

chapter four: gods and religion

The pantheon known to the humans of Cerilia is not the same pantheon recognized by the ancient tribes who came to Cerilia before the War of Shadow. The old gods gave up their existences in order to destroy their evil brother Azrai at Mount Deismaar. Their essences imbued hundreds of champions and common soldiers with the beginnings of Cerilia's bloodlines, and have shaped history every since. More importantly, the god's mortal champions, closest to the old gods in their ideals, took the brunt of the divine essence released by the gods' death and were elevated to create a new pantheon.

The new gods numbered eight; Haelyn, assuming Anduiras reign over nobility and war; Erik, the druid, ruling nature in Reynir's stead; Sera, taking the place of Brenna as the goddess of commerce and fortune; Avani, taking the mantle of Basaia as lady of reason; the Vos warriors Kriesha and Belinik, absorbing the energies of Azrai to become the Ice Witch and the Prince of Terror; Nesirie, absorbing the power of Masela and gaining power over the sea; and Ruornil, inheriting from Vorynn domain over magic and arcane secrets.

At first, the new gods worked closely together in the flesh; they fought, loved, had children, and helped the peoples of Cerilia recover from the War of Shadow. Nesirie and Haelyn formed a strong alliance and bore Cuiraeen, a new god of battle and storm. Likewise, Avani and Erik bore Laerme, goddess of fire and passion, and Sera and Ruornil bore Eloele, goddess of the night. As centuries passed, however, wars and feuds between mortal followers ensued, fragmenting many of the god's alliances and creating argument and rivalry. Fearing a repetition of Deismaar in any future conflicts, the gods agreed to a universal pact: Never to battle each other in physical form.

The powers continue to increase the prestige and well-being of their worshippers, priests, and temples, but, for the most part, now restrict their guidance to dreams, inspiration, and prophesy. A few scholars may argue that gods no longer exist, and perhaps never existed, but most Cerilians believe implicitly in the existence of their gods. The divine abilities of blooded scions and divine spellcasters provide seemingly irrefutable proof of the continued existence of the gods and the history of their ascension at Deismaar.

worship

Throughout Cerilia, personal faith is an important characteristic of every character, from the meanest peasant to the highest lord. Most people of Cerilia say an occasional prayer to more than one deity on a regular basis, but dedicate their lives to one patron deity. Cerilians believe that one's patron deity oversees all of the important aspects of existence. No one deity controls birth, coming of age, marriage, death, or the afterlife; each deity cares for such needs for their faithful.

Each major human culture, and most humanoid cultures in general, have a specific god that looks after the well being of the people of that culture or race. This does not preclude members of that race from worshipping another patron deity, but most characters naturally seek advice, guidance, and support from the faith of their people. The gods of the human pantheon have complex relationships, but most humans pay

respect to all of the gods that are not considered enemies of their faith. An Anuirean Knight might worship Haelyn, but also pray to Sera, Lady of Fortune, before taking a great risk. Table 4-1 lists the principle faiths of Cerilia by race/culture. As long as one's own deity is not at odds with another, acts of simply piety towards the other deity are not considered offensive.

As a general rule, Cerilian deities do not overtly punish sinful behavior or reward faithfulness. The deity's rewards and punishments are measured in the afterlife. The clergy of a deity's church are responsible for meting out punishment and acclaims in the mortal world.

Divine spellcasting

A divine spellcaster forges a personal connection to a source of divine power in the rituals and rites that bind them as a priest of a religious order. Once forged, this divine link allows the channeling of divine energy and the casting of divine spells. Cerilian deities do not (and perhaps can not) judge how this power is used; the powers are granted to men, and it falls to men to decide how best such powers shall be used. Should a spellcaster act outside the precepts of his or her faith, it falls to the clergy of the faith to guide or punish the offender.

A divine spellcaster who forsakes his or her deity does not lose the ability to cast divine spells; only a ceremony of excommunication is capable of severing the divine link between man and god once forged. Should a divine spellcaster wish to take up the faith of another deity, they may do so without immediate penalty. Accepting ordination in a new faith forever severs a spellcaster's connection to their previous deity. Divine spellcasters who abandon their deity are often considered to be guilty of most heinous blasphemy and may find themselves harshly judged by their peers (as well, perhaps, in the afterlife).

All blooded scions contain within them some small spark of divinity; the more powerful the bloodline, the more powerful the spark. Any scion with a True bloodline is capable of channeling enough divine energy to cast divine spells without a patron deity. The divine abilities of any scion that has accepted a bloodform far exceed those that do not. Scions that have a completed bloodform may cast divine spells without a patron deity with only a Great bloodline. Blood formed scions with True bloodlines are capable of forging a link with worshippers that will allow the casting of divine spells.

State religions

Throughout Cerilia, priests are held in high regard and most nations have a recognized state religion. In general, the state religion of any realm is the faith with the most levels of temple holdings in the realm. In cases where the measure is very close, the state religion may vary from one ruling line to the next (or even one ruler to the next), as different dynasties declare their own religious loyalties.

Even kings must bow to the wishes of their state religion in matters of spiritual consequence. When the time comes to install an heir, the church must provide support by performing the coronation ceremony to complete the investiture. Without the support of the church, the new regent receives only half of

the normal regency points. The church (or churches) performing the coronation becomes recognized as the official state religion under that regent's rule. The official state religion has the authority to challenge any landed regent's actions (or even his right to rule) if they fly in the face of the precepts of the faith.

Churches often claim the right to hold their own courts and to administer the enforcement of a variety of religious crimes (canon law), including blasphemy, heresy, and witchcraft (the use of magic to cause harm to others). Such claims can bring them in conflict with secular legal powers unless the realm's regent supports the churches activities. The methods of trial and the penalties handed out vary significantly from one faith to another, but most temple courts are required to obtain secular consent to death penalties or any trials against nobility; this formality is often ignored by some faiths.

Patron deities

Cerilian gods generally prefer worshippers of a specific race. Although such deities may allow an occasional worshiper of a differing race, they are not often welcome among the clergy. Humans may be clerics of any human deity, but are most likely to worship the god associated with their tribe, culture, or region.

Your character may or may not worship a specific patron deity. Clerics, druids, and paladins always have a specific patron deity. If you want your character to have a patron deity, consider first the deities most appropriate to her race (Table 4-1: *Human deities by region*, and Table 4-2: *Non-human deities*), or class and alignment (Table 4-3: *Human deities by class*).

Table 4-1: human deities by region

Culture	Deity
Anuirean	Haelyn or by class and alignment
Brecht	Sera or by class and alignment
Khinasi	Avani or by class and alignment
Rjurik	Erik or by class and alignment
Vos	Belinik, Kriesha, or by class and alignment

Table 4-2: non-human deities

Race	Deities
Dwarf	Moradin
Elf	None
Goblinoid	Kartathok
Halfling	Any
Orog	Torazan

Table 4-3: human deities by class

Class	Deities (Alignment)
Bard	Laerme (CG)
Barbarian	Cuirac�en (CG), Erik (N), Belinik (CE)
Cleric	Any
Druid	Erik (N)
Fighter	Haelyn (LG), Cuirac�en (CG), Belinik (CE)
Magician	Avani (LN), Ruornil (N)

Class	Deities (Alignment)
Noble	Haelyn (LG), Sera (CN)
Paladin	Haelyn (LG), Cuirac�en (CG), Nesirie (NG), Avani (LN)
Ranger	Erik (N)
Rogue	Sera (CN), Elo�le (CN)
Sorcerer	Avani (LN), Ruornil (N)
Wizard	Avani (LN), Ruornil (N)

Time, seasons, and holidays

Time is measured differently depending on where in Cerilia one happens to be. The Brecht measure time by tide and moon, while the Khinasi track the passage of days, months and years by the position of the sun. The Vos generally don't care about days or months – they measure time by the naming of years, with the first snowfall after a brief summer beginning a new year.

One of the lasting legacies of the Anuirean Empire is the standardization that it brought to the realms in its far-reaching domain. Although most regions of Cerilia still maintain a local calendar, scholars consider the Anuirean calendar to be the standard for marking the passage of time. Anuireans base their calendar on the orbit of the moon and the movement of the constellation of Haelyn, the protector. The Anuirean *Book of Days* defines twelve months to a year, four weeks to a month, and eight days to a week. A year has 388 days. The four annual days not part of any month have become times to celebrate and reflect. These days fall upon the vernal equinox (the *Day of Rebirth*), the Summer solstice (The *Night of Fire*, when a show of falling stars results from the annual passage through a meteor belt), the autumnal equinox (the *Veneration of the Sleeping*), and the winter solstice (the *Eve of the Dead*).

The 12 months of the Anuirean calendar begin with the Day of Rebirth, the vernal equinox. The month *Sarimiere* is the first of the new year, followed by *Talienir*, then *Roelir*. After Haelyn's Festival, the month of *Haelynir* begins. *Anarire* and *Deismir* (named for the Godswar's final battle) follow in succession, with the Veneration of the Sleeping next. *Erntenir*, the month of harvest, leads to *Sehnir*, then *Emmanir*, just before the Eve of the Dead. Then comes the coldest month, *Keltier*, which flows into *Faniele*, then *Pasiphiel*, and again, the Day of Rebirth.

Table 4-4: cycle of the year

Month	Name	Common name
	Day of Rebirth / New Year	Spring Equinox
1	Sarimiere	Spring I
2	Talienir	Spring II
3	Roelir	Spring III
	Night of Fire / Haelyn's Festival	Summer Solstice
4	Haelynir	Summer I
5	Anarire	Summer II
6	Deismir	Summer III
	Veneration of the Sleeping	Vernal Equinox
7	Erntenir	Fall I
8	Sehnir	Fall II
9	Emmanir	Fall III
	Eve of the Dead	Winter Solstice
10	Keltier	Winter I
11	Faniele	Winter II
12	Pasiphiel	Winter III
	Day of Rebirth / New Year	Spring Equinox

Anuireans devote six of the week's eight days to work, giving the remainder over to leisure. The days, from work's beginning to rest's end, are: *Firlen*, *Renlen*, *Dielen*, *Varilen*, *Branlen*, *Barlen*, *Mierlen*, and *Taelen*.

Table 4-5: days of the week

Day	Name	Common name
1	Firlen	Firstday
2	Relen	Secondday
3	Dielen	Thirdday
4	Varilen	Forthday
5	Branlen	Fifthday
6	Barlen	Sixthday
7	Mierlen	Seventhday/Restday
8	Thelen	Eighthday/Godsday

Aebrynis's days are 24 hours long, divided into night and day by the setting of the sun. The length of the night varies by season. Throughout most of Cerilia, the Festival of Rebirth sees almost 16 hours of daylight, whereas the Eve of the Dead sees as little as 8. Aebrynis's moon has a 32-day period, thus each month of the Anuirean calendar is exactly four 8-day weeks. Each month starts with the new moon, the moon waxes as the month progresses and then wanes as the month draws to a close.

Table 4-6: phases of the moon

Day	Phase of the Moon
32, 1, 2	New
8, 9, 10	Crescent (waxing)
16, 17, 18	Full moon
24, 25, 26	Crescent (waning)
32, 1, 2	New

Almost 2,000 years after the destruction of the old gods, Anuire's current yearly reckoning is 551 *Michaeline* (551 MR) or 551 after the death of Michael Roele, last Emperor of Anuire. In Khinasi lands, the year is 2039 MA (dating from the Masetian Arrival in Cerilia). In certain other parts of Cerilia, the year is 1524 HC (Haelyn's Count), recording the years since the battle of Mount Deismaar.

The 22nd day of Deismir (sixthday in the third week of Summer III) is celebrated through Cerilia as the anniversary of the Godswar. In much of Cerilia, the celebrations focus not on the battle of Mount Deismaar, but rather on the ascent of the current gods to divinity.

