

ELLANHERE

MINOR GODDESS OF CANINES

Titles: Pack Mother, She-Wolf, Dargar's Bitch.

Aspects: Canines.

Affiliations: Eostre Animalmother and Dargar.

Symbol: Wolf's head facing head on.

Priesthood: Pack Lords (priests); Pack Brothers/Sisters (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Fulmonan of Wulfmonan.

Duties: To serve your community and lord. To aid those in need.

Sins: (Minor) accidentally harming a canine, allowing a canine to be mistreated (does not apply to her Dargar followers), not owning a canine, petting or feeding a cat; (Major) owning a cat, willfully harming a canine except in self-defense; (Mortal) willfully killing a canine except in self-defense.

Signature Power: *Beast friend* (canines only).

Powers: *Fear, knockdown, shape change* (canines only), *speed, smite, summon beast* (canines only), *wilderness step*.

Trappings: Trappings always relate to canines. *Fear*, for instance, might involve the cleric howling or conjuring a ghastly spectral hound, while *knockdown* may be represented by an illusory wolf leaping at victims.

Ellanhere is patron of domesticated dogs and wild canines, including wolves and dire wolves. She is thus both tame and feral, obedient servant and cruel killer. She has little authority over supernatural breeds, such as Fenris and varcolac wolves or moon dogs, though they respect her position as mother of lesser canines.

According to many legends she is the daughter of Dargar and Eostre, though this is highly disputed. Clerics of Eostre claim she is the spirit of Eostre's first dog, granted divine status for her loyalty and obedience. In that faith, she is the mother of all canines. The cult of Dargar say she was a wolf cub granted their god by Eostre in the hope tending it would calm his unruly nature. Dargar was so impressed by her vicious nature he elevated her to godhood during the God War.

She is rarely depicted in humanoid form in art. Rather, she takes the form of a she-wolf that slinks around Eostre or Dargar's legs or, more rarely, a wolfskin cloak worn by either deity.

Similarly, she has no temple, but shrines to her exist in most temples to Eostre Animalmother and Dargar. Often they are little more than a wolfskin or a wolf's skull, though more elaborate ones may have a carved image.

Many priests act as veterinarians specializing in canines. Typically they serve a community or nobleman,

tending the war dogs, as well as regular domestic breeds. Others serve as master of the hounds for nobles who hunt with dogs. They will not, however, participate in the hunting of wolves. Among orc tribes that keep wolves (and dire wolves), priests are responsible for ensuring the wolves are trained and kept in top condition.

Paladins are warriors. Like canines, they are expected to serve a community or lord loyally, either as a frontline fighter or a trusted bodyguard. Among orcs they serve as cavalry commanders as well as bodyguards.

However, lone wolves that come to the aid of those in need are common in stories, and clerics of Ellanhere may adopt that role. Many take this road until they find a lord worthy of their service. Others have served a lord, but, like a faithful hound, have vowed to take no other master after his death.

The phrase being "top dog" means being a leader. Clerics of Ellanhere cannot help but jostle for position when they gather in any strength. Most often juniors stretch their neck upward and arms outward before renowned peers, accepting their status as lesser members of Ellanhere's mortal pack. When one refuses to acknowledge another's position, they must decide who outranks the other. While violence sometimes occurs, most often they growl and stare at each other in a contest of intimidation.

Among the cult of Dargar, clerics are feral creatures, heavily devoted to wolflike behavior. Pecking order within their ranks always involves contests to the death, for Dargar does not accept weaklings who bow without first testing their opponent's strength.

Religious ceremonies vary, but there is always a hunt. Typically, clerics dress in wolfskins and hunt either a real animal or someone dressed in a deerskin cloak. Real animals are eaten raw. All hymns and prayers take the form of howls. It is considered a good omen if local hounds or wolves join in the chorus, for it means Ellanhere has heard the prayers and is pleased. Hearing a cat yowl during a ritual is a bad omen for the future.

