



<VLT 01 TAVIT

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Mystery Cults series for the Amazons vs Valkyries adventure setting. The religious cults presented here are just a few of the hundreds that exist in this setting. Some are dedicated to chthonic gods that are almost forgotten, while others worship new deities, such as Alexander the Great. These cults are most common in Greece and the Greek colonies, but also exist in Egypt, Persia, Rome, and Carthage. Even in less civilized lands druids, witch doctors, and other religious leaders join together, keep secrets, pursue common goals, and organize themselves in a hierarchy.

Content Warning!

This file contains disturbing content that is not suitable for all audiences. This content includes:

- Extreme violence/cruelty
- Sexual references

AMAZONS
vs
VALKYRIES

Bloodstone Press™



MYSTERY CULTS

Mystery cults are secret societies that exist within religious institutions. Like other secret societies, their existence is well known, but their rituals, lore, and objectives are concealed. Only the initiated are allowed access to these secrets.

Levels of Initiation. Cult membership is divided into a hierarchy of at least twenty degrees or ranks. Some cults have more than sixty ranks. Only the high priestess (or priest) is privy to all the cult's secrets.

Exclusivity. None of these cults require their members to disavow or deny other deities and cults. In fact, many people are simultaneously members of multiple cults.

Cult Secrets. Only the initiated know the true name of the cult's deity, and they are forbidden to speak it to anyone outside the cult. At each level of initiation, a different true name is revealed to the member with only the high priestess knowing the actual true name of the deity. Mystery cults also harbor many other secrets and esoteric lore. Some examples are listed on the table below.

Initiation Fees. Although membership in most cults is open to everyone, initiation rites have fees. These fees offset the cost of the ritual and help support the temple and its ambitions. The amount of the fee increases with each degree and depends on many factors, including how much the applicant can afford and how much the cult leaders desire the new member.

Initiation Times. Most cults conduct initiations once per year. Common dates include the first full Moon after the Winter Solstice, the Spring Equinox, and the Summer Solstice. The process usually involves preliminary ritual purification, eating sacred foods, and confessing of wrong doing. This takes at least three days and sometimes up to two weeks. The actual ceremony begins at sundown and continues until sunrise. During the ritual, the initiates consume psychoactive substances and venture into a deep cavern where they have unnerving encounters with deities and demons.

Membership Advantage. Besides access to secret lore and powerful associates, being a cult member has other perks. Membership can mean that your business wins a lucrative contract from a trade guild or local magistrate. It could mean that your child is educated by an expensive Greek tutor, or your competitor suffers a tragic setback.

Leadership and Members. Cult hierarchies are separate from temple priesthoods. While most leadership positions within the cults are occupied by priestesses (or priests), not all temple priestesses are members of the mystery cult. Likewise, most cult members are not priestesses or employed by the temple; they are private citizens, lawyers, merchants, stage actors, lords, scribes, and princesses.

NPCs Only!

The Cult of Moloch is for DMs to create heinous villains for players to defeat. Players should not play paladins with this oath.

D20 Secret Lore

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Facts about mythical events |
| 2 | Location of an entrance to the Underworld |
| 3 | Location of a gate to another dimension |
| 4 | Location of a prison holding a demon or deity |
| 5 | Formula for creating magical items |
| 6 | Rare spells |
| 7 | Facts about other planes in the multiverse |
| 8 | Facts about a mythical beast |
| 9 | Facts about distant lands |
| 10 | The true ambitions of a major political figure |
| 11 | Archaic or extinct language(s) |
| 12 | Secret of navigating the tunnels of Europa |
| 13 | Lore of a lost or forgotten civilization |
| 14 | Location of a legendary magic item |
| 15 | Clues or answer to a puzzle or riddle |
| 16 | Location of a sacred site |
| 17 | Lore about a humanoid or monstrous race |
| 18 | Lore of a lost, magic-like technology |
| 19 | Location of a magical island |
| 20 | Lore about the Amazons Vs Valkyries conflict |

THE CULT OF TANIT

Domains: Fertility, Life, the Moon, and War

Location: Carthage, Egypt, Spain, Malta, Sardinia

Cult Secrets: Seduction, midwifery, martial training

As the chief deity of Carthage, Tanit rules their pantheon along with her consort Ba'al-Hammon, god of the sky.

Although she has a consort and is considered a symbol of fertility and sexuality, Tanit is often thought to be a virginal mother goddess. She is also known to be fierce when needed, riding a lion and wielding a spear as she charges into battle to protect the city and people she rules.

Tanit has no children, but takes it upon herself to protect all of the warriors of Carthage as though they emerged from her own body; for that reason, her symbol is commonly found on their shields as they invoke their mother's protection and blessings for the fight ahead.



Members of the cult tend to have a more free attitude toward seduction, but not toward the act of sex itself. While it is fine to seduce someone, whether it be for pleasure or for a purpose, many cult members will draw the line before they actually have sex with a partner. Cult members may even choose to follow the path of Tanit—seduce, take a consort, but never consummate the relationship or have children of their own.

THE TEMPLES

Tanit's main temple is located in Carthage, and is accompanied by a cemetery for children. Smaller temples can be found throughout Egypt, Spain, Malta, and Sardinia, though they are often hidden.

It is in these temples that the most objectionable (to the Great Mother, at least) activity associated with Tanit's worship takes place: child and animal sacrifice.

Inscribed on the wall of the Great Temple of Carthage are the words: "To our Lady, Tanit, and to our lord, Ba'al-Hammon, that which was vowed: Life for Life, blood for blood, a lamb for a substitute."

It is under this chilling inscription that members of the cult bring either their firstborn child or a lamb to be slaughtered, charred, and then placed in an urn and left at the feet of the Goddess.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GREAT MOTHER

Tanit is one of the ancient goddesses, and as such, she demands complete loyalty from her followers. Her need for human sacrifice is something that the Great Mother cannot abide, especially because Tanit requires the sacrifice of young children to be satisfied.