

Memories of Graewynn

Faith Guide 1.1



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Faiths of Many Flavors

The Faiths presented in this document are entirely fictitious and should be treated as such. The Faiths presented here are not meant to be viewed as reflections of real-world faiths. There may be some similarities, however, each faith should be viewed as it is through the scope of the setting. To reiterate, the faiths here are entirely fictitious and not a commentary on real world religion.

Faith in the Setting

Faith is a powerful force in the setting. Each faith has its good folk, and its monsters. Each person in the setting has their own ideas how a faith should work, but few often agree on all the tenets or teachings.

True Believers

Even True Believers have their own way of seeing how their faith should work and function. Unlike others however, True Believers can never abandon their Faith. Please choose wisely before choosing the True Believer Trait. For whatever reason, True Believers cannot leave their faith and should do everything in their power to justify their faith to others, even when something goes wrong.

While not necessarily a zealot, a True Believer would even go so far as doing things normally out of character to protect their Faith.

Faith Write Ups

Like the Species write ups, the Faith information is presented as an overview of the average members of a Faith. Faiths can have sects who have more extreme or lax views on certain aspects of the faith. Not every faithful member will participate in their faith in the same way, this can lead to infighting among the faithful and has happened plenty of times.

Player Created Sects

Players may submit a request to have a Sect of the major faiths approved. These Sects must have enough similarities to the main faith to still have some connection to it. To have a Sect approved the Player must submit the following information:

- **Sect Name**
- **Laws of the Sect** – This must use at least half the laws of the core faith but may have different interpretations of a Law which may go against the normal interpretation. New faiths must also include new Laws which differentiate it from the main Faith.
- **Hierarchy of the Faith** – Ranks or positions held within the faith.
- **Faith Symbol** – The symbol of the Sect should be a variation of the core faith's symbols.

If the Sect is approved, then they may still use Faith Rituals for the main faith. Initiating someone into the Sect requires a Faith Initiation Ritual just like any other Faith.

New Faiths

Players may submit a new idea for a faith for approval. This faith is a new Faith and will not have a large following across the Continent. The Player submitting the approval is the founder of the Faith.

New Faiths require the following to be submitted:

- **Faith Name**
- **Laws of the Faith** – A new faith must have a minimum of 5 Laws. These are guidelines for how believers should act. The Directors will work with the Player to refine the laws into something to fit the setting as need.
- **Virtues** – Each faith requires 5 Virtues. These virtues are things each member of the faith should seek to embody.
- **Holy Symbols and/or Holy Texts** – The faith must have a holy symbol or text which members should wear in some manner.
- **Holidays** – How does the faith celebrate their holidays or how do they view holidays.
- **Afterlife/Soul** – Each faith generally revolves around the idea of some kind of afterlife or soul. How does the faith view these things?
- **Funerary Rites** – What does the faith do with their deceased?

Yemanism

For as long as written history has existed for the Soli, they have worshiped El'Yemana and her daughter Celestia. These two figures are the most prominent in all Yemanistic belief.

Yemanism holds to the belief that enlightenment is the key to becoming holy. Yemanism pushed its followers to expand their knowledge through study, research, prayer, and exploration. Many Yemanists are curious people who wish to always know more about the world around them, and all things within it and beyond. When the Soli found the road out of their homeland, they were excited to see what lay in the world beyond. However, their naivety ended in harsh realizations that the rest of the world is not nearly so enlightened or wise.

Yemanists believe when a crisis presents itself, they can count on El'Yemana or Celestia to give them a sign to guide them through their trials. The trials many Yemanists go through are looked at as teaching moments of the world. By experiencing things firsthand how difficult they can be, it will teach lessons people will never forget. Soli should then spread this knowledge to others to save them from the same hardships.

Many converts question why so many suffer under hardships across the world. Yemanist priests will almost all respond that the world is a large place and the lessons to be taught must come in many forms. The hardships of the world are to allow people to gain knowledge on their own or drive them to expand their knowledge. Many Yemanists claim once all knowledge has been revealed to them, they will be able to utilize the teachings of Yemanism to transform the world into a paradise.

The Yemanist Magni Opus

Part of Yemanism is the exaltation of Alchemy. Many of the Yemanist beliefs include references to Alchemical Formulae as an allegory. The process for attaining perfection is called the Magni Opus. This great work has four steps used in relation to many parts of Soli life.

The first step is Nictredo or the Darkened Existence. Nictredo is associated with the color black, night, decomposition, putrefaction, and boiling ingredients until they are ready to be worked on. This process is often linked to the early days of Soli's expansion. They encountered great hardship through the first two expansion wars. Their ways had to be broken down and allowed to grow to become something more by combining their efforts. Nictredo is also believed to be a part of missionary work. Soli believe it to be a calling for only those with great emotional fortitude. Being a strange person in a strange land forces the missionary to confront the ignorance and foolishness of heathens. The missionary must break down their stubborn adherence to their old ways and bring them to the light. All these things are in order to move along to the next stage of Albedo. Nictredo also is associated with birth, when a child is born, the world seems to be a sea of

chaos and confusion, but as they grow, they rise out of this dark time that few remember.

Aldo is the second stage of the Magni Opus which references purifying the collected mass from Nictredo. Aldo is believed to be the province of Priests of Yemanism. Once a soul converts it the next stage is to purify oneself of all previous impurities. This includes heathen beliefs, unsavory cultural practices, purifying the body and learning all one can. Many among Yemanism see Aldo as a time when both children and converts learn the ways of the faith and the dawn of understanding. Many look at their adolescence as the Aldo portion of their lives, where they are taught a great deal and then sent into adulthood clean and ready to apply what they have learned in theory. For many, Aldo is the hardest part of the process of becoming something more. They are learning, but slowly and the process may take too long before they succumb to temptation. Aldo is believed to be a delicate and formative stage, and if not protected, can be easily perverted into something else. With untampered knowledge, the fertile mind can lead to undesirable results.

Citrinas is the third stage of the Magni Opus. The Alchemical process is linked to converting silver to gold or improving the worth of something through further processing. This is what many Yemanists believe to be adulthood in their lives or the midday when the sun is at its highest. Those who proceed into the Citrinas stage must take the theories they have learned during Aldo and now apply them to the world. This stage comes with the trials of life. At the Citrinas stage, the real work begins as the process of transmuting one substance to another of more value is not an easy one. Adulthood is rife with difficult choices and the loss of innocence. Citrinas is a time when theories are tested and how much of what was learned is used. Through this stage, the wisdom gained is likened to transforming lesser materials into gold. Theory is valuable; however, experience and proof are more valuable than a theory.

Rubedo is the final stage of life for the Yemanist. Likened to redness, red is regarded as a twilight color for the Yemanist. At this stage, gold has been created through alchemy. In turn this allegory represents an adult who has become wealthy in spirit, in mind, and in life. Rubedo is the attainment of goals after a long journey. This finished product is then able to utilize its full potential. As part of this, Yemanists believe this is the stage when one must become a teacher and pass on their knowledge to others. Sages, scholars, and the wise all find themselves wanting to leave behind great works or books, or teachings to know that they will live on in the hearts and minds of their people.

The Revelations of Celestia

The Soli have found their society advances by leaps and bounds due to the Revelations of Celestia. These Revelations are when the highest-ranking members of the Yemanist Clergy request knowledge from Celestia directly. If deemed worthy by the God-Child, she will enter a trance like state and speak the Revelations. Generally, at least a dozen scribes will be prepared to record the words spoken by Celestia to ensure everything is heard and recorded.

However, many among the clergy have agreed frivolous requests cannot be put on Celestia and they must use much of what they have learned and interpret it the best they can.

These Revelations are often complex and filled with symbolism which is still being interpreted to the present day. The Yemanists feel they are tasked with interpreting these Revelations and seeking the wisdom and knowledge of them to uncover new methods of creating and building.

For example, when the Cormah first landed in Sol and were threatening the Soli people, Celestia provided the Revelation of Construction. This Revelation's original manuscript is said to take up several bookshelves of scrolls describing intricate ways to build defenses, buildings, and methods for construction. It was through this revelation the Soli were able to construct defenses against the Cormahn raids and to this day are the model for how the Soli build their cities and villages. Within these writings are ways to organize buildings, methods for constructing supports, formulae for making building materials and much more. At present it is believed the Soli only understands about a third of everything present within the Revelation of Construction. Some scholars believe the estimation of one third may even be generous as some of the later portions of the revelation are intricately complex and well beyond even the Soli's understanding.

Other Revelations include:

Revelation of Combat – Providing descriptions of how to fight, create weapons, and even tactics for how to fight in small scale battles.

Revelation of War – Provides information on logistics, large scale engagements, proper organization of military ranks and even powerful weapons. It is rumored that the plans for the Exorcist were developed from the Revelation of War.

The Revelation of Corn – After the Soli began to explore the greater continent, they attempted to raise corn in the homeland. However, they did not understand why it would fail in their soil. One foolish clergy member asked Celestia how they may grow Corn within the Homeland. Celestia then provided what is jokingly referred to as the Revelation of Corn which provided several key concepts about Corn and its various uses. Much of what was recorded is still poorly understood but hints towards a vast usefulness for Corn on its own.

There is some discussion among Yemanist scholars on whether the techniques learned here should be used specifically regarding corn and not in other agriculture. This has led to some stagnation due to dogma where certain techniques may be applied to other crops, but some staunch traditionalist clergy refuting this should be treated as heretical if not used as spoken in the Revelation.

The Revelation of the Construct – Perhaps one of the most powerful revelations, the Revelation of the Construct became the basis for Soli Artifice. Much of the information

provided gave the Soli an enormous edge when it came to building Constructs. Though massively expensive, the Soli soon realized how useful these artificial beings were and put them to use, helping them build their cities, guard their goddess, and even wage war on their behalf.

The Revelation of the Celestial – This revelation provided the Soli with a means to navigate using the stars, determine where they are using a compass, and even how to chart the world based on the position of stars, the sun and the moon. These lessons also included great details of other aspects of the celestial bodies. However, the Soli are still deciphering them to better understand the world around them.

The Revelation of Geology – Shortly after the Jartleford were encountered, the Soli requested to understand more about the mountains surrounding their Homeland. This became a lengthy revelation regarding the stones and metals found within the earth where useful materials and methods of refinement and mining match the skill of the Dwearn. While not as naturally inclined to such work, the Soli have put it to great use ensuring their people are well equipped and have several useful scientific tools at their disposal.

There are volumes and volumes of information provided from other Revelations and after they have been interpreted by the brightest minds among the Soli, are often copied and provided to libraries and universities throughout the Homeland. At present, it is forbidden to allow a copy of a Revelation to leave the Homeland, even if it is believed to be a relatively minor revelation.

Hektram's Heresy

The Yemanists have publicly acknowledged that Monzori Hektram is a heretic of the faith, and his actions are condemned loudly and publicly. During that time Hektram fabricated reports to send back to the Homeland going so far as to have inspectors from the Homeland have accidents and never return.

Many Yemanists hear the name Hektram, spit and denounce the heretic as a madman and monster.

Pantheon of Yemanism

In Yemanist beliefs there are only two important figures.

First is El'Yemana, the goddess of Light, Knowledge, Wisdom, and Order. El'Yemana is often viewed as a distant figure in the faith since she has given her daughter Celestia to the Soli as a conduit to her. While Celestia speaks for her, she is busy ensuring the universe functions properly and experimenting to learn more and discover new things. While sometimes criticized as being a distant uncaring figure, El'Yemana has entrusted her will to Celestia to relay it to her followers. It is said the Sun is El'Yemana's realm and can be seen as it passes overhead proving she is near, yet she is busy perfecting the Magni Opus and applying it to all of reality.

Celestia on the other hand is described as having hair the color of polished silver, alabaster white skin, and eyes the color of polished gold with arcane symbols etched around her iris. Since she is a physical incarnation of a deity's daughter, she is kept well protected within the Akeron Temple in the center of Segog. It is said she is cared for by numerous ancient protectors all willing to sacrifice their lives to protect her from any harm. Only the most trusted and beloved Yemanists are allowed to have an audience with Celestia. Those who have described her presence as filling them with a sense of wonder, innocence, and peace.

While not revered as a deity, many Yemanists often refer to the Crucible. This term is used to describe both the essence from which El'Yemana creates souls before sending them to the mortal world and the difficulties and obstacles overcome during life. This metaphor is often used to explain why Yemanists do not have a perfect utopian existence explaining the impurities of the soul must be removed through struggle and suffering.

Clergy Members of Yemanism

The Clergy of Yemanism has several positions important to the faith. The first name is the 'proper' form, while the second name is the common vernacular for someone of that rank. When two members of the clergy of the same rank meet, generally the local one is deferred to unless the local member would choose to defer to another.

Neulota (NEW-loh-TAH) - Neophyte of Dawn

A Neophyte of Dawn is considered a new member of the clergy. Often tasked with menial work of higher-ranking clergy and trained to perform various rites and observe sermons to prepare them for their tasks as an Acolyte. Neophytes are not allowed to hold sermons themselves or teach others of the Faith until they have passed several tests and get the approval of a Rectori of the High Sun.

Askrieni (ASK-ree-ENEE) Acolyte of the Morning

Acolytes are the lowest ranking member of the Clergy which is allowed to preach and perform acts of faith in service of the Faith. Askrieni are commonly sent on simple errands for the Faith. Acolytes are not allowed to hold any position of authority within the Faith. Often viewed as a journeyman preacher.

Rectori of the High Sun

Rectori are considered a full preacher of the Faith. Rectori are given charge of a group of faithful and expected to guide and educate them on the matters of the Faith. Rectori have authority over all Neulota and may direct Askrieni assigned to them, but not Askrieni of other Rectori.

Clericos - Cleric of the Evening

A Cleric of the Evening stands above a Rectori and is expected to oversee a region with several Rectori under their authority. Clericos are powerful individuals with tremendous pull in the faith. Any tithes or efforts carried out in a region generally fall to the Clericos to complete.

The Helius Court (HEE-lee-US)

Considered the governing body of the Yemanist Faith, any new developments in the faith are all approved and passed on by the Helius Court. While the Court primarily stays in the Homeland, meeting in the Grand Library of El'Yemana, they oversee the matters of the faith on a continent-wide scale.

Dominus of the Setting Sun

Dominus are considered the lowest ranking members of the Helius Court. While similar in rank to a Clericos, Dominus can be dispatched to oversee a collection of Clericos in difficult regions. Dominus are generally used as the eyes and ears of the Helius Court's informants and messengers.

Unless assigned, a Dominus must defer to the local Clericos except in times of war. Most Dominus have been trained to fight or command troops in an emergency.

Arch Dominus of the Setting Sun

The Arch Domini of the Setting Sun are the collective members of the Helius Court which determine policy and practice within the faith. At the height of the Empire, there were 42 Arch Domini, with several maintaining large regions across the continent. After the Soli fled from Graewynn, the number has been reduced to 19 since several of the Arch Dominus no longer have areas to oversee.

Yemanists Initiations

A Yemanist Initiation typically has four parts.

First is the Admission of Nictredo. During this process, a convert admits they are but the raw material yearning to become refined. This often comes with a confession of sins performed in the past and seeking forgiveness.

Next is the Ordeal of Aldo. During the Ordeal of Aldo, the clergy person performing the initiation will press the initiate to reveal their flaws, their fears, their impurities. It is during this time; the convert must perform some act showing they are cutting ties with their former beliefs to make them ready to become a Yemanist. Historically, for example, this would be the part where a Therios would be forced to kill one of their beastkin to prove they no longer hold onto the heathen beliefs. More progressive clergy may force them to drive off the beast, but this is used as a test to see how far the convert would go to become a Yemanist.

Next is the Promise of Citrinus, while the Ordeal of Aldo can be harsh, the Promise of Citrinus is generally a time when the preacher will console and support the person after they have gone through a difficult time. The convert has proven they will change and give up long held beliefs to become a Yemanist.

Finally, the Quest for Rubedo. This portion of the initiation is often a time when the convert will pledge themselves to what they believe their path is within the faith. They will speak of what they will do within the faith to not only improve themselves, but others around them. This is

generally met with support from other converts and the preacher overseeing the initiation.

Virtues

Pride – Being proud of what you know is admirable. Being able to apply it to change the world is worth being proud of. Yemanism encourages Pride within its adherents. No matter what action is taken.

Compassion – Few would be able to live without having been taught of the world. This compassion to teach and aid their fellow man is not a sin, in fact it is more of a virtue. Some Soli believe there is a bit of a paradox between compassion and pride, so many choose to follow one or the other.

Curiosity – The Yemanist church believes curiosity is also a virtue. Their people should be eager to learn to continue through the cycle and assist others. A healthy curiosity will drive a Yemanist to gain more knowledge, to be endlessly interested in the world around them and the details of it.

Wisdom – Those who have been through so much are regarded as sages and holy men even if they do not directly serve the church. Wisdom is a trait above all others which should be respected. Wise counsel is considered to always be virtuous.

Temperance – Yemanists believe pleasure should be derived from a place of study and enlightenment. Physical pleasure is base and more likely to distract the mind from the pursuit of knowledge. Yemanists preach moderation in all things, often going so far as to suggest abstaining from intoxication, meat, or pleasures of the flesh for anything but procreation.

Holy Texts

The Liber Illistrat, or Book of Enlightenment in the loosest translation, is the holy text of Yemanism. Within The Illistrat's sacred pages are stories and history of the Soli and El'Yemana's relationship. The text has dozens of stories of El'Yemana as she developed the secret of alchemy. This section is known as the Antea Texts, many of the stories talk of fantastic accomplishments of El'Yemana until she created the Soli and blessed them with safeguarding her mortal offspring. Since then, the Exim Texts have catalogued Celestia's rule and the teachings she has offered her chosen people.

The Illistrat is believed to be a living work evolving and being written as Celestia reveals more knowledge to the world. There are other portions of the Illistrat devoted to war, science, alchemy, artifice, architecture and any other subject one can imagine. The Illistrat in its entirety takes up hundreds of shelves. However, mostly when referred to as just the Illistrat, it refers to the Holy teachings and guidance presented by Celestia. Other sections have their own names such as the Illistrat Bellicus for military tactics, Illistrat Cultios for agriculture, Illistrat Minerva for weaving, Illistrat Sapientia for philosophy and many others.

Every decade, any significant additions to the Illustrat are distributed to the parishes and then expected to be shared with the flocks of believers.

Iconography

The Yemanist Faith is typically represented by a sunburst, a circular form with points radiating off it. Images of El'Yemana all wear a veil or have hair covering her face. Most artists are scorned for trying to depict the face of a Goddess being almost taboo to do so, even in jest. Celestia on the other hand has her likeness immortalized across the empire. Illuminations of Celestia are always depicted clearly and openly hiding no part of the child's face. Many feel since they have Celestia to guide them, why should she be hidden, people should celebrate her glory.

The Colors of Yemanism represent the four stages of the Magni Opus. Black, White, Reds and Yellows are all common colors among the Yemanist faithful. Black represents a culmination of all things brought together in preparation for great things. Many craftsmen typically wear black clothing to denote the potential they can bring out of the world. White is a sign of purity and chastity often worn by the young and those of the Yemanist faith. Yellows are one of the more common colors worn by adults and those who trade and work in the fields. Red is most typically worn by leaders of the clergy, alchemists, and artificers. This represents their closeness to the Goddess. These colors are usually prominent, but not mandatory.

Yemanist soldiers typically will wear a red and black sash or head band to denote their faith. Sunburst emblems are also common when possible. Since they represent the difference between the Rubedo of life and the Nictredo of death, the colors are deemed appropriate.

A few very talented artists have begun creating locketts or small tokens with a portrait of Celestia. These items tend to be valuable, and a few are even a special kind of picture box allowing them to look inside and behold Celestia in all her glory.

Laws of Yemanism

The Laws of Yemanism are strict and unforgiving. Many Yemanists follow them simply because they don't wish to be banished.

Pursue Knowledge in All Things

El'Yemana's teachings promote her adherents learning all they can when they can. Adherence to this law varies based on means and access to knowledge. Some believe this to mean they must go and experience life to its fullest, many Yemanist adventurers use this law as their reason for expeditions. Others take this to mean they must study constantly, expand their horizons across all pursuits of knowledge. And yet others believe in seeking wisdom in everyday life, understanding the small nuances of what happens around them. Yet other Yemanists use this law to be nosy and keep close watch on their neighbors for signs of blasphemy.

Refusing to learn or embrace knowledge is considered a transgression of this law. This willful refusal to learn is often looked at as a major impurity in the soul and often must be excised before a person can move forward from the Nictredo stage.

Refusing the Wisdom of the Goddess is Sacrilege.

Yemanists who refuse to learn and gain knowledge are considered dissenters and must be taught the error of their ways. Other Yemanists may teach the willful individual in any way they choose so long as it does not result in death.

Other examples of breaking this law are being an adult unable to read, refusing to attend school or university without special dispensation, refusing to listen to the advice of someone wiser, or ignoring the warnings of the clergy, artificer's guild, or Alchemical College.

Be not tempted by accursed powers.

Working with those who bind themselves to creatures from other worlds for power or knowledge only used for spreading fear, darkness, and ignorance is a sin of the highest magnitude. This includes Necromancers, Infernalists, Enchanters, Druids, Shaman, Abyssari, and any other tradition of magic which draws its power from worlds other than Tenebrar or El'Yemana's light. Associating with these types willingly is a lower form of blasphemy, however a Yemanists who do this are considered among the highest orders of heretics.

Practicing, performing, or using Necromancy or Blood Magic is seen as a sin because it potentially leads to consorting with accursed powers. Knowledge of such things walks the line of sin, however, if these magics are not used in any way, the knowledge of them is not a sin.

Destroying Knowledge is akin to Harming the Goddess.

Yemanists believe knowledge to be the most important thing above all. Any true Yemanist is loath to see knowledge lost or destroyed. Book burning, murdering a wise man or sage is a deadly sin. Destroying a library is crime enough to be hunted in the streets even by lowly commoners.

Some heathens have criticized the Doctrine of the Dawn as contradictory to this law of the faith. The Clergy overseeing this stage of a community's acceptance into the Soli Empire often painstakingly collect and safeguard the knowledge which is then replaced with Yemanist and Soli culture. There are several libraries within the Homeland where the confiscated books and histories of nations converted to Yemanism are kept under lock and key. Most Yemanists use this to justify the Doctrine of the Dawn, even if they are limiting who has access to the information taken. Once the information has been collected, other copies of the information are then destroyed which is often attributed to destroying knowledge and where the critics of Yemanism draw their arguments refusing to believe some has been preserved.

Do not be distracted from your pursuit by food, drink, or flesh.

Many Yemanists, while not completely devoid of decadence, do refrain from allowing it to become excessive. Debauchery to the point of addiction or being out of control is the ultimate sign of foolishness to a Yemanist. These faithful look down on decadence which results in heavy intoxication or harm to others preventing them from learning more. Dulling the mind with such intoxicants is considered low and weak. Only those unable to embrace the trials the Goddess sends will debase themselves with too much food, drink, flesh, or other pleasure.

All That is Good May be Done in the Goddess's Light

Yemanists believe anything that requires being done in the dark of night is a sin against El'Yemana. As part of the teachings of their goddess, keeping too many secrets is dangerous and ultimately a sin against their goddess. That is not to say many Soli who do keep secrets rationalize it as, others are not ready for this knowledge which could bring more chaos than good until the time is right.

Nighttime is believed to be the time that evil forces are at their prime while El'Yemana rests for the coming day. Yemanists prefer to be near a source of light or at the very least indoors. Many Yemanists have gestures to repel evil spirits at night. Many carry a lantern or candle or other source of light. If none is available, few Yemanists will leave some place they feel is safe.

When Life fades, what remains is unclean.

That which is dead is unclean. Corpses are considered unclean as they no longer have the light illuminating their eyes. This taboo varies wildly. It does contribute to the large portion of the Yemanist clergy who are vegetarian eating only fruit and vegetables and refuse to wear leather, while others simply believe that this taboo is in relation to things such as the undead and when they will arise.

This law has become a point of contention among Homeland Soli and converts within the greater parts of Graewynn. The most zealous Yemanists believe all undead no matter the circumstance should be destroyed. While some converts in Graewynn have come to accept Mortaeans believing they are a living embodiment of the Nictredo phase of life. While accepted, most Mortaeans Yemanists are regarded with pity more than anything else.

Respect Knowledge and the Trials Suffered to Find it.

Places of learning, such as schools or libraries are considered holy ground. Many of these places undergo the same rites as a temple. Yemanists believe these places are houses of worship in addition to centers for learning. Yemanists will be reverent in such places and scorn anyone who would be obnoxious or loud within such places. Many Yemanists are taught to leave arms and armor behind within a school and that blood shed within such a place is a way to ensure that your soul is cast into the flames of the Crucible.

Created with Love by the Goddess, the Body is a Masterpiece.