The noble warrior god Haelyn is the protector and brother to Roele, the founder of the Anuirean Empire. Naturally, the

astronomers based in the City of Anuire in those long-ago days chose the constellation of Haelyn to help them measure time. This constellation, six stars high, looks like a warrior *en garde* and is fully visible from southern Anuire at the summer solstice. With each passing month after this solstice, one star slips below the southern horizon. When the last star – Haelyn's head, or the *Crown of glory* – falls beneath the horizon, the Eve of the Dead has come. Haelyn's constellation hides only for the single night of the winter solstice, but it's a night of frantic prayer, for many fear the Shadow World's influence grows strongest when Haelyn's constellation does not watch over his people. Of course, Anuireans living farther north must endure even more time away from Haelyn's gaze (and longer nights). As protection from the Shadow World, people in the north also venerate other deities, particularly Erik.

cerilian deities

Each deity description follows the same general format.

Deity name (level of power)

Each entry begins with the deity's common name among their race/culture of primary worship. Following the name is the deity's level of power. In descending order, the levels of power are greater deity, intermediate deity, lesser deity, and demigod. These ranks represent relative levels of power among deities only and do not affect the abilities or spells of the deity's divine spellcasters.

Titles and aliases

A few of the more common titles used by a deity's worshippers are listed under each entry. This is not an exhaustive list, but represents several of the names by which a deity is commonly invoked. If a deity's name differs between different cultures/races, the deity's regional name is also listed by region.

Symbol

The deity's symbol is used by the faithful to represent the deity. The holy symbol used by clerics of the deity must take the form of the deity's symbol, although it can vary significantly in size, cost, and utility.

Alignment

Table 4-7: Human deities

Name	Symbol	Portfolio	Worshippers
Avani	Setting sun	Sun, reason, magic	Khinasi, scholars, philosophers, magicians
Belinik	Crossed axes	Battle, feuds, fear	Vos men, fighters, barbarians, tyrants
Cuiráécen	Sword and lighting	Storms, conflict, battle	Warriors, the reckless
Eloéle	Black dagger	Night, darkness, thieves, deception	Rogues, thieves, smugglers, spies, liars
Erik	Oak tree	Forests, hunting, nature	Rjurik, druids, rangers, hunters, barbarians
Haelyn	Sword and sunburst	Courage, justice, chivalry, rulership, war	Anuireans, regents, officers, paladins, nobles
Kriesha	White hand	Winter, hardship, beasts of the cold	Vos women, barbarians, witches
Laerme	Harp and flame	Fire, love, art	Bards, artisans, young lovers
Nesirie	Trident and wave	Ocean, grief, healing, remembrance	Masetians, healers, sailors, mourners
Ruornil	Moon and night sky	Night, moon, magic	Bards, magicians, sorcerers, wizards
Sera	Silver scales	Wealth, luck	Brecht, merchants, rogues, bards

Name (Power)	Alignment	Favored Weapon	Domains
Avani (G)	Lawful Neutral	Shortspear	Knowledge, Law, Magic, <i>Reason</i> , Sun
Belinik (I)*	Chaotic Evil	Greataxe	Chaos, Evil, Strength, <i>Terror</i> , War
Cuiráécen (L)	Chaotic Good	Longsword or shortspear	Chaos, Good, Strength, <i>Storm</i> , War
Eloéle (L)	Chaotic Neutral	Dagger	Chaos, Illusion, <i>Night</i> , Trickery
Erik (G)	Neutral	Greataxe or shortspear	Animal, Earth, Plant, <i>Wilderness</i>
Haelyn (G)	Lawful Good	Greatsword or bastard sword	Good, <i>Justice</i> , Law, <i>Nobility</i> , War
Kriesha (L)*	Lawful Evil	Light mace or heavy mace	Evil, Law, <i>Suffering</i> , <i>Winter</i>
Laerme (L)	Chaotic Good	Shortbow	Chaos, <i>Charm</i> , <i>Fire</i> , Good
Nesirie (I)	Neutral Good	Trident	Good, Healing, Protection, <i>Sea</i>
Ruornil (L)	Neutral	Quarterstaff	Knowledge, Magic, <i>Moon</i> , <i>Spell</i>
Sera (I)	Chaotic Neutral	Light flail or heavy flail	Chaos, Luck, <i>Trade</i> , Travel

*See the deity's description for special rules regarding selection of this deity as patron.

The deity's alignment provides a guideline for the general behavior of their faithfuls. Each sect of a deity's religion has an alignment. A sect's alignment can differ by at most one step from the deity's alignment.

Likewise, a cleric's alignment can differ by no more than one step from the alignment of their particular church. Therefore, most of a deity's clerics will have the alignment of the deity. It is thus possible (but uncommon) for a cleric to have an alignment that differs by two steps from her deity's listed alignment.

Portfolio

The deity's portfolio includes those areas of human experience or nature over which the deity claims dominion, power, and control.

Domains

The listed domains are those granted to the clerics of a deity and reflect the deities' alignment and portfolio. As with the deities listed in the *Player's Handbook*, a cleric chooses two domains from the deity's list and acquires the granted powers of those two domains. Domains listed in italics are campaign specific, and are detailed in Chapter Three: *Magic*.

Favored weapon

The deity's favored weapon is usually a representation of a method of punishment used by the deity against foes or those who sin. Spell such as *spiritual weapon* take the form of the favored weapon listed in parenthesis. This weapon may differ by sect. Weapons of the listed type are the conventional favored weapons of the clerics of each faith and therefore their most likely armaments.

Deity description

The first paragraph of the deity's description includes the deity's attitude, temperament, and general nature. The second paragraph describes the deity's church. This overview explains the church's organization and the common duties of the clergy. The third paragraph lists the time of day a deity's clerics pray for their spells. If more than one time of prayer is listed, the cleric must choose a specific time and use it thereafter. This section also lists well-known holy days of the faith, which the cleric may be expected to attend/perform.

Finally, the most common multiclassing options (if any) for clerics of the faith are given. The cleric is not obligated to multiclass. Paladins of deities that have a common multiclass may advance in their deity's favored multiclass without forfeiting the ability to advance further as a paladin.

Dogma and relationships

The dogma of the faith contains the tenants of a religion that all clerics (and divine spellcasters) of a deity must hold dear. The interpretation of these tenants, however, provides the basis for many of the splinter sects of worship. The deities hold themselves aloof from such schisms, leaving it to man to find truth through their own trials. This section is written as if it were an excerpt from a holy text of that deity. Likewise, the relationship between the deity's major temples and the faithfuls of other human deities are provided as if discussing the relationships of the deities themselves. Members of the faith are expected to treat worshippers and clergy of other faiths as the deities are perceived to treat each other. This is complicated by the fact that the relationship between any two deities is not necessarily perceived in the same light by both sides.

Human deities

Avani

Greater Goddess

Goddess of the Sun, Lady of Reason, Lightbringer, Lifegiver

Aliases: Avanalae (Anuire), Lana (Brechtür), Avani (Khinasi), Vani (Rjurik)

Symbol: A setting sun

Alignment: LN

Portfolio: Sun, reason, magic

Domains: Law, Knowledge, Magic, *Reason*, Sun

Favored Weapon: Ray of burning light (shortspear)

Avani (ah-VON-ee) is goddess of the sun, reason, and magic. Prior to her ascension, she was Basaia's highest priestess and has replaced her as patroness of the Khinasi people. Avani can be a harsh and relentless goddess, as unforgiving as the sun that beats down on the Khinasi lands, or she can be warm and nurturing, enfolding her people in the glow of her divine radiance. The Khinasi believe that Avani appears to them every day with the rising of the sun. The Lightbringer shines forth her divine radiance, chasing away shadow and that which skulks in darkness. The Lifegiver brings the world alive each day. She is a great and beneficent goddess, and so gives this blessing to the entire world. As a result, for part of each day, she disappears from the lands of the Khinasi so she may bring her gift to the rest of the world. The ignorant among the Khinasi know that Avani will return in the morning to chase away the shadows that lie upon them. The educated realize that she comes back each morning because she set the world spinning so that her divine radiance could shine down upon the entire world. Her regular visits also protect her believers from incursions of the Shadow, for she denies the Shadow a place to build on Aebrynis. Instead, the darkness must hide in the dank places below the surface of the world.

The church of Avani is strongest in the lands of the Khinasi. Her priests and paladins are expected to represent themselves as if they were representing her. They must strive to be firm but fair in their dispensation of justice, must aid the poor and defend those unable to defend themselves, and must be merciful to enemies who she would deem deserving. Avani's temples are often libraries and other places of learning. Despite the reverence with which the Khinasi people hold Avani, opinions vary significantly as to what she represents. This comes in part as a result of the natural inclination among the educated to apply their reason to discovering Avani's true message. The inevitable result of these studies is a fragmentation of the church into region holdings that sometimes fight each other as much as they do their traditional enemies. Many believe that Avani is wroth with her followers as a result and that the wastelands of Khinasi are places where her displeasure has taken form.

Clerics of Avani pray for their spells at dawn as they greet Avani on her return to light the world. The only official holy day of the church is the anniversary of Deismaar. To the Khinasi, the holiday is observed to venerate the ascension of their patroness, not to remember what was essentially a foreign war. Her clergy commonly multiclass as magicians or

wizards and her paladins may advance without restriction in these classes.

Dogma: Avani is the sun, and she shines her divine radiance upon the world every day, protecting all people from the encroachments of Shadow and darkness. Her light brings food to the tables of her people, for crops need both rain and sun to prosper. Her warmth enfolds her people; she chases away the storms that destroy well-being. She touches her followers with her blessing every day, for each ray of the sun carries her divine benediction.

All knowledge should be gathered, be it empirical, experimental, conjectural, practical, or theoretical. Knowledge is the light by which darkness is held at bay. Knowledge, like fire, is both useful and dangerous. We must protect against those that would abuse knowledge. Access to dangerous knowledge must be earned through demonstrated determination, discipline, and self-control. Strive to seek wisdom and understanding, for knowledge is the root of all lasting power.

Allies: Nurturing *Nesirie* cares for all. Her way is not the way of the mind, but the way of the heart. This way is not sufficient to protect mankind, but it is one of the reasons that mankind is worth protecting. *Laerme* is our loving daughter who must be protected, nurtured, and cherished. As with all young, she may act rashly, but it is always with the best of intentions. Share your wisdom with the young, direct them, and help them mature in safety.

Foes: *Eloéle* is the herald of our Church's fate if we are not zealous in our work. She is the most dangerous of our enemies, for she seeks not the destruction of civilization, but its corruption. She is cunning, unpredictable, and ruthless, caring for nothing but herself. *Kriesha* hates the warmth of reason and would destroy all that we value for spite alone. She is a disciplined and cruel foe who listens only to the reason of scimitar and spear. *Belinik* possesses strength, but is a tiny-minded brute. Although the task appears hopeless, we must strive to bring him enlightenment so that he will one day know lasting peace.

Others: Our husband *Erik* watches over the bountiful earth in the knowledge that each generation must prepare for the next. Be respectful of Erik, for he values knowledge of the earth. That he takes little active interest in the affairs of civilization is cause for sadness, but not for scorn. Even as the moon brings light to the darkness of night, *Ruornil* bears the light of reason to guard against the darkest forces of the world. It is sad that he spends as much of his strength in keeping secrets as he expends against the forces of darkness. *Haelyn* is a puzzle. He works to foster civilization, and this is a worthy goal. He wrongly believes that civilization is created by the sword. Reason has always been sharper than the sword. *Sera* is selfish and shallow. She and her followers are happy to acquire knowledge that will be of use to them personally, but they care not for others. Short-sighted, they do not consider how their good fortune may be better used to prevent the misfortune of others. The unpredictable *Cuiraeécen* possesses a noble heart, but lacks wisdom. He is overly found of warfare, but with our council can sometimes be lead from disaster.

