



## Part Six: Religion within the Archipelago



The Empire is made up of many different people believing many different things. Some follow their religion to the exclusion of others, but most will make an offering at the shrine of many of the following gods. Some people devote themselves to the worship of one god, but this does not necessarily mean that they do not believe in others. Larger cities may have shrines or temples to many gods. Only the most well known religions are listed here; there are a large number of regional variations and sects.

In addition to the religions listed below there are a number of illegal or proscribed religions. These are not commonly available to players but if you are particularly interested in playing a member of one of these then please contact the organisers. If you want to write your own religion then we would be pleased to incorporate it; again, please contact the organisers.

### Gods and Religions

**Vortainius:** The God of Justice, his **Grand Church of Justice** is the most organised religious body in evidence to date. The church rules the Imperial Realm of Tarin. The Hierophant of Justice usually leads the Church, but the Prince-Bishop (the Realm Lord) of Tarin must be a separate person. Devotees of the Grand Church are provided with schooling in the priestly ways, matters of law for the region within which they dwell and are allowed access to the Great Library within Tarin itself. They are then ordained as Priests of Justice and sent forth to proselytise the way of Vortainius, to offer their services as judges of disputes, and to assist local authorities in the apprehension of those who have broken the law. They are fully supported in this aim by the Imperium, which recognises their right to do so. All Realm Lords must appoint a Priest of the Grand Church as their Realm High Justice who will administer law in that Realm. This is currently the largest organised religious group in the Archipelago, having spread from Tarin some three hundred years ago.

**Father Beast and Mother Wind:** A dual religion espoused almost exclusively by the Wind-Dancers of the south-eastern Archipelago, involving animal rites and propitiation of the wind-goddess. Only women may devote themselves to the Mother and only men to the Father. Children of the Maelstrom are known to occasionally worship a variant of these deities known as Father Earth and Mother Lightning.

**White Eyali and Eridun the Silver :** The twin deities of the Shadow Children, Eyali is said to whisper secrets of the Spirit Families at the core of the earth while Eridun sends his blessings down from his great temple on the moon, and pulls the strings that move the stars. Moderately common among the Shadow Children, Eridun is a popular god of Astral Magi everywhere. There is said to be a Cult among the Whisperers who worship an aspect known as the Black Eyali. Very little is known of this faith, but it is apparently frowned on.

**The Dreaming God:** Popular among coastal communities and Tritons, this was once the formal faith of the Empire, though it fell out of fashion after the arrival of the Sea Princes. The Dreaming God is a personification of the power of the sea, which is strongly associated with the dreaming mind of the people of the archipelago. The worshippers of the Dreaming God are called **the Chosen of the Dreamer**, they are known for their ability to interpret certain types of dreams.

**Marnea, she who is clothed in Blood:** Marnea is the incarnation of battle; she resides wherever wars are fought. Her worship is a combination of fear and awe. **Marneans** vary in their beliefs and their numbers are few. The worship of Marnea does not appeal to many of the citizens of the Empire, although many will give a small donation at her shrines to avert her gaze from them and theirs.

**Ahatha:** A deity mostly worshipped by Giants, dedicated to wisdom and peace; many stories and legends surround him. He is credited with being creator of the world and all the races and creation and peace are what please him. **The Kin of Ahatha Centar** are few, but renowned as having unique abilities.

**The Way of the Breath:** is unusual in that worshippers do not revere one deity, but rather have a set of beliefs relating to spirits everywhere and within themselves. Considered rather eccentric by the majority this relatively new religion is however very popular, particularly among the poor. This is perhaps due to its lack of hierarchy and emphasis on the importance of deed over word.





**Abbast:** A goddess of growth, her worship is common amongst Scatterlings and anyone involved with cultivating plants or animals, she is a popular deity all over the Empire. **Abbastrians** are often called upon by the Empire to advise in situations where food supplies are threatened.

**Yarl, He who Ends:** This religion is one focussed firmly on the next life - Yarl is the God of Death. Particularly popular amongst the Corpse Moss possibly because of its strong anti-undead dogma, but also widespread through the Empire, **The Seekers of Yarl** focus strongly on societal rules and codes.