Yemanists believe their bodies were fashioned by their goddess herself. Due to this they exalt the physical form, but in an artistic sense rather than a sexual sense. Nudity is common, but not looked at as crude or rude. Those who lust after the bodies of others are seen as base and wishing to pervert something sacred. Body modifications are abominations, scars are marks of great shame and guilt, and birth marks are considered signs of misfortune. Many other cultures ask then, why are there so many misshapen or ugly. Any Yemanist will reply that something twisted them whether the mother was a heathen, someone in the family consorted with other powers, or as a trial to teach someone a lesson. Some also suggest the ones who are infirm may have been pulled out of the fires of the Crucible too soon or had some defect hidden deep inside them.

Redemption for Transgression

According to Yemanist doctrine, one must undergo an ordeal to be forgiven for transgressions against the faith.

This can vary from preacher to preacher on what form it must take, but commonly it involves some act of service which will be physically, emotionally, or mentally difficult. More progressive teachers believe community service is sufficient for minor transgressions. More serious transgressions may require the sinner to embark on a quest, a ban on certain actions such as forcing the person to remain sober if they drank too much, up to and including imprisonment. In the worst cases, excommunication and banishment are the most common recourse.

More radical preachers have gone so far as to use public beatings, humiliation, and even execution as punishments for moderate to severe transgressions. Minor transgressions are generally punished with draconian reeducation. Ironically, these preachers rarely use excommunication to prevent dissension spreading among others yet to hear Yemanists teachings.

Holidays of Yemanism

Illumia

A celebration of when El'Yemana bequeathed Celestia upon the Soli as her chosen people. While sometimes compared to a birthday, this is not entirely accurate.

The celebration of Illumia revolves around illuminating the darkness and bringing light into the world. Many Yemanists see this as a joyful time when they seek out new people to exchange gifts, knowledge, and make new friends and acquaintances. It is not uncommon for Illumia to also be a celebration of love. Many Soli meet their significant other during Illumia when they go out of their way to meet new people and learn about them. Many Light Thaumaturge are sought out to imbue objects with a glow to help them light up the nights of Illumia to bring light into the darkness.

Illumia is generally celebrated in July with its peak during the longest day of the year.

Dismadel

In contrast to Illumia, Dismadel is held on the shortest day of the year in December. During Dismadel, Yemanists are expected to remain vigilant and to fear Dain Mornless, a figure colloquially known as a bogeyman who travels during the night. Some adult Yemanists will use a costume of dark cloaked, skeletal figure to scare younger Yemanists into being wary of the night and the things hidden in the dark.

Dain Mornless is described as a tall gaunt skeletal figure who stalks the world seeking to snatch those who carelessly wander in the dark. Described as a trickster and a maneater, it is said Dain Mornless burns when exposed to any form of light. As such, many Yemanists often use this time to decorate their homes with as many lights as possible to illuminate the night or to spend an evening with their friends and family huddling together against the cold darkness. Most Yemanists also use this time to become introspective and think on how they can improve themselves to be better prepared for the year to come.

Lighting Day

Held in May, Lighting Day is a celebration of the Soli venturing out into the greater part of Anthuli to spread the word of Yemanism. During Lighting Day, many Yemanists embrace all manners of colors, believing their faith to spread across the world like the rainbow from a prism. As it enters the prism, representing the Jartleford Mountains, it exits spreading wide and bringing in many others until they are all one.

Many Jartleford Dwearn see this holiday as a celebration of when the Jartleford joined with the Soli to become Yemanists.

This celebration holds a special place for many converts to the faith. It is a time of celebration, feasting, and color of all kinds. The holiday focuses on the many different paths of folks before they came to be Yemanists and recognizing they are all united in faith and belief.

One of the most famous places responsible for Lighting Day is Halcyon Abbey. Housing a massive almost perfectly clear quartz prism, the Abbey's residents put on quite the show using various magics to create a lightshow unrivaled throughout the Empire.

Transmutation Day

Regarded as a bittersweet holiday, Transmutation Day is held in honor of those who have died serving the faith. From those who fought back against the Cormahn incursion into Sol before the Revelation of Construction, to the missionaries killed by heathens, to those who sold their lives defending the Wall of Martyrs against the waves of undead, each is remembered on this day.

Celebrated in September, this time is when many Yemanists resolve themselves by working harder and pushing themselves further than they had before. On Transmutation Day many Yemanists flock to places of worship and renew their faith knowing they will need to steel themselves against temptation to stray from the Light

of El'Yemana. While some have commented this holiday seems grim, for many Yemanists it is a time of renewing their resolve and finding strength in one another. It is common for oaths to be sworn between friends and siblings to watch over each other in their darkest times.

Another common way of celebrating Transmutation Day is making resolutions for what they plan to do or become. Many see this as a time to transition from one state of the Magni Opus to the next.

Yemanist Marriages

Marriage among the Yemanists is generally an extravagant affair. A proper ceremony must be overseen by a clergy person of Rectori or higher, though some poor communities will sometimes have an Askrieni sent. It is expected a marriage is performed during a sunny day with a clear sky when the sun is at its highest. Many Yemanists believe having it done at any other time is a sign of impurity with the couple being too impatient or willing to anger El'Yemana.

Before the ceremony, the couple will generally spend at least three days prior to the ceremony together and must be inseparable. They must do everything together. On the day of the ceremony, the couple's closest friends and family will paint alchemical symbols on their skin. To the surprise of many outside the Yemanist faith, the couple generally wear little clothing during these ceremonies to ensure the symbols are visible to all. This symbolizes the two becoming one through a unique form of transmutation. As all the guests gather, the couple are presented to the officiant. During this time stories of the couple doing things together are shared by their guests highlighting why they are good together. It is believed the more stories told the more fortune the couple will have in the future.

The officiant will then take the couple to a special tent set up as a sauna. The couple will enter the sauna together and must spend at least fifteen minutes. While inside, the couple exchanges their vows. It is considered acceptable for the marriage to be consummated while in the sweat tent. Once the couple emerges, the officiant pronounces them married. After this ceremony, the couple will change into regular clothing and there is generally a feast afterward.

To show the couple are married, they will wear a variation of a symbol for transmutation. This is generally a piece of jewelry with the symbol on it worn prominently.

Yemanist Funerary Practices

Yemanists believe since souls return to the Nictredo stage of the Divine Alchemical Process, they must be returned to the earth. Since the Yemanists see most materials come from the earth, they believe they must return the body there to begin its own process.

However, up until the Yemanist expanded in the greater portion of Anthuli, they simply buried their people in graveyards in the Homeland. This inspired the idea that the Yemanist dead must be buried in ground sanctified to El'Yemana otherwise the soul would not return to the

process since lands not sanctified were tainted by heathens and would require additional connection to El'Yemana. Those not buried in holy ground have their souls trapped within their putrefied remains until their body is exhumed and moved or the land around their body is sanctified. This idea is considered somewhat old fashioned, but it does pop up regularly among the more zealous Yemanists.

Most Yemanists will have their body prepared for one final viewing. The body is carefully wrapped in strips of cloth soaked in alcohol and then covered in a veil. Those who tend to corpse in the faith are viewed as a necessary evil. Most grave tenders generally are viewed as perverse for their work but accepted begrudgingly for what services they do provide to the Great Work.

Yemanism and the Soul/Afterlife

Yemanists believe their life is an eternal process of being refined into an enlightened state of being. Through the difficulties of life, they are forced to change under pressure until they shed their impurities and become something better.

The doctrine of Yemanism says that each soul must undergo several stages of purification before they reach the enlightened state of Rubedo. Once a soul has attained such a state, they leave the cycle of life and death becoming one with the goddess El'Yemana. Once this process is completed, Rubedo Souls are allowed to ascend to a higher existence beyond the mortal world where they will begin the next stage of their purification.

Most souls begin in the stage of Nictredo, a raw and unrefined state. While some use the words purity, this does not refer to some original sin or all things begin in a tainted state. Nictredo is commonly compared to pulling a hunk of ore out of the ground. The Soul is that ore and through various processes can be refined into a state without any impurities.

If someone dies before attaining the state of Rubedo, they must begin again from Nictredo, shedding their former life and becoming something new. This is for most Yemanists why corpses are unclean; they are the former shell which prevented the soul from progressing to the Rubedo state. While the body is crafted by the Goddess, the mortal world is full of temptations, distractions, and impurities which can taint the body. Many Yemanists point to the teachings of the dead are unclean due to something going wrong with the body preventing the soul from attaining the Rubedo state.

Yemanist Superstitions

Among the Yemanists there are several superstitions which prevail despite even the wisest teachers claiming they are not true.

- The number 7 is unlucky. This stems from the sails on the Cormahn ships were said to have 7 sails or there were 7 ships depending on the source.
- The number 8 is a lucky number, representing all things and bearing a similar shape to the symbol for infinity.
- Working in darkness invites trouble, many Yemanists will almost compulsively light candles or stop their work if their work areas is not 'properly' illuminated.
- Wearing too much black, dark colors or getting too dirty is a sign someone is still stuck in the Nictredo stage of their life.
- Many Yemanists will make a gesture of protection before entering a dark place. (OOC: the ASL sign for Protect is a good example to use).
- Many converts outside the Homeland regard Homeland Soli as sacred and truly blessed. They will often go out of their way to make a Homeland Soli comfortable or welcome.
- Misuse of the knowledge of a Revelation invites heresy because it strays from the word of Celestia herself.

Yemanist Thaumaturgy

Yemanists believe their people pioneered the field of Thaumaturgy and brought it to the world. While Thaumaturgy has existed in the world for as long as any records show, the Yemanists did categorize the Aspects of the Divine in the *Compendium Divinicus*.

Yemanist Thaumaturges generally follow the Aspects of the Divine listed below: Crafters, Light, Knowledge, Nobility, Order, Flame

These Aspects are attributed to El'Yemana and by extension Celestia.

Sects of Yemanism

There are no publicly acknowledge sects of Yemanism, however, some divisions from the faith have started to arise in the area of Graewynn.

The Artificers Sect

Viewed as a club of angsty engineers, the Artificers Sect believes there is a grand design to everything which can be determined mathematically. From their view, all things are little more than a construct. The only thing differentiating a construct from a living breathing being is that a construct is far less complex than the living body. The Artificers seek to create the perfect simulacra of life artificially; however, their efforts have earned them disdain from other Yemanists as they generally require cadavers to explore the systems of the living body going against one of the laws of Yemanism.

Fronic Yemanism

The Fronii, a former group of Yemanists in the western part of Anthuli, have taken it upon themselves to create a sect focused around the ideal of the undead are abominations to El'Yemana. Fronic Yemanism is far more militaristic than conventional Yemanism with their Orders of Knights being viewed as holy warriors sent to purge undeath from the world. At present the Fronii have declared the Purgation Crusade, a declaration of war against all things undead. Most conventional Yemanists believe they have gone too far and have made a mockery of true Yemanism.

Moonsong

Practiced primarily among those residing in the country of Erce, Moonsong is focused on the individual finding their place in the natural cycle of the world. However, each group of Moonsong followers has their own way of following the faith but shares many similar concepts. We will focus on the similarities rather than the differences.

Moonsong views the moon as their guiding principle, believing that change is as inevitable as it is predictable. Though the moon goes by many names among the faithful, all Moonsong followers know the Moon looks down on the world with joy and love for her children. The Song is the harmony of life each living creature brings to the world which in turn is pleasing to the Moon. A common story among the Moonsong is the phases of the moon are when the Moon Goddess is turning her face to watch different parts of the world. Unlike other faiths the Moon Goddess is not omnipotent and must turn her attention to various parts of the world as time goes on. She is patient and provides her attention evenly among the world below her.

The daytime is when the Moon Goddess has gone to rest or has gone far away to watch lands much farther than a person could walk in a day's time. The sun is believed to be a strict and often judgmental fatherly figure by many groups, glaring down on them to ensure they are behaving themselves and continuing the cycle of life. It is said the Sun God created plants and the green of the world, while the Moon was responsible for the animals and people. To care for their children, both beings take a portion of the day to watch over their children.

For a Moonsong follower each goes through a cycle of change and must prepare for it because many things are fleeting but cycles will always be renewed. To this end many Moonsong followers have minimalist views on their lives often only keeping things necessary for them to continue through their life. Shelter, tools, food, medicine are all viewed as necessary to continue the cycle of life. Most Moonsong followers view the things other nations find valuable as frivolous or useless. For example, many Moonsong followers would rather barter than trade in coins, but some have come to understand others do not accept barter and seek coin instead, so they use it only as necessary.

This plays into one of the core beliefs of Moonsong is finding harmony with nature and all living things. Moonsong followers believe they are one piece of the vast network of life across the world and it is more of a sin to take from that world unless it is to sustain them or their kin. Vanity, greed, and a disregard for life are among the greatest sins one can commit. Much like plants and animals, they wish to leave as small a mark on the world as possible to please the Moon Goddess with the natural beauty of the world.

The Moon Cycle

The New Moon is when she is watching somewhere far away and has turned her attention from the lands. As her face grows fuller, her attention is being turned onto the places it sees. Among the Moonsong, the new moon is a time for doing what must be done using the darkness to take care of problems and sort out dangerous issues. It is common for Moonsong followers to do battle with their enemies under the cover of night. By the time the focus of the Moon Goddess is turned back to that area, signs of fighting will have faded, and the cycle continues. Some more critical members of the Song believe the New Moon is the best time to do things which may be shameful or displeasing to the Moon Goddess but know they must be done to keep the cycle on track.

During the First Quarter Moon or the Facing Moon is a time of contemplation and preparation. It is seen as a time to prepare for the rising of the full moon. Many followers of the faith will plan what they will be doing in the coming weeks and discuss matters of importance to restore harmony among the believers. A great deal of work is usually done during this time. Additionally, during the First Quarter Moon is a time to settle matters in a more civilized way. Many times, disputes are settled, and negotiations are held under the First Quarter Moon. During this time, Moonsingers from different groups may gather to try and find compromises to ensure all involved thrive in times of difficulty or seek aid from other nearby groups.

When the Full Moon rises, she is paying close attention to that part of the world. During the Full Moon, many among the Moonsong believe they must adhere to their faith to the letter and in doing so please the Moon Goddess. Though only a few days, the Full Moon is considered a sacred time when followers of Moonsong should pray, worship, and carry out important rituals for their faith.

During the Half Moon, or Turning Moon, members of Moonsong focus on finding their balance within themselves. This is considered a deeply personal time when members of the faith should focus on their own self-improvement and how to come to terms with their faults, failures, and troubles. It is a time for penance and introspection.

Hektram's Folly

With the disturbance of Hektram's folly, many among the Moonsong believe the cycle has been severely disrupted. Previously the undead were seen as perversions of the cycle created because of people not living in harmony with nature and manifested as a form of punishment.

However, with the appearance of sentient undead in the form of Mortaeans, many Moonsong have been forced to reevaluate their views on the undead. When the decaying forms of their former friends and family returned from Agrineas, many Moonsong believers struggled to simply let them go.

A conclave of Moonsingers was called and over one

hundred Moonsingers attended. It took them several days to decide what to do about the Mortaeans who had once lived in Erce while alive and the strange new Mycerim. The Verdanti Moonsingers were against the Mortaeans but felt the Mycerim were not the same since they still carried a breath of life within them. Others tended to agree and with a vote decided by a small margin it was agreed to allow the Mycerim to remain, but all Mortaeans would not be allowed to return since they now stood outside the natural cycle.

This sent ripples through the Faith both in Erce and abroad. Many felt this decision went against the virtues of the faith, while others argued most of the Mortaeans were cursed by what had happened. This was a dark time for the faith struggling to come to terms with what their people had become and the tenants of their faith.

At present, most Moonsong outside of Erce have come to accept Mortaeans claiming they are following the tenants of the faith more closely than the Moonsingers did after Hektram's Folly. Many Moonsong groups within Erce still view the Mortaeans as a threat, especially those at the border between Erce and Agrineas who must fight the mindless undead day to day. While others preach compassion and compromise, many on the border find it difficult to forgive the undead after watching their kin be devoured by the mindless dead.

The Waking of the Ancients

Another dark time within Moonsong's history is known as the Waking of the Ancients. In 497 SC, during the 4th Expansion War, as the Soli and their constructs slashed and burned their way into Erce, a handful of Moonsingers came together to put a desperate plan into action. Being unable to compromise with the conquest driven Soli, the Moonsingers felt they had no other choice.

Performing a forbidden Ritual, the Moonsingers and other spell casters from Erce sacrificed their lives as an offering to massive ancient Skywoods to help strike back against the invading Soli. The Ritual was forbidden because it drew souls and spirits from the cycle and imbued them within the Skywoods to animate them and give them life.

The ritual drew in spirits of the forest and those who had recently died to the Soli's advance to animate the trees. Driven by this rage, the trees smashed into the Soli lines proving to be too much even for their powerful constructs.

Twisted by hatred amplified by the chorus of other souls and spirits, the Skywoods wreaked havoc on any caught in their path. When this came to light, many Moonsong balked at what had been done. Condemned by the actions of a desperate few, most Moonsong protested to being saved this way. While there was no way to tell which souls had joined the Skywoods, many believed their friends and family were now forced into a vigil outside the cycle.

To compound the fact, the spirits joining the Skywoods were believed to be those the Moonsong regarded as enemies of the faith, spirits of anger, fear, destruction and

death which would pervert the souls of those also pulled into the Skywoods corrupting the Song and sending messages of pain and sorrow to the Mother rather than joy and life.

Post 5th Expansion War

Since the last Expansion War, the Moonsong have redoubled their efforts to uphold their virtues and beliefs. Many have made humanitarian efforts anywhere they can, even well outside of Erce. Some groups have even gone as far as to try and make alliances with people outside their faith offering aid where possible.

This was well received until the Fronii empire formed forcing many of these humanitarian efforts back behind the Wall of Martyrs. Even the Fronii were given aid until their leadership denounced the Moonsong and forced them out declaring them heathens trying to recruit the Fronii to their pagan faith.

Much of the efforts of the Moonsong have been concentrated on healing the wounds of those who fought and the scars on the land. While many have been loath to do so, there are long stretches of land near the border which have become outposts. These lands are where the Soli's constructs and the Skywoods battled leaving behind a decimated landscape.

While these outposts are meant to be guardians, many Moonsong followers in them have been working to remove the ruined constructs and nurture the land. Some of the battlefields have been turned into farms helping provide more food for the Erce, while others have become training grounds for warriors of different groups to learn to fight together when the Soli return.

Pantheon of the Moonsong

The Moonsong revere three figures within their faith.

First is the Moon also known as Luna, the Watchful Mother, the Silver Lady, or Selain. The Moon is the central figure of the faith and responsible for giving life to all beasts and people like. To the Moonsong, the Moon is the source of nature itself and life. While Moonsong is focused on the Moon and her watchful presence, they also acknowledge the Sun. Some stories tell of the Moon walking the world during the New Moon as a feminine figure with a gossamer robe which reflects the song as images from the past and a circlet of flowers said to be given to her by the Sun as a sign of love.

Known as Sun, the Scolding Father, the Burning Eye, or Helkhaut, the Sun is generally a disproving figure in the Moonsong pantheon. Believed to have given life to the plants of the world, the Sun is generally believed to be powerful but uncaring. Those who get too close to the Sun are doomed to be burnt to a crisp. It is said the Sun disapproved of the scurrying beasts and people, preferring the silent and peaceful plants which spread across the world. In his irritation at the beasts and people, the sun grew angry, and its anger radiates the heat the sun

provides. It is believed that only through harmony with nature will Helkhaut's fury be contained allowing life to flourish. The personification of the Sun is generally as a vicious warrior bearing monstrous features twisted by anger.

The final being of the Moonsong is only known as the Quiet One. Believed to be not only the keeper of time, but it is also the being who brings silence to the living. The Quiet One conveys the dead to the Moon returning the Song to the Mother. While some outside the faith have asked where the Quiet One came from, the Moonsong believers do not feel it matters, but that the Quiet One serves both the Sun and Moon in its own way. The Quiet One is commonly depicted as a robed figure without a face with horns of various types of animals, and roots growing from beneath their robe.

While the Sun and the Quiet One are generally not the focus of the Moonsong, there have been Sects devoted to them at times. During the 5th Expansion War, the Shout of Helkhaut grew to some prominence. This sect believed they must draw on the fury of the Sun to punish the Yemanist invaders.

Stations of the Faith

Unlike Yemanism, there is no sole authority for how Moonsong is followed. Within each group of Moonsong followers a single person is chosen as the Moonsinger. How this choice is made is up to the group of followers and at times there may be several individuals chosen to lead a gathering of Moonsong followers. Some groups may choose a more democratic way of choosing someone who embodies the virtues of Moonsong while others may choose through trial by combat or other more esoteric methods such as who can seek out some new wisdom to teach to their followers.

Regardless of how a Moonsinger is chosen, they provide guidance, solace, and counsel to their followers rather than directly lead them. Moonsingers are viewed as teachers and mentors more than leaders. A new Moonsinger may only be chosen with each new cycle of the moon beginning with the new moon.

Moonsong Initiations

An initiation among the Moonsong is generally a celebratory affair. Most Moonsong initiations involve feasting, laughter, and joy. Generally, Moonsong Initiations are held at night when the Moon is in the sky. Even if someone is eager to join the faith, many Moonsong adherents will caution it is good luck to be initiated at least when the Moon is in the sky.

Generally, the new convert is asked to tell the other members of their faith their story. Who they are, where they come from, what brought them to believe in the guidance of the Moon. It is a time to grow the community, and many will toast and cheer as the convert's story is told. If a convert is shy, many Moonsong initiations will see folks ask questions to better meet the new member of the faith.

After the stories are told, the person initiating the new member will explain the Moon Cycle in a ritualistic method often involving moving around the convert in a circle describing each phase. The others present mirroring the actions of the initiating faith leader.

Finally, the convert is marked with 4 symbols representing the faces of the moon. On the forehead is drawn a circular shape to represent the full moon, on the chin is drawn a horizontal line for the new moon, a crescent moon is drawn on one cheek for the Facing moon, and a half circle is drawn on the other cheek for the Turning moon.

Virtues

Humility - Moonsong believers find humility is necessary to maintain their minimalist lifestyles and to not take more than they need from the land. As such ego is often viewed as a road to vanity, greed, and overindulgence which in turn makes the person disgraceful in the eyes of the moon.

Community - Many members of Moonsong look at all life as their siblings or at least distant cousins. It is important to work together and do what you can to protect your kin. Even when times are hard and they must hunt to survive, they offer thanks to the spirits of those taken to preserve the group.

Acceptance - To the Moonsong all are welcome so long as they can give up materialistic desires and embrace the ideals of the faith. People who might not be 'proper' in other societies are welcome to bring their experience and wisdom to the Moon. Regardless of skin or hide color, species such as Therios, Verdanti, and Fae, ability, or identity, all are welcome and should be celebrated for their individuality.

Introspection - The teachings of Moonsong focus on being able to look inward and identify the thoughts and feelings which lead to the decisions of each person. Followers of Moonsong must look within themselves and find the root of their struggles and recognize when they should rely on their community to help them grow and continue in the great cycle.

Compromise - Despite celebrating the individual, compromise is necessary to ensure the community survives. Many Moonsong followers believe compromise is the key to preserving their community and faith even during times of hardship. Even if it means taking the life of another if it would mean the community survives.

Preservation - Each member of Moonsong is passionate about preserving the natural world as best as possible. While they can build homes and villages, they should seek to do it in the least destructive ways possible to the natural world. Using techniques to incorporate their homes and needs into the landscape is the ideal many of them strive to accomplish.

Holy Texts

Many Moonsong communities do not keep holy texts, but often keep an oral history and record of their community which is shared during the full moon to ensure their people know of their forebears and the wisdom of the elders. While those not of the faith have tried to record them, there are so many different oral histories it has become hard to call any single one a complete record or true definitive text.

Iconography

Most Moonsong believers wear symbols representing the moon or music to show their belief. The most common is known as the Moon Sigil. Most examples of the Moon Sigil are a white or lightly colored Ring worn around the neck or otherwise attached to their clothing. These rings are usually made of wood, bone, or stone. A Moon Sigil made of metal is believed to be a sign of arrogance. Variations of the Moon Sigil are common, some are simple rings while others are more elaborate including carvings or markings of natural objects such as animals or plants.

Many among the Moonsong will also adorn themselves with flowers, herbs, or other plants as part of their dedication to harmony with nature. Some go further, refusing to use anything they have not gathered and made for themselves. More progressive Moonsong see the value in clothing made by others so they can focus on their own needs.

Laws of Moonsong

Though these vary from group to group, the most common Laws are as follows.

Take only when you must.

Moonsong followers believe materials, food, and even taking lives should only be done to survive. Living a slightly more difficult life due to a minimalist lifestyle is worth preserving the natural beauty of the world for the Moon Goddess. Some more aggressive minded members of the faith use this to justify aggressive action saying it must be done for the good of the community. These disputes are often settled during the Facing Moon.

Anyone who takes more than is necessary to survive are regarded as sinners by this law. This excess is considered greedy and selfish.

Live in Harmony with Nature.

Moonsong traditions always follow some form of treating Nature with respect and reverence. Most Moonsong camps are clean and have as little impact as possible on the land. Most of their people will hunt, gather and farm only as much as they need to get by.

Embrace difficulties as teaching moments.

