminal Sneezes, he would sneeze loudly and uncontrollably once every 5 minutes.

Blotches - victims show red blotches on their face and skin. The blotches reduce CHA by 1 point per each degree of severity. Normal CON x 5% disease resistance rolls are attempted until one is made, with the number of failed rolls equal to the number of CHA points lost for the duration of the sickness. Recovery is determined by a CON roll each season on Windsday of Fertility week. If made, one CHA point is regained. CHA not recovered after a year is lost permanently.

Fever - these victims are subject to irrational acts and unpredictable moods. Initial severity is determined normally. Once contracted, the victim's behavior is determined by the chart below. Severity of the disease will determine the frequency of the roll. A mild case will require rolls every month; terminal victims will roll every five minutes. The effect lasts for 30 minus CON of victim full turns.

1D10	*effect*
1-4	Sleep
5-7	Befuddled
8-9	Demoralized
10	Fanatic

Joint Rot - attacks the character's joints, slowing him down. Each attack increases the victim's base strike ranks by one; base strike ranks greater than twelve mean that the character may strike only every other round—subtract twelve from the total to determine the effective strike rank in the next round. Victims whose base strike rank equals 24 or more have had their joints locked, and are helpless. Even if the disease is thrown off, the increase in strike rank is permanent.

Creeping Crudd - only a person wearing armor will be infected by this disease, such as adventurers constantly encased in that hot, sweaty stuff. Having Crudd reduces attack/parry percentages by 5% for each attack of it. The frequency of attack is determined by the severity of the disease. Terminal Crudd, for example, will reduce all attacks and parries by 5% every five minutes. When a character is reduced to zero, all ability is lost permanently. Undertaking curative measures before then can regain the skills lost. Those 1 m or closer to a victim of the Crudd will notice that the victim stinks.

To get rid of the Creeping Crudd requires full exposure of the body to the sun and air. For each week spent not wearing any clothing at all, 5% lost skill will be regained.

Thunder Lung - these sneezing and coughing attacks are violent enough to cause damage to the victim. Find the severity of the disease by normal CON x 5% resistance rolls. A mild form causes attacks with 1D6 severity; chronic form causes 2D6 attacks; the acute form causes 3D6 attacks; terminal form causes 4D6 attacks. The frequency of attacks also increases with the severity of the form of the disease. Randomly roll the STR of each attack and then try to overcome with that number the CON of the afflicted character. If successful, the strength of the attack is done as damage to the character's hit points. If the hit points are reduced to zero as a result of Thunder Lung, the character has burst and all creatures within 3 meters are exposed to the disease.

Brittleskin - a slow, creeping scaling of the skin. The degree of severity determines the rate of spread. The first contraction

will affect one hit location. Successive attacks will affect another random location. Re-roll if the location already has been infected. When the victim is entirely encrusted, there will be no further spread.

Cure this disease only by means of a Chalana Arroy temple's Cure Disease or a spirit of Healing. Mundane Healing has so far proven ineffective. While encrusted, each affected hit location gains 2 points of additional protection. If the skin is broken and damage inflicted on the location, a Repair spell must first be used before any Healing spells will work.

Convulsions - incapacitating nervous attacks. Each time the disease attacks, the victim will writhe on the ground unable to perform any other action for species maximum minus characteristic CON of the victim melee rounds. Normal severity indicates frequency of attacks.

Slow Withers - this disease atrophies portions of the body. Slow Withers attacks only one hit location. Each attack of the disease reduces the hit points of the affected location by one. Severity of the disease determines the speed of hit point loss, and Slow Withers will never develop into the terminal form.

Hit locations reduced to zero or below through the actions of this illness are permanently afflicted and become useless. Healing spells will not regain lost hit points from the Slow Withers. If a chest, head or abdomen hit location reduces to zero or below, the character is dead.

Bleeding Disease - this sickness has one degree of severity: afflicted individuals require twice as many Healing points as do unafflicted individuals. A character with Bleeding Disease must use Healing 4 to stop bleeding, and Healing 12 to regraft limbs. Only Cure Disease, spirit of Healing, Divine Intervention, or Mallia Initiation will halt these effects.

Cure Brain Fever **1 point**
instantaneous, touch, reusable, stackable
This spell will heal Brain Fever. One use of the spell will stop the effects; more spells used at the same time will reverse the effects and "regrow INT" at a rate of one point per spell used up to the original intelligence.

Cure Chills **1 point**
instantaneous, touch, reusable, stackable
This spell heals the Creeping Chills, just as the previous spell cures Brain Fever.

Cure Shakes **1 point**
instantaneous, touch, reusable, stackable
This spell heals the Shakes, working just as Cure Brain Disease does.

Cure Wasting **1 point**
instantaneous, touch, reusable, stackable,
This spell heals Wasting Disease, working just as Cure Brain Disease does.

Cause Plague **3 points**
variable, self, non-reusable, non-stackable
The caster will die from the effect of this spell. The Plague is highly contagious, with severity from chronic to terminal; there is no mild form. Plague attacks the CON and STR. Resisting the disease requires the exposed individual to roll below his STR and CON total on D100. Failure to do so means that the character loses 1D3 from both STR and CON for each attack. Only successful Divine Intervention or Mallia Initiation will halt the Plague.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS

SPIRITS OF REPRISAL

Mallia uses her diseases to punish offenders of her cult. Each of her worshippers carries one or more diseases, and gain their immunity through the worship of the Disease Mother. Those worshippers who intentionally harm another worshipper or who are responsible for the persecution of another worshipper by non-cultists will immediately lose their immunity to the diseases they carry. Moreover, the virulence of the carried diseases increases to the terminal form. The bodies of dead offenders will infect a 1km area, causing diseases resistance rolls for each disease present, until the body is burned, or a shaman is convinced to cure the diseases, or a worshipper of Arroin practices his Cure Disease skills in the area for a season.

SPIRITS OF DISEASE

Spirits of disease are spirits specially bound to the service of the Mother of Disease, and have a special relation with Disease Masters and have also a special type of spirit combat.

Disease Masters of Mallia need not bind their spirits into any object, but rather bind the spirit to their service. In this they are like shamans, as they are often so referred. The Disease Master may use the spirit's disease capabilities as well as its POW and INT.

In spirit combat, the initial attack is normal. But if the spirit of disease should succeed in an attack when the victim fails, the spirit can try to infect the spirit of the target with any of the diseases which it is carrying, and all diseases carried will try to infect the victim at once. This infection requires another roll overcoming the target's POW, as if the spirit of disease was trying to possess the victim. If successful, this does not force the victim's spirit from the body but infects the victim with the acute form of any diseases carried. If the victim dies, the priest of Mallia may then try to bargain with and bind the new spirit of disease. He uses the method described in the Initiate's section when the first spirit of disease was bound. A Mallia Disease Master may only have as many spirits of disease as he has immunities to different diseases, and he must be immunized against all of the diseases carried by his spirits.

If the binding is unsuccessful, then the victim's spirit will roam the mundane plane as a spirit of the disease to which he succumbed.

If the victim manages to defeat the spirit and drive it off or kill it, he will gain immediate immunity to any of the diseases carried by the spirit, for one year. Exposure to those diseases will not affect him. He also will steal 1 D3 points POW directly from the spirit, subtracted immediately from the spirit's characteristic POW. This stolen Power will not be diseased in any way, and adds to the former target's characteristic POW as if a Power Gain roll had been made. The character will be entitled to any normal Power Gain rolls after a week's rest.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
PRIMAL CHAOS
See the Primal Chaos cult for data.

THED
Mallia and Thed were great friends in the Darkness, and they often work together to further the spread of misery and suffering. Mallia finds much worship from Thed's children, the broos, and they are among her most accomplished Disease Masters.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
PLANTS AND DISEASE
This paragraph supersedes the rules given on p.68 of Cults of Prax. For a plant to overcome and eliminate a disease, its potency must overcome the POW of the disease, which is equal to the normal characteristic POW of the victim. If successful, the disease is eliminated.

INFECTING SMALL AREAS
A Malliant can infect smaller areas in two main ways. Wells, for example, can be contaminated with potions of disease. All drinkers of the water from the well will then need to resist catching any of the diseases present. Alternately, the spirits of disease can be bound to vials of disease potions. The vials then can be hidden in an area. Whenever another creature comes to within 80m of the area, they will be attacked by the spirit. The only way to clear the area is to find and destroy the vial, thus releasing the spirit (and probably thereby catching one or more diseases), or by defeating the spirit with another spirit or neutralizing it with a spirit of health.

These procedures, and others like them, constitute the Spread Disease skill.

DISEASES FROM MALLIA

Disease	*Severity*	*Effect Per Attack*
Shakes	mild to terminal	-1 DEX
Creeping Chills	mild to terminal	-1 CON
Brain Fever	mild to terminal	-1 INT
Wasting Disease	mild to terminal	-1 STR
Soul Waste	mild to terminal	-1 POW
Sniffles	mild only	continual sniffles
Sneezing	mild to terminal	loud sneeze
Blotches	mild to terminal	-1 CHA, red blotches on skin
Fever	mild to terminal	irrational behavior
Joint Rot	mild to terminal	add 1 to strike rank to 24, then joints freeze
Creeping Crudd *	mild to terminal	-5% to all attacks and parries
Thunder Lung	mild to terminal	sneezing and coughing fits do damage to character and may cause explosion of character

The above diseases can only be cured by successfully using: Cure Disease spells, Cure Disease plants, Treat Disease skill, spirits of Healing, Divine Intervention, or Mallia initiation.

** Creeping Crudd can be cured by natural recovery through exposure to sun and air.*

Disease	*Severity*	*Effect Per Attack*
Brittleskin	mild to terminal	adds 2 points armor to affected hit location; requires Repair and Healing to recover
Convulsions	mild to terminal	incapacitating attacks
Slow Withers	mild to acute	loss of hit location points
Bleeding Disease	special	requires twice Healing

The above diseases can only be cured by successfully using: spirits of Healing, Divine Intervention, or Mallia initiation.

Disease	*Severity*	*Effect Per Attack*
Plague	chronic to terminal	-1D3 STR & CON

Plague can only be cured by Divine Intervention or Mallia initiation.

BAGOG

THE SCORPION QUEEN

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

When the Devil led his forces into the surface world, many other creatures also escaped to there. One such was Bagog, a slow-witted scorpion daughter of the Darkness. Bagog scuttled about the surface world, comfortably enjoying the carnage of the Gods War, fighting and eating all who opposed her. Her stinging tail was a fearsome weapon, and for a while she was content.

Then other urges shook her, and she began to lay many eggs. Soon they hatched into smaller versions of herself, and while they were mostly scorpions in form, they had been changed by what Bagog had eaten. There were scorpion baboons, scorpion elves, and many other types. Some were unable to live, while others flourished. These latter ate as Bagog had, and their children gained knowledge as well. Soon the scorpion kinds formed a rough social order, centered about the might of Bagog. They ate each other, as well as their foes, hoping to soon acquire the knowledge of all the species.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

The tribes have survived since the Darkness because they lived in places that other races dreaded. The scorpion races have made some allies, like the broos, because of the pressures of persecution by the lawful races. Occasional scorpion men heroes have gained much of their abilities through the worship of Chaos. Slowly the scorpion kinds have evolved to their present cultural sophistication.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The cult assures its members of eternal rebirth in the glory of Bagog. The creatures of Bagog feast upon their dead if at all possible, for they believe that their key to perfection may be hidden in the essence of the dead, and therefore may be absorbed by the living.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

Bagog is associated with the Runes of Beast, Darkness, Chaos, and Man.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The worship of Bagog provides the minimum culture needed to survive among the hardships of the wilderness. The knowledge of the race, though long in accumulating, is passed to successors when the proper rituals are made.

Each member of any of the scorpion races is a member of Bagog upon hatching. Through their lives, the scorpion men will advance through the cult of Bagog as well.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

The Scorpion Queen is considered the incarnation of the goddess, and her word is law. She holds the direct knowledge of the race. Directly responsible to her are the priestesses, who take care of tribal duties.

Bagog teaches that the knowledge needed to achieve perfection is hidden within the minds and hearts of other creatures. To attain that knowledge, those creatures should be devoured by the proper ritual.

Advancement within the cult is similarly based. It requires that an ambitious scorpion man defeat and eat a scorpion man of higher cult standing. Done with the proper ritual, the victim's battle magic and skills become the property of the eater. Very powerful victims may be eaten by several younger scorpion men to spread the available pool of knowledge, and to expand the cult.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

Worshippers of Bagog hate all Order/Law worshippers because they persist in persecuting the People. The cult particularly despises champions of anti-Chaos sentiment, such as Storm Bull, Zorak Zoran, or particular worshippers who distinguish themselves in their anti-Chaos zeal.

The People are friendly with broos, for the goat-heads give relief from wilderness diseases by means of Mallia worship, and the scorpion kinds would rather donate their Power to the Mistress of Disease than to contract her horrible illnesses. The common oppression of the two races provides much ground for co-operation.

III. ORGANIZATION

INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION

Each tribe is an independent entity, each led by their separate Scorpion Queen. Tribes may band together against common enemies, but long-term co-operation is rare, partly because of the territorially possessive feelings of the Queens and partly because the distance between tribes in the wilderness is great.

Very powerful Queens have allied tribes permanently by fighting and devouring the other Queens. Queen Gagig Twobarb, for example, founded the Queendom of Jab near the Forest of First Reward (as Chaos folk know it) by defeating and eating three other Queens. Since all four Queens were now incarnate in one body, all four tribes followed Queen Gagig without further question.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

The Queen of the tribe is also its High Priestess of Bagog, and she rules her people both spiritually and temporally. Qualified female Rune Lords or Rune Priests may challenge her in combat for her position upon occasion, though certain supernatural

Though Hahlgrim had been able to raise the main Skanthi tribes from a distance, and knew that portions of their strength were on the march already, he needed to treat with the South Skanthi, a brave but notoriously suspicious folk spread across the hills of Skalsland up to the Rockwall Mountains.

Hahlgrim led us south, past Thunder Mountain and over the Erinflarth ford at Ribbon Sands, for storms in the south and east had flooded the Skalsplitter and raised the Erinflarth below there to a dangerous level. This meant that we must go through wild country, especially the Hardbrush flats, still reputably safe.

Hahlgrim led the party, mounted on Lightning a part-gelding of high intelligence. With us rode Ketil Ericsbane, Oddi the Keen (a priest of Storm Bull and Hahlgrim's brother), Ellisif the priestess, and each had brought 3 of their company, so that we made 17 in all. We had holy bread, salted meat, and a gift from Hahlgrim of holy Clearwine, which could open the mind and season the muscles of the soft.

After we crossed the Erinflarth, we slowed our pace so that Oddi might occasionally check the wild animals for Chaos taint; the Storm Bull's worshippers had been invaluable in the last few weeks as Hahlgrim began to define the real border between Bilini and the strength of Chaos. Several farmers and one merchant were found to be active worshippers of Chaos by Oddi's skills alone.

After several hours, Oddi frowned deeply. "I sense what I would sense were we deep in Dorastor. There is Chaos here today and yesterday, last week, a season or a year ago. Bolthor has indeed delayed long his stroke."

Hahlgrim decided to press forward, for we would be among the Skanthi on the morrow, yet to return our way and pass east of the Watch Hills might take many days, for none could know the full will of a storm god. As we went, the ground showed occasional mushy dips, and the healers forbade us water our horses from such depressions, though the Skalsplitter itself was pure though muddy.

Encamping, the sun quickly left us to slide beyond the Rockwall's peaks, and the cold came. We had set guards about the camp, but the Chaos onslaught in the night was powerful.

…After midnight the Chaos creatures struck at the horses. Lightning, whom Hahlgrim never picketed, sounded the alarm. The noble steed smashed one of the demons to the ground with a blow of his powerful hooves. But there were several demons, hairy and glowing in the night, among the animals, and even as we ran toward them we saw one of the fiends use his claws to slash a great wound in Lightning's haunch. The horse cried out, for he knew doom was on him. But if the monsters thought they had stumbled across simple hill people, they soon learned differently. Not only did these lumbering creatures make their own light and thereby a good target for spear and

signs must appear before the challenge must be accepted. In the resulting ritual battle, the victor consumes the loser.

CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES

Each scorpion tribe has a center of power in its tribal hearth. Most hearths are portable, after a fashion, being no more than a square, poorly-worked stone slab, which may or may not bear symbols and carving. The hearth is their focus of worship to Bagog, and is necessary for the regaining of Rune magic. Since each tribe has only one hearth, these are jealously protected, for destruction of the hearth deprives the tribe of their link to Bagog. Desecrators of the hearth will be hunted to the death, for rekindling the focus requires lengthy ritual and much Power sacrificed.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

Freezeday of Illusion week of each season serves as the holy day for the cult. The high holy day is Freezeday, Illusion week, Sea-season, when the cold winter is gone and the tribes celebrate the return of plentiful food. Frequently great raids begin on this day, with much ritual preparation before the hearth, and the following weeks spent readying new Initiates. Warriors would set out on Freezeday of Death week.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

The People of Bagog automatically are lay members by birth, and lay membership is available only to the People. Members of other races must undergo the Ritual of Rebirth to become a scorpion man, and they will become a lay member when they hatch.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

Each lay member must sacrifice 1 point of Power every holy day to Bagog. They may keep 10% of the goods or money they find, and must be ready at any time to defend the hearth. All lay members will perform mundane duties for the tribe.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Every Bagogi cultist pledges to protect his clutch-mates. Healing, food, room, and board will be available to any worshipper if possible.

SKILLS

The following skills will be taught to lay members at the normal rates: Chaos Speech, Club Attack, Rock Throwing, Sling Attack, Spear Attack, Spot Trap, Tail Attack, Tracking, and Weapon Making (to 35% only).

BATTLE MAGIC

No battle magic is taught to lay members.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

When the lay member reaches maturity, or when certain skills have been learned, the lay member is expected to attempt to become an Initiate. A lay member must have the following skills before trying to become an Initiate: one weapon at 50%+ attack, knowledge of Mobility or Healing 3, Tracking or Spot Trap at

50% or better. Once the skills are known, then the lay member must challenge and defeat another Initiate. Usually the Initiate is of another tribe. Sometimes lay members have the Queen's permission to eat an elf or other sentient Initiate or Rune Master, (though the knowledge transferred will be halved), and a few times a year an elder member of the tribe may voluntarily sacrifice himself to Bagog, an act highly honored by every scorpion tribe, and doubtless appreciated by the challengers, who thereby gain Initiate status without struggle.

If the challenge succeeds, then the lay member eats the body of the Initiate and becomes a new Initiate of Bagog. Defeat of powerful Initiates sometimes can be accomplished by several lay members, who all may feed on the body.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
Initiates are the feeders of the tribes, and must bring to the tribe the equivalent of 30 SIZ points of food each week. Tribal Rune Lords will command the Initiates, whom the Initiates are expected to obey.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Initiates receive the same benefits as lay members, and will be allowed to accompany the Rune Lords on wilderness expeditions, on raids, and other duties.

SKILLS
If the lay member has eaten the loser of the Initiation combat according to the rituals of Bagog, then he will always gain +20% with one weapon known by the devoured Initiate.

Initiates receive training for half normal price in all skills available to lay members.

SPELLS
In benefit for winning the Initiation combat, the Initiate gains for free the following spells if not already known: Binding, Healing 1-3, Ironhand, Mobility, Protection 2. Other spells will be taught for normal prices.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL STATEMENT
Rune Lords of Bagog are the leading warriors of the tribe. They command the Initiates on raids against foes, and are in charge of the defense of the tribe. Just as Rune Priests of Bagog tend to be female, Rune Lords tend to be male.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
The candidate for Rune Lord of Bagog must be an Initiate, and prove his ability in hunting and raiding. He must never have stolen from clutch-mates or his tribe in general. He must be 90%+ in five of the skills taught to Initiates, two of which must be weapon skills.

As he did to become an Initiate, so he must now do to become a Rune Lord: he now must face and defeat another Rune Lord, devouring him if he wins. Usually the Rune Lord will be of another tribe; occasionally by permission the Rune Lord may be of another species. The body is eaten in any case and the knowledge transferred.

RESTRICTIONS
Rune Lords of Bagog must celebrate their holy days with the Initiates. They must lead Initiates on hunts and raids. At some time in their lives they must meet and defeat a Rune Lord of a lawful cult. This last is a prerequisite for female Rune Lords who plan one day to challenge the Queen.

BENEFITS
Every new Rune Lord gains an allied spirit in the body of an insect scorpion. If the new Rune Lord defeated one of the same tribe, the allied spirit is that of the old Rune Lord; if in the same tribe, the victor also gains the Initiates of the old Rune Lord, and all of the Rune Lord's wives or husbands.

A Rune Lord may marry. A Rune Lord will also receive Darkwall, Healing 4-6, Mind-speech, and Protection 4. A Rune Lord eats as he wishes of all catches made by his Initiate following.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
GENERAL STATEMENT
The Rune Priests link the scorpion races to Bagog. They wield the magical skill of the god, and often accompany raiding parties to provide magical support. Just as most Rune Lords are male, most Rune Priests actually are Rune Priestesses—female. Priests of Bagog do not lose their DEX-based skills and are expected to continue striving to achieve their highest status.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
The candidate must be an Initiate or Rune Lord of the Scorpion Mother, must have 18+ POW, and must defeat a priest of the same or a different cult (in the same fashion as Rune Lords).

RESTRICTIONS
The priests are expected to officiate at the tribal feasts when the captives of the season are consumed. Those captives who ask to become members of the scorpion races may undergo the Ritual of Rebirth, overseen by the High Priestess.

BENEFITS
The new priest or priestess will gain the allied spirit of the former priest or priestess if the victim came from the tribe. He also will get an automatic Power gain roll, and the battle magic spell Spirit Screen 4.

The new priest may marry. Priests and priestesses may select as they wish from the prisoners and catches eaten at feasts.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
The following Rune spells are available to priests of Bagog: Discorporation, Dismiss Elemental, Divination, Divine Intervention, Extension 1-2, Matrix Creation, Mind Link, Multispell 1-2, Shield, Summon Small Shade, Warding.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS
Sprout Legs **1 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, stackable
This spell causes additional legs to sprout from the thorax of the scorpion man. This leg will be usable as a normal appendage, and will have the same hit points as the other legs. One leg will be created for each point of spell, up to a maximum of four.

sword but the air between us and them began to stir with Rune magic. Our foes reeled even before our blades could bite.

Oddi, half-armored, his face horrible with battle frenzy, reached them first, stunning the demon who had attacked Lightning. Its claws scraped against Oddi's chain mail, and the battle cry of the Storm Bull rang out in the night. I raced after Oddi, foolishly not waiting to do more than grab my scimitar. I dodged behind the demon and swung with all my might into the fur behind the thing's knee, the weighted tip of the blade hewing flesh and bone just as my teacher had taught me. The demon bellowed with pain and buckled immediately, which made my heart fiercely satisfied. Yet I forgot that even trees (for the monsters were three meters high at the least) must somewhere fall, and the stinking hulk came crashing down on me while I was still extended from my blow. I heard the brutal thud of Oddi's sword as he lopped off the demon's head with one swing, missing me by little more than a hand's width.

Though it was dead, it was heavy, and I could not pull out from beneath it at once. Its glow persisted, and as I struggled from it, I saw things crawling on the corpse, so near my eyes that I cried out in terror and shook even as I pulled free, my skin crawling and my stomach heaving with nausea. By then the rest of the demons were dead or fleeing, and the healers were gentling warriors from their frenzy.

Hahlgrim and Ellisif argued strongly about Xenohealing Lightning, for the stubborn Priestess did not feel that a horse was worth the drain in Power, but had she not finally relented I feared violence, for Hahlgrim would not deny a friend, even should it have a mane, and any use of arms against a healer would have boded ill for the war.

When I surveyed the battle site at dawn I was surprised to see that there were beheaded scorpion men as well as demons sprawled where the horses had been tied. One had a long sharp bone in place of its left arm, and a huge claw like a crab in place of its right. Oddi told me how it had grabbed his Initiate with the claw, then repeatedly stabbed her with the wicked bone, but fortunately not killing her immediately—now she was healed, and whistling while she saddled her horse. Another scorpion man had missed his aim in the night, and had impaled a stump with his tail stinger, and was then dispatched before he could remove the stinger from the wood. Stinger seemed too light a word for the appendage, which was as long and as strong as my arm.

Oddi asked me, a good Lunar worshipper, how I liked my Chaos friends, and indeed these were foul and most gruesome, but I stoutly maintained that not all Chaos folk were such, at which he shook his head. He also told me of his gratitude that I had struck down the demon, but that under the frenzy of the Bull he had come near to beheading me as well as the demon, and that never should I go before the warrior who felt the Power of the Bull.

We stacked all the heads on a pyre and burnt them, and continued toward the looming mountains, whose beauty looked most hospitable after the terrors of the night.

Jabbers **1 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
This Rune spell turns one of the scorpion man's arms into a jabber. Jabbers are long, boney points used for fighting. They have a base strike rank of 2, are used somewhat like spears, can impale, and do 1D8+1 damage plus any bonus. Attack and parry percentage equals to the target's DEX times 5%. The jabbers have twice the arm's hit points and are covered with 6 point bone.

Venom Boosting **2 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, stackable
Each point of this spell cast upon a scorpion man will increase the venom potency of the tail sting by 1D6 points. The amount of increase is rolled only after the venom penetrates a foe, and is rolled for separately for each foe hit. This spell is stackable to 4 points only.

Claws **1 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
Used like the Jabber spell, this one causes the arm to turn into a large, crab-like claw. The claw has a strike rank of 4, and does 2D6 damage plus bonus. Attack and percentage equals to the target's DEX x5%. The claw has 6 point skin and hit points equal to twice the arm's. The Claw may also crush.

Carapace **2 points**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable,
This spell increases the toughness of the exoskeleton of a scorpion man by 12 points, which is added to other natural armor. Some may also wear external armor. This spell is incompatible with Absorption, Reflection, Shield, or Spirit Block.

Speak to Scorpion **2 points**
15 minutes, voice, reusable, non-stackable
This Rune spell allows the target to converse with scorpions for the duration of the spell. Oratory bonuses help if the animal needs convincing.

Ritual of Rebirth **3 points**
4 hours, touch, reusable, non-stackable
A challenger gains knowledge of this spell upon the final defeat and consumption of the previous Scorpion Queen of the tribe. During the spell's duration, any prisoner eaten by the Queen will be laid in an egg at the conclusion of the spell. One season after the devouring, the egg will hatch and the being or beings devoured under the spell will be reborn as one of the scorpion races. The upper torso and head will remain identical to the one devoured; the lower body will now be that of a scorpion. Old weapon skills of the devoured will remain intact, as will former knowledge; attack percentage with the scorpion tail will equal the character's attack bonus plus 5%.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
SPIRIT OF REPRISAL
Bagog has no spirit of reprisal.

Renegades from the cult lose their allied spirits, and their tail shrivels and dies, falling off at 1 hit point of tail per day. All cult Rune magics will be lost. Offenders will have no immunity to scorpion venom.

Further retribution is the duty of the tribe. If caught, those who failed to follow cult dictates or those who have harmed clutch-mates will be cut apart and their sections laid out to rot. The tribe will not devour cult offenders.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
PRIMAL CHAOS
See the separate cult description of Primal Chaos.

THED
Since the birth of Time, the scorpion races and the broos have found common grounds for alliances. The broos provide valuable disease control spells, and the scorpion men provide warriors unmatched in broo society. Melding of the two occurs whenever a broo undergoes the Ritual of Rebirth, creating a scorpion broo with the disease resistance of Mallia's sons, or when the Bagog worshipper accepts Chaotic features and transforms into a broo. When the latter happens to a scorpion being, only the upper torso (the non-scorpion body) is transformed.

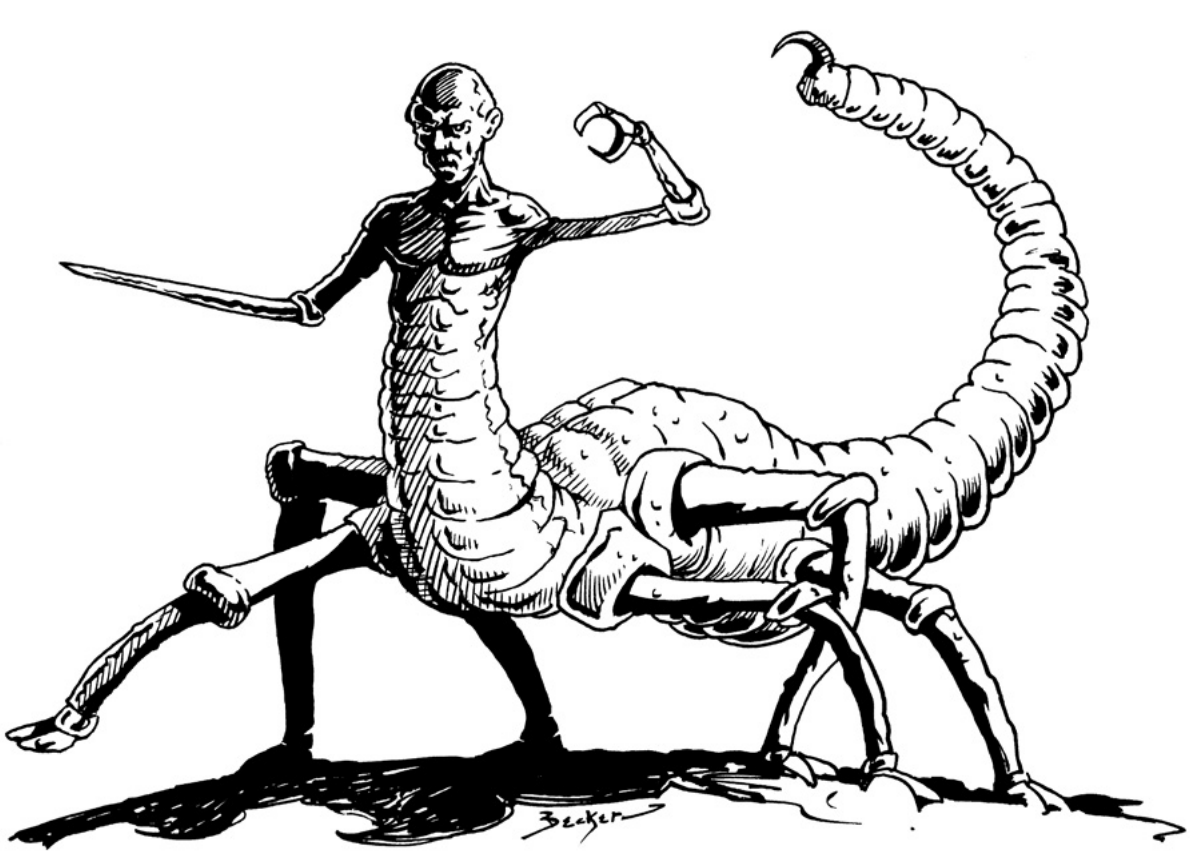
X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
CEREMONIAL DEVOURING
Properly done, the devouring of opponents may yield knowledge to the eater, but the skills known must be 25%+ and the spells only will be battle magic. In eating scorpion race members, the eater has a chance of gaining each skill or appropriate spell by making a roll of INT + POW divided by 2, or less, on D100. Only skills and spells which the eater does not know at all can be transferred, and only to the first 25% of a skill. Battle magics gained will be known entirely. Rune magic, other than Spell Teaching, cannot be learned this way.

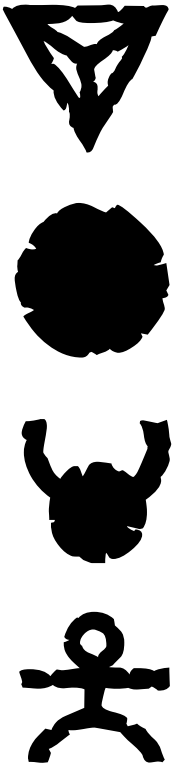
Members of non-scorpion species may be eaten in this way, but the roll will be INT + POW divided by 4 on D100. All other points about transference remain the same.

Queens who ingest beings as part of the Ritual of Rebirth do not remember skills or spells from those beings.

THE MULTIPLE CHALLENGE
Powerful members of Bagog's cult occasionally may find themselves challenged by several lesser members at once. This is allowed if the challengers are less than half as skilled as the being who is challenged, and if the total skill percentage of the challengers approximately equals the skill percentage of the incumbent. The challengers have the choice of weapon. If the challengers succeed, they all may feast on the victim's body, and all may try to gain the benefits of devouring.

A devouring ceremony ordinarily occurs on any holy day of the cult, or at such other times as the Queen decides.





THED

MOTHER OF BROOS

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY
BEFORE TIME
Prior to the Lesser Darkness, Thed was an important goddess. She was the wife of Ragnaglar, who later was called the Mad God, and their children were the broos, who then were untainted by Chaos. Together with Ragnaglar and Mallia, she schemed to introduce Chaos into the world in the form of the Devil. The three had found jealously and pride in themselves, and they dreamed of usurping the functions of the world, and of becoming its unchallenged rulers. Thed herself was the mother of the Devil, and his malevolence twisted and distorted her in childbirth. She participated in the wars of Chaos, and her broos aligned with her. During the war, Ragnaglar was slain by the Storm Bull, Mallia left the conspiracy, and Kyger Litor defeated and skinned Thed. The Devil finally was slain by the Storm Bull and cast to Hell, where Arachne Solara devoured him. Thed dispersed to all the dark corners of the universe, including Prax.

SINCE TIME BEGAN
The broos still honor and revere Thed, and obey her wishes. She occasionally is called upon by Animal Nomads for aid in raids and battles, and she grants them this for the perfunctory worship they give her in return. At other times she wanders about, sometimes visiting a shaman or Rune Priest with horrible doom at some altar as they attempt to summon some other, more benevolent spirit.

Though protected in her existence by the Great Compromise, Thed was on the losing side, and occupies a distinctly minor place in the vast pantheon of deities. It is probable that only her initial role as Mother of the Broos has been effective in maintaining her powers. That connection is also her greatest weakness, as broo-hunts are popular activities especially among humans, and it is likely that the broo population has been declining for some time.

LIFE AFTER DEATH
Thed's worshippers become demons of Chaos after they die, and spend their time hunting the souls of those unprotected by their own deities. The demons will be scouts for the forces of Chaos in the Final Battle.

Though guaranteed an existence after death, that existence seems to most worshippers of Thed to be so little different than what they presently do that few care about the guarantee in any active sense. Typically the forces of Chaos presently are limited to little more than reaction and fringe activity.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS
The cult of Thed is associated with the Runes of Spirit and Chaos.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT
REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE
The great majority of Thed's worshippers are broos and other such vile creatures. They worship her as their mother and the source of their existence. It is because of her that Chaos came into the world.

A few humans secretly worship Thed, but these warped souls are mostly rebels and outcasts from their original cults and from human society. Though they usually are intelligent (they have to be, to survive), they also will be psychotic and without principle in their relations.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER
Among broos this cult is important. Its priests have rapport with Thed and command her will to the tribe. Among humans and other races Thed has no power except to create fear. Humans discovered belonging to this cult are typically slain by their neighbors, unless the tribe is temporarily allied with Thed.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
Natural for one of the few remaining spirits of Chaos, Thed dislikes nearly every other god, recalling her old power and despising those deities still powerful. The Storm Bull slew her husband, Ragnaglar, and her children, the Devil and many broos, and she hates him and the Air Gods particularly. She greatly dislikes the Darkness deities, who fought Chaos so fiercely and for so long. She is reasonably friendly to the Cacodemon cult and to Mallia, her old ally. Though Mallia has now disassociated from Thed, the beings who worship Thed also often worship Mallia as well.

