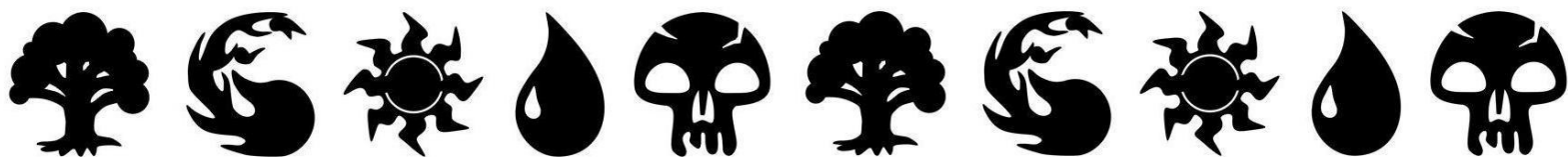




# The Planeswalker's Guide to **THEROS**

*a planar supplement for use with the Magic: the Gathering  
Campaign Setting & the SAGA roleplaying system*

**ROWAN WALKINGWOLF**



*Written & Published by Rowan WalkingWolf, 2013*

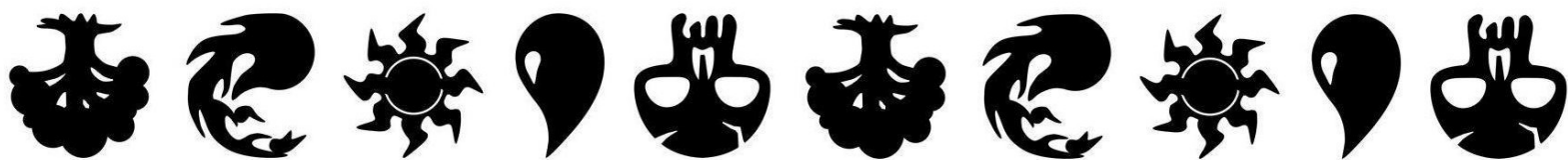
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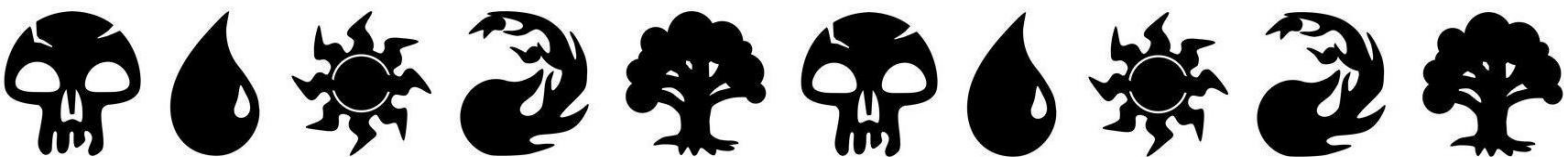
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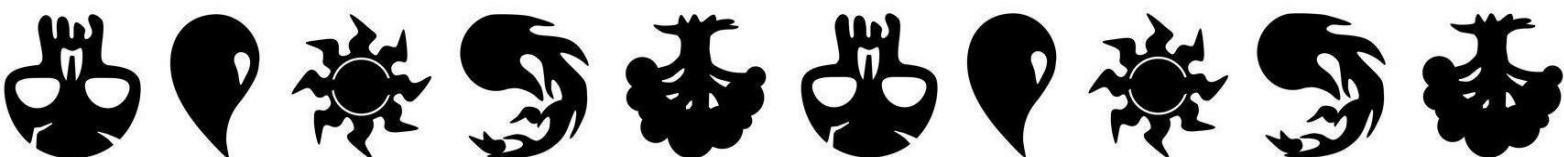
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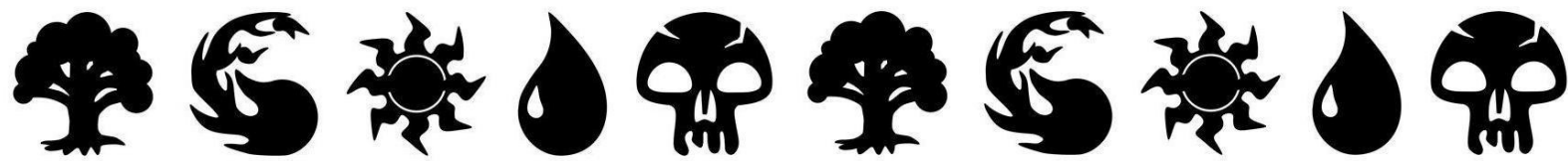


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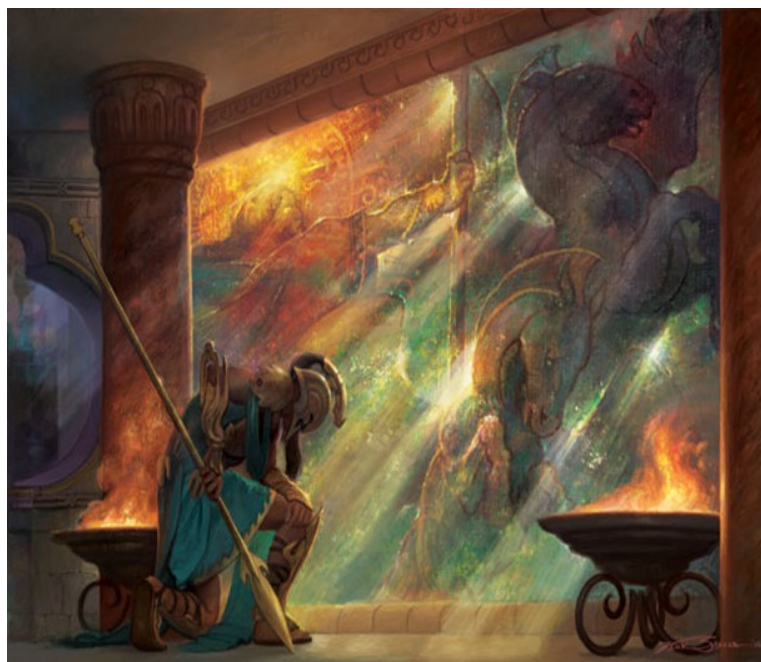




# A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THEROS

## THE PLANE ITSELF

The caprice of the gods, the destined hero, the great journey, the untamed wilds beyond the city walls, the raging sea, the birth of civilization (and the wild free peoples who resist it), temples and burnt offerings, hoplites and phalanxes, hydras, gor gons, minotaurs, sacred and profane rites and rituals, great thinkers, enlightened despots, revels in the woods, the power of belief- Theros is a plane filled with divine magic and monstrous danger, where heroes are born and where legends are made. Theros is high-fantasy and high adventure in an immortal Bronze Age!



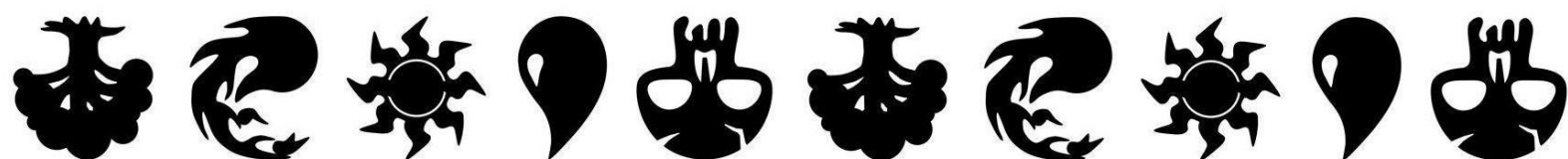
## THE LAND OF NYX

When mortals sleep and dream on Theros, they are said to "visit Nyx," the proverbial land of night and the home of the gods. Therefore, dreams are seen as gifts from the gods. When the gods appear to mortals, each is "infused" with Nyx itself. Where the god's features or form would be shadowed, instead the night sky is visible, as though the gods occupy the daylit world and the nighttime world at once.

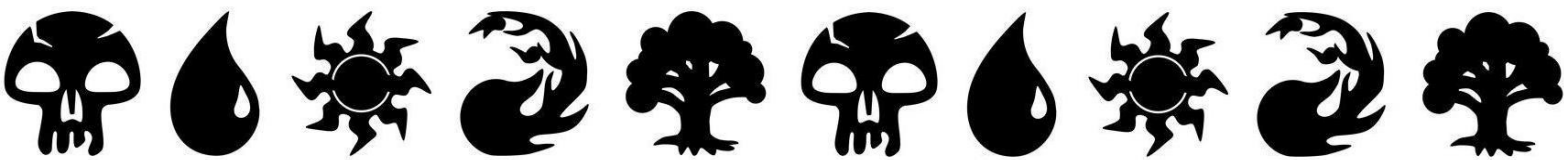


## ENCHANTMENTS: MAGIC OF THE GODS

The gods of Theros- very real beings with vast influence over the plane- are themselves *living enchantments*. For this reason, all enchantments are thought to be gifts from the gods. Additionally, when other creatures such as nymphs demonstrate the "infusion" of night sky that all the gods have in common, it's taken as evidence that the nymphs are servants of the gods, native to Nyx, and only visiting the sunlit, mortal world at the gods' behest.