Each moment of struggle or difficulty is seen as a moment to grow and learn about yourself and the world around you. In the moment it may be hard to see what lesson is being taught, but with introspection in the future, believers should seek what they can learn from those difficult times.

Those who cannot yet learn from their difficulties and become stuck in place are often looked at with compassion rather than being judged as sinners. Most often a Moonsinger or the community itself will do what they can to assist one of their lost members to learn from difficulties.

The Cycle must be preserved.

To the Moonsong life and death are simply parts of the greater cycle of the world. Things are born, grow, and die. At times other living things must die to let others survive, but it keeps the greater cycle moving. Things outside the cycle such as Spirits, Undead, Demons, Sylvagore, and other monsters are dangerous and cannot be allowed to pervert the cycle and continue to take from it. At times even other living creatures may need to be killed to prevent over-predation or exploitation of Nature.

Even in death, we live on in the world around us.

Death is not to be feared but seen as a time when the members of the faith pass on into Nature and become a part of the cycle. As their body decays, they become food for other beings and nourish Nature. Each of them becomes a part of so many lives from birth to death and that living memory will be carried on if the cycle continues.

Our Kin are our Charge.

Family both, blood and extended, are responsible for taking care of their members and helping them when able. However, it does not mean one person must do it all themselves and should seek help from their community when they can.

People who disregard others, isolate, or cause unnecessary conflict are seen as sinners by this law. Upsetting the harmony of the community, family, and those they regard as friends without good cause have broken the cycle and must either be taught a different way or banished.

Redemption for Transgression

Many among the Moonsong feel punishment should be handled in the least invasive way possible. Common methods of atonement include meditation in nature, taking overt acts to show the person will not transgress again, to being sent out on a spiritual journey intended to teach lessons the Moonsinger(s) believe will help the person return to the path of the Moonsong.

Generally, the most severe punishment within Moonsong is ostracism from one's group. This is often done with those who refuse to follow the laws of the faith and is done ritualistically where all members of the Moonsong group encircle the wayward member and disown the person before turning their backs on them and ignoring them entirely.

Holidays of the Moon

Moonsong holidays tend to follow the seasons announcing them and welcoming them as part of the cycle of life.

Innola

Celebrated in March, Innola is a time of new beginnings, life, and growth. For the Moonsong, Innola is a time when people wake from the long cold winter and life begins anew. Innola is celebrated with a day of ritualized tending to the land. Many Moonsong will take this time to prepare for planting, cultivating new relationships, and improvement.

For the Moonsong Innola often is accompanied by festivals for planting, hunting, and celebrating surviving another year. Innola is the new year celebrated on the first day of spring. It is a time to come together as a community and work together towards the coming year. Depending on the group of Moonsong, they will plant crops while singing songs of growth, hunters will give additional thanks to their kills during a hunt, and gatherers will leave gifts of shells, bark, and other things to help fertilize the land.

Kehtu Festival

Celebrating the arrival of summer, the Moonsong celebrate the Kehtu Festival in June. During this time, community building is the focus. Dances, competitions, and feasts are found throughout places influenced by the Moonsong. Groups will often invite others for entertainment, food, and drink while making new connections with each other. It is considered good fortune to marry during the Kehtu Festival, although it is known for passions to run hot and showing off is generally expected of the young people.

The Gathering of Storms

In the autumn, generally during September, the Moonsong come together to air out any of their grievances that have arisen since spring. During this time, challenges are expected and answered by those with a grievance. It is considered a tumultuous time where the Moonsong must deal with their issues before being forced to endure the winter.

It is not uncommon to see ritual combat, battles, or negotiations happen during the Gathering of Storms. Any grievance aired during this time must be resolved one way or another. Originally viewed as the last of the Sun's fury before giving way to the colder times, many Moonsong feel it is a practice worth indulging in allowing communities to grow stronger. Those able to solve their issues while adhering to the virtues and laws of the faith are celebrated as wise while those who resort to less diplomatic methods are viewed as childish, yet still allowed to seek their resolution.

During the Gathering of Storms, it is generally the time when new Moonsingers may be elected when groups feel they can no longer abide by their current Moonsingers.

The Season of the Quiet One

In late November or early December, the Moonsong enters a period of quiet and stillness. During the winter many

Moonsong feel it is a time of caution when wisdom should prevail over the hot-blooded. Many will bring in the final portions of the harvest, preparing to await the colder times to pass.

In Erce, generally around this time, as Autumn comes to an end, storms from the sea ramp up bringing rain, snow and struggles to those closest to the coasts. During this time most Moonsong keep to themselves and their close friends and relatives much like a bear hibernating for the winter. Unless necessary the Moonsong will remain where they are simply wishing to survive until the next spring.

Moonsong Marriages

Moonsong marriages are simple affairs where the community comes together to provide a feast for the couple. During the feast, the couple will sit together at a table with their closest friends and family.

As the feast goes on, it is customary to give the happy couple a token of well wishing. This could be anything from a simple flower to a more extravagant gift of a weapon, tool, clothes etc. Once the couple has had their fill, they stand and thank those who have come offering a toast or song.

Then all in attendance will rise and journey to a nearby space in the wilds which has been prepared with flowers, or other plants available based on where the ceremony takes place. The couple and their friends/family will then collect wood, tall grass or other natural materials and construct a lean-to. The gifts given will be put on display around the lean-to or even woven into the construction of it. Some groups will construct this lean-to before the feast for the sake of time.

This process symbolizes the couple building a life together. Once it is completed, the couple will sit inside of it and a Moonsinger will have a private discussion with them. This intimate conversation generally includes an exchange of vows, professions of love, and plans for their life together. The Moonsinger will also encourage them to be the most open, honest, and vulnerable with each other, then they have ever been before. Any secrets must be laid bare, and truths spoken during this time. If the couple cannot do this the Moonsinger can refuse to acknowledge joining the two in marriage. Hasty marriages often fall apart at this point. If the couple find they are no longer interested in joining, the lean-to is then torn down and the two go their separate ways.

Afterwards, the couple will have one turning of the moon to create or commission tokens of devotion for each other. These tokens are generally made of wood, leather, bone, or stone. The most common tokens are worn like a brooch or hang from a belt or necklace.

Moonsong Funerary Practices

The Moonsong view the body after a person has died as simply an empty shell, cast off while the soul goes to sing its song to the Moon. Most Moonsong do not view a corpse as their lost friend or family member but no different than a

stick or rock found on the ground.

This lack of significance has led to several Moonsong dealing with corpses in a more practical way rather than a religious way. Knowing rotting flesh spreads disease and invites hungry predators or scavengers, many Moonsong will either bury the body in a shallow grave or take it to a location away from their community to allow the wilds to claim it as their own.

Some Moonsong do place a touch of reverence on the body of a close friend or loved one and will generally perform a solitary funeral pyre for them.

Regardless of which practice is used, it is customary to offer any final wishes or long kept secrets to the corpse to be reclaimed and not burden the living with such things. The belief is with the person no longer there, it is not healthy to carry those burdens of things left unsaid. Instead send them with the shell of their former friend or family member to be claimed by the world.

Most Moonsong will claim a memento of the person and carry it with them as a reminder knowing they have moved on from this world. This practice normally is seen as wise and compassionate. However, during the 5th Expansion War some warriors returned with dozens of mementos making it a grim reminder of what was happening to their people.

In war time, many will try to recover some trinket to carry back to the family. Several warriors would exchange trinkets before going into battle with promises to return the trinkets to their families if they survived. Unless they cannot be found, a trinket should be returned to the family before anyone outside the family keeps one. If several are taken, one must go to the family, then to friends.

Many consider it bad luck to carry mementos or trinkets for fallen comrades if they were not close. Many will make it their mission to return the items to who they should go to rather than risk angering the Moon.

Moonsong and the Soul/Afterlife

To the Moonsong, the Soul is the breath of life which is given to each being by the moon at birth. The soul is viewed like a seed which if nurtured will grow and prosper. When the end comes, the soul visits the Moon to share their experiences, their life, their feelings, and memories before returning to the cycle to grow again.

This eternal cycle of reincarnation continues the song and each life is viewed as just another turning of the cycle. However, it is believed that the souls may not reincarnate as the same form they had in life. For instance, a human may return as an animal or even a tree.

Some members of the Moonsong believe Therios and Verdanti are souls who started as a beast or plant respectively and when they reincarnated to a humanoid form, they retained some of their former aspects.

There is some debate on Effigies and Mortaeans among the Moonsong. While they do not condemn them, they do view them as a strange anomaly. Botanic Effigies are regarded the same way the Moonsong would view a Verdanti. Some wonder if there was some reason for reincarnating into metal or stone as some sort of lesson or to alter the experiences returned to the Mother when they pass.

The Undead (and by extension Graveborn Effigies), are viewed with a mixture of pity and apprehension. Moonsingers debate what the reason would be for them to return as such. Mindless undead are viewed as a punishment for something done during life in general, however, the Mortaeans and Graveborn have put that view back up for debate. While many view Mortaeans and Graveborn as unnatural, they cannot decide how to address them in general. In most cases it is left up to the individual to decide how to treat them. More literal Moonsong regard them as abominations, but many simply view them with pity believing they must have been left in this state due to the imbalance of the cycle created by Hektram's Folly.

Superstitions of the Moonsong

Despite the efforts of knowledgeable Moonsingers, these superstitions persist.

- If an animal sits and watches you, or you witness a flower bloom, it is a friend or family member who has died showing they are watching over you even in their new cycle.
- Whenever cooking, brewing, or even using Alchemy, one should always offer a tribute of some kind to the plants/animals which contributed to the creation of the food, drink, or substance.
- Wrapping something (rope, wire, etc) counterclockwise is unlucky and going against the cycle, things should always be wrapped clockwise.
- Animals with black and white on them are considered lucky and touched by the Moon. Plants with white flowers or fruit are considered lucky.
- Walking backwards invites misfortune, one should always face the coming cycle rather than backpedal.
- It is customary to bring good news to others when visiting, even if you have bad news to deliver.
- Using utensils instead of your hands to eat is a sign of fear. One should always be willing to take hold of their meal.
- If you use a Voice Caster, the spirit inside will steal your voice.

Moonsong Thaumaturgy

Moonsong Thaumaturgy is generally seen as becoming an agent of the Moon to provide wisdom and guidance to those of the faith. Many take up the tasks of healers and scouts to help their people thrive.

Moonsong Thaumaturges generally follow these Aspects of the Divine: Beast, Darkness, Nature, Life, Community, Pleasure

Sects of the Moonsong

Shout of Helkaut

While the Shout has been around for a long time, its ranks swelled after the 5th Expansion War due to the many bitter and angry feelings after the Yemanists left. The Shout is viewed as a heretical order because rather than revere the Moon, they instead revere Helkaut, or the Sun. Many within the Shout believe they must hunt down and burn the ones responsible for the harm done to the land and peoples of Erce. This order goes against nearly every tenet of the Moonsong faith, but many of its members still consider themselves a part of the Moonsong.

Umbricana

Particularly along the eastern border of Erce, a new sect has arisen believing the Mortaeans should be given a chance to present themselves as they are and be members of the Moonsong. Though the Umbricana still believe undeath is outside the natural cycle, only the state of undeath is abnormal. If the undead truly wish to rejoin the cycle, they must atone by spending a lifetime of 60 years protecting life and they will be forgiven. When they have served their term, they must then willingly allow their unlife to be ended and they can return to the cycle.

Rohari

Founded by the Gethral, and formalized after their people were freed from demonic slavery, the Rohari believe every person is free to live as they please so long as they are not hurting others. Central to the faith is the legend of Merrax, the Gethral who rose from the ranks of slaves and led a rebellion against the demons oppressing his people. While not all members of the Rohari believe Merrax is a god, some have begun whispering that only a god could have freed them from the centuries of imprisonment. Known as the Chainbreaker, the Ashen Axe, and the Fireheart, many within the faith revere Merrax as their savior.

Following in the ideals of Merrax, the Rohari believe people must accept others as they are without putting pressure on them to conform or change themselves to fit another's ideals. The Rohari believe any form of slavery, oppression, and conformity is a sin against their faith. At the core of the faith is the ideal of live and let live. Rohari encourage each other, and others, to explore who they are as a person and to do what they must to live a life they are proud of no matter how frightening it may feel. Many Rohari develop a fierce sense of independence and family because they must prove themselves. No one is forced to do the work for others, instead the Rohari preach each person must travel their own path. This is not to say the person cannot ask for help along their journey, but they must have the courage to ask. To tie or chain up a Gethral against their will is a great evil and many Rohari will immediately become violent to prevent it.

While other faiths and people sometimes see the Rohari as cold, often simply standing by if they are not asked for help, to the Rohari, this is allowing others to find their own voice, feet, or courage to overcome obstacles. Pride is a complicated issue among the Rohari, while one should be proud of their own accomplishments, they should never be too prideful to suffer needlessly. This belief comes partly from the need to survive in a harsh landscape the Gethral call home, but also to ensure the survival of all who want to work together. Within the wastelands, people must work together, or else entire villages can be lost overnight. When pride becomes too great to seek help with their problems, the Rohari see no need to help. To them, the struggle must either be overcome alone, giving the person a sense of strength or they must seek help when a problem is too big to ensure they can surpass it.

Shamanic Origins

After the Gethral broke their chains, there were many who began following shamanic traditions which are said to have survived since before the demons enslaved them. Many Rohari believe everything has a living spirit which manifests in this world. Even their captors were merely spirits feeding off their pain to sustain their mortal forms. Each spirit has their own personality, agenda, and beliefs like any living creature. Many Rohari will choose a spirit as their personal crest and seek to emulate the spirit as an expression of who they are. Some villages of Rohari may represent themselves with an animal, a force of nature, or even

concepts as their markings. These groups do not claim to own these patrons, but instead try to live their lives to the ideals they attribute to such forces. The Rohari do not pray as other faiths do, to the Rohari their actions are their prayers. By living their lives upholding their own ideals they offer praise and worship to the spirits and Merrax.

Among the Gethral living closer to the ocean, several camps have been exploring shamanic practices attempting to engage the spirits of their ruined homeland. While these practices are still relatively new, many have said the spirits are all too eager to speak with and work with those who will listen. Despite fundamental differences many Gethral respect and support the efforts of these shamans in hopes of restoring some of their lands so the Gethral no longer must raid to have the food and medicines they need.

The Six-Fold Path

To the Rohari there are Six paths a person can follow in life. Since the beliefs of Rohari are highly personalized, each views the Six-Fold Path differently. Some Rohari focus themselves along one path, while others may walk multiple paths. It is believed each of these paths are necessary to one day fight beside Merrax beyond the Veil between the mortal and spirit realms. There is some overlap between the Paths, so some use the names of the paths interchangeably. Another common theme is some Rohari may combine the names of the paths in a way to help describe the path they walk. For example, a Vekra'ken may walk both the path of the Hearthken and the Vekranen as a warrior who raids to provide for their family.

A Rohari must choose a path either when they transition from adolescence to adulthood through a rite of passage or during their initiation into the faith. Prior to choosing a path, it is commonly accepted for the aspirant to try various professions to help them decide which path they wish to walk.

There is no shame transitioning from one Path to another so long as it is done for good reasons. Those who simply abandon a path because it is too difficult or out of fear are marked as cowards for giving up too easily.

Hearthken - The Provider

While some other cultures might think laborers are of a lower class, the Rohari believe those who labor for the sake of others are invaluable and should be respected. Hearthken encompasses everything from hunters, gatherers, cooks, servers, lovers, and laborers of any kind.

The role of a Hearthken is to provide for others' needs whether they are physical, mental, or emotional. When the Gethral were enslaved, those who looked after others after torturous days of work were respected and valued for helping their people go on even in the worst of conditions. It is said when Merrax grew tired of slaughtering demons, he would praise those who prepared him a warm meal or gave him comfort even when his spirits were low.

Some outside the Rohari question why a lover would be included among the Hearthken. Any Rohari will tell them the lover provides emotional support and comfort to those weary from the world. Sex workers often fall under the Hearthken path and are treated with respect.

It is considered a grave sin to treat Hearthken poorly and it is easy to spot a Rohari in a tavern as the one ready to jump up and put hands on someone who disrespects the tavern servers or innkeeper.

Vekranen – The Warrior

One of the more common paths walked by the young, the Vekranen path is a bloody one leading from one battle to the next. Vekranen are expected to fight with everything they have and seek out challenges at every opportunity. While some take this ideal to challenge everyone and everything, the ideal is to seek martial excellence or question establishment. Vekranen are expected to train when they are not in battle to prepare for the next conflict.

Among the Vekranen, it is expected for them to speak up when there is a problem. While much of the path revolves around combat, the Vekranen are also expected to challenge poor leaders, or practices which harm people unnecessarily. Some outside the Rohari view Vekranen as rabble rousers and dissenters without cause. Young Vekranen often fall into this category, however, more experienced warriors have tempered their hot-bloodedness and instead will challenge problems when they see them rather than start problems for the sake of their path.

A lot of Rohari start out as Vekranen thinking it will be glorious and earn them renown, however, after a few battles, many Rohari transition to other paths. It is understood the path of the Vekranen is not for everyone so there is some leniency for those who transition from it to another path due to combat being too difficult for them.

Iximund - The Shaman

Among the paths, the one with the fewest adherents is the Iximund. Many view the Shaman as a path of madness and divinity. Shaman tend to be odd even among a people as accepting and understanding as the Rohari. Most Shaman only choose this path because they have an innate connection to the world of spirits.

Whether through dreams, hearing the whispers of the spirits, or having a connection to the unseen others do not, a Shaman tends to seem not entirely present in the mortal realm. However, most Rohari treat a Shaman as a spiritual leader like a priest or teacher. This carries with it a level of respect for the wisdom they provide from the other side of the veil.

Many Shamans practice various forms of divination to help them interpret or gather wisdom from the other side. From reading entrails, the stars, cast sticks or stones, or interpreting dreams, Shaman seek answers to the mortal realm's problems in symbols.

Many Iximund will seek out places where the Veil is thin to aid them in communing with the spirits which leads them to living apart from most gatherings of others. When troubled or having difficulty deciding, many Rohari will seek out a Shaman to provide them with guidance from the spirits.

A common superstition surrounding the Shaman path is angering one is often a way to invite misfortune in the form of the spirits causing mischief or manipulating events to harm the transgressor.

Tahmathor - The Artist

The path of the Tahmathor is often linked to all the other paths in one way or another. The Artist creates to inspire others with their work. From songs, dances, artwork, masterfully crafted tools or weapons to any number of other forms of art, the Tahmathor looks to create something which will inspire and evoke emotion in others.

Often linked to the Hearthken, the Tahmathor goes beyond simple comfort or support. Instead, they would seek the excellence of song and dance nearly to the point of obsession. Many Artists choose one facet of another path and seek to hone it to perfection. While a Vekranen may master several weapon types, tactics, or their durability, a Tahmathor may seek to become a master of one weapon type eschewing all other forms of fighting for their one mastery.

Some joke the Tahmathor is like the path of the Shaman, but for those with no connection to the spirit realm. Many Tahmathor are set apart from others due to their single-minded focus, however, it is not uncommon to see them seek out others to put themselves to the test.

Ironically, many Rohari merchants walk the path of the Tahmathor seeking to hone their ability to haggle and trade to perfection allowing them to trade with anyone and everyone no matter the situation.

Lyfthar - The Healer

The Lyfthar has dedicated themselves to healing others. While there are several similarities between Hearthken and the Lyfthar, the Healer seeks to mend and heal the body and mind leaving the soul to the Iximund. Whether they heal with magic, medicinal training, or simply counseling others in times of difficulty, the Lyfthar know their calling is to heal rather than simply comfort.

Many Lyfthar also practice Alchemy in one form or another to provide medicines, poultices, and potions to others. The path of the Lyfthar is to walk beside others and ensure they can continue their path even when things become difficult. While some believe Lyfthar are gentle kind souls, there are several Lyfthar capable of giving seasoned Vekranen a challenge when angered. Some Healers have taken to a more aggressive bedside manner to ensure their charges take care of themselves and follow their guidance.

Visoth – The Wise One

Few walk the path of Visoth like the Shaman or Tahmathor. The Visoth is a path of leadership, wisdom, and diplomacy. Among the Gethral, the Visoth are uncommon due to the pressures of herding rowdy and independent Gethral to follow anyone for any length of time. The few who have the talent to do so often earn the undying loyalty of their people.

Sometimes called Talkers, the Visoth do spend a great deal of their time talking with other Rohari, non-Rohari, and foreigners. While viewed often as leaders, some Visoth also serve as spies, diplomats, or mediators when issues arise. A common trait among the Visoth is education, many will immerse themselves in other cultures and ways of thinking to help them better understand others.

People who claim to walk the path of the Visoth are regarded with hesitation simply because many Rohari know they can be persuasive so a common belief among foolish Rohari is Visoth always want something and will manipulate to get whatever it is they need.

Bane of the Demon

Within their practices, the Rohari have come to believe those who slay demons are worthy of walking the path of Merrax. It is considered heretical to even know Blood Magic among the Rohari. This practice has become highly respected among the Rohari. However, this belief has become watered down by less educated members of the faith. Some have taken to calling Yemanists, and their constructs demons and believe it they should be treated as such.

Shamans and warriors following the faith will correct the foolish members of their faith. While the Yemanists and their constructs have been their enemies for generations, they are nothing compared to what lurks in the darkest parts of the spirit world. To the Rohari, it is their duty to destroy demons who walk the mortal realm. Rumors circulate that the Rohari have developed a way to preserve a trophy from demons as part of a ritualistic practice.

Those who follow this practice are known as Ashwalkers. An Ashwalker takes it upon themselves to slay demons at every turn and collect trophies from them. To the Ashwalkers this is a sign of pride, accomplishment, and their way of taking something back from the demonic forces. According to Ashwalker dogma, each time they take a trophy from the demons, they deny them their full power when they reform.

Any path or combination of paths can claim to be an Ashwalker, but their focus is to deal with demonic threats both inside and outside the Narseth Wastes. The Rohari believe it is the duty of all Rohari to interfere with or destroy demons at every turn. Those who claim to be Ashwalkers take this to the next level and make it their focus.

Rise of the Daemontide

Many blame the Gethral and Rohari for the Daemontide since it originated within their lands. Many Rohari will

dispute this because according to their faith, summoning demonic creatures is one of their greatest sins. Despite the Daemontide crashing towards Sol, many Gethral in the northern reaches of the Narseth Wastes found themselves fighting tooth and nail against the demons.

Many clans of Gethral organized themselves to hunt down corruption and trailed behind the Daemontide in its earliest days. The Rohari took this on as a personal mission to hunt and destroy as many demons as they could while also seeking answers on who caused the Daemontide. In their zeal, some Ashwalkers and other Rohari raided places seeking answers trying to use force rather than persuasion. This earned a lot of criticism from outsiders labeling the Gethral as violent barbarians.

However, even within the Narseth Wastes groups of Rohari would seek out and question anyone suspected of having a connection to demons. This led to a lot of members of the faith dedicated to fighting against demons coming to blows with their own kind accusing each other of being a part of the group responsible for the Daemontide. This led to the discovery of the Raxis'Korbal.

Pantheon of the Rohari

The Gethral revere Merrax, the Chainbreaker as the central figure of their faith. However, while many know the stories of Merrax, day to day many Gethral also make offerings to spirits of various kinds.

While no one is entirely sure what happened to Merrax in his final battle, it is believed he ascended to become a god or at least a powerful spirit to continue his war on the other side of the veil. It is said each demon killed made him stronger and before the end he carved a canyon through a mesa to the heart of Makehm circumventing fortifications and demonic forces waiting in ambush for his warriors.

Many Rohari also revere several spirits in addition to Merrax. One of the most revered is Wesledorn, known as the Father of Battle. Spoken of as a spirit of war armed with spear and sword, Wesledorn is covered in scars from countless battles and wears little more than the hides of his greatest foes.

Wesledorn is believed to have emboldened the Gethral during their revolution against their demonic slavers. It is said Wesledorn only helps those who will stand up and fight back. Many Shamans claim to commune with Wesledorn seeking advice on how to wage the next war, knowing another Expansion War is on the horizon. During the 5th, countless offerings were given to Wesledorn. Several shamans provided invaluable tactical advice to the Gethral forces against the Soli after consulting with Wesledorn.

Another powerful spirit recognized by the Rohari is the Wastrel. Often viewed as the personification of the Narseth Wastes itself, the Wastrel is viewed as a spirit of misfortune, however, many Rohari view the Wastrel as testing their people's faith through the trials of living in a harsh environment. Offerings to the Wastrel generally

include trash, ruined equipment of the enemies of the Rohari, and insults. Many use the Wastrel's name to curse others who are lazy, do not contribute to the community, and or will likely be claimed by the Wastes someday.

Many Rohari also recognize several demonic spirits generally as spirits arrayed against them. While some demonologists and Blood Magic users have agreed these spirits do indeed exist, not all of the ones the Rohari possess knowledge of are known. Most Rohari know the Overurges of the Damniarchy are arrayed against them.

Stations of the Faith

Unlike other faiths, there is no central leadership or clergy. Each person is expected to have their own interpretation of the faith and so long as they uphold the core ideals, then they are a faithful Rohari. Some do seek guidance from others they respect, talking about the faith and what it means to each other is common practice to help educate and encourage newer members.

