

# The Celestial Reference Guide

## The Holy Trinity

*The “Holy Trinity” consists of the three gods, Prana, Endo, and Gaia, which have become the focus of the Imperial Holy Temple. Though not an official state religion, the Temple’s influence spread with the Empire, itself. Generally, worshipers of the Holy Trinity and Elder Pantheon believe that by journeying through the Abyss and enduring its hardships, their souls will be cleansed of sin, allowing them to return to the Aether to be born anew.*

### *Endo*

Vilified and respected in equal measure is the Lord of the Abyss, Endo. The gloomy reaches of the Abyss are his domain and the lost souls within, his to rule. Though commonly thought to dole out punishments to the wicked thanks to modern Imperial religious doctrines, Endo oversees the various realms of the Abyss and its denizens in a neutral fashion; providing for their needs in the afterlife to offer peaceful rest and a transition to rebirth from the Aether, or by punishing evil souls according to their deeds in life.

Endo is often depicted as shadowy figure resembling a bald human man, dressed in a loosely-fitted tunic and trousers, and his symbol is a drop of blood bearing the reflection of a skull.

### *Gaia*

Nature provides for the needs of all in equal measure, but also yields many dangers which become increasingly concentrated as mankind clears the trees and scars the ground without regard for their purpose or the lesser creatures which depend on the resources naturally available for their survival. Though slow to build and boil over, nature’s wrath must never be taken lightly.

Most commonly referred to as “Mother Nature,” Gaia is the personification of the earth itself. Though ancient depictions suggest Gaia to prefer the form of a moss-covered tree bearing humanoid features, modern depictions suggest the form of a Forest Elf woman whose skin is tattooed to resemble a map of the world’s land masses and bodies of water.

Gaia’s symbol resembles a four-pointed leaf, with each point bearing veins, curves, and notches to lend to the vague depiction of each of the four natural elements.

### *Prana*

Just as the gentle warmth of sunbeams may soothe weariness and revitalize weakened crops, so too does Prana’s enduring love for all her creation. Credited with the creation of all life and lending her divine power for the use of healing magic, Prana is often referred to as the Lady of Light, the Life-Giver, or simply Mother Prana.

Traditional depictions of Prana show a graceful Human woman clad in a shimmering red gown, and her symbol is traditionally a stylized depiction of the sun.

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## The Elder Pantheon

Sometimes referred to as the “lesser Gods,” the Elder Pantheon has been worshiped alongside the gods of the Holy Trinity throughout the world for centuries, though different cultures may have referred to individual gods by varying names, or have held some in higher regard than others. The Imperial Holy Temple still acknowledges the Elder Pantheon, though to a limited degree when compared to the Holy Trinity.

### *Alvar*

Weather can be wildly unpredictable; one moment, the sun is shining unchallenged in the sky, and the next, clouds have covered it and fierce winds blow. Rainclouds can give way to the sun in the middle of a storm, and yet rain will continue to fall as the skies turn a tranquil blue. Asking for favorable weather is rarely if ever a productive endeavor, but when one must ask, Alvar the Windborne is the one to ask.

The Halfling god of weather has a great many names. Windborne is the most common name used, but he has also been known throughout the ages as Cloudstrider, Sojourner, Stormwalker, and “Old Cloudy.” Dwarves in particular have had some choice names for him. Regardless of his name, his image is always the same: a Halfling dressed in baggy, wind-blown linens, with a clouded glass flask at his belt. Some legends used to say he kept the rains in that flask, which became his symbol.

Very few people worship Alvar in the present day. The decline in his worship began at least two centuries ago; now, records of his followers and worship exist mostly for history’s sake.

### *Amaran*

To the true warrior, honor, glory, and valor go hand-in-hand. Those who shy from combat can only wallow in their fear as the truly dedicated face down impossible odds, standing tall with weapon in hand and raging fire in their hearts. When glorious battle calls upon the warrior and he rises to fulfill his purpose, Amaran the Titansbane watches over him and guides his blade.