# HUMANOID RACES OF THEROS

## HUMANS

*Anax & Cymede, Akroan King and Queen*

The most prevalent humanoid race on Theros. Similar to the humans of every other plane, except that all the humans of Theros tend toward a Mediterranean or Grecian appearance: dark, curly hair or dreadlocks, olive to brownish skin, dark eyes, big eyebrows, and large hooked noses. The humans of this plane can be divided into three major ethnic groups, each of which corresponds to one of the three major Poleis, or City-States, of the plane. These are: **Meletans**, **Akroans**, and **Setessans**. Each of these ethnic groups is detailed in the sections detailing the three major Poleis of Theros. In addition to the civilized city-dwelling humans, other smaller ethnic groups also populate Theros. These include the wild and nomadic peoples who roam with the centaurs or satyrs, and those rare few humans who live near the leonin of Theros.



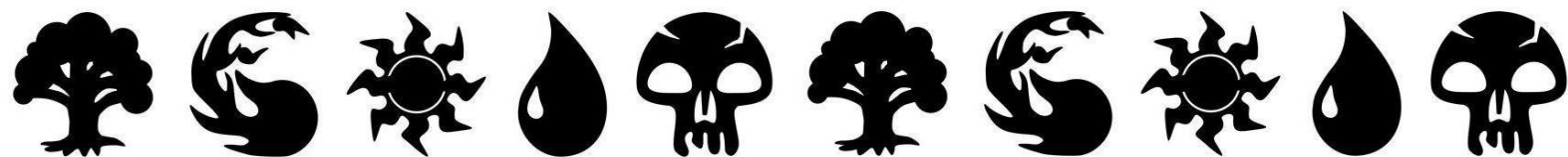
## LEONIN (CATFOLK)

*Leonin hunter*

Beyond the borders of Akros lie the leonin dens. They are scattered throughout the rocky scrublands and low mountains, away from the human poleis of this plane. The leonin of Theros keep to themselves, interacting with other races only when they must: for trade and, occasionally, for raids. Typically, leonin of this plane tend to be isolationist, xenophobic, and extremely dubious of- if not outright hostile toward- Theran humans.







There was a time, centuries ago, when the leonin worshipped the same gods as their human counterparts, but after the era of the tyrannical archon Agnomakhos, the leonin rejected all human ways in a bitter backlash that has defined their role on Theros ever since. Most revere the hunt and the pride, but according to chronicler Lanathos, some leonin still make offerings to Heliod and Nylea.

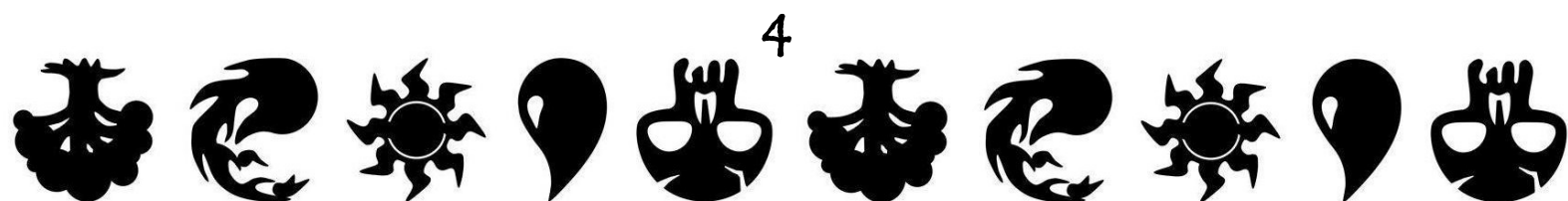
Culturally, the Theran leonin are a monarchic people, ruled over by a warrior-king. The leonin king is both a warrior and a spiritual leader for his people. Each king is considered the manifestation of nature's animus on earth. The current reigning king of the leonin is **Brimaz**, a capable warrior and an inspiring leader who has private doubts about the isolationism of leonin culture.

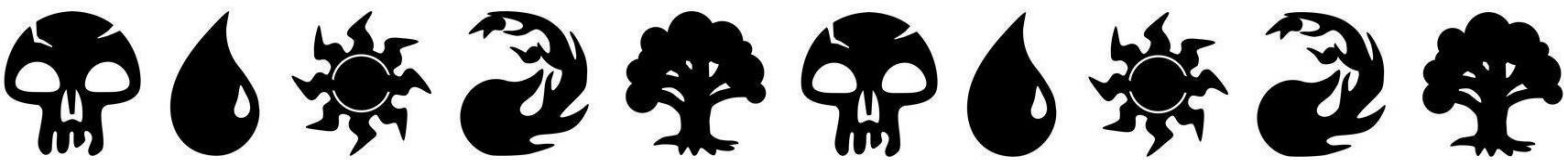
In general, Theran leonin tend toward white and/or green alignments, though there are individual exceptions.

## TRITONS (MERFOLK)

Tritons are a race of sea-dwellers who are occasionally at odds with human and leonin sailors and coastal poleis such as Meletis. Tritons are amphibious- they can breathe air for several days at a time but must spend time in water to keep their gills soft. While tritons pay respect to many gods, they are devoted primarily to Thassa, goddess of the sea. Tritons see Thassa as the primary god of the pantheon of Theros, believing she will bring their race to ascendancy over beasts of the sea and the human-dominated poleis of the land. Tritons often act at Thassa's direct command, drowning boats in magically conjured whirlpools or creating great monuments on the Dakra Isles. All tritons share a blue mana alignment, and most tritons are singly devoted to blue mana alignment. Certain individual tritons who leave their people to travel abroad and those very few tritons who challenge their customs and people develop other alignments.

*Triton Gloryseeker*





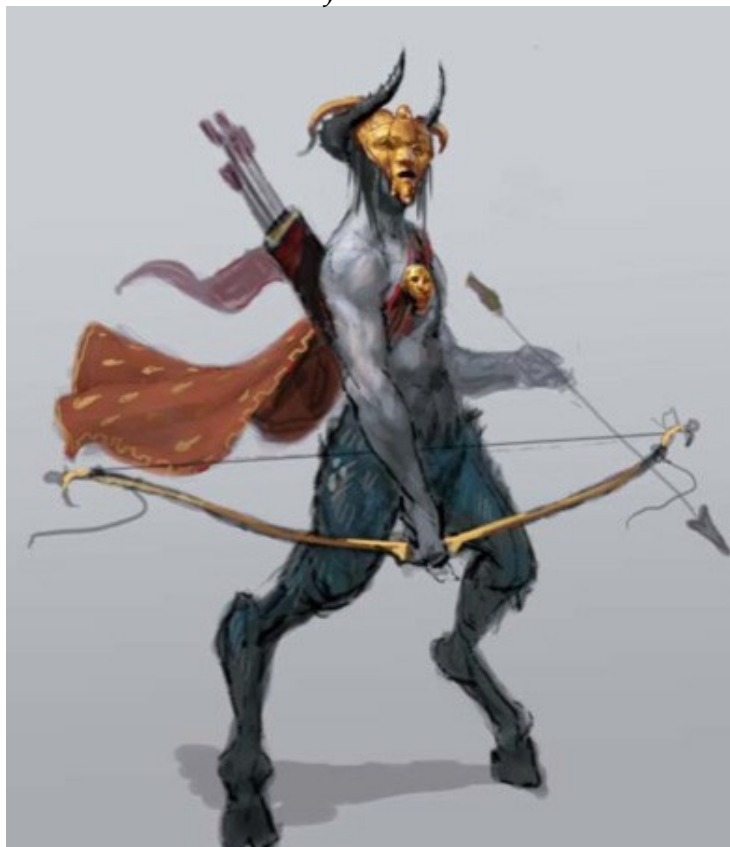
## THE RETURNED

When mortal humanoids die on Theros, they pass into its Underworld. They dwell in this eternally gray realm without sun or night under the watch of Erebos, god of the Underworld. But over the centuries, many denizens of the Underworld have escaped and returned to the sunlit realm of the living. They are called the **Noston** (from *nostos*, "to return home"), or **the Returned**. Humans, leonin, satyrs, and centaurs have been known to become Returned. Perhaps due to their allegiance to and kinship with Thassa, Tritons don't pass into the Underworld, and therefore cannot become Returned. Monstrous humanoids- namely, giants and minotaurs- likewise do not become Returned.

To leave the Underworld, beings must give up their identity and their very faces, each of which becomes an unsettling surface with eyeholes and a mouth. This doesn't mean that the Returned have no personality and no memory of anything, however. One's name and past are forgotten, but skills and personality are retained. That is, the events and relationships of the mortal's life are lost, but the results of those events are intact (such as speech or the ability to play music). In addition, the Returned lose the ability to form the long-term memories on which relationships are based - they are unable to "build a new life," as it were.

Sentient, sapient zombies. The Returned are undead in the most actual sense. When they return to the living realm, they don't return to life. They need water and air but not food. The Returned form communities, experience fleeting emotions, and follow daily routines, but their existence is a shadow play, because without an identity or an ability to nurture long-term relationships, the elements of their "lives" have no weight or substance.

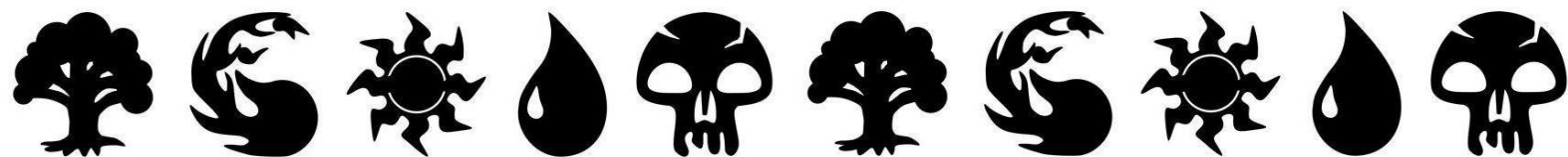
*Satyr Returned*



*Human Returned*







They aren't just thinking, speaking zombies but also feeling ones. Although their lack of identity prevents long-term memory formation, they do feel emotions based on their experiences. That in turn means that their emotions tend toward darkness: frustration, bitterness, loneliness, resentment, anger, and melancholy.