Though there is little structure, the Rohari find this to be preferable than the strict doctrines of other faiths such as Yemanism. Usually someone who is respected for their integrity or connection to the spirits may be sought out to teach others about the faith. This is seen as a sign of honor and nobility to have others seek you out to learn how to become a better member of the faith.

In general, at least one person following the path of the Iximund and/or the Visoth takes the lead among Rohari gatherings. At times this will come with the prefix "High" added before the path they walk such as "High Iximund or High Visoth".

Rohari Initiations

Rohari Initiations are generally exciting affairs including competitions, storytelling, and often ritual combat. While there are as many ways as there are Rohari clans to initiate a new aspirant of the faith, some core ideals should be considered.

First, the aspirant must boldly renounce their former faith. Some do this by breaking a chain, tearing off their old holy symbols, or even performing some act blasphemous to their old faith.

Next the preacher initiating the new member must present the prospective member with a challenge. This could be a competition, a ritualized combat (generally first to three strikes), or a task the aspirant must complete. Once the aspirant has undertaken the task, even if it was too much for them, they are welcomed by what Rohari are present.

The aspirant must then declare themselves to a family, clan, or declare themselves a new clan. This is generally done by donning the symbol of the group they are joining or presenting the symbol of their new family.

Virtues of Rohari

Bravery - The Rohari believe every one of their followers should have the courage and bravery to face down any challenge. Fear is not scorned unless it is allowed to rule a person's life. The wisest Rohari knows all courage comes from conquering their fears.

Acceptance - The Rohari believe people should accept others for who they are, so long as their actions do not harm others. However, should the actions of another bring harm to a Rohari, they are allowed to respond however they wish. The Rohari believe differences should be embraced to better their society and help them grow.

Personal Accountability - Each member of the Rohari is expected to take responsibility for their actions and must deal with the consequences. While a person is free to choose how they act, they must own their behavior and how it affects others.

Perseverance - Being able to overcome obstacles or seek the help to do so are regarded as a virtue in the Rohari. There is no shame in asking for help, however, forcing help on another is oppressive. If a person cannot persevere on their own, they must ask for the help they need otherwise a believer must leave them to their own devices.

Comradery - Gathering a collection of likeminded folk is important to the faith, no one should be alone if it can be helped. Unless someone proves themselves untrustworthy or dangerous, all people are friends you simply have not met yet.

Creativity - Many among the faith are encouraged to follow their creative sparks whether it be for art, music, dancing or any other creative pursuit.

Compassion - There are many evils in the world, the Rohari should not add to them. All people are walking their own paths, they should be treated with compassion until they arrive where they want to be. It is up to the Rohari to aid this journey when their assistance is requested.

Holy Texts

The Rohari do not claim any holy text, instead many of their teachings are passed on from one person to the next.

Iconography

Most Rohari use a symbol of a path leading to the horizon as a symbol of their faith. This is called the Path of Merrax. It symbolizes the journey each member takes to being true to themselves. Oftentimes, this will be incorporated with the symbols of any spirits the individual sees as their patron. This symbol may be worn as a simple design on their clothing, stamped on their equipment, modeled in their jewelry.

Laws of the Rohari

Help those who ask, await those too proud to ask.

Having the humility to ask for help should be praised. Unless asked, let others seek their own path. Do not coddle another or interfere in their growth, but do not refuse them help if they have the strength to ask unless you are unable to help.

A common saying among the Rohari regarding this is "No one will offer a hand to be slapped away". Meaning they will not offer to help only to be turned down. There are times when someone may need an intervention because they are being self-destructive. While this does strain this law of Rohari, it is deemed a necessity at times.

Seek your inner and best self.

Each person must understand their own self before they can truly understand others. Along each person's journey, they should look inward and seek out who they are, why they do what they do, and if it is truly what is best for their life.

Rohari seek to become their best selves in whatever way they feel is appropriate. It is considered a sin to try and push your expectations upon another member of the faith. While you can make requests for changes, trying to force someone to change what you want is wrong in the eyes of the Rohari.

Live life to the fullest.

Each day we must find what makes our hearts and souls light and joyful. Pursue what will make you happy no matter the obstacles but remember to do no harm unless you must protect yourself or your loved ones.

Rohari embraced leisure time as part of their faith. For them it is a time to build their community and seek what they want in life. While some Rohari practitioners may seem like they work all the time, if they regard it as their hobby, leisure time, or something they enjoy they are following their inner self to what they want to do.

Drive out the demon.

It is the charge of all Rohari to thwart the plans of demons no matter the personal cost, given the chance, they will enslave and torment us for the remainder of our lives. They may deceive, threaten, or harm you, but it is your duty as Rohari to drive them from the mortal realm.

This law is also cited when someone is dealing with a bad habit, addiction or struggling through a change. For the Rohari, they consider many of their problems like demons hounding them, holding them in place. It is the responsibility of all Rohari to never let themselves become stuck and should make changes or seek aid if necessary.

Be not bound by oppression.

The chains of oppression must be broken. Suffer not the slaver, the oppressor, or the captor. Seek to free yourself,

your family, and anyone who is bound not by their own hand. Whether the chains be physical, societal, or magical, do everything within your power to break free of such bonds.

This law has several variations throughout the faith. While some criticize the faith for when the Rohari must take prisoners, it is generally only done if a person willingly surrenders. Rohari are expected to treat anyone they are forced to take prisoner with the utmost care and compassion to not become oppressors themselves. A Rohari found mistreating a prisoner who surrenders is often punished severely, often with a beating from other members of the faith.

Honor your word.

Though some claim making a promise or giving your word is a form of bondage, to the Rohari, it is an oath freely given and not forced on them. This is an important distinction because Rohari feel if one of their members is forced to make a promise or coerced, then they are under no obligation to fulfill said promise. This has become a point of contention at times when some Rohari are forced to give a promise and then immediately break it.

A Rohari who consciously breaks their word after freely giving it is labeled as an Oathbreaker. Oathbreakers are not protected by the tenets of the faith and until they have atoned through willing service to the person they broke their oath, they cannot claim the protection of the law.

This term of service is called the Oath of Contrition. Generally, the Oath of Contrition lasts for a week to a year and a day. The term is negotiated with the person the Oathbreaker is seeking atonement. A week is for minor oaths, while a year and a day is for important oaths. During the Oath of Contrition, it is expected the Oathbreaker is treated fairly and put to work. The work must be honest work and must not put the Oathbreaker's health or life at risk.

If the Oathbreaker feels they are being mistreated or overworked, they may seek out other Rohari to observe their work. If it is decided they are being overworked or abused, the Oath of Contrition is completed right then, and the Oathbreaker is absolved of their transgression.

Holidays of the Rohari

Rotogard

Rotogard is a day of merriment for the Rohari. The origins of this holiday reach back to the days of the slave pens. It was the one day a year, the Gethral would work to raise the spirits of each other even while being worked to death by the demonic overlords.

Common ways to celebrate are pranks, joke duels where two people take turns roasting each other for others entertainment, or other forms of comic relief. Some Rohari will use oversized or ridiculous weapons to fight for 'the Honor of the Laugh!'. Rotogard is celebrated in March.

Pyre's Day

Pyre's Day is the direct opposite of Rotogard, it is a somber day when the Rohari remember their fallen. Believed to be celebrated on the day when Merrax vanished, it is a time of reflection on the past year. During this time, it is uncouth to make jokes, laugh, or be extravagant.

Most Rohari eat the most basic of meals and take little effort to make themselves presentable. Many Rohari dread Pyre's Day knowing it is a time when remembering their dead is part of the process of grieving. Many Rohari refuse to work or do anything not strictly necessary during Pyre's Day. Often, they will visit places where their kin have fallen offering alcohol, food, or trophies taken from the enemies who killed their comrades. Pyre's Day is generally celebrated in November.

Vekrana'togad

Loosely translated, Vekrana'togad means the "Call of War". While technically a holiday celebrated in September, Vekrana'togad is a time when those who fight are celebrated and honored by the others. During this day, those who have seen combat in the last year retell their tales and are given tokens of gratitude for their struggles by others.

Once night falls on Vekrana'togad, the warriors must then leave their settlements and gather with other warriors to participate in a ceremony known as the Death's Pledge. During Death's Pledge, each of the warriors is given six cuts, each one representing one of the Six-Fold Path. In doing so they acknowledge they may die in the coming year, but they are doing so for themselves, their people, and all Rohari. It is a solemn ceremony where the older generation of warriors often has to remind the young of the dangers ahead and what it means to be a warrior.

Rohari Marriages

When it comes to family, the Rohari also do not have a religious practice associated with marriage. During the enslavement of the Gethral, the demonic overlords would move those who showed close affections with each other and move them to other pens rather than allow the Gethral any reprieve. For many this became a time of finding love and comfort where they could since the next day they may never see their partners again. This continued in the Rohari beliefs. Many Rohari find marriage is a form of constraining someone and demanding they only find comfort in one person. Any form of sexuality or gender is embraced and accepted among followers of the Rohari. As such it is not uncommon for non-traditional relationships to form among the Rohari. With the focus on living their best life, the Rohari feel it is only right to not constrain their feelings to one person unless that is their choice. Monogamous relationships do exist but are generally less common than non-monogamous relationships.

Many of these non-monogamous relationships are often regarded as a Chosen Family. Chosen Family are those who have sworn to be by each other's side until the end. Making this commitment is considered a joyous time and

each time the family grows, it is often celebrated with a feast and games.

Rohari Funerary Practices

As more of a necessity in the early days after being freed, the Rohari will generally burn their dead. Many will build a pyre and burn the bodies of their fallen. This came as a necessity during the revolution against the demons because of a particular breed of demon called a Hellraiser. These creatures could possess a corpse and make it fight for them.

As such the Rohari have an indifference towards corpses and have been known to dismember their own to ensure they will not rise until they have a chance to burn them. For the Rohari this practice is still used today, but generally only when dealing with demons or undead.

When a person passes away either from injuries, disease, or old age, they are honored with a pyre. The body is wrapped in a specially prepared tapestry crafted by the Hearthken. These colorful wraps are meant to pass on with something to help them be identified when the soul arrives in the spirit world. The body is then carried to the pyre and ignited.

It is expected for Rohari to openly show their grief during the burning of the body. Stoicism is often viewed as a sign the person did not care for the deceased. Some have heard the laments of grieving Rohari and turned the other way believing it was some horrific creature coming to claim their souls.

Rohari and the Soul/Afterlife

For the Rohari, the Soul is a complicated matter. They believe the body and soul are in truth one thing, however, when the body dies, the soul breaks free like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon and arrives in the Spirit Realm. Once there, they must begin a new journey to join Merrax and his followers in their hunt for demonic creatures. This encourages many Rohari to keep themselves in tip top shape so they have a better chance of finding Merrax because the transition will be jarring. Much like being born again, they must learn to walk, act, and do things now as a spirit.

The soul is regarded as the collective memories, experiences, and feelings the person experienced in life, giving them shape and form. However, the soul is more of a new body which slips the veil and arrives in the Spirit Realm. The process is believed to be disorienting, but the Rohari believe they will hear the call of Merrax's hunt and must find him. This journey is an ordeal which must be taken to prove they are worthy of Merrax's war.

Once the new spirit has found Merrax, they enter the final stage of their metamorphosis. They become a full-fledged spirit based on their experiences and emotions. Some become spirits of war and battle, while others might become spirits of inspiration, comfort, medicine, or many

other forms. Then they begin their new lives protecting the spirit world from the scourge of the demon again.

Superstitions of the Rohari

- The Rohari believe the Rimmorak Ocean is a cursed ocean and the only thing on the other side is a vile place ruled by demons. Most Rohari will refuse to get on a ship sailing through the Rimmorak.
- Rohari believe the Daemon Wake is a place of great evil and only those corrupted by demons will spend any time there unless necessary. Anyone returning from the Daemon Wake must undergo a ritual cleansing before being allowed among the Rohari.
- Knocking on a defeated construct three times provides luck in battle.
- Stomping hats found during raids puts a curse on the owner. This superstition became popular during the 5th Expansion War when Gethral would stomp on hats of the Soli as an insult.
- Oaths should never be sworn while bloody. This stems from pacts sworn with demons. Rohari will clean themselves up before swearing an oath. Swearing an Oath while bloody risks drawing the attention of a demon.
- If a tool breaks while working, it is a sign of misfortune coming. This stems from when the Gethral were slaves and a broken tool often resulted in a beating at best or torture and death at worst.
- If an ember from a fire lands on someone and does not burn them, that person is protected against evil spirits. Being burned means they are vulnerable to the predations of evil spirits.

Rohari Thaumaturgy

Rohari have a somewhat complicated relationship with Thaumaturgy. Many Rohari Thaumaturges find they embody the concepts of Rohari however, some of the Aspects they follow have their drawbacks.

Rohari Thaumaturges generally follow the Aspects of the Divine listed below: Pleasure, Champions, Chaos, Fire, Community, Fury

Sects of the Rohari

The Raxis'Korbal

Among the Rohari it is said there is a group known only as the Raxis'Korbal who have been studying magic associated with demons to combat them. Some say these are the same people who caused the Daemontide in the first place when times were getting desperate during the 5th Expansion War. By Rohari beliefs, this is impossible because Blood Magic is forbidden due to its connection with demons. However, the rumors and whispers still travel. The Rohari denounce these rumors saying it goes against the core of their beliefs in forcing something or someone into servitude.

As far as anyone knows the Raxis'Korbal do not carry any form of insignia or acknowledge they are members. Anyone

claiming to be Raxis'Korbal is often laughed at among the Rohari for trying to be part of some mythical group. While some may admit being prepared to fight back against their greatest enemies may be a wise idea, to do so in the ways suggested practiced by the Raxis'Korbal would lead to damnation and simply becoming another oppressor.

While the Raxis'Korbal is by the strictest terms considered a Sect, most are unsure if they claim to be members of Rohari or a separate organization.

Incarnate Fury

Among the Rohari some have taken the role of warrior to an extreme degree. Calling themselves the Incarnate Fury, these Rohari hone themselves to become the perfect warrior. Training daily in grueling methods, the Incarnate Fury believe the only way they can become truly worthy to stand in the presence of Merrax is by becoming a living weapon themselves.

Sigruun

Primarily practiced by the Dwearn, Sigruun is a faith about appeasing and carrying on the traditions of one's family through ancestor worship. In this regard, many Dwearn feel it is important to have a history of their people, especially since the Mad King's Fall cut off many Dwearnian Kingdoms from one another. First and foremost, within Sigruun are the Family Traditions. The teachings of Sigruun say each family is the rock in which society and life is based on. Without family, there is only chaos and disorder. Each family is given freedom to choose their own traditions within the teachings of Sigruun but must uphold tradition unless a prominent member can surpass the ancestor who initially laid down the original tradition.

Some view Sigruun as a highly structured and complex faith simply because the Families each have their own way of doing things meaning what may be acceptable to one Sigruunite may not be acceptable to another. In this case, many Sigruunites are careful about their interactions with others until they know what is acceptable or not.

Esteem within Sigruunite Families

Many Sigruunites are focused on what they call their Esteem. Esteem is their position within the family hierarchy and where they stand amongst their predecessors and descendants. For a Sigruunite, holding a position of high Esteem is considered the greatest honor they can do for their family. To earn Esteem, the Sigruunite must do things which raise the family's status, protect the family at risk of bodily or political harm, or could be recalled in history as a notable act.

This Esteem is how the family ranks their members and decides which places they will reside when they join the rest of the family in their final rest. For many they do not mind being in the middle of the pack, however, some Sigruunites believe it is their duty to raise their Esteem and the Esteem of the family.

Esteem is not based on gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, or mental status. Esteem is entirely based on the person's deeds as they are entered into the Lengibuk. Sigruun do not care what gender, sexuality, or ability a person has. It is entirely based on the actions that they take, and the Esteem earned from said actions.

The Lengibuk and Hierarchy of the Ancestors

Each Sigruunite Family has a Lengibuk, or Book of the Line. Within this book, a Sigruun family records their family's story and deeds. Each member is given one page initially but may add pages as their story gets longer. Depending on how prominent or influential the life of a family member is usually determining how much detail is recorded. Some Dwearn never even fill up one page while others have numerous pages. Despite what some young folk may think, this is not a journal for their private thoughts,

instead it is meant as a record of their deeds, accomplishments and even failures.

Within the pages of the Lengibuk, ancestors are organized by the Esteem they hold within the family. While this is highly subjective, generally the closer to the front of the Lengibuk an ancestor's story is, the more prominent they are. Once every ten years, the family holds a gathering called the "Sebor Leng", often also simply referred to as a Family Gathering. When the Sebor Leng is held is up to each family. During this time, the family meets and determines the position of each member of the family within the Lengibuk. These affairs can be celebratory or political nightmares. Some families are so cutthroat about their position within the Lengibuk they may resort to blackmail, coercion or even murder to improve their standing in the Lengibuk.

If a Dwearn wishes to change a family tradition entirely, they must first prove to the current living members of the family they have surpassed the ancestor who set down the tradition. Many clever Dwearn instead decide to 'creatively interpret' the traditions and slowly over time change them until the family always does things a different way.

Even members of a family who turn to evil, corruption, or fall out of favor have their deeds recorded as a cautionary tale. Such ancestors often become Ancestral Shades, vicious angry spirits who seek to punish the living of their species. Some have tried to remove records of ancestors which have shamed the family, but this inevitably causes the manifestation of an Ancestral Shade. It is taboo to try to remove the pages of a family member or to write falsehoods about the family member simply to make them appear greater than they were. Doing so is heresy to strict orthodox Sigruunites. It has become mildly more acceptable among less devoted followers of the faith.

A common game played among Sigruunite children is taking on the roles of the ancestors and having them interact with one another, retelling the stories from the family Lengibuk. During feasts and other important events, Sigruunites will tell stories of their ancestors to teach lessons or give hope to their comrades.

The Extended Families of Sigruun

While the word Family is used by the Sigruun, not all members of a Sigruunite Family are necessarily blood related. Older families often have branches of the family which have so many generations of separation that two members of a family could in theory marry without risking inbreeding.

Like noble houses, Sigruunite families can have dozens or even hundreds of members. Additionally, when a person not born of the Sigruunite family joins, it allows for the bloodline to remain diverse. While it is not taboo to marry within the Family so long as there is at least 5 degrees of separation, the Sigruun are allowed to marry outside the family.

Sigruun can also adopt members into their Family, however a member who joins via adoption is generally at a disadvantage to the Esteem within the family. Adopted members essentially have no backing to trace their bloodline, which in turn ends up leaving them lower ranked in the family's Esteem.

It is possible for branches of their family to have their own Lengibuk which refers to the primary family's Lengibuk for reference. These Branching Lengibuks are often regarded the same way, however, many within a Branching Lengibuk are considered to have less Esteem than those in the primary family's Lengibuk. Generally Branching Lengibuks are also kept and maintained in the primary family's estate.

Non-Dwearn Sigruunites

For the longest time, Dwearn never expected Sigruun would catch on with other species, however, as it turns out the Gethral and even several Agrineans before Hektram's Folly had begun to adopt the teachings of Sigruun. For the Gethral, it touched on a more shamanic revival amongst their people. Within the teachings and rituals of Sigruun, it is possible to speak with the spirits of the ancestors. Some outsiders have labeled this as witchcraft or dark magic. While there are certainly some aspects of Sigruun rituals which speak with the dead, the only dangers of such rituals are if the wrong ancestors are allowed to pass into the world of the living. It is believed the Lengibuk carries the spirit of the family member and allows the living to speak with them.

The Fall of the Hymspyd and New Traditions

When Reshinor crashed Ishalinoria into the Hymspyd and caused the Magma Roads to erupt, many Sigruunites deem this as an apocalyptic event. Many Sigruunites while primarily concerned with their own families do regard the loss of so many and the destruction of many Lengibuk as an atrocity unlike any other. In this dark time, it is taught by the Sigruunite an untold number of Dwearnian souls were lost to oblivion with the destruction of the Lengibuks caught up in the destruction.

The loss of even a single Lengibuk is considered a horrific event, but to lose so many so quickly was inconceivable. Many Dwearn Sigruunites blame the Aelf'enai for the obliteration of the souls lost during this time which is believed to be why some Sigruun distrust or dislike Aelf'enai.

After the loss of the Magma Roads, many Sigruun families were forced to deal with situations they had never considered: from orphans, to what happens to someone if their Lengibuk is destroyed but they survived the apocalyptic times.

For many Sigruun the simple answer was start a new Lengibuk with a foreword of what could be remembered from their former families. This practice is often looked

down on but has been accepted as a necessary evil within the faith.

Thekarin of the Lengibuk

Among the Sigruunites, the elder members of the family generally are entrusted with updating and maintaining the family Lengibuk. Once a family member has reached an age where they are no longer fit to work or adventure, they have the option to become a Thekarin or caretaker of the family Lengibuk. This is considered a great honor and improves the Esteem of the elder significantly.

The reason multiple people are entrusted to update and maintain the Lengibuk is to provide a more unbiased perspective when recording the Esteem of their family. Many Sigruunites will often write letters home keeping their elders updated on what they are doing to be entered to the Lengibuk. The Thekarin then meet and discuss what to add to the Lengibuk. At times, if the Thekarin are unsure or do not believe the notes, they may dispatch a member of the family to verify the information before it is recorded.

Each time the Lengibuk is updated, the Thekarin doing the updating must initial and date the entry to show when it was entered. There are no time limits on when things can be entered, and large families may have several records out of order.

While the Thekarin are influential in the Family they do not hold any power other than what goes into the Lengibuk. Thekarin hold sway over how or when action or merit is written in the Lengibuk, but if a member of the family feels the Thekarin have been biased in what they have entered, a formal Audit can be called. These affairs are generally one of the most trying times for a Family because if a Thekarin is found to be entering biased information, any records they have entered are stricken from the Lengibuk which could go back dozens of years. The Thekarin is then reviled in the Lengibuk and is essentially disowned from the family with their last entry in the Lengibuk listing out their crime.

If an Audit is called and it is determined the Thekarin are not entering biased information, the one who called for the Audit's Esteem is greatly diminished as their deed is recorded along with the results.

While it is not common, the Thekarin can be a young individual, but they have proven they are beyond reproach and can provide an utterly unbiased view of any information to be put in the Lengibuk. Young Thekarin are regarded as either as wise beyond their years, or as a danger due to some prejudice among older generations believing they will not be judged fairly by the young.

The Heresy of Dawn

Many Sigruunites believe the Soli's Doctrine of the Dawn is a genocidal campaign because if followed the way many say it is followed, the Soli burn books and writings of old faiths. This has enraged many Sigruunites believing the Soli are literally burning away the afterlives of their people.

Along with this sentiment, when the Soli detonated the Exorcist on the slopes of the Altyr mountain, exposing the Altyran Dwearn capital to the sky, many panicked over the possibility of other Lengibuks being destroyed in the process. While it is not confirmed if any Lengibuks were destroyed, several family homes with the families inside were destroyed and it is not confirmed whether any Lengibuk were lost.

Rise of the Mortaeans

With the advent of Hektram's Folly, the Sigrunite faith has been forced to deal with the question of, if a Sigrunite rises as a Mortaeon what does that mean?

With the Mortaeans existing for a mere fifty years, many Sigrunites have yet to decide what to do with a family member who rises as a Mortaeon. Currently there are three philosophies on what to do with a Sigrun Mortaeon. While not every Sigrunite holds to these philosophies, these are the most popular.

First is called the Abolitionist Schism. According to this idea penned by one Harved Grenstar, Mortaeans should be welcomed back as who they once were. This philosophy dictates the Mortaeon was sent back to take care of unfinished business or to uphold a need by the ancestors because they are uniquely qualified to handle it. This manifesto goes so far as to suggest Mortaeon Sigrunites are the ideal Thekarin since they have muted emotions and are less likely to be influenced by others because of this. This philosophy is considered quite radical in most Sigrun circles and often decried as a breach of the faith of the worst kind. According to the Abolitionist Schism, once the Mortaeon has completed their task, they will be welcome within the family's afterlife having proven they are worthy of it.

Second is the Unforgivable Sin. Many orthodox Sigrunites believe Mortaeon Sigrunites were rejected by the ancestors for some reason. Their punishment is to be returned to their rotting corpse. This thought process follows the ideal that something with today's generations of Sigrunites have been failing the ancestors and not keeping to the traditions of their families. Most orthodox Sigrunites believe a Mortaeon should be excommunicated from the faith and their pages striped out of their family's Lengibuk.

Finally, is the Curse Existence Philosophy. Considered a middle ground between the Abolitionist Schism and the Unforgivable Sin, the Cursed Existence explains Hektram's Folly was a curse laid upon the world by El'Yemana. Those who rise have been rejected from their afterlives because of the arrogance of Hektram trying to reach beyond his place. Many who believe the Cursed Existence philosophy regard Mortaeans of all types with pity, believing they are unable to pass on because of the Yemanist's actions.