This mountain of an Orc is depicted as wearing battle-scarred, piecemeal armor, with a halberd in one hand and a massive greatsword slung over his back. Legends tell of his triumph over the titans of the ancient world, his blade felling scores of the giants as he led the charge against them.

### *Chiolus*

Societies flourish with order, and order cannot exist without law. Chiolus, the Whitemane, is the protector of that order, a stalwart champion of law. In his eyes, there is no chaos – there is only order and those that threaten the balance it brings.

Chiolus oversees all matters of a legal nature. It is extremely rare to find a courtroom or guard house without his image or symbol. His image – that of a lion Kaddri – is often offered prayers for swift resolution at the beginning of a hearing or trial. His symbol, the silver scale, is commonly used in matters involving a jury or other panel; verdicts are decided by members of the panel placing a gold coin on either side of the scale.

Chiolus’s symbol has become the namesake of an order pledged to his service. The Order of the Silver Scale is an order recognized as judges and lawmen, upholding law where needed.

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## *Fuka*

The preservation of life is one of the highest priorities of mortals, and those who put the well-being of others before themselves are held in particularly high regard. One who throws themselves into the path of harm to shield others can surely count on the blessings of Fuka, the Conservator.

Worshiped by healers and protectors, this Sekahn appears as a battlefield hospitalier clad in white and blue, carrying a grand shield. It is said that she heals by taking on the pain of others, while her shield becomes stronger as she bears more and more suffering. Healers and clerics on the field of battle have been known to whisper her name in the hope that she will aid them as they struggle to protect and tend the wounds of others.

Fuka's symbol is a shield with a stylized relief of the sun.

## *Jiao*

Luck is a terribly fickle thing, withdrawing its favor just as quickly as it is granted. The capricious nature of fortune has led to numerous and varied depictions of luck personified; some insist that luck is a whimsical woman, or a child-like trickster. The most widespread and recognizable image, however, is that of Jiao.

A human man dressed in garb stylish enough to make the most fashion-forward nobles jealous, Jiao's likeness is among the most easily-recognized of the gods. Gamblers and daredevils to this day commonly invoke his name when the stakes are high, with some swearing – and betting – their entire livelihood that they've seen him in the crowd, raising a glass in their direction. Some especially faithful or superstitious chance-chasing thrill-seekers even carry tokens with carved reliefs of his symbol: a hand with a coin in its palm.

## *Jiti*

Mortality is the great equalizer; whether at the end of a blade or the end of one's years, death comes for us all. With it comes Jiti, the Grey Wanderer, who guides the souls of the departed to their final rest.

Appearing as a human man in a simple hooded robe, Jiti will approach the deceased and lift the soul from the body, beginning the soul's last journey through the land of the living. During this walk, the spirit can be seen and touched by all, just as if it were still alive. It is, however, bound to Jiti's side, and he must always continue the Walk.

It is forbidden for anyone, mortal or otherwise, to interfere with Jiti's duties. He will not accept bribes, exchanges, or make deals. His only interest is guiding souls of the dead to the spaces beyond.

His symbol is the setting sun. Some more symbolic artwork places it in a winter backdrop, but in all versions, the setting sun is present.

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## *Jutai*

Knowledge is power. Through knowledge, the blacksmith creates masterful armor, the warrior becomes master of the battlefield, and the farmer makes his fields flourish. When knowledge is used for the right purposes, amazing works are possible. The one who fosters that thirst for knowledge and its application is Jutai, the Truthseeker.

Few records of Jutai and his worship remain, but those that do show him as a Dwarven man with a meticulously-maintained beard, graying with age. Some art shows him wielding a hammer and chisel, carving into stone the knowledge he holds. This has led some to believe these tablets exist, and every so often, tales spread of someone dedicating everything to finding the Testament of Jutai, and never returning. Regardless of their fate, one undeniable truth is that Jutai's active worshipers are few and far between. Even in Dwarven centers, it seems he is only paid lip service.