Gold masks cover void faces. When a human dies on Theros, a funerary mask of dark clay is customary, used to "frame" the identity of the deceased for the underworld. So when a mortal destroys his or her identity to leave the Underworld, that mortal must fashion a mask to stand in for it. Gold is the most common material in Erebos's realm, so it has become customary for the Returned to symbolically replace their funerary masks (and by proxy their identities) with beautifully crafted gold masks that cover their changed faces and function as surrogate, albeit flimsy, identities.

Because gold is commonplace in the Underworld, the Returned don't value it (except their own masks) and instead use special clay pieces called **ostraka** (singular: ostrakon) as a kind of currency or barter tool. Each ostrakon is a shard from a dark clay funerary mask. These pieces of clay have great significance to the Returned for obvious reasons, and they are used as mementos by inhabitants of the necropolis of Asphodel, as trophies by those of Odunos, and as ornamentation and currency by all of their kind.

All Returned share a black mana alignment in common, though they are not generally considered "evil", as are zombies and undead of other planes. Certain individual Returned may develop (or even rekindle) other mana alignments, though because they are undead, they all retain and share a black mana alignment.

## ROLEPLAYING THE RETURNED

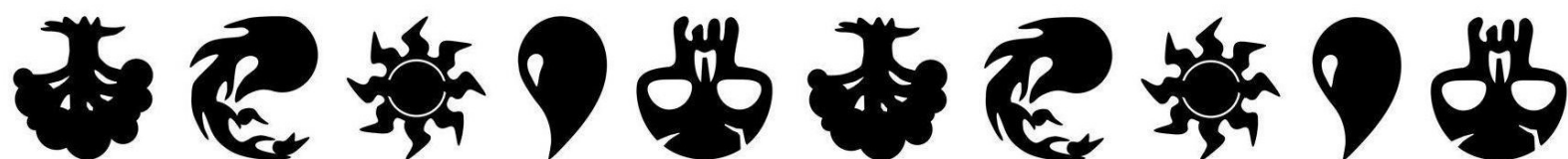
Typically, players in roleplaying campaigns are restricted from playing undead characters, simply because they are mindless, evil minions. Not so with the Returned. Although accurately described as "zombies", these undead are conscious, sentient beings. They have desires, thoughts, feelings, and goals, however fleeting and intangible. As such, players are faced with some difficult challenges in roleplaying a Returned, although when done well, the experience should be rewarding and enriching for said player and for the gaming group at large.

## EIDOLONS

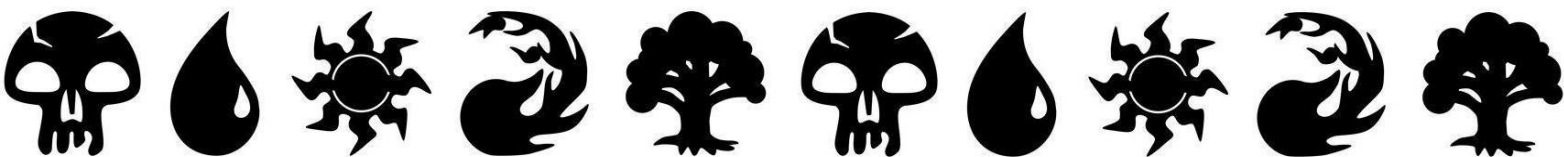
When a dead person escapes the Underworld, they lose their identity and become one of the faceless Returned. But in this process of severing the physical body from the "soul," an eidolon is also created. An eidolon is the spectral embodiment of the lost identity, but without its body, it has no agency. Unlike the Returned, it has no sense of what it lost. The Returned and its severed eidolon are never reunited, nor are they aware of one another's existence.

While some eidolons forever wander, others linger in a certain place. This "haunt" isn't chosen because of a connection to its former life.

*Eidolon*







More often, it's near a place where a nymph lives. It's believed that eidolons are instinctually drawn to nymphs' magic, like a cub is drawn to the warmth of its mother. The nymphs are usually sympathetic to these creatures.

Because Eidolons are non-sapient shadows of their former lives, it is impossible for players to play active, functional eidolon PCs.

## SATYRS

The satyrs of Theros are well-loved for their good spirits, their love of revels, and their boisterous, gregarious personalities. Those who feel differently know to keep their opinions to themselves. And so their fun-loving reputation expands, and the darker aspects of their nature are kept quiet — except in the minds of the humans tricked into becoming their caretakers. The majority of Theran satyrs live within their native **Skola Valley**, a verdant, highly enchanted valley dotted with copses of trees and chaparral. The satyrs subsist on the magic of the valley to the point that their lives resemble one long party. There are no permanent settlements, and the music of pipes can be heard from dawn until dusk.

Satyr



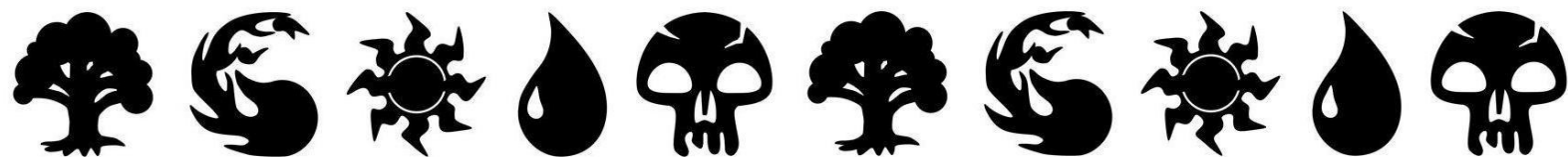
With all their basic needs provided for, the satyrs are free to pursue pleasure as the only goal in life. There are few lasting bonds between satyrs, all of whom dwell in a state of abject hedonism. They are generous when it suits their ambitions; they are cruel when those ambitions are thwarted. Since everyone ends up in the same Underworld, they believe honor and righteousness are useless endeavors. "Taste the world," say the satyrs, "before Erebus rips your tongue out."

## THE CULT OF HORNS

Frequently humans come to Skola in search of endless pleasure without consequences. When they first arrive, they are courted by the satyrs. They are told they will learn the mysteries of Nyx. They enjoy days of revelries, music, and ecstatic dance — all without a care in the world. Inevitably, the hospitality gives way to something more sinister, and these unsuspecting humans find themselves conscripted into service of the satyrs.

The satyr sybils decide when these newcomers are ready for full initiation rites. Many humans undertake the rites, never knowing the joke is on them, and are awarded a crown made of broken horns — a symbol of mockery. Once given the crown, they are known as **Stubs**. They are assigned menial, humiliating tasks. Enchantment magic keeps them in the thrall of the satyrs until, inevitably, the satyrs tire. Then the Stubs are deserted in the wild chaparral, where they awake hours later, alone, dazed, and ashamed. Out of embarrassment, Stubs seldom tell the true story of their time with the satyrs. Many perpetuate the myth of the joy and excitement of their time in Skola, encouraging the younger generation to "sow their wild oats" among the satyrs.





## REVELS: ROLICK NIGHTS & BAKKEIA

The dual nature of the satyrs is evident in the types of revelries they hold. Satyrs host festivals for humans in the poleis several times a year. These are splendid affairs with good food, drink, and entertainment. The satyrs are jovial and welcoming, and while the streets are trashed the next morning, rarely do things get out of control. These **Rollick Nights** are the foundation of the satyrs' renown and the places where they "recruit" the most humans for the Cult of Horns.

*Satyr Revel*



Satyrs also engage in hardcore celebrations known as **Bakkeia**. These episodes of ritual madness happen only in the Skola Valley. They often begin pleasantly enough but descend into defilement, sacrifice, and violence done by those who hold the power in the valley. Caves under the valley heated by geothermal gases are the sites of some of the most depraved rituals, probably because the toxic vapors induce hallucinations and delirium in the participants.

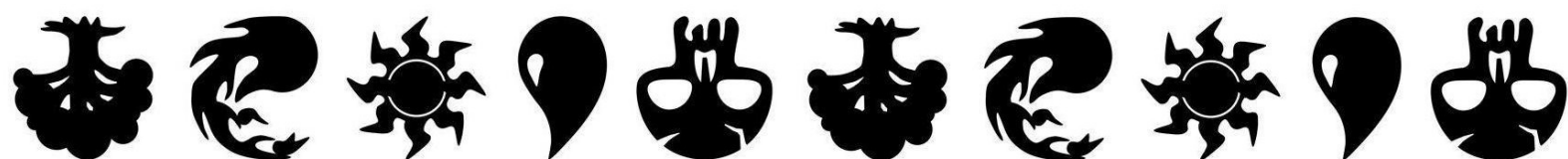
Generally, Satyrs on Theros tend to be green and/or red aligned. Many also flirt with a black mana alignment, especially when harmless revels transform into wicked Bakkeia. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization, and many individual satyrs vary greatly in alignment.