Character Guidelines: While paladins need decent combat skills, priests need very little save for a few dice in Healing. Intimidation is handy, since it enables one to dominate others without resorting to violence, behavior not uncommon in canines.

The Beast Master and Beast Bond Edges are solid choices, since together they provide a faithful hound or wolf the cleric can support with bennies.

THE NAME OF MAGIC

BONUS BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Although the Hearthlands is now dominated by the Marklands and the resurgent Saxa culture, centuries of Anari rule left their mark in more than just crumbling ruins and the memory of tyrannical rule. The names of the magical arts presented in the *Hellfrost Players' Guide*, for instance, are a mix of Anari and Trader.

But before the Anari expanded out of their small isle and spread their influence across the Hearthlands, the Saxa used different terms to differentiate their magicians. Today, these terms are found only in the Auld Saxa tongue (itself a living language in some regions), and are most often spoken only in epic poems of bygone days.

This free document makes no changes to the *Hellfrost* magic rules—it merely adds a little more flavor for those so inclined to use it.

DRUIDISM

An art never mastered by any human culture, druidism was universally referred to as *alfseiðr* (“elf magic”) in Auld Saxa verse. Although engros can also learn the art, the old name remains in common usage in rural Saxa communities, even ones where Auld Saxa is extinct, for the word *alf* still conjures images of mystery and the supernatural.

Adding a race’s name before *seiðr* was once a commonplace practice. *Ormseiðr*, for example, referred to dragon magic (orm being Auld Saxa for dragon, but used these days to refer only to wingless dragons). The epic poem *The Saga of Redvig Trollslayer* makes mention of *trollseiðr*, though trolls today are rarely, if ever, conversant in magic.

ELEMENTALISM

The oldest surviving magical art still in widespread use was known simply as *seiðr* (“magic”) in the oldest surviving stories and poems. The term was prefixed by the word of each element (*eir*, *ertha*, *fyr*, and *waeter*).

As new forms of magic were developed, some might say discovered, elementalism was renamed as *verden-seiðr*, which translates as “world magic.” The term comes from the common belief that the world is made up of the four elements.

HEAHWISARDRY

Although heahwisardry was favored by the Anari, it features in some Auld Saxa works. The art was known as

galdrastafr (literally “magical staff”) or *gandr* (modern Saxa for “staff”). The suffixes *-madbr* (“-man”) and *-kona* (“-woman”) could be added to either term to describe a practitioner of the art.

HRIMWISARDRY

Since the art was totally unknown before the Blizzard War, there is no Auld Saxa word for hrimwisardry. The modern name is a Trader word, being a mix of modern Saxa (hrim; “ice”) and Anari (wisardry; “magic”).

RUNE MAGIC

Rune magic is the oldest known magical art. Although never practised by humans, giants were recorded as invoking the runes in the oldest surviving poems and songs. That frost dwarves also carved runes was only discovered after the Blizzard War, when the dwarves migrated south. Practitioners of rune magic, regardless of race, carried the title *vitki* (“wise one;” pl. *vitkir*).

SONG MAGIC

Although many citizens refer to practitioners of song magic as skalds, the word is highly misleading. Skald is merely a Saxa word for an entertainer, and any musician, poet, or teller of tales might be labelled as one, regardless of his magical knowledge. The Anari equivalent is a scop. The Auld Saxa term clearly separated mundane skalds from their magical counterparts.

The Auld Saxa for song magic is *galdr*. Although the word simply means “spell,” it refers specifically to an enchantment brought about by singing. Its practitioners were called *galdrmadbr* (“spell man”) and *galdrkona* (“spell woman”).

PRIESTS & PRIESTESSES

The word priest is from Trader. The Auld Saxa term for a priest is *goði* (pl. *goðar*), while that of a priestess is *gyðja* (pl. *gyðja*). The word *olriðr* (“war-”) was added a prefix to denote paladins.

According to some ancient stories, in days of old clerics ruled communities in the same way as nobles do today. The division between nobility and clergy came later. Although the terms still appear frequently in poems and stories, they are applied only to high priests (any priest who runs a temple) in normal conversation.