There is some debate whether it is the hammer and chisel or the caliper and quill. It is generally assumed his symbol is the hammer and chisel he is seen carrying in these pieces.

## *Meha*

The crux of any settlement or city is its harvest. A bountiful harvest season allows for sated stomachs when the ground turns cold and snows fall, and supports growth when the weather turns warm and trees blossom. To those who make growth and harvest their business, there is no prayer more important than the one offered up to Meha, the Sun Chaser.

This Forest Elf appears in garb that seems to shift color with the light, creating a dazzling display some have compared to a dragonfly's wing. In all artwork, she is accompanied by numerous butterflies and, occasionally, honeybees of remarkable size. Because of this, faithful (or especially hopeful) farmers will often place dishes of sweetened water ringed by fresh flowers in their fields alongside their scarecrows, hoping that Meha's messengers will pass through and bring blessings on their fields during planting season.

Meha's symbol is a butterfly with wings as dazzling as her dress.

## *Tatsuya*

Love is a powerful, binding emotion capable of driving people to immeasurable lengths. It can keep a soldier on his feet when all else abandons him; it can give someone the strength to hold on for a moment longer. It unites people over great distances, and it has inspired nations to rise against one another in battle. When the heart swells and takes control, the one who nurtures that feeling of love is Tatsuya, the Songsworn.

Depicted as a Sabin dressed in the finest cerulean silk and possessed of extraordinary grace, Tatsuya's image is considered by many to be the epitome of Sabin beauty. She is often shown with her dark hair loose as she plays a traditional Sabin instrument, her smoky blue eyes always resting softly on the viewer. Many existing depictions of her show her playing string instruments. Because of her affinity for music, in ages past, she was worshiped by bards and court musicians, as well as the hopelessly-romantic. Worship of Tatsuya has fallen considerably over the past century, though her image remains in the dedicated traditionalist centers of Sabin society.

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## The Gods of the Asaltante

*Though it has become more common for the Asaltante to primarily worship the Holy Trinity like their Imperial cousins in modern times, they have long held the Elder Pantheon in high regard. Their views differ slightly from the Imperial Holy Temple in a few ways, however. Primarily, they believe that the gods are beings of flesh and blood who toy with mortals by influencing reality as a form of entertainment. To this end, regular offerings of one's possessions, food, and wealth are necessary to satisfy them and earn their favor. Sacrifices of livestock and people are also carried out on occasion to further appease the gods. While such a practice may be seen as abhorrent to other cultures, offering one's own life for the wellbeing of the rest of creation is viewed as being among the most honorable of acts by the Asaltante.*

*Additionally, whereas the Temple teaches that the dead are eventually reborn through reincarnation, the Asaltante hold to a belief in a legitimate afterlife in the various realms of their gods, and that the decomposition of one's soul to be reborn is more akin to a punishment for evil deeds or a lack of devotion to the gods.*

*Unlike the Elder Pantheon, whose gods each control a specific domain or aspect of the natural world, the gods of the Asaltante are affiliated with numerous domains and are generally worshiped in equal measure, though Baran, Etrin, Ibil, and Orneus are among the most common among these gods to invoke the names of on a regular basis.*

### *Baran*

Just as mankind requires leadership, so too do the gods, and Baran fills such a role for those of the Asaltante. Holding the utmost authority among the gods, Baran also holds the power of creation alongside his wife Etrin. Both a philosopher and a warrior, he is typically associated with knowledge, poetry, war, and death.

Though believed to disguise his form or possess the ability to change his shape outright, Baran is typically thought to appear as an elderly Human with a long gray beard, dressed in unassuming traveler's clothing, and whose skin is riddled with scars.

Due to his tendency to disguise his appearance to walk among lesser men, Baran has come to be known by many names. However, as the male contributor to the creation of life, many are inclined to simply know him as "Father."

Ravens are believed to serve as his Baran's spies and messengers, and therefore serve as his symbol, though he is also associated with the sun.