## CENTAURS

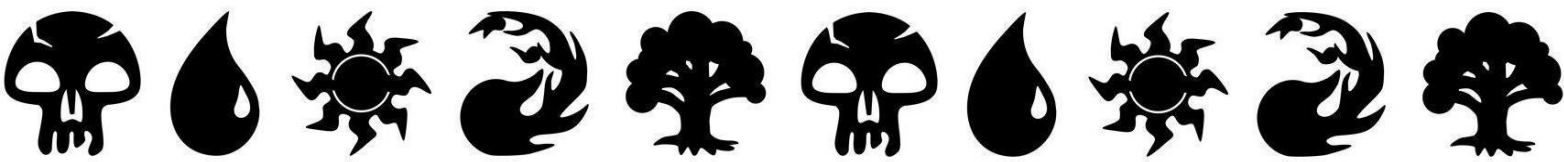
Theran centaurs are humanity's most consistent allies and trade partners, but their populations are not monolithic. Over countless centuries, the centaurs of Theros slowly divided into two distinct bands, the Lagonna and the Pheres, who are now culturally disparate ethnic groups. Whereas the Lagonna are traders who sometimes settle an area, the Pheres are nomads and raiders.

### ETHNIC GROUP: THE LAGONNA BAND

The Lagonna travel in small merchant family bands called guri (singular "guros"). They most commonly trade with Meletis, which provides the biggest market for their wares, but they also do business with Setessa. In general, Lagonna Band centaurs tend toward green mana alignment with a heavy emphasis on blue/black secondary alignment due to their heavy trading.





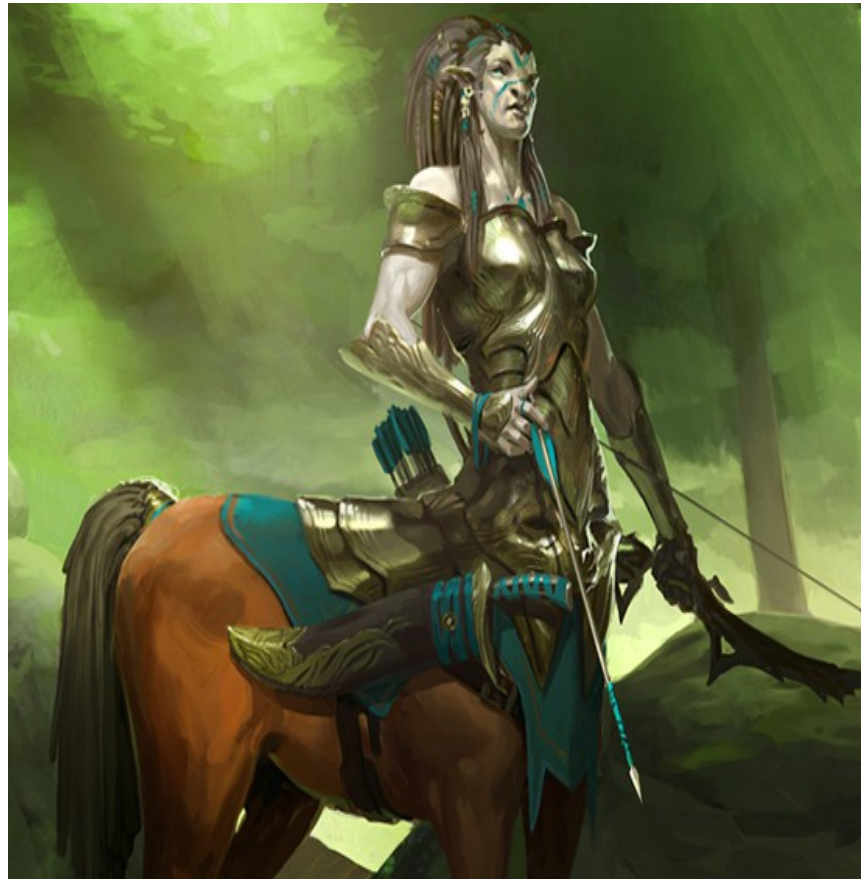


### *Oka, Lagonna Band Courser*

The Lagonna Band is organized into a variety of different roles. These are:

**ELDER:** The head of each guros is typically its eldest member. The family head has the final say on all clan-related decisions. Eldership is not dependent upon sex (i.e.: female elders also hold positions of leadership).

**BARTERER:** Each guros has a barterer who serves as liaison between the guros and its trade clients. Barterers are, by necessity, more diplomatic and more knowledgeable of other cultures than the average centaur.

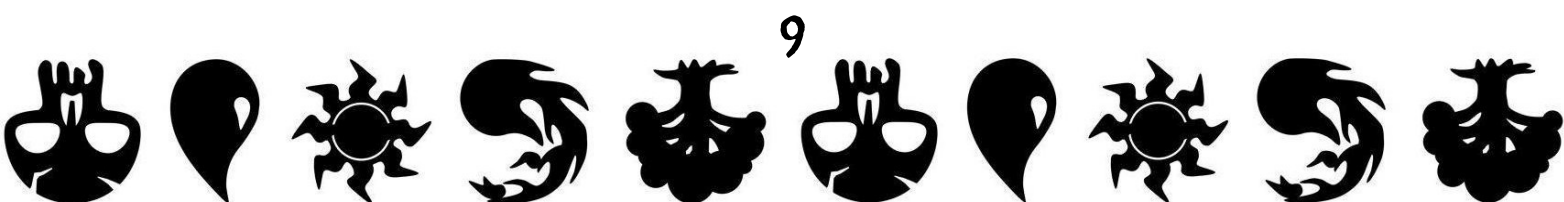


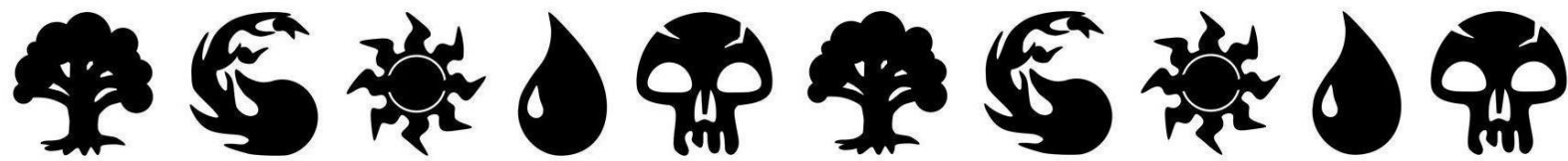
**OMENER:** The omener reads messages from the gods for the guros. These messages can be from an eagle flying overhead, a lightning-struck tree, a toad crushed on the roadway, and the like. The omener has knowledge of all of these "omen signs" as well as which god may have sent them.

**COURSER:** Coursers explore new trade territory for the guros. They may not be with the guros for long stretches, but their excellent tracking skills always enable them to find their group again in short order.

**KOLETRA:** Every guros tries to travel with at least one of the Koletra — burly, well-trained warriors of the Lagonna Band. Not every guros has Koletra of its own, and guri share their best warriors among each other as a sign of goodwill and a way to forge bonds.

**HEPTARISTI:** Once per year, a massive Lagonna herd is gathered and all guri attend. The Lagonna trade heavily among their own during this summit, but the highlight of the event is the choosing of the Heptaristi, the seven leaders. Seven guros elders are chosen to form the Heptaristi and to make all of the most important decisions for the band. The Lagonna treat this as if it was a democratic affair, but in truth, most seats are purchased through trade agreements with other clan leaders.





## ETHNIC GROUP: PHERES BAND

The Pheres roam the wild lands between Setessa and Akros. Their family ties are looser than those of the Lagonna Band, and on some occasions they form large raiding hordes to secure resources and new hunting grounds. Physically, they are slightly larger than the Lagonna; culturally, they are much wilder and less civilized. Pheres names are often descriptions of a physical feature or the circumstances of an individual's birth. For example, "Great-Hoof", "Wide-Eyes", and "Smoke-Born".

In general, Pheres Band centaurs tend toward green/red alignment, although individuals may diverge.

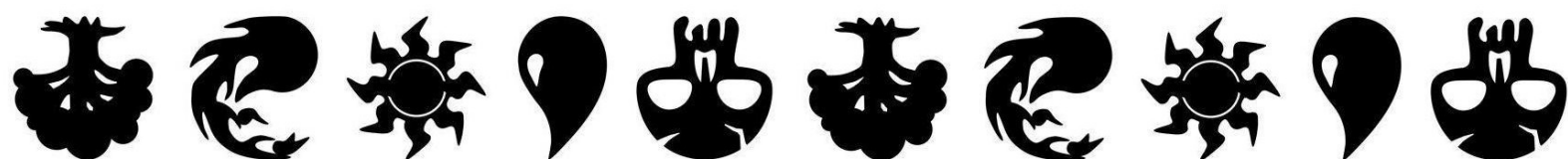
As with the Lagonna, the Pheres Band is divided into a number of distinct roles. These are:

**CHARGER:** Unlike the Lagonna, who are ruled by their elders, the Pheres are led by their strongest and most skilled. Each small raiding herd follows a charger, and leadership tends to be stable until the charger ages to the point where he or she can't lead effectively anymore. This leadership is not a strongarm dictatorship, as some outsiders assume, but a flexible and voluntary meritocracy.