CHAMPION CULTS

OPTIONAL RULE

Within every cult, whether that of a major god or a minor one, there are stories of great “heroes.” Some are warriors, others are healers, sages, mages, craftsmen, or explorers. On rare occasions, the gods reward such worshippers with a special place in the Afterlife, promoting them to semi-divine status and allowing mortal followers to access a fraction of the hero’s new found power.

These sub-cults are often known as champion cults, for the hero was a champion of the faith in life, and in death encourages others to live to the same ideals. Not all champions need have been clerics—devotion to the cause can take forms beyond holy vows.

Champions are never worshipped individually as gods. They are servants, in the same manner as heralds. Their cults are very small and localized.

JOINING A CHAMPION CULT

When a cleric who follows a major deity takes the New Power Edge, he may instead elect to join a champion cult. He may pick any spell of Novice or Seasoned Rank not on his god’s spell list, so long as it is not obviously anathema or contradictory to his god’s tenets. Granting *healing* should be rare, as it is found only in a few cults.

In return, the player and the GM must come up with one new minor and major sin concerning the champion and his beliefs. These need not follow the basic beliefs of the god, though they should not be contradictory (such as a champion of Tiw who prohibits killing), since in avoiding one sin the cleric will commit another.

A cleric who follows only a lesser god is restricted to Novice spells (again, *healing* should be rare), but need only add a minor sin to his list of prohibitions.

At the GM’s discretion, clerics can pick a spell they already available through their deity. This grants a +1 bonus when casting the spell. This modifier does *not* stack with the bonus gained for a cleric of a major god also worshipping an affiliated minor god—only a single +1 bonus ever applies, no matter how many sources the spell comes from.

Players should be encouraged to come up with a short description of the champion’s deeds in life that earned him his reward in death.

EXAMPLE CHAMPION CULTS

Below are a number of sample champion cults. Since this rule is optional, none is official canon. They can thus be tweaked as the GM desires. Entries with two deities

can be used for both major and minor gods—just drop the major sin for the latter.

AGRORAMOVIX THE RELENTLESS

Deity: Ullr

Spell: *Boost/lower trait* (Vigor and Fighting). These add to the cleric’s existing spell.

Sins: (Minor) Giving up hunting a quarry for any reason; (Major) Showing mercy to orcs

A Tuomi hunter, Agroramovix’s settlement was destroyed by orcs while he was away hunting. Agroramovix vowed to track down the culprits and wreak vengeance upon them. His quest lasted ten years, but was ultimately successful. The hunter survived his ordeal, eventually dying of old age. By the time of his death, his deed was widely known among the Tuomi.

SIGRIC THE MULE

Deity: Var

Spell: *Boost/lower trait* (Strength & Vigor). These add to the cleric’s existing spell.

Sins: (Minor) Riding a horse or in a wagon; (Major) Burdening an animal when you are not encumbered

Sigric was a merchant. He honored Var, as wise merchants do, but he was not a cleric. Too frugal to spend money on mules, he carried his trade goods on his back wherever he travelled, never complaining about his tiresome burden. He died an old man, his back hunched and legs bowed, but he was extremely rich.

VYNER THE SMITH

Deity: Ertha

Spell: *Smite* (Vyner’s cult also suits Hagvirkr, god of smiths. In this case, he grants *warrior’s gift*. The spell only functions while the target is wielding a weapon.)

Sins: (Minor) Using your fists, feet, and so on as weapons; (Major) Breaking a weapon except as an offering to Ertha

During the Blizzard War, Vyner worked day and night to forge new weapons for the armies of the Hearthlands. Such was his skill that is said the spear and swords slid through Hellfrost dragon scales like a hot knife through butter. Even when his home was attacked, Vyner remained at his forge until his death. Many legends claim the blade he was working on as coldfire from a Hellfrost dragon burned his flesh and bones became a relic.