Pantheon of the Sigrun

While not revered as gods per say, the Sigrun revere their ancestors as benevolent spirits who watch over them and are remembered for their deeds good or bad.

Many Sigrunites will have a few favored ancestors, often ones they are blood related to, who they pay more attention to and will offer thanks to them or do deeds in their names.

The deceased member of a Sigrunite family with the highest Esteem is regarded as the Head of the Hall and oversees the afterlife of the other family members. While this can change over time, it is generally believed to be an enormous honor. The Head of the Hall is treated much like a ruler among the ancestors.

Traditions of the Sigrun

While each family has their own set of Traditions, some examples may help the reader to understand what those traditions may look like.

Traditions of Remembrance – Many Sigrunite families have traditions to remember certain events from their family. These could be happy moments or moments when the family nearly fell to ruin. These often include when a certain name or event is referencing an appropriate response. For a happy moment, the family members may all respond with "And to his mighty fine beard" or spit at the mention of a disgraced family member.

Traditions of Esteem – These Traditions generally outline what the family values and what may earn them Esteem within the faith. Some militant families may see winning a battle as worthy of Esteem, or if the battle is lost, the losing party must pay for the drinks of their family for the next 8 months. A family with a lot of financial influence may have a tradition for every 1000 Anum a member earns the Head of the Family must present them with a gift of at least 50 Anum in worth.

Traditions of Contrition – These traditions are often a way for members of the family to ask for forgiveness for a transgression. Some may involve a quest, a punishment, or some other act the family member can perform to restore their Esteem.

Traditions of Battle – These Traditions often outline how a family goes to war and fights. It could be as simple as formations to a complex code of ethics and rules of engagement.

Traditions of Celebration – Sometimes viewed as minor holidays, a Tradition of Celebration generally is a time the family will celebrate some event. Some families may honor the first time a young Dwearn got their first beard whisker or their hair was long enough to be put into a braid.

Traditions of Reverence – Similar to Traditions of Remembrance, many Traditions of Reverence entail actions, or sayings to show reverence and respect to

another. Some families have traditions requiring elders to be addressed in a certain way.

Traditions of Judgement – These traditions typically encompass certain actions and are judged and considered sins to the family name. Breaking one's word may result in anything from a fine, to a familial beating, to being disowned if the action is considered a grave offense.

Leadership among the Sigrunn

Among the living members of a Sigrunnite Family, the living member with the most Esteem is considered the Head of the Family.

The Head of the Family holds little actual power aside from being the deciding vote if an issue arises which is dividing the family. The Head of the Family generally oversees the family's estate and holdings no matter how great or small.

Some Sigrunnite families will establish traditions where the Head of the Family is the leader, but this is the exception not the rule.

Other members of the family held in high Esteem also can sway decisions or actions of the family by leveraging their Esteem to help support or thwart changes to traditions or influence others.

Sigrunn Initiations

Sigrunnite initiations are often tense affairs for those trying to join an existing Family. The initiate, much like an adopted member, must seek to gain the favor of at least one member of the Family with some amount of Esteem by the traditional ways. Some Families may have additional traditions which make this harder for the would be initiate. For instance, some prominent Sigrunnite families may require the person to present themselves to the Head of the Family and plead their case. Others may require the initiate to earn the favor of a certain number of members with high Esteem. Most of this is common in Altyr where it is easy to meet with those members.

Out in Graewynn, many Sigrunnites ease up on the restrictions knowing many are only just learning Sigrunn is a faith they can join. Most initiations outside of Altyr generally involve an interview with the preacher performing the initiation where the aspiring member of the family must prove they would be a good fit for the family and would bring Esteem to their family.

This process generally is lengthy and if the preacher is persuaded to allow the aspirant into the Family, the preacher then performs a ceremony bestowing the family's symbol and colors upon the aspirant telling them of some of the greatest deeds of their family. Once this is complete, other members of the same family will welcome the new member as an adopted sibling. It is not uncommon for an aspirant to take the family name as their own when they join the faith.

If a member wishes to create their own family, they must present the book, the colors, and family symbol which will become their Lengibuk to the preacher. The preacher then takes the Lengibuk and performs a blessing on the book. During this blessing, the preacher must remind the founder of the new family the importance of the Lengibuk and charge them with protecting it at all costs.

Virtues

Family - Sigrunn is focused on family. Despite their shortcomings, Sigrunnites must try to reconcile with their family. If reconciliation is not possible, then the family splits which is looked down upon, but not taboo. When such splits happen, a new Lengibuk must be started with the member who could not reconcile with the greater part of the family.

Honor - Sigrunnites are expected to uphold the honor of their family and line to the best of their abilities. Every action they take should be taken towards honoring those who came before them. With the variety of families following Sigrunn, this virtue is expressed in numerous and sometimes odd ways.

Dedication - Sigrunnites are expected to dedicate their lives to expanding the family's line and story. Whether through supporting the family, doing notable things, or simply by taking care of other members when they have difficult times.

Familial Tolerance - Sigrunnites who can accept their family for who they are is considered one of their noble virtues. Even if that family member strays from tradition or makes a mistake, Sigrunnites are encouraged to accept it and celebrate the new branches of the family. This virtue also applies to accepting other families and people may have different beliefs than they do, however, so long as peace is maintained, a Sigrunnite allows others to go about their business without interfering.

The less enjoyable side of this is that at times a Sigrunnite may be forced to tolerate a family member who rubs them the wrong way or is generally a bad influence. To the Sigrunn it is the job of the family to straighten this person out or simply leave them be.

Growth - Sigrunnites believe they must grow and expand their family. When a person is inducted into Sigrunn, it is seen as an adoption, but they are welcomed into the family. There is some debate among Sigrunnite factions on whether this is open to people with a different species from the core of the family. As no children can come from such unions or inclusions, some believe it is not and goes against the ideals of family, but there are sects out there who believe anyone is welcome into the family.

Preservation - History is important to the Sigrunn. For them the Lengibuk is a sacred relic and to me their faith is based around. One of the most important parts of the faith is ensuring the Lengibuk is preserved at all costs. Even if

the family is wiped out, they can live on as long as their Lengibuk is preserved.

Holy Texts

Sigruunites believe the Lengibuk is the center of their faith and how they can remember, honor, and protect their family. Lengibuks are rarely ever copied, however, if the Lengibuk is damaged or grows beyond its bindings over time, the current family may copy the Lengibuk into a new volume. Some ancient families may have several volumes related to their family kept in a shrine within the family's home.

Lengibuks come in many shapes and sizes. Wealthy families will often have their Lengibuks etched into metal or wooden pages, or even have their Lengibuk etched into the walls of their family estate. Some snobbish Sigruunites may judge the cover of a family's Lengibuk, but only ever in private.

Destruction of a Lengibuk is considered the gravest sin a Sigruunite can do. It is viewed as a form of spiritual genocide. If a Lengibuk is destroyed and no one can record the stories, to a Sigruunite the souls of those ancestors cease to be and are lost to oblivion. Stories speak of ancestral shades who would hunt down those who destroyed their family's Lengibuk before being drawn away into oblivion.

Iconography

Sigruun iconography is often deeply personal and tied to the family's device or crest. The choice of the symbol is often bears scrolls, books, tablets, or other symbols for written work along with any other symbols to represent the family. Many Sigruun Families wear their family crest with pride. Asking a Sigruunite to cover or not wear their family crest is a grave insult. The only time it is acceptable is in life-or-death situations and even then, it is still something most Sigruunites would rather not do.

Laws of Sigruun

Family First

To the Sigruunite their family comes first in all matters. It is forbidden for a faithful Sigruunite to betray their family. Without our family, we are at risk of losing everything to the thieves and conquerors beyond. Your family is your strength. Sigruunites should carry themselves in an honorable fashion which brings glory, honor, and praise to the family. Embrace the things the family finds important and let no one insult your kin.

Do not interfere in matters of other families.

Other families must sort their own business from within. It is foolish to think you can interfere in the matters of other families. If another family requests help, then you may provide assistance, but do not be arrogant enough to think you know what is best for other families.

Follow the Ancestors Traditions unless you surpass them.

Sigruunites may lay down traditions for their families, but these traditions may be overturned or modified by those who have been deemed to surpass the ancestor who laid down the tradition. If a Tradition is to be challenged, the members of the family must give their blessing on whether or not the challenging family member has surpassed the ancestor who laid down the tradition. Two thirds or more of the family must agree to this. Only those who have reached physical maturity may present their vote on these matters.

Hall, Home and Hearth.

Set down your roots so your family can prosper. Each family should have a home where the eldest gather and take care of the family. An ancestral family home is essential for future generations. Should this home be taken, it is the duty of the family to retake it. This home reflects the Halls of the Ancestors. The living family should do their best to maintain and protect it for the sake of those who came before.

Guard the Lengibuk.

If times are dire, it is imperative the Lengibuk is protected. Even a sin such as abandoning the family can be forgiven if it means the Lengibuk is protected and kept safe. Without the Lengibuk, all the ancestors are lost to oblivion and the family line vanishes for eternity.

Holidays of the Sigruun

Jungenmoot

When the year is still young, Sigruunites hold a festival in February called Jungenmoot. This is a time when even adults are expected to act like children, embracing flights of fancy, silly ideas, and what it means to be young again. The Jungenmoot, is a time of children's games, reverie and joy. The celebration is used to remind people what it is like to be a child with a sense of naivety and joy to the world. Acting like a child during this time would incur no loss of Esteem, or punishment so long as no one is hurt, and reparations are easily dealt with. Sweets are common during this time, as it is expected to enjoy life as a child.

The Amang

Aside from Jungenmoot, one of the most favored holidays of the Sigruun calendar is the Amang. During this time, the Sigruun families come together and have competitions or boasts for the coming year. This is a time for families to attempt to one up each other telling tales of their year, compete against each other in team games, and generally celebrate the lives of those they care about. The Amang is generally held in July. Many Sigruun families hold their Family gatherings during this time or shortly thereafter. It is not uncommon to use the Amang to try and woo potential partners. All boasting should be seen as good fun, with a taboo to sling insults or bring up past misdeeds.

Feast of Kel'Dragar

In September, it is customary to hold a Feast for families and friends of the family. Sigrun families provide a feast for the people they care about or even their communities. This is a time to strengthen the community and bonds between those important to you. It is not uncommon for new lovers to profess their love to one another. For many this is also the time for lovers to pledge marriage in front of the whole family to get their reaction. Typical foods prepared on this holiday include pork of all kinds with a special presentation of cooking an entire wild boar.

Yektorket

Also known as the Celebration of the Silver, Yektorket is a time when the family recognizes their elder members for their contributions to the family's Esteem. Most Sigrunites spend this time with the elder members of their families reminiscing of events from long ago, sharing hard earned wisdom with the next generation, and considering the twilight of life. Some particularly elderly Sigrunites use this time to get their affairs in order knowing they may not have many years left. This time is traditionally used to plan and coordinate what will happen should an elder pass during this time. It is considered a honor to pass during Yektorket as it is time to be introspective and respect the elders of the family.

Sigrun Marriages

In the case the family grows, through marriage with another family, there are some important choices to be made. The newlyweds must decide if they will stay with one of the families primarily or begin their own Lengibuk. Typically, in larger Sigrun families, the newlyweds are persuaded or even coerced into staying with one of the families thus adding to their Lengibuk. If a member of a Sigrun leaves the lineage, their pages are copied from the Lengibuk and provided to the new family. From then on, the former families will no longer update the entries of the newlyweds except with a note that they went to form their own family.

Though there is an exception to this when the couple wishes to start their own Lengibuk. This process requires permission from their family elders to begin an entirely new family. While there is often a lot of posturing and attempts to keep the family united, if the newlyweds are adamant, elders will typically give their blessing and a new Sigrunite family is formed.

Divorce is highly frowned upon in the Sigrun faith. Especially if someone starts a new family, their deeds can only be recorded in the new family's Lengibuk. They cannot have their entry in their original family's Lengibuk updated even if they divorce their partner.

If a marriage is not working, it is more acceptable for the pair to separate, but still technically be married. They cannot remarry, however if children result from a separation with a different partner, those children will struggle to gain Esteem as the family is divided and it will be difficult to provide an unbiased entry into the family Lengibuk.

For Sigrunites who have children out of wedlock, this traditionally would result in a forced wedding between the parents. However, if the family did not enforce such an event, the child would not be allowed to be entered into the family Lengibuk due to their illegitimate status.

If a child is left orphaned or is unable to be entered into a Lengibuk for any reason, they are allowed to choose their path, but would either must start their own Lengibuk or join another established family.

Sigrun Funerary Practices

When a Sigrunite passes away, the funeral ceremony is regarded as a happy if bittersweet time. For the Sigrunite, when a family member passes it is a time to reflect on their life, to finish out their pages in the family Lengibuk and celebrate their ascension into the halls of their ancestors. When possible, the ceremony usually involves a great deal of pomp and circumstance along with feasts and drinking. After the pages of the Lengibuk are filled for the recently deceased, the surviving family must weigh their actions against others within their line. Each member of the family is assigned a station within the Lengibuk. Folk who live regular lives are relegated to the Hall of Gathering. The Hall serves as a grand meeting place where members of the family all may converse, play, and feast to their heart's content.

As for the corpse of the family member, it should be either buried or entombed in a mausoleum. The corpse is seen as a shell of the ancestor who has now taken their place in the Hall of Gathering. In times of difficulty, it is not considered disrespectful to burn or otherwise dispose of a corpse because the ancestor has no further use for this shell.

Sigrun and the Soul/Afterlife

Within each Lengibuk, the ancestors are arranged in a hierarchy strictly based on their deeds. For some families with long and noble histories, each of these heroes becomes a prominent figure in the Family's beliefs. For example, if an ancestor was known for their skill in battle, during times of conflict family members may pray to that ancestor for strength and guidance. Other ancestors known for being good diplomats become patrons of negotiation, good conduct, or patience. Sigrun beliefs can mirror monotheistic or polytheistic practices depending on how long the history of the family is or how daring their members are. More monotheistic Sigrun families may trace their faith back to the family founder and lift them up to be their guide in matters of importance.

By Sigrun dogma, the Lengibuk contains the spiritual afterlife of their ancestors. Within it is an estate where their family goes after they have died. Within this place are several stations often assigned based on the actions and dedication to the family's traditions. The station is determined through both the Esteem recognized by the living ancestors in the Lengibuk, and the deceased ones once they arrive in the afterlife.

Most ancestors find their days in the Ancestral Estate. Depicted as an idealized version of the family estate, the ancestors want for little and can spend their days among their people enjoying leisure, food, drink, and other activities. While not a particularly prestigious place to spend their afterlife it is still a pleasant experience according to most Sigrun theologians. It is said the prayers of their descendants echo through the air. From here the ancestors may grasp these prayers and provide strength, wisdom, or succor to the future generations.

More prominent figures in the family's history are assigned to the Eternal Watch. This station is for those who at great expense to themselves protected the family against all odds. The Eternal Watch is a place for protectors of the family. When not within the Hall of Gathering, they must keep watch over their family to ensure their prosperity for generations to come. Family who end up in the Eternal Watch find they are comfortable even while they watch over both the living and the dead of their family. There is generally a pool, mirror, or other reflective surface the Eternal Watch can use to view other places in both the worlds of the living and the dead. From there it is said they can send warnings or omens to protect their family.

Another station within the afterlife is the Halls of Remembrance. This unique station is for family members who did something great or terrible for the family. Other theologians have compared this to a hall of Saints and Villains. Many Sigrunites look at those positioned in the Hall of Remembrance as their greatest victories and worst defeats. Many Sigrunites use the sainted ancestors' names for blessings and the villainous family member's names as parts of curses. Within these halls, the memory of each ancestor's most prominent events is replayed endlessly. For some it is a time to relive the best moments of their life while others find they must relive the worst moments of their lives for eternity.

The final common station is the Halls of the Eldest. While not associated with the age of the ancestor, the Halls of the Eldest is the highest station for any Sigrunite. These family members were the most influential in the family's history. The Founder of a family is typically found within the Halls of the Elders and other famous members of the family. Said to be a palatial part of the estate, the Halls of the Eldest tend the library of their families' lives. Within this library are held books, scrolls, or other written works containing every moment of the lives of one of their kin. Here the Eldest can read even the most minute details of the lives of their kin. With this knowledge they can truly know every aspect of their kin. Much like the Thekarin, the Eldest use this information to help sort where their kin will go once, they have passed from the mortal realm.

Some Sigrunite families have other stations more specified than these, for example some Sigrunites believe there is a powerful forge within the afterlife for their kin to work and toil away providing ideas and dreams to their descendants, or a magical sanctum where members of the family who showed great talent for magic may reside and empower their line with the gift of magic.

A somewhat controversial station primarily held by some of the oldest Sigrunite families, is the Banished Lands. The Banished Lands are for those of the family who have brought great shame to the family and are left in a wasteland devoid of life, nourishment, or any other stimulation. The only thing visible from the Banished Lands is the manifestation of the Family Estate, always in the distance, the one bright light in a world of gray. This is the closest thing to an eternal punishment beyond the Halls of Remembrance can muster. Some more cruel Sigrunite lines often threaten their members with a place in the Banished Lands if they do not earn the Esteem to even be worth the Ancestral Estate and are essentially forgettable.

Superstitions of the Sigrun

- To put a book back in the wrong place is inviting misfortune. This stems from the respect given to the Lengibuk.
- Getting a papercut is a sign of the ancestor's displeasure with your actions. One should reconsider some things after receiving a paper cut.
- If you have a fight with a family member, you should bring a gift when you next speak with them whether you were right or wrong.
- It is taboo to sling insults at another person's family, you should only insult the person, not those who came before them.
- Bastard children are considered unlucky.
- Getting slapped with a book is a sign you are disrespecting the ancestors or should consider your life choices.
- Disrespecting graves is to invite a curse upon yourself.
- One should never write in a Lengibuk with the same ink used from their first entry. This may require a family to keep a stockpile of special inks for their family members otherwise their deeds may be muddied in the Halls of Gathering.
- A good prank should always be returned two-fold. To not, invites despair upon yourself. Family should find joy in the little things and try to spread the joy to others.

Sigrun Thaumaturgy

Often regarded as the guardians and caretakers of the Lengibuk, Sigrun Thaumaturges are expected to play a pivotal role in the faith. They must watch over the Lengibuk and protect it. Failing to do so is one of the greatest dishonors a Sigrunite Thaumaturge can commit.

Sigrunite Thaumaturges generally follow these Aspects of the Divine: Crafters, Mountain, Community, Order, Champions, Knowledge

Sects of the Sigrun

The Keepers of Leng

An ancient order comprised exclusively of Dwearn scholars, the Keepers have taken it upon themselves to seek out and reclaim lost Lengibuk from kingdoms lost to the disaster of the Magma Road collapsing. The Keepers are secretive

about who is within their ranks, but it is rumored there is a vast library in the depths of Altyr where the Keepers maintain a library of the lost books ensuring their people's souls are kept safe from being lost should the Lengibuk be destroyed.

The Primalis

Possessing only a minor following within Anthuli, on the southern continent of Kuh'nal, the most common faith is the Primalis.

The Therios originally founded the Primalis faith and believe their connection to the beastkin is something every Therios should worship and attempt to mirror their beastkin. The Primalis themselves are described as gargantuan dire beasts, each one an originator of a species of animal. Primalis followers fervently believe in the idea of living simple lives closer to nature and embracing their relationship with the beastkin rather than the civilized aspects of society.

Historians believe Primalis may be one of the oldest existing faiths and have traced its roots back to 498 NY, however, many Primalis insist it is far older possibly existing before the Aelfenai and Dwearn. However, up until approximately 300 NY, most of the historical evidence was passed down as oral tradition. The oldest documents known to reference the Primalis are from a schism which occurred in the faith as communities began to develop and maintain written documents.

During this time, the Therios of Kuh'nal had been divided between the Klehani believed to mean predator or hunter and the Sheye believed to mean farmer or builder. The differences are often described as the Klehani looking at things from a small scale, while the Sheye look at the world from a much larger scale.

The Klehani (KLEH-haw-NEE)

The Klehani were orthodox Primalis believing they must stick to the old ways and hunt, kill, and devour as their beastkin did. Many modern historians view the Klehani as barbarians refusing to adapt to the times, however, some Therios suggest they were embracing the purest essence of the faith by giving up on comforts and security of what many of the Sheye were developing.

To the Klehani, nature provides what they need when they need it, not when they would like it. For a Klehani Primalis, existing in a state like the beastkin is the closest thing they can obtain to becoming holy. Often, this meant they would endure periods of food shortages, sickness, and be unable to adapt to dramatic changes in their environment. For them a primitive lifestyle followed the dictates of the Primalis.

Through this practice, many Klehani claim they have a closer connection to the spirits of nature and can commune with them in ways the Sheye cannot. Much of the Klehani culture revolves around seeking the teachings of the Primalis through shamanic fasting, endurance, and ritualized hunting. Though a power dynamic exists between the hunter and the prey, the Klehani believe even prey who adapt and become strong are following the example set by the beastkin.

Favored by Therios, commonly seen as carnivorous or hunters, the Klehani believe prey are an important part of

the natural cycle. They are willing to go hungry rather than overhunt in their territory to ensure there is food for the coming year. Wise Klehani realized there is a balance in nature and to upset this balance invites disaster. This core belief is where the Klehani and Sheye beliefs differ significantly. The Klehani realize some of their people may die, but for them those are necessary sacrifices to ensure the balance is maintained.

However, there are several Klehani who believe in a might makes right system which would see them hunt until they are full, and nature will sort it out. This selfish belief unfortunately spread widely to many prideful and arrogant Klehani. Along with such beliefs came what was known as the carrion hunts.

Modern Klehani have further split into two factions over the Carrion Hunts, the Adatori who believe might makes right is the law of the land. They believe the balance should be forgotten. The other faction is the Utiseh who believe the balance must be maintained even at the cost of their people going hungry. While both groups primarily exist in Kuh'nal, the last decade has seen members of both groups emigrate to Anthuli for one reason or another.

The Sheye (SHEH-hay)

While the only known documents are believed to be from around 300 NY, it is said the Sheye movement began much earlier, possibly as early as 500 NY. The Sheye view the Primalis as a set of ideals for their kind rather than spirits they can commune with. Sheye Primalis turned away from the shamanic connection to the Primalis instead choosing to live as communities and bring together all Therios kind to elevate them to something more.

This evolution of the Therian culture would bring the balance back to the world where folks did not have to die because of lack of food or being hunted by primitive groups of Therios. Within the Sheye belief system, they could work as a community, much like an ecosystem to become something more. Using logic, reason, and patience, they could cultivate the land, heal the sick, and care for the elderly in ways once believed to be a burden on a Therios grouping. As the Sheye grew in prominence, for the first time in Therian history, there were those born who did not require the warm flesh of the hunt.

Designer's Note: This would mean the first Therios born with non-Mandatory Feeding Traits.

For many of the Sheye, the community is the foundation of their faith. For them each of them works and provides for each other while they do not have to give into their baser urges to hunt or kill. A common saying among the Sheye is "Everyone works, everyone eats".

By working to cultivate crops and livestock, many Sheye found they could influence other groups by providing food to them. Some Sheye groups did it to prevent hunters from attacking them, others did it purely out of compassion for other Therios. This angered several stronger groups of

Therios descended from larger carnivores and upset the power dynamics within Kuh'nal.

Upsetting the long-held alliances between certain symbiotic tribes of Therios, the Sheye gained a great deal of power within Kuh'nal as some groups came to depend on the Sheye's food production. This led to a population boom among many Therios gatherings which made it harder for Klehani Therios because with more people there were more eyes to watch for danger or fight back.

Without food scarcity, many groups grew strong and were able to prevent the Klehani from hunting their kin. The use of tools and weapons created by the Sheye further shifted the balance of power as the Sheye could focus on improving their technology while many of the Klehani were left with primitive tools.

Despite their advances, the Sheye were still a minority compared to the greater numbers of Klehani, but several Klehani leaders knew within a few generations the Sheye would overtake them.

The Carrion Hunts

The reasons the Carrion Hunts started ranged from wanting to maintain the dynamic between hunter and prey, believing the act of farming went against the balance of nature, jealousy over the plenty the Sheye had, disdain for species living and working side by side which had hunted each other for all of time, and the desire to take new territory from what the Klehani believed were weaklings, to knowing the Klehani beliefs would likely fade into history if the Sheye were not dealt with. Even those who did not necessarily follow the teachings of the Primalis were interested in the plunder and potential gain from taking from the growing Sheye.

In an unprecedented event, hundreds of Klehani leaders gathered in what was called the Hunter's Moot. During that gathering, many Klehani groups agreed to forgo their normal hunts against each other and instead turn their claws and fangs on the Sheye. Knowing individually, they could not threaten the Sheye, many put aside ancient grudges or traditions to wage war on the progressive Sheye.

When the Hunter's Moot concluded, it was agreed at the end of the season, the Klehani would attack the Sheye. In the months leading up to these attacks, many Klehani secretly approached Primalis on the fence about the two factions and swayed them to the Klehani way of thinking offering territory, large shares of the food, and blessings of the Primalis themselves.