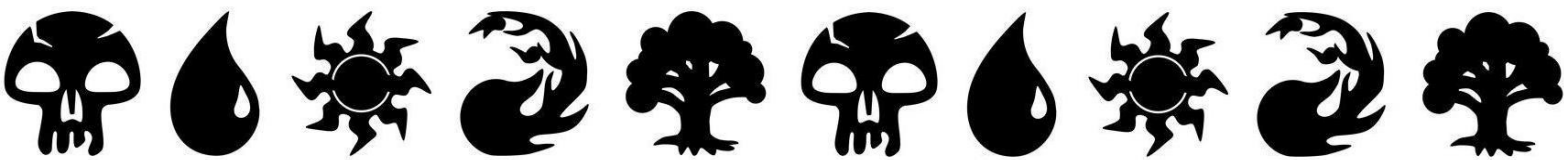
**CALLER:** Pheres "callers" are shamans and summoners with the ability to call animals to aid the band and to enchant their allies with animal energies. A caller can be identified by the ornately carved horn he or she carries, called an **oulokeros**.

**TROMPER:** Pheres legends say that when the gods first fashioned humans from the red mud of the eldest river, it was Pheres trompers who taught them how to corner and kill prey. Trompers are the feared raiders and warriors of the Pheres Band.

*Pheres Band Tromper*







## NYMPHS

Nymphs are divinely created creatures who inhabit special places, infusing them with the magic of Nyx. Most are benevolent and associated with healing or other life-giving magic, but dark nymphs dwell near the entrances to the Underworld and in places of great sorrow as well. Nymphs were intentionally created by the gods and can act as companions, messengers, guardians, and/or scouts, and while they regularly interact with and serve the gods, so to do they also mingle with and influence mortal humanoids.

Nymphs tend to be mysterious, shy creatures who spend most of their lives around a single location. Although they are corporeal, they "inhabit" aspects of the natural world, such as trees, lakes, or caves, often in immaterial, mystical form. They frequently live in groups or bands, usually with other nymphs of their ethnic phenotype, but sometimes in mixed groups. They have no need for sustenance or shelter; they subsist on the magic of Nyx. Nymphs do not grow old or suffer from illness, but they can be killed with physical force or by the use of magic.

Nymphs are divided into five ethnic groups or phenotypes, each aligned with one of the colors of mana. These are:

### PHENOTYPE: ALSEID

These white-aligned nymphs inhabit meadows. They protect flocks and are in closer proximity to human civilization than any of the other nymphs. Alseid are created by the sun-god Heliod, and most often serve him throughout their existence.

### PHENOTYPE: NAIAD

Blue-aligned nymphs can be found anywhere there is water. They are common in the streams and grottos of the Nistos Forest. Naiad also make their home on isolated beaches and shorelines, although they prefer areas with more cover. Naiad are created by the sea-goddess Thassa, and often live to serve her.

### PHENOTYPE: LAMPAD

These rare, black-aligned nymphs are said to help Athreos, the undead ferryman, in guiding the dead to the Underworld. They sometimes bear torches that burn violet. They are created by the death god, Erebos, and serve him as harbingers and messengers. Although these nymphs have a somber, funereal reputation and are staunchly allied to black mana, they are NOT intrinsically "evil" or "bad".

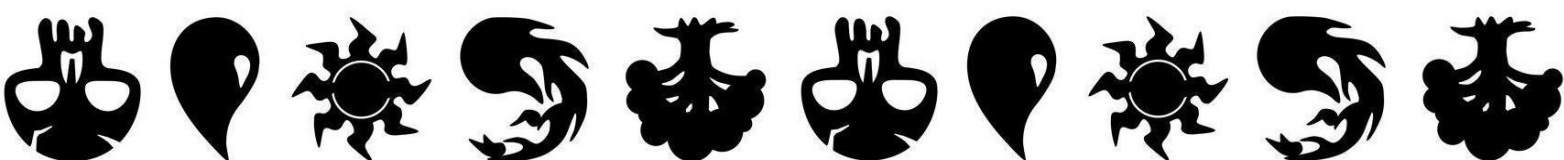
### PHENOTYPE: OREAD

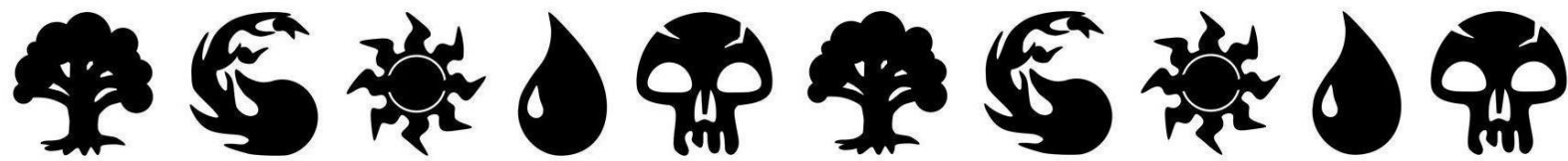
The most aggressive and dangerous nymphs, these red-aligned creatures dwell in remote mountain crevasses and near volcanoes. Purphoros is fond of their company, and the wildest of these nymphs also take part in satyr bakkeia.

### PHENOTYPE: DRYAD

Nylea has created many green-aligned nymphs, and her followers can be found throughout the Nistos Forest and Skola Valley regions.

## II





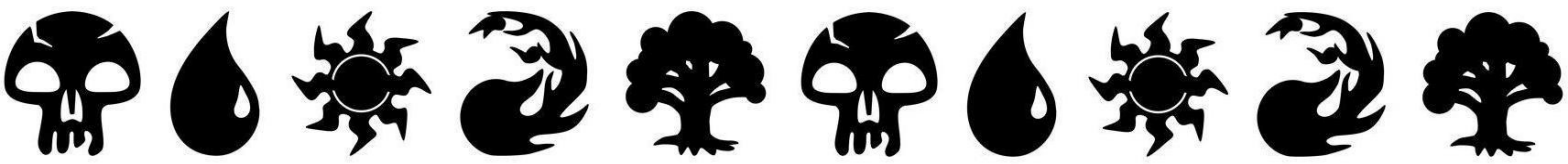
*Alseid*



*Naiad*





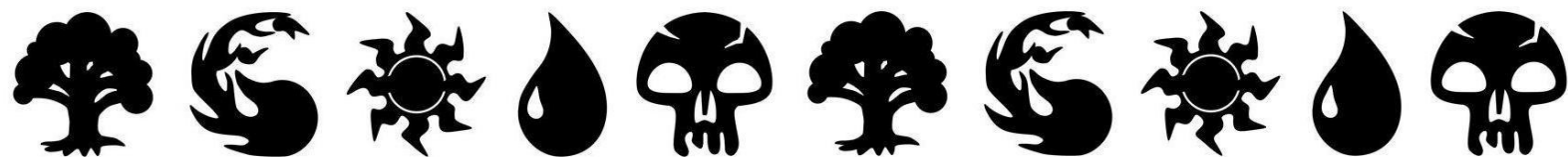


*Lampad*



*Oread*





*Dryad*



## THERAN PANTHEON: GODS & GODDESSES, AND THEIR WORSHIP

Countless generations of stories and faiths have led to a pantheon of gods that oversees the most important aspects of Theran life. Most of these gods and goddesses have real-world correlaries among the Greco-Roman pantheon, and players and storytellers who desire a more in-depth glimpse into the attitudes, motivations, and whims of these deities should look to Classical mythology. In terms of game mechanics and roleplaying, the gods and goddesses of Theros are very real beings with neverending, near-omnipotent influence over the plane and its mortal inhabitants.

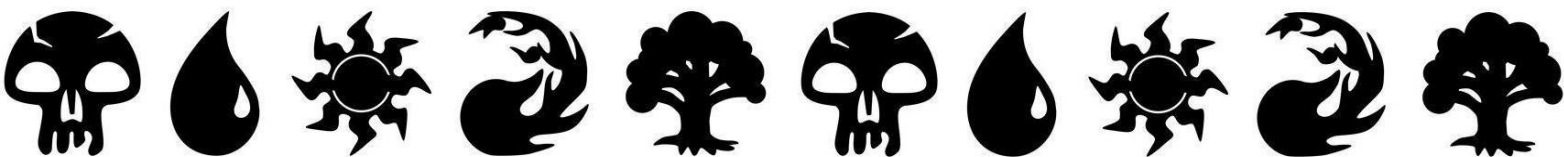
There are numerous deities in the Theran pantheon, although five major gods/goddesses are held in the highest reverence. These are:

### HELIOD, GOD OF THE SUN DOMAINS

Heliod represents law, justice, retribution, and the bonds of kinship. Heliod presides over matters of family honor, questions of morality and virtue, speeches, marriages, acts of protective bravery, dawn meals, and self-sacrifice. Heliod's name is often part of legal proceedings, and sacrifices to him are made in times when the greatest aid — or the strictest justice — is needed. While he is generally considered a "good" god, for those who view hierarchic society and law as oppressive forces, Heliod is the ultimate tyrant, and indeed, his actions and attitudes are often tyrannical. Heliod's real-world correlary is Helios and Zeus.







## SIGNATURE ITEM

Heliod wields **Khrusor, the Sun Spear**, a weapon blessed with his power that can be pitched down from the heavens to any point on Theros. Obscure legends say that another major polis once existed, a coastal city known as Arixmethes, that Heliod smote with Khrusor and cast into the sea. Heliod is not quick to anger, but once his wrath is incurred, no one is beyond Khrusor's deadly reach.