THE PRICE OF FAITH

OPTIONAL GUIDELINES

TIME AND FAITH

Time is a precious thing, for the lives of mortals, even the long-lived elves, are fleeting. A character who chooses to be a cleric receives powerful miracles with very little in the way of backlash, the backing of his cult, and usually the respect of the public. Yet such benefits come at a price beyond that of avoiding sins.

Unlike in some role-playing games, being a cleric in *Hellfrost* should not simply be a means of gaining cool powers purely for adventuring. Of course beating orcs to death and stealing their treasure is part of the game, but *Hellfrost* is also about people and communities.

Clerics are expected to serve their deities, and that means devoting time to religious duties. Typically, a cleric must give up 50% of his waking time to directly serving his god. A disciple is expected to serve his deity above everything else. As such, he must devote 75% of his waking hours to serving his deity. Devotees, lesser than clerics but no less religious, must give up 25%.

In many cases the duties a cleric performs are incidental to any plot and occur during downtime. A cleric of Eira who stays over in a tavern or seeks hospitality in a stead, for example, will be called upon to treat minor ailments or perform blessings. Most clerics can be assumed to participate in prayers and minor ceremonies as part of their daily routine—attention need only be paid to holy and high holy days, which carry a price if not honored correctly (see *Region Guide #0*).

Such trivial acts of servitude need not be played out, but neither should they be totally ignored as irrelevant acts. A few words from the GM is often enough to remind cleric characters that they are beholden to a lifestyle not entirely of their own choosing. Sometimes, of course, a cleric may have to miss a social function because of his religious duties, but when this occurs, the GM should have a small sub-plot up his sleeve so the character does not miss out on the action.

Adventuring can, of course, be a means of serving one's deity, at least so long as the quest is beneficial to the god. A cleric of Eira accompanying a bunch of dungeon raiders just in case they need healing is not directly benefiting her deity, as there are plenty of people desperately in need of succor.

Because the free Connections Edge to a cult come with the Order Hindrance, the GM has all the tools he needs to ensure clerics go on adventures beneficial to the cult, and thus the god. Ordering a cleric to undertake an adventure is not heavy-handed or "rail roading" the

character into obeying the GM's wishes—it is part of the price a cleric must pay for his gifts.

TEMPLE RANKS

Most *Hellfrost* campaigns will likely revolve around wandering adventurers. Some, though, will focus on one settlement or a small geographic area. In such campaigns, clerics might be part of a temple, serving there on a daily basis. As such, they are part of the temple hierarchy.

As mentioned in *Region Guide #0*, there is no continent-wide system of ranks, even within the same cult. But if a cleric is going to serve a temple, he should be given the opportunity to hold a rank. Temple rank should be based not on character Rank, but the Faith die. After all, heroes are a rare breed, and most NPC clerics never have interesting adventures. The GM can impose other requirements based on the particular cult (such as Healing for Eira or the number of Combat Edge for Tiw), but in most cases a simple table showing titles and the required Faith die is enough.

Note that being a high priest or paladin, a term used to denote the senior cleric in a temple, rarely has anything to do with faith—the post is as much political as spiritual. Small temples may have a high priest with just Faith d6, although the title-holder may well be a Wild Card. Characters should never become a high priest just because they invest skill points in Faith. The post also requires them to devote huge amounts of time to the temple, making it ill-suited for most adventurers.

An example ranking system for a stock temple of Tiw is given below.

Recruit, d4: This rank is held by junior clerics, those either in training or who have only recently taken holy vows. Most characters will have already held this rank and advanced beyond it by the time play begins.

Brother/Sister, d6: The default rank for most members of the temple.

Sergeant-of-Arms, d8: Holders of this rank are almost as numerous as brothers/sisters.

Captain-of-Arms, d10: This is usually the highest status an NPC will ever acquire, and even then a temple boasts only one such cleric. Beyond lies the realm of the truly righteous clerics—i.e., player characters.

Master-of-Arms, d12: The cleric is second in command below the high priest. Few temples ever support a cleric this faithful.

As noted in *Region Guide #0*, clerics may hold specific titles relating to the role they fill within the temple.