III. ORGANIZATION
INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION
The temple is the highest organization for this cult; the cult has no formal structure above the temple. Occasionally the broos will meet in council or band together in larger numbers than usual, for a particular purpose, and the dominant personalities present will arrange themselves into a grudging hierarchy, but the process must be repeated at every such gathering, and the bitter results never are the same.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
The most powerful Thed worshipper in an area is under an obligation to Thed to form a coven. According to Thed, this person will know who he or she is, and much of the petty history of the cult concerns the bloody struggles to prove, according to Thed, just who is Thed's instrument in fulfilling the obligation. Normally a Rune Priest, Rune Lord, or shaman will lead a coven, but if none are available then an Initiate may take command.

The head of a coven is called the Covenmaster. He governs by manipulation, bullying, threats, bribery, assault, and murder as he sees necessary. If a member of the coven has the power to challenge the Covenmaster, that member is under the obligation of Thed to struggle for power until one recognizes the other as leader, or is killed, or leaves to found his own coven in another place.

The only restraint to the Covenmaster's power comes from Thed herself, who may by visions instigate a general uprising against a Covenmaster who kills too many of the coven and thereby cuts into her supply of Power.

CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES

There are no special places of power to Thed, though places and items may be consecrated to her.

The Devil's Marsh is a holy place, since there still are parts of the Devil there.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

Holy days are at the discretion of the Covenmaster, who may call meetings as he wills; most Covenmasters find it more propitious to call meetings on Wildday or Godsday, particularly during Disorder and Illusion weeks.

High holy days occur during the Sacred Time. It is then that the coven meets to swear in new Initiates and Rune-level members. The length of the meeting varies with the orgiastic stamina of the Covenmaster.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

Broos may join the cult of Thed without cost. Any creature tainted with Chaos, such as an ogre, scorpion man, or giant can join by presenting the Covenmaster with a small gift of some value. Humans and the like may join only by receiving the approval of the Covenmaster.

When a human, troll, etc., applies, it must be at a meeting of the coven. The Covenmaster may carefully question him about his backgrounds, motives, and desires. This entry test can be abstracted for game purposes by rolling the applicant's CHA X 5 or less on D100. Each 100 Lunars donated to the Covenmaster by the applicant will add 5 to the number which the applicant's roll must equal or be less than. Should the prospective member be rejected, he will be attacked by the coven, which may be jealously guarding its identity.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

Members are expected to come at the call of the Covenmaster unless they feel the obligation of Thed (see the section on Intra-Temple Organization). Members are expected to spread abroad those conditions most suitable to Thed, including anarchy, famine, disaster, and cruelty.

Broo or not, every cultist of Thed has a duty to keep himself well-fed and free of entangling emotions.

Every Thedist lay member must sacrifice 1 point of POW to Thed at each coven meeting.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Cult members will be friendlier to other cult members than they might otherwise be, unless they are on opposing sides in a factional struggle, and therefore will provide minimal support or a hiding place to other members on the run.

Broos belonging to Thed often belong to the dominant cult of their tribe, with heightened status and self-importance.

The requirements of the cult often force the member to feed himself well before sharing any leftovers.

"It will take some men," said Hahlgrim to the King.

"It will take an army!" fumed Bolthor.

They sprawled amid the confusion of the King's private chambers. In the last seasons the sparring with Chaos had taken its toll even here—the once fine furnishings now looked faded and frivolous, and there were many tokens of war cast about. Here lay the cloven helm of a favored sergeant, there lay a straw doll which alone had survived the burning of a farmstead.

"You lead my men to ruin and slaughter," Bolthor continued. "They die, and yet the numbers against us do increase rather than lessen. When we sacrificed to the lords of terror, we knew some peace from day to day. Now no man knows the measure of his time in the world."

My lord Hahlgrim was undaunted. "Whose life is safe as a plaything of Chaos? Soldiers do not find victory in surrender—you dishonor the dead, my king, by such musings. You men are undaunted. Take you your guide from their courage, and persevere."

Hahlgrim had risen, a vast man and gaunt when seen next to portly King Bolthor the comfort-loving. Hahlgrim had many voices, and he could command or cajole as he saw best fit the hour. Now his voice was cold with contempt, and Bolthor shrank back before the truth it told. This King, I thought, should have been born in a grassier time when the cattle were fat. But here he was, forced to face the duties of kingliness as well as its pleasures.

The fat of his face drooping, Bolthor nodded at last. "It shall be as you advise, Hahlgrim."

King Bolthor commanded, but his arm rested upon Oddi the Keen, for Hahlgrim had been called elsewhere. One in three of all Bolthor's thanes came that day, and their men, and most of the priests and their guards, and even Queen Monnie the Shrill, Bolthor's Lunar spouse, a priestess with a powerful reputation. I accompanied to record the deeds, for all would happen by Hahlgrim's will. We were a strong band, yet even the vast armies of other ages would have been lost in the wilds before us.

It was near Slimestone, where the giant gorp lived, that our outriders reported the enemy gathering, and soon we all could see howling creatures, leaping and lurching. As their numbers grew, so did their courage: these were broos of every nature, disgusting to the eye. Some were Thed-spawn, others clearly Greyskin grovelers of Primal Chaos, warped almost beyond recognition.

"They are many," Bolthor said soberly.

Oddi nodded cheerfully.

"It would seem that Hahlgrim knows a way to rid himself of at least one enemy," the King said bitterly.

"My lord King Bolthor," Oddi replied, "Kingship runs deep in our clan—I will not fail you here. My life is yours. And you have your Guided Teleport spell to return you to safety. Fear not —we have come to slay, but not to die."

"Yet my heart forebodes," the King said. "The hour is late; may we not post ourselves upon that knoll?" Bolthor gestured to a low rise which commanded the flat ground around it.

"Indeed," said Oddi, "that seems best. Our men will form a shield wall circling the top, on which the broo assaults will break like the slap of a child, and our healers will stay in the center to reach any who fall. The warrior-priests will steady our force if they stand among them.

These broos, my lord, are each a horror, but they will not fight well together unless driven by the will of a great leader."

Bolthor nodded. "It shall be as you suggest," he said, and then ordered his thanes accordingly.

All through the evening parties of broos attacked, and were slaughtered by our bold men, who attended themselves suffered little. Yet the monsters launched themselves onto our spear points, so that a wall of dead built up before us. Oddi said that it was ever so, for the race made little of learning and sought only easy vengeance for their goddess. Though the fighting was most determined where we stood. Oddi's senses did not indicate the powerful malevolence of his sliminess, Ralzakark.

Bolthor was napping fitfully when we approached him and well might he have slept, for fat Bolthor acquitted himself well that night; his sword was notched and his royal armor splattered with the blood of broos. He roused as we came before him.

"Now is the time, my lord King," said Oddi. "The broos waver and hang back before their fires; our men are ready; the mages of us will make the light of day long before dawn, and our swords shall this morn diminish Ralzakark's strength to a tenth that saw the sun rise yesterday."

"We shall lead the charge, fair Oddi," said Bolthor.

"By my life, my lord, we shall."

Both wore full iron chain and plate armor, and both took up an iron bastard sword in each hand. There were murmurs of admiration at the warlike cast of Bolthor's face. His wife, Monnie, perhaps for the first time in her life, knelt to bid him safe return. Close behind were Bolthor's personal guards and Oddi's own housecarls, giants all, each armed with two swords. Then the helms of these great warriors began to glow and shimmer, and they turned toward the battle as one man, and the heavens lit with magical light like day, and the worshippers of the Storm Bull cut through the broos like a plow through the soil, and everywhere overturned them, even the scorpion folk, so that when the true sun rose no broo lived upon the plain before us.

After the healers had calmed the berserk warriors, and led them back to the knoll, the King rewarded Oddi richly, as befitted a true king, and not one who thought he could take up and put down the job, as might a carpenter. At the feat in the castle, I had once more cause to admire how the uncouth ways of the Storm Bull's men complemented and somehow justified their lust for war. Only a man who craves no quarter should give no quarter..

Lay members whose Rune Lord or Rune Priest is knowledgeable may learn an unusual amount of weapons skills and magic while not making a serious commitment to the cult. Fortunately for the world such knowledgeable individuals are rare.

The cult has a secret word of recognition which changes every season. Thed bestows the word upon all cult members during a nightmare.

SKILLS

Traditionally, Rune Lords of Thed teach their skills to their followers at whatever price they wish. This price often will be some devious act of special brutality. Covenmasters customarily do not teach skills to those who plot against them.

BATTLE MAGIC

Rune Priests of Thed usually teach their followers any cult spell they know, by means of Spell Teaching, for a named price

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

An Initiate can be inducted only during Sacred Time. He must be vouched for by at least two other Initiate or Rune-level members of any established coven. When building a coven, a Covenmaster may disregard this pre-requirement as he wishes.

The prospective Initiate must bring two gifts, one for Thed and one for the Covenmaster. The gift to Thed may be such traditional items as the severed hands from vanquished fighters against Chaos. The gift to the Covenmaster may be money, a potion, a service, or something else of value and use. Once fulfilling the requirements, the applicant rolls D100. A result of 75 or less indicates that he has been accepted. A roll of 76-95 means that the applicant is rejected, and that he must bring twice the gifts when he next applies, and then must make a new roll for acceptance. Each time he is rejected, he must double his gifts. If an applicant rolls 96-00, compromising data has been learned about him, and the coven sacrifices him to Thed.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN ACCEPTED

After acceptance, the Initiate must sacrifice 2 points POW to Thed at each meeting of the coven.

The Initiate must bring a gift to Thed (see the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult) on the first meeting of the coven for each season. Outside of normal political considerations, he need bring no more gifts to the Covenmaster.

Initiates must participate in organized assaults on society, but the Covenmasters determine the details of such matters.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Initiates of Thed may rule covens if there are no Rune levels available. They have high status among the lay members, and very high status as broos among the broos. They generally will be well-fed and well-housed by the cult, and often will be sent on independent missions.

SKILLS

Rune Lords will teach their skills to Initiates for standard prices, and will teach for free Medium Shield Parry to 50% to any Initiate. They are not obliged to teach those who plot against them.

SPELLS
An Initiate may only learn the Rune spells unique to Thed. A Rune Priest of Thed will teach for free to the Initiate one Rune spell of the Initiate's choice, and will teach any other spell at the price the priest chooses. All Rune spells taught require their normal sacrifice of POW, of course. The Initiate may be required to sacrifice for Rune magic before any great task.

Battle magic available to the Initiate is the same as for the lay member.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP
GENERAL STATEMENT
The leaders of the cult expect their Rune Lords to be strong warriors against good, and they excel in oppressing others and forcing unfortunates to obey their will. The Thed Rune Lord is cruel, greedy, and rapacious by nature and by training.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
To be accepted as a Rune Lord of Thed, an applicant must have a POW of 15 or more, and must have presented a High Priest of other than his own coven with at least 12 gifts to Thed (see miscellaneous notes) taken within the past season. He must also have at least two fighting skills at 90% or more, and be 90%+ in any three of the following: another fighting skill, the making of acid/poison/blade venom at potency 10+, any Stealth skill, Set Traps, Tracking, Hide Item, or Listen. A Rune Lord is accepted upon a D100 roll of 01-95.

A rejected Rune Lord must wait one full year before he reapplies.

RESTRICTION
A Rune Lord should bring a gift to Thed (see miscellaneous notes) every week of every season except during Sacred Time.

Non-broo Rune Lords will generally not proclaim their link to the cult, and so they typically do not wear iron, though they may have a full set of iron armor hidden away.

BENEFITS
The Rune Lord can be master of his own coven, who must obey him and act at his beck and call. A Rune Lord can take over any coven currently led by an Initiate, and force the Initiate to swear fealty to him, for what that is worth. The Rune Lord is treated by any broo as if he were a broo from birth, though he may not have been, and most intelligent Chaotic beings give him deference. He receives a spirit of Thed for his allied spirit (see the section on subservient cults).

Upon acceptance he goes through a rebirth of Chaos, a true changing of self. This rebirth takes one full year to complete from the time of acceptance, and which once completed is not reversible, even by Divine Intervention. By becoming fully committed to Chaos through this re-birth, he takes on an aura of Chaos which most creatures of Chaos can sense. But he also becomes vulnerable to Detect Chaos abilities, as well as Rune spells such as Defend Against Chaos, Summon Spirit of Law, and so on.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
GENERAL STATEMENT
Rune Priests of Thed are powerful political leaders among the broos, especially in emergencies. Though there are no ties between one priest and another, Rune Priests with sufficient qualifications are called High Priests and initiate new Rune-level candidates.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
High Priests only can ordinate new Rune Priests, and only at Sacred Time. They must bring seven gifts to Thed, and need a POW of at least 18. As with Rune Lords, the applicant is rejected only on a D100 roll of 96-00 and must then wait a year to reapply.

Thed cares little about knowledge and learning, and so waives the language requirement.

RESTRICTIONS
A Rune Priest must bring a gift to Thed each week.

BENEFITS
Rune Priests may seize any coven from its leader (Initiate, Rune Lord, or Rune Priest). In times of war and stress, priests become important advisors to the broo tribal leaders. They also go through the re-birth of Chaos, as do Rune Lords, and gain the detectable aura. A spirit of Thed (see the subservient cults section) is given to the Rune Priest as an allied spirit. Their most important benefit is in their Rune magic.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
Because she began as a non-chaotic goddess, Thed retains has access to the following standard spells: all 1 point spells, all Dismiss Elementals, Matrix Creation, 2 point Vision, and 2 point Multispell.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS
The Thed Rune Priest has access to the following special cult spells:

Crack **1 point**
instantaneous, 160m, reusable, stackable
This spell must be cast at a non-living, non-magical object, including a piece of armor, a weapon, or a shield. If a spirit lives in the item, the caster's POW must overcome the POW of the spirit in order to let the spell work. The spell has no effect on spell matrices, crystals, or on elven bows of magical nature. It will shatter a weapon with Bladesharp or Fireblade cast on it. This spell is stackable, in which case more than one item on the prospective victim may be shattered at once. If the spell is cast on an object with Rune magic, such as Truesword or Crush, on it, then the Crack takes effect only if it has enough points of POW in it equal to or greater than those placed in the Rune spell. Objects carried by a character protected by Shield or Countermagic may be destroyed only if the Crack's caster puts enough points of battle magic POW behind his spell to break through the defending spell.

A Repair spell will fix a broken object.

Fumble **1 point**
one melee round, 150m, reusable, stackable
This spell is targeted against an opponent. If the target fails to resist a POW vs. POW attack by the caster, then the victim rolls on the standard Fumble Table. The caster may stack this spell, in which case each additional point causes the victim to have to roll on the Fumble Table for one more consecutive round. A 3 point spell would, for instance, cause the victim to fumble for three consecutive melee rounds.

Chaos Spawn **2 points**
15 minutes, 10m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell summons a wailing, moaning void appearing in mid-air. That flung into or otherwise entering this void is irrevocably lost. The void is a popular way to sacrifice to Thed. After 1D4 melee rounds the void leaves a random Chaos creature in its stead. Determine what it is with 1D10.

D10	*Creature*
1	broo
2	scorpion man
3	ghoul
4	skeleton
5	basilisk/cockatrice
6	gorp
7	1D3 assorted snakes
8	dragon snail
9	3 meter tall giant
10	nothing

All creatures have a 25% chance to hit, plus bonuses as applicable. None of these summoned beings may use any battle magic, nor will they consent to be placed in Mind-link with the summoner or anyone else.

REVERSE CHAOS RANDOM EFFECTS TABLE

result	*effect*
01-03	lose 1D6 POW
04-05	lose 2D6 POW
06	lose 3D6 POW
07-09	lose 1D6 DEX
10-11	lose 2D6 DEX
12	lose 3D6 DEX
13-14	lose 2D6 STR
15	lose 4D6 STR
16-17	lose 2D6 CON
18	lose 4D6 CON
19-20	+3 to victim's strike rank for duration of spell*
21-22	may not resist any 1 point spells cast at him
23-24	drenched in acid, 2D10 potency (one round only)
25-26	engulfed in flame, 3D10 damage (one round only)
27-28	attracts magic: all 1 point attack spells cast in a 20m radius automatically targets against the victim
29-30	victim becomes immune to fire damage for duration of spell
31-32	roll equal to or below INT x 5 on D100 or stand stupefied for 15 minutes
33-35	all foes have +20% chance to hit victim*
36-37	one valuable gem, magic item, or weapon in the victim's possession is eaten by Chaos and disappears forever.
38-40	takes one point of damage in random location each melee round until spell expires*
41-42	victim befuddled for spell duration
43-45	non-Rune metals do double damage to victim
46	victim is rendered incapable of physically attacking*
47-48	all foes have +30% chance to hit victim*
49-50	attacked by poison, 2D10 potency (one round only)
51-52	takes 3 points of damage in random location each melee round until spell expires*
53-54	add +3 to damage of all weapons hitting the victim*
55-56	victim bound as in Binding spell
57-58	victim may not resist 1 or 2 point spells
59-60	a spirit of 3D6 POW engages in spirit combat with the victim
61-62	explosion, 3D6 damage to all within 3 meters, as well as to victim (one round only)
63-65	victim becomes physically indistinguishable from caster of spell
66-67	victim becomes silent when moving; adds 25% permanently to Move Silent ability
68-70	target becomes magic attractant for 1 and 2 pt spells
71-72	add +4 to all weapon damage against the victim*
73-74	as above, but add +5*
75-76	as above, but add +6*
77	victim may use no offensive magics*
78-80	victim takes 1D6 points of damage in random location each round until spell expires*
81-82	victim immobilized
83-84	victim goes berserk as in Fanaticism spell
85	foes have +40% chance to hit victim*
86-87	all objects on victim's body are devoured by Chaos, and victim stands naked and weaponless
88-90	victim may make no vocal sounds, including spell casts
91-92	roll CON x 5 or lose consciousness for spell duration
93-94	victim becomes magic attractant for all spells
95-96	victim demoralized for spell duration
97-98	lose 2D6 of SIZ
99	roll twice
00	victim joins caster's side for duration of spell

* The victim may attempt to resist (on the *RuneQuest* Resistance Table) the initial casting of this effect and, if he succeeds, the spell has no further effect on him. If he fails, he may not resist any subsequent effect of that particular curse.

A CHAOTIC INTERLUDE

The words 'Chaos' and 'Chaotic' usually are misused and misapplied, adding to confusions. In western Genertela, the word Krjalki means Chaos monsters, yet western manuscripts from every Age refer to both trolls and dragonewts as Krjalki, clearly a misapplication of the term ... sometimes it seems that anything someone fears is called Chaotic....

Perhaps many creatures or beings have been maligned. In Kralori ... [philosophy] considers all of creation a mistake, or at least that it is a mistake to worship it or consider it real. [There] Gbaji is known as a great psychic liberator, since Illumination frees the person from entanglements with the worldly.

The Kralori preference or acknowledgement of one of the Chaos gods is a dilemma which has plagued or delighted foreign visitors. Those who wish to save the Kralori from their godless ways are balked because the people often wholeheartedly embrace that god yet stoutly resist all the other Chaos creatures and temptations. Most foreign exploiters claim that they are freeing the land from its archetypal enemies, though conditions will be worse for the people they rule than for those they have not yet conquered.

...Kralori are very loyal to dragons. Dragon neutrality in the war of Law and Chaos is well-known, and their constancy in this is legendary. But in Kralorela, dragons have been known to rise to aid the people, a unique situation which raises only more questions.

...Perhaps 'Chaotic' really means 'that which we do not understand....'

The earliest tales exalt Chaos, and it is called "Mother and Father of the World" in an Ulerian song, while an ancient Earth song of the Sacred Time says "there is nothing so wondrous or so blessed as Chaos, from whence we spring and are molded."

The concepts most commonly found in the earliest stories are those treating the state as the primal void or the emptiness which preceded the earliest gods, or which uses Chaos as the earliest matter used in the creation of the world. Though apparently diametric, the approach is similar, treating the proto-cosmos as Beingless, possessing neither innate intelligence nor ego. The condition is always passive and inert until acted upon by the gods.

-portion of a private letter from a Lhankor Mhy priest, ca. 1599 S.T.
trans. by Greg Stafford

This spell does not create a creature. Thed sends it in reply to the summons. At the end of the 15 minutes, the wailing void appears, envelopes the summoned creature, then vanishes for good after 1D4 melee rounds. If the Thed priest throws a successful Divine Intervention as the void coalesces, he may choose from the list above the creature he wishes to appear, and it will have 75% attack chance.

Reverse Chaos **2 points**
15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell is aimed against a single victim, who receives a chance to resist. If he successfully resists the spell, there is no effect. If he fails to resist, he must roll on the following chart, and apply the effects to himself.

Thed receives this spell as a result of her peculiar position as inside-out Chaos. This spell may also be used non-reusably, in which case the spell is treated as a one-use spell. In this form it may only be cast upon a creature of Chaos, or a creature tainted with Chaos in some way. The creature gets a chance to resist, but if it fails, then the spell's effects are permanent. In this form the spell is known as the Curse of Thed.

If a successful Divine Intervention is stacked with this spell, the priest may choose what effect he desires to inflict upon the victim. If a victim's characteristic is reduced to zero or less by this spell, treat it as a 1. The effects that cause damage in a random location may not bring the victim's hit points below zero in any one area.

This spell can be cast as a non-reusable spell on beings of Chaos, in which case the effects of the spell (if they have a duration) are permanent. For example, if Glypto the Thed Rune Priest cast this spell non-reusably at a broo and rolled an 88, that broo would be struck dumb permanently. Similarly, if he had rolled a 12, the broo would lose 3D6 of his DEX permanently. However, if Glypto had rolled a 36, the effect would be the same as if the spell had been cast reusably. Glypto would have wasted his spell for nothing.

This spell enables the priests of Thed to wield great power among creatures of Chaos, including those that have undergone the re-birth of Chaos.

Rebirth of Chaos **3 points**
permanent, 10m, non-reusable, non-stackable
Cast upon lay members and Initiates of Thed, this spell has the same effect as the natural re-birth of Chaos which all Rune-levels undergo, and in addition gives the member a Chaotic feature.
There is a danger in this. The recipient has a percentage chance of dying equaling 5% plus another 5% per Chaotic feature he already has. A broo already with two Chaos features stands a 15% chance of death if the spell is cast upon him. A Divine Intervention must be cast to remove the effects of this spell before any revivification can proceed. It will take two Divine Interventions (one to remove the spell and one to revive the character) or one Divine Intervention and one Resurrection to bring back life to the character.

This spell may be cast upon non-Thedists, but they are allowed to resist. Only High Priests of the cult may sacrifice for this spell.

VII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
SPIRITS OF RETRIBUTION
The Covenmaster must slay any straying lay member or Initiate, but Rune-level traitors are struck by the Curse of Thed: roll for a random Reverse Chaos effect, and apply the effects as permanent.

THE SPIRITS OF THED
Thed grants these peculiar allied spirits to her followers. They have INT of 3D6 and POW of 4D6, and possess a random Chaotic feature.

These spirits, unlike typical allied spirits, are not kept in a weapon or familiar, but float about freely with their master, invisible to all but him ordinarily, though they have a slight link to the physical world and may be seen as a shadowy shape by a particular person 1% of the time. At his command the spirit may possess him, giving him its Chaotic feature while still allowing him control over his own actions. It may be commanded to engage a foe in spirit combat, but any points of POW lost by the spirit in spirit combat are lost permanently, due to their Chaotic nature. These allied spirits may cast spells while in a disembodied state.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
CACODEMON
Cacodemon gives his grandmother the following Rune spell:

Create Ghost **1 point**
instantaneous, 40m, non-reusable, non-stackable
This spell binds the spirit of a victim sacrificed to Thed into an area as a ghost. The priest must successfully engage the victim's spirit in spirit combat for 1 round to create this binding. The victim need not volunteer.

MALLIA
Despite Mallia's later disassociation from Chaos, Thed retains a spell from her.

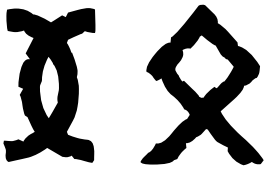
Cause Disease/Soul Waste **2 points**
15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable,
Unless he can resist this spell, the target will contract acute Soul Waste. He then must attempt to roll CON x 5 or less, or contract chronic disease, and so on. The disease will progress normally.

DAKA FAL
Before she became Chaotic, the broos gave Thed ancestor worship. This spell dates from that condition.

Summon Ancestor **1 point**
combat or 15 minutes, 160m, non-reusable, non-stackable
With appropriate changes of proper names, this spell works exactly as the Thanatari Summon Guardian in this book or the Summon Ancestor of Daka Fal in *Cults of Prax,* except that it is non-reusable.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
THE GIFTS TO THED
As briefly explained under Initiates, members of this cult must often bring a gift to Thed. This gift must have been taken from others and the taking must have caused the original donor pain. Poisoning a well is an example. This gift would endanger an entire community, which would please Thed very much. Thed would be pleased with ears, sacred items of other cults, limbs and members, heads, cherished personal treasures, etc.

THE DUEL OF THED
If two members of Thed's cult wish to duel, the Covenmaster will choose an official date for the duel at least one week in advance. By the honor of the cult, of course, both parties will be expected to bushwhack each other before then, and that official date therefore represents the Covenmaster's judgement of when the dispute must be settled. Ordinarily, the longer away the date is set, the more important that the Covenmaster considers the dispute (and the more equally-balanced the opponents probably are). Hiring assassins, poisoning food, and impersonating friends are legal in this duel.



VIVAMORT

LORD OF THE UNDEAD

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

Vivamort was a Darkness spirit of the labyrinthine halls and ways of Hell, placed there to stand eternal guard over the Terrible Secret. But Vivamort was curious about what the secret was, and when Eurmal crept into Hell, Vivamort betrayed his trust to learn the secret. There they discovered Death.

Vivamort aided Eurmal again when he and Humakt came to carry Death to the surface world, helping them past Death-hound and Bimbaros, Hell's porter. Vivamort knew that all those slain would come to his realm once their souls had met Death.

Grandfather Mortal was the first to die and the first to come to Vivamort. He also was the first to understand Vivamort's soul-greedy treachery, and great hatred stood between the two. When the Sun later came to Hell, Vivamort was burned and had to flee, hurt and disfigured, to the now-darkened surface. (When the Sun learned of Vivamort's role in the release of Death, he sent curses upon him.)

Reaching the surface, Vivamort sheltered a while with Mallia, Mother of Disease, trading secrets of Darkness and Death. He stalked the world for Power. As he went, he learned more of Death, and began to fear what he had unleashed, for he recognized Chaos as an extension of Death. The knowledge froze him with terror.

Soon the Devil attacked him and wounded him. The wound would not heal, and his Power drained out through it to the void. Vivamort faced not just death, but annihilation from this Chaos wound. Since he wished above all to preserve himself and his vile deeds, he begged help from his Chaos foes and made evil pacts with them.

The Devil allowed him a hollow existence. Vivamort was cut off from the mystic unity of the world and from the universal flow of Power, and cast apart from both life and death. From that agreement onwards, Vivamort would need to drain life from others and to embrace Chaos. Faced with complete annihilation or acting as an agent of active entropy, he chose the latter out of pride and fear.

Some write that he found this new manner of existence acceptable, because of the determination with which he took up the cause of Chaos, roaring through the Great Darkness. He used his demonic abilities to rip Power from the harried gods, and some he was able to destroy totally. Vivamort slowly gained allies, and he made others like himself. Once, Vivamort and his undead allies caught Arroin and broke his spirit, but could not kill him.

News of Vivamort and his transformation reached Hell, carried by spirits whom he had attacked but not annihilated. Many there cursed him then: the Sun's curse came in effect; Ty Kora Tek, Queen of the Dead, was incensed when Vivamort stole souls who were hers, and she set the Earth against him; the River Styx heard of Vivamort's betrayal and swore he never would cross her waters again, and to this day a drop from the Styx will destroy any vampire it touches. All the waters of the material world followed Styx's vow, and they remain a prime enemy of Vivamort.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

Since the Dawning of Time, Vivamort has been hated and feared by most, and embraced by few. These arrogant few are vain enough and fearful enough to want to maintain their present consciousness forever. It has little history in Time since it infests the outer edges of civilization and cloaks its doings in utter secrecy. During Time, the Hero-Priest Delecti has grown to great power and fame in the Upland Swamps of Dragon Pass. Additionally, some tenuous connections with a few other cults have been made.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Vivamort's vampire cult offers continued awareness in the same dead body and warped soul. If the cult member is a vampire and is destroyed, he is annihilated; he does not enter the cycle of rebirth. Since the higher aspects of his spirit, his mystic essence, already has been sacrificed to become a vampire, the vampire has willingly removed himself from the universal cycles. Vivamort offers life eternal for the highest price—the soul.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

Despite the enmity of most of the other gods of Darkness, Vivamort retains his origin in Darkness. His Runes are Chaos, Darkness, and Undead.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The cult exists because the cosmic duality established in the God Time allows it to exist, and arrogant people exploit that chance to slake their fears of unbeing. A deadly few will always seek out the vampire cult, with its promise of unlimited existence on the material plane, and risk quick death at the fangs of the vampires in return for the chance of undying. Those who live by accident near temples of the cult may aid the cult out of fear, or find that co-operation with it gives them distinct advantage over their fearful neighbors. So long as such weakness exists in the world, the cult will have applicants.

Vivamort requires many horrors and absolute loyalty of his worshippers. Long Initiate service is required before reaching vampire status.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

The cult holds little openly acknowledged position or power in Glorantha. There is some acceptance of it in the Lunar Empire (usually along a contested external border), but the cult is detested by most people and governments.

…And so we found exhausted Hahlgrim asleep, while his allied spirit, a snarling lynx, prowled a perimeter around the camp to watch for foes. Our column halted to eat. We held council with our battle lord.

"Karnoora is no more," he told us, "unless she knows not the bite of silver nor fears blessed water. It was a mighty struggle."

So might we have believed, for Karnoora was a vampire princess of great power, whose mortal continuance (how should one say "life" of a vampire) spanned the ages of the world.

"Orlanth spoke full to me of her and her ways, and so she was confounded where she thought herself most safe. The Tower of Lead still stands, and her followers still exist. She died last night; they will remove themselves tonight unless we strike first. Should we strike, old Ralzakark will be stripped of another arm, and he shall feel like the worshipper who joins too many cults, and has his coin tithed away at every hand." Perhaps this last was not a jab at Bolthor, who was famous for joining cults and then whining at the cost, but so we all took it. Bolthor glowered, and later would talk only to his blood thanes.

Though we were weakened by the fight with the broos, Hahlgrim found enough Rune magic among us to form a compact and powerful band. Most of the army, including Bolthor, was sent home; the remainder he separated into a strong screening force and a few of the most powerful, who would precede the force and attempt to enter the Tower unnoticed, acting as worshippers whom the vampires would surely summon to milk of Power after Karnoora's demise. Hahlgrim saw fit to leave me with the screening force, under Ketil.

At that point a message came from Bolthor, urgently requesting a meeting. Hahlgrim opposed a second parley, yet we pleaded with him for it, even knowing of Bolthor's treachery, since a new insult to the King might leave him intractable. Hahlgrim bridled, for the time was valuable, but the greatest lord goes against friendly counsel at his peril. At length we cantered away from the Tower to meet Bolthor in the mud of Bugswarm swamp.

Bolthor demanded the return of Ironbreaker. His new sword, the King said, did not fit his hand well, and he craved the return of the heirloom. Hahlgrim had connived to keep secret the full knowledge of the sword's power, as evidenced by his own explanation of the fight with the vampire princess, and therefore the King had been deceived.

Hahlgrim said, "My lord King, with this great weapon did you make fast my fealty and also gain the alliance of my family and brethren. It was I who showed you that the forces of Chaos cannot stand against determined men, and that the Lightbringers will triumph always when their bravery and intelligence emulated. Should I return this sword to you, so then will I return to the lands of the Skanthi, for I deem not that you then would withhold your hand against the lands so recently reconfirmed to me. Even this last evening I learned of fields burnt along the Erinflarth. Who then will stand between you and the fury of Ralzakark when he takes the field himself? Ironbreaker may not frighten the hero of the broos. He will sweep across Bilini, and the Great Bat will come to call, and even your wife will not keep you your throne should the bat be used. Trust the word of honest men, Lord Bolthor, and keep your crown. Become Bolthor Gift-grabber, and your worst fears shall be truth. My fealty remains as sworn, unless you have it elsewise. How say you?"

Bolthor twisted in the saddle while his advisers spoke to him, and his face grew dark. "Keep the toy!" he growled at last, and galloped toward his army. No more of him that day did we hear.

Hahlgrim swore mightily once the King and his entourage had left, and bid we speed toward the Tower. Later he told me that the sword Ironbreaker had a spirit like the heart of a child, and that if the holder honestly admired the weapon and praised it for itself, then the weapon would speak in return, and reveal all of its secrets. But if the holder beheld and praised Ironbreaker only so that the sword reflected glory upon the wielder, then the sword would only do as it was bid. "Of this latter sort is Bolthor, in whom fear and greed constantly war for dominance."

In all, nine set out for the Tower. We followed at a good distance, so that any watcher on the ground could not spy both us and Hahlgrim at the same time. With Hahlgrim was Oddi the Keen, and other stalwart fighters, as well as a powerful Healer. Our leader's fears proved sound: the sun raced to the west, the shadows deepened. The meeting with Bolthor had cost much: we would have to face the vampires at the beginning of the night.

Hahlgrim's party crossed the last stream before the Tower of Lead, and entered the spider tree forest. All about them misty curtains hung from the branches, and tiny jewels of light danced and bobbed among the gathering mists. They avoided the webs as they could, for the lights were the spiders of the wood, and the wise among us told of horrible nightmares, fevers, and painful deaths upon the bite of these strange creatures.

Suddenly great shapes loomed in the night, and wolves were upon these daring men. The wolves were actually vampires in were-form, for blades often magically slid off their fur. The healer among them sent back the alarm, and we raced to the rescue, some of us (myself included) crossing the stream above and below the fight, to catch the vampires in the curves of the scimitar, as the saying has it. I had barely dismounted, when no wolf but a tall gaunt warrior loomed up before me. I cannot describe the horror I felt when my blade would not bite and the terrible creature reached out his hand through my armor to send a chilling cold through my shield shoulder. I sent the most powerful Mind Blast at him which I could, and knew great joy when the undead began to flop about upon the ground, bereft of all intelligence. With my silver dagger, a parting gift from my father, I cut away the thing's head, and later burned separately both the head and body.

For that reason, the cult locates beyond civilized areas, and its small temples may be located anywhere, frequently operating out of Chaos nests. In the Upland Marsh, Delecti and his cult rule a wretched kingdom.

The cult operates secretly, preying upon nearby environs and remaining hidden as long as possible.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
Vivamort is friendly to certain sub-cults of the Red Moon (the Crimson Bat in particular) and tolerates Mallia. Daka Fal and the associated cult Grandfather Mortal are specially hated. Eurmal and Humakt are hated intensely, due to the dealings they had with Vivamort in the God Time. Vivamort always dislikes and fights any cult that actively fights Chaos and sees Vivamort as the harbinger of Chaos.

III. ORGANIZATION
INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION
The various temples have little contact. A mysterious council, composed of the oldest and most powerful heroes and priests, is rumored, but nothing is known beyond this. A few temples keep ties with parent temples, if the respective priests are friendly.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
A Vivamort temple will have one to five Rune Priests or Rune Lords in most cases. The most powerful Rune Priest is the High Priest, who runs things as he wills.