## PERSONALITY

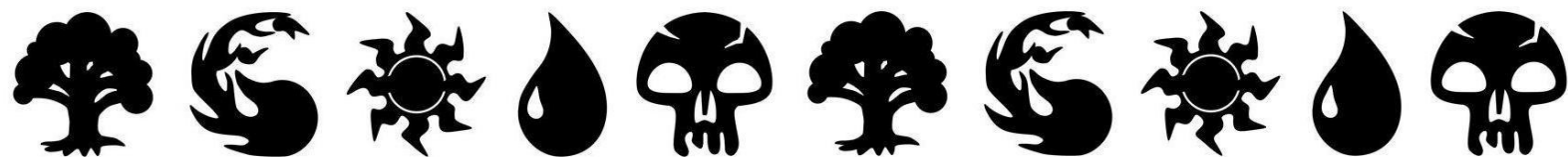
Heliod radiates with pride and self-assurance. His presence fills the sky with light, blocking mortal access to the dark, starry view of Nyx, and in person he has the same overwhelming aura of awe and brilliance. He is convivial and gregarious, making friends and forming bonds easily, and he sees himself as the ally to all. But others know that Heliod can be fickle in his loyalty. Heliod's greatest ally today might be the target of his retribution tomorrow. He is also vain, cocksure, and dominating in his power.

## WORSHIP

Heliod is the sun god, literally bringing the light of day to the world, so almost everyone on Theros pays at least tokenistic acknowledgment to him. Some families have a custom of winking in the direction of the dawn's light first thing in the morning, a gesture of respect to the sun god's luminous eye. Heliod's devoted worshippers are mainly humans and Laggona Band centaurs, who celebrate Heliod on the first clear-skied morning of every month. Temples to Heliod often feature stairs up to a rooftop courtyard, enabling sun worship. The largest holiday aligned with Heliod is the summer solstice, celebrated with three days of ceremonious feasting, weddings, and oaths of loyalty.

*Heliod & Khrusor*





# THASSA, GODDESS OF THE SEA

## DOMAINS

Thassa is the god of the sea and also presides over aquatic creatures and the secrets of the briny deep. But she is also the god of ancient knowledge, murmurs, gradual change, introspection, vast distances, long voyages, and far-ranging searches. Thassa might also be described as the god of patterns, such as those of tides, currents, ripples in water, the moon cycles, and even the passage of time. She is also the mother and progenitor of the Tritons (Merfolk) of Theros, and is almost universally revered among those people. Thassa's real-world correlary is Poseidon.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

Thassa wields **Dekella**, a two-pronged spear or bident. Wielding Dekella allows her to control the tides and stir the seas into whirlpools. Legend has it that a mortal sailor once stole Dekella and used it to destroy an enemy fleet, and that Thassa punished the mortal by turning his entire family into eels.

## PERSONALITY

Thassa is the goddess who is least likely to be satisfied with the status quo, but also the least likely to rush to change. She is constantly striving to resculpt the land, changing coastlines and upending institutions for the purpose of slow, eventual, unfolding change and inevitable decline. When she speaks, she often uses the future tense, always referring to what tomorrow will bring, forever disinterested in the reality of today. Thassa is slow to anger but implacable once roused. Her anger can grow like a rumbling, cresting, unstoppable wave, taking out whole villages with its fury — then subside with the tide, dragging the evidence of her wrath calmly out to sea.

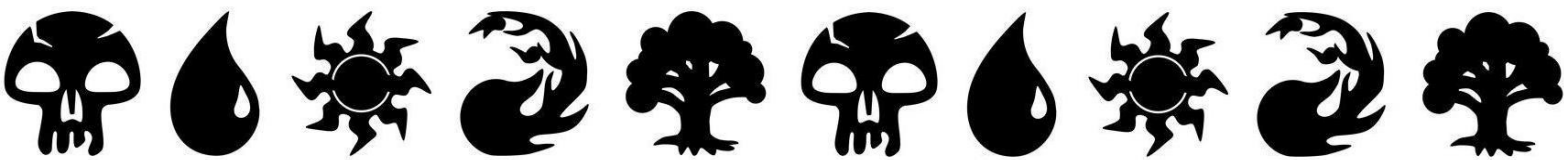
## WORSHIP

Tritons and the humans of the city-state Meletis comprise most of Thassa's worshippers, as well as all those who venture out to sea. Although tritons exalt her above all other gods, she shows no favoritism toward them, seeming equally impassive to all mortals. She is supplicated with offerings of fish and salt by the poor, offerings of pearls and nacre by the rich, and with murmured prayers and quiet contemplation by all.

*Thassa & Dekella*







## EREBOS, GOD OF DEATH & THE UNDERWORLD

When the sun first shone on Heliod, god of the sun, the first shadow was cast. When Heliod saw it, he feared and banished it, sending it beyond the so-called **Rivers That Ring the World**, the five rivers that form a boundary between Theros and its Underworld. That shadow became Erebos, the god of death. In time, Erebos accepted his role, knowing that although Heliod had banished him, he would always stand behind the sun god.

Although Erebos is most often referred to as "he", in truth, the god is neither male nor female in aspect. Erebos, being a god of death and appearing physically as a half-rotten corpse, is most accurately described as an "It" or a "They".

### DOMAINS

Erebos rules over death and the Underworld, but these aren't his only duties. Because of his own origins, he is also the god of misfortune, ill fate, begrudging acceptance, envy, and bitterness. And because he is lord of the Underworld, where gold is common and valueless, he is also the god of wealth. Although it might seem as though Erebos is connected to Nyx more closely than the other gods, this isn't the case. Erebos's realm lacks both the sun and the night. Erebos's real-world correlary is Hades.

### SIGNATURE ITEM

Erebos wields **Mastix**, a golden-handled whip with an impossibly long lash, like a thin shadow that stretches on forever. The whip is a means of inflicting pain when he must, but its more frequent function is as a snare to pull the reluctant dead into — or back into — his realm.

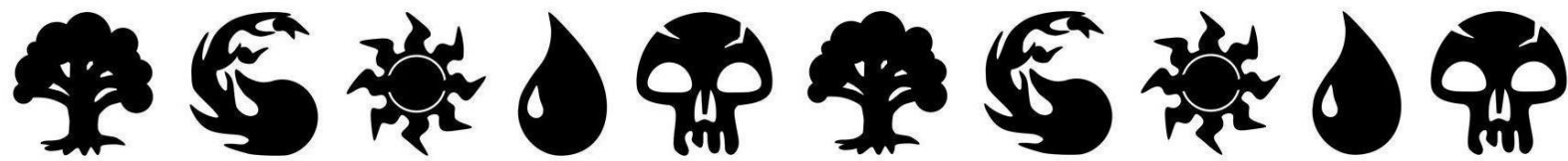
### PERSONALITY

Erebos is an effective warden and lord of the Underworld realm. He is not without compassion, but his compassion is limited to feeling on behalf of others what he himself feels, and his acceptance of his fate means that his lieges, the dead, must accept theirs. He idly envies the sunlit world of the living, but only in a daydream-like way. He knows that all mortal souls will eventually join him, which affords him a kind of satisfaction and certainty. When others suffer, it brings Erebos peace, but not glee, because the alienation and banishment of others enables them to identify with his own.

### WORSHIP

The god of the underworld is worshipped by three distinct sets of mortal beings: those who exalt death, those who desire wealth, and those who pray for acceptance of their fates. The first group is the smallest but most dangerous; they seek to bring about a confrontation between Heliod and his shadow. The second group is largest. Because the dead leave their earthly wealth behind, Erebos has become associated with that wealth, as well as with the abundance of (to him, pretty but valueless) gold in his realm. The final group is closest to Erebos's heart—those who have been cast out and who seek peace with their fate.





*Erebos & Mastix*



## PURPHOROS, GOD OF THE FORGE

### DOMAINS

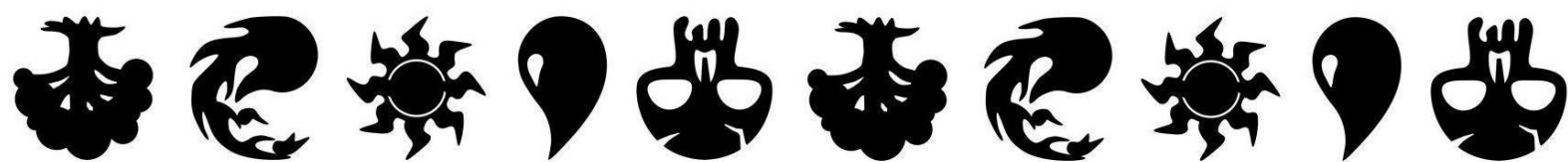
Purphoros is the god of the forge, the restless earth, and fire. He rules the raw creative force of heat and energy that fills the souls of sentient beings. His energy emerges as chaos, something to be harnessed and shaped by labor and passion. For this reason, Purphoros is also the god of artisans, of obsession, and of the cycle of creation and destruction. Purphoros' real-world correlary is Hephæstus.

### SIGNATURE ITEM

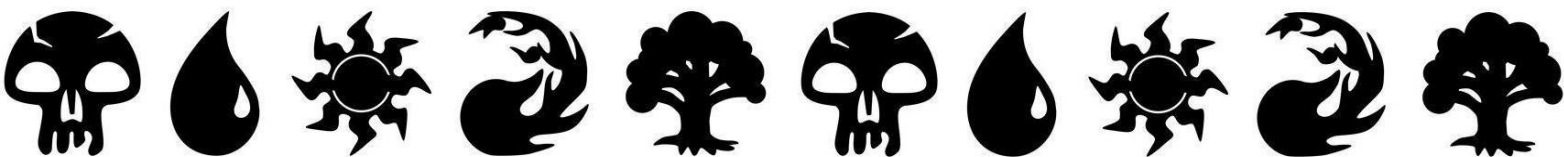
Purphoros wields **Akmon**, a large hammer whose head slightly resembles an anvil. A blow from Akmon can render the earth molten, and when it strikes metal, each spark becomes a new enchantment, some of which even take on life.