### *Etrin*

Just as a mother's love may soothe the pain of a child's scraped skin, so too may Etrin's blessings lend aid when tending to the wounds of her fallen children. As the mother of all creation, Etrin is often referred to as "Mother" by many, and her influence ranges from art and song, to healing, fertility, and even death.

Like her husband, Etrin is said to walk among lesser men, often disguised as a weary traveler or an injured maiden seeking aid. Traditional depictions suggest she appears as a woman with a kind and gentle face and long, curling locks of golden hair, dressed in a layered gown of blue and white.

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It is said that cats serve as her servants and messengers, and also as her symbol. The moon has often been associated with Etrin as an alternative symbol.

## *Forfall*

Just as a fallen tree decomposes, giving rise to new growth which sustains the animals which men may hunt, so too does the decomposition of one's essence give rise to the birth of new energy. All matter must eventually decompose, and none are exempt from this reality. However, as cycles remain continuous, one's true self will eventually be reborn and the cycle will naturally repeat itself—Such is the belief of the Asaltante who regard Forfall as the guardian of the realms of the dead. Due to their affiliation with death and decomposition, Forfall is seen as the ultimate judge of the dead and their deeds in life, who determines whether their spirits will enter the realms of the gods and to whose halls they will be sent, or whether they will slowly fade into oblivion within their dismal domain's many layers.

Forfall is traditionally depicted as a Human woman with beautiful and lively features on the right half of her body, while her left half appears more akin to a rotting corpse.

Mushrooms—representing life and growth after death—are traditionally used as Forfall's symbol.

## *Ibil*

Unfortunate circumstances, minor inconveniences, and unexplainable events are all unwanted but necessary features of everyday life, and each are attributed as the work of Ibil, the mischievous adopted child of Baran. Referred disdainfully as "The Trickster" or "The Sly One," Ibil is held as the god of trickery and mischief, luck, and wine.

Ibil is known to possess the ability to shapeshift and take the forms of various humanoid figures and animals, though most commonly, they are depicted as an androgynous Human figure with ears bearing small points vaguely resembling those of an elf.

Given their connection to the concept of luck, Ibil's symbol is a simple silver coin.

## *Orneus*

Likely the most regularly worshiped of the gods next to Baran and Etrin is their son, Orneus. Known for his strength, dedication, creativity, and courage, Orneus serves as the god of the common man, especially of farmers, craftsmen, and laborers. However, his name is often invoked by sailors who seek his protection on voyages and favorable winds to aid their travels. Likewise, he is revered as the god of storms, as it is said that lightning is made of the sparks from his anvil and the accompanying thunder is the sound of his hammer beating the anvil. What's more, in contrast to his brother's affinity for chaos and trickery, Orneus embodies law and order, and is believed to be the god thereof.

Orneus is often depicted as a fit, young Human man dressed either in armor or a commoner's tunic and trousers, and sporting wild, fiery-red hair and a matching beard. The hammer he bears while smithing serves as his symbol.

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## *The Weavers*

All things are connected via the threads of fate, and these threads are interwoven into a great tapestry depicting the events which soon unfold thereafter, by three timeless sisters: The Weavers. Surpassing even the gods themselves, the weavers exhibit ultimate neutrality in their work, offering neither favor nor scorn as they create the stories of all. Man and god alike are beholden to their fates once woven into the tapestry, and are powerless to change them. The gods may only tug at the strings to force small alterations when they feel so inclined.

Due to the solidity of one's fate, those who revere the gods of the Asaltante and the Weavers are often inclined to accept life and its hardships as they come, and appear to face harrowing circumstances fearlessly.

Numerous depictions of the Weavers exist—most likely due to biased perspectives on their function. Among the more skewed renditions, the Weavers are depicted as a trio of hags or as three beautiful sisters. However, the most common traditional depictions suggest they appear as three generations of women—a crone, a mother, and a maiden; all of which being Human.