Vivamort allows no direct struggles between his vampires, but vampires are arrogant by nature, and tend to dislike even each other, feeling cramped and confined by too many members in a hierarchy. If too many priests especially have been initiated, the most powerful and ambitious of the lower priests will break with his own temple and set out to colonize a new area and found a new temple of Vivamort. In departing, the priest usually takes a Rune Lord and a few Initiates to aid him.

CENTER OF POWER
The Vivamort center of power is the Plateau of Terror, where Vivamort died and was reborn under the terms of his pact with Chaos, and where the first vampires came into being. The Plateau of Terror now may be underground or on another plane of existence with the god, now there may always be a center of power "where life has failed, fear prevailed, and Chaos is seeping in."

HOLY NIGHTS AND HIGH HOLY NIGHTS
Freezeday night is the holy night for Vivamort cultists, especially in Death week of each season. The high holy night is the night of Wildday, Death week, of Dark-season.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN
Almost anyone can be a lay member, because almost anyone can be a scared person accidentally living near an active Vivamort temple, giving Power to vampires in hope of avoiding becoming a victim. Vivamortists demand secrecy, and betrayal of their existence to civil authorities or Chaos-fighting cults is severely and swiftly punished. Only the close-mouthed lay member's family will be safe.

I came upon Lord Hahlgrim and Ironbreaker. This was surely a great weapon, for it sang and glowed as it swung, and the vampire against whom he fought parried desperately as it tried to dissolve to smoke and disappear. But Hahlgrim skewered the smoke even as it hung, and the air flashed with power, and its vanishing scream testified that the vampire had been annihilated.

Around us the fight continued, and many of our force fell, for the vampires were a dozen or more, and some of them great mages. But Hahlgrim and Oddi had planned well. Some of us retreated toward the stream, while others poured out holy water to make an island, so far as the vampires were concerned, of the battle ground. Bounded by water on all sides so that they could not escape, and outnumbered a dozen to one, even the mightiest of them fell, though not before fifty or more of us were dead or mortally wounded. The fighting was fierce, and our Power had been savaged. We brought back the bodies as we could, but some were never reclaimed, and all thought the fight the hardest they had known. I spent much of my force dispelling the shade elemental these creatures called up, and more than one of my comrades congratulated my Lunar training, which made me proud.

One vampire had been captured, and him we held in a silver slave collar, allowing him just enough POW that he might answer our questions. Before we dispatched him we learned much of vampires and their ways, and learned also that Ralzakark had regained that day an old ally, though our captive knew no more…

After spiking the vampire beds and making much general destruction and looting of the Tower, we rode away, coming across the camp of a large group of Tricksters further down the valley, who had wandered through broo country from Kartolin Pass and Ralios. They did many entertainments, and Oddi particularly enjoyed them, drinking and riddling with them far into the night.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG
Lay members must give 1 point of Power a week to the cult. Offers of sentient sacrifices will gain favor and permanent lay membership. Lay members may have to do work for the temple, though this is rare. Vampires and lay members rarely interact, except perhaps in the obvious way. High Priests of the vampires vary in their attitudes toward the lay population: some respect the safety of the 'pool,' as the flock is sometimes known, but others regard the lay members as cattle, and do as they wish. Any lay member betraying the existence of the temple is punished severely and swiftly.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Vampires usually do not victimize lay worshippers.

SKILLS
None.

BATTLE MAGIC
None.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
Vivamort prefers to corrupt those of the lineage of Grandfather Mortal—humans, ogres, trolls, elves, ducks, baboons, etc. Such candidates for Initiate status must have brought victims to the temple. If hard working, loyal, quiet, eager, and vicious, beings may quickly gain Initiatehood.

Initiates must swear never to betray their vampire Rune Priests and Rune Lords. They must renounce family and clan ties, or bring them within the cult. They must bring at least one family member as a feast for the vampires. If they have no family, a friend will do. In return, the hierarchy agrees to assist the Initiate into the way of the vampire should he later achieve the qualifications.

A person will be accepted as an Initiate by passing a test, abstracted to the following: INT+CHA+1 per victim supplied, divided by 2 and then multiplied by 5. Roll equal to or less than the result of the calculation on D100. Money contributed does not aid a prospective Initiate's chances.

Failure to be accepted means that the candidate is a traitor or prospective traitor, and will become the main course in the next vampire feast. The character may be able to fight his way free, of course, but those who fail the test and fail the escape will be turned into zombie temple guardians.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
To remain an Initiate, a person must sacrifice 2 points of POW and 2 hit points (blood) each holy night. Initiates must give one-third of their gross income to the temple, and do any work that the hierarchy requires. They must help find victims when such are needed. An Initiate may live at the temple or continue in some role in a nearby community. The Initiate also must place himself at the vampires' disposal when extra POW is required (as in an attack on a vampire or the temple itself by an organized foe). This is done on command at any time, via the Vampire Touch (see below). Initiates may die from this.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Though vampires are not harmed by the sun, they lose all their special magics so long as the sun shines. Initiates are therefore their invaluable representatives during the day, and have much direct control of the lay population, thereby gaining fearful respect from their former neighbors. An Initiate has limited cult protection, and a ransom. Rune Priests and Rune Lords of the vampires will treat their Initiates fairly, but always know that any Initiate is ultimately expendable. As convenient for their masters, Initiates may gain access to some one-use Rune magic. Individual Initiates may stay at and be supported by a temple.

SKILLS
The following skills are taught by the cult to Initiates for the prices indicated:

Half Normal Cost - Hide in Shadows, Spot Hidden.
Normal Cost - Camouflage, Move Silently.
Unique - Sword-biter.

BATTLE MAGIC
The following battle magic spells are available or otherwise relevant to cult Initiates.

Half Normal Cost - Darkwall, Detect Life, Detection Blank.
Prohibited - Firearrow, Fireblade, Ignite, Lightwall.

The prohibited spells are prohibited to Initiates only, as being unbecoming to their spiritual development. Rune Lords and Rune Priests may use them normally, if judiciously.

THE SWORD-BITER
Vivamort's Initiates and Rune Masters only may learn the special cult weapon, the sword-biter. This is a type of light mace, treated as such in all respects except that when parrying in combat the sword-biter can disarm an opponent if the user rolls 01-20 for his parry and the attacker has rolled 21-95 for his attack. Treat fumbles normally.

The sword-biter is a shaped mace with a blunt fork at its tip and a sturdy protective hilt. The vampire will try to parry the blow of a sword with the fork, then twist his weapon and so disarm the attacker. They generally use a short sword in conjunction with the sword-biter, but the capture of non-believers is much more useful to the cult.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP
GENERAL STATEMENT
The Rune Lord of Vivamort actively despoils the living to the benefit of his dark god. He personifies the aggressive, grasping rankness of the grave, which seeks forever to drain life from the living. As importantly, however, the Rune Lord is also the protector of the Vivamort Rune Priest, who in turn is the genitor of further members of this undead race. Vivamortist Rune Lords usually will encounter no contradiction in these twin aims.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
To become a Rune Lord vampire, the applicant must have been an Initiate for at least a year (usually for much longer) and have at least 90% ability in Hide in Shadows and Spot Hidden, use two weapons at 90% or better, and be 90% or more in one other skill of any kind. The applicant's POW must be at least 15. The applicant must die, throwing his soul to Vivamort's care.

The same abstraction of the test is used as for an Initiate. Failure to be accepted means death.

The ceremony involves the assembly of the temple vampires, invocation of Vivamort, and the draining of the Rune Lord candidate of all blood and POW. The candidate dies. Vivamort then places the now-twisted spirit of the candidate back into the body, which must then lie in state for one full day and night or the Rune Lord will be annihilated and never reawake. The candidate that reawakes is now a vampire.

RESTRICTIONS
The successful candidate is now a Rune Lord of Vivamort, a creature of the undead, a disjointed soul in a dead body, having the full status of vampire, and will exult in the hatred and fear such status brings. The new Rune Lord will start to gain a distinctive pallor of skin and sheen of hair. His prominent incisors will have developed by the time he rises from the dais, and he will have accrued his now-incredible strength. The new Rune Lord now will register on a Detect Undead spell. He will no longer reflect from a mirror, since his soul is no longer fully tied to the material plane.

He must lie dormant for one-third of each full day.

The Death Rune, presented strongly by one who is tied to a Death Rune cult (i.e., who is an Initiate or higher) has great power against the vampires of Vivamort. A vampire may not look directly at that presented Rune, nor may he directly approach it. Contact with the Death Rune causes 3 points of damage to the vampire (as in a Disruption spell). The Death Rune also focuses Disruption spells cast against vampires. A Disruption cast in this way automatically overcomes the POW of the vampire (there is a 95% chance of success) no matter what his POW. To use these powers of the Rune, the Death cultist must present the Rune and concentrate. This cannot be done in any melee round in which the cultist attacks with a weapon or casts a spell other than the Death Rune-focused Disrupt. Focusing on the Rune will not protect a cultist from a rearward attack. Any form of the Rune will be effective—crossed sticks, a Humakti sword, a ritual sign, patterns on cloth, and so on.

Vampires may call on Vivamort for Divine Intervention, but the vampire does not sacrifice points of permanent POW—since it has none. Instead, the vampire sacrifices to Vivamort some of his species maximum capacity for POW. All the mechanics for Divine Intervention are the same. [Example: a human vampire Rune Lord who gained Divine Intervention with the 'loss' of 4 points of POW would act thereafter as if he had a species maximum of 17 (21 minus 4).] If the points of POW lost take the vampire below 15, the vampire would cease to function, going into a coma of one month for each point below POW 15. Vampire Divine Interventions tend to be defensive and oriented towards getting to safety in case the POW lost precipitates such coma.

The lowered species maximum from the Divine Intervention lasts for a year (one complete world cycle) and then raises to that normal for the species. If a vampire's species maximum is ever lowered to zero, the vampire is annihilated, expunged from every plane of existence forever.

The Rune Lord will die if impaled in the heart (chest). Fire will burn and destroy the vampire, as a consequence of the Sun's curse. Immersion in water annihilates vampires, as will even one drop of the water of the River Styx.

BENEFITS

Above all, the vampire Rune Lord now has the terrible ecstasy of ripping Power from the world.

Though the Rune Lord may not be of as high status or as close to rapport with Vivamort as is a Rune Priest, he has some distinct bonuses for dealing with the material world. His vampire status gives him doubled strength. He is ageless and immortal, and has vast amounts of time to develop fighting skills and any other interests. In the interests of self-preservation, vampires will become very skilled in many fields.

The vampire may Harmonize any person whose glance he catches, without loss of POW to himself. The Vampire Harmonize is a special version of the spell: the victim will not move as the vampire does, instead freezing in his last position until the effects of the gaze wear off.

A vampire can store Power drained from others, up to his species maximum.

All vampire hit locations take twice the normal damage. If that much damage is taken, the vampire turns into smoke at the end of the melee round, regaining its hit points at a rate of 1 per melee round. Should the damage suddenly exceed its hit points, even though all hit locations are intact, it will turn into smoke. It does so at will, though it may also turn into a bat or wolf. Vampire smoke moves at 1 movement point per melee round.

The touch of a vampire penetrates armor and attacks the character's POW just as does a ghost. If the vampire wins, the character loses POW. A victim drained to less than POW 3 will also lose the last Rune magic spell for which he sacrificed. If the bite of a vampire penetrates armor, it drains 1D6 in hit points (blood) per melee round until forced from the victim or until the victim dies.

Vampire Rune Lords receive an allied spirit. Since they are undead worshippers of a warped spirit, even their allied spirits are unable to regenerate their POW. Such spirits regain their POW in spirit combat, or they may get POW from their master.

The vampire Rune Lord is susceptible to spirit combat in the ordinary fashion. Vampires register on Detect Undead, but not on Detect Life spells. Vampires are not subject to disease, nor harmed by poisons or Blade Venom.

Vampire Rune Lords may get one-use cult special Rune spells, but usually choose to content themselves with those spells they drain from the living. For a one-use cult special Rune spell, the Rune Lord must sacrifice POW equal to that of the spell every week for a year, above and beyond the POW that he drains for himself. A Rune Lord who wanted two uses of Raise Zombie would have to sacrifice 4 points POW to Vivamort each week; if he happened to drain 15 points POW in a particular week, 4 points would have to go to Vivamort for the spell, leaving him with 11 points.

The Vivamort Rune Lord can die by the impalement of his heart (chest). The head must be cut off and the body burned for the annihilation of being to succeed, for if the intact body is recovered by Vivamort worshippers, the instrument of impalement can be removed on the next holy night, and the vampire will rise to hunt again.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD

GENERAL STATEMENT

Vampire Rune Priests must further the race of the undead. In doing so, the priest may accept only victims and sacrifices that are intelligent sapients. Vampire priests consort with any sort of being; if they are particularly pleased with a worshipper (or even a feast victim) they may sponsor the person into the cult. Vampire Rune Priests deal with the more spiritual levels of charnel Chaos, and their plans and schemes are longer-range, more intricate, and more pervasive than those of Rune Lords. Rune Priests always lead the temples.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

The candidate must have been an Initiate for three years, and must have brought the temple at least 25 victims. Every candidate must have a POW of at least 18, to show worthiness for the new role, and each must know Hide in Shadows at not less than 90%. Every candidate must pass tests to become a priest; these tests are abstracted to the following calculation:

INT + CHA divided by 2 and multiplied by 5, plus 2 for each language and knowledge skill known at more than 50%. Roll D100 equal to or less than the result. Money donated or victims seized do not improve the score.

The same ceremony and lying-in-state occurs for the Rune Priest as for the Rune Lord.

To be turned down is to become an enemy of the cult. The bodies of those who do not succeed become zombie guardians.

Those who do succeed awake as vampires, undead creatures of great power, warped souls in dead bodies.

RESTRICTIONS

Except for Hide in Shadows, the DEX-based skills of the vampire Rune Priest are reduced to DEX times 5. The priest has the pallor of skin and the sheen of hair typical to the undead. He will register on a Detect Undead spell, but not on Detect Life. He no longer reflects in a mirror. He must lie dormant for one-third of each full day. He may not look at or directly approach a strongly presented Death Rune held by one consecrated to that Power; the touch of such a Rune causes 3 points damage as a Disruption spell, and can act as a focus for Disruption spells that automatically succeed (95% chance) regardless of the vampire's Power.

Not having the time for continued weapons practice or other active training, priests often hunger for such abilities and the power they bring.

Vampire Priests get Divine Intervention from Vivamort. The priest does not sacrifice points of permanent POW, since he has none, but instead sacrifices some of his capacity for the POW, lowering his species maximum for a time. If the loss of points lowers the species maximum below POW 18, the vampire goes into a coma that lasts one month for each point below 18 lost in the Divine Intervention. The lowered species maximum lasts for a year (one complete cycle), then raises to normal. Rune Priests will be extremely cautious and defensive with calls to Vivamort for aid. If a vampire's species maximum lowers to zero, the vampire is annihilated.

BENEFITS

The Rune Priest has most of the benefits of the Rune Lord. His strength doubles immediately. He may turn into a wolf, bat, or cloud of smoke; while in smoke form he regenerates at 1 HP per melee round. He may Harmonize those whose glance he catches, immobilizing them, without loss of POW to himself. He no longer registers on a Detect Life spell (though he will to Detect Undead). He gains an allied spirit incapable of regenerating its POW and that must gain the POW through spirit combat or from its Rune Priest. His hit locations regularly have twice the normal amount of hits; should one of his hit locations be damaged beyond what it can take, or should the vampire be damaged in excess of his hit points although all body locations are intact, the vampire automatically turns into smoke.

The touch of a vampire Rune Priest will reach through armor and attack a character's POW, just as a ghost does. If the vampire wins, the character loses POW. If the bite of the vampire penetrates armor, it drains 1D6 in hit points (blood) from the victim. Vampires often hang on until the victim is dead or the vampire destroyed.

The vampire Rune Priest may use little Rune magic, and his approach to Rune magic differs from most priests. The vampire has a warped soul and serves a god with no Higher Being. This complicates matters (see Rune Spell Compatibility, below). Vampire priests can use both cult special spells and spells drained from victims.

The vampire priest is not subject to diseases, nor harmed by poison or Blade Venom. The vampire may be killed by impaling his heart (chest), but the attackers must cut off his head and burn the body to prevent him from rising to walk again on the next holy night.

THE HIGH PRIEST

The High Priest of each temple learns to create the Basilisk. Only one Basilisk may be created and controlled by a High Priest at one time. If it is destroyed, the High Priest must go through the lengthy (one week) ritual and then wait an entire year for the egg to hatch. In fashioning this creature, the priest must possess the needed materials, including the rare Rooster's Egg. This last may be created by a vampire with alchemical skills, or gotten through other means. The High Priest can claim the first choice of victims, the 'first drinking' from them, and the 'last draught' which dooms them. The vampire High Priest is the undisputed Lord of the Undead, responsible for the furtherance of his master, Vivamort, and the undead.

The Basilisk characteristics are included in the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY

Vivamort has power to grant use of only the following cult special spells to his worshippers. Each of these spells must be sacrificed for with Power drained from victims so long as the vampire wishes to keep the spells. The sacrifice for this Rune magic must occur before the vampire drains any POW for itself.

Rune Lords may gain one-use Rune magic only on Death week, Freezeday night holy nights; for each one-use spell they must drain POW equal to the spells every week for an entire year.

Any vampire can drain Rune magic from those Rune Priests, Rune Lords, and Initiates who have sacrificed for and are carrying Rune magic. Those drained by the vampires lose the magic and the Power for which they had sacrificed.

Vampires must drain the victim to below 3 points POW to drain the possessor of a Rune spell. The vampire gains the last spell for which the victim had sacrificed, no matter what size or type of spell. If the last sacrifice increased the Power of an already-known spell (from Shield 3 to Shield 4, for instance), the entire spell (all 4 points in the Shield 4 example) would be lost to the vampire. Captives may be held and drained below POW 3 again and again, to steal all the spells the captive knows. If the captive's POW goes to zero or below, the captive dies, but a spell is still gained by the vampire.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS

Vivamort teaches only the following spells; other spells of any sort must be drained from victims.

Divination **variable**

permanent, 160m, reusable, non-stackable.

The caster may ask a question of Vivamort, who will usually answer with a short sentence of up to seven words, though it may be a vision. Bound by Time, gods cannot tell the future.

The ritual takes one hour, only to be done in a recognized holy place of Vivamort.

The probability that the questioner will understand the answer is POW x5 or less on D100. Results above that number

mean that the god does not answer. A result of 96-00 means that the answer is misleading, and the referee must attempt to mislead the questioner. The referee makes all D100 rolls.

Each POW point of this spell used allows one question to be asked.

Create Skeleton **1 point**
instantaneous, 40m, reusable, non-stackable
Using the bones of a victim, the caster animates the skeleton at the victim's old level of competence (with a limit of DEX x 5).

Summon Small Shade **1 point**
15 minutes, 16, non-reusable, non-stackable
A shade is a tall, cloaked human-sized figure in a pool of darkness 3x3x3m. It engulfs characters in the pool of darkness and attacks them with fear shock. All statistics and characteristics are as standard.

Create Ghost **2 point**
instantaneous, 40m, reusable, non-stackable
Binds the spirit of the victim into an area as a ghost. The caster must engage successfully for one round of spirit combat to create this binding. The victim need not volunteer.

Create Zombie **2 point**
instantaneous, 40m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell creates a zombie out of a newly slain victim. The zombie is exactly as shown in the standard monster description.

Raise Ghoul **2 point**
permanent, 40m, reusable, non-stackable
A vampire may cast this spell on the grave site of any victim that he has killed himself or was party to killing through bite or touch, exactly one week after the victim's death. On the next night, the doubly unfortunate victim will claw his way out of the grave, and become a ghoul, hungering for the flesh of the living. The caster may assign the ghoul a task, but eventually it will wander away and operate on its own, perhaps grouping together with other ghouls or haunting an area singly, yet always seeking the flesh of the living.

Ecstatic Communion **variable**
30 minutes, 160m, re-usable, non-stackable
This spell is cast during a temple holy night sacrifice. It causes the loss of victim POW and hit points to become the most exquisite sensual joy for both the drinker and the victim. Persons under this spell will be unable to respond to outside events until the spell has ended. At such sacrifices it operates as an area spell for all donors at the altar. Victims may attempt a saving roll equal to or less than their POW + INT; those who fail that roll must make another at the same percentage, or they will cooperate fully with the vampires in addition to feeling the ecstasy.

This spell is commonly used at the creation of a vampire, though it also may be used outside the temple, to quiet a victim's cries or to gain power over a sybarite or hedonist. Outside the temple this spell acts as a Rune magic attack, and must overcome the victim's POW. If the spell once has been effective against a particular person, that person will thence resist its influence at one-half his or her POW.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
Vivamort has no known subservient cults. A temple may perhaps gain control over some local Chaos worshippers and force them to do as Vivamort wills, but the cult has no ties resembling a normal subservient cult.

Nor does the cult have a spirit of reprisal. Ex-Initiates are the responsibility of their temples, which have the most to lose from such defections. Temples will use all power to hunt down traitors and expunge them.

Should any vampire knowingly turn on his master, he will find the binding of his mind and body failing, in exactly the same fashion as if the vampire should lose all his funeral earth, except that the failing cannot be stopped. For further information, see the entry on the elements in the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
MALLIA, MOTHER OF DISEASE
Vivamort maintains a connection with the being who sheltered him and who helped (inadvertently, some say) destroy him. Mallia has never shaken off these ties of old. Vampires are immune to her form of Death, but aid her and her followers on occasion, and they also can spread a disease given to Vivamort by Mallia in the God Time.

Cause Creeping Chills **1 point**
permanent, touch, re-usable, non-stackable
This spirit of disease was given to Vivamort in return for secrets of Hell and Death that he brought with him when he first emerged from the Underworld. Some vampires have become ardent spreaders of this disease.

The spell works exactly as if the victim simply had been exposed to the disease as per the disease rules, except that the spell is blockable by defensive magics. Once contracting the disease, the victim must be healed or die.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
THE VAMPIRE
The vampire can be created only on the holy night of the cult, the final stage in the ordination of the Rune Lord or the Rune Priest to be. The nascent vampire is drained of all of his POW, which is offered to Vivamort. Vivamort is present at the ceremony, and deigns to bind the mind of the candidate back into the dead body. Then Initiates or victims must give POW and hit points (blood) to the new vampire. The new vampire lies in state for one full day and night before arising to his new role. He takes on a pallid white skin and lustrous hair. His STR doubles immediately and his teeth lengthen. He may now turn into a bat, wolf, or smoke, Harmonize without loss of POW anyone whose glance he catches, and use all the other powers of the vampire form.

Vampires get spirit allies which cannot regenerate their POW (they must steal it from victims or have it given them by their vampire masters) Vampires can use a few special cult Rune spells. Vampires can drain magics from their victims. Vampires, both Rune Lord and Rune Priest, can call for Divine Intervention from Vivamort, but with possibly deadly affect if Vivamort takes much of their Power storage from them.

Vivamort was a renegade from Death, as are many of his followers renegades from various Death cults. Vampires are

greatly affected by the determined presentation of the Death Rune by one consecrated (Initiate or higher) to a Death cult. The Rune causes damage on touch and acts as a focus for a highly effective Disrupt spell. Forceful display of the Rune gains the individual a measure of personal protection from vampires and a method of attack also. Vampires will usually not directly attack the presenter, but may order Initiates, allied spirits, or available skeletons, zombies, etc., to do so.

A vampire may drink the blood of any being with an INT of 5 or more and a POW of 5 or more. Vampires do not drink from non-sentients.

Characteristically, Vivamortists choose dark or black clothing lined with crimson silk.

THE ELEMENTS

Vampires are repugnant to the five elements. The blight of Vivamort is unnatural, and the elements have some power against this cancer.

Air - Air elementals can disperse the smoke form of the vampire. The vampire cannot coalesce again for the amount of STR of the elemental, expressed in hours. Elemental Air does not constrain vampires as greatly as other elements, since Vivamort stole some of the Air's powers in the God Time. The Storm Gods and their worshippers despise Vivamort because of this.

Fire - The power of Heat and Fire is vibrant energy, totally antagonistic to a vampire's existence. Fire was set onto Vivamort by the Sun's curse from the darkness of Hell. Fire damages the vampire terribly, in a way unregeneratable until the next vampire holy night. Either magical or normal flame will harm the vampire in this fashion.

Earth - Every vampire carries at least a handful of his burial earth in his coffin. This earth represents the undead vampire's Stasis connection, symbolizing his victory over the grave.

The Earth Powers are not pleased with this desecration of their element and despise the use to which Vivamort puts the stasis principle. Should the vampire lose all his funeral earth (he may have several coffins with earth in them), he begins to lose his powers, one per day. The powers are lost randomly, but the vampire will not know which one is gone until it fails for him. Once all special vampire abilities have been lost (the doubled strength is never lost, though), the vampire will lose one point of POW from his species maximum per day. After 21 days the normal human vampire will be at zero POW, and incapable of accepting POW. He ceases to function. On the next day he ceases to exist. A vampire may reverse this process by getting more grave earth from his burial site.

Several Earth cults have sacred burial tools, usually shovels that deliver unregeneratable damage to vampires, in the same manner as fire. Their use in digging graves for the dead and their holy place in cult funeral rites gives these tools their special powers.

A gnome called up from the grave earth carried in a vampire coffin would be an unholy force, since the originating earth is infected with Chaos. The gnome would be commanded by the vampire, but would run amuck if the vampire were absent.

The Sun - The Sun forced Vivamort from Hell and cursed him. At present the light of day does not harm the vampire, but it strips him of all his special powers. The vampire may not drain POW or blood, Harmonize, perform metamorphosis, etc. The vampire keeps his skills and his doubled strength.

Water - All the waters of the world took up the vow of the River Styx against Vivamort. Water is a prime enemy of Vivamort and vampires, and vampires travel by water precariously.

No vampire may cross running water except by bridge, boat, on the back of another, etc. Immersion in running water kills the vampire. Vampires may cross, or live in swamps and marshes with impunity. Waha left the taint of the Devil in the marshes of the Good River, and that taint allows the vampires access to all such areas.

Special holy water, blessed by Rune Priests of certain water cults, has great effect against vampires. When this pure and holy water is sprinkled on the grave earth carried by each vampire, the earth loses its potency. The vampire may not cross this holy water, even if it is but a thin film on the ground, the doorway, or whatever. A vial of this pure water, applied to the vampire's person, causes 1D6 unregeneratable damage to the vampire's body.

THANATAR

THE SEVERED GOD

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

The Devil entered the world; with him came the slimy hordes of Chaos. Foremost in his father's (the Devil's) favor was Tien, who commanded the most powerful of the legions. He personally directed the destruction of the god Genert. Tien continued his terrible conquests until his forces were routed at last by a vastly outnumbered army of order which used strategy devised by Lhankor Mhy, the god of knowledge.

Tien was furious, and sought personal vengeance against the god. He set an intricate trap for the sage lord, alluding to the whereabouts of Lhankor Mhy's missing love, the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge. Lhankor Mhy was deceived, and walked into Tien's black pit, and there was captured and imprisoned. The vengeful son of the Devil prepared a ceremony to drain all knowledge from his captive and then funnel it into himself. The knowledge god instead found the knowledge to escape from his bonds and flee from the Chaos creature's treacherous tunnels. Tien became obsessed with the destruction of Lhankor Mhy, abandoning all other activity to pursue and harry that foe.

Lhankor Mhy, fearing another meeting with Tien, found protection with the Lightbringers.

It was then that the Spike exploded.

With the fall of the Greater Darkness, Tien stalked the sacred vestibules of the cosmic mountain, shadowing the Devil and hunting the heart and soul of Glorantha, plotting the downfall of his arch foe. In a golden room deep in the mountain he came upon the shining goddess, the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge, the true Light of Lhankor Mhy's existence. In triumph, he used a sharp garrote to capture this magic for his own. It became known that Tien had not merely beheaded her—he had magicked her soul into her still-living head. He carried this foul trophy with him, extracting her magic and skills to supplement his own. With the Mistress went all the Light of Knowledge left to the world; the Great Darkness was now complete.

As the Lightbringers rallied the Darkened world to their cause, events ran against Chaos. With the death of the Devil, Tien had no protection from the wrath of Storm Bull and his sons, one of whom, Hrothmir the Horned Hero, pursued Tien to the gates of Hell itself.

There the Death/Darkness deity easily slipped away, and hid in the fringes of the Underworld where Yelm's Light barely reached. In fury, Hrothmir slew himself to pass through the barrier between life and death, and entered the Underworld also, bound by powerful oaths to destroy this thing of Chaos. Again Tien fled, now into the darkest crypts of Hell, blocking his pursuer's path with the dead and the Dark, warping both by the Chaotic forces of the outer Darkness. But all ways Tien chose led back to the Underworld's center, for all paths of the living end in Hell.

Trapped between the unbearable Light of the Sun God and Hrothmir's avenging axe, Tien stood firm. Swiftly came the blade of the Horned Hero, separating the god's ram-horned head from his black-shrouded body. The head rolled into the full Light of Yelm's glory, and the Air God's son heard the roar as the flesh crumbled from the bone, searing away most of Tien's power of Darkness, leaving his living eyes to stare blindly. At the same moment a cry of release took Hrothmir's attention; the grisly head of a once-beautiful woman shriveled to dust and became the ghostly form of the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge, and then faded forever into the depths of Hell. Thus distracted, Hrothmir failed to see the body of the severed god come forward until the sky god's son was enveloped in darkness and fear, which dismembered and fed upon the hero's spirit. At last it removed Hrothmir's head and placed it upon its own headless shoulders.

The body of Tien had lost much in the battle. The separation and searing of its head cost it all but meager control over Darkness; only the possession of a part of Death had prevented it from dying. It no longer retained the powers stolen from the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge, nor had it the ability to devour the knowledge of others—those were lost when Hrothmir severed the god. By taking the hero's head, it regained some of its intelligence and seized a portion of the spells and abilities possessed by Hrothmir. The dismembering of the Devil's son made its control over reality imperfect, and so the spell preserving the head became imperfect. Soon the head began to decompose, and with it went the knowledge seized with the head. What was left of Tien needed more heads. A frequent and terrible sight during the Darkness was the vision of the god Than (a corruption of Tien) wandering the catacombs beneath nameless mountains, or prowling the fens of Snake Pipe Hollow with something else's head balanced atop his shoulders, yielding Than magic and knowledge for a while.

Tien's horned skull fared differently. Resting in the full Light of Yelm (who was ignorant of the Chaos God's nature), Lhankor Mhy discovered it on his quest to Hell. He attempted to destroy the skull but could not, nor could the skull of Tien affect the knowledge god with his mind-stealing abilities, for Lhankor Mhy had learned to protect himself from that power. Thus fate prevented any final vengeance on either side. To prevent Tien's skull from causing further harm, the knowledge god carried it with him out of Hell and cast it into the Ocean. This act displeased several water deities who swiftly caused it to be cast up on the shore of an island. The deities have since borne no love for the sage lord or his followers. The skull was soon forgotten.

In spite of Yelm's burning Light, this piece of Tien did not die either. Stripped of flesh and bereft of the control of Death

We stayed at Bolthor's country rest for several days. We had picked off Ralzakark's strength while it was uncoordinated; now all Dorastor would know of the heavy blows against him. As he gathered his forces, what should we do?

Hahlgrim argued mightily that the rest of Bolthor's strength must be raised, and that some should again press up the Sludgestream to engage those Chaos forces it might, while the main army should cross the Tobros Mountains, bypass Ralzakark's musters, and destroy him and his citadel on the Plateau of Wrath.

After three days, Bolthor had agreed to nothing, and he offered little reason for his delay, except that delay was what he did best, as Ketil grumbled. We ate in our apartments at sunset, then I sat down to compose a letter to my father.

Hahlgrim watched the reflection of the Red Moon from a window while I wrote. Ketil had taken a horse to visit a lady love in a village half an hour away. Oddi was adding some accounts in another room. I felt a draft, and looked to where the door to the hall swung open silently. Hahlgrim turned too, and we watched Bolthor, in full armor, walk in, and a dozen of his thanes also, all armed and some with heavy crossbows. Lord Hahlgrim was overly mindful of me, and would not at first resist. He sighed rather, saying "You are the 'old ally' of Ralzakark, King Bolthor? I thought it might be so, yet I hoped against it, for you could well serve out your days safely."

Bolthor would not respond. He drew his sword and held it by the blade. "You will return my sword to me, and accept this one, Hahlgrim. I have agreed with Ralzakark that my forces will not patrol beyond Dorasta shrine, and that his forces will not penetrate beyond the Oilstream and Frog river. The patrol work will be well for your abilities, Lord Hahlgrim." He stared pointedly at me, and I hated this fat fool.

Hahlgrim, his face mask-like, made no reply.

"Give me the sword, Hahlgrim," Bolthor commanded, then repeated the command.

Hahlgrim stirred, smiling grimly, making a curious small gesture as he said, "Bolthor."

But instead of completing the sentence, we all heard a loud crack from the other end of the room. The scabbard holding Ironbreaker to the wall exploded, and the jewels from it rolled noisily across the stone floor while shreds of leather fell everywhere. But such we saw but did not attend, for Ironbreaker itself did not fall but rose swiftly into the air, glowing brightly. Several thanes made magical passes at it, others fired crossbows at it, and the cruelest thane shot my Lord Hahlgrim through the lungs. Though Hahlgrim fell, Ironbreaker did not pause. Bolthor screamed and his thanes scattered, but Ironbreaker still came through the air.

"Thanatar!" the King squeaked. A new horror came into the room, teleporting silently behind the collapsing Hahlgrim. The teleporter was a thin man, in black, and around his waist he wore many shrunken human heads. He

and Darkness, it still retained its memory, its power to consume knowledge, and its hatred of Lhankor Mhy. But the only victims available to it for centuries were small animals and primitive islanders who enshrined it as a death god—a power over which it had no domain.

Lhankor Mhy's ability to resist the Consume Mind spell was passed on to all Priests and Rune Lords of Lhankor Mhy. It is an inner secret of the cult and may not be taught to outsiders, lay members, or even cult Initiates.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

Though not a major deity, many of Than's Chaotic followers survived the transition into Time and remembered the leadership of the Devil's son. Along with vile-souled humans, they formed the first bands of rapacious headhunters to terrorize the Dawn Age. Imitating their deity, the Thanics collected the living heads of their victims and drew limited magics and skills from them. In the catastrophe of his severing, Than lost the ability to grant Rune magics to his followers except for the Create Head spells and a few Death and Darkness magics. The Thanics needed the heads as their only source of Rune magic. In posing so clear a threat, the worshippers of Than became anathema to most cults and only the most vile would deal with them.

Many faithful Thanics sought the skull of the severed head across the mortal plane. But the head, resting in a sandy niche of a tiny island temple, had been found by a wandering, self-serving Priest of Lhankor Mhy who had been intrigued by it, and who spent several years researching its origin. Once he knew the truth, the power-hungry sage concealed the skull in the catacombs of an unknown city in the Kralorian Empire, and learned from it the awful knowledge-devouring spells. In the process he founded the cult of the Horned Skull, whom he named Atyar, Devourer of Knowledge.

Feared throughout the Empire, the cult gained in power, attacking other temples and wresting knowledge from captives who would be found later in alley ways and side-streets, broken and mindless.