Belinik

Intermediate God

Prince of Terror, Lord of Strife

Aliases: Belinik (Anuire, Khinasi, Rjurik, Vosgaard), Alenecht (Brechtür)

Symbol: Crossed axes

Alignment: CE

Portfolio: Battle, feuds, fear

Domains: Chaos, Evil, Strength, *Terror*, War

Favored Weapon: "Fury" (greataxe)

Belinik (bell-in-ICK) is the god of war, strife, competition and hatred. Prior to ascension, he was the most powerful of the Vos war chiefs that followed Azrai's banner. He now claims the title of patron god of the Vos and inspires Vos warriors to be savage in their attacks, merciless in their conquests, and fearless in their defeats. Contention is his companion, for in contention the weak are slain and the strong rewarded. Belinik is believed to destroy the herds of any Vos tribe that grows too soft, leaving them with no choice but to raid their enemies in order to survive. Belinik is a dark god, and fosters unceasing contention through hate, anger, and jealousy among his faithful.

Belinik's clerics are predominately male and claim spiritual sovereignty over all Vos. In addition to the Vos, Belinik's worshippers include any willing to use murder, torture, and other horrid deeds as a means to an end: the control of others through strength and fear. Belinik's church has unquestioned power among the Vos. His priests do not work alongside others in their community to help it prosper; they plan attacks on their neighbors to take what they have, raiding for slaves, livestock, and booty. Belinik's clergy foment dissention among warriors of Vos tribes, for such conflict inevitably leads to violence and guarantees that the strongest rules. Priests of Belinik test their battle skills constantly, usually against far inferior opponents, and almost always to the death. In order to advance in the church hierarchy, a priest of Belinik need simply arrange the death of his superior and claim his rank; priests that are not feared by their subordinates are soon pulled down.

The hour of dawn is holy to Belinik, for it is at dawn that most battles take place. On the Eve of the Dead, the temples of Belinik enact dark ceremonies designed to bring them to states of psychological madness. The most important ceremonies are those performed to bring the favor of Belinik in battle. Immediately prior to battle, priests of Belinik will ritually slay a kidnapped enemy warrior by cutting out his heart and devouring it. If such a victim is unavailable, the priest will attempt to cut out the heart of the first foe that they face. This ritual is considered to be one of the most sacred to Belinik, and among some tribes each warrior will attempt to do this, regardless of the personal danger. Belinik's clergy commonly multiclass as fighters.

Dogma: Terror is power. Power is for the strong. The weak hide behind paper agreements, seeking compromise over victory. The strong dictate everything and compromise nothing. Destroy or be destroyed; win or die; conquer or perish. Trust no one. Loyalty cannot be earned; it can only be coerced through fear. Answer every insult with blood; when you lose face, you lose power. Any who oppose you must be utterly destroyed; with each demonstration of your mastery you bind more tightly those beneath you.

Allies: Only *Kriesha* has the strength to stand behind us. Her followers are strong and thus must be shown often that our strength is far greater. Do not trust her, but use her to your advantage, for she makes a fine servant.

Foes: Belinik is the strongest of the gods, and all will eventual kneel to his axe. *Avani* wastes time gathering useless facts. In the end, her knowledge will work to whatever ends the strong deem wise. *Erik* preaches foolishness. The land must be mastered like any foe. The strong may take what they wish and the weak must suffice with the remains. Such is the true law of nature. *Haelyn* is a fool whose laws exist only to put weaklings over better men. His "Book of Laws" are an attempt to subvert the natural order. Defeat and humiliate his followers at every opportunity and bring the strongest of them to heel beneath our banners. *Cuiráécen* refuses his rightful place at the Lord of Strife's side. *Haelyn* has tainted his strength. Glory is for the strong, and only for the strong. We shall show him our truth and bind him to our service. *Laerme* is less than nothing - a possession to be mastered and conquered. She saps the meager strength of the weak with feeble passions and turns them into her slaves. The ability to hold a human life in one's hands and snuff it out with but a word is beyond any passion of which she can even conceive. The strong can sate their loins where they will. Her minions should be taken to serve our pleasure. *Ruornil* hides in the darkness. He lacks the courage to do aught but horde secrets and tricks. Tricks cannot stand before the power of the torch and axe. Burn out his servants where you find them, and their tricks will avail them not.

Others: *Nesirie* is a feeble old woman. As her husband and son seek to protect her, to strike at her is to strike at all three. Her worshippers are the most useless wretches, and fit only to be sacrifices upon my altars. *Sera* bewitches the minds of the strong with temptations of gold. Do not be fooled by her charms. True strength comes from will and courage to take what you covet, not from coins. *Eloéle* skulks in the shadows, hoping to accomplish there what she lacks the strength to do openly. Shadows offer concealment only until the bright fires of might burn them away.

Cuiráécen

Lesser God

Stormlord, God of Battle, *Haelyn's* Champion

Aliases: Cuiráécen (Anuire), Kirche (Brechtür), Khirdai (Khinasi), Kirken (Rjurik)

Symbol: Lightning bolt crossed by a sword

Alignment: CG

Portfolio: Storms, conflict, battle

Domains: Chaos, Good, Strength, *Storm*, War

Favored Weapon: Longsword or lightning (shortspear)

Cuiráécen (koo-RAY-eh-KEN) is the son of *Haelyn* and *Nesirie*. The god of battle is the patron of young warriors, for he is the representation of reckless courage and victory through strength. His father's name is invoked for discipline, bravery, and victory through organization, duty, and proper conduct; Cuiráécen's name is invoked for strength of arms, fearlessness, and personal glory. Cuiráécen has a stormy temper and can be both vain and rash. As the Stormlord, he heralds his presence with storm clouds, lightning, and thunder.

Apocrypha suggests that Cuiraécen is romantically linked with both Laerme and Eloéle.

The church of Cuiraécen is loosely organized, each individual temple is arranged differently and no overall church hierarchy exists. Cuiraécen was born in the third century after Deismaar, and by the beginning of the fourth century, he had inspired orders of knighthood within the church of Haelyn. The first church of Cuiraécen was created in the sixth century in the hills overlooking the Spiderfell, in the Anuirean province of Rhumannen, Gheiste (now Ghoere). Since time, his shrines have spread across Cerilia. The worship of Cuiraécen is a warrior's faith. It appeals to soldiers, knights, guardsmen, militant priests, and other such professions. Farmers might invoke the name of Cuiraécen only to beg to be spared the ravages of a brewing storm, but Cuiraécen does not provide them with spiritual guidance in their daily lives. Several orders of knighthood are allied with the church of Cuiraécen.

The priests and followers of Cuiraécen spend much of their time engaged in martial pursuits, for such is considered worship to Cuiraécen. They perfect their own combat and tactical abilities and teach others such skills. The clergy of Cuiraécen celebrate two of the same major holidays as do the priests of Haelyn: Haelyn's Festival and Godsdag (the 22nd of Deismir). In addition, followers celebrate the first day of spring (the Day of Rebirth) as the beginning of the storm season. They conduct a minor celebration six weeks later, on the 16th of Talienir, which they observe as the beginning of the campaign season. The principal ceremonies of worship are held in the early afternoon, at which time Cuiraécen's priests receive their spells. Cuiraécen's clergy commonly multiclass as fighters. His paladins must be Chaotic Good, and can multiclass as fighters without restriction to their ability to advance further as paladins.

Dogma: Cuiraécen fights without fear. Through strength of arm and unflinching courage inspire lesser men to conquer their fears and thus lead them to victory. Success in battle is the truest test of worth. Enter the fray when ere you can, but most assuredly in the defense of those who no one else can or will defend. Never refuse just battle. Act quickly and decisively; indecision is a sure path to ruin.

Allies: We serve our father, *Haelyn*, as champion and herald. We obey our father in most things, yet he values duty over honor. We must act, even against his wishes, when his inflexibility would deny us rightful victory. Our mother, *Nesirie*, requires our defense. Her compassion makes her an easy target for her enemies. We will protect her from harm – even if she does not thank us for the deed.

Foes: *Belinik* is a great warrior and a fine foe, but he has lost sight of his honor. Battle and bloodshed are noble endeavors; killing without purpose is cowardly. We must be ever vigilant for opportunities to make war against his purposes. *Kriesha* has little honor and is as treacherous as a snake. Oppose her plots when you can.

Others: *Avani* and her followers should be treated with respect. Though unskilled at arms, her intelligence and knowledge makes her a worthy ally or foe. *Erik* is wise, but slow. He is loath to confront problems head on, preferring, instead, to mull issues interminably. He must be shown that a quick, decisive strike resolves a conflict far more surely than

debate. *Sera* has respect only for that which she can own. The value of courage cannot be valued in coin. *Ruornil* is a keeper of secrets. There is little to respect in one who does not face his foes openly. We aid him if our needs coincide, but do not hesitate to overcome him should he oppose us. *Eloéle* is a temptress and without honor. She is often a coward, striking out from the dark. Yet she can also be brave – she strikes decisively, alone, acting against innumerable foes without support or aid. She has our respect, but we must be wary lest her cowardly ways poison our heart. *Laerme* is courageous as she pursues her passions no matter what the cost. Love is a fine thing, but it must not be allowed to seduce one in weakness. Love in moderation and at a distance.

Eloéle

Lesser Goddess

Goddess of the Night, Sister of Thieves

Aliases: Eloéle (Anuire), Éla (Brechtür), Elyal (Vosgaard)

Symbol: Black dagger

Alignment: CN

Portfolio: Night, darkness, thieves, deception, independence

Domains: Chaos, Illusion, *Night*, Trickery

Favored Weapon: "Final recourse" (dagger)

Eloéle (eh-LOW-eh-lay) is the lady of the night and the mistress of thieves, spies, and others who hide their activities from view. She deceives as naturally as others breathe; those who lie by design or habit also take her as their patron. Eloéle is a subtle goddess. Although she does not avoid violence, she prefers to avoid it except as a last resort. She is more likely to favor a clever scam than a brutal mugging. She is fickle, however, and has favored assassins as well as burglars. Eloéle is not bound by rules; she ignores the unspoken rule among the gods that they not involve themselves in the affairs of the world. Yet she has her own sense of honor (or sport), and will not use her divine abilities to directly manipulate political or economic events to her own ends; instead limiting herself to means available to mortals. Apocrypha suggests that Eloéle is romantically linked with Cuiraécen.

Eloéle is the daughter of Sera and Ruornil. She was born in the early centuries after the destruction of Deismaar and her following seems to have grown only slowly since then. As a religious organization, her church is almost non-existent and does not have any extensive set of rules. Followers of Eloéle are found across Cerilia, but rarely gather in large numbers for any length of time. In most of Cerilia, the church has little more than small shrines hidden from all but a few knowledgeable followers. These followers exercise virtually no control over the religious attitudes of the local population. People who make their livelihoods during the day know little of her; but some do whisper her name in supplication of her protection from outlaws. Rogues and others who hide under their activities under cover of darkness look to her as their patron.

Clerics who follow Eloéle perform a simple ceremony every day just after sunset to request the assistance of the goddess during the night to come. The only holy day celebrated by Eloéle's faithful is the anniversary of the goddess' birth on the 11th of Sehnir; although this date, in keeping with the goddess' deceitful nature, has changed several times in the past and may do again. Priests of Eloéle are so immersed in

their deceptions and intrigues that it is entirely possible that they willfully misinform each other in an attempt to be among the few to perform the rituals that best gain her favor. Eloéle's clergy commonly multi-class as rogues.

Dogma: Eloéle is the dagger in the dark. Through finesse, this least of weapons can overcome the greatest of foe. Choose the subtle solution to any dilemma. The strongest of enemies can be defeated with a single word, spoken at the right time. Neither vengeance nor victory has any savor if the enemy cannot appreciate their defeat. Violence lacks subtlety and is the resort of the desperate or foolish. Deceit, blackmail, misinformation, innuendo, and silence are the tools of the clever. Wield power through others, for then theirs is the risk, but yours the mastery. Do not be bound by any rules save those of your own choosing and pleasure.