### PERSONALITY

To sit in the presence of Purphoros is to be inspired. He forges the most ornate and delicate items only to dash them into flame and start again. He is reasonable yet ultimately follows no rules save his own creative and destructive impulses. Sometimes, this can mean covering a whole area with lava to make way for something new. His main flaw is that of frustration, of feeling limited and constrained. He is forever pushing against the barriers of mortal imagination, sensing that there is much more to express. This can cause him to plummet into despondency and then lash out at the world with raw destruction.





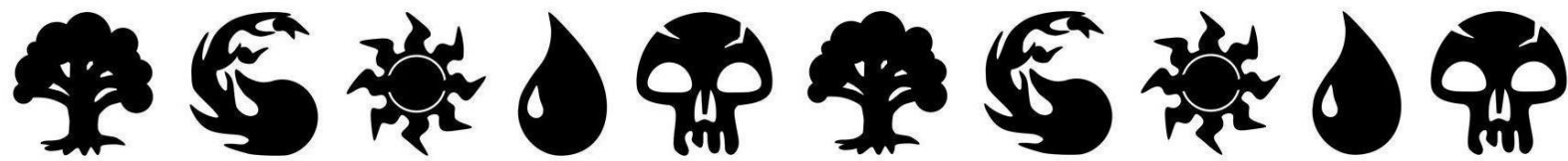


## WORSHIP

Followers of Purphoros, the god of the forge, brought the secret of **bronze** to Theros, leading to stronger objects and armaments than any created previously. And the most sanctified shamans of Purphoros also possess small quantities of a new metal said to have come from Purphoros's forge: **iron**. But it's not only smiths who worship him. Artists, human and satyr especially, seek his aid, ascending to altars on volcanic slopes to breathe deeply of the creative vapors. Warriors give him homage when lighting a bonfire. Potters inscribe their works with markings meant to honor him.

*Purphoros & Akmon*





# NYLEA, GODDESS OF THE HUNT

## DOMAINS

Nylea is the god of the hunt, the seasons, and the forest. Because of her reign over the hunt, she is also associated with predation and hunger. And because of her rule of the seasons, she is also the god of metamorphosis and rebirth. Nylea receives strength and peace from sleeping inside the chrysalis at the center of her grove in the Nistos Forest. Nylea's real-world correlary is Artemis.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

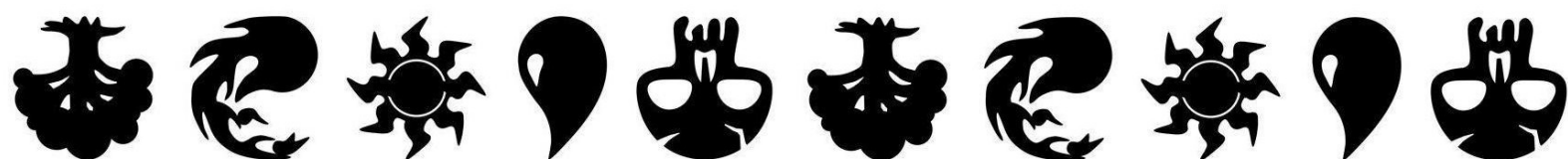
Nylea is Theros's finest archer, and she wields a shortbow called **Ephixis**. Her companion, the nymph **Theophila**, conjures illusions for target practice, such as fireflies or miniscule silk worms. Nylea has no qualms with predation, but she loathes hunting for sport. She personally kills poachers in the Nistos Forest who have not asked for her blessing to hunt her animals.

## PERSONALITY

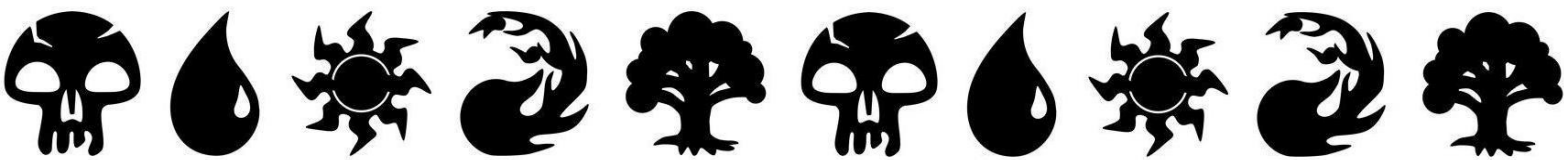
Nylea is usually aloof and thoughtful, but with her companions she is playful and joyful. She has a feral, animalistic side and shoulders the responsibility of keeping the forest a haven for animals, preventing the spread of civilized humans into her domain, and letting the natural world have free rein. Nylea is quick to anger and vengeance if something threatens her realm. The seasons change at her whim, and she delays the change if angered. She is allied with Purphoros, and permits him to unleash fires on the forest when it is in need of cleansing or when urban humans are encroaching too far into the wilds. Nylea has a tumultuous relationship with Karametra, the god of the hearth. Karametra is infuriated by Nylea's interference in the seasons. In turn, Nylea is disgusted by agriculture, which she sees as an aberration from the natural cycle of the world.

## WORSHIP

Nylea doesn't have temples built in her honor. She dislikes the construction of temples and cities in general. Nymphs of all kinds pay homage to her, as do sentient humanoids such as satyrs, centaurs, the human citizens of Setessa, and Theros's feral, nomadic humans who don't live in city-states. Her holy sites often consist of a tree surrounded by a cloud of butterflies. When one of these trees is spotted, people say she is near. Her human followers tend to be loners, outcasts, and those who choose to live in the wilds. Some city dwellers will come into the forest to honor her, especially to pray that the seasons will change in a timely manner. Nylea hates sacrifices and is notoriously hard to please. Depending on their offerings, worshippers could as easily anger her as win her blessing. She enjoys seeing acts of kindness and protection of creatures both domesticated and wild.







Nylea & Ephixis



## OTHER DEITIES

The five major gods and goddesses of Theros command the most reverence, devotion, and attention among religious Therans, but they are certainly not the only godly beings presiding over the plane of Theros. A number of other gods and goddesses are also part of the Theran pantheon, and some are extremely pivotal in the day-to-day lives of mortals. These include:

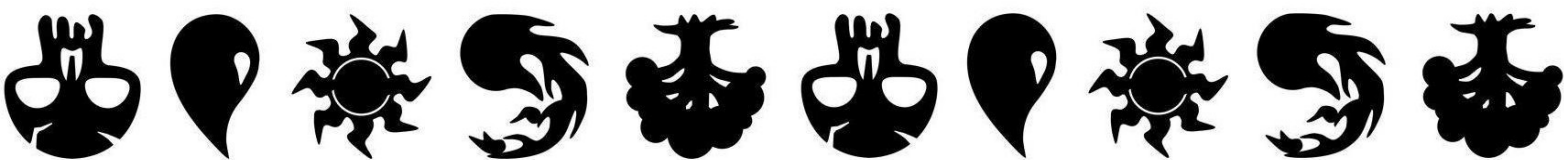
## ATHREOS, GOD OF PASSAGE

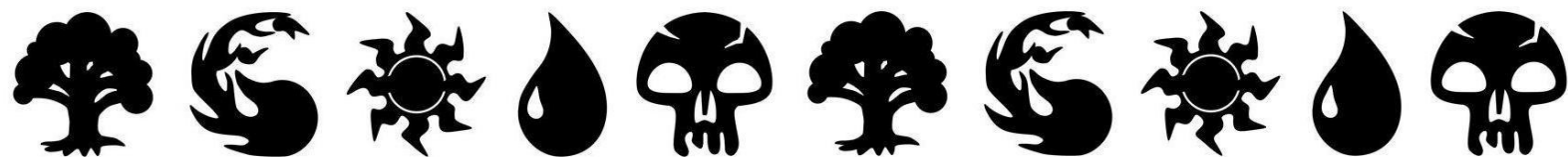
### DOMAINS

When mortals die, their souls must cross the Rivers That Ring the World to reach the Underworld. The shrouded god Athreos is their guide, ferrying the dead to their ultimate rest. Silent, bent, and tattered, he patiently fulfills his role. In this role of easing the passage from life to death, he is aligned with white and black mana, and those curious priests and cultists who serve him tend to explore and practice both these magical schools.

### SIGNATURE ITEM

Athreos is never without his signature staff, **Khoraphon**, a gnarled length of dark wood. When the dead arrive on the shores of the Rivers, he lays it across the water to transform it into a barge.





## PERSONALITY

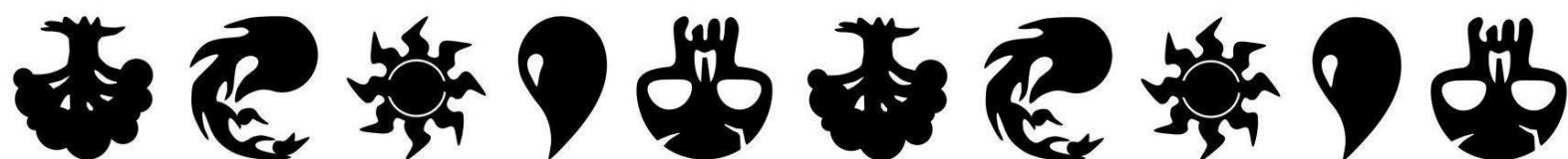
Athreos is a dark, somber, and compassionate god. After countless eons of transporting the dead across the Rivers of Theros, he fully understands and comisserates with the plight of mortals, those who are doomed to die. As he ferries the dead across the Rivers, a trip that is both long and arduous, Athreos silently and mournfully listens to all the tales of the recently dead, of their woes, regrets, unfinished tasks, and unfulfilled desires.