Constant persecution by other cults and local wars at last forced the Atyari to flee the Empire, in a diaspora continent wide. Before leaving, the highest priests of the Atyari gathered, and sealed the skull of Atyar deep beneath the catacombs in a special place, protected by great magics. The flight from the Kralori Empire ended in the mutual discovery and unification in Genertela of the cults of Than and Atyar into the cult of Thanatar, the Severed God. Separate worship of both Than and Atyar continued, loosely united under the leadership of the Thanatari High Priest.

The juncture of the cults brought the members benefits. Atyar's hatred of Lhankor Mhy was aided by Than's head-stealing abilities, giving the Atyar worshippers power against the knowledge god's Priests, who were unaffected by Consume Mind. In return, the Atyari wove the Create Major Head spell for the worshippers of Than, perfecting the already-existing spell.

The reunion of the two parts of the Severed God did not reform Tien. Since each part had developed separately, the two could not make one whole again. Since the pieces did not knit together, the Severed God was formed, and each piece retained its individuality.

Because of its Chaotic and disgusting practices, the cult has been heavily persecuted wherever discovered, with frequent raids made on its underground hideouts and complexes.

Of the skull of Atyar, legends vary. Some say that the broo Hero, Greegrog, retrieved the skull and was made immortal for his pains. Others say that the skull still lies deep beneath the rubble of that Kralori city, waiting to be found.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Since they will be safely escorted to a part of Hell known as the Place of Waiting, followers of Thanatar do not fear death. From there they will be drawn back to serve the living as familiars and allied spirits in the form of human guardians. A guardian is a cult spirit bound into the ritually-prepared body of a human being (see the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult). Thus life after death is promised to all believers.

When a Thanatari lies dying, the Gatherer of Souls (one of many subservient cult spirits) appears to the stricken cultist and guides his or her soul to the Place of Waiting—reputedly that part of Hell where Hrothmir separated the head and body of Tien. After completing a term of service as a guardian, the spirit returns to the Place of Waiting once gain to bide till the day when the forces of Chaos engage the gods in the final battle.

To aid in the defense of Thanatar temples, the bodies of dead cultists are turned into undead. Initiates who die are animated as zombies on cult holy days. Lay members who die are usually interred for a year and then animated as skeletons on holy days.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

Tien originally possessed the Runes of Death, Darkness, and Chaos. From the Mistress of the Light of Knowledge he stole Truth. When the god was decapitated, Than lost Truth and most of his control over Darkness, but kept Death and Chaos. Atyar, the skull, lost the use of Death and Darkness, but did retain Chaos and Truth. The reunion of the god created a lessened deity of Death, Darkness, Chaos and Truth.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

As long as beings desire the gain of something for nothing, and do not care if it is at someone's expense, then the cult of Thanatar will exist, for Thanatar represents the covetousness of creatures for the abilities of their fellow creatures.

The cult has two goals: to regain Tien's power and status and to gain vengeance upon the gods responsible for his present state.

SOCIAL/POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

Among the closed societies of many Chaotic creatures, the Doom Priests and Doom Masters of Thanatar wield great power, often second only to hereditary secular leaders and the priests of racial deities. Thanatar remembers fondly his pre-eminence during the God Time and seeks to lord it over his fellow deities of Chaos, threatening the leaders of other cults with their gruesome knowledge-stealing abilities.

Human regions hold the cult anathema, and persecute and ritually execute its worshippers in purification rites conducted, by priests of most cults, and usually presided over by a Sage of Lhankor Mhy. Lay members of Thanatar may be spared if they ritually vow to mend their ways. Most cults consider it an honor to be part of an expedition into a Thanatar complex. Such expeditions may prompt alliances between cults normally hostile, such as Orlanth and Seven Mothers, but even the Thanatar cult cannot get hereditary racial enemies like trolls and elves to cooperate.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

This cult fears, hates, hunts, and opposes almost every other cult. Lhankor Mhy and Storm Bull followers are specially despised from pre-Time wrongs, nor are cults with similar Runes (such as Humakt, Zorak Zoran, and Kyger Litor) loved. Sun worshippers are unpopular.

While this cult mains an alliance of sorts with other Chaos cults, this too is fragile. It is hard to trust someone who may snick off your head tomorrow.

Thanatari never use gold for anything, and will go out of their way to spit on this Sun-related metal.

III. ORGANIZATION

INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION

There is little organization or contact between temples. If a temporary unity is needed, the word of the eldest or the most powerful High Priest of Dark Truths decides all questions. Due to the lack of contact, temples occasionally are devoted purely to the worship of either the aspect of Than or of Atyar.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

A Thanatar temple has three branches, all presided over by a single High Priest of Dark Truths. Just beneath him is the ranking Rune Lord, known as The Doom Lord (all other cult Rune Lords are known as Doom Masters).

Of slightly less power are the ranking Priests of the three branches of the cult. The branches are the Hand of Than, the, Horn of Atyar, and the Breath of Thanatar. Except in extremely large temples or communities there will be no other full priests.

Below them in descending order of influence are the Doom, Masters (corresponding to Rune Lords), the Doomed (advanced cult Initiates), the Doom Seekers (Initiates), and the laity.

The cult, while seeming well-organized, is based on the successful use of brute force. The High Priest of Dark Truths reigns heavy-handedly over his subordinates, and is shielded by The Doom Lord and his Doom Masters, guardians and entourage loyal to his person. When the High Priest dies (in whatever fashion), succession may be determined by assassination rather than assignation, with the ranking priests of the three branches fighting it out to the finish. The Priest of Thanatar normally is groomed for this position and will have the backing of the Doom Masters. But it is not unknown for the entire hierarchy of a temple to die during a period of succession, leaving the temple in the hands of he who can grab it.

CENTER OF POWER AND HOLY PLACES

The cult has no center of power. Death is everywhere; darkness and destruction are where you make them. Cult members find power and comfort in being underground, but groups may be found in deep forests or cities. A special holy place is the island upon which Atyar was first cast out of the sea; another is the secret vault which holds the skull of Atyar.

knelt beside the motionless Hahlgrim, who was still down even though I had put my six points of Healing on him. The dark figure swiftly pulled out a silver garrote, and I knew his purpose. I launched myself at him and upset his cast even as Oddi the Keen burst through the door beyond.

We all seemed to hesitate, though not truly. Perhaps the memory of the moment would be chiseled in anyone who saw the blazing sword hover over the squealing king, then descend like lightning through his armor, his skull, his torso, and plunge thunderously into the marble floor, quivering there with the sound like pork sausage sizzling. Bolthor, superb armor and all, had been split fish-wise.

Meanwhile, the Thanatari cultist and I rolled on the floor, grappling, the heads around his waist shrieking as we weighted on them or sent them thudding against the cold stone. Our brains swarmed with Rune magics, yet one could not defeat the other. This man was as strong as a demon, and at last he got the garrote around one of my wrists. Even as I squeezed my thumbs into his throat, he desperately jerked the loop closed, and severed my hand. I remember seeing the member fall away, but so filled with blood lust was I that I merely held with the other hand and shoved the stump into the assassin's face, so that the blood rushed into his eyes to blind him. He teleported and I fainted.

When I awoke, I was healed. Hahlgrim was dead. No resurrection cast succeeded. Oddi howled to Orlanth that the god had no reason to despise such a hero as Hahlgrim. At last Oddi lay weeping beside his brother, the sword Ironbreaker in Oddi's grasp. Silently we kept vigil over the body for an hour, then Oddi related the rest.

Bolthor's thanes had fled when their lord was slain, for as with Hahlgrim he could not be healed or resurrected. In his dying, Hahlgrim saluted Oddi as the new owner of Ironbreaker, and told him the secret of the sword. One of the properties of the weapon was that it would infallibly kill one person, but that the death would be paid for by the infallible death of the sword's wielder as well. Hahlgrim had decided upon his own death when he realized that he could not protect me from the crossbow quarrels; this revelation made me feel profoundly humble, unworthy of this great man's death, and I begged forgiveness from his brother, which Oddi granted without stint.

Oddi had healed me and arranged his brother in the Orlanthi burial position, and then had saluted Ironbreaker, which revealed its full self. With the great sword, Oddi set out for revenge, and found a dozen of Bolthor's best thanes in frightened council. He was on them like a thunderclap, and with the terrible Ironbreaker he slew them all in moments. One of the servants told me that Oddi had been like an avenging god, and that Oddi alone broke the best of Bolthor's line in half an hour's time, penning them within the castle walls and forcing them to jump or to be slain where they cowered (for Bolthor's kin were no more valiant than the fat king himself). Oddi had smashed down armored doors and torn through strong walls to corner the rats of Bolthor, and indeed I saw much evidence of Oddi's towering rage and mighty vengeance.

A vision had alerted Ketil, and he rode in with a hundred or more followers to secure the grounds and aid in the burial preparations. After new attempts at resurrection (for then we could not believe that a sword could be so made that a god could not undo its work), we buried our Lord upon Ash hill, overlooking his lands.

Oddi thereafter would observe only forms of worship, and would not swear by any god.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

Dark-season is the holiest period for Thanatari. High holy days for the cult fall upon Wildday of Disorder, Death and Truth weeks in that season. During Disorder week, cultists celebrate both aspects of the Severed God. In Death week Than is emphasized, as is Atyar in Truth week.

Every Wildday of each Disorder week during the rest of the year is a holy day. Upon these days, Doom Seekers (Initiates), the Doomed and lay members can form new cult relationships, and new guardians are created to replace lost ones or to be given to newly-promoted cultists. Heads created on holy days can last up to half-again as long as normal.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

All races may join this cult, though non-Chaotic creatures will join at -5 CHA. Applicants must be willing, if not eager, to be members of a Chaos cult which openly decapitates intelligent beings in order to seize their abilities. The attraction of this cult for creatures of Chaos was hinted at earlier: Thanatar frequently forms a 'shadow-government' in Chaotic areas, and if the advancement of an ambitious broo or scorpion man is blocked along racial or tribal lines, he or she often gains personal power by becoming Thanatari. Except in certain hideous areas of the world, the same opportunity does not exist for creatures of Law. It would take, for instance, a human of reasonable persistence and intelligence even to find a Thanatar complex, and his motives for doing so would normally be psychotic.

Of necessity secretive and paranoid, the rulers of a Thanatar complex will test applicants extensively. This is abstracted to the following: non-Chaotic beings must make a D100 roll under their (CHA-5)x5%+5% for each gift of value to or service performed for the cult. Chaotics must roll under the average of their (STR + CON + DEX)x7%+5% for each gift of value or service rendered.

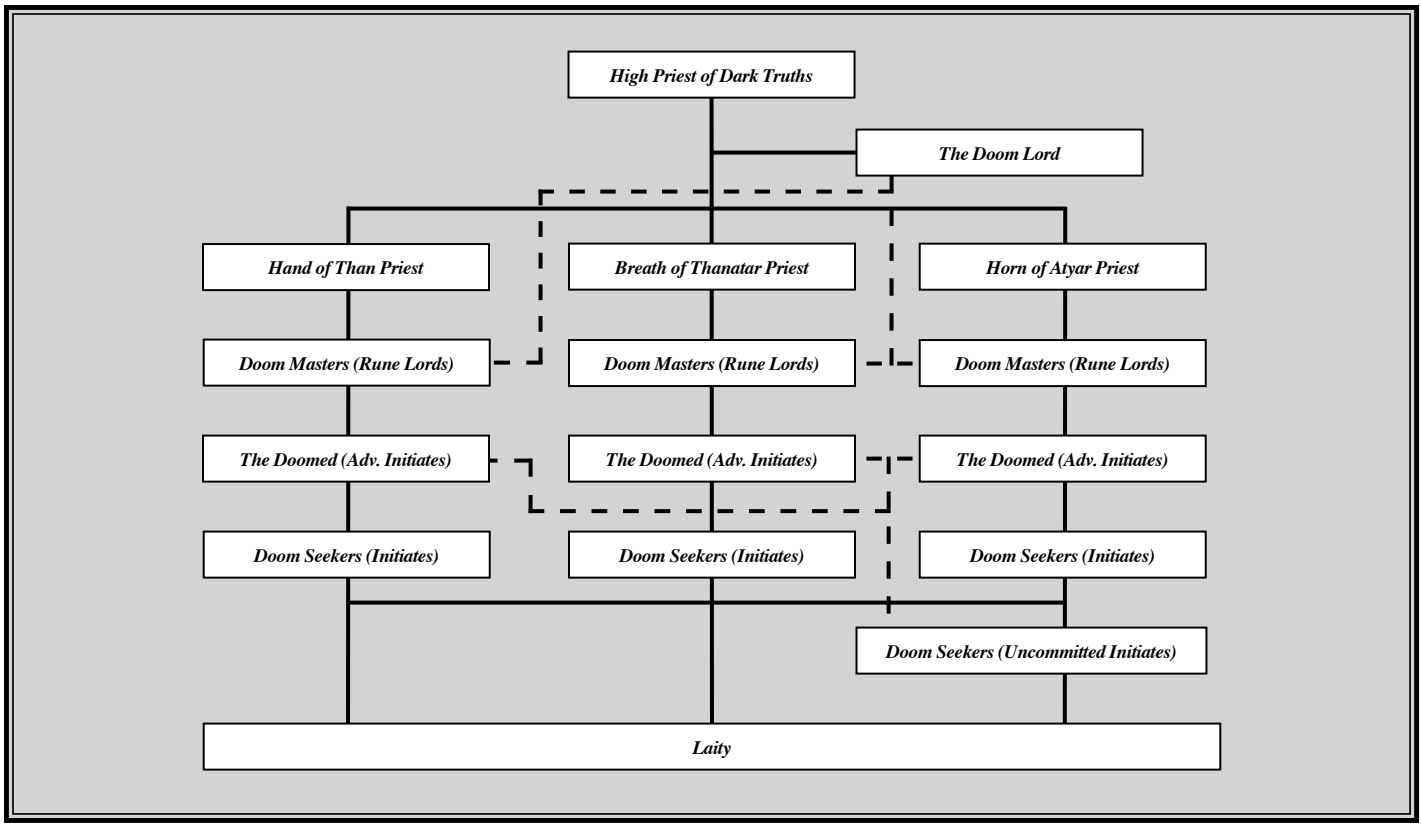
If the character fails the roll, the priests have doubted his sincerity. If he or she is not a Chaotic creature, they will consider the applicant a spy. Spies are dealt with gruesomely.

Outsiders are not welcome at Thanatari ceremonies.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

Lay members must attend all holy day ceremonies, and must sacrifice 1 point of battle magic POW each such ceremony. They must donate at least one day per week of their time in labor for the temple—usually in mining and shoring to expand the labyrinthine domain of the underground complex.

Lay members will know only the main entrance to the temple. Lay members must shun all contact with Storm Bull, Yelm, Yelmalio, and Humakt followers, and must try to lead



Initiate-level or higher followers of Lhankor Mhy into situations where they may be abducted. In some cases lay members will be used as first-wave shock troops in assaults where the defenses of a stronghold must be worn down.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

While they are in the temple (the entirety of typically sprawling underground Thanatari complex is considered the temple), lay members are guaranteed the protection of the cult. In exchange for an additional day of service per week, the laity may live without charge in the temple.

SKILLS

Lay members can learn any skill except those forbidden by the cult. Any lay member immediately will want to obtain the special talisman that protects the wearer from attack by the insane head spirits which litter every temple complex: see the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult for details.

> ***Half Normal Price:*** Attack and Parry with short sword, Parry with medium shield, Move Silently, Hide in Cover, Dark-tongue (Read, Write, and Speak), Garrote.
> ***Forbidden:*** Axe Attack and Parry.
> ***Unique:*** the garrote is the cult's special weapon. It is used in the ceremonies that create the cult's Heads.

THE GARROTE

A garrote is a thin, strong wire or band which is put around an enemy's throat. At 50% or less skill with this weapon, the wielder can choke and kill his victim; at more than 50% ability, the victim's head will be severed from his body if enough damage is done. Garroting can be performed only from the rear.

In melee, the hit location rolled must be the head or no damage is done, but if the victim is completely unaware of the attacker, the head will be hit automatically. Once hit, the garrote stays in place turn after turn, but successful attacks must be made to do additional damage. Give all successive attacks a +20% chance to succeed.

To dislodge the attacker, compare the STR + DEX of the victim against that of his opponent, and make a successful attack on the Resistance Table. If 20% of the score needed is rolled, the garrotter is thrown to the ground. If the victim fumbles, the garrotter may roll additional damage against his victim.

STR needed: 12 DEX needed: 9 Hit Point: 3
ENC: 0 Base chance: 05% Length: 0
Training: 200/400/900L./experience
Damage: 1D6+1 (damage ignores all armor except hood, unless. neck armor is specified.)

For full training prices, the cult will teach this weapon to anyone who could qualify as a member, whether or not he is a member.

BATTLE MAGIC

> ***Half Normal Price:*** Bludgeon, Disruption, Extinguish.
> ***Twice Normal Price:*** Darkwall, Healing, Ignite, Repair.
> ***Forbidden:*** Fire Arrow, Fireblade, Harmonize, Light, Lightwall. If these spells are already known, or learned from a severance, they will be forgotten.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
Thanatar Initiates are known as Doom Seekers. To become an Initiate, a candidate must possess a 90% ability in one of the skills required for Doom Master (Rune Lord) status.

A candidate will be assigned a holy day when his ceremony will be performed. During the week preceding that holy day, the candidate also will be assigned one of the Doomed (an 'advanced' Initiate), who will follow the candidate as he enacts a very minor Heroquest, imitating events of the Severed God's mythos.

These acts include decapitating a follower of Storm Bull, Humakt, Yelm, or Yelmalio (recalling the decapitation of Tien), setting fire to a structure known to hold at least two living occupants (preferable Lhankor Mhy followers) and tossing the previously decapitated head into the flames. Thus this act of meaningless violence is combined with the symbolic disintegration of Atyar's flesh. The skull must be retrieved so that it can be brought to the initiation ceremony.

The ceremony itself is long and disgusting. During it, the candidate must undergo further tests, abstracted as follows: roll under the percentage of his second-highest ability on the list of requirements for Doom Master + his CHA x 5 divided by 2, on D100. The central test is given by the cult spirit, the Voice of Atyar, a subservient spirit summoned for the initiation. A candidate passing the test gets a free question, which the spirit' must answer truthfully (and usually cryptically).

The new Doom Seeker is then marked with a small white blemish, shaped like a horned human skull, normally placed on a hidden part of the body. The presence of this mark protects the Initiate from attack by the insane spirits which roam the temples, and replaces the talisman the former layman carried.

Candidates who fail the test must wait two full seasons before undergoing the test again. Repetition of the Heroquest is unnecessary.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
Once accepted into full cult membership, the Initiate must take a random Thanatari gift and accept a random geas. The Initiate may take only one gift, with its requisite number of geases. The gifts and geases represent the desire of the Initiate to follow more completely the way and ideals of Thanatar.

The Initiate now assumes the title of Doom Seeker, must sacrifice 2 points of temporary POW on holy days, and must follow and enforce the cult likes and dislikes more stringently than need any lay member.

A Doom Seeker can be required to participate in any cult-sponsored raid or expedition. He must continue to donate of his time in the form of supervision or instruction. Once per season the Doom Seeker must provide a living captive for cult use.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
A Doom Seeker may receive a weapon from the cult, usually a garrote or a short sword. He has access to the libraries and instructors of the Atyar cult. By benefit of the horned skull blemish, he is immune to attacks by the decayed head spirits. He also can see by the light cast by the cult's special Darklight spell.

SKILLS
The following skills are available from the cult at the noted prices or modifications of prices. These skills for Initiates are in addition to those for lay members.

Free: Darktongue (Read, Write, Speak), Garrote, Hide in Cover, Move Silently.
Half Normal Price: Alchemy Skills, Any Language (Read, Write, Speak any known language and many dead ones), Evaluate Treasure, Oratory.

BATTLE MAGIC
In addition to spells taught to lay members, the Initiate may learn the following:

Half Normal Cost: Befuddle, Demoralize, Fanaticism.
Normal Cost: Healing, Ignite.

The Initiate also has access to reusable cult specialty Rune magics, but he must choose a branch of the cult to serve, and he must make a commitment of loyalty to that branch's priest. At that point he has access to the spells as if he were a priest of that branch. These spells, however, are available for one time usage through the permanent sacrifice of Power. Spells that have a one-time usage by full priests or 3 point spells are not available to Initiates.

The commitment to a cult branch is unimportant to the god. Changing allegiance from one aspect to another is a purely political matter, earning the Initiate enmity or safety as the factional struggle indicates.

VI. DOOMED STATUS
GENERAL STATEMENT
The title and status of a Doomed (or The Doomed, or Doomed One), has no exact parallel in other cults. The terms cover Initiates who are both preparing for Rune Lord and Rune Priest status. Members of The Doomed usually are in transit to another status, though many cultists are satisfied to remain Doomed till death. Most of the time of a full priest of the Thanatari is spent within the temple on cult business; it is the Doomed Ones who adventure for Thanatar, and they are ritually free of responsibility to the priests of Thanatar's aspects in so far as cult political struggles are concerned.
The Doomed therefore represent dangerous wild cards in the temple hierarchy, and as much as possible the priests prefer to keep their Doomed performing wicked missions beyond the temple complex if they do not quickly advance to Rune-level Status.

Initiate fighters who meet the requirements for The Doomed will automatically become a Doomed One. But those Initiates preparing for the priesthood (there are only four full priests in a temple) must first pass a test similar to that for a priest.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
When an warrior Initiate reaches 60% ability in 5 of the skills needed for Doom Master (Rune Lord) status, he may become a Doomed One by means of a ceremony.

THANATAR'S GIFTS

The following are ten gifts which Thanatar usually bestows on cultists once they reach the status of Doom Seeker or higher. For each gift, the cultist must concurrently accept the stated number of geases. Both the gifts and the geases must be determined randomly.

Gift (roll 1D10)		Number of Geases
1	+10% Knowledge bonus.	2
2	+10% Stealth bonus.	2
3	+1 to a raisable characteristic.	1
4	+1 to a non-raisable characteristic.	3
5	+10% in short sword attack.	1
6	+10% in garrote attack.	1
7	Permanent 1 point of Countermagic against magical attacks cast by Fire/Sky-related cultists.	3
8	+10% in parry with short sword.	1
9	+10% in any non-weapon-related skill.	1
10	Special (roll 1D6 to determine):	
	(1) Grow ram's horns. In two years they may be used to butt like a broo for 1D6 damage.	1
	(2) Skin/fur turns pitch black. Add 10% to Hide in Cover at night or in darkness.	1
	(3) Skin becomes like 1 added point of armor.	1
	(4) Cultist may select any 1 gift.	0
	(5) Re-roll on 1D10 gift table. Gift has ½ the geas cost (½= 0).	
	(6) Re-roll twice on regular table.	

THANATAR'S GEASES

Most rolls upon the Thanatar Gift table will indicate that a certain number of geases must be taken. These geases will make the cultist a better follower of Thanatar, though they may seem mysterious to mortals. Roll D100 for each geas so indicated.

D100	*Geas*
01	Favored by Thanatar; no geas.
02-05	Eat only the flesh of sentient creatures.
06-08	Always eat of the flesh of each victim.
09-11	Distrust all members of the other two cult aspects.
12-14	Slay all non-Thanatari cult member Chaotic beings.
15-17	Never use minted coins.
18-20	Never use an edged weapon.
21-23	Distrust everyone.
24-26	Never speak in the presence of a non-Thanatari.
27-29	Ride no animal.
30-33	Wear no head protection.
34-38	Never go into sunlight or blindness may result; roll under CON x5 on D100 or be permanently blinded.
39-41	Never go into torchlight or effect is as 34-38.
42-43	Never go into any non-cult light; effect is as 34-38; see also cult Rune spell Darklight.
44-54	Never use fire in any form, including creation of cult light.
55-62	Accept Chaotic feature; 25% chance of Thed's Reverse Chaos feature being the type gained.
63-64	Always challenge Storm Bull worshippers.*
65-67	Never eat vegetables, except elves.
68-70	Never wear metals other than tarnished silver.**
71-74	Never wear leather armor.**
75-79	Never eat the flesh of cattle or bison.
80-83	Always challenge Lhankor Mhy worshippers.*
84-86	Never lie to a fellow cultist.
87-91	Never combat an undead.
92-93	Never use magic on an enemy while in combat.
94-95	Never attack with a weapon.
96-98	Roll twice more.
99-00	Roll three times more.

* This duel is always fought to the death.

** Roll for particular hit location to which this applied. On a roll of 20 the cultist never may wear any armor made of non-cult metal.

Initiates planning to become an adventurer-priest Doomed One or a full priest later must pass a test. For game purposes abstract the test to POW + CHA divided by 2 x 7, giving a number which must be rolled under on D100 in order to pass the test successfully. No bonus is gained for length of service or gifts, but since the candidate for Doomed adventurer-priest must have a minimum of POW 18, few will fail this test. Those who do fail must wait to take a second test till the next Dark-season.

Passing the test, the Doomed One is then inducted into one of the three aspects of the cult if he has not already chosen one previously. He must not change that aspect until he becomes a priest, whereupon he may change aspects as he desires.

RESTRICTIONS

The warrior Doomed One has none of the restrictions and vows of the Doom Master, though he must enforce all cult likes and dislikes to the best of his ability. He is responsible only to the leader of the temple, the High Priest of Dark Truths, and to the Doom Lord of the temple. Though he may offer respect or alliance to the other ranking Rune Priests and Rune Lords of the temple, he owes them no fealty.

The priest-aiming Doomed One is in the same situation. In addition he may not receive an allied spirit or be allowed the full increased chance of POW gain. Like any Doom Priest, his DEX-based skills cannot rise above his DEX x5; unlike the priest, he may continue to train up to that level of ability.

BENEFITS

Added to the benefits he received upon becoming an Initiate, any of The Doomed receive a guardian as a bound spirit (see miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult). The guardian is gained at no risk to a Doomed One. He may have other bound spirits, but only one guardian. In accepting the guardian, the Doomed One also accepts a second gift (and geas) from his god, Thanatar. It is possible to refuse the guardian and the second gift/geas at no personal penalty.

The Doomed may stand aloof from cult power struggles, or choose individually to back any faction, regardless of the aspect of the god currently served.

A Doomed One aiming toward the priesthood has access to all 1 and 2 point spells available to his chosen aspect. Such Initiates also can use available reusable 3 point spells on a one-use basis only. Except as noted, all spells will be reusable. When such a Doomed One is promoted to Rune Priest and changes aspects in the process, he loses the reusable quality of any Rune spells not compatible with the new aspect. Such Initiates gain a fraction of the priest's POW gain bonus; they subtract their current POW from their species' maximum POW +1.

VII. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL STATEMENT

With the exception of the senior-most Rune Lord in each temple (he is The Doom Lord), Rune-level fighters are known as Doom Masters. As with Initiates, Doom Masters may serve whatever branch of the cult they wish—unless they are also a Doom Priest, whereupon they are limited to one aspect of worship. A Doom Master should represent the cohesion of the aspects of the cult, being at once a physical fighter whose goal is to bring death to the world, and to be a scholar whose actions are marked by rational (if erratic) deliberation. They must combine weapons skills with stealth and knowledge.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

Candidates for Doom Master must have spent at least one season as a Doomed One, and they must have a POW of 15. The candidate may also have passed the preliminary test for becoming a priest while a Doomed One-but note that if he had, his DEX would have to be at least 18. If he did pass such a test, he may continue to use any 1 point Rune spells he may have learned. Any other spells become one-use only and may not be re-learned until he becomes a priest.

Candidates for Doom Master must have 90% ability in five of the skills listed below. At least two skills must come from Part One of the list, at least one skill from Part Two, and at least two from Part Three.

Part One
Short Sword Attack
Short Sword Parry
Medium Shield Parry
Garrote

Part Two
Move Silently
Hide in Cover

Part Three
Read/Write Darktongue
Speak Darktongue
Read/Write other language
Speak other language
Oratory
Evaluate Treasure
Alchemy

The candidate also must know the spells Befuddle, Darkwall, and Disruption.

RESTRICTIONS

The Doom Master accepts the normal restrictions for Rune Lord. For Thanatar, he vows not to attack a priest of the cult unless he also becomes a priest. If he breaks this vow, the cult spirit of reprisal immediately will attack him. Since this is a most disorderly cult, there are few other restrictions; here rule depends on the strength of the ruler, not on laws or tradition.

BENEFITS

Besides the benefits accruing to a Rune Lord, the Doom Master must take another random gift and geas from Thanatar. The Doom Master receives 1D3 pieces of magical tarnished silver armor or weapons, all forged to the temper and strength of bronze. The first piece is always a short sword. He might also receive (depending upon the whim of the priests) 1-2 more guardians. He always will receive an allied spirit, normally bound into a weapon but who can be made into the more free-willed guardian if so desired.

Divine Intervention will not bring back a Doom Master from the dead.

A Doom Master may sacrifice POW for Thanatari Rune spells on a one-use basis unless he has passed the Doomed One preliminary test for the priesthood.

If a Doomed One had not chosen an aspect of the god, as a Doom Master he now must choose the combined aspect of Thanatar. If he has chosen previously, he can keep that choice.

A Doom Master may become either a Doomed One priest candidate or a full priest with no loss in fighting skill if he has a DEX of 18. Normally, in fact, the High Priest of Dark Truths is both a Doom Master and a Doom Priest, in no small part because of the extra personal power thereby available.

The Doom Lord, the senior-most Doom Master, has access to the cult spirit of reprisal as a one-use 3 point Rune spell.

VIII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD

GENERAL STATEMENT

The cult is divided into three aspects, Than, Atyar, and Thanatar, and three factions correspond to that. There will be a High Priest and at most three full priests in a given temple. The three priests will be known as the Hand of Than, the Horn or Atyar, and the Breath of Thanatar. There will be no other full priests, though many may have passed the preliminary test available to The Doomed.

Each branch of the cult has cult specialty spells available to it. The Thanics have Death and some Darkness spells; the Atyari have knowledge-devouring spells; the Thanatari draw from the other aspects and add a spell similar to ancestor worship to summon back the guardians. While the full priests of the cult have numerous Rune spells, they possess no basic Rune magics, no Extension, Warding, etc. All such were lost in the God Time. Necessary basic Rune magics are stolen from living heads that are taken from victims who have been ritually prepared and decapitated.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

A new priest is chosen whenever a vacancy is formed in the four-priest hierarchy, whether by death, promotion, or the creation of a new temple. The candidate actually selected must have been a Doomed One adventurer-priest for at least a full year, and must have POW of 18 or greater. He must undergo a test which is abstracted for game purposes to POW + CHA, divided by 2 and multiplied by 5. A D100 roll under that result must be made. A Doom Master qualified to become a priest may subtract 10 from his roll, and additionally may subtract 5 more from his roll for each year that he has been Doomed. If accepted, he becomes the new priest of the vacant branch of the cult. If a temple has been worshipping only one aspect, it is possible that the new priest could choose which of the other two aspects he would represent and advocate.

A new priest can also be ordained when it is desirable to send him (or he desires to go) to found a new temple. He will commonly take several Initiates of his choice.

RESTRICTIONS

The Doom Priest officiates on all holy days. He very rarely leaves the temple complex, though he may elect to accompany important raids when he feels that leadership by the more cavalier Doomed Ones would be inappropriate.

He or she must sacrifice 1 point of temporary POW each day, unless on a mission outside the temple. The Doom Priest is subject to the standard Rune Priest restrictions.

BENEFITS

Besides the standard benefits as defined by the rules, the Doom Priest must accept another random gift and geas from Thanatar. He also may receive 1-2 additional bound spirits in the form of guardians (see the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult), and he may obtain an allied spirit. This spirit might be either the more free-willed guardian or it might be bound into a weapon or object. The priest has full access to all Rune magics available from his aspect of the god.

The High Priest of Dark Truths of each temple has access to the cult spirit of reprisal as a reusable 3 point spell.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY

Doom Priests, Doom Masters, The Doomed, and Doom Seekers have no standard Rune magics except as they are stolen from living heads made through Create Heads or wrenched from victims via Consume Mind. No stolen spells relating to fire or anti-Chaos may be used.

No Rune magics except cult specialty spells may be taught.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS

The following spells are particular to this cult or have been permanently stolen or derived from similarly Runed cults during God Time. The availability of a spell to a given branch of the cult will be indicated in the parentheses following the spell name, along with the Power points required to be expended to learn the spell if other than listed. (Example: Darklight costs priest of Than and Thanatar 1 point of POW, but it costs priests of Atyar 2 points to learn, due to Atyar's loss of Darkness control.)

A spell usable by a cult branch will bear that branch's name in parentheses just after the spell name, as well.

Create Skeleton
(Thanatar, Than, Atyar-2) **1 point**
instantaneous, 40m, non-stackable, reusable
Using the bones of a deceased lay member, the priest animates the skeleton at the victim's old level of competence (with a level of DEX x5).

Darklight
(Thanatar, Than, Atyar-2) **1 point**
special, 10cm, non-stackable, reusable
This spell is peculiar to the Thanatar religion. It creates what is known as the cult light. The spell can be cast on any item capable of burning non-magically, and of giving off non-magical light: torches, lamps, lanterns, braziers, campfires, etc. The fire must then be lit by using an Ignite spell. The light that springs thereof will be invisible to non-cult eyes. Laity who possess the special cult talismans, Initiates, and Rune-levels all will see a purple light. A fire so treated will give off heat, and will burn normal fuel. As long as the fuel is within the one-meter-cube magicked area, only Darklight will be emitted, but any flame crossing the boundaries will burn normally and be seen normally. The duration of Darklight therefore depends upon the availability of fuel and the retention of the flame within the magicked area.

Fire/sky view this spell as a grievous perversion, and seek to extinguish all such flames. It is particularly their goal to smother the eternal flame flickering in each temple's worship hall; the flames are reputed to be scions of the first Darklight spell cast in God Time.

Ingest Scroll
(Thanatar, Than-2, Atyar) **1 point**
instantaneous, touch, non-stackable, reusable
This is an Atyar specialty spell. The priest casts the spell on a scroll or any single page of information that he holds in his hands. The spell causes the information to be transferred to and translated in the caster's mind, destroying any trace of it on the page or scroll. To prevent shock for 1D6 turns, add INT + CON, divide by 2, multiply by 5, and roll equal to or less than the result on D100. If the character does go into shock, he must make a second roll, under his INT x5 on D100, or lose

all the information he gained from the page or scroll, and one randomly chosen knowledge skill will be permanently lowered by 1D6 x5%. Ingest Scroll can also absorb a single sentence of information that has been chiseled in stone or carved in wood.

Summon Guardian **1 point**
Duration is Combat (15 minutes or until bound into body) within 160m of caster, non-stackable, reusable or non-reusable by the situation.
This spell resembles the Summon Ancestor spell used by Prax cult Daka Fal, except that it summons a willing spirit of a departed cult member from the Place of Waiting. The spirit so summoned must then be bound into the body of a specially sacrificed victim. The summoned spirit will have an INT of 3D6 and a POW of 3D6+6 (there is information on guardians in the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult). Such spirits are reusable only when used in ceremonial situations.

The spell may also be used on a non-reusable basis to summon a guardian to do spirit combat with a foe. The spirit arrives with the characteristics indicated on the chart below. After giving commands to the spirit, the summoner rolls D100 and if 96-00 (fumble) occurs, then the spirit misunderstands the command and turns on the summoner.

Guardians may be used for a spirit attack against a foe, as ordered by the summoner. They may also use known spells, but will deplete their Power to do so. In either case, loss of Power to 11 or less causes the spirit to disappear even from spirit combat and return to the Place of Waiting.