Allies: Our mother, *Sera*, is aware of the value of subtlety, and has taught us well. We need not oppose her, for her aims coincide with ours. *Cuiráécen* thinks that strength, bravery, and honor will always triumph. Little does he know that physical might is the least aspect of true power. It is only necessary to manipulate his honor and feed his rashness to feel the joy of bending such strength to our ends.

Foes: *Avani* is ever our foe. Be on guard against her, for she is subtle and shrewd. Deflect the light of her searching gaze from our most secret places and confound her with lies. *Laerme* lacks the intelligence to see the hidden currents of truth. She is simple minded and easily moved by manipulating her lusts. Yet she interferes with our work and thus must be punished. *Haelyn* prides himself on his rules and laws and flies into a fury when others rebel against his dominance. He has bound himself with so many rules that it is remarkable that he can breathe and unsurprising that his only solution to every problem is to reach for his sword. Bind him in his own rules and he will be powerless to act against you.

Others: *Belinik* is a brute and a boor. He attempts to master others, but only appreciates the crudest techniques. He scorns sophistication in mastery, mistaking subtlety for cowardice. We are easily his match, for a single whisper can easily turn fear into rebellion. *Erik* concerns himself with the subtleties of nature alone. He is easy to manipulate, but there is little reward for doing so. Let him have the wild places; our energies are better spent in more challenging enterprise. *Nesirie* nourishes the naïve hope of bringing happiness to the weak. What little strength she has, she squanders reducing the suffering of others. Let her pursue her hopeless task; it will profit her naught in the end, and it provides a useful handle for manipulation. Our father, *Ruornil*, keeps his secrets close to him, and has taught us to do likewise. He is an enigma, unconcerned with our successes or failures. Watch him carefully and pry out what secrets you can. *Kriesha* is a shrewd manipulator, yet she acts from cold hatred rather than from the joy of mastery. It is better to ruin your opponent rather than to destroy her. Her hatred is the key to her undoing, manipulate it and her plans are easily countered.

Erik

Greater God

Old Father of the Forests

Aliases: Aeric (Anuire), Erik (Brechtür, Rjurik), Iraikhan (Vosgaard)

Symbol: An oak tree

Alignment: N

Portfolio: Forests, hunting

Domains: Animal, Earth, Plant, Wilderness

Favored Weapon: Greataxe or shortspear

Erik (AIR-ick) is the forest lord, the god of nature, protector of the wilderness, and patron of the Rjurik. Erik was high druid of the Rjuven people prior to the battle of Deismaar in which he inherited Reynir's power. To honor Erik's ascension as their patron, the Rjuven people adopted the name Rjurik. Erik has few laws; equally, he levies few requirements. His principal concern is the safeguarding of the wilderness so that it can provide for future generations. He demands of his followers that they take only what they need from the bounty of nature. Those who despoil nature for purely personal gain are subject to his vengeance.

The majority of Erik's clergy are druids. Erik's druids in the wilds do their best to preserve the wilderness, while his city-dwelling clergy council the people to manage nature's resources wisely. In Rjurik lands, druids act primarily as "village priests" for the rural and wilderness Rjurik. As such, their principle duties revolve around protecting their charges from the more dangerous aspects of their harsh environment. They see to the health of the people, defend them when they must, and help them eke out a living from the wilds. Most druids are trained by their predecessor to eventually replace them and are only dimly aware that the church has a small council of higher-ranking members. Rjurik druids do not distance themselves from those that they tend; they hunt, work, drink, live and love as any other member of their community. Most Rjurik jarls have a priest of Erik as an advisor, and their input is valued on all matters.

Erik's priests pray for their spells at dawn or dusk. Holy ceremonies to Erik take place in the wild, generally in stone circles that function as Erik's temples. The principle holy day is Midsummer's Day. During this time, the druids gather mistletoe, holly, and other sacred materials used in their ceremonies and rites. These materials are blessed by the moon at midnight, and then by the dawn sun of Midsummer's Day. A brief morning ceremony invokes Erik's protection over the people in the year to come, and is followed by a day of hunting, feasting, marriages, contests, and other merriment. Aside from this ceremony Erik demands no formal worship, he asks only that his people live in harmony with the world around them. His church is a matter of heart and soul, not of doctrine.

Dogma: Protect the wilderness so that it can provide for Erik's people always. Take only that which you need, and use all that you take. For every tree felled, plant two seedlings for the future. Greed for the wealth of others brings no honor. Live in reverent affinity with the elements of nature.

Allies: Our wife, *Avani*, is wise enough to value the continuing bounty of nature. Although she values nature only for the benefit it brings mankind rather than also for itself alone, she can be counted on to act wisely. *Ruornil* seeks to protect the mysteries of nature from the misuse of the unwise. *Avani* is the sun, and *Ruornil* the moon, together they bring light and life to the world. When darkness threatens, they are the first to join battle. When they require our aid, give freely.

Foes: *Belinik* teaches his followers to take what they want without concern for others or the future. He is a raging forest fire that consumes all. His rage must be extinguished, his hunger quenched, lest all be forever consumed. Likewise, the gods of the goblins, gnolls, orogs, and other humanoids have ever been the enemies of the Rjurik people; their waste knows no limit and they are a blight that must be driven from our lands.

Others: Our daughter, *Laerme*, is the bright-winged songbird who brings peace and beauty. Enjoy the songbird, but do not become complacent in its song. Winter always comes. *Cuiráecen* is a brash young hunter, over-eager to impress others with his skills. With patience, he must be brought to understand that the hunter must protect and provide for his people, not battle for individual glory. *Eloéle* can only delude those who wish to be deluded. Ignore her and avoid her games. Nature is deaf to her plotting. *Haelyn* believes that the works of man are fundamentally more valuable than the works of nature. In ignorance, he causes untold harm. He acts not out of hatred, however, and must be gently reminded that the order of nature is as essential as the order of man. *Nesirie* mourns the loss of her people. She must be reminded that death is a necessary part of the cycle of life. Be wary of her, for those that have known great loss may lose sight for the need of a continuing future. *Kriesha*, like nature, is utterly without mercy. The weak fall to her touch, and the next generation is strengthened. Nature, however, balances harshness with times of plenty. In her unrelenting harshness, she has become twisted in spirit, hating all that do not suffer as she does. Avoid her when possible. In the bounty of nature, *Sera* sees only profit. Shortsighted, she may fail to consider the future. If constantly reminded that her future profit depends upon wisdom in the present, she can be taught wisdom of a sort.

Haelyn

Greater God

Lawmaker, Lord of Noble War

Aliases: Haelyn (Anuire, Brechtür, Vosgaard), Halaïa (Khinasi), Holn (Rjurik)

Symbol: Silver sword over a golden sunburst

Alignment: LG

Portfolio: Courage, justice, chivalry, rulership, war

Domains: Good, *Justice*, Law, *Nobility*, War

Favored Weapon: Greatsword or bastard sword

Haelyn (HAY-lynn) is the lord of justice and chivalry, and patron of the Anuirean people. He is the paragon of kings and paladins, and is worshiped throughout Cerilia by those seeking order through law. In his role as lord of justice, Haelyn is stern, but tempers his judgments with mercy. He represents the rule of law as the means by which a society is run. Prior to his ascension, Haelyn was the high paladin of Anduiras and the chosen commander of the forces gathered against Azrai.

The church of Haelyn is considered the most powerful church in Cerilia and its teachings have spread to every human-dominated region. In the fifteen centuries since Deismaar, the church has split in several different schisms. Each of the sects differs slightly in their beliefs and activities, but all provide spiritual guidance for the people who look to them for inspiration. At every temple, priests conduct

morning ceremonies that praise the glory of Haelyn and call for his divine wisdom in the day to come. Superstition holds that if a morning ever comes that the bells of Haelyn's churches are silent, then the day will be without dawn and the world's descent into shadow will begin. All clergy, regardless of rank, spend an hour of each day in labor for the good of the community.

Priests of Haelyn pray for their spells at dawn. The most important ceremony of the year is Haelyn's Festival, which occurs on the day of the summer solstice. The night of the summer solstice, called the *Night of Fire* because of the shower of falling stars that occurs each year, is the culmination of the festival. Worshipers of Haelyn refer to the 22nd of Deismir as Godsdays (also the Day of Ascent) and commemorate the battle of Deismaar and Haelyn's ascension. Haelyn's gospel, the *Book of Laws*, appeared in the first temple of Haelyn on the 6th of Pasiphiel the following year, where it remains to this day. The church of Haelyn now celebrates that day as the Day of Holy Justice. Other holidays vary from temple to temple. Haelyn's clerics commonly multiclass as paladins; they are not subject to normal advancement restriction on their ability to advance as cleric/paladins.

Dogma: See justice done, with both compassion and zeal. It is the duty of the strong to protect the weak and uphold the sacred feudal social order. Make war when justice demands it, but never for an unjust reason. Study warfare and serve in the armies that oppose evil and injustice. To rule or judge is not a privilege, it is a most holy responsibility and the heaviest of burdens, for your acts touch the lives of your subjects. Should lordship fall to you, work diligently to see that you rule fairly and justly. Stand by your oaths to your liege, your subjects, and your neighbors; the word of a ruler is the coin by which nation's earn peace.

Allies: Our wife, *Nesirie*, is our surest ally. We are her shields and we shall allow no harm to befall her. Our son, *Cuiráecen*, is poised on the edge of a sword, between glory and duty. We must strive to guide him towards just and well-considered action that faithfully discharges his duty rather than rash forays in the pursuit of personal glory.

Foes: *Belinik* enjoys strife, suffering, and wanton destruction, as do all vermin who pledge themselves to him. We are reluctant to make war; *Belinik* takes delight in blood and savagery. *Kriesha's* cold heart offers naught but despair and death. She plots continuously to raise the wicked over the righteous and her efforts must be opposed at every turn. *Eloéle* is a spoiled child that defies our edicts and seeks to bend righteous ideals to ill ends. Given opportunity, she would gladly attempt to unravel the feudal order for puerile thrill. She poses as great a threat as *Kriesha*, for she schemes without purposes and her plots often wreak their ill effects long before they are discovered.

Others: *Avani* guards the knowledge that empowers progress. She strives in the cause of justice, but must be gently reminded that knowledge alone does not shield the defenseless from evil. *Erik* values the natural order, yet this sometimes leads him into conflict with the flowering of civilization. Try to respect him, even when he is difficult to understand. *Laerme* brings great joy to all, but we must be on guard lest pleasure distract us from our sacred duties. *Ruornil* guards against the evils of shadow and the misuse of arcane forces, in

which cause we are allied. Nevertheless, his obsession with dangerous knowledge often blinds him to the need for timely action and to be counted on to aid significantly in most conflicts. *Sera* seeks profit without consequence. She is happy to acquire position, power, and wealth, but ignores the obligations that such power carries. Short-sighted, she does not think of her place in the sacred order, only the personal profit in her actions.

Kriesha

Lesser Goddess

The Ice Lady, the Winter Witch

Aliases: Kriestal (Brechtür), Karesha (Rjurik), Kriesha (Vosgaard)

Symbol: White hand

Alignment: LE

Portfolio: Winter, hardship, beasts and other horrors of the cold wastes

Domains: Evil, Law, *Suffering*, *Winter*

Favored Weapon: "Winter's Touch" [Ice mace] (light or heavy mace)

Kriesha (KREE-sha) is the goddess of winter – long, bitter, harsh winter – the sort of season in which the cold seeps into the warmest homes and in which the wolf packs sate their terrible hunger on those foolish enough to brave the storms. Prior to her ascension, Kriesha was a high priestess of Azrai. Kriesha is without mercy; the harsh winters she sends against the Vos work to strengthen them as a people, for none but the strongest survive. Belinik teaches the Vos males to attack their enemies with fire and fury. Kriesha teaches the Vos women to plot. The Winter Witch shares the patronage of the Vos people with Belinik. Although the worship of Belinik seems to dominate the church of Vosgaard, the Vos women believe that Kriesha holds the true power. Kriesha's worship extends from Vosgaard across the breadth of northern Cerilia; she is known in any land where winters are long and brutal.