Since the Klehani did not believe in concepts such as declarations of war or rules of engagement, without warning many Sheye population centers were attacked by Klehani groups. Confusion reigned as many Sheye found themselves under attack from those they traded with, fought against, or even considered allies. The attacks were so fierce many Sheye were forced to abandon their homes and

flee to other villages. Word quickly spread of the Carrion Hunts, and the Sheye steeled themselves not sure who they could trust.

In the following 8 years the Sheye saw their territory shrink with each passing year. While they were able to fight back and win some battles, they were losing the war. The Klehani had a fanaticism and zeal about them the more rationally minded Sheye could not match. Many Klehani capitalized on the connections within communities forcing powerful members of a community to either give themselves up in exchange for captives or starving out the Sheye by ruining their crops.

A Chance Meeting

In 317 NY, a group of aquatic Therios had ventured far from the shores of Kuh'nal trying to find food and get away from the Carrion Hunts. In a chance encounter, they met a Cormahn crew stranded on a reef after a storm. With the aid of the crew, the Sheye Therios were able to free the ship from the reef.

Instead of leaving right away, the Cormah spent time with the Aquatic Therios, both groups striving to learn the language of the other so they could talk. As thanks the Cormah offered to aid the Sheye however they could.

Knowing this could be a great opportunity, the Sheye ask to accompany the Cormah on their trip, having not seen much beyond their shores. The Cormah traveled to the Archipelago wishing to bring word of these peoples from the Ravenous Sea to the Salt Mother.

Hearing the state of the Therios and not wishing to be in debt to the brave Sheye, the Salt Mother made a treaty with these Therios to help them escape the Carrion Hunts. Over the next two years, the Sheye pulled most of their people to the northern coast of Kuh'nal and a dozen Cormahn ships ferried as many Sheye Therios as they could to Anthuli. Once to twice a year the Cormah would dispatch a fleet to gather more and more of the Sheye until all those who wished to flee did so.

A few Sheye remained behind feeling they could not move across the sea and instead would rather die on Kuh'nal than in this strange new world. To this day there are still small pockets of Sheye Primalis on Kuh'nal struggling to survive. There is one known stronghold of Sheye on the northwestern shore of Kuh'nal, almost directly south of the Cormah Archipelago known as Kinholme. This fortified city has held back the Klehani long enough most have given up on taking the city. Those who tried were met by fierce resistance and the many Anthulian guns traded to the Sheye Primalis of Kinholme.

Arrival in Anthuli

The Sheye found themselves among like-minded individuals in Anthuli, seeing many farmlands and communities blossoming across many countries. For most Sheye Primalis this was a miracle. While it took time before the Therios were not viewed with suspicion in Anthuli, the

Sheye felt it was better to be regarded with hesitation than being actively hunted back home.

As time went on and the Therios numbers grew, the Sheye prospered learning from other communities who farmed and developed many new traditions.

It was not until after the 3rd Expansion War that more Therios crossed the Ravenous Sea to Anthuli. The ones who came across, nearly seven centuries since the Sheye left Kuh'nal wanted to explore the world and see more of it. Some of the Sheye's teachings had remained within Kuh'nal and some groups used them sparingly. These Moderates were tolerated so long as they still upheld the Klehani values and did not disregard the old ways in favor of wealth or power.

These Moderates fell somewhere between the Klehani and Sheye's teachings, believing they must still hunt and kill as part of ritualized hunts, but did not stigmatize organized communities or advancing beyond the primitive ideals of the Klehani. Moderate Primalis often use modern tools and practices, but continue to venerate their beastkin, the spirits of the Primalis, and hunt in a ritualized fashion as part of their daily lives.

In modern times, some Adatori Klehani have traveled to Anthuli, mostly on a ritualized hunt in memory of the Carrion Hunts. It is rumored there is a shift in Klehani thinking where the most dangerous thing they can hunt now is the Sheye. This hunt is often used to challenge would be leaders to feast on a Sheye and bring back their head as proof to show they have what it takes to hunt the most dangerous thing to the Klehani way of life.

The vast majority of the Primalis in Anthuli fall into either the Moderates or the Sheye and generally can mesh with most groups easily.

Non-Therios Primalis

While not common, some non-Therios have joined the Primalis faith. Many of them regard the aspects of the hunt as sacred and often choose a simpler lifestyle than many 'city folk'. Common among rural communities and the various species of the Erce, even some Joyless Fae have been known to become members of the Primalis.

Another surprising addition to the Primalis are the Mortaeans. Many Primalis regard Mortaeans as simply a competitor for their next hunt. Mortaeans who relish the hunt are often accepted among the Primalis as fellow hunters. Ironically the Klehani are the most accepting of Mortaeans although they are not sure what happens to them when they pass on. Should a Therios rise as a Mortaeans and regain their need to feed on the living, this is considered a second chance to truly embrace the Old Ways.

On the other hand, many Sheye view the Mortaeans the same way the view the Klehani and often will not accept them into the faith unless they have control of their urges.

Pantheon of the Primalis

The Primalis Pantheon is massive, containing beings of dozens of different shapes and sizes going by different names, with dozens of stories attached to each of them. Generally, the beings are referred to as Primalis, Progenitors, the First, or the Great.

For example, some may refer to Bjorg, or the First Bear, as the first bear to exist, while another group may revere the River-Hunter, a Primalis of the Brown Bear. In general, practitioners of Primalis accept all of the great beast spirits, though some may have some reservations or argue over the name or adventures of the Great Beast.

The following are some of the more common Progenitors in the pantheon of the Primalis.

Sun-Walker – the Primalis of Hunting Dogs, revered as a great hunter, companion to mortals, and known for being both playful and protective.

Fangdred – the Progenitor of Wolves, called the First Wolf. Stories speak of Fangdred being a peerless warrior striking his enemies suddenly with incredible ferocity. Viewed often as the distant father requiring his followers to impress him to be graced by his presence.

Mosteng – the Great Queen Bee, is said to have thousands of children who work tirelessly to bring her a golden feast morning, noon, and night. Regal and cold-blooded, she has no qualms about sending hundreds of her children to die for her.

Askiranka – the Queen of the Serpents. Said to be the mother of all snakes and serpents, Askiranka's gaze is hypnotic, and her bite is lethal. Wise beyond measure, she only doles her wisdom out to those capable of resisting her gaze, her venom, and her constricting coils.

Makageno – the Great White Shark of the deeps. Said to be the relentless hunter, Makageno will track their target across hundreds of miles if even one drop of blood is spilled within the oceans of the world.

Tekatintentu – Progenitor of the Field Mouse, said to be kind to those who treat her kin well, she can be the caring mother, but when backed against a wall she becomes a frightful terror willing to sacrifice life and limb to survive at all odds. Often also regarded as a trickster.

Gilded-Beak – the First of the Raptor. Regarded as the father of all birds of prey, his gaze is felt long before his talons. Compared to a god of death, glory, and the hunt. A common curse among followers of Gilded-Beak is "May his Eye fall upon you."

Arachnamof – The First Spinner, is a devious spirit who weaves webs between souls. While he can be kind and bring people together though manipulating events, he often lures others to their doom weaving a path of self-destruction for those foolish enough to be caught by his webs.

Proud Prkanka – First among Lions, Proud Prkanka was teased as a cub and resolved himself to become powerful and regal and make all who questioned him or teased him bow before him when he grew older.

There are countless other Primalis spirits, all with their own personalities and desires.

It is not uncommon in Anthuli for communities of Primalis to join and venerate multiple Primalis at the same time. Especially because several of their Faith Rituals often call to one or more of the Primalis spirits for power.

***Designer's Note:** This is to allow folks to create their own guiding figure for the faith so they are not restricted to the ones listed here. Simply choose a type of animal, give them a name and a few stories and that works for Primalis.*

Stations of the Faith

Among the Primalis there are a few different leadership roles, though some are more favored by one faction or another. After the name of the leadership role, the name in parenthesis notes which faction favors it. If there is no faction listed, any faction considers it a common leadership role. Not all positions are necessary among a group worshipping the Primalis.

Most positions are awarded based on merit for who would fill the roll the best.

Shaman

Among the Primalis, a central figure is the Shaman. Shaman commune with the Primalis and carry their will to the mortal followers. Often compared to priests or preachers, few Primalis followers willingly oppose the words of a Shaman. However, Shamans are regarded as teachers, priests, and advisors rather than true leaders. Even so this position is considered a great honor.

Hunt Elder (Klehani)

The Hunt Elder is considered a war leader. Most used during the Carrion Hunts, this position continued to exist denoting the most capable warrior within a clan of Primalis. Hunt Elders face challenges from others on a regular basis and must always be ready to accept challenges to their position. Refusing a challenge is seen as a sign of weakness and should be answered ruthlessly.

Preyspeaker (Klehani/Utiseh)

A Preyspeaker is the voice of those who would be considered Prey within the faith. It is the Preyspeaker's job to give a voice to those who are hunted. While many Klehani may threaten a Preyspeaker, it is considered a sin to harm them when they present themselves to other Primalis to speak for their people. Generally, a Preyspeaker is expected to inform the more aggressive of the Klehani what groups are at risk of being driven to extinction and which groups have the numbers to be hunted.

Seed Elder (Sheye)

The Seed Elder is responsible for overseeing the crops grown by the Sheye and ensuring things are prepared for the harvest. Between organization, performing the rites of planting, and ensuring the people are fed, the Seed Elder is often quite busy.

Denspeaker (Sheye/Utiseh)

The Denspeaker position is regarded as a mediator among the Primalis. It is the duty of a Denspeaker to resolve issues between different groups peacefully and maintain the balance of nature among the Primalis. Sheye Denspeakers keep the peace between the various species of Primalis trying to mediate so all can coexist. Utiseh Denspeakers have the authority to call off a hunt if it would put the future of their people at risk. Seen as the counter part to the Preyspeaker among Klehani factions, the Denspeaker must be aware of the hunting Primalis and what they need.

Warden of the Land (Sheye)

A relatively new position created after the Sheye came to Anthuli, the Warden leads and directs groups of Sheye Primalis to ensure they follow the faith and honor the rites of farming and hunting. Many times considered the wisest among the Sheye, young Primalis will often look to the Warden for guidance.

Carrion Fetch (Abatori)

A Carrion Fetch is a role assigned to those who believe the Carrion Hunts must be continued. These hunters will seek out Sheye encampments and report back leading a hunt to slaughter any Sheye they come across. While this role has fallen out of favor for the most part, there are still a few groups of Abatori who choose a Carrion Fetch to lead them.

Primalis Initiations

There are two modes of thought when it comes to a Primalis initiation.

First is the Old Way, where the prospective Primal is must engage in a ritual hunt to prove they understand the ways of the faith.

The Initiate must first proclaim they wish to become Primalis and demand a hunt. The preacher will then anoint them with blood, bones, or with some other symbol of a hunter. Then the initiate must proceed to track and hunt a target. In the most traditional form, they must kill and eat the still warm flesh of their prey. Some Moderates and Sheye will allow this part to be done in a ritualized fashion which does not result in death. Once the hunt is complete, the initiate must call to the Progenitor(s) they revere to witness them and recognize them as a hunter. Once this is completed, the other Primalis then consume the remainder of the kill or a feast is held in the initiates honor.

The Sheye have a different perspective on the Initiations. To the Sheye, the prospective faith member must seek out others within the faith and seek their permission to become a member. It is customary to ask at least 3 others for their blessings. Those giving the blessing must then accompany

the prospective member to the preacher and speak on their behalf explaining why they feel the prospect would be worthy to be of the faith. The Preacher then presents the Prospect with a sapling or a bag of seed. The prospect must then sow the seeds or plant the sapling with reverence and respect. Once this is done, all present will give a great yell or howl to call the attention of a Progenitor to recognize the prospect.

Virtues of the Primalis

Patience – All Primalis are expected to be patient. Whether waiting for the opportune time to pounce on their prey, slip the hunter's trap, or await the time when the crops come into harvest. This should carry over to all aspects of the Primalis's life.

Teamwork – Whether hunting or farming, the Primalis view those who can work together as following the example of their beastkin. Though teamwork, even a larger foe can be brought down, or a difficult project completed. Only through this pack mentality can challenges be overcome. Those who wish to go alone may do so by choice but are often regarded as going against what the Primalis teach. The Sheye value Teamwork above most other virtues.

Fortitude – Many aspects of the faith involve going through difficult times whether famine, fighting for their life, or sticking to their chosen path. Fortitude is believed to be necessary among all Primalis. Giving up is the same as laying down to die. Primalis should strive to withstand all challenges.

Ambition – Primalis believe those who strive for the bigger hunts will go far. Ambition is viewed as a way for the Primalis to try and thrive against all odds. Attempting to take down the prey who can fight back or tackling a task which may have a high reward are considered a virtue. Those who strive for mediocrity will be left with whatever scraps the ambitious leave for them.

Cleverness – Not all beasts are strong or fast, some are simply clever and have found ways to survive against hunters far stronger or faster. Being clever is a way for Primalis to think outside the box to achieve their goals. While not necessary, it does make life more interesting.

Strength and Speed – While Klehani often preach about being strong or fast, these attributes do make for a good hunter. This virtue is held primarily by the Klehani believing might makes right and there are only the quick and the dead.

Holy Texts

Only the Moderates and Sheye keep any kind of holy texts. In general these are accountings of hunts, harvests, and tales of the Primalis. Some Sheye have tried to create the Primalis Text, a collection of tales of many different spirits worshiped by the Primalis and tales of heroes. Many of these are often used to teach others the ways of hunting, farming, and pass on knowledge to future generations.

While sometimes more practical than spiritual, the Primalis Text is an ever-evolving work which grows with each new story added to it. Some groups of Primalis try to add new stories to it any time they meet a new member of the faith.

The Klehani have been known to pass on oral traditions of the stories, however, this has been muddied over the years as a few moderates have taken to collecting Klehani stories and include them in the Primalis Text against the wishes of the Sheye Primalis.

Iconography

Many Primalis wear bones, furs, or other symbols representing the Great Beast they follow. While most Anthuil Primalis present as a hodgepodge of different beasts, any group bearing similar iconography is considered a hunting party united under one of the Great Beasts for a purpose.

In the last fifty years or so, to help differentiate themselves from others, is the adoption of the Claw and Fang. This symbol is a single fang with diagonal slash marks through it included with the iconography of their patron Primalis.

Laws of the Primalis

The laws of the Primalis are generally simple, however, some groups may include other ideals. The ones presented here are ones used across all variations of Primalis.

Survive at all Costs.

The first and most important law of the Primalis. This law is used to justify any action to ensure the survival of a member of the faith. If an action is necessary to survival, there are few things which cannot be forgiven.

Klehani use this law to justify a great deal of their hunts claiming their actions were to survive even at the expense of nature's balance.

The Sheye used this law to point to why they had to progress their society rather than remain primitive like the Klehani.

This has proven a powerful motivator even during the Expansion Wars. Primalis followers generally fought against the Yemanist expansion, fighting tooth and nail for their territory and choosing figures among the Yemanist faith as their prey for sacred hunts.

Honor the Progenitors

All Primalis are expected to honor, revere, and respect the Progenitor(s) they venerate. This includes emulating them and considering the ideals they represent.

Klehani typically believe this in a more literal sense which is why they have chosen a more primitive lifestyle.

Sheye consider their Progenitors in a more metaphorical sense, seeking to emulate the aspects they believe their Progenitor would value.

We are all bound by the Cycle of Hunter and Prey.

To the Primalis all things come back to the cycle of the hunter bringing down their prey. Both literally and metaphorically. To the Primalis one must hunt for what they want or need. Generally, they should seek what they need before they seek what they want. To this end, the Primalis are expected to work hard to achieve their goals but remember there are always things which will pounce from the unknown to give them a challenge. They must meet this challenge in whatever way they can.

Many Primalis of all sects often offer thanks to their prey for granting them continued survival and adding their strength to that of the hunter.

Be mindful of the Balance of Nature

This law encompasses the idea of nothing is infinite. All things will come to an end. Overdoing it can lead to disaster and hasten one's own death. At times sacrifices must be made to maintain the balance of nature even if it means others may die to prevent the entire group from dying.

Conservation is important to many Primalis, however, some foolish Primalis believe this also means what is meant to be, will be. If they over hunt and have no food come the harsh winter, then they will die and accept this for what it is.

Holidays

The Primalis do not generally have set holidays. Most of the time when a hunt or harvest has been particularly fruitful, they may celebrate their good fortune.

Some have adopted other celebrations such as birthdays, national holidays, and even acknowledge the celebrations of the holidays of other faiths.

Marriage

Marriage is a relatively strange concept to many Primalis. Many simply accept that when a mate is chosen the pair are bonded for however long they choose to be. This concept is thought of as common sense to many Therios Primalis, but some non-Therios Primalis struggle with it.

Depending on the Progenitor of the Primalis, this could mean the pair is mate for life, or simply until they produce offspring and one of them moves on to continue their lives.

There have been several Primalis, both Therian and not, who have tried to mimic marriage rites of other faiths to show their dedication to each other. While there is no precedence for this, most Primalis are fine with allowing a mated pair to celebrate their relationship how they see fit.

There are also groups of Primalis who live in a multi-partner relationship amongst themselves and raise the children communally rather than as a mated pair. Again, most Primalis simply believe this is just the way nature works and have no real opinions either way.

Funerary Practices

To the Moderate and Klehani factions, it is believed when a person dies, if they are killed in combat then their flesh rightfully belongs to their killer. Only the one(s) strong enough to kill them is allowed to consume their flesh. For the Primalis this is one of the most sacred acts one can perform. In doing so, the strong become stronger and another person is fed.

Everyone else is merely a scavenger. Scavenging the flesh of another's kill is to welcome a curse from the dead Primalis and admit that they were not a good enough hunter; that they could not finish the hunt.

Only those who die of old age or if their flesh is not claimed by their killer are then given a simple celebration of life. Those close to the departed will tell joyful stories of the life of the fallen and do things they know would make the departed soul happy.

The departed's belongings are then stripped from them and the body is buried in a shallow grave or left in a cave to decompose. The belongings are then distributed among the Primalis to allow them to carry a memento of their departed friend. Some Sheye have taken to holding a vigil for the departed for three nights to ensure they are not consumed by scavengers.

Some Klehani Primalis will insist the body, regardless of if the departed died of old age or was killed, must be consumed by all ignoring the idea of the scavenger. However, the one who made the kill is given the first choice of the body. The heart or thigh tend to be the choicest of parts to consume. In this, the hunting party is strengthened even if only a little.

The Soul/Afterlife

To the Primalis, they have but one life. They must live it to the fullest and do everything they can to live as long as they can.

When life comes to an end, they will return to the Spirit World where they will become one with the Progenitor they venerate. Many Primalis believe they are all merely a reflection of the Progenitors and must return to them one day. Living a full life will add those experiences to the culmination of the Progenitors and add to their strength.

Klehani see this as a loss of the self. All you are vanishes and you are subsumed by a greater being. Many Klehani secretly fear the day of their death but will not shrink from facing the world and the dangers of it. Some arrogant Klehani believe their will is strong enough to take control of the Progenitor if they prove themselves as powerful hunters with no equal.

The Sheye instead view this as becoming one with the many who have come before you, joining in a community of other like-minded souls in perfect unity. In essence they become part of a greater whole able to then influence and

pass on their experiences to future generations through the spirit.

Superstitions

- Eating one's own kind risks madness. Being of a similar Progenitor they are taking too much of that power into themselves and the mortal mind cannot handle that kind of power.
- Each time they feed on someone, they consume some part of their essence, growing stronger.
- Witnessing a tree or rock fall without any obvious reason why is an omen from the Progenitor, generally meant to be aware of your surroundings.
- Sickness is a sign of weakness and means you are a prime target for a hunt. Many Primalis will avoid the sick for fear of becoming prey.
- Stick to open spaces, being cornered means death.
- Gluttony is either a sign of power or a sign of selfishness. The strong will take their share but should be mindful of becoming too full.
- Be wary of those who smile and show teeth. It is a sign of the hunter choosing their prey.
- Mercy is a sign of the well-fed.
- Klehani believe those who must feed on others to survive are blessed by the Progenitors, the Sheye on the other hand believe those who must feed are cursed and cannot rise above a primitive status.

Thaumaturgy

Those who promise themselves to one of the Progenitors in exchange for their power generally find they gain access to the following Aspects of the Divine: Beast, Champion, Night, Community, Life, Nature, Nobility

Sects of the Primalis

Ravening Maw

Originating from the Ravenous Sea in the south, the Ravening Maw is a cult devoted to the Great Maw. Comprised almost exclusively of Therios from Kuh'nal, they embrace their vicious hunger and find they must feed on other beings. The teachings of the Ravening Maw include consuming those who will not sate their most primal desire, hunger, with the flesh of others.

This Sect ignores the concept of Balance entirely instead choosing to feed endlessly. Even the Klehani regard them as destructive both to themselves and nature.

The followers of the Ravening Maw are mostly Aquatic Therios with the ability to eat other creatures. However, there are rumors of this cult gaining ground in the southlands of Agrineas and Erce. Some say even Mortaeans have begun to band together with these Therios and hunt those outside their faith.

Abyssari (AH-bis-AR-RYE)

Prior to the events of Hektram's Folly, there are stories of the prisoners used as slaves by Hektram's followers who were visited by a shadowy being offering a dark exchange. At the time the being offered a way for the prisoners to fight back with powers from beyond the grave. Desperation, starvation, and a burning desire for revenge drove dozens, if not hundreds, to accept the bargain. Rumors circulate of what the bargain entailed, but those who agreed found themselves in the service of this shadowy being after the Folly.

Word of this new faith has spread far enough many have heard of its name, Abyssari. Unbeknownst to many, the Abyssari is a faith developing in the ruins of Agrineas. The Abyssari believe the shadowy figure was the Messenger sent by Death itself. While many common folk view such a thing as dark and evil, the Abyssari believe death is an inevitable end to all things but should be understood and appreciated rather than feared.

To the Abyssari, passing from the mortal world into whatever awaits beyond this life is like a sacred rite of passage into eternity. The Abyssari view life as a frail and fleeting existence much like the innocence of childhood. For those who have heard the whispers of the Messenger, they realize what awaits them beyond mortality is true existence. Life is but an illusion which will one day be cast aside to embrace the Eternal Truth.

Outsiders often accuse the Abyssari as a death cult, however, the Abyssari know better. For many Abyssari, life is a time to become wise and prepare for what will come afterward. To this end the Abyssari have devoted themselves to preparing their souls for the day they will move beyond the mortal coil and ascend to become something greater.

Within the Faith, they believe all afterlives are connected and overseen by Death itself. These fiefdoms in the afterlife are allowed to exist as an intermediary before a Soul passes on into the truest form of existence. However even among this new faith there are disagreements on what that state is exactly.

At present there are several schools of thought within the Abyssari. Despite their philosophical differences in the soul's journey, the Abyssari all follow similar ideals. It is not uncommon for members of the faith to move from one camp to another during their time in the faith. Many Abyssari also practice portions of each camp's doctrines simply calling themselves Abyssari rather than any of the camp names.

The Merciful Keepers

One facet of Abyssari are the Merciful Keepers. Among the keepers, they teach death is a time when they will be called into service to assist in administrating the afterlives of others. The Merciful Keepers view their lives as a time to prepare for the work they will do once they pass on and

become servants of death. They will help souls transition from life, maintain the afterlives of others, and hunt down those who attempt to evade their own demise.

Despite the grim nature of their belief, many Merciful Keepers believe life is important. People should be allowed to live their lives and find what joy they can no matter what awaits them beyond. The Keepers believe they have no right to try and take life from another, and no one has the right to take their existence from them. Death may be inevitable, but it is patient and can wait until the appointed time to collect souls.

Teaching that all souls remain in their chosen afterlife for a period of 100 years, they then transition into the true Underworld where all souls slowly lose their willingness to continue before slipping away into nothingness. Each point in the soul's journey from creation to nothingness is a sacred journey. To the keepers any attempt to disrupt this long journey is sacrilege and should be prevented. It is often compared to life as the childhood or adolescence of the soul, when they can play and experience the world through young eyes. From there when the soul moves to the afterlife this is considered the teenage to young adult years. Finally, when they pass on from their afterlife, and move into the Underworld, they have matured enough to maintain the sacred path of the soul until they no longer wish to be a part of it and pass into nothingness.

The Merciful Keepers do not believe in the skills of Healers preferring to only allow themselves to be healed via faith and their own ability to heal naturally. To the most orthodox of Keepers magical and medicinal healing are cheating death and should be scorned. More moderate Keepers believe these practices are acceptable but only in the direst of circumstances. Many Keepers believe it is their sacred duty to be there when someone is dying to ease their pain and give them hope for what is to come next.

Undead are those who were not yet prepared to move into the afterlife and have clung to their lives so strongly they did not pass on. Because of this the Keepers believe each undead has some duty or desire they must fulfill before they are able to pass on. Undeath is not meant to be eternal, simply a delay before moving into the next stage of the soul's existence.

Some believe the Merciful Keepers formed from the Erce and Verdanti which had been captives and were not allowed to return to their home and faith after the Folly.