They cannot be used to memorize spells, supply Power, or to teach the summoner. They will have available only the spells and knowledge of the victim.

Summon Small Shade
(Thanatar, Than) **1 point**
15 minutes, 160m, non-stackable, reusable.
This is the standard shade. It has an attack chance of 20%, is 27 cubic meters in size, has hit points of 1D6+6, STR of 1D6+6, and is in movement class 12.

THE DOOM OF UNDYING
Thanatari cultists are feared for their Rune magics allowing the creation of living heads severed from ritually-prepared victims. These heads can feel, think, and remember, though they have no will of their own. This horror sets the Thanatari apart from even other Chaos cults, whose brethren have reason to fear that someday they too may dangle from the belt of a headhunter—fully aware and unable to act. The two spells following this section relate the use of the magics.

When Tien was severed by Hrothmir, the god lost the ability to give all but his own special magics to his followers. The two head-creating spells let Thanatari draw upon the magic and knowledge of a victim so long as the independent head of the victim survives. There are two spells. Create Minor Head preserves the victim's living head for one week; it places the caster in Mind Link with the head, allows the use of the head's battle and Rune magics, and gives use of portions of the victim's Knowledge-based and other skills. The other, more insidious, spell is Create Major Head, that gives the caster greater control over the magics and abilities of the preserved head.

GUARDIAN SUMMONS CHART
This chart should be used whenever a Priest or Initiate used the Summon Guardian spell. It mimics the variety of randomly available souls.

				(# of spells)	
D100	***type***	***POW***	***INT***	***Rune***	***Battle***
01	F	5D6+6	3D6	2D4	2D4+6
02	F	4D6+6	3D6	2D4	2D4+4
03	F	3D6+6	3D6	2D4	2D4+2
04	F	2D6+6	3D6	1D4	2D4
05	F	1D6+6	3D6	1D4	1D4
06-09	F	5D6+6	3D6	1D4	1D4
10-13	F	4D6+6	3D6	1	1D4
14-17	F	3D6+6	3D6	1	1
18-21	F	2D6+6	3D6	0	0
22-25	F	1D6+6	3D6	0	0
26-35	N	5D6+6	3D6	1D4	1D4
36-45	N	4D6+6	3D6	1	1D4
46-55	N	3D6+6	3D6	1	1
56-65	N	2D6+6	3D6	0	1
66-75	N	1D6+6	3D6	0	0
76-79	M	5D6+6	3D6	1D4	1D4
80-83	M	4D6+6	3D6	1	1D4
84-87	M	3D6+6	3D6	0	1
88-91	M	2D6+6	3D6	0	0
92-95	M	1D6+6	3D6	0	0
96	E	2D6	3D6	0	0
97	E	3D6	3D6	0	0
98	E	4D6	3D6	0	0
99	E	5D6	3D6	1	1D4
00	E	6D6	3D6	1D4	1D4

F (friendly) *- spirit will do as summoner desires.*

N (neutral) *- spirit will do as summoner desires, but at a coat of 1/10 the POW of the spirit In battle magic power from the caster. This must be expended immediately and cannot be used by the summoner of the spirit.*

M (malign) *- these spirits always will attack a summoner to try to possess them.*

E (evil) *- these spirits always will attack the summoner to try to destroy him.*

To determine which battle magic spells are known, roll 1D50 and consult the Basic Battle Magic chart. A roll of 50 is a bonus roll, and the spirit knows whatever spell the summoner wants. To determine which Rune spells are known, roll 1D15 and consult the Standard Rune Magic Spells table. A roll of 10, 18, or 24 (Rune power) means the spirit knows a special cult spell. (To determine the spell, roll 2D8 and consult the table of contents of Cults of Prax. The spirit then will know a 1, 2, or 3 point Rune spell from the indicated cult) A roll of 25 means the spirit knows the Rune spell of Spirit Block.

Under either spell, the head may not resist the exploitation of its abilities. No caster ever learns magic from a head. Heads never learn magics or skills, or go up in POW.

Each spell must be cast by the person who will use the head, and requires that much time be spent in preparation. One spell creates one head. The ceremony involves the ritual cleansing and purification of the victim, often involving some use of Darklight fire and torture, followed by a two-day to one week long ritual (depending on the spell cast), and the final beheading of the victim with a silver garrote and the accompanying casting of the required spell or spells.

Heads must be carried by the Doomed One or Doom Priest who cast the spell, or by one of his bound guardians. The total number of heads with which the caster can be in mental contact is limited to the result of the caster's INT divided by 3, rounding down to eliminate fractions. A caster's allied spirit may make use of the knowledge and spells contained by the head.

Every humanoid head has an encumbrance of 2, up to SIZ 21. Find the encumbrance of larger creatures by dividing their SIZ by 10 (round remainders of less than 5 downward, and more than or equal to 5 upward: thus a creature with SIZ 25 has a head with an encumbrance of 3). Heads of small creatures, such as pixies and ducks will have encumbrances of 1.

Though heads will have the hit points they had in life for that location, wounded heads will not heal without magic. In the case of Minor Heads, they will not heal at all. Any healed head always has one less hit point than it had before being damaged. A head with 5 hit points which is damaged and then healed will have only 4 hit points after that; if damaged again, it will heal only to 3 hit points, etc. Heads without hit points are dead; no magic or procedure will bring them back.

Heads need no sleep or food. Heads do not speak, though they do open their mouths, grimace, open and close their eyes, etc.

When a head dies or is destroyed, rapid decay occurs, and it turns to a stinking mass in a few hours. All magics in it are then lost forever, though even death does not free the spirit therein from the magic which bound it to its head. The spirit remains trapped in the head, becoming an insane ghost that attacks any living being not protected by special Thanatari talismans or blemishes. Such ghosts have a range of 20m from their heads.

Thanatari cultists use cast-off heads as boundary markers, watchdogs, and guards. Masses of them often will be found stacked together, a sight discouraging to improperly-protected intruders.

If the caster dies, his heads die with him, though they still are not unbound.

Two ways exist to free Thanatari head ghosts. The Daka Fal Rune spell, Free Ghost, will do the job. More commonly, a Lhankor Mhy ritual is used. Priests of Lhankor Mhy teach the ritual without cost to any who wish to learn. The intonations necessary to the ritual require a week to learn correctly. The words of the ritual follow.

In the name of Full Knowledge
I rip this tool from Thanatar,
To confound his presence
In the scheme of being
And to hasten the end of Chaos.
Go, spirit, to the fate of your will!

A chanter needs ten strike ranks to recite this. He then crushes the head, living or dead, with his feet. Living heads must take their full hit points before dying; for effectiveness, treat crushing as a kick. Once he has crushed the head, he then compares his POW against that of the ghost in a Resistance Table roll. A successful roll means that the ghost is freed. If not succeeding, the crusher may try again, but as if he had lost a point of POW. Meanwhile, the mad ghost can continue to attack the person. A head can be crushed even if part or most of it has crumbled to powder.

The skulls of victims often are mortared deep within masonry walls.

A non-Thanatari might imagine it wise for owners to crush his discarded heads, preventing the effectiveness of the Lhankor Mhy ceremony. But this is not done. Such heads are sacred representations of the Severed God. Crushing a head not only invites immediate retribution from the cult's spirit of reprisal, but also risks that the spirit of the head waits for the Initiate or Rune Priest in the afterworld.

The creation of the living heads violates the tendencies of the natural world enough that the universe itself may try to repel the vile creature performing such an act. The first-time user of either of these spells will have a 5% chance of gaining a Chaotic feature, a chance increasing 5% each time such a spell is cast until such a feature is gained. Only one feature will be so acquired. The Chaotic feature will not necessarily be a favorable feature—there is a large chance that the feature will be taken from the broo goddess Thed's 2 point Rune spell Reverse Chaos (see the cult of Thed). To determine the feature, roll D100 and consult the following table.

01-25	standard Chaotic feature
26-49	standard Chaotic feature plus Reverse Chaos feature
50-00	Reverse Chaos feature

Roll D100 on the Appropriate table(s)

There is a non-cumulative 03% chance per use of the spell that further Reverse Chaos features will be gained.

Gaining a favorable Chaotic feature may be a blessing to a creature of Chaos, but it may not be so to a human. Most humans object to neighbors who are marked with Chaos, viewing them much as they would a broo, Jack O'Bear, or gorp. This will cause the cultist to lose popularity, and probably his life. Anti-chaos cults feel obliged to remove such tainted people from the face of the earth, even if any Thanatari connection is unknown.

Create Minor Head
(Thanatar, Than, Atyar-2) **1 point**
one week, touch, non-stackable, reusable
Create Minor Head is a Than specialty spell, creating limited versions of the heads which the Thanatari use for magical knowledge and power. The spell requires a two day long ritual in which a single living victim is decapitated with the ritual silver garrote and his spirit trapped within the severed, living head with all knowledge and magics intact. The spell places the head in a limited form of Mind Link with the priest, and he draws out magics as he requires.

Any spell the victim knows is usable by the priest, and that includes all compatible Rune magics. But no new spells may be brought to mind—the head cannot learn, and cannot store new material. Rune magic is cast on a one-use basis; battle magics are reusable as long as the head lives.

Though the caster must supply his own POW, the use of a Rune spell from the head temporarily drains from the head four times the POW normally sacrificed to gain the spell originally. Thus a 1 point Rune spell would drain four points of POW from the head, and so on. After each use, the cumulative POW lost is compared against the head's remaining POW and a roll on the Resistance Table is made. A successful roll means that the head dies and decay begins. The head is useless immediately. If the head is not overcome, it regains the POW at one-quarter the normal rate.

Create Minor Head normally lasts a week. If the final day of the ritual fell on a cult holy day, the spell will last ten days. The head will have the hit points it had in life, but will not heal and will not be healed if damaged in any way. When the spell fails, rapid decay sets in. The head swiftly becomes a fetid, stinking mass. Any magics remaining in the head are lost.

Besides magic, a priest may withdraw knowledge and skills from his victim, but such attributes will be temporary and last only as long as the head is alive. All knowledge-based skills possessed by a head may be used by a priest at a level equal to half the head's ability. Other skills improve differently, since their functioning stems only partly from knowledge.

Manipulation, Perception, Stealth, and combat skills are all gained as follows:

victim's former skill %	bonus gained
0-49%	no bonus
50-74%	05%
75-89%	10%
90%+	15%

For a skill bonus to be gained, the priest's own skill must be at least 25 lower than that of the head's. Thus, if a head formerly had a 65% ability in picking locks, the priest would have to have an ability in that area of less than 40% to gain the 5% bonus. The bonus may take the priest over his maximum required skill level, but an ability in a DEX-based skill never may exceed the priest's DEX x5.

Create Major Head (Thanatar, Than, Atyar-3) 2 points
until destroyed, touch, non-stackable, reusable
The cult is truly infamous for this disgusting power. The spell must be stacked with the 1 point spell Create Minor Head (which remains reusable). Like the Create Minor Head spell, this spell also requires a lengthy ceremony in which the head of the victim is removed with a silver garrote. The ceremony requires 8 hours a day for an entire week to prepare the victim and the priest.

This spell creates a more permanent living head which lasts until it is destroyed, giving the priest much more control over his collection.

As in Create Minor Head, the priest is in Mind Link with the head and may draw upon the victim's magics, including all battle magics and compatible Rune magics, but the control differs from the lesser spell.

Rune magics taken from a bound head are reusable if the spell is already reusable, but Create Major Head forces the caster to choose one and only one Rune spell to use. To gain additional Rune magic from the head, the priest must permanently sacrifice POW to Thanatar, as per the rules. Further, using Rune magic subtracts battle magic POW from the head equal to the points of the spells. This drain is temporary and can be regained, but it also taxes the head and may kill it. Reflect this chance by subtracting the head's POW after casting the Rune spell from the head's current POW, then compare the result against the head's current full POW on the Resistance Table. A successful roll indicates that head is dead and rapidly decomposing.

The priest also can use and reuse the battle magics of the victim, and can use the head's own POW to cast them if the priest wishes. POW so used (it is drained from Rune magic use) returns at one-fourth the normal rate of 6 points every 24 hours.

A head down to 1 point of POW loses consciousness and the priest temporarily loses the use of its spells, knowledge, and skills. A head at zero POW is dead, and such a death keeps a head from becoming an insane ghost—no spirit, no ghost. When a head dies, all magics are lost.

Magic cannot be learned from a bound head.

Besides spells, the summoner also may gain knowledge from his victim. All Knowledge-based skills may be used at a level up to or equal to the priest's INT x5. Other skills are improved differently, since knowledge only plays a part in their functioning. To determine the bonuses in Manipulation, Stealth, Perception, and combat skills, see Create Minor Head for details.

In contrast to magic, knowledge and skills can be learned with Create Major Head. Each season that a priest possesses a head, he may choose to permanently improve by 5% in one area of knowledge or skill possessed by each of his heads, due to long and continued contact with them. This gain is limited to up to three-fourths of the head's ability in the case of knowledge-based abilities and up to 15% in the case of all other abilities, depending on the former ability of the head, as per skills temporarily gained from a head. See Create Minor Head.

Create Zombie (Thanatar-3, Than) 2 points
instantaneous, 40m, non-stackable, reusable
This spell creates a zombie out of a recently dead Initiate. The zombie is as shown in the rules. Preserving flesh and applying Strength and Vigor spells forces this to be a 2 point spell.

Devour Book (Thanatar-3, Atyar) 2 points
instantaneous, touch, non-stackable, reusable
This spell of Atyar is the next step up from Ingest Scroll. When cast, the spell causes all knowledge within the book clutched by the priest to be absorbed into his mind. The caster must roll less than his CON + INT divided by 2 multiplied by 5, on D100, or he goes into shock for 1-6 hours, staring blankly into space. If the roll is failed, make a second roll of INT x5 or less on D100. If the second roll is failed, all knowledge absorbed from the book was lost when the shock set in, and 1D3 Knowledge skills are permanently lowered by 1D10 x5%. The spell, regardless of success, will do 5 points of damage to a character's hit points much like poison, and can be healed only like systemic poison. A book so absorbed is left with completely blank pages.

Devour Book also can absorb one page (approximate length) of information that is chiseled in stone or carved in wood.

Summon Specific Guardian (Thanatar, Atyar-3) 2 points
combat (15 minutes or until bound into body), 160m, non-stackable, reusable.
This spell resembles the Daka Fal spell, Summon Specific Ancestor. It must be stacked with a 1 point Summon Guardian spell. It is the nearest approximation to a resurrection ability that the cult has. The spell calls back the spirit of a specific deceased cult member from the Place of Waiting. The being summoned will be dealt with as if it had undergone Resurrection (see the Chalana Arroy cult in *Cults of Prax*), losing abilities as dictated. Normally this spell is used only in ceremonial situations.

The deceased must have died by wounds, poisons, or other physical damage. The spell will not work on beings slain in spirit combat, Soul Waste, or magically-oriented Power-draining death. Since a special sacrifice has been made, the body of the sacrificed victim does not need special healing, since this is part of the ceremony.

Once using the spell, the priest or allied spirit must engage in spirit combat with the specific ancestor, and if succeeding in the first round of combat, then the spirit is bound into the prepared body. If the soul of the departed wins the round, it returns to the Place of Waiting.

Deterioration Caused by Loss of Time
If one or more full days passed before Summon Specific Ancestor was attempted, the spirit may have lost some abilities and magics. Use the chart to determine the loss, subtracting the stated percentage from each ability.

Magic losses accrete: a specific guardian returning on the third day after death will have lost the fifth point of all his variable spells as well as the fourth point. Lost abilities are exclusive: the stated percentage is the total percentage lost in each ability. Abilities do not go below zero.

If the spell is performed in less than one full day keep all skills and all spells (including Rune spells) intact.

Full Days Dead	*Battle Magic Losses*	*Rune Magic Losses*	*all skills Percentage Losses*
1	6th point all Var. spells	none	15%
2	5th point all Var. spells	none	30%
3	4th point all Var. spells; ALL 4 pt. spells	none	45%
4	3rd point, all Var. spells; ALL 3 pt. spells	none	60%
5	2nd point, all Var. spells; ALL 2 pt. spells	All including one-use	75%
6	ALL 1 pt. Spells	none	90%
7	oops!		

This spell also may be used to summon a specific guardian to do combat with a foe. Then the Summon Specific Guardian spell remains reusable, but Summon Guardian is lost as a one-use spell. Used in this manner it is exactly like the Daka Fal Summon Specific Ancestor. All rules apply. The Summon Guardian spell and the Guardian Summons Chart contain the needed data.

For more about guardians, see the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult.

Summon Spirit of Teaching (Thanatar-3, Atyar) 2 points
1 day, 160m, non-stackable, non-reusable
This spell must be stacked with both Summon Guardian and Summon Specific Guardian, and it must be cast from within a Warding spell or the spirit summoned is treated as malign. The spell summons back the spirit of Treack Markhor, the traitorous priest of Lhankor Mhy who founded the Atyar cult. He is a neutral spirit and will immediately demand the sacrifice of battle magic POW equal to a tenth of his current POW. He will teach Lhankor Mhy Rune magic via rapid teaching. Twice the POW required for the spell must be permanently sacrificed to him. He knows all Lhankor Mhy Rune spells.

Treack Markhor: INT 23, POW 6D6+6

Summon Voice of Atyar (Thanatar-3, Atyar) 2 points
15 min./3 questions, 10m, non-stackable, reusable
This spell is usable only on cult holy days by priests of Atyar or Thanatar. It summons the subservient cult spirit known as the Voice of Atyar. There is a 35% chance that the spirit will appear ordinarily, but if the summoner is the temple's High Priest of Dark Truths, the chance of success raises to 75%. The summoner must prepare for a full week.

When it appears, the spirit has the corporeal form of a shimmering silver ram's skull, with horns and brightly glowing eyes. The Voice of Atyar tests Initiate candidates and answers in a truthful but cryptic way up to three questions per summoning. A priest who summons the spirit may ask of it three questions, which must be answered. The ritual of the questioning conforms to the procedures for Divination. A priest may summon the spirit for his own purposes but once a year. A second attempt to call on the spirit within a year for personal purposes will cause the Voice to attack the caller if the ritual succeeds.

The answer to a question may be a vision or no more than seven questions. Being bound by Time, the Voice cannot foresee the future. The ritual takes an hour to perform and must be done in a temple or other recognized holy place sacred to Thanatar.

The probability that the priest or Initiate correctly reads the vision or message is POW x5 or less on D100. And, since no one is perfect, there is always a 5% chance (96-00 on Dl 00) that the character will read the signs wrong. The referee must then make up an answer purposely misleading.

The Voice of Thanatar has the following attributes:

INT 25	CON 16	SIZ 1POW 30	DEX 20
Defense 30%	Hit Points 18	Armor 6 points	

Spells: Befuddle, Disruption, Multispell 2, Protection 3. It also has 2 points of Divine Intervention, and one each of the cult specialty Rune spells available to a Doom Priest of Atyar.

Consume Mind (Atyar) **3 points**
instantaneous, 10m, non-stackable, reusable
The third and most powerfully dangerous of the Atyar specialty spells. This is the only way that a priest may gain permanent use of a victim's Rune magic. This spell does not work against Lhankor Mhy Rune Priests and Rune Lords. When this spell is cast upon a victim, the totality of the being's memory is drained from it, and is transferred to the caster's mind, leaving the victim a mental vegetable. This spell can be cast only during Disorder week, and requires the entire week to perform. Because of the concentration he needs to cast this spell, the priest often secludes himself into the safest area of the temple; he is almost defenseless while casting this vile magic.

To succeed in the spell, the priest must succeed in a POW vs. POW attack upon his victim. Failure at this point means the ritual is unsuccessful and may not be cast for another season.

If successful, the priest then is liable to catatonic shock. A roll under his CON + INT divided by 2 and multiplied by 5 lets him evade this result. If he fails the roll, he is in shock for 1D6 days and must further roll on the fumble table below. He will also have to make a D100 roll of less than his INT x5, or lose all information that he gained from the victim's mind, AND he will have 1D6 Knowledge skills permanently lowered by 1D10 x5%.

Regardless of success or failure, this powerful spell does 1D6+4 points damage to the caster, and heals like systemic poison.

Three points of Reflection cause Consume Mind to go back on the attacker. If Reflection succeeds, treat the result as a fumble.

Successful use of Consume Mind allows the caster to gain 1D10 randomly chosen points of battle magic. Treat in all ways as though the caster had learned them in a normal fashion. The caster also gains 1 point of Rune magic, which he may select at will. Additional points of Rune magic may be withdrawn simultaneously if 1 point of Divine Intervention is stacked with the spell for each point of magic to be gained. Any spells so stolen must be cult-compatible. All spells so gained are reusable, including cult specialty magics.

Knowledge skills known by the victim can be gained at a rate of 5% per week in each skill. To improve, a priest must make a roll as though he were learning by experience. If the experience gain roll is once missed in a certain skill, the priest may gain no further expertise in that area from that victim. Knowledge skills gained in this manner may rise to equal the priest's INT x5, but not exceed the victim's former skill level. All DEX-based skills may be gained up to 15% additional ability. See the Prologue to the Create Heads spells and the spell descriptions for more details.

Like a Create Head, this ability causes the user to gain a Chaotic feature or a reverse Chaotic feature. The feature will be gained by the directions in the Prologue to the Create Head spells.

FUMBLE TABLE
Roll once with 1D10.

1	caster permanently loses 1D3 points of INT.
2	caster's memories are lost and replaced by those of the victim. In effect, the victim has become the caster; the mind of the original caster no longer exists.
3	caster goes insane; sits in corner and gibbers.
4	spirit of victim immediately attacks the caster.
5	caster permanently loses all knowledge of 1D10 battle magic spells.
6	caster permanently loses all knowledge of 1D4 Rune magic spells.
7	caster loses the ability to use Consume Mind ever again.
8	the catatonic shock state lasts 1D6 weeks.
9	the catatonic shock state lasts 1D6 weeks. Roll again.
10	roll twice more, ignoring rolls over 9. Reroll duplications.

Sever Spirit (Than) **3 points**
instantaneous, 160m, non-stackable, non-reusable.
This spell strikes like a garrote to slice the spirit of a character from his body. The caster must make a successful POW vs. POW roll. If successful, the victim dies. If not, the victim takes 1D6 to his CON, the effects being similar to poison.

Summon Spirit of Reprisal (Thanatar) **3 points**
15 min. against non-cultists or till mission is accomplished, 160m, non-stackable, non-reusable (Doom Lord), reusable (High Priest of Dark Truths).
The High Priest of Dark Truths and the Doom Lord of each temple have access to this spell. It allows the caster to summon a powerful cult spirit either to punish wayward cultists to save the temple or to personally defend them (see IX., Subservient Cults, for a description).

IX. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
THE SPIRIT OF REPRISAL
This spirit has no name. It appears as a shimmering silver skull with ram's horns and glowing eyes, floating over the headless shoulders of a large humanoid shrouded in ink-black robes, as though a combination of the Voice at Atyar and of the Gatherer of Souls. Either a temple's Doom Lord or its High Priest of Dark Truths can summon the spirit. Each must use a 3 point Rune spell. The duration of the spirit depends upon the function to which it is summoned. If called upon to enact retribution upon a certain cult member who has transgressed (by crushing a head, betraying a temple, attacking a priest while he was under vow, etc.), the spirit will accomplish its task and return to the spirit plane upon completion. The retribution against a cult member usually consists of at least three rounds of spirit combat in which the spirit drains INT, a round of shade attack, and a successful physical attack. This usually leaves victims alive, but destroyed mentally.

If called upon to attack non-cultists, it will remain for the duration of the spell (15 minutes), or longer if stacked with the appropriate Extension spell.

If the spirit must defend the persons of the High Priest or the Doom Lord, and not simply the sanctity of the temple, it immediately demands payment of 1D10 battle magic POW points.

THE SPIRIT OF REPRISAL

STR 24	SIZ 3X6X3 *	INT 18	POW 30	DEX 20
Move 12	Hit Points 24	Attack 40%		

* SIZ when attacking as a shade; otherwise about 21.

The spirit can attack in three different, but not simultaneous, ways: as a spirit, POW vs. POW (permanently draining INT, not POW); it can attack as a medium shade, making a fear-shock attack; or it can attack physically, with a 40% attack doing 1D6 + 2D4 damage.

A spirit of reprisal may summon a Gatherer of Souls to its aid and cause the Gatherer to attack its opponent.

THE GATHERER OF SOULS

This headless man in flowing black and silver robes appears to and beckons dying cultists. He is a minor physical manifestation of the god-aspect Than.

He safely guides the Thanatar dead to the Place of Waiting, where they are added to the pool of spirits who can join the ranks of Thanatari guardians. There are many of these spirits; the Thanatari rely on them to protect their souls from the beings who wait in Hell to prey on the unguarded souls of Chaotic cultists.

The Gatherer of Souls appears to any dying Thanatar worshipper who possesses either the layman's protective talisman or who bears the Thanatar blemish. The Gatherer also appears to any being dying inside the temple complex—if the being is unmarked or without a talisman, the Gatherer of Souls attacks him immediately. 'Dying' is defined as having 3 or less hit points or as being in shock from massive body damage.

Normally the spirit is visible only to the dying, but if Detect Spirit is cast upon it, the spirit becomes visible for the duration of the spell. Also, if it chooses to attack as a shade, it will become visible for the duration of the attack. It is itself a combination of a normal spirit and a small shade—similar to the spirit of reprisal but much less powerful.

THE GATHERER OF SOULS

STR 1D6+6	SIZ 3x3x3m*	POW 3D6+6	INT 3D6
DEX 20	Move 12	Hit Points 1D6+6	

*** SIZ when attacking as a small shade; otherwise SIZ 2D6+6.**

The Gatherer of Souls waits patiently for cultists to die completely before guiding their spirits to their new home.

As a spirit, it attacks a creature by normal spirit combat. If it succeeds, it will drain 1D4+1 hit points instead of POW (remember, it usually attacks dying beings). Take the points directly from the being's CON.

It also attacks just as do normal small shades. If the Gatherer is destroyed physically, that particular portion of the manifestation is merely dispersed for a week or so.

Lurking Gatherers (Gatherers within 30m of the point in question) diminish by half all healing spells, potions, and herbs. Thus a 2 point spell does but 1 point of value, a 3 point spell rounds down to 1, and so on. Only by dispersing or driving back the Gatherer may the wounded be properly healed.

As mentioned, there are many Gatherers in the world. Though many will be in existence at any given time, only one will appear to any given person.

THE VOICE OF ATYAR

For information about this spirit, see the 2 point spell Summon the Voice of Atyar.

TREACK MARKHOR

This is the spirit of the founder of the Atyar cult. He is a former priest of Atyar's enemy, Lhankor Mhy. For more information on this spirit, see the 2 point spell Summon Spirit of Teaching.

X. ASSOCIATED CULTS

There are no associated cults. Some of the other Chaotic cults such as Vivamort, Mallia, and Thed allow Thanatar cultists to join, but usually at -5 to -10 CHA. Those who do join may learn skills and battle magic, but any Thanatari above lay-level are bound within the confines of their god's abilities. It is impossible for them to learn Rune magic by other methods. Members of other cults may join the Thanatar cult, but may not progress higher than Doom Seeker as long as they are bound beyond lay-level to another deity.

XI. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

TEMPLES

The temple/living areas of this cult are usually labyrinthine subterranean complexes. Often they may link to Chaotic communities of varying size. The worship hall will be large, pillared, and lit only by Darklight lanterns. In a room behind the altar is a lamp which is guarded always. It holds the cult's eternal flame, rumored to have been lit by the first casting of Darklight, and passed on to every temple of Thanatar.

Every temple will have one or more libraries. There will be large prisons in which sacrificial victims and captive priests are kept. These captives will not be mistreated, since their bodies and heads will be used to supplement the ranks of guardians and to provide magic for the ever-needful Thanatari.

Temples of this foul deity are virtually small slices of Chaotic Hell. Most areas are guarded by living cult members, skeletons, zombies, and the ghosts of rotted heads. Almost any Chaotic creature conceivable can be present in these hell-holes.

WORSHIPPERS

Chaotic creatures, such as ogres, broos, Jack O'Bears, scorpion men, and goblins usually follow this god. Humans, with increasing frequency, are finding their way into this cult. In a few vile areas, humans compose entire temples.

GUARDIANS

Guardians are the familiars of the Thanatar cult. They are human beings whose spirits have been replaced by those of deceased Thanatari.

On holy days, unwilling non-cultists are forced into spirit combat with the cult's spirit of reprisal until the victims' INT is devoured, and they die. Using the Summon Guardian spell, a priest then calls a spirit from the Place of Waiting. A ritually-

prepared Doomed One engages the summoned spirit in combat and binds it into the body as if it were a familiar. A spirit so bound becomes a guardian.

Treat a guardian as both a bound spirit and as a non-player character. The binder may draw upon the guardian's POW and spell-storage capacities, as per a normal familiar. All normal rules concerning bound spirits in familiars apply. However, the guardian may use any of its spells to fight for and defend its master. When a guardian or its binder dies, the spirit once again returns to the Place of Waiting, to bide there till the forces of Chaos engage the gods in the final battle of the world.

PROTECTIVE TALISMANS

Because of the special blemish which they all bear, Thanatari of Initiate level or higher are immune to the attacks of the rotted-head ghosts. Lay members of the cult obtain similar protection by have a charm created for them. Such a talisman is constructed from a human finger bone, human hair, and a shard of tarnished silver (often in the form of a horned skull.) At the time of creation, the lay member sacrifices a point of POW into it; that point of POW is lost until the talisman no longer contacts the wearer's body. At that moment the charm breaks, and the POW is regained in six hours. The charm normally hangs around the neck, secreted under clothing.

PRONUNCIATION NOTES

Pronounce the name of the original god, Tien, as *TEE-yen*. The "th" in Than is said as it is in "thee"—fully voiced; the "a" is short, as in "at". Say Atyar as *AT-yar*; the second syllable rhymes with "far". Pronounce Thanatar as *THAN-i-tar*, once again fully voicing the "th" as you would in the normal English word "than".

HIT LOCATIONS

A person carrying a living head has a special hit location chart:

01-04	Right Leg
05-08	Left Leg
09-10	Abdomen
11	Carried Head
12	Chest
13-15	Right Arm
16-18	Left Arm
19-20	Head

For non-humanoid creatures carrying living heads, use some abdomen or hindquarters number as a hit location for the carried head. Randomly determine which head is struck if more than one is carried. Heads may be armored. Armor on a head adds to the encumbrance of the head, usually only one point per such head.

CULTS OF TERROR DESIGNER NOTES

By Greg Stafford

One of the especially strong points of Glorantha is its realistic portrayal of the deities and their religious cults. This is natural since the world of Glorantha, which is presented as the preeminent example of a cohesive game world for the system, is a theistic world where the gods are real and the world is a mythical construction following the prescientific conceptions of cosmology. The world is a flat lozenge that floats upon the cosmic ocean, surrounded by the primeval darkness, and covered over by the bowl of the sky.

Cults of Prax was the first supplement that we designed that dealt with details of the religious systems of the world. It presents fifteen religions that are independent or semi-independent, yet integrated within the whole of the world. It gave the requirements, beliefs, and mythical backgrounds, and also, the spells and special skills which the deity and cult taught. It personalized, the deities and gave guidelines for the whats and whys of the gods. It fleshed out much of the world with its extensive background, adding local color and hundreds of motivations for adventures.

Cults of Prax included some terribly bloodthirsty and violent deities. It is questionable whether or not they would be called Good, though they were all carefully placed and explained within the world system to justify their continued existence. Some of the deities were presented as being enemies of each other as well.

But there was still something lacking. Glorantha's mythical structure includes a class of gods and beings which are called chaotic. The term includes several different concepts within its definition, and by its very nature it is antithetical to existence and Being. All of the cults in *Cults of Prax* are presented as being dire foes of the chaotic things of the world. But there were no chaotic deities in *Cults of Prax*.

People complained about this, especially when their characters had reached relatively powerful positions as rune lords* or rune priests. The characters had, generally, faced and (usually) defeated their classical foes from Cults of Prax. They had also typically faced and crushed the monsters in the rulebook that are classified as chaotic. But where, they asked, were the gods of these monsters? Shouldn't they, too, have deities worthy of their worship? Don't they, too, have some sort of powerful entity that is capable of giving them special powers and magics?

Cults of Terror answers those needs, and I am confident that many people will be sorry they ever asked.

Cults of Terror is a book of the bad guys of Glorantha. It contains details on nine dangerous deities, presented in the same clear and complete format as in *Cults of Prax*. These monstrosities range from the crude and simple to the sophisticated and complex. Now the leaders of the enemy can be presented with magics comparable to those wielded by their foes. No longer will the good guys move with impunity into a chaotic stronghold, confident that their rune spells will carry the day.

THE CRIMSON BAT

STEED OF THE RED GODDESS

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

The Crimson Bat once was a natural animal, but was horribly mutated by the flood of Chaos which infected the world after the War of the Gods. It grew to a tremendous size, and glowed with Chaotic forces. The glow was the Glowspot, and it was a source of Chaotic power.

To feed these energies, the Bat consumed enormous amounts of food and for survival required the Power from intelligent beings.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

During the First Age, the Crimson Bat roamed the world without restraint. It descended upon towns and cities without warning, devouring the people. The early hero Arkat met the beast in battle, withstood it, and managed to banish it from the mundane plane. It did not reappear in the Second Age.

In the Third Age, the Red Goddess was born in Peloria. She brought new and radical ideas and beliefs about the powers of the world to her people, and they joined in her worship. Filled with her inspiration, they conquered and converted the lands around them to the words of the goddess. The goddess left the world for a time to forge her place within the pantheons of the Elder Gods. While she was on this Heroquest, powerful enemy lords took the opportunity to strike. So strong was their hate of the Red Goddess that they reached and besieged her capital before she returned.

She returned riding the great monstrosity of the Crimson Bat. Enemy forces knew great terror, and died in regiments as the Bat made war. Many survivors went mad. Lunar historians refer to this battle as the First Battle of Chaos, and use that day, Freezeday, as the feeding day for the Bat.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The cult promises nothing about life after death, except that loyal and lucky cultists will be spared the eternal agony of being eaten by the Bat.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

The Crimson Bat is identified with the Runes of Chaos and Death. Since its binding by the Red Goddess, it has been allied with the Lunar Rune.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The cult was formed by the Goddess to care for and to feed the Bat. In binding the demon, she gained some control over the beast's hunger, finding a low maintenance level so that the Bat could stay on the mundane plane without the sacrifice of thousands of people each week.

The cult is responsible only to the Red Emperor, and the Bat is an arm of his power, though he may temporarily assign command of the use of the Bat to a particular general or military district governor.

In times of peace, the cult must maintain the Bat at its minimum level. It is fed an average of 25 intelligent beings once per week. Its feeding requirements are exact, and covered completely in the miscellaneous notes at the end of this cult. If the Bat is not properly fed, it will fade from the mundane plane, requiring many sacrifices and great magics to bring it back.

In wartime the cult membership grows, and the Bat's hunger increases for the demon is used regularly in attacks. The food consumption increases by a factor of ten, and the bat then must be fed twice weekly.

The Lunar Empire finds the Bat useful. The Chaos light it emits acts in all ways as a miniature Glowline, and all Lunar magicians within that area cast their magic as if the Red Moon were in its full state. This area about the bat is called the Glowspot, and it varies from 4 - 20km in diameter depending upon the feeding level of the Bat.