**The Brethren of Splinters:** A murky, secretive and little known religion, they are characterised by their absolute disbelief in any form of deity or divinity. They are renowned hedonists believing that life should be lived to the full. They are also generally distrusted and perhaps the least well-liked of all the religious groups.

**Haddah:** An androgynous deity. **The Children of Haddah** strive for perfection of the form (including the mental and spiritual form) and increasing understanding of that through beauty. There are two extremes amongst the Children, the first favours pure aesthetics and often appeals to the richer patrons. They often sponsor art works and poetry. The second concentrates more on purity of form, and mathematical study. More extreme devotees of the second type can go as far as attempting to purify natural forms to make them more pleasing to Haddah. Most of the Children's beliefs fall somewhere in the middle of the two extremes though. More devoted members of the religion can be recognised by their wearing of masks.

**Foedus:** Foedus is the God of the Sun. The **Foedei** believe that Foedus was created by the sparks from the swords of two other divinities, Ascar and Trith, during a battle between them. They believe that these divinities are moving towards another great clash and that when this occurs they will conscript all beings to fight for them as mindless drones. The only way to avoid conscription is to become strong enough to resist their call to arms. The Foedei aim to spend as much time as possible in the sunlight and so despise Whisperers and Children of the Moon as weak, because they shirk Foedus' light. This religion is popular amongst mercenaries.

## Ranks within the Priesthood

Within each religion there are three levels of service to the god (corresponding to the skills Devotion, Reverence and Piety). The names of these vary from religion to religion and region to region. If you begin the game with these skills then the events described below will have already happened to you up to the skill level you possess. If you wish to achieve a greater level of skill after having played then you must fulfil the criteria below, and have the Experience available and the prerequisite skills to buy the skill for your character.

To become a Devotee the person must find a Reverent or Celebrant to cast a Mystery of Conversion. Then they study and pray until the God accepts them. The same process occurs again to gain favour with the God, with the Celebrant performing a Mystery of Dedication to start the Devotee's process to the rank of Reverent, and then again to begin becoming a Celebrant. These Mysteries often take place in highly formalised rituals, and are often a cause for celebrations. If the vows sworn to the God are broken or the person does not follow into the religion they have sworn to, then the God may well take vengeance.

## Strictures

Each religion has a series of Strictures, actions that are forbidden or compulsory to worshippers. There are Strictures at all levels of worship from Devotee upwards. If these Strictures are broken then unfortunate events tend to occur. Often the God removes their gift of power to the worshipper, and sometimes worse punishments are inflicted. Curses are sometimes employed for minor transgressions. If you are playing a character bound by Strictures and feel you may have broken one, please inform a referee as soon as you possibly can. If you want to write your own religion, please note that you will need to think of one to three Strictures for each rank of the priesthood.

## Mysteries

You will be given a list of Mysteries that your character can cast with your character sheet. The number you receive will depend on the number of Mysteries skills you have purchased with your starting character points. Please read the general section on **Playing A Spell Caster** and also note the following:

## Faith Costs for Casting Mysteries

Whenever a celebrant or reverent casts a mystery they are required to expend a number of faith points, being unable to do so means that the mystery can not be cast.

- . Lesser Mysteries require the expenditure of one faith point.
- . Greater Mysteries require the expenditure of three faith points.
- . Divine Mysteries vary in their faith point requirements. Faith requirements for Divine Mysteries are stated in the Mystery description.





## Ceremonies

Some Greater Mysteries are Ceremonies; these are denoted by having 'Ceremony (number)' in the description. This means that the mystery requires a short ceremony to be performed needing the number of celebrants/reverents specified and lasting at least five minutes. Each participant must follow the same deity and at least one (who leads the Ceremony) must have knowledge of the Greater Mystery, all other participants must cast the Lesser Mystery of "Offering Worship" during the Ceremony all spending the requisite amount of Faith. All Ceremonies require the presence of a referee.



## Healing Mysteries

Some Mysteries allow you to heal people. Many of these Mysteries allow you to perform healing that only lasts until Dusk or Dawn (see the general section on Spell-casting for more information on durations). If poison effects or wounds are cured temporarily in this way then at the end of the duration they return as if freshly inflicted with the full duration count remaining. So if a poison had an original duration count of 2 minutes then the target would have the full 2 minutes remaining in which to receive fresh healing in. Note that a call of "*Dispel Effects*" will not remove the effects of temporary healing mysteries.