Kriesha's clergy are almost exclusively women, often the "wise-women" of their clans. It is difficult to wield power without the support of a clan's circle of wise-women and few dare to cross them, for their revenge is slow, thorough, and nearly always fatal. Priestesses are trained in matters of money and trade from early on in their service, and they manage a clan's wealth and supplies. The wise-women know that wealth has power, and they use their financial power to encourage others to become more pliable to the whims of the church. The church buys information, causes underlings to betray their superiors, and handles matters of external trade. Priestesses also protect their clans from internal enemies by constantly testing the loyalties of members of their tribe. They enforce loyalty, where necessary, through fear tactics. Punishments are especially harsh against women who betray the church. The punishment may not occur for several years, but when it does arrive, it is final.

Midwinter month (Faniele) is the principle holy time of Kriesha's church. In Vos lands, it is a time of fasting (for game is scarce) followed by a feast at month's end filled with tests of strength, endurance, and loyalty. Priestesses of Kriesha pray for their spells in the pre-dawn hours, when the night is at its peak of cold.

Dogma: Kriesha demands complete loyalty. The ties of family and clan are secondary priorities. Be willing to betray anything and anyone you hold dear if necessary. Friendship and love are dangerous luxuries and must be forsaken. Destruction awaits those who lack the discipline to obey. Ensure that the clan remains strong. Be patient and ruthless when dealing with foes. Nurse your hatreds and launch your attack only when you can destroy everything your foe values, for only then can you truly exult in your victory.

Allies: *Belinik's* rages draws attention to him and thus allows us a free hand. He is, like all men, a valuable tool. Permit him his vanity, for he serves well, but do not allow him to meddle in women's affairs.

Foes: *Avani* is our most hated foe, and thus her suffering shall be the greatest on the day of our triumph. Plot carefully against her, for she is observant, and be patient; not even the light of the Sun will stand against winter's breath. *Cuiracén's* pride is his folly. His love of battle makes him dangerous in open conflict, but his touchy honor and concern with glory make him a predictable foe, easily avoided. *Haelyn* teaches that the strong should risk themselves to protect the weak. Fool! Such order is against nature. Unculled, his people degenerate into fools and weaklings. In time his people will be our chattel. *Laerme* inspires nothing but sloth. She is a parasite that feeds on the labor of others and provides nothing of true value. Such weakness must be culled.

Others: *Erik* understands the might of nature and the need for the weak to die so that the strong may continue. Avoid open conflict with him, and plant the seeds of future alliance, for he nearly understands the truth. *Eloéle* is young, but can be taught. Her plans are subtle, but without purpose; she has no true steel. In time she will put away her children's dolls and take up the tasks of a woman; then she will be a worthy ally. *Sera* is selfish, fat, and weak. She seeks only wealth and decadence. When winter comes, she will be among the first to starve. *Nesirie* is weak-willed, hiding behind her son and husband and letting them do as they please. She serves us by weakening our foes with her timid babbling. *Ruornil* is a traitor to our people, clinging to the tricks of Vorynn rather than the truths that Azrai taught us. His punishment will come.

Laerme

Lesser Goddess

Goddess of Fire, Beauty, and Art

Aliases: Laerme (Anuire, Brechtür), Leira (Khinasi), Lara (Rjurik), Ayairda (Vosgaard)

Symbol: Silver harp against a red flame

Alignment: CG

Portfolio: Fire, love, art

Domains: Chaos, *Charm*, *Flame*, Good

Favored Weapon: Shortbow

Laerme (Lair-ME) is the goddess of warmth and passion. The goddess of art freely rewards or inspires any who seek to create art and beauty. She provides artists, composers, and artisans with the inspiration to transform a work of art into a masterpiece, and provides guiding dreams that help young lovers find bliss. She is neither jealous of other deities, nor vain. Instead, she is content with the fact that nearly every intelligent creature on the continent honors her at some time or

another, whether they are aware of it or not. Even those that worship her foes are blessed with her favor. However, she has been known to punish as well as reward. Those who destroy beauty or deny love will suffer from her wrath. Barbarians that destroy art and literature or fathers who prevent their daughters from eloping might be struck down with a strange illness or be cursed with haunting dreams of Laerme's displeasure. Apocrypha suggests that Laerme is romantically linked with Cuiraécen.

Laerme was born by Avani and Erik toward the end of the second century after Deismaar. She is not a widespread and organized church, and does not encourage her priests to actively convert followers. Temples to Laerme are rare; churches of Avani and Cuiraécen often have small shrines devoted to Laerme and her priests tend to them itinerantly. Her priests are more likely to be found in artisan shops, music houses, bardic colleges, or as wandering courtiers. Each priest's worship is unique; every work of art, every love in bloom, and every fire lit honors Laerme. All priests of Laerme must practice some form of art, although they need not be skilled; all Laerme requires is that her worshippers give something of themselves to their art.

The most important ceremony in the church is the one that brings two people together in a marriage of love. Not all wedding ceremonies are presided over by a priest of Laerme, but most that are fueled by true love, rather than convenience or convention, ask for Laerme's blessing. Priests of Laerme may pick any regular time of the day to pray for their spells; the time of day varies based upon the priest's chosen art, for the priest normally engages in their chosen art as part of their worship.

Dogma: The rational creation of beauty for its own sake is the most spiritual task that a being can undertake; the creation of spiritual beauty is the greatest task of all. Help spark the flames of love, and fan them so that they will burn brightly. Patronize the arts. Create art to enliven and beautify life. Appreciate natural beauty where you find it, and leave it unspoiled for the future. Embrace the fire of life and live each moment to its fullest.

Allies: Our mother, *Avani*, is our acknowledged superior and we honor her, for passion and the appreciation of beauty are the products of reason. But passion also surpasses reason; embrace to the passion which defies logic. *Cuiraécen*, our love, embraces passion in his every act. We would not change him, even if we could, yet must help him keep in mind that violent death is always ugly - a permanent quenching of expression, the discordant end to the song of life.

Foes: *Kriesha* despises us, though we wish only to bring warmth to her heart. Where she could create beauty, she instead sows discord and destruction. She leads an entire people astray, and thus the Vos need our aid more than any other. *Belinik* is accursed, evil, and vile! He strips wholesome passions from the hearts of men and returns to them darkness, rage, fear, and spite. Flee from him, for he cannot taste beauty, only crush it.

Others: Our father, *Erik*, appreciates the harmony of natural beauty, but he has so much more to offer! We shall be relentless in our efforts to encourage him to be more than a simple caretaker and to take a more active hand in cultivating beauty. *Haelyn* teaches duty and service before all else - even

the enjoyment of life such service protect. Men cannot act from duty alone, but must also act from love of country and family. We must keep Haelyn mindful that duty without love is a stern and unrewarding thing. Poor *Nesirie*! Her heart is torn by her grief and she is blind to joy. She mends, but no longer creates. We must help her find hope; in the act of creation she can transcend her sorrows. *Ruornil* hides places of natural beauty from the eyes of the world. Beauty must be protected, but it is wrong and selfish to cloister it away unappreciated. *Sera* has passion only for coin, and no creativity, only the urge to possess. Be wary of her, for she rarely has the potential to see beyond her own self-importance. *Eloéle* is mysterious, never to be understood, and certainly not to be trusted. She creates nothing but lies and shares nothing of her secret joys. Worse yet, her machinations interfere with the happiness of others to no good end. Avoid her, else you may become a pawn in her ceaseless plotting.

Nesirie

Intermediate Goddess

Goddess of the Sea, Lady of Mourning

Aliases: Nesirie (Anuire), Nasri (Khinasi), Narikja (Rjurik), Neira (Brechtür)

Symbol: Wave and trident

Alignment: NG

Portfolio: Ocean, mariners, grief, remembrance of the dead, diplomacy

Domains: Good, Healing, Protection, *Sea*

Favored Weapon: Trident

Nesirie (neh-SEA-ree-ay) is the goddess of the sea and provider and guardian of those who make their living upon it. She is also the goddess of mourning and remembrance of people and things past. Nesirie has inherited Masela's role as patroness of the lost Masetian culture and those few remaining who claim Masetian blood. Not everyone whose livelihood depends on the sea worship Nesirie, but nearly all pay her respect. Seafarers of all cultures murmur a brief prayer to her before setting sail on any voyage. Legend among sailors say that when Nesirie's grief overwhelms her, the seas become restless, so they offer to her their wishes that she find peace. Nesirie is also the diplomat of the gods.

The church of Nesirie can be found nearly anywhere where land meets sea. Mariners call to her for protection from storms, creatures of the deep, and other hazards. They beg of her full sails and calm waters. Most of Nesirie's clergy are women that have endured some terrible tragedy that has left them bereft. Aided by Nesirie through their grief, they repay the gift by aiding others in any way they can. Although they are skilled in comforting those who have suffered tragedy, some are equally skilled in preventing tragedy in the first place and take up arms as paladins. Priests maintain lighthouses on the shores of many domains; some feel closest to their goddess when helping to protect those who depend on her good will. Nearly every new ship launched to sea is blessed by Nesirie's clergy; the seas are dangerous enough even with Nesirie's favor and most mariners will refuse to set sail on an unblest vessel. Priests normally officiate at funeral rites for her followers only, but they are often present, at the request of relatives, at funerals for worshippers of other faiths.

Temples of Nesirie conduct daily services before dawn and after dusk. In the morning, they give their blessings to those who will put to sea that day. In the evening they request protection for those who are on extended voyages at sea. The Eve of the Dead at the end of Emmanir is the principle holy day for the priesthood of Nesirie. On this day they honor the memories of those who have died and comfort those that grieve for them. This ceremony is critical to the Nesirians, for they believe that only through the memories of the living can a spirit find peace and that those who are forgotten after death are easy prey for the power of Shadow.

Dogma: The sea is the lifeblood of the earth; its tidal flow is reflected in the birth, life, and death of every human being. Within this great cycle are lesser ones: the cycle of night and day, work and rest, sorrow and joy. Seek to understand this cycle, and aid others in accepting it as well. Show compassion and aid those suffering through the ebbs of the cycles of their life. Remember the past; only through the memories of those that remain can the actions of the dead have meaning. Care particularly for the remembrance of your dead, for their spirits require the remembrance of those who love them to keep the Shadow at bay. Heal the injured, comfort the lost, and negotiate peace among all men.

Allies: Our devoted husband, *Haelyn*, champions the weak and upholds the social order. Our mercurial son, *Cuiraécen*, aids his father in this noble and worthy task. We can count on them to protect us from the physical dangers of the world, but we, in turn, must protect them from moral danger. Their strength and pride can be easily swayed to violence and bloodshed. There is more to life than oaths and glory. We must never fear to provide moral leadership or to mediate the many disputes between them. *Avani* shares our grief in the loss of our people, and aids in their remembrance. She has our respect and gratitude, as we have hers. *Ruornil* wages his silent and secret battle against the encroachment of darkness, asking no thanks or acclaims, and ignoring all provocation to lesser battle. His is perhaps the heaviest task of all, yet never is a word of complaint spoken. What aid we have to give, we shall always give to him freely.

Foes: None.

Others: *Erik* lives in peace with the land. But, like nature itself, he can also be capricious and cruel. We, each of us, must strive to exceed our own natures. *Belinik* is filled with bitter, terrible rage. Like a wounded animal, he is dangerous and must be treated with respect, but not fear. In time, perhaps we can teach him to face his self-torment and begin to heal. *Sera* beguiles herself with physical excess. We are all tempted by such lures. She is confused, not wicked. We must strive to remind her of the true costs of her reckless pursuit of profit. *Eloéle* practices her malice in unpredictable ways. The will and reason behind her actions is unknowable. Little can be done, save to help those harmed by her actions. *Kriesha* is hurt and untempered by love. She requires solace more so than any soul existent. We must strive to thaw the ice lodged in her heart and help her find a path to contentment. *Laerme* teaches love of the physical, but gives no thought to consequence. She loves freely, but leaves those that she touches bereft and forlorn.