The Bat is a great deterrent to uprisings in the borderlands. With its Chaotic cries, it can chase away all animal life from wide areas and make the life of a nomad impossible, and with its great attacks it can defeat and devour any settlement or tribal citadel. By imperial decree, the Bat has not been seen for years in the Heartland Sultanates, confined to client states such as Tarsh, as a gruesome reminder of the might of the Red Moon.

Though not directly mandated by the Goddess, the Red Emperor has declared that Rune Priests and Rune Lords of the cult shall not be more than lay members in any other cult.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

Most Lunar citizens consider the Bat and its cult a necessary evil, and try to avoid contact with it. Since the cult is responsible directly to the Emperor, the civil and military authorities usually cooperate fully with it.

Cultists constantly watch for food suitable for the Bat. The food must be intelligent, and bands of cultists search the streets and alleys for criminals, runaway slaves, and adventurers to use as food. Peasants will be used only when other food types are insufficient. This rarely happens.

III. ORGANIZATION

INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION

There is only one temple to the Crimson Bat, the Bat itself. Rune Priests, Rune Lords, and Initiates can sacrifice and gain cult Rune magic while within the Glowspot, and the Bat acts in all ways as a temple for the sacrifice of Power on holy days and for regaining Rune magic.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
In peacetime the cult has about 25 constant members, though this will vary. The High Priest has four assistant priests, two of whom will always be at 90% or more in Bat Mastery. The five Rune Lords supervise the sweeps for Bat food, and an assistant priest will often accompany such a hunt. The Initiates number 15-40, and five or so always will accompany a Rune Lord on his sacred mission. The number of lay members will change constantly as the Bat moves from place to place.

CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES
The Crimson Bat is the center of power, and the holy place is the Glowspot.

HOLY DAYS
The Dark Moon day, Freezeday, is the holy day for the cult. At maintenance level, the Bat will be fed his 25 human sacrifices on this day.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN
To join the cult, the prospective member must acknowledge the power and might of the Crimson Bat and of the Lunar Empire and donate at least 50 Lunars to the cult. Captives may join the cult as lay members to try to avoid becoming Bat food.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG
Laymen do not continue in this cult. The cult must be rejoined each week, and that is possible only in the proximity of the Bat, which moves regularly. Lay members are expected to fully aid the collection of food for the Bat.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Lay members will be eaten by the Bat only after all non-cultists have been devoured.

SKILLS
The cult offers no skills to lay members at any price.

BATTLE MAGIC
The cult offers the following battle magic spells to laymen:

Half Normal Price - Binding.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
To be accepted as an Initiate, the candidate must present himself to a priest of the cult. If there is room for a new Initiate the candidate must then attend the next feeding of the Bat, and temporarily offer the Bat all but one point of his Power, and at least 150 Lunars. There is a 99% chance that the Bat wilt accept the Initiate. One percent of the time the Bat rejects the candidate by taking all of his Power and eating his body.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
Initiates must obey the commands of their priests and Rune Lords and work always to keep the Bat fed. Initiates must worship the Bat on holy days, and offer themselves as food if the Bat's supply is insufficient (this is imaginable only if the Bat

[Though] the allies of Bolthor among the Bilini were few, Oddi the Keen hunted them down without rest, until all were dead, chastened, or exiled. To Monnie, Bolthor's wife, Oddi did little save isolate her from events until he could confer with the commanders of the Lunar Military Districts behind Bilini. Though no Lunar partisan, to my happiness Oddi made plain his willingness to insulate the Empire from such barbaric and Chaotic forces as he might, in return for his freedom in Bilini matters—all, in truth, that interested my friend. I was able to smooth negotiations, and the Lunar staffs expressed their satisfaction at my Initiate status in Irrippi Ontor. My father was impressed by my adventures and new position, and this made me glad.
Bolthor's head halves we kept atop the main gate at the capital, so that all might see that Bolthor would never return.

Oddi was not yet settled to becoming a king, though the succession lay squarely on him since he had so thoroughly crushed Bolthor's line. Strange fits of anger came upon him; occasionally he would rage about the palace. Many thought he would harm himself or doom innocents, but we made friends with his needs and kept our distance, for usually he was gentle and considerate. These spells abated as the death of Hahlgrim grew distant, and Oddi planned a new campaign against Ralzakark. Ketil he kept at his right hand, for Ketil was as careful with the wealth of the kingdom as he had been with Hahlgrim's coin. The strike against Ralzakark would not begin until later in Sea-season, so Oddi, I, and a few trusted men rode to Oddi's lands in the north, to settle debts of Hahlgrim and to hunt.

…We headed for the Copperbark, where eubuck and sand-nosed deer live abundantly. On the second day a cold wind blew from the northwest. That night we saw the sky in that direction glow as bright or brighter than the Red Moon, and our horses grew skittish. The next morning the birds did not sing, nor saw we other life. We rode toward where the bright glow had been, and saw the cause.

In the valley below rested a great red shape, as long and as high as a castle wall. My heart leaped as I praised my good luck: this was the fabulous Crimson Bat, upon whose legendary back the Red Goddess herself had returned from the spirit plane to reclaim her earthly empire. I sent a prayer to She who Leads the World.

My companions were not so pleased. It is an unfortunate truth that the mortal cultists of the Bat are an arrogant and self-pleased group, who pay little heed to others except as Bat food. I do not know how many actually are eaten, though it has a prodigious appetite during war. Any number may be more than convenient for unpopulated country, and it is there that the Emperor, may he be blessed, must keep the Bat.

Oddi swore, for though the great creature was just across the border from Bilini, yet no one had told him of its coming.

was among Lunar forces suffering a disastrous defeat). All spirits bound by Initiates must be fed to the Bat, and every Initiate is required to donate 90% of any earnings to the cult.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Initiates will not be fed to the Bat unless there is an extreme shortage of Bat food. Any available non-cultists and all lay members will be eaten by the Bat before the first Initiate is. If Initiates become food, the most junior Initiate is taken first, and the most senior Initiate taken last.

While attending the Bat, Initiates have their food provided for them by the cult; the cult pays for all needs and expenses.

Favored Initiates may ride on the Bat with the Rune Priests and Rune Lords when the Bat flies to new feeding grounds.

Initiates may join associate cults of the Crimson Bat, but this will disqualify the Initiate for priesthood with the Crimson Bat.

SKILLS

Initiates will be taught almost any skill that a current priest or Rune Lord of the cult has mastered, at half the normal cost and at twice the normal time to learn the skill. The Crimson Bat promotes no skill over another, believing that even the most esoteric skill may be useful in bringing back the Bat food.

SPELLS

In addition to the normal one-use Rune spells available to most cults, this cult also sells battle magic to Initiates on the same basis as the skills its Rune Masters know.

Divine Intervention is not available to Initiates of this cult.

It was our fortune then to see the camp break up. The select rode upon The Bat itself; the rest, mostly Initiates and prospective fodder, kept pace on the ground in a long caravan paralleling the flight of the creature. It flew no faster than a horse would walk, and its enormous wings flapped at an awesomely slow rate; no non-magical beast could have stayed so aloft.

We followed the cult for several hours, and all of us were relieved that its course took it back within Lunar territory shortly. Oddi said that it might be going to Dragon Pass, for he knew of fighting there.

Once The Bat swooped down upon a poor farm and ate the inhabitants. Another time it chased fleeing peasants, uprooting trees and rocks to feed upon those who sought safety beneath. My friends were livid with rage, but did nothing, for here they had no power but their own, which was little against the Bat. I hung my head that my people would employ such method against the weak, and suppose that this occurs only because the Bat has not entered the Heartlands for many years, and that no one there knows how it lives.

When we crossed into Bilini, we all were silent, but Oddi's silence lasted longer, for the creature was a thing of Chaos, yet his Storm Bull sense had betrayed him and he had known nothing Chaotic was at hand.

When we came to the palace, his mood was heavy, and he retired to his quarters for two days, seeing no one and eating nothing…

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL STATEMENT

Rune Lords of the cult are known as Feeders. They enable and assist the mundane functions necessary to the regular feeding of the Bat, and accompany and guard cult priests who must venture into unfriendly territory.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

There are only five Rune Lords in peacetime, so the referee must decide if the cult has room for another. There may be an indefinite number during a war.

Feeders must meet normal requirements for Rune Lords (POW 15+ and five skills at 90%+). Of the five skills, at least two must be combat skills, and one of those must be with a sickle-shaped weapon such as the scimitar. The applicant may not be an Initiate in any other cult. An applicant can apply for Rune Lord status once per year; an applicant must have been a cult Initiate for at least one full year.

The percentage chance on D100 of acceptance equals the applicant's POW + CHA, plus the total number of intelligent beings he or she personally captured and fed to the Bat. A fumble on the acceptance roll means that the Bat ate the applicant.

RESTRICTIONS

Crimson Bat Rune Lords have few restrictions. They must obey the commands of the High Priest and they must work very hard to keep the Bat well fed. If they elect to have an allied spirit, they must satisfy its appetite as well (see the associated cults section below). Rune Lords may keep 30% of any earning, to provide for any Initiate followers.

BENEFITS

The Rune Lords of this cult get few benefits beyond those normally available such masters; food, lodging, and expenses are paid by the cult. The junior-most Rune Lord will not be fed to the Bat until all Initiates of the cult have marched into its jaws.

Upon acceptance as a Rune Lord, each receives one complete set of iron equipment, including armor, shield, and two weapons. The individual Rune Lord may choose his own type of armor and his own weapons. Rune Lords desiring it may choose to have an allied spirit. All Rune Lords may ride upon the Crimson Bat when it flies to new feeding grounds.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD

GENERAL STATEMENT

Rune Priests have responsibility for the care and feeding of the Bat. All their actions will be directed to that goal. Though they may be found adventuring in areas distant from the Bat, they only will be so found on specific missions assigned by the High Priest. Most of their time is spent feeding the bat or obtaining and guarding the Bat's food.

REQUIREMENT FOR ACCEPTANCE

In addition to the normal requirements for priesthood, priests of the Crimson Bat must Read/Write New Pelorian (the Lunar official language) at 85% or better. To be accepted for priesthood, they must pass the same test as do Rune Lords. There are only four assistant priests at any one time. To be a priest, they must not have been Initiated to any other deity.

RESTRICTIONS
Priests of this cult are restricted to the neighborhood of the Bat; they may go out on their own only with specific permission of their High Priest.

BENEFITS
Each priest of this cult is a personal Glowspot. No matter where or when, their spells always work as if it were full moon.

The priest may decide to receive an allied spirit (see the associated cults).

When the High Priest decides to leave an area and fly the Bat to a new location, the priests may ride atop the Bat to the new feeding ground. Priests will start to learn the Bat Mastery skill from the High Priest.

Bat Mastery [Knowledge skill] 0%
Successful use of this skill brings the Bat back under the control of the cult should the Bat ever break the Binding spell wrought by the Red Goddess. The Bat must be satiated with food and Power before the skill will work. If the Bat should go berserk from hunger, the priests can control it once it has completed its feeding. See the miscellaneous notes of this cult for information about guiding the Bat.

Bat Mastery may be learned from experience (though the local population will not cheer the student when he misses), but it is taught only to 90%. A priest will learn 5% in the skill for every four weeks he studies; he must accompany the Bat in order to study.

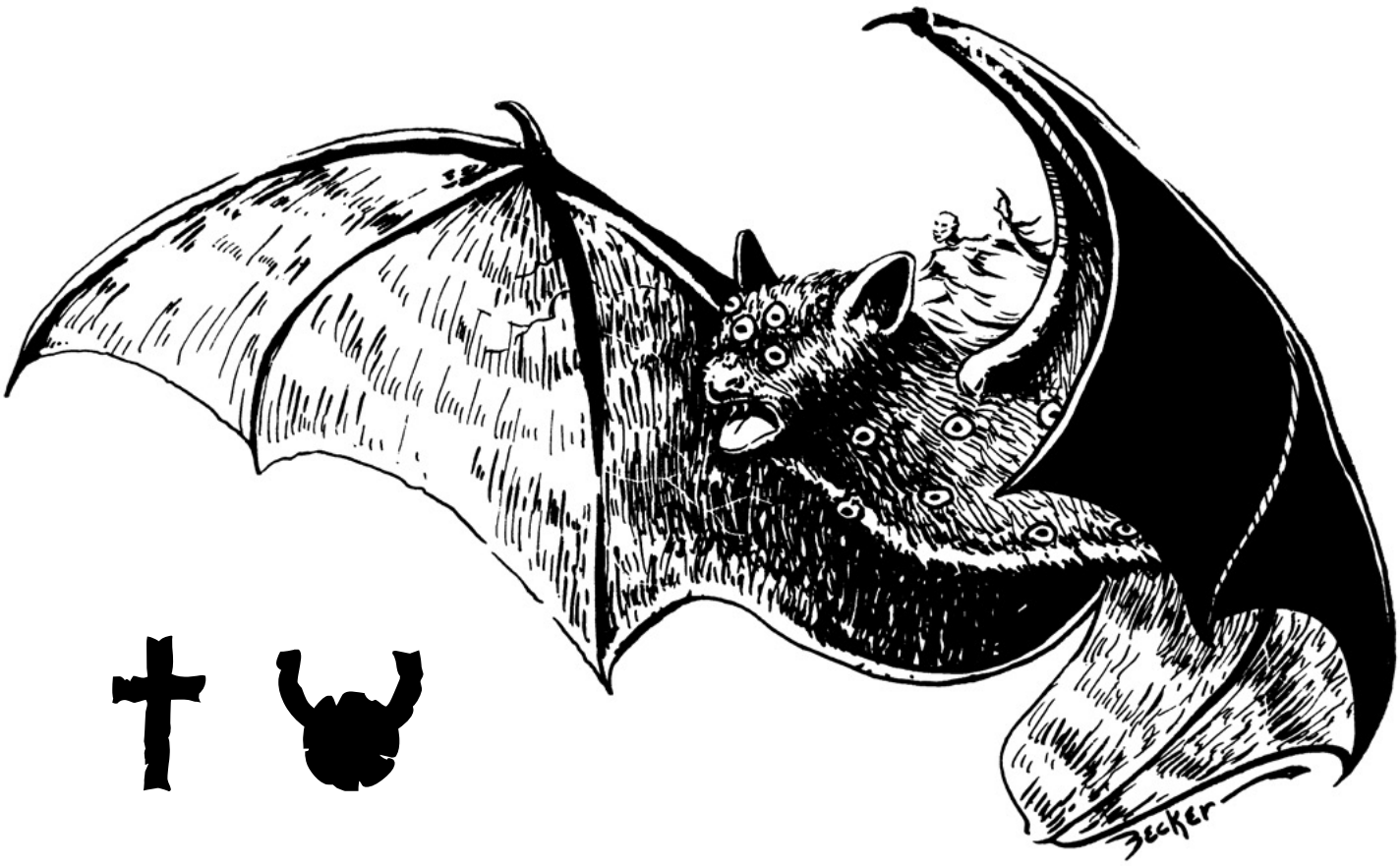
RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
Rune Priests of the Bat are able to use the following standard Rune spells: Absorption, Concealment, Discorporation, Dismiss Elemental 1, 2, and 3, Extension 1 and 2, Mind Link, Multispell 1, Shield, Spell Teaching, and Warding. This version of the Absorption spell diverts the POW directly to the Crimson Bat.

CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS
The cult will teach the following cult special Rune spells for the price the teacher wishes to charge.

Bat Wings 1 point
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable,
This spell works only on Initiates and Rune Masters of the cult of the Crimson Bat. It causes a pair of large bat wings to grow out of the back of its subject. These crimson wings enable their possessor to fly at a movement rate of 12 for the duration of the spell.

The wings are, for all purposes, part of their possessor's body. They have 3 point armor skin, and they take the same number of hit points as their possessor's arms. Use the Wind Children hit location table.

Although physical damage does disable the wings, any damage they sustain does not come off the character's total hit points.



Fangs **1 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
This spell works only on Initiates and Rune Masters of the Crimson Bat. It causes the growth of huge red fangs from the mouth of its subject. Attacking with these fangs, the user has a base chance of 50% (pluus any attack bonus) to hit, and does base damage of 2D6 (plus any damage bonus). Furthermore, the fangs secrete an acid of potency equaling their user's CON, but to which the user is immune while the spell lasts.

Power Drain **2 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
With this spell the caster has the same ability to drain Power as does a vampire. His touch will reach through an opponent's armor, attacking him POW vs. POW in the same fashion as a ghost. Unlike a vampire, the priest cannot keep the Power; it flows through him directly to the Crimson Bat.

Glow Spot **3 point**
15 minutes, 20m, reusable, non-stackable,
This spell causes the subject to act as a Glowspot with a radius of 20 meters. Inside that area all Lunar magic functions as it does on the day of the full moon. For this effect to work on targeted spells, both the caster and target must be within the radius of this or another Glowspot.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
THE LITTLE BATS
Those Rune Priests and Rune Lords wishing to receive an allied spirit may have one from the sub-cult of the Little Bats.

These spirits look like small red bats, and they function in all respects as normal allied spirits except that they, too, have an appetite to be fed. Once each Freezeday they must engage an opponent in spirit combat and completely annihilate them. Of the Power they eat in this combat, half goes to the Crimson Bat while the rest maintains the physical body of the little bat. Little bats attack opponents in spirit combat by landing on their head and gripping hard with their claws. In the course of the combat, they pulse bright red. If a little bat is not fed for two consecutive weeks, it loses patience and attacks its master.

A little bat has INT of 2D6+1 and POW of 3D6+6. In physical combat they have one hit location with 2 points of armor and 2D3 hit points. If one is killed physically, it will reform its body and return to its master on the next full moon.

These bats also serve as the cult spirit of reprisal. Any Initiate or Rune Master who deserts the cult will be attacked once by 2D3 of little bats.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
THE SEVEN MOTHERS
The Seven Mothers grant the Crimson Bat the use of the following spell:

Mind Blast **2 point**
variable, 160m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell must overcome the POW of the target to be successful. If successful, it destroys the INT of the victim for a number of days equal to one-half the attacker's POW. A roll of 01-05 always succeeds and also does 1D6+2 damage to the target's head.

PRIMAL CHAOS
The Emperor's decree against initiation in other cults is largely based on an understanding of the potential of Chaos. Misuse of its abilities is frowned upon. No priest or Rune Lord of the Crimson Bat may have Chaotic features, for if control of the Bat fell into the hands of a Chaotic, the devastation could be immense.

Philosophically, however, the Emperor allows the individual to choose. The cult of Primal Chaos is available to Initiates of the Crimson Bat, but joining the cult will void any chance of an Initiate's advancement to Rune level in the Crimson Bat, being restricted to Initiate forever.

Initiates of the Crimson Bat gain access to the following spell through the worship of Primal Chaos:

Chaos Feature **3 points**
permanent, touch, one-use, non-stackable
At the instant that the caster sacrifices Power for the functioning of this spell, the sacrificer is marked with the Touch of Chaos—he gains a permanent Chaotic feature. Cast any die: an odd roll indicates that the caster rolls for the Chaotic feature on the Curse of Thed chart given in the cult of Thed write-up. An even roll means that the standard Chaotic features chart is used.
Each Chaotic feature taken results in a cumulative 10% chance of the caster permanently changing into a broo. The change roll is made immediately after assuming a new Chaotic feature.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
FEEDING THE BAT
The Crimson Bat must be fed each week, on Freezeday. If it is not fed, its requirements double each day that passes. If still not fed its new requirement, the Bat will fade and disappear from the mundane plane on the following Godsday. The Bat, therefore, must be fed regularly and on time.

Both the body and spirit of the Bat must be fed. At its maintenance level its body requires 250 total SIZ points (an average of 25 creatures of SIZ 10) for food each week. The Bat will not quibble about the type of meat so long as it is fresh: not more than one or two days dead.

In feeding the spirit, the Bat will devour only the spirits of intelligent beings (those with INT 6+). The spirits of enough beings to give it a minimum of 250 points POW each week are needed (this is an average of 25 creatures of POW 10 for food each week).

THE SURROUNDING POPULATION
The Crimson Bat roams the borders of the Lunar Empire, stopping every week or so in a new area. It has not been in the Heartland of the Lunar Empire for years, by imperial decree.

When the bat enters an area, the people react in one of four ways. (1) They flee immediately and return when the Bat has departed; they often return to find their property confiscated or destroyed. (2) They hide, but the cult has become expert at tracking down and finding people. (3) If captured, they join the cult as lay members, and betray non-cultists; since the Bat will eat lay members when needed, this tactic is of uncertain benefit if the population is small or if everyone joins. (4) Some will fight the cult; unfortunately the cult is very strong compared to their normal foes, and always has with it the awesome trump of the Crimson Bat itself.

The people are usually convinced that assisting the cult will cause the least damage. They round up undesirables, traders from other countries, minor cultists, and such, and hope that the offering is adequate.

GUIDING THE BAT

Bound by the Red Goddess, the Crimson Bat is obliged to follow the instructions of the High Priest or any order given correctly via the Bat Mastery skill. But if the Bat is not properly fed, it has a percentage chance equal to one-tenth the Power due it of becoming uncontrolled. In this state, the Bat will devour whole towns to satisfy itself. If it cannot feed to satiation, it will vanish from the mundane plane on the next Godsday.

THE GLOWSPOT EFFECT

The Bat exerts a force which acts in all ways as the Lunar Glowline for Lunar magicians. All Lunar magicians within the Glowspot of the Bat act as if the Red Moon were full.

At full ability, the Glowspot of the Bat extends for some 20km or so. At minimum ability, the Glowspot covers an area with a radius of approximately 4km.

When seen, the entire area within the Glowspot is filled with a bright red light emanating from the Bat. The light is visible day and night.

The Crimson Bat, Chaos demon bound to the service of the Red Goddess and the Lunar Empire.

STR 250	CON 120	SIZ 18	INT 13
POW var.	DEX 150	CHA see below	
Move 12	Hit Points 162		

D20	*Location*	*AP/HP*
01-02	R LEG	85/51
03-04	L LEG	85/51
05-08	BODY	85/52
09-12	R WING	85/50
13-16	L WING	85/50
17-20	HEAD	85/51

Weapon	*SR*	*Attk%*	*Damage*	*Pts*
Bite	5	750%	1D10 + 26D6	
Breath *	1	750%	3D6+10 acid +12D6	
Tongue 1 **	2	750%	3D6+10 acid +12D6	30
	(range 10m)			
Tongue 2 **	3	750%	3D6+10 acid +12D6	25
	(range 20m)			
Tongue 3 **	4	750%	3D6+10 acid +12D6	20
	(range 30m)			

Chaos Scream (see note 1)
Eye Spit (see note 2)
Wing Buffet (see note 3)

* in the exact shape and range as a dream dragon's breath.

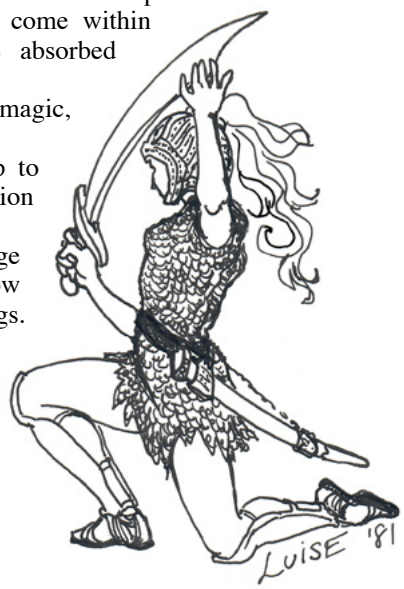
SKILLS: Flying 500%.

NOTES:

1. The Bat can emit a horrible, madly Chaotic keening affecting all creatures within 4km, except for Initiates, Rune Lords, and Rune Priests of the cult. All unintelligent, uncontrolled animals will flee the area, and all intelligent creatures will become demoralized for 1D10 days.
2. Two of the Bat's five eyes on his head can eject Chaotic blood from the Bat every other melee round, to a range of 80m. This blood can be removed only through successful Divine Intervention. (**Note:** because of the extremely Chaotic nature of the Bat, Divining for blood removal may be attempted as often as needed; no god would let a worshipper be affected in this way without hope.) Each melee round that an individual is covered with the blood, no matter how much, he loses one point of cast Rune magic. Once all cast Rune magic is eliminated, the victim will then begin to lose the knowledge of any Rune magic sacrificed or traded for, at the rate of one point per 5 melee rounds. Traded magic will be devoured first. When all Rune magic has been absorbed by the blood, it will dry and crumble off. Once free of the blood, Rune magic again may be sacrificed for as normal.
3. The wings of the Bat can create a wind with a strength of 100.
4. The Bat never can be surprised.
5. Any creature of SIZ less than 50 will be swallowed on a successful bite attack.
6. The current POW of the Bat is equal to the number of POW points sacrificed to it since its last feeding day.
7. The Bat's body host a number of very large (SIZ 4) ticks. Anyone not at least an Initiate of the Crimson Bat who tries to ride the Bat will be attacked by 4D6 ticks. Each carries the disease Soul Waste. These ticks are smaller than standard ticks.

Attack	*damage*	*HP*	*Armor points*
50%	2D6	8	3

8. The Bat will absorb all the battle magic cast or in effect within the Glowspot. Priests and Rune Lords of the Bat will be unaffected.
9. All discorporate or unbound spirits (except fetches) which come within the Glowspot will be absorbed instantly by the Bat.
10. The Bat absorbs all magic, battle or Rune, cast at it.
11. The Bat regenerates up to 20 hit points per location each melee round.
12. The bat may unhinge its jaw to swallow unimaginably large things. On a special bite roll, the Bat can swallow whole anything up to half its current size.



KRARSHT

THE HUNGRY ONE

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

The endless bickerings and jealousies between the gods weakened and finally tore the fabric of the world during the early Gods Wars. Through the tears oozed illogical horrors which intensified the fear and terror of the conflict. One such creature, whose true name is still unknown, was called Krarsht. Also known as the Waiting Mouth, the Hungry One, and the Devouring Mother, Krarsht survived by feeding on what she perceived as the refuse of Glorantha.

It is thought that Larnste, patron of Change, once saw the squirming being of Krarsht and sought to eliminate that Chaos evil from the world. When he tried to step on the foulness, however, Krarsht sprang to bite the god, breaking his divine skin and infecting the wound immediately. Where the god bled, there rose up a foul and evil forest, a perfect nesting ground for all things Chaotic. The wood was later named Foulblood Wood and has remained a bastion of Chaos.

In the Great Darkness, Krarsht reigned unchallenged for a while, but at last had to face Storm Bull and his followers. That god seriously wounded the Devourer in a number of violent battles. Each time Storm Bull could corner her, Storm Bull was able to cut off another part of her being, most of which died, while Krarsht bit at and tore great wounds in the mighty sky-bull. By tasting his blood, the Waiting Mouth learned some of Storm Bull's secrets, modified them, and took them for her own. Finally the valiant bull drove Krarsht from the surface world, and she was forced to eat holes in the world in which to hide. At first the Storm Bull followed her into these caves, but the Devouring Mother was more clever than the other Chaos gods; some of her amputated parts grew into minor versions of her, the Krarshtkids. Following her underground, they began eating other, diversionary tunnels. Soon it became impossible for the Storm Bull to follow her without being in danger of being lost, and so she escaped annihilation.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

During the ages to follow, Krarsht grew comfortable in her underground domain. Save for errant Mostali miners, her rivals were few and, unmolested in her labyrinth, she recovered some of her former strength. She attracted some followers from those who admired her tenacity. Her losses in direct confrontation with the forces of Order taught her the usefulness of patience and the satisfaction of vengeance, and she became known as the Waiting Mouth to those few who still knew she existed.

Throughout Time, Krarsht has never tried to hold surface kingdoms, since she owns much of the world beneath. Instead her forces operate against individuals of the surface, those in responsible positions who are ambitious and temptable, or the honorable men who oppose the unprincipled. In fact, Krarsht may be the ultimate tool, if not the cause, of the decay and ultimate evilness of many mundane empires which began with bright promise. But the cult keeps no written records; only Krarsht herself knows the true bounds of her deeds. The cult tunnels through society as she tunnels through the earth.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Krarsht promises that every loyal follower of her in life shall become her in death, and will learn her every secret and have available her every Power. This shall be true for every follower, even though there shall always be only one Krarsht. Philosophers who have studied the question declare that Krarsht's promised Many Into One is illusion, and that while Krarsht may indeed store a worshipper's ego in some unimaginable way, the dead worshipper will have no will—that all functioning of the god remain hers alone, and the worshipper merely dreams his presence. It is believed that Krarsht plans a special use, perhaps thousands of years in the future, for the myriad worshipper identities she has stored, but no one has guessed its meaning.

RUNIC ASSOCIATIONS

The cult is associated with the Runes of Mobility, Stasis, and Death.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

Since the Dawning, worship of the Waiting Mouth has infested many civilizations. This religion appeals to bureaucrats, con men, unscrupulous traders, and those in general whose foremost desire is to be on the side of power always; the cult of Krarsht teaches many skills and rationales that the ambitious find useful. The cult can conveniently do away with rivals and enemies, as the Mouth needs occasional sacrifices, but not so many that the wrath (or even the curiosity) of the public is aroused. Cult lay members are expected to be or to try to be active in local economies and politics. Others may find success in underworld dealings. Frequently cult members will serve as a clandestine network making any service or item available at a profitable price.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

This cult always attempts to be obscure or unknown, even in the few areas where major portions of the population are worshippers. The name of Krarsht may be unknown to those who worship her. This is satisfactory to her, for Krarsht is patient. The cult emphasizes secrecy, and its operatives know only so much as they need to function effectively. Only an Initiate or higher-ranking cult member ever enters a cult temple. Lay members rarely see priests, and then only during induction of new members and at occasional ceremonies. Lay members never knowingly see Rune Lords of Krarsht; even Initiates may not see a Rune Lord for years at a time.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
Worshippers of the Storm Bull are this cult's first hate, because of the damage he did to the Devouring Mother during the Gods War. From those great wounds she never recovered. Cultists fear the Humakti, who have proven adept at spoiling many of the cult contracts with their Sense Assassin ability. Krarsht always encourages lay brethren and Initiates to report immediately the presence of Rune Masters of these cults.

Former Initiates or Rune-levels of Krarsht are few. Such of those who violate cult dictates immediately will be attacked by the minor spirit-mouths of the cult, the Krarshtides. Each night for a week the former worshipper will be attacked by one of these monsters, who will eat his Power and attempt to drive him mad. Should the offender survive these assaults, other cult members will hunt him until they get him.

III. ORGANIZATION
INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION
Through the unity of Krarsht, the regional temples maintain a reliable flow of information. While direct communication between the far-flung temples is impossible, very important information can be told to a sacrifice just before the ceremony of sacrifice, and that information (as the sacrifice understood it) will be made known in a vision to all of the High Priests of Krarsht after the victim has been devoured. In times of the greatest crisis, a cult member will volunteer to be told the information and then be sacrificed; a cultist is more likely to understand and convey cult information accurately than is an ordinary sacrifice paralyzed with fear.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
Each temple of Krarsht may control a region 50 - 200km across, with small satellite shrines to the goddess controlled by far-flung Initiates of that temple. The groups of lay members worshipping at the shrines are called Drools. Rune Priests of the cult regularly ride a circuit of 10-15 Drools, stopping for a short time at each in order to perform a few services and to induct new lay members.

Rune Priests (called Tongues) remain at the temple and co-ordinate cult activities when they are not riding between the Drools.

Rune Lords (called Jaws) are the master craftsmen of the cult. They always perform the most sensitive or dangerous tasks for the Mouth. They do not work often, but train frequently. Their clients never see them, know their identities, or have any knowledge of them except their intent. The only way to contact a Jaw of Krarsht is through an Initiate of the cult.

CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES
The centers of power for Krarsht are her regional temples and local shrines. Her temples are vast underground labyrinths carved by Krarsht's children. Each will have several disguised or camouflaged openings to the surface world, usually a cave hidden by brush. The land surrounding the opening will always be controlled by an Initiate or lay member of the cult.

The local shrines are given by Krarsht to worthy Initiates so that they may form their own Drool. A shrine is good for the sacrifice of Power to the Maw, but good for nothing else. Rune magic can only be regained at a temple, etc. Sometimes these shrines are great idols, and sometimes small, easily carried altars

(Though indomitable in war, Oddi knew black moods between battles, and often he was difficult to be with.
The war with Ralzakark went well. The wily foe lost many battles, and the Sludgestream itself had cleared greatly, yet Oddi was unable to bring the final strength of the broos to battle. The upper reaches of Dorastor were broo held, and the pass into Ralios lay closed.)

Ketil and I rode out from the palace, for we had been too close upon our work. I knew not the farms and vales west of Oddi's family holdings, so we went there for the rare cheeses which Ketil promised surpassed all others. On our fourth day there we were interrupted in our easy explorations of friendly larders by a young farmhand with very frightened eyes.

He and his brothers had been digging a well when they struck curious rock which rang hollow to their picks. After some difficulty they broke through, and discovered a strange underground tunnel large enough for them to walk upright in, which seemed to run on forever. They explored the way in both directions a little, but wisely felt their powers more useful in farming than in fighting, and sent for their local Orlanth priest, who in turn advised us of the discovery.

…In one direction the tunnel ran on without turn or interruption. The best lights and spells we cast down it told us that it had no end or deviation. That was to the northwest. In the other direction the tunnel went little more than a kilometer before several other tunnels branched off. There was no dust on the floors, and the air was fresh. The tunnels were very circular, more like tubes than caves. Neither of us had known anything like it. With some misgivings, I conferred with a Lankhor Mhy priest in Shomashill, but there was no Irrippi Ontor temple within several days' ride. The priest was equally reluctant to deal with me, but I tempted him into cooperation with my tantalizing information. He could not immediately identify the meaning of the structures, and thought they might be some bones of an unknown god. …The priest had eyes as large as mine when he finished his report. We resolved to enter the tunnels as soon as possible… Where the tunnel branched, a new shaft was sunk, and we continued our exploration with secure communications.

One tunnel was a dead end, but the other two opened into a wonderland of convoluted tubes traveling without reason up and down, over and under, through each other and around each other in loops and spirals. At last we found the way to the main hall, and drove new shafts directly to it, bypassing the maze in which we always became lost.

The complex held many tubular rooms and ways, but astonishing was the main hall. Here the diggers had carved straight tunnels in grids along all three dimensions of existence, and the result was an enormous open lattice-work cube, perhaps a hundred meters on a side, though our torchlight could not penetrate the heights. The effect of the hall was oppressive and threatening, and we were doubly nervous because of the reputation of Krarsht which

the priest revealed to us and because so many of the tunnels were vertical that we could not adequately explore the entire warren.

"I have bred large cats to fight large rats," said Ketil, "but there are no cats great enough to rule here."

When one of us saw movement far above, we alerted everyone, as well we did, for the Krarsht beasts dropped among us with hideous shrieks soon thereafter. These awful things were unknown to us or to the Lankhor Mhy priest, though doubtless Irrippi Ontor held the information, could I have gone quickly to such wisdom.

The Krarsht beast is thin and circular, perhaps two meters across, and it has six legs. Standing, it is not more than a meter tall, but its six legs give it great springing ability. I have seen them jump six meters or more from a standing start. When they land, they strike their targets so that their mouth (which is in the middle of their body) engulfs the head of the victim, while the body folds somewhat around his body, from the top down, and the massive digger claws at its extremities may occasionally be brought to bear upon a man, though this is quite rare. The things' spit and tongue are also death-dealing. Their favorite attack is to drop from above, an attack impossible to miss in the vertical tunnels…

…When we returned, we brought stout pikes, and being so armed spelled the doom of the beasts we could find. Ketil rigged stopper bars on the wooden hafts. When the terrible things fell upon us again, they were firmly impaled by their own force in falling, and the bars extending from the hafts stopped the beasts from quite reaching the carriers of the pikes. There they would squirm and scream, their blood streaming down upon our pikemen, who nonetheless stood firm.