Healing Mysteries with a permanent duration do not wear off after any period of time; the wound is closed as if it had healed naturally.

Healing Mysteries may not restore Health Levels to crippled limbs unless specifically stated in the description.

## Blessings

In some ways Blessings are very similar to Curses (see Playing a Spell Caster). If you decide that someone is worthy of being blessed by the God through you, then you cast the relevant Mystery. Then you will need to find a referee and inform them of who you have blessed and what the Conditions for the Blessing are. As with Curses a Blessing sometimes takes a while to take effect on the recipient.

If the recipient of the Blessing breaks the Conditions then they will lose the effects of the Blessing, as the God will retract it. It is also very important to note that should that happen the Celebrant who cast the Blessing will usually be punished by the god for bestowing a Blessing on an unworthy person.

Conditions should be in line with your religion, so for instance it would be appropriate for a Celebrant of Vortainius to lay a Condition on their Blessing that the recipient does not break Imperial Law. Celebrants can put as many Conditions on Blessings as they like, and unlike Curses they are additional not alternative. Thus the recipient must not break any of the Conditions. If the Celebrant dies, then the Blessing usually dissipates.

Individuals may not bless themselves.

## Devotee Only Mysteries

Some Mysteries are denoted as '**Dev Only**'. They only work on Devotees, Reverents or Celebrants of the same religion as the caster.

## Herb Bundles and Binding Thorns

Some mysteries allow the enchantment of Alchemical Ingredients to produce charms effective against undead creatures.

**Herb Bundles** may be created by preparing a pouch filled with one dose of Wild Garlic and one dose of Silver Shavings. The pouch must then have the mystery "Cantrip to Enchant Herb Bundle" cast upon it. Once created the Herb Bundle may be used by clearly indicating one target within vocal range, raising the herb bundle towards it and chanting the following vocals:

*"By my faith in [patron religion of caster] you may not approach me"*

While the vocals are maintained the target will not be able to approach the wielder of the Herb Bundle, however only lesser undead are effected in this way. Once enchanted Herb Bundles do not lose their powers but may only be used with effect by their creator.





**Binding Thorns** may be created by taking one dose of Whitethorns and enchanting them via the mystery "Charm to Enchant Binding Thorns". Binding Thorns can be used by the caster to prevent greater undead from moving from the spot. Binding Thorns may be used by burying them in ground over which the target recently passed (in their footsteps). Once this is done the target, who must still be within vocal range, should be clearly indicated and the following vocals used:

*"By my faith in [patron religion of caster] I bind you"*

While the caster maintains the vocals the target will not be able to move from the spot. Unlike Herb Bundles Binding Thorns are destroyed once the caster stops chanting, target is slain or somehow manages to escape from the binding. If the thorns are removed from the ground the enchantment ends, the undead is free to move and the thorns are spent.

## Sample Mysteries

Presented below are a few of the more common mysteries from various faiths of the Empire.

Name: **Salve the Believer**

Level: **Lesser Mystery**      Duration: **Permanent**      Range: **Touch**

**Dev Only**

Allows the caster to touch a location on a fellow devotee of his faith and instantly heal that location back to full Health Levels.

Name: **Touch of the Slumbering Spirit**

Level: **Lesser Mystery**      Duration: **1 minute**      Range: **Touch**

Allows the caster to put a single individual to sleep by touch. The victim must be touched at which point the call "*sleep 1 minute*" may be made.

Name: **Blast of Divine Retribution**

Level: **Lesser Mystery**      Duration: **Instant**      Range: **Touch**

Allows the caster to make the call "*strike*" (one hit to all locations) versus a single clearly indicated target within vocal range.

## Relics

Relics are items that have taken on significance for a religion. They are usually associated with charismatic or particularly dedicated members of that religion. These items resonate so strongly with the power of the God that they develop a power of their own. Relics can only ever be activated by members of the religion that they belong to, and several have been known to do very unpleasant things to non-believers who try to use them. Nobody has ever been able to work out how to replicate the process of producing a Relic; their appearance is always a miracle, chosen by the God. Relics are denoted within the game by a coloured ribbon, see the section on **Ribbons and Laminates** for more details.