Paradoxus

Viewed with a mixture of contempt and pity by other Abyssari, the Paradoxus way of thinking believes when life ends, they are pressed into Death's service. Their mortal lives are the payment given prior to their service as a sort of investment. Popular among living Abyssari, the Paradoxus believe their lives are times to embrace pleasure, leisure, and enjoy it to the fullest.

It is Paradoxus doctrine to heed every moment they can of life because it is the only time, they will be free. When they pass on, they will become servants of Death and be forced into a grim and thankless duty shepherding souls about the afterlife. The end goal is to live a full life in order to have fond memories to sustain their souls before they move off into oblivion.

Unlike most Abyssari, the Paradoxus wish to prolong their soul's existence as long as possible and believe a full life of experiences is the way to sustain themselves before slipping away into nothing. This often puts them at odds with the Merciful Keepers and their belief in a Soul only has so many years before it slips away. Knowing they cannot escape death, the Paradoxus take a more absurdist view compared to the commonly nihilistic view of death.

One of the main criticisms however of the Paradoxus view of the Abyssari faith is the selfish nature of it. Each of them believes they must be selfish to have as much fun and entertainment as possible even at the expense of others. While the teachings do tend to attract followers who have had hard lives and simply wish to enjoy themselves, many simply use the faith as an excuse to party and fulfill their own desires.

When a person leaves the mortal world, they no longer can celebrate, feast, or otherwise indulge themselves, instead all they will be allowed to do is be at the beck and call of Death. For this reason, many Paradoxus will take whatever means they can to relish experiences to enrich their souls.

To the Paradoxus believer, events filled with powerful emotion, powerful sensations, and memorable events all will give them more time in the afterlife to avoid their fate of nothingness. The difference between a Paradoxus Abyssari and a typical hedon is they know there is an end coming for them and want to delay it as long as possible without being forced into the muted state of undeath.

Undeath is viewed as a temporary reprieve from their duties, allowing them to avoid being pressed into Death's service for a while longer, however, the muted sensation is considered a cheap imitation of life.

Scions of the Flesh

Among one of the larger factions within the Abyssari are the Scions of the Flesh. These devotees believe undeath is the ultimate way to embody death and become one with its duty. The Scions of the Flesh study undeath in all its forms seeking to find ways to enhance it and replicate it. Many Scions claim Hektram's Folly was a mass awakening of those necessary to fulfill Death's mission.

Among the Scions, it is believed the state of undeath is the only excuse to remove oneself from the soul's journey. In doing so they become mortal agents of death and can prepare others for their passing. To the Scions it is a kindness to raise a person as undead to ease them into Death's embrace.

More scholarly than the other factions of Abyssari, the Scions study and manipulate undead forms in bizarre and horrifying ways. Many Mortaeans among the Scions feel this is perfecting their undead forms to fulfill their roles as shepherds of the underworld. Whether to hurry the living along into the afterlife, or to become truly deathless in a vain attempt to avoid slipping away into oblivion.

Transitioning from living into undeath is a sacred act where one has proven they are more useful in the mortal world than the afterlife. To this end, one must understand their new form and how to preserve it.

Many Scions believe all should seek to attain the state of undeath in the world and the Folly is pointed to as proof of their conviction. Some Scions even point to the Aelf'enai attempting to escape the flesh by stealing the power of their gods only to have the power fail them rendering them mortal once again. Only through undeath can they escape the clutches of nothingness. To the Scions they believe they can bring the mortal world into the afterlife where they can be together with all those they have 'saved' by raising them as undead.

While one of the most common facets of the faith, the motivations to become a Scion of Flesh are varied. Some are simply fascinated with putrefaction and thanatology, while others wish to perfect the undead form, some have even postulated on the Necropothesis, a way to use undeath as a temporary solution to discover a way to return to life circumventing death all together. Many Mortaeans who rose during the Folly fall into the Scions because they believe in the possibility of the Necropothesis and wish to return to their former lives believing the Folly had stolen a natural death from them.

Nihilo

The second smallest facet, the Nihilo are a facet of undeath who believe the truth of death is the most important thing to bring to the people. For them, sorrow, melancholy, and truth are the most important things they can give to others. For the Nihilo, the harsh truth of the world is the message they must provide to others. Many Nihilo believe people must understand the harsh reality awaiting them at the end of their lives. Only through the suffering accompanying this truth can people truly prepare to pass on into an eternity of servitude. Ironically like the Paradoxus, the Nihilo believe hastening death is a waste and only through suffering through life can they prolong their existence before slipping away into nothingness.

Many gatherings view the Nihilo as wise, however, unsettling in their ruthless message. It is considered a sin to the Nihilo to present anything other than the coldest of truth. Regardless of the outcome, tempering their words is only going to give hope to people which is the cruelest trick life plays on the living.

To this end, many Nihilo study all manner of macabre things to better understand the meaning of death. This drive pushes them to face horrible things without blinking. Some

claim the Nihilo are mad, yet there is a certain clarity in their madness. Without distractions such as joy, love, or comfort, one can truly come to understand the basest nature of the world. Without this understanding they would go into the afterlife little better than mewling children and be forced to be taught what they must know.

Generally grim even among a faith focused on death, the Nihilo are considered nearly as dutiful as the Merciful Keepers, yet they do not seek to comfort others to the reality of the end of life. Much like tempering the truth, this is a disservice to others. It is not uncommon for Nihilo to forsake friends, families, or love interests in the search for their dark wisdom. Several even court death only allowing themselves to be saved at the last moment. This practice is considered reckless but few Nihilo care as the closer they get to true understanding, the closer they are to being ready to pass on.

Viewing undeath as the penultimate state of the Nihilo doctrine, many living Nihilo seek to become undead simply to prolong themselves and bring them closer to the understanding they seek. By stripping away their emotions and bodily functions to distract them, they can focus on their philosophical pondering and pursuit of dark wisdom.

Oblivionists

The smallest facet of Abyssari are the Oblivionists, while closest to a true death cult, they believe the end goal is oblivion. Within everything is the seed of annihilation and all things move towards absolute nothingness. To the Oblivionists, existence is meaningless because in the end they have nothing to look forward to as they will simply cease to exist. Their teachings often lead to frustration and resentment of life. It is their duty to shepherd the world towards oblivion and prepare others for such things. The Oblivionists are considered full of fools who would rather watch the world burn than anything else. Their ranks are mostly full of those who could not let things go after the Folly and wish to destroy everything since the world is cruel and unforgiving. To them ceasing to exist is a mercy.

Many Oblivionists want to be the last thing to fade away into nothingness to know they were responsible for the end of all things. While some take more direct matters and seek to destroy all in their path, others choose a more subtle route attempting to lead others into self-destruction. To lead others into destroying themselves is one of the purest acts an Oblivionist can achieve as it speeds along the journey of the soul.

Most other Abyssari view the Oblivionists as angry children who refuse to see any kind of reason because of their destructive teachings. They are the only Abyssari who do not value life as an important part of the soul's journey. For most Oblivionists, all things not related to bringing about death are merely distractions. Unfortunately, Oblivionists often have some of the best warriors among the Abyssari. These warriors hone their craft towards the goal of bringing death to all in their path. Should an Oblivionist die in battle, they welcome their passing with a smile.

Undeath is merely a means to an end for most Oblivionists. While it is a step towards nothingness, the undead are merely tools for their war against all life.

Designer's Note: *Oblivionists do not encourage suicide. They want to fight to survive to claim the honor of being the last one watching as the world burns. They are destroyers more than anything else.*

The Spread of Death

In the years since the Folly, the Abyssari have gathered themselves in the undead choked Necropoli of Agrineas where they can practice their faith without being bothered. Some have struck out on their own wanting to test their faith out in the rest of the world.

During the 5th Expansion War, many Abyssari secreted themselves to battlefields to study the aftermath or offer what they could to those left behind on their way into the afterlife. Since then, the Abyssari have spread their message into the greater parts of Anthuli, most concentrated in the south near Agrineas but reaching as far as the Daemonwake in some small instances.

Pantheon of the Abyssari

To the Abyssari, there are only two figures of importance.

The Messenger is the shadowy figure which taught the slaves of Hektram to use Necromancy to exact their revenge upon the insane Yemanist. Depicted as little more than a shadowy humanoid shape with eyes, the Messenger is believed to be the intermediary between Death itself and the mortal world. Some Abyssari also believe the Messenger is the leader of those who shepherd souls into their afterlives ensuring the correct souls go to the correct places. Even after the Soul moves on from their afterlife, it is the Messenger who transports them to the Underworld to await their slide into oblivion.

Some believe there may be multiple Messengers or Abyssari who complete their duties and will become Messengers. While there is no way of knowing which ideal is correct, the beliefs have both spread and are rarely argued over since the believers will only know when they die.

The central figure of the Abyssari is Death. While often personified as the ghostly, skeletal handed reaper the Abyssari know this is but one of many faces of death and simply serves as a visual aid when necessary. To the Abyssari, Death is the greatest force in all of existence, able to destroy anything it wishes for whatever reason. Many know it is impossible to fight against Death since it is omnipotent and omniscient. There is some debate if Death and oblivion are one in the same or if one day Death will also sink into oblivion once it has collected all things. Time means very little to Death itself, however, each being is allotted a certain amount of time to exist before Death is allowed to claim it. While there is no conventional wisdom on this despite what the Merciful Keepers preach, all

Abyssari believe it is Death's choice to allow life to exist at all.

Stations of the Faith

Though each camp has some variation, most of them organize themselves in a similar way.

The Shepherd

A title commonly used for a leader among the Abyssari groups, the Shepherd guides their flock to explore and discover their meaning regardless of the camp or beliefs. However, the Shepherd should encourage their followers to be involved in as many aspects of the soul's journey as possible. Other applicable titles include: Fleshmaster (Scions), Ender (Oblivionists),

Gravebearer

A Gravebearer is generally the guardian of the Abyssari tasked with keeping threats to the work of the Shepherd and other members of the faith at bay. Treated as holy warriors, Gravebearers are the grim watchmen of the faith. At times, Gravebearers may also lead groups to war to ensure those who fall are properly cared for and given whatever final rites are necessary to pass along.

Dirgespeaker

A Dirgespeaker is an individual who listens to the final words of the dying and/or studies the funerary rites of other cultures and faiths to ensure they are performed properly. This position is revered much like a holy person in another faith. Dirgespeakers spend a great deal of time studying these rites and speaking with others of their coming ends to ensure they have been heard and their wishes fulfilled. Some Dirgespeakers also take on the role of ensuring a person's will is carried out and their belongings are distributed per their instructions.

Abyssari Initiations

Abyssari Initiations are generally small affairs requiring the prospect to undergo a near death experience. This process is ritualized and at times has been known to almost look like a sacrifice to some dark god which has made many commoners afraid of the faith's practices.

During this Ritual the Preacher will instruct the prospect to focus on what they sense during the experience, to understand if they are afraid of death, and why they must not be.

Commonly these initiations are held in places significant to death, graveyards, battlefields, mausoleums, or even in an open grave.

Some spirited preachers may even go so far as to bury the prospect alive or enclose them in a tomb to give them a true fright and sense of impending doom to ensure they understand what death means.

It is considered taboo to allow a prospective member to die during their initiation because if they die then they cannot

learn the mysteries of the underworld before being sent there. If a prospect dies during an initiation, it is commonplace to flay the flesh from the back of the preacher who allowed this to happen.

Laws

Follow the Soul's Journey

Abyssari are expected to live their life as it is part of the soul's journey to the afterlife. Suicide is the gravest sin to the Abyssari. Life is meant to prepare the Abyssari for their servitude to Death in the hereafter. Going before you are ready is a burden in the afterlife and there are far too many souls to attend to.

Seek a Higher Understanding of Death

It is the responsibility of all Abyssari to seek a greater understanding of the meaning of Death and the processes associated with it. Studying about how the body works both in life and in death, seeking meaning within the dark and macabre, and what makes the soul work are all important aspects of the great work of Death.

Guide others along the Soul's Path

In life, the Abyssari should guide others along the path towards the grave and prepare them for what to expect. This is why understanding is necessary to assist others in preparing for the inevitable. This law is one used to justify some of the more extreme acts taken by the Paradoxus or Oblivionists.

Prepare Yourself for Servitude in the Grave

Abyssari will become servants of Death and eventually pass into nothingness. To prolong their service, they must enrich their lives to armor themselves against the bleakness of the Underworld and ensure they last as long as possible. If too many slip away, then the afterlife and the underworld will fall into disarray.

Attend to the Fading

As a shepherd of souls, it is the Abyssari's duty to attend to those who are fading from life to ensure they are not alone when they pass. Often considered a vigil for the departing, the Abyssari are expected to be present and at the very least observe others passing to both prepare themselves and ensure others are sent along their way in the proper manner.

None Shall Escape the Grave

Any attempts to achieve immortality or somehow break away from the soul's journey are considered taboo. Abyssari must interfere with these practices at all costs. Even if it should mean the Abyssari should pass on in the process, it is necessary not to disrupt the journey. This has prompted some Abyssari to find ways to kill things perceived as unkillable including deities or powerful spirits.

All Will Crumble, Do Not Let Hope Flourish

The Abyssari know all things will eventually crumble and die. For this reason, they are expected not to hold onto

hope and instead embrace what is, rather than what they hope it will be.

Virtues of the Abyssari

Duty – To the Abyssari of all camps, they believe they have a sacred duty to prepare themselves for their roles once they have passed on into the Underworld. This includes preparing oneself by living life and not hastening their own death. Upholding their honor as a servant of death means they must pass through all the parts of the soul's journey.

Wisdom – Abyssari are expected to be wise in all manners regarding death. From knowing what to say or do during times when someone passes away even if it means doing nothing. Additionally, an Abyssari should strive to understand death and study it in their own way.

Stoicism – Being able to be stoic even in times of great distress is important, death is uncaring, and in their pursuit of the wisdom of death, the Abyssari may be forced to deal with situations where they cannot allow their emotions to get the better of them.

Reason – Abyssari are expected to be reasonable when it comes to their actions. They should always have a reason for doing what they are doing which is not an excuse. Excuses fall apart under scrutiny while reasons will be understood by others for why something has been done.

Curiosity – A healthy sense of curiosity is important to an Abyssari. Only through curiosity will new avenues towards understanding be found and new ideas on how to perceive the nature of death come to light.

Honesty – There is little use in lies, as they will turn to ash like all other things. However, the truth will last because it is as enduring as Death itself.

Holy Texts

Within the last ten years, there have been copies of the Manifesto of the Abyss circulating around Graewynn. This tome contains numerous findings of the various camps in a collected work attempting to understand the nature of death.

However, most copies of the Manifesto are individual works and contain different information. At least 13 are known to exist each containing different thought processes about the nature of death, the afterlife, the soul, and the underworld.

Some of the volumes are insightful and thought provoking, others read like the ramblings of a lunatic obsessed with death. A few copies of these have found their way into the hands of commoners who do not understand the reason why the Abyssari study thanatology and leads to gross misunderstandings and fear among the common people.

However, with more Mortaeans being accepted into communities as the years drag on, some have been curious about the work and read these manifestos bringing even living prospects to the faith.

Iconography

Abyssari typically wear a symbol with a black background with a skeletal hand on it called the Death's Reach. The skeletal hand should have its fingers splayed out as if reaching towards something and can be of any color but should stand out against the black background.

When wearing jewelry, many Abyssari favor onyx, jet, or obsidian jewels with the Death's Reach on them.

The Merciful Keepers generally modify this as an outstretched hand as if offering aid to another.

Paradoxus have been known to show the Death's Reach holding a mug, drumstick, or even musical instrument.

The Scions of Flesh will alter the Death's Reach to either be holding a needle for stitching flesh, or include red blood drops.

The Nihilo generally do not care enough to use a different symbol, but a few will include a scroll held by the skeletal hand.

Finally, the Oblivionists generally incorporate claws or a weapon into their Death's Reach.

Holidays

Gravenocht

Celebrated in October, Gravenocht is a bittersweet holiday for the Abyssari. For most it is a time to remember Hektram's Folly as the birth of their faith and the increase in the undead appearing in the world as a result. For most Abyssari it is a time to remind people of the approach of death. During this time, Abyssari will wear additional symbols of death.

The Merciful Keepers and Nihilo perform the Grave's Walk, a sort of parade through settlements where the Abyssari act as if they are souls passing into the afterlife. The Abyssari will ignore all non-Abyssari and act as if they are in one of the many after lives of the region. The only time the Abyssari is allowed to interact with another is if they show them some symbol of their faith, and then may speak to that person.

Paradoxus use this time to scare others and remind them of the thrill of life while the Scions of Flesh will show off their latest creations or alterations in gruesome displays to frighten and intrigue others.

Oblivionists have been known to launch raids on the living during this time to bring the meaning of death to others.

Marriage

Abyssari have a variety of marriage practices. Most are adopted from other faiths, however there is one unique to the faith.

Instead of a standard marriage ceremony, the attendees are encouraged to wear black or other symbols of mourning. The couple then proceed up to the altar where a single tomb, grave, or casket is placed before the ceremony. The pair get into the open grave together embracing one another.

The officiant then gives a form of eulogy speaking of the lives of the two and things that have done together as if they have passed on. The attendees are then encouraged to come up and place a gift (traditionally flowers representing mourning, money, or keepsakes) in the open grave with the couple. Each should offer a blessing to those in the grave before they move on.

Afterward, the officiant proclaims the people they once knew were dead, and now the couple must arise together as one. The couple then crawls out of the grave to the wails and tears of the attendees. From there a reception is held where the couple thanks their guests for the gifts given.

Funerary Practices

The Abyssari honor all funerary practices of other cultures and faiths respecting how these others wish to be buried.

For their own, generally a service is held, and the bodies are placed on display. The officiant will then speak on the nature of death and speak proudly of the person going into the service of Death and service in the afterlife. During this time a Dirgespeaker is expected to enact the last wishes of the departed or execute their last will and testament.

Outsiders regard this as a rather informal affair with little care given to the deceased. However, Abyssari simply feels the person has moved on to their term of service in the afterlife and has simply moved on in the soul's journey. To the Abyssari the person is not gone yet, they simply are no longer visible to them.

Once the Dirgespeaker finishes, there is a brief time where those who feast on the dead are given the chance to feed on the corpse before whatever remains is placed in a grave and ceremoniously sealed away. Often, the Abyssari will place more importance on the marker, tomb, or casket of the departed than the body itself. To them the monument is more important as a symbol of the soul moving on to the next step of their journey.

Many Abyssari stonemasons are sought out for their skill to craft grave markers or construct mausoleums for the rich due to their artistry and care given to such projects.

The Soul/Afterlife

To the Abyssari, the soul is not an immortal spiritual vessel, just like the living body, the soul can die just like the body. According to Abyssari doctrines, those who give up on life can experience the death of the soul long before their body passes into the afterlife. No matter the reason, the Abyssari believe one must press on no matter how hard things are and to let the soul die before it has completed its service in the afterlife is a tragedy.

Regarding the afterlife, the Abyssari accepts other afterlives exist, however, these are only stop overs before the soul moves into the Underworld. Depicted as a gray and desolate place filled with remnants of important objects, buildings, and places, it is a chaotic arrangement of all things which have been forgotten or lost to time. Once a soul has completed their time in the afterlife, they pass beyond that and into the underworld where they are given a choice, they may serve as an agent in the service of Death, or they may simply be allowed to walk into the Abyss.

At the center of the Underworld is a pit which nothing has ever returned once it has entered. It is said anything which falls into the Abyss is utterly erased from existence. Not even a deity could survive such a place. It is believed this is where all things will go at the end of existence.

Those who choose to enter Death's service serve to maintain the afterlives of others, fetch wayward souls to the Underworld, and at times provide omens at Death's direct request. Unlike many other faiths that personify their deities, Death to the Abyssari is a force in the universe like heat or sound. When Death conveys its will, the agent will simply know what they must do. Agents of Death may move between the afterlives and even visit the mortal world in an intangible state. They may only interact in the way tasked to them; any deviation will not allow them to appear.

It is said most souls gradually lose interest in existence and either simply fade over time or cast themselves into the Abyss. In the end, all things will fade including the items found in the Underworld which slowly are shifted around as new ones appear pushing the oldest into the Abyss. This chaotic ever-changing landscape has confounded philosophers. There are stories of the Messenger explaining the landscape to those who showed a potential, though no one has been able to identify what potential that may be.

Superstitions

While considered reasonable by most scholarly individuals, even the Abyssari have a few odd superstitions.

- An unkept grave marker is a serious insult not only to the person it marks, but to the faith in general. Many Abyssari will nearly compulsively clean and maintain grave markers they come across.
- Mushrooms are signs of good luck. Some Abyssari will carry what they call their lucky mushroom. Many feel Mycerum are akin to Dryads for other faiths and regard them as messengers of Death.
- To reinforce the inevitable, many Abyssari will often give sincere compliments on objects that are clearly aging and falling apart.
- Something as simple as a weed growing in an otherwise barren place is a sign death no longer lives in that area.
- If a person dies and their body lands facedown, they will spend their afterlife and time in the underworld with the smell of whatever they landed on in their nostrils.

- A person's first gray/white hair is to be celebrated, Abyssari often will hold a small party for a person who gets their first gray/white hair.
- If a couple is covered in tokens during their wedding ceremony in an open grave/tomb/etc. then they will be together in the afterlife and will be able to find each other in the Underworld no matter what.
- Feeling the dying breath of another is to have a brush with the true nature of Death and brings good luck.

Thaumaturgy

Abyssari of all camps typically find themselves drawn to the following Aspects of the Divine: Decay, Darkness, Nightmares, Order, Cold, Sea

Sects of the Abyssari

Due to the faith being much younger than the others, the camps within the faith have yet to establish themselves as the true way to perform the faith, but some theorize in the future one will rise to dominance in the faith and the other camps will be considered sects.

Cult of the Mother Mushroom

While formally they consider themselves a separate faith from the Abyssari, the Cult of the Mother Mushroom is composed exclusively of Mycerim. Each member believes they are one with a deity born when the Mycerim arose and are all connected via a network of fibers spread throughout the earth. To them each of them was born with a purpose given to them by the Mother Mushroom they must fulfill. No one is quite sure of the Cult's goals; however, they have been looking to spread the Mycelia Network across the continent to further connect their deity to the rest of the world.

Oromar

Native to Cormah, Oromar is a faith centralized around the ocean, debts, and wanderlust. Believed to have originated from the Cormah's deal with the Oceanima, Oromar has developed into its own cultural entity which has become popular among coastal cities, and among the mariners across the oceans around Anthuli. Followers of Oromar are often regarded as scallywags out to loot and pillage as they see fit. However, this is only the most public part of the faith. For every pirate proclaiming to be an Oromar follower there are at least half a dozen others who believe in the mysteries of the ocean.

Much of the Oromar faith revolves around the ocean and the characteristics commonly attributed to it. Ranging from its stormy unpredictableness to the warm gentle life giver, the ocean is where all members of the Oromar should seek to be as much as possible. The teachings of the Oromar are varied and interpreted wildly differently from practitioner to practitioner.

Oromar dogma teaches the sea is the one place a being can truly be free of their cares and embrace themselves fully. It is said those who join the Oromar have been bewitched by the sea and will never look back. The allure of the faith is there are few true rules and many of them a fair number of common folks can get behind. People are expected to be as wild and passionate as the sea itself. Enjoying whimsy, curiosity, and a wanderlust to explore and see new things. Yet for many the ocean is their home whether they live on land or on a ship.

To be Oromar is to have an intense love of the sea and all the mysteries hidden within it. Oromar followers are happy to take risks and know firsthand at times high risks mean high rewards. Within the faith itself, it is a blessing to push oneself further than ever before, forever chasing a new horizon. In this way the Oromar has become welcoming of all species and peoples. They do not care for allegiance to anything but the sea itself. On the waves, it is the faithful against the world. Among the Oromar, communities become close, much like family, as they strive together to explore, trade, and find meaning in their lives.

This bond is often referred to as the Oath of Salt and Winds. Modeled after the bond the First Salt Mother, Hergonia Serivo, made with the Oceanima, by swearing the Oath a person binds themselves to the ocean, body and mind. Many Captains will demand new crew swear the same oath to them which then extends its protections over the crew and the captain themselves.

The Oath of Salt and Winds goes as follows:

*“Blessed Lady of the Untamed Heart,
I, (insert name), give all I am to you out of love.
My heart will forever belong to you,
Even when my lungs fill with salt water,
and I sink to the darkest depths, I am yours.*

*With the Oath of Salt, I will keep myself and my people safe
against any foes, even the storm or wave itself.
I cleanse myself of my fear and hesitation with salt.
You will not hesitate to dash my body upon the rocks,
And I will resist your anger when it looms above me.*

*With the Oath of Winds, my sails will carry me forward.
Until my breath is taken by the winds, I will strive.
No struggle, no challenge, and no battle will deter me.
Whether gentle or cruel, I will press onward.
Hear my words and know they are true.*

*I will be as wild and let no force tame me like you.
Together with my crew and my family, I will chase the
horizon.
Mother Ocean we are bound by this oath.
Whether by your hand or those who take my life from me,
May my bones find rest in your embrace in the end.”*

Oromar's Beginnings

Scholars have traced the roots of Oromar to the Cormah Archipelago, however, there are conflicting reports on when it began. While believed to be ancient, the earliest known reference to it officially was in the early 400 NY period. The Cormah claim it has existed since the Oceanima first approached their people and grew from the few who witnessed the swearing of the Oath of Salt and Winds to the Oceanima.