Within a few days we had carried the battle to the few hanging back in the vertical shafts, and here again Ketil was invaluably ingenious in rigging pole arms which we could fight with while ascending the dangerous heights…

By the will of the Goddess, this was the worst fight I ever experienced, for the enemy was bloodthirsty, the way mysterious, and the fighting often in pitch blackness. When we had satisfied ourselves that all the beasts were dead, we turned aside a stream and began to fill the lower depths with water. Militia we called up followed the long tunnels in either direction until they passed out of the very land of the Bilini, where our power could no longer penetrate. We sealed and destroyed what we could, and flooded the rest, but perhaps we could have turned the Erinflarth into those holes, and still never filled them…

We had found a temple of Krarsht new-built, and just before the followers would have gathered there to begin their horrible activities. The farmer on whose land the true (disguised) entrance was found had disappeared without trace, and a Storm Bull search of the area revealed no Chaos. Had we known what the place was from the start, we would have kept the discovery secret, but as it was, everyone within many hours travel learned of the strange place too quickly…

when the Initiate is first recruiting his Drool. The shrine may be shrouded with black silk. If a shrine can be seen, the image of Krarsht will be roughly circular and flat, with six legs about the perimeter of the body, and a large central mouth.

The great holy place of the cult is south of Dragon Pass, in the Holy Country, where Larnste first saw Krarsht and failed to kill her, and where Krarsht's first feeding took place. Where Larnste tried to crush the Maw is still his giant footprint. About the toes of the footprint collected the infected blood from Krarsht's bite. This blood fed Chaos, and from that area sprang the foulness which cultists know as the Forest of First Reward, and decent folk call Foulblood Wood. It continues to be a center of Chaotic activity.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

The cult deliberately aligned its ceremonial days to conflict with those of the Storm Bull. Thus its holy days are during Stasis week of each season: on Freezeday in Sea-season, on Waterday in Fire-season, on Clayday in Earth-season, on Windsday in Dark-season, and Fireday in Storm-season.

The cult high holy day for the year also is Wildday, Stasis week, Storm-season.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

Members of the cult are rewarded for bringing in reliable new members, and punished for suggesting fools and traitors. The applicant will be questioned thoroughly by a group of lay members, then scanned by a concealed Initiate with Sense Order. There will be a later interview with the Initiate of the local shrine. If the applicant is accepted for probationary membership, he will have to prove worthy of it by ambition and deed. A Rune Priest permanently inducts the applicant into the cult after satisfying his own sense of the worthiness of the probationer. It is up to the Initiate to decide when the new probationer might be ready for permanent status.

Applicants found to be Initiates or Rune-levels of any cult of order, and particularly cults of Truth, will never leave the questioning session. However, the cult encourages lay members of other cults to continue their observance of the rituals of the other cults, and in general welcomes any being with discipline, ambition, and greed.

REQUIREMENT TO BELONG

Lay members must donate 5% of their earnings to the cult and attend each service. Every lay member must vow complete secrecy about the existence of the cult and all matters concerning the cult.

Lay members must accomplish the majority of recruitment of new worshippers, and are relied on to pass on all news, rumors, and other useful local information to the Initiate. They often make the initial contact with potential clients. Many of the street urchins infesting every sizable town will be lay members of the cult.

The lay member must provide one intelligent being as a sacrifice each season, and sacrifice 1 point POW each service.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Each person recruited by a lay member who becomes a permanent lay member is worth a reward of 10 Lunars to the recruiter. If a recruiter brings in a member who eventually becomes an Initiate, the recruiter receives 100 Lunars from the cult.

Lay members will be found in all cults and occupations. They often help each other find lucrative positions, and will make emergency loans.

The cult will relocate lay members who are under suspicion by local authorities, but even in emergencies will not admit a lay member to a temple. If a lay member has performed with conspicuous incompetence, he will be fed to the Hungry One. The cult can provide Healing for members, with payment to be settled when the member is able.

SKILLS
Krarsht lay members receive training in the following skills:

Half Normal Price - Hide in Cover, Move Quietly, Listen, Short sword attack only.
Prohibited - The Peaceful Cut.
Unique - a lay member may begin training in the cult special skills, Hurl Pratzim and Net Attack/Parry:

HURL PRATZIM
Initiates brew this disgusting liquid from the saliva of the Krarshtkids. It is cohesive and viscous. The user reaches into a pouch holding several handfuls of the stuff. He then casts 1 point temporary POW into it, and throws it at a target. Casting this stuff demands skill, because when it leaves the hands it begins to expand and form a conical web about 3m in diameter. If the throw succeeds, the saliva binds and entangles the target. Victims hit by pratzim must make an STR vs. STR roll to escape. The pratzim is always STR 15. A missed roll means that the victim is bound, may not fight with any weapon, and may hop, if still standing, at a movement rate of 2. A fumble roll means that the victim is hopelessly entangled and will strangle to death in CON + 5 rounds unless freed

The beginning skill at Hurl Pratzim is 0%. The skill is learned at the rate of 300/600/1200/EXP for members of the cult, and 600/1200/2400/EXP for non-members. Each handful can be hurled only once. Lay members will have ten handfuls per season.

BATTLE MAGIC
The cult teaches all the battle magic spells. In addition, lay members may learn a cult special spell, True Net.

True Net **1 point**
temporal, passive, 80m
This focused spell affects only nets and handfuls of pratzim, increasing the chance to hit by 5% per point of spell, and increasing the strength of net or pratzim by one point. This spell is stackable to 4 points, and is not compatible with other weapon-improving spells.

IV. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
The prospective Initiate must have been a lay member for at least a year, and must know Hide in Cover, Move Silently, and Net Attack/Parry at 50% or more. He must then convince the Initiate under whom he worships to sponsor him the next time that a Rune Priest officiates at ceremonies. Abstract this as a roll of D100 of POW + CHA plus 1 for each 1000 Lunars given to the cult and 1 for each worshipper recruited for the cult by the applicant and then divide the total by three and multiply it by five. A roll equal to or less than the result on D100 means success. Applicants who fail the roll must wait for another season. Applicants who fail twice have lost the trust of Krarsht and are fed to her children.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED
The new Initiate is called a Lip. Once accepted, he must restate his vows to the Waiting Mouth and his complete loyalty to the cult. The new vow is of utmost seriousness, and Initiates will be warned (once) that they now never will be allowed to leave the cult alive.

A Lip must sacrifice 2 points POW each week to Krarsht. If this sacrifice is not performed, a Krarshtide spirit will hunt down the offender and hound him until either he is driven mad or dies, or until he returns to explain to his Drool or his temple.

Lips must provide two sacrifices to Krarsht per season.

MUNDANE BENEFITS
Initiates in good standing who have been in a temple for three years or more and who have followed cult dictates may be provided with their own Drool or be sent out along with a Rune Priest to establish one or more new Drools. They also will receive a small shrine to Krarsht.

All Initiates have better access to training than do lay members, since they have proved their devotion.

SKILLS
The following skills will be available at every temple:

Half Normal Price - Acid Brewing, Camouflage, Climbing, Composite Bow, Dart Throwing, Jumping, Light Crossbow Attack, Lock Picking, Poison Brewing, Spot Hidden, Spot Trap, Thrown Dagger, Trap Set/Disarm, and Weapon Making.

Lips will be trained in the following cult special skills:

Bribery **05%**
The knowledge skill Bribery may be taught to a person up to his Oratory percentage or to 50%, whichever is lower. Bribery is taught to Initiates and Rune Masters for free; it is also taught occasionally to non-cultists for 500/1000/EXP. A D100 roll equal to or less than the Bribery skill successfully bribes the target. A critical hit bribes the target without leaving him knowing that he has been bribed: the bribery will not show up quickly if the target is questioned. It will show up by Divination.

Sense Order **05%**
This ability is first learned to 5% ability plus perception bonus, and rises only through experience. Success in this skill allows

the user to sense the presence of concentrated Order; it does not trigger for the background radiation of the natural world, but does alert the user in the presence of special magical items of Order or of Initiates and Rune-levels of such cults. This skill is effective to a range of 15m. Successful users will receive a vague sense of unease and the knowledge that Order is near.
Cost: time. Available only to cultists.

Brew Pratzim
This knowledge skill successfully used allows the user to brew five handfuls of pratzim for each person participating in the process. The brewing takes four hours, and requires a SIZ 3 amount of blood for each participant. A Rune Priest must provide the necessary Krarshtkid spittle as the base for the potion.
Cost: time. Available only to cultists.

Teeth of Krarsht **0%**
These special cult throwing weapons are designed to administer poisons from a distance. They are disc-like, with six sharp points arranged equally around the perimeter (each representing one of the Devourer's legs.) The weapon does 1D4 damage plus the effect of the poison. Basic skill is 0% plus any attack bonus. The training cost for this weapon is 100/300/900/EXP for cultists; non-cultists will be taught only to 25% for a flat sum of 1800 Lunars. Teeth of Krarsht can be made by any worshipper with 25%+ Weapon Making skill.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL STATEMENT
The Rune Lord of Krarsht is called a Jaw, and is responsible for successful completion of cult contracts. A contract to Krarsht occurs whenever any worshipper of Krarsht interacts with the world, for the worshipper in accepting the way of the Hungry One has agreed to further the power of Krarsht both during and after life. More narrowly, the cult undertakes deeds for non-cultists which those ambitious, jealous, or greedy souls may be too squeamish or too much under suspicion to perform for themselves. This might be an assassination or murder, a kidnapping, (rarely) a theft, the spread of rumor or gossip, and so on. The cult will undertake to perform these contracts to its utmost power, because it knows that every such contract paves the way for more Chaos in the world.

A contract will either be 'one-legged' or 'six-legged.' For a negotiated price, the cult will attempt to complete a one-legged contract once and only once. For six times the price, the cult will agree to a six-legged contract, to be attempted until successful. The cult will never decline any contract which it perceives will further the will and domain of Krarsht and of Chaos generally.

A Jaw is contacted through the local shrine Initiates. The client or contractee will never meet the Jaw. Once the veracity of the client has been established, the Initiate will arrange an interview at a safe place, and there question the client by using a long and constantly improved list of questions. A scribe may copy the client's answers, or the Jaw actually may be listening from behind a partition. Once the list of questions is ended and satisfactory payment made (50% in advance, 50% upon completion), the client never is seen again.

Jaws sometimes are required by the cult to maintain a public identity, though never in regions dominated by Storm Bull worshippers. The public cover permits a Jaw to be intimately acquainted with religious, political, and economic conditions in an area, and it is said that experienced Jaws know years in advance just who their clients will be. The Jaw never makes any contact with a prospective client, though a layman may well do so. Just as with the Waiting Mouth, the Jaw is patient.

Entire political structures may be infested with Krarsht worshippers; even then, none will know the Jaws.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
Krarsht requires her Jaws to have 90% ability in one missile weapon, Move Quietly, Camouflage, Trap Set/Disarm, and Hide in Cover. They must be able to brew a potion or acid to at least POT 10, and have 15+ POW.

When the requirements are met, the temple priest will assemble a quorum of their number to examine the applicant. There will also be 4D6 Krarshtkind present. The applicant must then convince them of his worthiness, abstracted for game purposes as a roll of 0100 equal to or less than POW + CHA divided by 2 plus 1 per contract previously brought to the temple by the applicant. If the roll is not successful, then the applicant waits at least one season before trying again. If the second attempt does not succeed, the applicant will be devoured by the assembled mass of Krarshtkind.

RESTRICTIONS
Jaws may marry only within the cult, and then only with someone of Lip status or greater. They must fulfill or be working at all contracts to which they have committed the cult, and must make at least one contract per season should their workload fall below a level determined by the High Priest of the temple. Most Jaws will live a disguised life in a community; they will not be able to absent on long journeys and special missions; for that reasons some Jaws will always remain at the temple, both to guard it and to act as a reserve.

BENEFITS
Jaws have the normal Rune Lord benefits of Power Support and Divine Intervention. Instead of the normal allied spirit, they may ally a Krarshtide (see the associated cults section).

For each weapon skill mastered, Jaws receive one iron weapon of that type (or 5 iron arrows, quarrels, darts, etc.). Jaws keep 40% of their livelihood profits and incidental monies (not cult contract money) for the purpose of keeping paid informants and supporting an occasional Initiate aide.

SKILLS
The following skills are available to both Rune Lords and Rune Priests:

Acting **10%**
This is a knowledge skill. It costs 500/1000/3000/EXP to learn from its masters; Jaws and Tongues may learn it for half price. When the skill is successfully used, the persona portrayed will seem real and natural to all who see the user. It may be combined with the Disguise skill.

Disguise **05%**
This knowledge skill costs 200/400/800/1600. The successful use means that the character has altered his appearance to all viewers.

BATTLE MAGIC
A Rune Lord or Rune Priest of Krarsht may learn this battle magic spell for 500 Lunars; it may be taught to non-cultists for 1000 Lunars.

Image Creation **2 point**
unfocused, temporal, passive, 80m
This spell creates an image of a humanoid figure, the actions of which will be the actions of the caster of the spell. The image may look different, as when the caster is stranded in the middle of a band of trolls and really wants to look like a troll until he can get away. The image may be cast over the caster, or on any other target with-in the 80m range of the spell.

If the image is intentionally jostled or attacked, it will go away. During the round the enemy took to hit the image and dispel it, the image will provide the target with a 5% additional Defense-add per point of SIZ difference between the image and the target. The maximum image SIZ is 21. Casting the spell requires no motion which would give away the fact that the character is casting a spell.

VIII. RUNE PRIESTS
GENERAL STATEMENT
The Rune Priests, called Tongues, run the cult. They oversee the feeding of sacrifices to the Waiting Mouth, oversee the shrines, and induct new members. Fighters and magicians from the Order cults have rarely invaded the temples of Krarsht with any success.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE
The prospective Tongue must have been an Initiate of four or more years good standing, must Sense Order at 90% or more, Read/Write the local language at 90% or more, and have a POW of 18+.

RESTRICTIONS
Tongues may marry only from within the cult, to worshippers who are at least Lips (Initiates). They are restricted to DEX x 5% in advancing all DEX-based mundane skills. Priests do not need to personally bring sacrifices to Krarsht.

BENEFITS
Priests live at the regional temple when they are not travelling on cult business. When there they receive free room and board.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY
Rune Priests of Krarsht have access to all standard 1 point Rune spells. They cannot summon Small Elementals, but they can call up a Krarshtkid who will act as an elemental would (see the associated cults section).

Tongues may use the following cult special spells:

Defend Against Law **1 point**
15 minutes, range 160m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell adds 30% to the defense (as does the Shimmer battle magic spell) of one being who is fighting against one or more followers of Law/Order. This spell will not work against Chaotic beings.

Face Law **1 point**
15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable
This spell will affect only lay members of Krarsht. The target will stand his ground and fight the lawful foe he faces, even if he would ordinarily run.

Chomping **1 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, stackable
For each point of POW up to 4 put into the spell, the target will do an additional 1D6 damage with a bite and increase his attack chance 10%. The target's teeth will grow longer and sharper, and the chomper will be able to impale as per the rules. This spell often is used in conjunction with Venom Bite.

Tongue **2 points**
15 minutes, voice, reusable, non-stackable
This spell allows the target's tongue to be used as a weapon. The tongue has a range of 3m, and will have an attack chance of the target's DEX x 5 to succeed. If so succeeding, the attacker's POW must overcome the POW of the defender. If succeeding, the defender takes 4D3 in Disruption-like damage.

Sweat Acid **2 point**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
A successful cast causes the target's skin to secrete an acid whose potency equals the caster's POW. The target or the items he carries or wears will not be affected by the acid, but beings or foreign items who touch the target will suffer the effect of the acid.

Venom Bite **2 points**
15 minutes, touch, reusable, non-stackable
The target of this spell injects a poison of potency equal to the caster's POW on a successful bite attack which does damage. The target will be temporarily immune to the poison's effects for the duration of the spell.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
SPIRIT OF REPRISAL
Krarshtides appear as shadowy, palely luminous images of the Mother Mouth, identical in form to the Krarshtkids below. Each spirit has a POW of 2D6+12. In use, these spirit attack by means of spirit combat. If they succeed in an attack and their victim does not, they may attempt to drive the victim insane. To do this they must make another POW vs. POW attack, just as in spirit combat. If they again succeed, thoughts and terrors of Chaos devour the victim's mind, driving him insane. Those who go insane traditionally kill themselves, but they are in any event no longer a threat to the Maw.

A Krarshtide has 3D6 INT. A Jaw of Krarsht may choose to use one of these spirits as an allied spirit. If they do not succeed, they will be subject to the spirit's insanity attack.

KRARSHTKIDS

From the parts of the Mother hacked off by Storm Bull in the Great Darkness grew the Krarshtkids. Resembling (but much smaller) the Waiting Mouth, a Krarshtkid has a central body 1 m in diameter with six legs jutting out around its perimeter at roughly equal spacings. These creatures can eat anything but favor loam, clay, sand, and limestone. They are the primary builders of the underground Krarsht temples. As they eat, mature Krarshtkids make individual 3m diameter tunnels, turning the earth they munch (through their digestive tracts) to a form of stone with which they line their tunnel walls. A younger Krarshtkid may eat a tunnel as small as 1 m in diameter. Tongues frequently choose Krarshtkids as allied spirits, in which case use the INT + POW stats for the Krarshtides.

Characteristics	*Average*
STR 2D6+6	13
CON 3D6	10-11
INT 3D6	10-11
POW 2D6+12	19
DEX 3D6+6	16-17
SIZ 7 Move 3	Hit Points 11

01-02	F LEG	3/4
03-04	RF LEG	3/4
05-06	RR LEG	3/4
07-08	B LEG	3/4
09-10	LR LEG	3/4
11-12	LF LEG	3/4
13-20	BODY	7/6

Weapon	*SR*	*Attk%*	*Damage*	*Parr%*	*Pts*
Fang	7	50%	2D6 *	-	-
Tongue	6	75%	**	-	-
Spit	1	80%	***		

* Fangs - when a successful bite does damage to the target, the potency of the poison (equaling the CON of the Krarshtkid) will try to overcome the CON of the target. If successful, the target will be paralyzed for 20-minus-CON days.

** Tongue - a hit by the tongue will then attack the POW of the target. If successful, the target will take 4D3 damage - In a Disruption spell.

*** Spit- the spit of the Krarshtkid is the pratzim base which the Initiate learns to brew. This will entangle the victim if successful.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS

PRIMAL CHAOS

See the separate cult write-up for Primal Chaos.

BLACK FANG BROTHERHOOD

The brothers of the Black Fang found much to admire about Krarsht, and they occasionally appear at local shrine services. Many Black Fang schemes require sub-contracting particular skills or contacts from the Hungry One. In return for profitable co-operation with a probably continent-wide organization, the Brotherhood provides these two spells:

Concealment **2 points**

15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable

This spell combines Invisibility and Silence, and makes the Invisibility passive. If the character protected by this spell attacks with missile, melee, or magic, he becomes visible in the first strike rank of the melee round in which he attacks and will disappear after the last strike rank of that round unless engaged in melee. In any round the character disengages from melee, he will disappear again at the end of the round of disengagement.

Vision **2 points**

15 minutes, 160m, reusable, non-stackable,

This spell gives a mobile viewpoint up to 240m away from the spirit of the recipient of the spell, as described in the rules.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

BUILDING A TEMPLE

When a Tongue of Krarsht has satisfied himself that a new temple is needed, and has secured a surface area proper for the comings and goings of the cult, he consecrates the site in a brief ceremony. The consecration notifies Krarsht that a new temple is needed. For months thereafter, Krarshtkids will tunnel to-ward the temple-to-be's location, and then start on its construction without further prompting by the Tongue. Krarsht will reveal the completion of the complex and its only-then-existing entrance in a vision to the consecrating priest.

A temple of Krarsht is built to Krarsht's specifications, which always change in arrangement. There are quarters for the Rune Masters of the temple, the ceremonial halls, and the feeding pits for the Krarshtkids, and many labyrinthine connecting tunnels, and tunnels which go nowhere. Pits open with-out warning, and streams occasionally break through in unexpected places. The first exploration of a Krarsht temple is both a sacred thrill and a mortal terror for the consecrating Tongue.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Krarsht is proud, and wants no worshipper to avoid becoming her when that is his destiny. But she is willing to help a mission occasionally. She does not provide normal Divine Intervention for followers. If a follower asks for her intervention and she deigns to give it, she will send 2D3 Krarshtkids and 1D3 Krarshtides to her worshipper. For 15 minutes he will have nominal control of the beings, as a member of another cult might control an elemental. After that time, the beings return to whence they came.

THE HALLS OF KRARSHT

Some say, though none but Krarsht will know, that all of the subsurface world is honeycombed by the servants of the Hungry One, and it is in fact likely that at least some major river valleys of Glorantha are crisscrossed by her underground ways. The dwarves, though loath to talk of their own affairs, have a few times encountered the Krarshtkids, if not their worldly masters or other-worldly Mistress. It is known, though, that the dwarves prefer granite, marble, and basalt as structural elements, while the Krarshtkids find such hard materials to impede the Mobility component of their make-up.

Philosophers point out that lack of ventilation in the great lateral connecting tunnels surely makes impossible all physical and underground movement between the temples by any but the Krarshtkids. Others are not so sure. If the connectors do not serve a purpose now, may they not in the future? Is Krarsht not merely a surviving Chaos God, but the Chaotic parallel to Arachne Solara herself? And will Krarsht's webs of nothingness be shown to bind all Glorantha in some unimaginable way at the end of Time? Stories are told of tunnels which open the ways to Hell, and other tunnels which open to strange places without gods. More is said, but it is fanciful.

BLACK FANG RELATIONS

Though relations with the Brotherhood are nominally cordial, Krarsht worshippers find the membership of this great crime ring undisciplined and never expose any inner secrets to it. It will sell skills to selected members of the Brotherhood, but reserves the right to reject any such application without comment. Skills are sold at ordinary rates.

The few Black Fang members who actually know of Krarsht see the cult as admirably performing what seem to be incomprehensibly long-range actions. Individuals of the cult never enjoy the fruits of crime, and have about them an austerity which borders on the disgusting.

Since Krarsht practices little organized crime (such as per week levies, disposal of stolen goods, prostitution, etc.) and Black Fang practices little else, the two cults rarely collide on questions of policy or execution.

NYSALOR/GBAJI

THE BRIGHT ONE/ THE DECEIVER

I. MYTHOS AND HISTORY
BEFORE TIME
This deity first was known as Rashoran, and he either was the last of the gods born, or was the first Chaos deity created. He is known to have been killed by the god of entropy sometime during the Great Darkness.

SINCE TIME BEGAN
Near the end of the First Age, the mortal races successfully built a new god, Nysalor, "The Bright One" or "The Perfect One." By those titles he was (and still is) worshipped reverently by the peoples of Peloria.

In western Genertela, where the priests of the cult went beyond the control of their god in Dorastor, the cult came to be called Gbaji, a vulgar word meaning "The Deceiver." The name seems well-deserved in that region.

The cult prophets of Nysalor originally had spread their word far and wide, but met great resistance in the west from the Malkioni, who had their own cosmic secrets. The prophets discovered that they could secretly introduce plague and disease into an area, present themselves as healers, then proceed to cure the infection. Their popularity rose rapidly in Ralios and Seshnela, but that new power tempted the prophets of the cult, and they fell prey to the vanity of such strength. More and more of them chose the easy 'dark side' of the cult, which said that the Illumined need care only for themselves. Some areas widely supported such dark prophets, and the people took up the secrets of this new faith. In this way terrifying cities of undead grew, whose living population merely masked the existence of their vampire lords. Ancient horrors were discovered and re-established, such as the Thanatar complex in Ralios. Everywhere people cheerfully sprouted Chaotic features and became Krjalki.

Arkat Humaktson, "The Liberator," led the heroic cleansing of the land, spending three generations in the task, and in the end leaving a trail of cinders across the continent before the final victory. Though its temporal power was broken, and its god now lay dead, the cult could not be completely eradicated because it required no temples or priesthood. The survivors of the Gbaji Wars hid themselves, and many deliberately forgot their riddles to protect themselves.

The Red Goddess woke the cult. She undertook a great path and in her journey sought passage beyond an empty shadow on the Spirit Plane. She engaged it, defeated it, and thereby became Illuminated by the god Nysalor. With his knowledge, she went to deeper places and freed the Crimson Bat from its eternal bondage. Returning home with it, she confirmed her mighty empire. Since then, the beliefs of the cult of Nysalor have become integral to the cult of the Red Goddess. Through Nysalor the Lunars have access to Chaotic abilities and powers unreachable by normal deities.

LIFE AFTER DEATH
The cult offers no promise or hint about life after death, nor has any requirement for burial. Local custom prevails.

RUNIC ASSOCIATION
The cult is associated with the Runes of Chaos, Light, and Mastery.

II. NATURE OF THE CULT
REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE
The realities of the world always are in question, and there always are new revelations and perceptions which may alter any being's outlook on the universe. The cult will continue to exist until all questions have been asked and answered.

SOCIO-POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER
The cult exercises little or no actual power, and even at its height seemed to do so only because of the personal actions of prophets operating in its name.

The cult continues to exist because sapients cannot refrain from asking questions about the nature of existence.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES
The cult has no particular likes or dislikes. Cultists will tend to shrink from performing or advocating extreme actions of any sort, but the definition of extreme action is left to the individual cultist.

III. ORGANIZATION
INTER-CULT ORGANIZATION
The cult has no normal cult or temple operations at all, and so cannot have inter-cult organizations either.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION
The cult has no regular temples and needs none. Sometimes worshippers will form schools, but these have no cult standing.

CENTER OF POWER, HOLY PLACES
The land of Dorastor, to the northwest of Dragon Pass, was the former center of power of the historical cult. Arkat the Liberator razed that land; it has since grown into a nightmare realm, perhaps because the balance of civilization was lost. Its peasant population consists of Chaotic ghosts, nations of renegade elves, psychotics, raging lunatics, and fugitive werefolk. The monsters of Dorastor are unspeakable and unique. Only a few have traversed it since its razing; only the boldest will now attempt its dangers.

The places where the sections of Nysalor's body are buried might be considered holy places, though there are no special effects from them nor do worshippers gather at the sites. All the known sites are in Dorastor.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS
The cult has no set holy days.

IV. LAY MEMBERSHIP
The cult has no lay membership, since the cult has no actual structure to it. It is impossible to be a casual member of this cult if you are in it in all.

V. INITIATE MEMBERSHIP
GENERAL STATEMENT
Initiates are the backbone of the cult, for it has no other hierarchy except for whatever respect a many-questioned Riddler may evoke from those he questions. The cult poses no standards for questions or questioners.

An Initiate is one who has been Illuminated by Nysalor's Light. In this consciousness-awakening, the individual breaks the mold of fear and mortality within which he has been confined, and gains special insight, into the relation of Chaos and the world. This insight completely alters the individual's perceptions and powers thereafter.

REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION
To become an Initiate, the being must be Illuminated. The being will be Illuminated by making a successful Illumination skill roll, automatically done once per year during the Sacred Time.

To attain the Illumination skill, a person must successfully answer Nysalor Riddles. A Riddle is a bizarre question about facets of everyday life, with an unusual answer capable of shocking a person to some very unusual realizations about the world in which they live. A Nysalor Riddle exists which corresponds to each of the skills listed in the rules; there are separate Riddles for attacks and parries of weapon skills.

When a character is asked a Nysalor Riddle, he must attempt to make his percentage with the corresponding skill on D100. This will not require use of the skill, merely the roll of the dice. If a roll is made equal to or less than the skill percentage, then the question was answered correctly.

Each correct answer to a Nysalor Riddle equals a 1% chance of success for Illumination in the following Sacred Time. The points are cumulative and cannot be removed or forgotten in any way. A person can be asked the same Riddle many times until it is answered correctly. A particular Riddle adds 1% only the first time it is correctly answered; after that it has no effect. Character

Example: *Pericippus the Priest hears a Nysalor Riddler say something unusual, like "What is the difference between a Silent Movement?" This is the Move Quietly Riddle of Nysalor, and Pericippus is 70% at Move Quietly. His player rolls a 48, and Pericippus replies, somewhat surprised at himself, "The sound of a man dying." He feels a bit odd. He has succeeded in gaining another 1% chance of being Illuminated. The following Sacred Time, in the midst of his normal sacrifices, Pericippus' player rolls 14 on D100. Since Pericippus' character sheet shows a total of 17 Nysalor Riddles answered, the priest has been Illuminated. He is almost overcome by a swoon, but succeeds in finishing the rites.*

"Whom else should I tell?" Oddi laughed. "It was all prompted by those Trickster rascals and their riddles, you know. How could I have not understood before now – here where Ralzakark finally has consented to fight us – that I have been Illumined?" He shook his head with chagrin, but without the black moodiness which I had known for days. "How can I tell my clan and my cult? They would cut off my head! But I thought you, a Lunar, should know, for if it becomes known, you will be supposed to have converted me to your foul ways and will thereby be in great danger from those who love me best."

This seemed true to me, though I would let it be as the Goddess willed and had no thought of flight from my post.

"There is a connected matter," Oddi added. "How shall I fight this battle today, feeling as I do? The hate has gone out of me, and I have no lust for war."

He said this matter-of-factly, as though declining a platter of eels. How much attitude makes of us all, for the day before he would have fallen on his sword before such words escaped him! I pondered what should be replied. I was young and strained for the fight myself, yet saw here a great chance to bring this noble barbarian to the ways of the Goddess and of true civilization.

"My King, it is said there is a dim and a bright side to all of existence, and that only those who are Illumined see that the difference resides not in existence but in the way we choose to see it. What Nysalor would tell you I know not, for Illumined I am not, but the Lunar way is this: the man who knows best will know best his duty. It matters nothing that we fight here today on the side of order, and that Ralzakark and his hordes fight for Chaos, for if we all willed it in reverse, so then would we fight, each in the other's place. The Goddess knows that just as Chaos can corrupt order, so can order undermine chaos. These ways of alignment are of our birth and our training, but they are not ways of living. Life itself does not care, and the Spider will weave Her web regardless, for all was made so by the Compromise.

"If you are a King without hate and lust, then your subjects will praise you only more, so long as you pursue your duties with diligence and honor. Why you came to be here this day with this knowledge only the Spider can know, and you must take it up with her. But if you will remain King, then kingly you must be in the same way you are just now friendly with me. Do, and exist; hesitate and lose life for it.

"We must ponder our responsibilities, using them as we might use masks and disguises. What lies beneath the mask only you can say. But if you will be king, why then ride we must against Ralzakark, and slay without stint, and take honor for those who have followed you."

Oddi nodded at last, and we rose from the hummock where we had rested. The sun rose as we rode toward the mountains. The ten thousand spears of Ralzakark glinted far in the distance. About us our brave thanes and warriors gathered and sang. With clear eyes we rode firmly to our destiny.

sheets should note which skill-Riddles have been answered correctly, as well as the total number of correctly answered Riddles.

BENEFITS OF INITIATION

An Illuminate immediately gains six kinds of benefits.

Ability To Sense Illumination - once the person is Illuminated, he always will recognize other Illuminates. This is not a skill or sense, rather the Illuminate's special knowledge permits him to deduce the presence of another Illuminate from physical evidence, gesture, intonation, etc., which non-illuminated persons would not have cause or way to understand.

Immunity to Detect Chaos/Law Skills - an Illuminate will not register to either type of sense.

Immunity to His Spirits of Reprisal - an Illuminated person will never be attacked by any spirit of reprisal of a cult in which he is an Initiate or Rune Master, even if he has disobeyed cult rules, quit the cult, or encounters the spirit on the Spirit Plane.

Immunity to Detect Chaos/Law Spells - an illuminated person will not register on either type of spell.

Secret Knowledge - the illuminated one will know as truth that Chaos is, in itself, neither evil nor inimical. This secret knowledge is the source of the other five benefits of Initiation. It makes the person of Law free from automatic fear of Chaos and the obsession to destroy it. Likewise, it frees creatures of Chaos from their twisted convictions and offers them the chance to rid themselves of the hate which rules their lives.

Illumination will give the realization, but it is not necessary that an individual change his life if he has other, stronger beliefs which intervene. Illumination conveys much the same information present in the fragment from Salonar Tamaskil's book, but teaches by emotional experience rather than intellectual argument.

The Ability to Learn Nysalor Riddles - only the Illuminated may ask Nysalor Riddles, and they ask only those which they know. Learning a Riddle requires sacrificing 1 point of permanent characteristic POW during the Sacred Time for each Riddle.

Besides being asked Riddles, Illuminated beings may try to discover the answers to Riddles through meditation. For each season spent concentrating on any specific Riddle, one who is Illuminated can attempt to roll D100 equal to or less than INT x 1%. Success indicates that the answer was found, and now 1 point POW can be sacrificed to learn the Riddle.

RESTRICTIONS

Many know the stories of Nysalor and Gbaji, and distrust those who ask strange questions. It generally will be impossible for them to tell what is or is not a Riddle, since Riddles will be ordinary sentences, and they well may not know that they have been Riddled.

Several cults have taken upon themselves the destruction of Chaos and things Chaotic, and they often count Nysalor worshippers among their foes. Some of their specialized tools in this fight may not work against the Illuminated (such as Storm Bull's Sense Chaos), but if some cultists recognize, suspect, or receive reports of people asking odd questions or acting in a socratic manner, they may strike out-of-hand to destroy the incipient Chaos before it spreads.

It is very dangerous to exploit this cult's undetectability by joining many different religions and learning their special cult spells. Members of the religions involved will find it questionable and distasteful, say, for a Fire priest to raise zombies, show vampiric powers, or to use strong Darkness spells. People know of this tempting cult, and know also that members of it can be tempted by the ease of its dark side applications.

VI. RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP
The cult of Nysalor has no Rune Lords.

VII. RUNE PRIESTHOOD
The cult of Nysalor has no Rune Priests.

VIII. SUBSERVIENT CULTS
The cult of Nysalor has no subservient cults.

IX. ASSOCIATED CULTS
Though they are rare in central Genertela outside the Lunar Empire, the cult of Nysalor has a good reputation with a number of other cults, and in those places temples may contain a shrine to the god set up, and acknowledge it as a place where Riddlers are welcome. This is normal in Lunar territories, where Nysalor is popular. Occasionally a shrine to Nysalor will appear in light or elf temples, or in temples to localized deities. Nysalor is also associated with Primal Chaos.

Since Nysalor is now only a shadow on the Spirit Plane, his Initiates neither get nor receive spells and skills from associated cults without joining those cults.

X. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES
THE LUNAR CONNECTION
The Red Goddess encountered the god Nysalor during her Heroquest for apotheosis. Nysalor, long dead in Glorantha, was still attainable on the God Plane, and when the Red Goddess attained Illumination, it was her final release to godhood. She experimented with her contacts with Chaos, first summoning and controlling the Crimson Bat during the First Battle of Chaos. Since then many worshippers have followed her path, and many in the Empire can balance the powers of Chaos with their responsibilities to the world.

