

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

Dungeon Master's
Guide

2nd Edition

Rules
Supplement

Monster Mythology





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TSR, Inc.
POB 756
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End,
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

ISBN 1-56076-362-0
2128



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Introduction



Monster Mythology is a companion volume to AD&D® 2nd Edition *Legends and Lore*. *Legends and Lore* provided AD&D game statistics and role-playing details for dozens of deities from the pantheons of eleven different cultures, nine historical and two fictional, and some heroes, magical items, and monsters from those cultures. However, nonhuman pantheons weren't included in *Legends and Lore*, and this book makes good this deficit. *Monster Mythology* is of greatest use to readers who possess *Legends and Lore*, but it is also usable by those who do not. A summary of the important general rules and notes from *Legends and Lore* is given, and expanded upon, here. So not having *Legends and Lore* is no bar to using this book!

Monster Mythology has a similar style of presentation to AD&D 2nd Edition *Legends and Lore*. The revised *Legends and Lore* was a complete rewrite of the original, with an emphasis placed upon role-playing and using the gods (and their avatars and servants) in a fantasy campaign. Likewise each section of *Monster Mythology* describes the societies, cultures and myths of the races who worship the pantheons in question. There are some differences from *Legends and Lore*, however, and the strongest is that the nonhuman deities detailed in this book are not mythos specific in the same way as Greek, Japanese, American Indian or other gods. Rather, the deities here can be thought of as archetypal powers. This means that they exist as deities in any of the established AD&D game worlds or can be introduced into any other game world in which AD&D campaigns and adventures are set. Thus, Amaterasu Omikami is the Japanese sun goddess in a Japanese (based) mythos; she does not exist in any

sense in the Aztec pantheon, or that of Rome, or that of Celtic Britain. But Corellon Larethian, the great creator god of the Elven race, is the head of the elven pantheon in all worlds in which elves exist, although how he is worshiped and how his priesthood is organized may differ from world to world. There will always be central themes to Corellon and his worshipers, though, and these themes form the basis for his, and other, entries in this book.

In the revised *Legends and Lore*, entries for gods (or Powers) are significantly lengthier than those in the original AD&D game *Legends and Lore*, and this is true for the 26 (or so) nonhuman deities here which appeared in the original work. However, the large majority of entries in this book did not appear in the original *Legends and Lore*, so there is much that is new here for all readers to enjoy.

When reading and using *Monster Mythology*, keep its intent and purpose firmly in mind. This book is not in any way a judgement on the validity or value of any religion in the real world. Hopefully, this should be obvious from the nonhuman nature of the gods and their followers, but it is as well to make this point quite specific.

Running Divine Beings

When deities in an AD&D® game deign to notice or intercede in the lives of mortal beings, it is the Dungeon Master who must play the roles of the deities or the servants they dispatch to act



on their behalf, of which their Avatars (manifestations of a deity on the Prime Material Plane, to be detailed in depth shortly) are the most important in many ways. Running a deity is a far greater challenge than assuming the role of a sage, merchant or talkative monster. The players will have their characters pay very careful attention to the words and actions of divinities and their most powerful servitors, so the DM must make sure he thoroughly understands his deities and be careful to present them in a special light. Very rarely will a deity itself interact with player characters; its avatar is a much more likely communicator with such humble mortals. But, whether the meeting is with the deity itself or an avatar, certain general considerations should be kept in mind.

The most important principle in using deities in a fantasy role-playing campaign is to use them judiciously and sparingly. It is certainly possible to run a high-level role-playing game in which gods commonly appear for the purpose of helping player characters. But such a campaign would stretch the game's rules to the point where it couldn't be called an *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® game at all. The AD&D® game is designed for a more mortal level of play. The player characters are heroic not because of the tremendous powers they might or might not accumulate, but because of the terrible risks they take in the face of awesome dangers, even death or destruction. To use a deity to save characters from these risks time and again is to sully the game.

Likewise, it is absurd to treat deities as super-powerful monsters, set up as ultimate targets for overweeningly powerful player characters. Most deities are capable of destroying a mortal at the merest whim. To set the characters into direct conflict with a deity is, almost always, to ensure a quick and inescapable death for them.