Since then, Oromar has spread, not through missionary work like Yemanism, but instead by others coming to believe in the mysticism of the faith witnessing others practice it. Many faithful come to the faith after spending time among its members.

Mercurial Beliefs

Even the staunchest followers of the faith come across as mercurial as the sea. Several of the 'laws' of Oromar are often referenced and heeded only when necessary. Several believers may also creatively interpret the central tenets of the faith to suit their needs at the time. Other faiths look at this as a lack of dedication, while the Oromaran beliefs say this is acceptable because the world and its oceans are ever changing one moment to the next.

The only belief which never wavers for the Oromar is their worship of the sea as both mother and challenger. Each storm, each wave, and each encounter while at sea is believed to be the mother testing her children to see if they have the grit to be worth her time.

Many Oromarans strive to become worthy of the sea and will seek fortune, fame, or reputation to make them more appealing to the Oceanima. It is believed those who have caught the attention of the sea will find themselves blessed with luck beyond reasonable doubt. However, if they fail to court this attention properly and fall into disgrace, their misfortunes will multiply swiftly.

Blessings of Luck

To the Oramaran, lucky individuals are regarded as being favored by the sea. While not true fate or destiny, the Oromar believe nothing in life is certain, but only the lucky few will be fortunate enough to see all the splendors of the world and experience them firsthand. Some are simply content not to risk the disapproval of the sea by doing things and taking small risks to show they follow the ocean's example.

Even when far inland from the Sea, the Oromar believe simply being near water is sufficient to have some connection to the Mother Ocean. Only those in places without water are truly unable to reach out to their deity.

However, with the ever-shifting nature of the ocean, Oromar know their luck could shift at any time. The easiest way to keep the attention of the Untamed Heart is to be bold and make offerings to the sea. Offerings originally were of people and animals considered beautiful; however, this practice of sentient sacrifice has fallen out of favor. Modern Oramar believers will offer valuable or beautiful tokens to the sea or moving bodies of water. In doing so they may appease the capricious matron to continue their good luck.

A common blessing is "May you court the favor of the Untamed Heart". This is commonly used to wish luck to someone, the same saying can be insinuated as a curse wishing misfortune on another.

Followers of the Sea

While the exact methods are left up to the believer, many choose paths in life to get the attention of the ocean. Some become experts at what they do whether that is piracy, trade, ship building or many other possible routes. Some have chosen to simply live lives to not court the displeasure of the sea and keep their luck from turning sour.

Oromar dogma says the sea has many interests and loves, however, there is a low-level competition among Oromarans to keep the sea's attention at all costs. When two Oromarans are set against each other, it is believed whoever the sea favors more will prevail.

Many among the Oromar revere those willing to take to the sea and pillage others are truly favored by the sea representing the most core aspects of the faith. By taking from those unprepared for the dangers of the ocean, they are proving they should be favored.

This same ideal has been adapted in several ways for merchants always striving to earn the most coin or goods. This often comes with expensive offerings made to the seas. To ensure another does not simply take what they have offered, it is common for the person making the offering to ensure they are over a deeper part of the ocean before casting the offering into the depths.

The Oromar and the History of Anthuli

Since much of the Oromar's beliefs are tied to the ocean, they have not taken any major role in the events of Anthuli for centuries. Often viewing the conflicts of those not in love with the sea as pointless, many Oromar simply use it as an opportunity to enhance their reputation. Since borders are merely lines on the map, the Oromar have no loyalty to the kingdoms and nations of Anthuli beyond fulfilling their contracts should they be so inclined.

Many Oromar have earned wealth and fame during the Expansion Wars. While often viewed more as mercenaries, some nations have hired the Cormah and by extension the Oromar to land troops, carry supplies, or even harry their foes well beyond the battlelines.

Below is a list of commonly known figures from the faith which have made a name for themselves during the Expansion Wars.

Hirago the Ruthless

Sailing under the pirate colors, Hirago is known by historians to have pirated the seas during the 3rd Expansion War where he pillaged coastal villages along the western and southern coasts of Anthuli. So great was his fortune many considered him the wealthiest man of the times. When he was finally caught and executed by the Court of the Stags in 380 SC, he proclaimed his wealth had been secreted away and any who dared go looking for it would earn the ire of the seas. To this day no one has found Hirago's Stash.

Ismeralda del Trinor

After being left for dead by the Agrinean navy in 422 SC, Ismeralda del Trinor returned to Cormah with a fury only mirrored by a raging hurricane. Expending nearly every coin and favor her family had, she went back to sea with a small fleet and began a campaign of terror against the Agrinean navy. Using superior Cormahn sailing tactics, she outmaneuvered the Agrineans at every turn sinking their vessels without defeat. It is said when she finally met defeat, it was because she had felt her revenge was sated.

Senna Horizonchaser

While spoken of as more of a legend rather than fact, it is said Senna was the first person to map the entirety of the Anthuli continent well before the coming of Celestia. Taking almost five years, she mapped the coastline of Anthuli from one end to the other. She is spoken of as a great explorer and scholar by Cormah to this day.

Abera "Rigger Abe" Fero

In 320 SC, Abera Fero was known as a merchant in the coastal nation of Etar who had bent the ear of numerous royal families and is said to have made connections across most of western Anthuli. Acting as information broker and merchant, Rigger Abe was said to be able to pull strings in one place to cause upheavals elsewhere. Believed to be a master of manipulating events, Rigger Abe was favored in that even when others could not pinpoint how he did it, he

would claim credit for events from plentiful harvests, wars, and even succession in nations all over.

Signando Morena

In more recent events, Signando Morena is a captain still alive to this day who is said to be descended from some of the most famous captains ever produced from Cormah. There is no path he cannot take and those who oppose him soon learn he is beloved by the sea herself. Primarily making his name during the later parts of the 5th Expansion War, Signando has proven time and again he will ensure he holds to his word. Anyone fortunate enough to contract with Signando learns he is a man of his word no matter what. Even in the face of terrible storms, the remnants of the navies of Anthuli's nations, or even when on land no one can get the best of him. Many believe he may be chosen by the Ocean itself and though he is believed to have died several times, is reborn on the high seas.

Pantheon of the Oromar

Within the Oromar Pantheon are several deities revered. Each has their own personality and followers. It is not uncommon for an Oromar to follow more than one or even all of the Pantheon depending on their needs or who may give them the aid they need.

The Oceanima

Central to the faith, the Oceanima is described as a humanoid shape with feminine proportions made entirely of sea water. When calm, it is said looking at the Oceanima is like looking at the very depths of the ocean far away to see the splendor of the creatures beneath the waves and the ocean floor. When angry, the Oceanima's form can change into any shape it deems necessary at the time. Stories persist of powerful kraken like forms, giant crabs, or even monstrous creatures no one has ever seen at sea.

Regarded as the true soul of the ocean, the Oceanima goes by hundreds of different names. The Untamed Heart, the Mother Ocean, the Tempest Screamer, and the Wavebirther. The Oromar do not believe the Oceanima is omniscient, or omnipotent, but does believe she can witness events anywhere a person can find water. Said to run the full gambit of emotions, the Oceanima is known for her kindness to some, her rage at others, and sorrow when one of her beloved passes away.

All other deities in the Oromar pantheon are either children of the Oceanima or other beings who pay heed to the Oceanima's wishes.

The Anchor Father

Said to be the eldest son of the Oceanima, the Anchor Father is responsible for carrying away the offerings cast into the sea and dragging down fools into the depths. Among the Oromar, the Anchor Father is regarded as a sorrowful being born when the world was young and given his grim duty.

Ancient depictions show the Anchor Father as a sorrowful figure with a stone tied to each limb and one around his

neck in tattered worn clothes. Modern depictions show modern anchors or carved blocks rather than amorphous stones.

The role the Anchor Father was given is as a psychopomp to carry the deceased into the afterlife. Whether going to a reward or sinking forever in the crushing depths of nothingness, the Anchor Father will collect all in time. However, the Anchor Father is not omniscient so some may spend time at the bottom of the ocean before being collected by the Anchor Father.

While often associated with death at sea, the Anchor Father is often given offerings to show mercy to sailors and others who have gotten in over their heads. If the offering is accepted, then the Anchor Father will instead lift the lost soul to the surface. Some believe this is because the Anchor Father does not enjoy his work but does it as his duty as the eldest son.

Tormesha

The eldest daughter of the Oceanima, Tormesha is the matron of the winds and storms. It is said she flies around the world and in her wake are the winds which move ships, trees bow to, and waves are driven along. Tormesha is believed to revel in her role dancing back and forth across the world. Thankful for such a pleasant role, Tormesha is intensely loyal to the Oceanima and is at her beck and call whenever needed.

For this reason, Tormesha has taken to mimicking her mother's moods. When in a good mood pleasant calm wind carry pleasant smells and will carry ships with speed. However, should her mood sour, she can whip up disastrous storms and natural disasters. Some regard Tormesha as one of the most powerful figures in the Pantheon, only superseded by the Oceanima.

Tormesha is typically depicted as a human figure with wings on her feet and wrists she is generally shown as a smiling happy young woman or an adult woman full of wrath.

Gordo the Gold-Toothed

Revered as the scribe of the Oceanima, rather than recording history or facts, Gordo relishes in tallying the offerings brought in by the Anchor Father and records who has given what in a great scroll. Considered like the Book of Debtors used by non-Oromar Cormah, Gordo has an intense sense of smell and can tell what person gave the offering just by giving the item a sniff.

Meticulously, Gordo updates the offerings believing it his duty to ensure the Oceanima knows who has given what gifts. Gordo is depicted as a sharklike humanoid with hundreds of tentacles coming out of his lower body. Each one passes along an offering is brought to his nose and then passed into piles for the Oceanima. Many times, the Anchor Father may have to meet with Gordo to tell where to deliver a soul lost to the waters of the world.

Bartan the Ship Builder

According to Oromar legend, Bartan was born a mortal and was raised up to godhood after a long life of building ships. Believed to have been the Oceanima's most favored beloved, Bartan was gifted immortality for his work. Since then, Bartan has become a patron of all shipbuilders, carpenters, and crafters of all kinds.

Depicted as a young man with muscular arms and a tool bag, belt, or apron full of carpentry tools, Bartan is often worshipped by sprinkling some saw dust or wood chips into fast moving waters. This is mostly done by ship builders and carpenters to show they too wish to honor the first shipbuilder.

Other Minor Deities of the Oromar

There are numerous other minor deities in the Oromar pantheon, however, they can vary place to place or even ship to ship. Most Oromar simply accept these new minor deities into their pantheons, but revered the other ones detailed above across all groups of Oromar.

Stations of the Faith

Yamaron or Sea Caller

Leading gatherings of Oromarans is the Yamaron or Sea Caller in the vernacular. The Sea Caller leads their people by inspiring them to always court the favor of the sea and guiding their folks through the teachings of the sea. Most Yamaron will live near sources of moving water to ensure they have a connection to the sea one way or the other.

Vientomoldar or Windshaper

Vientomoldar or Windshapers hold a special place within Oromar culture. A Windshaper is a Thaumaturge who has been chosen by Tormesha and can help ensure ships find their way across the ocean. Shaping the winds to their will, a Vientomoldar can change the current of the wind and provide ships with a means to move even through becalmed waters. Many Cormah ships have contracted with a Windshaper to ensure they are never left stranded.

Contanist or Collector

Principally following the teachings of Gordo, the Gold-Toothed, the Collector ensures debts are paid and accounts are settled. Viewed by outsiders as just an accountant, the Contanist is responsible for ensuring the tenets of the faith where possible. Without a Contanist, some believe the Oceanima may not receive their offerings, or their debts and deeds may not be seen.

Initiations

Oromar initiations are generally highly personal affairs, where the Sea Caller or other faithful individual performing the ritual will meet with the prospective member and teach them the ways of the sea. This includes impressing upon them the importance of courting the sea's favor, what can be done to do so and learning the prospect's intended actions to do so.

Once this is done, the prospect must then recite the Oath of Salt and Wind. Once completed, the prospect is then immersed in water as much as possible. Ideally it would be fully submerged in the ocean, however, even simply pouring a pitcher of water over the prospect is considered enough.

Laws

Your love of the sea comes before all other things.

The one law considered inviolate among Oromar is they must love the sea with all they have. Before wealth, fame, reputation, family, or anything else. Their first love is the sea. This does not preclude them from loving other things, but the sea is first and foremost. This has caused problems among couples where one is an Oromar when the nonbeliever demands they are the believer's foremost love. Any who professes to loving something more than the sea are to be cast out and drowned.

By this law, Oromar are allowed to have as many or as little lovers as they want, however, none will come before the ocean.

Court the favor of the Sea in all things

For the Oromar, the faith demands their actions should seek to please the sea. While this can be any number of things, things that court displeasure are things such as sloth, staying out of water for more than a week, allowing a water source to become fouled, or hiding away from the world for selfish reasons. Many Oromar do not believe they need to punish transgressions against this law, as the sea will do that for them.

Leave nothing to the fearful and hopeless.

Much like the tempest, Oromar are expected to take from those who cannot or will not take care of themselves. This stems from the ship culture of being forced to brave even the worst storms otherwise all is lost. For many this tenet is looked at as a license to steal from others. Like the storm, if someone will not stand up to you, then you are free to take from them until they do stand up for themselves.

Chase the Horizon

To seek out all that is unknown is to become truly divine. Oromar are expected to always look forward and chase after opportunity and take the risk. If they do not, they give up seeing the wonders hidden within the world. Staying still and refusing to go beyond what they have is cowardly.

Pay your debts.

While this is simple wise advice, for the Oromarans it takes on several meanings. Everything in life comes at a cost. It is only fair to repay those debts. Oromarans often cite this law when they go out of their way to repay someone's kindness, or when holding a grudge against an enemy. Some go so far as keep their own small book of grievances and kindnesses to be repaid one day.

Virtues of the Oromar

Greed

A hunger for more is a sign of someone strong in the faith. Since the Oromar are expected to make offerings and always want more, a greedy Oromar is a good Oromar. This can be greed for new experiences, money, wine, etc. While considered a virtue, greed can become a sin if allowed to go too far or puts the Oromar in a deadly situation. Caution should temper greed to ensure the Oromar does not find themselves in over their heads.

Guile

Oromar should be slyly intelligent. In doing so, the Oromar can outwit opponents at every turn. Guile is believed to be one of the Oceanima's favorite traits in people. While it is cautioned to be careful with manipulation or lies, they are certainly permissible by the faith so long as they work towards beliefs.

Failings, cowardice, and even lies can be covered up with the appropriate amount of guile and quick wit.

Boldness

Going forth with boldness is a virtue among the Oromar because it will court good favor with the Oceanima. Cowards are rarely viewed favorably, however, many Oromar sites while they may retreat, they are using guile to elude and trick their enemies. Much like the mercurial nature of the sea, they are simply making moves others only see as cowardice.

Those with the fortitude to be bold in all things often find success and rarely miss an opportunity. As the sea rewards those who attract her attention, boldness is the easiest way to do this.

Vanity

Many Oromar strive to stand out both through action and physically. While this does not necessarily mean a person must be beautiful, they should present themselves so they can stand out in a crowd. Having pride in one's actions and dress is important to the Oromar. It is a common trait among the Oromar to seek out fancy clothing or if they cannot afford fancy clothing, at least wear bright colors or truly unique styles. If one cannot stand out, how will the sea ever know they exist?

Steadfastness

Oromar are expected to stand their ground when they are forced into a situation, they cannot use guile to get out of otherwise. When there is no other option, the Oromar believe you must stand up and fight tooth and nail. On the seas, if you do not do everything you can, the sea will swallow you with no remorse.

Passion

The Oromar embrace life's passions because without them, the world would be a boring, dreary place. Anything worth doing is worth doing with gusto. Many Oromar have made fearsome reputations simply using confidence, passion, and

bluster to make their way into the esteemed circles of the world.

This extends from being social, to projects the person works on, to the pursuit of a dream. Regardless of the goal or even lack thereof, it should be pursued with a doggedness others will envy.

Wanderlust

In a sense, many Oromar find having a sense of wanderlust, a desire to see other places, to keep moving, is an admirable trait. Without that desire, people risk slipping into despair, apathy, and isolation. Wishing to see the mysteries of the world, many Oromar embraced the desire to travel and explore.

Holy Texts

There are two texts considered holy among the Oromar. The first is the Book of Debtors. While the book itself was not created as part of the faith, many Oromarans believe it is a symbol of the debts we must all pay and was one of the few earthly things anyone can point to which was directly endorsed by the Oceanima herself.

While the Oromarans certainly will keep up their debts, many view the Book of Debtors more like a relic than a true holy text. Instead, each ship or home with an Oromaran in it will have a set of the Scrolls of the Deeps. These Scrolls are filled with stories of Oromarans who embody what it means to be Oromaran. Used as a collection of parables to teach and educate the young and new members, the Scrolls of the Deep can differ from region to region.

Most are produced on the Archipelago and shipped to different parts of the world. Some clever scribes have determined the best stories for regions and focus on only copying those as a comprehensive set of the scrolls would likely fill a bookcase with ease. Instead, each regional version is organized to have stories people of those regions can easily relate to and understand.

Iconography

Oromar generally wear a symbol known as the Wave of Faith. It is mostly done as a blue or green ocean wave on a golden yellow field with a sea creature generally also present somewhere on it.

There are rumors of certain sea creatures often denote different things, such as being a pirate, a merchant, a warrior, a mystic, or even as simple as being married. While this is not a formalized code, many collectives of Oromarans have adopted this idea to help them recognize each other and what they do so they can be put to task where they fit. These codes are localized and not always consistent. Once someone learns the code, however, it becomes easier to understand who does what within the Oromaran community.

Holidays

Oromarans do not hold to any holiday, considering every day to be a holy day where they can celebrate. It is not uncommon for Oromarans to join in the celebration of other holidays as a chance to hobnob and spread their reputations though.

Some Oromarans will use celebrations for the Scallywag's Boast. During the Boast, two to six Oromarans will compete in a form of one upmanship. They will tell tales, gamble, fight, or any other form of competition. Generally, during the Boast it is expected each person lie, cheat, or steal whatever they must come out on top. However, being caught in a lie, stealing, or cheating immediately pushes someone out of the Boast.

In most cases, the winner of the Boast is then celebrated and cheered while the loser(s) must then buy the winner their drinks for the rest of the evening.

Marriage

Oromar have come to adopt several forms of marriage putting their own twist on it. The most common form of the Oromaran marriage ceremony is generally done on the deck of a ship or on a pier. The guests either gather around on the ship or stay seated at the end of the dock while a Sea Caller speaks about the wonders of marriage but cautions both to remember who their first love is.

The couple are usually dressed in little clothing for the ceremony as many rituals of the Oromar are done since they involve getting wet. Adopting several styles of things such as fishing nets for veils, ships rope for handfasting's, and flowers generally found in or around water are common sights to see in these ceremonies.

After the couple has agreed to their union, the Sea Caller then gives a call to the ocean and the couple are expected to jump into the sea and should come up together. This symbolizes they both will honor themselves and the ocean's wishes forever.

Afterward, there generally is a rowdy party including much drinking and singing.

Funerary Practices

The Oromar believe the easiest way to get into the afterlife is to have their bodies cast into the sea, or at least spend one entire day submerged in water. Many Oromar will go to great lengths to ensure their bodies are dropped into the ocean so they can be collected by the Anchor Father.

Wealthy Oromar sometimes will have their possessions sunk with them as a final offering to the Oceanima. Some notable captains have gone as far as to load the hulls of their ships with all their worldly belongings only to sail the ship into the Ravenous Sea to sink into the depths with everything they have.

For many Oromar, they believe once Gordo the Gold-Tooth has tallied their offerings, they will be welcome to take them back in the afterlife.

The Soul/Afterlife

To the Oromar, the soul is composed of several parts. Each part represents the virtues of the Oromar. By living a life by these virtues, the soul grows stronger and will be easier to find by the Anchor Father. Once the Oromaran has died, their soul will serve as a beacon for the Anchor Father to then carry them off to their final rest.

If the soul lived up to the traditions of the Oromar, they are carried into the City of Cazdeleon. Within Cazdeleon, the soul will spend the rest of eternity beneath the waves enjoying all the finest things within the sea. From there they are welcome to travel the mortal world as ghosts to explore and see all the things they had missed in life.

For those found wanting by the Anchor Father, he instead fits them with anchors similar to his own, and casts them in to the Cleft of Nostramisior. There the poor wretch will sink being crushed by the depths and become food for the horrors of the deepest reaches of the sea. Tales of all sorts of monsters and evil creatures exist regarding the Cleft of Nostramisior. Each one hungers for the souls cast down to them in an ancient bargain with the Oceanima. They would reside in the depths away from the living and would be fed the souls of the damned in exchange.

Superstitions

The Oromar have a habit of adopting other superstitions believing covering all your bases will ensure they have good luck.

- Wearing the symbols of other faiths allows you to call on those deities, who are still second to the Ocean, to help you. If they answer, you have been crafty enough to even fool a deity.
- When inland, you should always carry a vial or bottle of water with you so the Oceanima can hear your prayers and be aware of your actions. If you wish to remain secretive, leave this bottle or vial behind.
- Shiny objects bring joy to the Oceanima, offerings of shiny objects are often most appreciated, especially if they are valuable.
- If something made by the hands of people is found in the gut of a caught fish, it is a rejected offering and should be cast away.
- If your current debt in the Book of Debtors is more than the number of days you've been alive, you will immediately be sent to the Cleft of Nostramisior upon your death.
- An unclaimed fart is a prank of Tormesha played on the people who smelt it.
- The Oceanima is particularly fond of children's laughter. Oromar will receive great luck if they protect children whenever possible.
- Attempting to drink sea water runs the risk of insulting the Oceanima. Fouling small pools of water, especially inland, is a way to anger the pantheon of the Oromar.

They do not enjoy swimming through your waste any more than you would while watching their people through the waters of the world.

Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturges of the Oromar almost always have the Sea Aspect of the Divine, and one other from the following list: Chaos, Sky, Deception, Cold, or Fury.

Sects of the Oromar

The Gilded Grin

Among the Oromar, the Gilded Grin is viewed as a somewhat unsavory group. A collective of merchants who will use any means to amass vast amounts of wealth have taken to revering Gordo the Gold-Tooth as second only to the Oceanima. For them, the amassing of wealth will surely gain the Oceanima's favor by collecting art, money, and other objects of great value before taking them with them into the afterlife to enjoy similar wealth for eternity.

The Dredged

The Dredged are a collective of Mortaeans both from Cormah originally and others who have taken the teachings of the Oceanima and use them to plumb the depths of the ocean. Many have taken to raiding and pillaging ships only to sink them and then collect the goods afterward. There are some Oromar who claim this is sacrilege because once the goods are sunk, they belong to the Oceanima.

Minor Faiths and Cults of Anthuli

There are dozens of minor faiths and cults which have sprung up over the centuries, few have ever achieved more than a few hundred members across the continent. Many are confined to a region and do not spread for one reason or another. Many of the Minor Faiths and Cults have sprung up after the 5th Expansion War trying to gain a foothold within Graewynn and attract a following. Some have been more successful than others, but the common folk are seeking some answer to their concerns or some semblance of safety among other like-minded individuals.

Cult of the Winddancer

In the northern reaches of Graewynn, the Dagani have resurrected a cult known as the Cult of the Winddancer. This cult worshiped the Equine Windddancer who is said to have taught the Dagani everything they would need to become the greatest riders in history. This cult views horses with a mixture of reverence and divine right to claim any horse they come across in the name of their god.

Holding true to being called a cult, they only allow those with a great affection for horses to become one of their members and their practices are held away from the prying eyes of others. One thing is for certain, they are deeply involved in the Dagan Revival and have trained many in the arts of mounted combat.

Cult of the Scar

Those who have traveled the Daemonwake have told stories of an Ork'rus group living among the corrupted lands and attempting to contact the evils which created the Wake. Rumors of this Cult of the Scar suggest these Ork'rus have begun studying the Wake to learn more about their roots and potentially undo the Ritual of Transublimation and bring down the walls between the mortal world and the spirit world. Few believe they can do it, however, their use of Blood Magic and willingness to summon demonic creatures has many worried this could lead to something worse than the Daemonwake.

The Miraculous Union

Just outside the northern borders of the Narseth Wastes, a movement has formed which claims to welcome Thaumaturges of all kinds. Called the Miraculous Union, they believe all beliefs to be valid and exist as a kaleidoscopic interpretation of the One. This being is said to be all powerful and mortals can only interpret a single facet of the One. However, this faith has struggled to gain much ground due to numerous instances of infighting amongst themselves over how to go about worshipping or organizing the faith. The Union believes only Thaumaturges have the right to join because those who have not yet become a Thaumaturge have not given of themselves to the One and as such cannot be saved until they do become a Thaumaturge.