Ruornil

Lesser God

The Moon God, the Silver Prince

Aliases: Ruornil (Anuire, Brechtür), Rilni (Khinasi), Lirom (Rjurik), Lirovka (Vosgaard)

Symbol: Silver crescent moon on a deep blue field

Alignment: N

Portfolio: Night, moon, magic

Domains: Knowledge, Magic, *Moon*, *Spell*

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Ruornil (roo-OR-nil) is the lord of the moon, of magic, and the guardian of mystical places. Before Deismaar, the young Ruornil was the Weaver, the title given to the greatest of Vorynn's magicians. Ruornil's few earthly goals revolve around magic, the shadow world, and the Vos. He is the heir of Vorynn as rightful patron of the Vos people, but they have entirely abandoned his worship to pursue the worship of Azrai's successors Belinik and Kriesha. The most important seem to be the protection of the sources of mystical power that suffuse the continent of Cerilia, and the expansion of the understanding of the fabric of magic. He also works to free the Vos from the tyranny of Azrai's successors and win back their hearts. His followers are devoted to aiding him in these goals, at least as far as they understand them.

Even to his worshippers, Ruornil seems a distant, mysterious god. He has set down no written word, does not communicate regularly with his followers, and seems aloof from the daily affairs of Cerilia. The church of Ruornil is very small. It is comprised primarily of small shrines attended by priests and mages; these shrines are rarely in public places. His temple holdings tend to be in remote areas of Cerilia, the most prominent exception being the small theocracy of Medoere in southern Anuire. Priests work tirelessly to defend the sources of *mebhaighl* and expand their understanding of the nature of magic. Many are hermits, preferring the solitude of the wilderness to the press of urban life. They chart ley lines, seek out *caerbhaighlien*, and ally with rangers and other wilderness peoples to prevent intruders from despoiling magical sources.

Monthly rituals of worship are held on the night of the fullest moon in the middle of each month. The Veneration of the Sleeping (fall equinox) is the principle annual holy day for ley members of the church. On this day, the worshippers make symbolic offerings of items of magic to their god, seeking to return to the earth the magic that they derived from it. Secret rituals are also held by the high clergy on the Eve of the Dead, for the Shadow World draws near on that day, and the rites of Ruornil help keep its influence at bay. Priests of Ruornil pray for their spells several hours after dusk, ideally when the moon is ascendant. Priests of Ruornil commonly multiclass as magicians or wizards.

Dogma: Ruornil guards the natural flows of magic from that which would cause them harm. Be ever diligent in your efforts to expand understanding of the fabric of magic - for only through such efforts can one earn the mastery required to act wisely. The Shadow is the greatest threat to mankind; fight its influence always. We are the light that keeps darkness at bay.

Allies: As the Sun and Moon are paired forces against darkness, so too are *Avani* and we. She is the guardian of magical lore, we of magic itself. Yet she seeks to bring all knowledge to the light of day, without reflecting upon its

consequence - a secret, once released, cannot be easily recalled. The wise leave secrets buried, where only the worthy may uncover them when needed. *Erik* guards the land, the source of life and earthpower. In the protection of *mebhaighl*, we have no stronger ally. *Nesirie* can always be trusted to act for the good of all. She keeps our secrets, and can be counted on to aid us in times of need.

Foes: *Belinik* is tainted by the madness of Azrai the deceiver, and brings ruin to all he touches. He fears and destroys anything that he cannot control or understand. That his deception continues to lead the Vos people towards their destruction is cause for the greatest sorrow. *Krieha* is deep in shadow. She takes cruel delight in the use of great and terrible lore to work her will. We fight a silent war against their darkness, for the good of all humanity.

Others: Our wife, *Sera*, is concerned with the physical, we the spiritual. Together we make a balanced whole, but we must work carefully to maintain that balance. *Eloéle*, our daughter, has learned to guard her secrets well, but misunderstands the need. We protect the mysteries from those who lack the mastery to use them wisely. She hordes secret information only for the power it gains her. We must teach her restraint and give her purpose lest she, like our people, fall to the Shadow. *Cuiraécen* is rash. There is great danger in unreasoned action, no matter how well meaning. *Haelyn* is valuable in our battle, but lacks subtlety. He seems to overcome darkness by simple mandate. The simple acceptance of a set of rigid constraints does not instill wisdom to do what is right because it is right, only obedience. The wise know when law and custom must be ignored for a greater purpose. *Laerme* has the best of intentions, but lacks the wisdom to be trusted with matters of consequence. True wisdom requires equal parts joy and sorrow; equal parts beauty and pain. Without bearing the scars of learning knowledge, she is incapable of truly understanding the consequences of its application.

Sera

Intermediate Goddess

Lady of Fortune, Goddess of Wealth

Aliases: Sarimie (Anuire), Sera (Brechtür, Rjurik), Sarma (Khinasi), Sirova (Vosgaard)

Symbol: Silver scales on a green background

Alignment: CN

Portfolio: Wealth, luck

Domains: Chaos, Luck, *Trade*, Travel

Favored Weapon: "Scales of Fortune" (light flail or heavy flail)

Sera (SAIR-ah) is the deity of fortune and luck. Prior to her ascension, she was the highest priestess of Brenna and the spiritual leader of the Brecht people. The goddess of fortune is the patron to the Brecht people, who believe that she guides her favored towards profitable economic pursuits and provides omens that help the faithful avoid unwise endeavors. She is said to hear every bargain struck, every prayer murmured over a game of chance, and every scheme to realize a profit, although she responds only rarely. The Brecht do not believe that Sera brings fortune or misfortune, but they do believe that she sees that her faithful are rewarded for diligent effort and

that good things come to those who overcome difficult odds not of their own making.

Due to the wide-ranging interests of the Brecht guilders, Sera's church has become international, with temples throughout Cerilia. Temples to Sera can be found wherever trade exists. To Sera's clergy, the achievements of temporal goals are every bit as important as the achievement of spiritual goals. They are as practical a group of people as the goddess that they serve. As a result, they are involved in mercantile and craft matters as well as ones dealing with the church itself. They advise tradesmen, influence political and economic events to their favor, and seek out profitable opportunities for trade. Sera's temples are also sources of training and education; many teach crafts and trades to local citizens in return for a tithe of earnings in the new trade once they reach master status. Trade agreements are often witnessed and recorded by members of Sera's clergy. Copies of these agreements are kept in secure vaults to guarantee a verbatim copy of the contract. Sera's clergy also help arrange marriages between the scions of great houses. These are treated exactly as business agreements, with set financial arrangements based upon the prestige of the houses, the strength of each house's bloodline (a valuable asset), and penalties (such as dissolution) for fraud.

The Brecht celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Mount Deismaar as Ascension Day, focusing on the ascension of their goddess rather than the disaster that brought it about. They also celebrate the Day of Rebirth as both the first day of spring and the opening of a new trading season. Sera's clergy pray for their spells at whatever time of day is most convenient for their schedules (usually early evening); thus, the specific time of prayer varies from priest to priest but, once selected, is fixed.

Dogma: Sera is mistress of the true bargain. She knows that diligent effort and careful planning make the best luck, not divine intervention. Those who wait for fortune to fall into their lap earn their misfortune. Wealth comes from industry, not from chance. Wealth is the key to all doors; without wealth, one is not free to engage in leisure activities, to pursue artistic endeavors, or to wield true political power. Use what wealth you have earned to buy happiness for yourself and to guarantee your future happiness. Do not squander your profits in an attempt to bring happiness to others; true happiness must be purchased with diligent labor - freely given it has no value and is soon squandered.

Allies: Our daughter, *Eloéle*, pursues her goals relentlessly and regardless of consequence. No lasting harm can come to those who diligently strive for their betterment. We must be aware of this aspect of the true bargain, but always keep in mind that it is but one aspect; wealth and happiness come most surely to those who strive by both night and day. *Nesirie* comforts those on whom misfortune has fallen and helps them find value in themselves. This is necessary, for recovery from misfortune requires positive action. It is also true that forgiveness alone merely encourages others to take advantage of you in the future. Thus *Nesirie* has not mastered the full truth, and she stumbles along in poverty.

Foes: *Haelyn* claims that loyalty to one's superior is the highest virtue. His "chivalry" denies the true bargain - true wealth and power should not be gifted by inheritance, but won

Table 4-8: non-human deities

Name	Symbol	Portfolio	Worshippers
Cold Rider	Cloaked rider	Undead, the shadow world, deceit	Undead, the power-hungry
Kartathok	Bloody spear	Goblin-kind	Goblin-kind
Moradin	Hammer and anvil	Dwarves	Dwarves
Torazan	Sword and horn	Orogs	Orogs

Name (Power)	Alignment	Favored Weapon	Domains
Cold Rider (D)	Neutral Evil	Unarmed	Charm, Death, Evil, Magic
Kartathok (G)	Lawful Evil	Shortspear or longspear	Destruction, Evil, Law, Strength
Moradin (G)	Lawful Good	Warhammer	Earth, Good, Law, Protection
Torazan (D)	Lawful Evil	Longsword	Earth, Evil, Law, War

by one's achievements. Loyalty is a fine virtue if it ensures your own happiness, but do not fall into the trap of believing that your master's or family's prosperity is your own. *Cuiraeécen* earns nothing and squanders what he was given. Glory and honor cannot buy bread. Honor is a fine thing if your opponent obeys the same rules, but why should they do so? Honor is a poor contract, and glory a hollow prize. *Belinik* kills for pleasure and glories in dominance through fear. This is strange enough, but made worse in that he prizes only this form of pleasure. Let him remind us always that a friendly coin purchases more bread than a bloody knife.

Others: Our husband, *Ruornil*, is not concerned with affairs of wealth and power. He is clever and often useful. Surely, there is no profit in the dominance of Shadow. Leave his secrets be, for their price is too high. *Avani* lays claim to wisdom, but does not wield it. Reason is a tool that can be helpful, but it can also be the instrument of deception and betrayal. She wastes her efforts puzzling over issues with no relevance to life, talking in jargon that conceals her lack of useful knowledge. The waste in which her people dwell is purchased with such folly. *Erik* lives in squalor and ignores the beauties of civilization. Worse yet, he jealously attempts to deny us our fair share of nature's bounty. There is no profit in such behavior. *Laerme* can blind even the wise with passion. Such passion is not without cost. We must reward ourselves for work well done, but in moderation. Excesses lead to misfortune. *Kriesha* offers nothing in return except hardship. Who would accept such terms? She is utterly misguided and not to be trusted.

other powers

The Cold Rider

Demigod

The Shadow Lord, The Usurper

Aliases: The Cold Rider (Anuire) The Night Walker (Rjurik), The Darkling (Khinasi)

Symbol: A cloaked figure on a black steed

Alignment: NE

Portfolio: Undead, the shadow world, deceit

Domains: Charm, Death, Evil, Magic

Favored Weapon: Skeletal touch (unarmed)

The Cold Rider is figure of mystery – a malignant will given body and form in the spirit world. The Cold Rider is seen only as a dark horseman who watches travelers from a windswept hilltop before turning away. He doesn't directly attack intruders, but those who encounter him end up meeting the most dramatic

and ironic manifestations of the Shadow World's evil. The Cold rider is malevolent, but may not yet be consciously so; no traveler has ever reported a conversation with the Cold Rider, but it might be that he only speaks to those that are doomed to never return to the sunlit world again. He appears in the Shadow World as he wills, drawn to extremes of evil or good, and leaves doom in his wake. Over the centuries, he has grown stronger and personalities, powers, and memories are appearing that support his worshippers claims that the Cold Rider is Azrai reborn.

Worshippers claim that the Cold Rider is the direct heir of Azrai's evil and many worship the Cold Rider as the new face of Azrai. There is no widespread organization devoted to the worship of The Cold Rider. Each church maintains its own doctrines and rituals, but those that follow the old ways of Azrai's church have found the greatest success.