Worshippers of the Red Moon need not be members of Nysalor or participate in anything tainted with Chaos. Fearful peoples outside the Empire treat the cult and the state as a single entity, but this is not accurate; their fear of Chaos blinds them to the many facets of the Lunar way.

THE DARK SIDE
The dark side of Nysalor is not, as one might expect, merely alignment with Chaos. It is a more subtle temptation. Once a being has realized that there is no final difference between Chaos and Law, he may later make a similar but false parallel between his personal ethics and his personal desires, reasoning that since there is no ultimate division to the former, neither is there any final difference between the latter. The parallel is not consistent, however, since both Law and Chaos create in different ways, and all creativity rests upon co-operation between elements of existence. He who operates solely from personal desire will not cooperate, since the childish core of any being's personality knows no constraint. Without co-operation and creativity, the being is a parasite, living off or stealing the products of others without exchange. Nothing he can do or make can add to the sum of his species or culture. In this sense, fully Lawful beings can be as much agents of the dark side as was the worst Gbaji prophet.

ARKAT THE DESTROYER
The ultimate irony of the struggle between Arkat and his arch foe Gbaji is that Arkat was Illuminated while still a youth under the tutelage of the elves of Brithos. This secret was known only to the highest of the Arkat cult's leaders.

The Arkat cult maintains a strict watch on itself and the rest of the world. As Illuminates, they can detect Illumination in others. Their strict moral code is clearly within the bounds of acceptable non-Chaotic behavior, and their great duty is to maintain order and stamp out Chaos, and they know no limit in pursuing that duty. They have developed special skills and abilities to deal with Chaos, especially the Gbaji worshippers.

An Arkat cultist will never accept the use of Chaotic magic. They never will deal fairly or honestly with any Chaotic being or thing. Now that their Heroquesting abilities have been dispersed through all cults, they aim only to destroy Chaos, and will not rest till they have done so.

The cultists of Arkat consider themselves the epitome of the Light Side of Nysalor, and condemn without hesitation he who is prey to the Dark Side. As exemplars, they pride themselves in their steadfastness, taking great pains to perform good deeds in the world and protect the good name of their hero god, who suffered so much and who paid the ultimate price for his inner knowledge.

APPENDICES

CULT COMPATIBILITY
By myth and through history, certain deities and their cults acquired prescribed behavior relative to one another. Individuals learn these responses, cult myth, ritual, and legend reflect them, and religious activities reinforce them. When strangers meet, whether on cult business or matters otherwise committed to their religious cause, in neutral territory, they can be expected to act as indicated on the chart nearby.

ENEMY CULTS
These cults know no compromise. Members will fight if they think they can win, or flee if they fear they will lose. No one expects or will give mercy.

HOSTILE CULTS
Relations are strained, and the historic tension precludes peaceful dealings. There will be difficult moments when hostile cults meet.

NEUTRAL CULTS
Such cults act according to present circumstance. Trouble may occur, but the spark must be deliberate, not caused by minor squabbles.

APPLYING THE MECHANICS

Example*: Oskandar Oddfellow is currently an Issaries Initiate and wishes to join the Storm Bull cult. He gathers all his worldly goods and first goes to see his current Issaries priest. As seen on the Cult Compatibility Chart, Issaries' attitude towards Storm Bull is a 3, friendly. To find Oskandar's chance to gain permission from his priest, use the formula of POW + CHA + donated money, divided by 3, then multiplied by the reaction number given by the chart (a 3 in this example). Oskandar donates 500 Lunars. The example formula is 13 + 11 + 5, divided by 3, then multiplied by 3, equaling a 27% chance to gain approval. He makes his roll with a 13.*

Now Oskandar approaches the Storm Bull temple. He donates 2500 Lunars, a sum intended to offset the priest's natural resentment of traders: Storm Bull is neutral towards Issaries, giving a reaction number of 2. The example formula thus stands at 13 + 11 + 25, divided by 3, then multiplied by 2, equaling a 32% chance of acceptance. Poor Oskandar rolls an 89, and is rejected by the stinking priest. His money goes to the temple anyway.

Oskandar retains Issaries' permission to try to join Storm Bull and will not need new permission. He may try another time in the next season if he wishes, or travel to the next Storm Bull temple or priest and try again.

FRIENDLY CULTS
Even without formal arrangements these groups will find each other supportive and agreeable. Meetings are likely to be pleasant.

ASSOCIATE CULTS
Associate cults share much in common—myths, rituals, and spells. There is no religious hostility; worshippers can be trusted.

NON-CULT BUSINESS
When not on cult missions, individual members may be able to overcome cult prejudice. Of course, those willing to exploit their enemy or associated cults may use those prejudices as an excuse for a fight, a free meal, an introduction, or quick help.

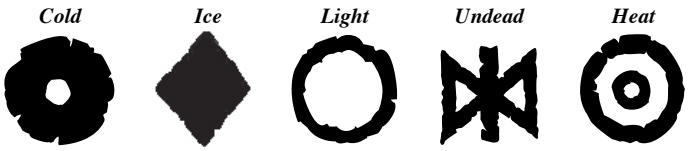
Referees should tailor prejudice to circumstance.

SPIRITS OF HEALTH
These great healing spirits are available to shamans and priestesses of Chalana Arroy. A spirit of health can rid an infected person of his disease in just the same manner as a spirit of disease gave it. The spirit of health must engage the disease in combat. The strength of the disease equals the victim's characteristic POW. If the spirit of health succeeds in 'possessing' the disease, it will drive the sickness from the victim's body.

If a spirit of disease and a spirit of health meet in spirit combat, the first to overcome and 'possess' the other will permanently neutralize the other's abilities. If, for example, a POW 16 spirit of health engaged a POW 14 spirit of disease, both would be able to attack the other. If the spirit of disease succeeds in its attack, and the spirit of health misses its attack, the disease spirit then can attempt to neutralize the health spirit. If it immediately overcomes the spirit of health's POW again, the health spirit will lose its disease curing properties, and it becomes a normal disembodied spirit.

NEW RUNES
These new Runes are not the most ancient known, but fulfill particular needs and are commonly accepted.

The Undead Rune combines Life and Death; it is a Form Rune. The other four Runes are pairs of modifications each of the Fire and Darkness Runes Light and Heat are components of Fire yet often found separately. Cold is a component of Darkness. Ice is claimed as a separate element by some northern peoples. These latter four are all modified Element Runes.



CULT COMPATABILITY CHART

0 – enemy
1 – hostile
2 – neutral
3 – friendly
4 - associated

	Daka Fal	Storm Bull	Waha	Eiritha	Humakt	Seven Mothers	Pavis	Yelmalio	Issaries	Chalana Arroy	Lhankor Mhy	Orlanth	Kyger Litor	Zorak Zoran	Aldrya	Primal Chaos	Mallia	Bagog	Thed	Vivamort	Thanatar	Crimson Bat	Krarsht	Nysalor
Daka Fal	-	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	1	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	2
Storm Bull	2	-	4	4	2	1	1	2	2	4	2	3	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Waha	2	4	-	4	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eiritha	2	4	4	-	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humakt	2	2	2	2	-	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	2	1	2
Seven Mothers	3	2	3	3	2	-	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	3	4	0	2	2	2	1	3	1	4
Pavis	2	1	2	3	2	2	-	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2
Yelmalio	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	-	2	3	2	2	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Issaries	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	-	4	4	4	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chalana Arroy	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	-	4	4	2	1	4	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	2	2
Lhankor Mhy	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	4	-	4	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orlanth	2	3	2	2	3	1	3	2	4	4	4	-	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kyger Litor	4	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zorak Zoran	2	4	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	4	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aldrya	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	2	2	1	0	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Primal Chaos	2	0	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	-	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mallia	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	3	0	3	3	3	2	3	4	-	3	4	4	2	2	3	4
Bagog	2	0	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	4	2	-	3	2	2	2	2	4
Thed	4	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	4	4	3	-	2	2	2	2	4
Vivamort	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	4	3	3	-	3	3	3	4
Thanatar	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	2	-	2	3	4
Crimson Bat	3	0	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	4	2	2	2	1	1	-	2	4
Krarsht	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	-	4
Nysalor	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-

This table combines the cults featured in Cults of Prax with the cults of this book. Further research demonstrated inaccuracies in the original chart; this chart supercedes the previous compatibility chart.

When determining a cultist's attitude toward another cult, read the horizontal line corresponding to the cultist's affiliation across to the vertical column for the other cult. THIS IS NOT A MIRROR IMAGE CHART: for instance, the proselytizing Seven Mothers are detrminedly friendly to Waha, but Waha nomads are hostile to Seven Mothers. Many chaos cults are neutral to Lightbringer cults, but Lightbringers are enemies to all chaos cults.

Unless a potential lay member is a member of a hostile or enemy cult in the eyes of the cult he wishes to join, the lay member of the one cult may usually become a lay member of another cult.

As stated in RuneQuest Classic, an Initiate or priest of one cult may become a priest or Initiate of another by making the same roll she made to become an Initiate of the first cult, for both cults. Generally, this is a matter of adding the character's POW and CHA to a quantity equal to 1 for every 100 Lunars contributed to the cult, dividing the result by three, and mutliplying by 5 to find the percentage chance of being accepted.

This chart also supplants that method. Now the player of the prospective multi-cult character must multiply first by his cult's reaction to the potential new cult. If that roll is successful, he must multiply then by the other cult's reaction to his first cult.

Nysalor illuminates do not use this chart except as it pertains to other cults to which they may belong.

Before I returned home, though, I made the short ride to Oxhead to visit Ketil Ericsbane, who then was Chief Priest of Orlanth there. Though perhaps as penny-pinching as before, he set a fine table for the two of us. We exchanged formalities over the meat, pleasantries over the bread, and got serious over the mead.

"That Oddi," Ketil said. "I can't quite trust him. He has something strange about him now. He laughs at the wrong times. Sometimes he changes his mind too quickly from serious matters."

"There's no doubting that he's a good king," Ketil added. "I'm astounded that he can get the Lunar goods as he wishes and yet keep out the Etyries merchants." This was more astounding than I could tell Ketil, for the dispensation had come from the Red Emperor himself. "He tithes his farms regularly, and does not harass the peasants. His seasonal sacrifices are feasts of roasted cattle for all those that work his lands. Yet…" Here Ketil could but shake his head disapprovingly.

"Everyone, not just his hired poets, sing his generosity and wisdom," I agreed. "And he is courageous." Oddi had a great reputation as a fighter; already arrogant fame seekers sought to slay him, but all those Oddi had killed calmly, without grin, tear, or boast afterwards.

"Yes," Ketil said, "Oddi the Brave they call him. And who else could have stood against great Ralzakark, and killed that monster twice in one melee?" We both smiled recalling that day of blood and triumph.

"He is just, too," I added, for I wished to allay Ketil's mind as best I could. "And pious." Orlanth ordered his worshippers have five virtues. Oddi had all.

But Ketil grimaced. "Yes, he is just, and he pays his tithes."

Poor Ketil, Oddi had shown no interest in more than cursory membership in Orlanth. We investigated the mead again, and then I spoke more of Oddi's devotion to his people. Then I requested that the poet in the corner sing Beovarg's Song, the tale of a scandalously impious hero of another Age, always a favorite of the Orlanthi. After I had made some promises for Oddi, and given a few presents of my own, Ketil's mood changed somewhat. "Well, no man is perfect," he admitted.

"Perfection is for the gods," I suggested, and we drank to the idea.

Ketil agreed to underwrite the new temple which Oddi wanted. He affirmed his vows next morning, when I left early to follow the Erinflarth on the first leg of my trip to see my long-missed family. Oxhead would send priests far up the Sludgestream to follow the farmers who were reclaiming its lower reaches. Oddi would be as pleased as he could be. The thought made me smile. I wished the land and its people a just peace while I was gone, and that never would I see Oddi, Ketil, or any of my friends from there again.

- The end.

THANATAR NOTES

CULT SYMBOLS

Cult colors are black and silver. Cult Rune metal is tarnished silver. The cult stone is flint. The cult phyla is man, which it uses for its magic and familiars.

Silver possessed by this cult for more than one year becomes permanently tarnished. Nothing short of Divine Intervention will untarnish Thanatar silver. No decent merchant will accept such coinage.

CULT GARB

Rune levels of the cult wear black robes trimmed with silver. Initiates wear untrimmed black clothing. Rune levels prefer to wear silver armor. If iron armor and weapons are available, they will be plated with silver before use. All cult warriors will wear ram-horned helmets if possible. The High Priest will affect a ram-horned skull mask of polished (but tarnished!) silver; it often will be trimmed with gems and may be evaluated as heirloom jewelry.

NETS

Part of every culture in Glorantha, and in any other world, is the net. A net is usually a set of lines knotted together into a grid pattern made to catch objects too big to fit through the holes of the grid. The mesh of a net can be small, for catching small fish, or large, for snaring larger prey, such as men.

For game purposes there are three nets of interest: fishing nets, trapping nets, and combat nets. Their many similarities include their manner of construction.

NETMAKING

Netmaking is a manipulation skill. While a netmaker may specialize in one of the three net forms (fishing, trapping, or combat), he can make any of the three types. This skill is common to foresters, fishers, and mariners. Its basic chance is 15%: its nominal cost to learn is 300/600/900/EXP.

The netmaker's player rolls once upon completion of the net to see if it always works. If not, each time the net is stressed, the character's Netmaking percentage at the time he made the net must be rolled equal to or less on D100. If the roll is not successful, the net will break, unravel, or fall apart in some fashion.

COMMON ATTRIBUTES OF NETS

For game purposes, all nets have two attributes, SIZ and STR/hit points.

SIZ is the size (area) of the net. Combat nets rarely are larger than SIZ 20, the maximum size usable by a man with one hand. Fishing and trapping nets may be of any size, but require one man per 20 points SIZ if the entire net is to be manipulated at once. Any net must have a larger SIZ than its intended target or it cannot fully entrap that target.

Nets commonly have a strength of 4D6+18 (an average of 32), and the STR also counts as its hit points in any one area. A being has three options to quickly emerge from an ensnaring net: ripping it open, cutting it open, or burning it open.

Ripping Open a Net - The character must match his STR versus the net's STR on the resistance table. A successful roll means that the net now has a hole in it large enough to crawl through. A second successful roll lets the ripper walk through the

NEW SKILLS

Skill	Cult(s)	Lay Member Cost	Initiate Cost	Outsider Cost
Acting**	Krarsht	unavailable	200/500/1500/exp	500/1000/3000/exp
Bat Mastery	Crimson Bat	unavailable	for priests only@ 5% per 4 weeks; free	unavailable
Brew Pratzim	Krarsht	unavailable	free	400/800/1600/3200*
Bribery**	Krarsht	unavailable	free	500/1000/exp
Disguise*	Krarsht	unavailable	200/400/800/exp	200/400/800/1600**
Garrote	Thanatar	200/4001800/exp	free	unavailable
Hurl Pratzim	Krarsht	300/600/1200/exp	same as lay member	600/1200/2400/exp*
Identify Disease	Mallia, Arroin	unavailable	200/400/800/1600	unavailable
Net Attack/Parry**	Krarsht, various	400/800/1000/exp	same as lay member	same as lay member
Net Making**	various	300/600/900/exp	varies by cult	same as lay member
Prepare Disease Potion	Mallia	unavailable	400/800/1600/2400	unavailable
Sense Order**	Krarsht	unavailable	learn 5% in first week; the rest by experience	unavailable
Spread Disease	Mallia	unavailable	300/600/1200/2000	unavailable
Sword Biter	Vivamort	unavailable	400/800/1200/exp	unavailable
Teeth of Krarsht	Krarsht	unavailable	100/300/900/exp	1800 for 25%/exp
Treat Disease	Mallia, Chalana Arroy	unavailable	400/800/1600/2000	unavailable

** These skills are rarely available to non-cultists except in special circumstances.*
***These skills may be available through other cults not described in this book or in "Cults of Prax".*

NEW BATTLE MAGIC

Spell	Points	Cult	Lay Member Cost	Initiate Cost	Outsider Cost
Image Creation	2	Krarsht	2000	free	2000
Sneeze	2	Mallia	unavailable	500	1500
True Net	variable	Krarsht	regular	500 per point	regular

All costs are in Lunars.

hole. This assumes that the ripper has not been trussed up in the net and can still move his arms and hands, perhaps getting some leverage with his feet. Even a common net usually will be strong enough to hold a man, but those wanting to trap great trolls get stronger nets made.

Cutting Open a Net - Only edged weapons work against nets. If the enmeshed being has an easily reached sheathed knife, he may be able to pull it out and cut with it. Edged weapons already in hand might also work in the referee's judgement, but such weapons in such a case will do only the damage of a dagger, because of problems of leverage and the unusual awkwardness of the cutting angle. Damage bonuses and Bladesharp will add cutting power. For the victim to escape the net, he must destroy the entire hit points of the net (they are the same as the STR of the net). The full hit points are present in every area of the net, and should one part of the net be cut open, other parts will have the same hit points.

Burning Open a Net - Nets usually are flammable, and will take full damage from a torch or Fireblade. Unless excessively dry, though, a net will not catch fire, so that the flaming object must be held against the net each turn until the hit points are burned away.

Combined Attacks - A net could be cut and burned at the same time to reduce its hit points, which also reduces its STR, and then the victim could apply his STR versus the weakened STR of the net and rip his way out.

FIGHTING WITH NETS

Only combat nets are meant to be used in battle. Other nets usually are too big, and are weighted differently to fulfill their primary function. Any warrior trained in fighting with a net will use a fishing or trapping net at half his normal ability with the combat net.

Fighting with a net is a unique combat skill. It requires a specially-made combat net. There are two combat nets, the normal net and the large net. Each has a basic chance of 05, costs 100 Lunars to make, and has a nominal price to learn of 400/800/1600/EXP. The normal combat net has an ENC of 2, a STR of 15, and a strike rank of 2; the large combat net has an ENC of 3, a STR of 20, and a strike rank of 1.

A combat net can be snapped with (doing 1D4 damage), much as children do with wet towels, or it can ensnare an opponent. Fighters normally carry nets on the left arm, and in that position the net can be used as a shield. In absorbing blows

H. NEW RUNE SPELLS

NEW 1-POINT RUNE SPELLS

Spell	*Primary Cult*	*Assoc./Secondary*
Bat Wings	Crimson Bat	none
Cause Brain Fever	Mallia	none
Cause Chills	Mallia	Vivamort
Cause Shakes	Mallia	none
Cause Wasting Disease	Mallia	Thed
Chomping	Krarsht	none
Claws	Bagog	none
Crack	Thed	none
Create Ghost	Cacodemon	Thed
Create Minor Head	Thanatar	none
Create Skeleton	Vivamort, Thanatar	none
Cure Brain Fever	Mallia	none
Cure Chills	Mallia	none
Cure Shakes	Mallia	none
Cure Wasting Disease	Mallia	none
Darklight	Thanatar	none
Defend Against Law	Krarsht	none
Face Law	Krarsht	none
Fangs	Crimson Bat	none
Fumble	Thed	none
Ingest Scroll	Thanatar	none
Jabbers	Bagog	none
Minor Infection	Mallia	none
Sprout Legs	Bagog	none
Summon Guardian	Thanatar	none
Venom Boosting	Bagog	none

NEW 2-POINT RUNE SPELLS

Spell	*Primary Cult*	*Assoc./Secondary*
Carapace	Bagog	none
Chaos Spawn	Thed	none
Create Ghost	Vivamort, Thanatar	none
Create Major Head	Thanatar	none
Create Zombie	Vivamort	none
Devour Book	Thanatar	none
Ecstatic Communion	Vivamort	none
Power Drain	Crimson Bat	none
Raise Ghoul	Vivamort	none
Reverse Chaos	Thed	none
Speak to Scorpion	Bagog	none
Sum. Specific Guardian	Thanatar	none
Sum. Spirit of Teaching	Thanatar	none
Sum. Voice of Atyar	Thanatar	none

NEW 3-POINT RUNE SPELLS

Spell	*Primary Cult*	*Assoc./Secondary*
Cause Plague	Mallia	none
Chaos Feature	Primal Chaos	all Chaos cults
Consume Mind	Thanatar	none
Glow Spot	Crimson Bat	none
Rebirth of Chaos	Thed	none
Ritual of Rebirth	Bagog	none
Sum. Spirit of Reprisal	Thanatar	none

from edged weapons, its hit points will be destroyed just as would be a regular weapon's. Trainees in Net Fighting learn both attack and parry.

Attacking to Ensnare - a successful attack which is not parried allows the attacker a roll on a special hit location table.

01-10 legs caught, cannot move, arms, upper torso, and head are free.
11-12 arms caught; legs and head are free.
13-15 right arm and head caught.
16-18 left arm and head caught.
19-20 head caught, vision obscured, attack/parry halved.

The areas caught must be freed by ripping, cutting, or burning, as outlined above. If there is no tension on the net, the victim can simply unwind the net from himself. A D100 roll equal to or less than the victim's DEX as a percentage will accomplish the unwinding. Make the roll once per melee round. If the character's arms are pinned, he cannot unwind without help.

Defending Against Nets - A net may be parried. The shield used to parry a net is caught in the net, immobilizing the shield arm, unless the parrier rolls his DEX or less on D100. A weapon used to parry a net will be caught unless the parrying character makes a roll of DEX times 5 or less on D100. If the attacker's weapon is caught in the net, it immobilizes his weapon arm unless he lets go of the weapon.

A fishing or trapping net dropping upon a victim from above cannot be parried, though the victim may be able to dodge it.

-Steve Perrin

OTHER GLORANTHAN MATERIAL

Glorantha is the discovery of Greg Stafford, who has accumulated that universe's myths, histories, legends, and lore since 1966. He has recorded well over a million manuscript words on the subject. Some material appeared previously in fanzines, but they now are out of print and no longer available. Other material has appeared since 1975 in Chaosium publications. This appendix is a guide to those sources.

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Dragon Pass (formerly *White Bear & Red Moon*) – This game started it all. It is a board-game based on Dragon Pass and the wars fought between Prince Argrath and the Lunar Empire. Besides the rules, it includes short histories of the many human and non-human nations and races in Dragon Pass, and of the heroes and superheroes of the age. By Bob Corbett and Greg Stafford.

Nomad Gods – The second board-game published, it extends to the east the map in Dragon Pass, dealing with the Animal Nomads of Prax. It is compatible with Dragon Pass, and in its new boxed version all game mechanics are transferable, so that a double-sized version with Dragon Pass is playable. By Bob Corbett and Greg Stafford.

RuneQuest Classic – This is the fantasy role-playing game of the universe of Glorantha. It holds light background material concerning that place. By Steve Perrin, Ray Turney, Steve Henderson, Warren James, and Greg Stafford.

Cults of Prax – Extensive mythical, magical, and social notes of Prax and Pavis. A close look at the lifestyles of some of Glorantha's more primitive residents, with narrative notes by Biturian Varosh. By Steve Perrin and Greg Stafford.

Griffin Mountain – A very large scenario pack about the lands of the Balazarings, to the north of Dragon Pass. Large maps link to the Dragon Pass map at the same scale. Citadels, giants, water creatures, chaos nests, griffins, wind swords, traders, ambushes, all inter-tied and cross-referenced for hundreds of possible adventures. By Paul Jaquays, Rudy Kraft, and Greg Stafford.

Snake Pipe Hollow – Dense scenario pack for stronger characters in this Dragon Pass adventure set. Underground adventures and overland encounters. By Rudy Kraft and Greg Stafford.

Apple Lane – This scenario pack is for beginning characters and/or referees. It has two scenarios, much background detail and many NPC statistics. By Greg Stafford.

RuneMasters – This companion to *Cults of Prax* gives complete statistics for a very strong Initiate, Rune Lord, and Rune Priest for each of 15 cults in *Cults of Prax*. Has also a full commentary on the growth, care, retinue, and the fighting formations that a Rune-level party will use. By William R. Keyes.

Plunder – Individualized booty for RuneQuest parties. Includes minor historical notes and references. By Rudy Kraft.

Foes – Contains 1200 individualized statistics for over 60 types of Gloranthan human, other sapient, or monster. Interior cover art size comparison chart. Saves much time in setting up RuneQuest adventures. By David Forthoffer.

The Wyrms Footnotes – This is now the official RuneQuest magazine, and has undergone a general upgrading in appearance, care, and presentation. Frequent materials dealing directly with Glorantha. Edited by Charlie Krank.

Different Worlds – A general FRP magazine which will include Gloranthan data such as new cults and designers' notes. Edited by Tadashi Ehara.

The following works are planned, but have no set date of publication. Titles are tentative.

Lords of Fate (formerly Masters of Luck and Death) – The third boardgame of Dragon Pass. A Heroquest to become the ruling deity on the board. Covers the Holy Country to the south of Dragon Pass. By Greg Stafford.

Men of the West – The humanist knights and wizards of Brithos and how their society interacts with the theists of central Genertela and Dragon Pass particularly. By Charlie Krank.

HeroQuest – A new FRP game compatible with but distinct from *RuneQuest*. The mighty of Glorantha enter the lands of myth and legend, penetrating the immortal stories to fight in the Gods War, to crusade against chaos, or to aid the Lightbringers. A revolutionary concept and approach to myth, magic, and gaming. By Greg Stafford.

The Pavis Campaign – Maps, personalities, scenarios, cults, and other background material bearing on the city of New Pavis and the vast ruins of the Big Rubble (Old Pavis). Material is drawn from the campaign led by Steve Perrin.

The Dorastor Campaign – The nastiest place in Glorantha, Dorastor has ruins, poison forests, demonic spirits, mutant elves, chaos heroes, unspeakable monsters, hideous geography, and other reasons to avoid it. Recommended for the bravest, boldest, and most foolish.

Others – The Dark Troll Campaign, The Elf Campaign, The Mostali Campaign, The Lunar Cults, The Grazelanders, The Sartar Campaign, The Hero Wars, Ships and Islands, more.

CHAOSIUM INC.

DESIGNER NOTES CONTINUED

Primal Chaos is the first cult. It is relatively simple, a simple trade of personal characteristics for chaotic features. Mallia is next, the goddess of Disease whose powers are invisible and cruel, and within the cult are a whole new batch of horrible sicknesses to plague a campaign and give your characters a slow and lingering death which is entirely unworthy of any heroic individual. Bagog is the goddess of scorpion people who eats her enemies and gives birth to a mutated form of her meal. Thed is the Mother of Broos, the primary foe of the world whose ancestors maneuvered the birth of Chaos and nearly brought the destruction of all of creation. Vivamort, the God of Vampires, gives even more terrifying powers to those undead, and almost unkillable, monsters. Thanatar is the creepiest thing I have ever read, and I swear that none of my PCs would ever venture against a temple of Thanatar if they have a choice. His horrors must be read to be believed. The Crimson Bat, familiar to devotees of Dragon Pass, is a monstrous mutated animal who sold out to chaos and has managed to survive ever since, supported by its worshippers who fear it so much they will join it. Krarsht is the deity of rottenness within, subtle and vicious, eating away at the hearts of men and the world. And last is Nysalor, also called Gbaji, the Illuminator, a mysterious and enigmatic deity whose strongest power is the inherent fears and evils that lurk hidden within all of creation.

The write-up is preceded by a long and detailed discussion of the cosmology of the world, as well as philosophical discussion of the world of Glorantha. I wrote this as background to give a proper idea of the place of chaos within the world, and to help satisfy the thirst of those people who are clamoring for more information about the world. It includes both mythical and historical background, revealing more of the secrets of the universe. I wanted to fill in the motivations of the gods, and also to provide many hints about possible scenarios. This section is about ten pages long and full of surprises.

Of major interest in the development of this book is that there are a total of nine other contributors to it. *Cults of Prax* was a joint effort by Steve Perrin and myself. While compiling this book I wanted to spread the work and effort, and to tap into the creative minds of other referees and players. We had originally intended to include both these deities and some of the other good guy deities, but the contributions of the good guys were far overbalanced by these and so we decided to go with only *Cults of Terror*. The others will appear in other Chaosium Inc. publications when appropriate.

The efforts of the authors are apparent in the write-ups, and there is not a page of submission that was not rewritten at least once. During these rewrites some of the religions underwent considerable changes, usually for the worse. The Thanatar cult, by Paul Jaquays, grew from being a simply disgusting and gross cult to fulfill an important place in the cosmic scheme as the enemy of Lhankor Mhy, God of Knowledge. Sean Summers' Vivamort underwent at least three changes in its development, changing through many playtests until we finally found the proper presentation and powers which' were appropriate to its place in the world. Of particular interest was the cult submitted by John Natzke. We played with it, expanded it, and worked hard upon its development until it had a life of its own. Eventually it grew too large and complex to maintain its integrity and consistency so that it burst into two separate cults. Thus hatched Bagog, Scorpion Mother, and Krarsht, the Hungry One. This was a most peculiar development, but like so much which occurs in FRP it had simply taken on a life of its own and grown beyond the original conceptions. I am afraid that the world of Glorantha is the worse for it, but the creative effort that came about was a wonderful experience of us all who participated.

Like all Chaosium Inc. products, *Cults of Terror* is marked by a fictional narrative that illustrates the text at hand with active examples of how the cults and monsters could appear in play. This one is the saga of Oddi the Keen and his long struggle against the growing threat of chaos armies from the vile land of Dorastor. The writing of this section was a particular delight to me, for I find wonder in the creative process and enjoy watching the growth and change of it.

Originally I wrote out the sections which were intended to be the examples. I wrote about a somewhat dour individual called Ketil Ericsbane, a priest of Orlanth. Like all first drafts this one needed much work, but because of the workload I was unable to devote my full time to properly developing it. As I worked, conferring often with Lynn and others, the emphasis of the saga slowly changed so that, instead of Ketil, the center of the action was now Ketil's friend, Hahlgrim the Mighty, another Orlanthi priest.

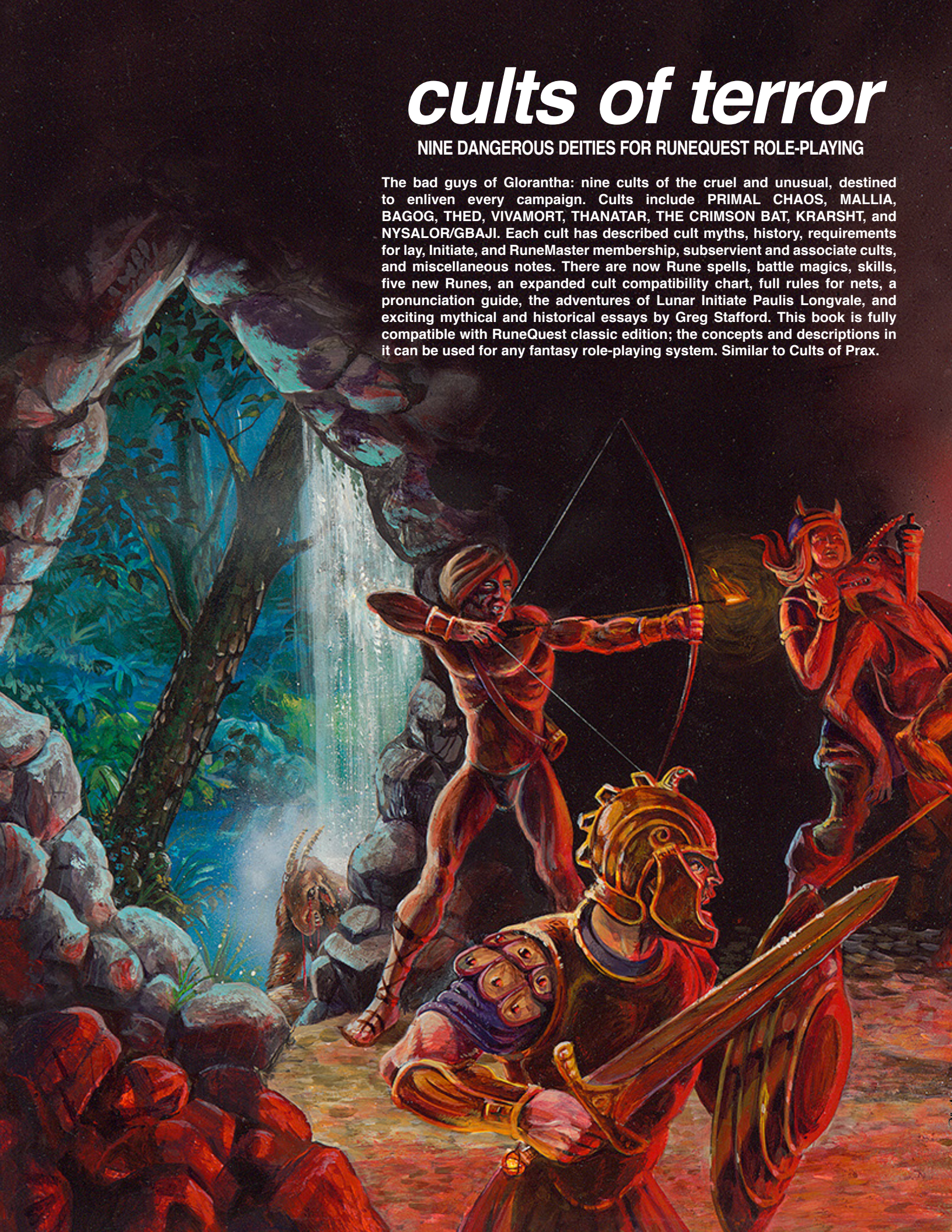
Writing is never as easy as we'd like it, and Lynn and I all agreed that the saga needed more work. This time the task fell on Lynn, our Production Manager. We discussed the needs of the text, the desires of the writer, and the emphasis we wished to place. Lynn worked and wrote hard, smoothing the lumps which I had left and the creases which others had made, working it like fine leather until it became the fine piece of work which is presented in the book. And in its final form the main character, Hahlgrim, met the fate so many characters meet and found his doom at the hands of deceitful friends. In the end it was Oddi the Keen, brother to Hahlgrim and a priest of Storm Bull, who emerged victorious in both the story and the text.

I have rarely engaged in such a wonderful effort as this project became. Though we were presenting the deadliest and most destructive deities of the world there was an enlightening air of creativity that prevailed throughout the whole production. I enjoyed the work, especially the multifaceted sharing which was necessary with the seven contributors who were freelancers and the two fellow employees of Chaosium Inc. It was a growing thing, both in the immediate experience and the final product, and a sharing thing, drawing upon the energies of many people who worked cooperatively towards a final product that is a work of art.

The making was a joy to me, and also to the others who worked on the project. It seemed to be a penultimate example of the real secret strength of FRP: the creative cooperation of many minds participating to reach a common goal. We enjoyed the effort, and we all have grown through it. We believe that we have done our best in our efforts, and hope that we have managed to convey some of the pleasures to you in our final product.

We hope that you will like it as well.

cults of terror

NINE DANGEROUS DEITIES FOR RUNEQUEST ROLE-PLAYING

The bad guys of Glorantha: nine cults of the cruel and unusual, destined to enliven every campaign. Cults include PRIMAL CHAOS, MALLIA, BAGOG, THED, VIVAMORT, THANATAR, THE CRIMSON BAT, KRARSHT, and NYSALOR/GBAJI. Each cult has described cult myths, history, requirements for lay, Initiate, and RuneMaster membership, subservient and associate cults, and miscellaneous notes. There are now Rune spells, battle magics, skills, five new Runes, an expanded cult compatibility chart, full rules for nets, a pronunciation guide, the adventures of Lunar Initiate Paulis Longvale, and exciting mythical and historical essays by Greg Stafford. This book is fully compatible with RuneQuest classic edition; the concepts and descriptions in it can be used for any fantasy role-playing system. Similar to Cults of Prax.