Lastly, any form of game in which deities regularly appear in game play in any capacity blurs the mortal/deity distinction, invites the sin of hubris from mortals, demeans the very special quality of deities, and risks making the sublime mundane.

But, of course, deities are a vital part of a fantasy world. Just as *Legends and Lore* described the historical deities which have been part of every human culture's attempts to explain the mysteries of the world, this book describes the deities which many of the sentient nonhuman races, from dwarves to myconids, regard as part of the basic fabric of their worlds and racial cultures. Names, forms, personalities, and magical powers are attributed to these deities, just as humans do with their gods.

The nature of a race's deities reflect and strengthen their culture. A race's pantheon embodies its world-view, greatly influencing what the race desires, how it behaves, and its motivations for undertaking heroic (and not so heroic) deeds. These deities provide flavor to a campaign, and for the demihuman races they also provide guidelines and motivations for many player characters. Not all elves have to worship an elven deity, but most will do so, and many players will wish to select a deity from the racial pantheons detailed herein for their player characters. The practicalities of this are discussed later in this introduction.

Of course, the presence of deities has a much greater impact on the priest character class than it does on any other. Priests are expected to actively serve their deities; and as with *Legends and Lore*, each entry for a deity contains a special section that delineates just what the deity in question expects from his priests. *Legends and Lore* noted that this fleshing out would make priests a more important part of the campaign, and this process is further strengthened here, since both tribal/clan shamans and witch doctors are added to the options of priest and cleric, providing a wide range of spellcasters dedicated to the service of deities.

Deities and the Campaign

The relationship between the gods in *Legends and Lore* and *Monster Mythology*, and player characters (or other, similar, mortals) is of the same magnitude as that of men to ants. While the gods are certainly aware of the existence of mortals, and occasionally find them interesting or irksome, such mortals hardly merit all of their attention. This is especially true with archetypal Powers who have involvements in a myriad different worlds in the Prime Material Plane. If a mortal is foolish enough to irritate a god, he is then much more likely to be noticed—and then quickly crushed by the deity's supernatural finger.

Unlike the relationship between men and ants, though, there does seem to be something more vibrant in the association between a god and its worshipers. The exact nature of this connection, unfortunately, remains a mystery beyond the comprehension of mortals and even (some say) of the gods themselves. Suffice it to say that gods need worshipers and will often go to some little trouble to make sure they have a good supply.

An important aspect of the gods is that they cannot be killed by anything save another god of greater stature, or by a god of any stature using a mighty magical artifact. This means that no mortal may ever kill a deity. The mortal might be capable of inflicting enough damage to drive off, banish, or dissipate a deity, especially if the mortal is using an artifact, but the god will always recover from its damage. Needless to say, a god that has been attacked, and especially injured to such an extent, will not be very happy with the responsible mortal. More often than not, he will deal with such fools quickly—and permanently.

Fortunately for such daring and foolhardy mortals, even finding a deity is no easy matter. For the most part, they inhabit the outer planes. They never visit the Prime Material Plane in their true forms, for this plane is the focus of so much divine attention that no deity will dare to enter it, even if it could, for fear of the wrath of other deities who will be certain to work together to destroy the offender utterly. Therefore, heroes wishing to confront a true god must first find a way to travel to the outer planes and then track down the god they wish to find. This latter action is itself almost impossible to accomplish since the gods can move between the planes at will, and they will often take advantage of this ability as they go about their business.



Divine Abilities

There are no statistics for the powers and abilities of true gods listed anywhere in *Monster Mythology*. This is because the power of the gods is such that it is impossible to quantify it. Nonetheless, some gods are more powerful than others and these differences in power have importance in game settings in certain ways. More powerful gods have more powerful avatars, can bequeath superior powers and spells to their priests and worshipers, and the like. These differences are specified in this book. General powers for gods of all kinds, provided purely for reference, are as follows:

Immortality: All gods are immortal and can only be slain as detailed earlier (by other gods).

Teleport: All gods possess the innate ability to instantly teleport without error to any point on the same plane, at will.