Clerics of The Cold Rider pray for their spells at varying times, but most often in the deepest dark of the night. Holy days and celebrations also vary from temple to temple, but often involve the sacrifice of a human soul. If a devout worshiper, the subject is often raised as a free-willed undead; the souls of enemies of the faith are instead allowed to make their way to oblivion but their bodies are raised to forever serve the temple. Most established temples have their most holy ceremonies on the Eve of the Dead, for it is on this day that the veil between life and unearth is at its nadir.

Dogma: The Cold Rider is Azrai reborn. He is the voice of darkness, the harbinger of doom, and the living incarnation of the perverse ironies and corruption of the Shadow World. Sacrifice for him, so that he may gain strength, and reclaim the world that is rightfully his.

Relationships: The Cold Rider's will is unknown. If he is truly heir to Azrai's evil, then surely he will seek out the humanoids and the Vos to once again support him.

Kartathok

Greater God

The Great Slayer, Lord of the Goblins

Symbol: A bloody spear

Alignment: LE

Portfolio: Goblins

Domains: Destruction, Evil, Law, Strength

Favored Weapon: "The Blood Spear" (shortspear or long spear)

Kartathok (*car-tuh-thock*) is the lord and patron of all goblin-kind. He is a bloody god, and demands frequent sacrifices of foes, preferably those taken during raids or captured in battle. Kartathok is the epitome of goblin strength

and cunning. He is a jealous god, and casts his spite against any goblin that does not bow to him.

Kartathok's priests are always war-priests and are usually present at any major goblin conflict. The church is greatly feared and has much influence. By custom and holy law, priests may drag any worshipper to serve as a sacrifice if no suitable foe is available. Even the chief is not immune to such a call, for the priests may use his failure to provide appropriate sacrifices as proof of Kartathok's disfavor. As the church determines how often sacrifices are demanded, it has considerable power toward unseating any goblin ruler and forces goblin leaders to make war regularly. Sacrifices of elves or of any goblin that has forsaken the worship of Kartathok bring particular favor.

Kartathok's priests pray for their spells at dusk. The frequency of sacrifices vary from tribe to tribe, but normally take place at least once each month during the night of the new moon. The Eve of the Dead is also holy to Kartathok, as the longest night of the year.

Dogma: Breed often. In numbers lies strength and protection. There is no foe or obstacle so strong that it can persevere against our numbers. One day all of Cerilia will belong to us. Appease Kartathok, and he will give you strength to crush your foes and many sons to carry your name into the future. Fail him, and The Great Slayer will destroy you utterly.

Relationships: Kartathok considers all other powers to be foes or potential foes. He distrusts all, and his temporary alliances always end in blood.

Moradin

Greater God

The Soul Forger, Dwarffather

Symbol: Hammer and Anvil

Alignment: LG

Portfolio: The arts and sciences of the dwarves

Domains: Earth, Good, Law, Protection

Favored Weapon: "Soul Hammer" (warhammer)

Moradin (*moar-uh-din*) is the father and creator of the dwarven race. He is a stern paternal deity, gruff and uncompromising, and hard as stone. A harsh but fair judge, he is strength and force of will embodied. He inspires dwarven invention, and encourages good nature, intelligence, and harmonious existence with other worthy races while battling pride and isolationist tendencies.

The church of Moradin has an active role in guiding the morals of dwarven communities. They emphasize the Soul Forger's hand in everyday dwarven activities such as mining, smithing, and engineering, and invoke his blessing when these tasks are begun. They lead the push to found new dwarven kingdoms and increase the status of dwarves in surface communities. They take an active role in teaching the young of the communities and oversee most formal ceremonies.

Although anyone may worship the Soul Forger, only dwarves are allowed to advance in his church; members of other races are not acceptable priests of Moradin.

Clerics of Moradin pray in the morning. Offerings are made to the Soul Forger on a monthly basis. The ranking cleric of a

community can declare any day a holy day to celebrate a local event. His clerics commonly multiclass as experts or fighters.

Dogma: Answer first and foremost to Moradin; dedicate your life to his laws and teachings. The bonds of family are sacred; no right-minded dwarf shall undertake any action that might tear a family asunder. Every dwarf is of equal worth. No right-minded dwarf shall place himself or herself above another. The safety of dwarven lands and people must never be compromised. The dwarven lands are a gift from Moradin. Their resources and wealth must be treated with great respect and used to their fullest potential. The land's treasures must not be squandered. Evil must never be allowed to triumph over good. Enslavement of a dwarf must never be tolerated. No worthy dwarf shall want for food, shelter, or companionship. Dwarves must care for their own kind, especially the aged and infirm.

Relationships: Moradin is opposed to Kartathok, Torazan, and other powers that serve evil causes. He is generally coldly neutral to the gods of the Cerilian humans; neither aiding nor opposing their interests save where they intersect with his. He steers clear of any temptation to involve himself or his people in the conflicts between the human deities.

Torazan

Demigod

Oroglord

Symbol: Sword and Horn

Alignment: LE

Portfolio: Orog

Domains: War, Earth, Law, Evil

Favored Weapon: Longsword

Torazan (*tor-ah-zan*) is the infernal lord of the Orog. Like his chosen people, Torazan's brutish appearance conceals an active mind. Torazan prizes ingenuity and slyness, for such traits bring victory in battle.

Orog priests are extremely powerful and influential; entire tribes march at the words of the high battle priests. Torazan's priests teach warcraft to young orog warriors and advise wise orog generals. Orog priests learn to cast battle magic immediately, and hone their skills regularly.

Torazan shows no preference for a time of prayer. Most of Torazan's clergy pray for their spells immediately after waking each day. Torazan's battle-priests often multiclass as fighters.

Relationships: Torazan hates Moradin passionately; he has little time for other foes, and is only interested in alliances that further his battle against the Dwarffather.

Halfling spirituality

Refugees from the shadow world, halflings have no specific patron deity. Although capable of deep spirituality, halflings tend towards introspection and are dependent on the moral compass of their community to help guide their actions. Halflings are welcomed by human churches in their community. Although halflings are not often inducted to the mysteries of the church, most churches do not exclude them from the clergy.

Sidhelien spirituality

The elves can call upon the forces inherent in wood and water, field and air, but have never worshipped deities. They are aware

that the gods of Deismaar existed and that new gods were created, but they do not pay homage to them. Particularly after their deception and betrayal by Azrai, the elves have been adamant in their refusal to worship human gods. To the elves, spiritual development is the responsibility of the individual. The path that an elf takes is a decision that only he or she can make. So strong is this belief that if an elf chooses to worship one of the human gods, so be it. The only restriction placed upon such rare individuals is that they not discuss their religious ideologies within elven realms.

Celestials, demons, and other powers

In addition to the major deities, dozens of lesser entities are worshiped by the denizens of Cerilia. It is believed that the homes of the gods are reached through the spirit world and that it is there that the servants of the gods make their homes. Whether such beings are servants of the gods, manifestations of a people's desire, or monsters preying upon the superstitious is subject to debate. Such servants may be referred to as being celestial in origin; although those horrific or believed to be evil are often referred to as demonic or infernal. For the most part, Cerilia's gods are close to human kind; their imperfections and weaknesses, their attitudes and objectives, are comprehensible to mortals. The same is not necessarily true of celestials and demons. These powers may have alien desires and needs or inflexible lines of action; dealing with them is often perilous.

Some celestials/demons have the status of demigods and are capable of granting the ability to cast divine spells. Likewise, True scions that have accepted a bloodform are capable of granting the ability to channel divine energy to their worshippers and are considered demigods.

faiths of worship

Mortal adherents of deities create religious institutions to regulate and foster their version of the truth underlying a deity's teachings. The differing temples of these gods are not unified, and often consider each other's beliefs to be heretical, at best. At least ten different faiths devoted to Haelyn exist in Anuire alone, and the rivalry is sometimes fierce.

Most of the human deities are worshiped in one aspect or another in several of Cerilia's cultures. Although the deity's name may differ in two different tongues, the basic teachings of the faith are unchanged – only the interpretation differs. For example, Sera is the patron of the Brecht, but is also revered in Anuire as Sarimie, and in Khinasi as Sarma. Among the Brecht, Sera epitomizes the belief that a man must make his own luck; individual initiative and drive are the means by which one gains power and respect. Among the Khinasi, Sarma represents the pursuit of wealth and leisure. Among Anuireans, Sarimie is venerated as the representation of acquisition of power through skill and fortune rather than inheritance.

Although the organizations of various faiths vary greatly, most follow a common structure. All churches have a clergy and a laity. Some laity may be extremely pious, but they are generally not privy to the most holy ceremonies and rituals of a church. The clergy are the priest and priestesses, those who organize and administer the temples and devote their lives to

servicing the deity. Although common folk by birth, clerics enjoy a privileged social status similar to that of the nobility in most cultures.

The lowest ranking clergy are those who have taken temporary holy orders and are in training to prepare them for their vocation. A priest is an ordained representative of a faith. Once ordained, priests are capable of advancing as divine spell casters (although not all priests do so). A priest that is responsible for church-owned lands, property, or the oversight of other clergy generally has a named title and is almost always a divine spell-caster of a least minor power. A priest who oversees the religious affairs of an entire province, or an entire realm is almost universally a divine spellcaster of some power and is often a blooded scion. A priest who oversees the religious affairs of an entire religion is usually one of the most powerful divine spellcasters of the faith and is always blooded. Churches generally appoint members of the clergy to permanent or temporary offices. Those with higher offices control all promotions, except that a council of high-ranking members of the faith usually elects province, realm, and faith-level positions.

Although each faith, sect, or temple may have differing names for their ranks, many faiths use titles roughly equivalent to those dictated to Haelyn's church through the *Book of Laws*. These ranks are presented in Table 4-9: Clerical ranks.

Table 4-9: clerical ranks

Clerical Rank	Oversees
Lay brother/sister	-
Brother/sister	Laity
Father/mother	Clergy
Curate	Temple
Prelate	Province
Archprelate	Realm
Pontiff	Faith

Faiths of Haelyn

Three Anuirean faiths devoted to the worship of Haelyn are presented to provide examples of differences among a god's churches. A complete list of Cerilian churches can be found in the *d20 Atlas of Cerilia*.

A faith may have an alignment that differs by no more than one place from the alignment of the deity that it worships. Likewise, a priest of a church may have an alignment that differs by no more than one place from the alignment of the church of which he or she is a member. Thus, it is possible for a clerics of some faiths to have an alignment which differs by as much as two steps from their deity's. In addition to alignment, churches often differ in the weapons and domains that they prefer, as well as the skills in which their members focus.

Orthodox Imperial Temple of Haelyn (OIT): The OIT claims to be the true heir to the word of Haelyn. Its priests claim the distinction of being the first church of Haelyn founded after Deismaar. The original *Book of Laws*, the most sacred text in the church of Haelyn, resides in a vault in the Averlerine cathedral in Aerele. The church draws from centuries of study of the *Book of Laws* to defend its exacting dogma, which at its heart holds that a society can thrive only

by adhering to a strict rule of law. Laws, the church believes, exist to regulate a person's inclination to place his own needs over those of the society as a whole. The only way to preserve the rule of law is to ensure that every member of society has a specific, unchanging function. As it is the responsibility of the ruler to guide the endeavors of his people, so is it the responsibility of the ruled to follow their ruler's dictates.

Where the OIT doctrine has encountered opposition is in its inflexible view that draconian adherence to an unchanging set of laws and institution of rigid social hierarchy are the only ways to preserve order. The OIT argues that its views are supported in the writings of the *Book of Laws*, a claim that has brought about numerous debates and has caused at least one rift within the church. Of the many ceremonies that are part of the OIT daily rituals, most emphasize the importance of maintaining the strength of the social order.