Initiative: When dealing with mortals, all gods automatically receive the initiative (and can never be surprised). Of course, the gods can choose to simply wait and see what the mortals opt to do, but they may always act first if they desire.

Comprehend Languages: All gods understand and can speak any language. This includes written and spoken languages as well as other, more unusual, forms of communication like the light and color based language of the will o'wisp.

Telepathy: All gods can automatically read the thoughts of other sentient beings telepathically within 120 feet.

Detection: All gods automatically detect good, evil, invisibility and lies to 120-foot range.

Magic Use: All gods may use spells of any level. This includes the spells of priests and wizards and requires no spell books, prayers, or material, verbal or somatic components. In short, invoking such powers requires but the very slightest act of will on the part of these incredible beings.

These powers are, as noted, really for reference since player characters will be very unlikely ever to encounter the true form of a god. A complete listing of other powers of deities, for reference, is provided in *Legends and Lore* (pp. 7-9) and doesn't require repetition here. However, differences in avatars and priest spell use are important here. These vary depending on whether gods are Greater gods, Intermediate gods, Lesser gods or Demigods. A brief explanation of these terms would be helpful here.

Greater God: These awesomely powerful beings are often the head of a pantheon, a creator god, one ruling many spheres of activity, father or mother of many other gods, etc.

Intermediate God: Lacking the mighty creative powers of Greater gods, these deities are still very powerful and frequently hold major sway over one or two spheres of life on the Prime Material. Individual clans and tribes will often hold an Intermediate god as a patron, even above a Greater god.

Lesser God: A Lesser god may often serve other, stronger gods as a messenger or aide, may be a cast-out god or solitary deity in conflict with others, and so on. Lesser gods are frequently revered by creatures or subgroups which are oppressed, solitary, embittered or which have some particular minority

skill or niche (thievery, some obscure branch of knowledge, etc.).

Demigods: These are the least powerful of all deities and are in some ways similar to Lesser gods. A noteworthy point is that no few demigods were once mortal heroes who have undergone divine ascension.

Avatars and the Strength of Gods

The strength of a god influences how many avatars he may have and how long it takes to replace one if it is destroyed. Greater gods may have up to 10 avatars at any one time. If an avatar is destroyed, it takes but one day to make another. Intermediate gods have up to five avatars at a time. It takes one week to replace a destroyed avatar. Lesser gods may only have two avatars at any one time, and need a month to replace a destroyed avatar. Demigods sometimes have no avatar at all, and never more than one; if their avatar is destroyed, it takes a whole year to fashion another. All gods can move their avatars between the planes at will save for demigods. Demigods cannot move their avatars between the planes at all, unless the avatar has some magical ability allowing this (e.g., access to the *plane shift* spell, some magical item of suitable sort, etc.).

Priesthoods, Powers, and Deity Strength

Greater gods and Intermediate gods can grant spells of any level to their priests (with normal experience level restrictions applying). Lesser gods can only grant priest spells up to 6th level. Demigods can only grant priest spells up to 5th level. Only Greater and Intermediate gods can grant the use of *Quest Spells* (as described in *Tome of Magic*) and no Intermediate god is likely to do so without the consent of the Greater god(s) of his pantheon!

Gods may grant special powers to their most devout worshipers. A special case of this is the permanent special power granted to certain classes—for example, the paladin's laying on of hands power is god-granted. Priests may also receive some special permanent powers, such as immunity to disease or poison, infravision, or some similar talent. Such powers are fully specified in this book and more powerful gods are able to grant stronger powers.

A special case is that, on occasion, a god may grant some temporary special power to a worshiper or priest which is not part of the mortal's normal array of skills and abilities. Thus, an elf warrior beleaguered by a murderous force of orcs might beseech Corellon Larethian, the Greater god of elves, for help. Under very rare circumstances, the god may hear and respond, granting some power to the mortal to defend himself. This power should only be temporarily granted—never for longer than one week—and should not exceed the special powers used by the god's own avatar. If the Dungeon Master decides to have such divine intervention, then the god will use his power to achieve