Holy Order of Haelyn's Aegis (HA): This church developed from a military order of the OIT. Composed of knights, warrior priests, and common soldiers, it was the military arm of the church of Haelyn. When the Imperial Temple called warriors from across Anuire to serve their emperor in bringing the light of Haelyn's worship and the benefits of Anuirean civilization to the rest of Cerilia, the HA was the first to answer. Only after the death of Michael Roele and the disintegration of the Anuirean Empire did the HA develop into a separate church. Due to its history as a military order, the HA continues to use military ranks to denote rank within the church, rather than the standard clerical ranks.

Table 4-10: Ranks of a military order

Military Order Rank	Oversees
Knight-priest	Ley soldiers
Knight-captain	Unit
Knight-commander	Several units or a major fortification
Lord Captain	Realm's armies
Lord Commander	Faith's armies

While the HA acknowledges the primacy of the OIT in the worship of Haelyn, its aims are different from those of its parent church. The Holy Order believes that questions of religious dogma, while important, pale somewhat in comparison to the threat posed by the mighty armies of the Gorgon and others. The church today is not an aggressive military order, although it is organized along military lines. Rather, it is an order that regards the defense of Anuire as its sacred charge. Members of the clergy are more moderate in their beliefs than the priests of some other churches of Haelyn, and are quite willing to work with those whose personal religious beliefs differ from theirs.

Table 4-11: Church summaries

Church	Algn	Common domains	Common skills
OIT	LN	Law, Justice	Administrate, religion
HA	NG	War, Nobility	Lead, warcraft
IHH	LG	Nobility, Justice	Diplomacy, lead

Impregnable Heart of Haelyn (IHH): The IHH is as much a result of the political rivalry that brought about the independence of the former provinces of western Diemed as it

does a doctrinal dispute with the OIT. Despite the political origins of the schism, distinct differences now exist between the two churches. The IHH is in many ways a simpler church than its forbearer. It argues that the OIT is so immersed in rites and ceremonies that it has lost sight of Haelyn's creed.

To the IHH, Haelyn's teachings are simple, and can be summarized in three words: courage, honor, and justice. Everything else stems from them. Courage is demonstrated both in the face of an implacable enemy and in the defense of personal convictions before peers. Honor demands mercy and respect, both on a battlefield and in trade negotiations. Justice is best served by an impartial set of fair laws that allow for individual achievement.

cosmology of Aebrynīs

The cosmology of Aebrynīs differs significantly from the "standard" cosmologies presented in the *Manual of the Planes*. Aebrynīs connects directly to one, and only one, other plane. This plane, originally called the *spirit world*, but more recently referred to as the *shadow world*, is a coexistent plane with the Material plane of Aebrynīs. There is no "ethereal plane" or "shadow plane" coexistent to Aebrynīs; for the purposes of spell effects, the shadow world fills the roles of both. If a path exists between Aebrynīs and any other planes of existence, the path passes through the Shadow World.

The Shadow World

Before Deismaar, the Shadow World was a realm of faerie that paralleled Cerilia. This was the home of the halflings, who frequently traveled between the two worlds—hence the name halfling, since they were half of this world and half of another.

When Azrai's physical form was destroyed at Deismaar, some small part of his soul survived in the ethereal realm of spirit which the halflings inhabited. This was at first no more than an evil taint; Azrai was not conscious, and for all intents and purposes did not exist as a self-aware entity at this time. He was only the memory of evil, but that proved to be enough to corrupt the halfling's idyllic realm.

Over the course of the three or four centuries immediately after Deismaar, Azrai's corrupt spirit spread throughout the spirit world, much like a drop of oil spreading a sheen over the surface of a lake. His increasing presence twisted the spirit world into the Shadow World, and the halflings left. This evil grows more and more powerful and is rumored to have finally gained the ability to manifest a physical form once again.

The shadow world reflects the mortal world, but in strange facsimile. Everything is dark and an air of emptiness hangs heavily, as if everything has been long abandoned. Details change between one glance to the next; a building might remain the same, but a wagon parked beside it might be in a slightly different place, or gone, and a door that stood open might close. The more ephemeral a thing is in the real world, the more its position or condition might change – the less firm its reflection. Ancient relics, long since torn down, may still stand in the spirit world. A savage storm stills ravages the seas south of Aerele in response to the cataclysm of the Godswar.

Everything in the shadow world has a faded look, like clothes washed too often or and left too long in the sun. There are no normal insects, birds, or other animals. No normal animals rustle in the grass, swim in the waters, or sing in the trees. The water is cool and drinkable, but tastes flat, as if it had been boiled. Worst of all, the land seems to twist the eye.

Everything about the Shadow World is unreal. While the Shadow World remains a parallel to Aebrynis, the laws of nature do not always apply there. There, illusions live and shadows walk of their own volition. Powered by the magic of the Seeming, things unreal come to life. Thus anything, and everything, is possible within the Shadow World for someone skilled in the Seeming, but these changes are largely illusionary; most fade immediately upon returning to the waking world.

Distances are largely a matter of focus in the shadow world. What is close at hand looks all right, and what is seen straight ahead in the distance, but whenever one turns their head, things that appear distant when seen from the corner of the eye seem to rush forward, to be nearer when looked at head on. Although this effect makes for dizziness, it is also indicative of a truth in the Shadow World; time and distances are deceiving.

Moving to/from the Shadow World: The barrier between Aebrynis and the Shadow World varies based upon the difference between the two planes at any give time and location. The middle of a crowded city at high noon differs significantly from the coexistent point in the Shadow World, whereas there may be little or no difference between the two in the dark depths of an ancient deserted monument. In areas of near exact similarity, beings can occasionally pass between the two planes unknowing. In general, however, travel to or from the Shadow World requires powerful magic or divine intervention. Some native beings of the Shadow World, including some halflings, have sensitivity to areas of high similarity and can recognize and cross the planar barrier without the use of magical aids.

Afterlife

To every location in Aebrynis, a corresponding parallel location exists in the Shadow World, but the reverse is not true. The shifting and desire-based nature of the Shadow World allow for the existence of vast regions that have no parallel in Aebrynis. Furthermore, these "deep" regions are not fixed in location; the point at which one leaves coexistent space and enters into one of these regions may vary over time. These areas are far more mutable than areas that parallel Aebrynis and they are as vibrant and rich as the Shadow World is bleached and dull. Such pockets are homes to the most powerful entities that inhabit the Shadow World. Most major divine powers have claimed (or perhaps created) their seats of power in such pockets.

When a mortal being dies, its soul "wakes" in the Shadow World and begins its journey towards the home of its patron god. Each spirit instinctively feels the direction in which it must travel to reach the end of its journey; the strength and accuracy of this pull is proportional to the soul's devotion to the ideas of its patron deity. Spirits that have little or no association with a patron are believed to be doomed to wander the Shadow World until they forget their sense of self and fade

into oblivion. Powers of the Shadow World actively seek out spirits of the newly dead and attempt to bind them to ill purposes.

It is believed that Nesirie is gradually assuming responsibility for guarding the dead. The dangers that the Shadow World holds for spirits and the evil uses the Cold Rider and other powers make of them deeply offend Nesirie's nature. As she grows more powerful, perhaps she will be able to prevent the powers of the Shadow World from luring spirits to their dark domains.

The nature of the realms of the gods is apocryphal, at best. Their nature may be as is commonly believed, or may differ significantly from the preaching of the church. Is the nature of these realms determined by the gods that rule them, or by the desires of the spirits that have found their way there? Only the dead know the answer to this final mystery. However, common dogma describes the gods of the realms as follows.

Avani (The Gleaming Spire): Avani's realm is a great city in the Khinasi style, built amidst a peaceful oasis. Avani's palace, which is the city's centerpiece, is a tall spire of gold in the center of the oasis; built around it are plazas, libraries, bathhouses and all the luxuries afforded to the richest sultans of the Khinasi. Those honored worshippers who follow the light of reason during their lives and never stray from the path set out by Avani are permitted access to an eternity of luxury. It is a land of warmth and peace where no battle occurs and nothing is out of place.

Belinik (The Striving): The Striving is a gloomy and desolate place where warriors that served Belinik in life now contest against each other eternally. Here the strongest battle the weak to gain their lord's notice. Belinik allows all who wish to enter access to his realm, but they must fight for their survival. Those who do not succeed are cast out and forever doomed. Here, warriors must battle their way up the rungs of power. For those who are at the top there are luxuries and wealth beyond imagining while those at the bottom are condemned to make do with the meager comforts that can be found in the cold hills that cover this realm.

Cuiracén (Cuiracén's Feasthall): Cuiracén's realm is a gigantic hall that sits atop of a steep sided hill, surrounded by storm clouds. Here great warriors celebrate their success in battle and forever recount the great events of their lives. The hall is home to a continuous feast where warriors may forever enjoy the spoils of the victory.

Eloéle (The Endless Maze): A dark and chaotic realm, the Eloéle's realm is similar to Sera's Marketplace Eternal. The endless maze, however, includes the seamy side of the marketplace, and is a vast maze of streets, alleys and squares. Here the worthy dead are allowed to indulge in all of their fantasies, at the cost of forgetting their previous lives. The Endless Maze is a city of taverns, brothels, gambling halls, and other similar establishments. The most successful and devoted of Eloéle's worshippers live in large palaces and the rest seek to steal from them to gain the prestige necessary to gain such luxury themselves.

Erik (Nature's Rest): Erik's domain is almost an exact copy of Cerilia, except as it would have been without any intelligent beings living on it. Food is easy to come by and the worshippers of Erik lucky enough to make it here travel the lands marveling at its natural wonders.

Haelyn (Honor's Glory): Honor's Glory is a land of rolling hills and grassland, dotted with castles and manors for the greatest of Haelyn's heroes. It represents Anuire as Haelyn would like to see it; a vision of idyllic peace where all know their place in society and the importance of their place to the working of the whole. Haelyn spends his time here challenging the greatest and most noble generals of Anuire and other lands to battles in which the rules of honor are always followed and the losers of each conflict surrender gracefully to the winners so that none are seriously injured.

Kriesha (The Steadfast Chill): Kriesha's realm is a place of breathtaking beauty. It brings together all the best parts of a snow-covered, icy landscape and combines them into pristine, crystalline glory. Palaces of ice lie scattered across the landscape and are home to the Kriesha's favored, while outside a cold wind blows, and packs of wolves and other monster roam.

Laerme (Songsheight): The realm of Laerme is a large college that contains copies of all books, songs, and artwork ever completed. Scholars, painters, sculptors, and other artists roam the ground of the college enjoying the garden of fruit trees and flowerbeds. The sun never fully sets and the inhabitants are forever free to love and work as they desire.

Moradin (Soulforger's Haven): The resting place of worthy dwarves is a miraculous wonder deep beneath the earth. Waterfalls, cavernous geodes, and other wonders of the earth are commonplace in the Soulforger's Haven. More importantly, Moradin sets the soul of each dwarf to a task in his grand scheme. Together, the dwarves discover ever-new wonders and pave the way for Moradin to provide new gifts to his people.

Nesirie (The Waves of Grief): The domain of the goddess of the sea is a small group of islands that rise up out of the ocean like jagged spikes. Each spike is carved into fantastic towers and castles. These buildings are home to Nesirie's faithful, who are surrounded by all the wealth the sea can provide.

Ruornil (The Silver Lands): Ruornil's domain constantly reflects the glory of the silvery moon. By its light, Ruornil's faithful devote eternity to studying the true mysteries of the universe. Great wizards of the past each shape their own regions of the domain into the forms that bring them pleasure, and share their art with those who wish to study with them.

Sera (The Marketplace Eternal): Sera's domain is a vast city that stretches for miles in each direction. Therein, Sera's faithful continue the fondest pursuits of their lives eternally. Craftsmen work alongside the great masters that have come before them and have access to the finest materials to create works of profound craftsmanship. Traders and merchants barter for their goods for the simple prestige of besting their opponents and sharpening their skill. It is said that the most skillful are asked to dice against Sera herself, and that those who best her are allowed to "cast the dice of their lives again" – reincarnated to perform some great task in her service.