## WORSHIP

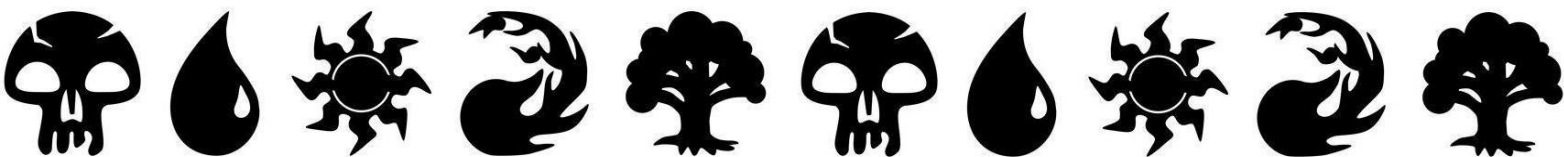
Few worship Athreos in the sense of lifelong clerical devotion, but all mortals (and all the other gods, for that matter) give Athreos tremendous respect and reverence. Besides one major temple in his name, Athreos claims no official sacred ground. However, all tombs, catacombs, burial chambers, and mausoleums are unofficially dedicated to him, and are considered his realm and domain. The few oddball priests who do dedicate their service to Athreos are universally black and white aligned. These supplicants prepare and honor the dead, but also learn and practice powerful mysteries that allow them to speak with the recently deceased and ask them questions. Gleaning knowledge and wisdom from the spirits of the dead is the specialty of priests of Athreos, a service for which they are often propositioned by the wealthy and powerful, but which they seldom perform for any outside Athreos' cult.

The custom on Theros is to craft a funerary mask of clay for the newly dead. In this way, the identities of the deceased are "framed" for Athreos, so that he can mark their proper passage. Such masks are broken into shards called ostraka and used as barter in the Underworld. This task is dutifully performed by the priests of Athreos, who consider it a sacrament to their grim god.

*Athreos and Khoraphon*







# EPHARA, GODDESS OF THE POLIS

## DOMAINS

As her name suggests, Ephara rules over the city-states of Theros. By extension, her domain also extends to a variety of blue-white aligned ideals and institutions. These include: civilization, philosophy, literature, scholarship, statecraft, and diplomacy. Ephara is the patron deity of the city-state Meletis, and is largely responsible for that nation's achievements in architecture, philosophy, literature, and academia. In no other city-state or region of Theros are there more idols and shrines dedicated to Ephara than in the learned halls and wealthy households of Meletis. Ephara is associated with blue and white mana.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

As a goddess of study and learning, Ephara has no use for weaponry or the tools of labor and toil. Unlike the majority of the other Theran deities, Ephara carries neither weapon nor tool. Instead, she is often seen bearing a scroll and a quill, and sometimes a large urn from which pour the creative and artistic energies of Nyx.

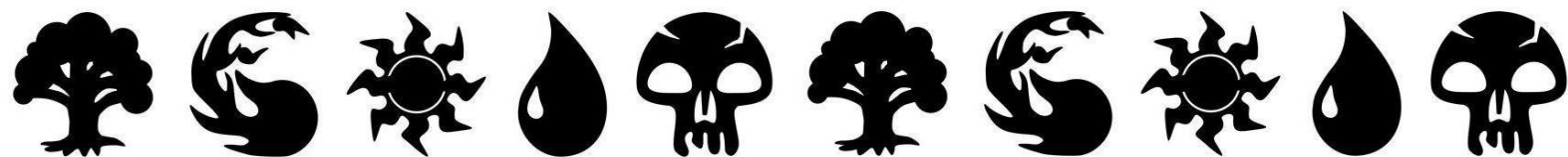
## PERSONALITY

Ephara is quite unlike her fellow goddesses. She is neither the nurturing mother-figure that is Karametra, nor is she the feral, bestial hunter-figure that is Nylea, and she has practically nothing in common with the enigmatic and unscrupulous goddess Pharika. Ephara is cold, rational, emotionless, stern, goal-oriented, and progress-minded. Her knowledge and wisdom are unrivalled, and she is the best mentor a mortal could ever aspire to learn from. Like many blue/white-aligned figures, Ephara views civilization as superior to the wild and primal, and sees wilderness and traditional hunter-gatherer life as "savage", fit only to be eradicated.

*Ephara, overseeing Meletis*







# KERANOS, GOD OF STORMS

## DOMAINS

A bolt from the blue can be both devastating and inspirational. Likewise, Keranos embodies the fury of the storm and the sudden blaze of epiphany. A god of little patience and less mercy, he dispenses insights and blasts of lightning in equal measure. As such, he is associated with blue and red mana.

As the embodiment of wisdom, Keranos is intolerant of mortals, whom he sees as reckless. Yet he also respects those who take action with clear purpose, especially if they seek his approval first. Such individuals earn a two-edged blessing: momentary glimpses of the future, but the inability to change what is to come. Among mortals, Queen Cymede of Akros is Keranos's greatest servant and has done much to spread the god's worship in the city.

Keranos is the Theran god of storms, lightning, wind, all forms of inclement weather, and inspiration. He is tumultuous, fickle, flighty, wroth. His temper is legendary, and his rage knows no bounds. He holds no symbol nor any object to be sacred, and has no signature item associated with him. Keranos is the progenitor of a great many of Theros's **chimera**, as detailed in the chapter concerning beasts and monsters of Theros.

However, his stormy, violent nature doesn't deter mortals from worshipping him. Ambitious mages and thaumaturges seek his favor by climbing to great mountainous heights or sea cliffs during raging thunderstorms, hoping to be struck by lightning and given inspirational insight into unknown and undiscovered magics. Cymede, Queen of the city-state Akros, is a powerful seer and warrior, and is fully dedicated to the god Keranos. Keranos also has a few devotees in Meletis, a seaside polis that endures many storms.

As mentioned above, Keranos is the consistent enemy of the goddess Karametra. Nylea, who views storms as a necessary and beneficial part of the natural cycles of Theros, respects Keranos and typically maintains positive relations with him. Although Thassa, the sea goddess cares little for relationships, she and Keranos occasionally collaborate on storms at sea. Most of the other gods of Theros have tenuous, flexible, ever-changing relations with Keranos.

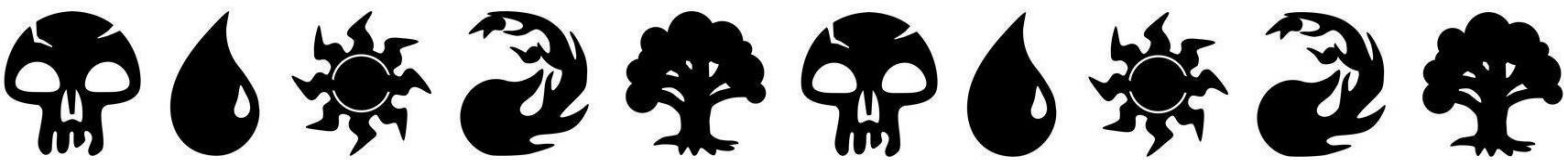
## SIGNATURE ITEM

Unlike the other gods and goddesses of Theros, Keranos wields neither weapon nor tool. He is a god of impetuous, momentary, and explosive insight and change, the patron of impassioned innovation. When he is depicted (or more rarely, seen) wielding any tangible "item", it's always a many-forked bolt of lightning, his weapon of choice for smiting the unworthy, and the means by which he conveys visionary brilliance in those he favors.

## PERSONALITY

Fickle, fleeting, unpredictable, and erratic. Keranos has no constant state of being, nor a single state of mind. He is as changing as the weather over which he lords.





## WORSHIP

Prior to his endorsement by Queen Cymede of Akros, Keranos was considered a lesser god by most Therans. His worship was sparse, informal, and small. Now, given extreme devotion and praise – not to mention the affluent patronage of a bellicose city-state – Keranos has become a household name in Akros. With the constant outward expansion of the Akroans, the worship of Keranos has begun to spread to other regions as well.

*Keranos wielding lightning*



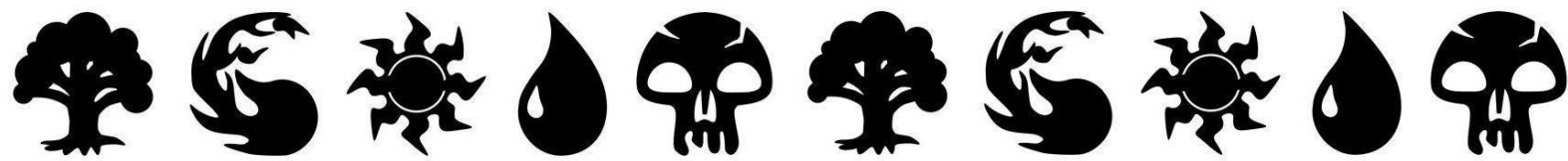
## KARAMETRA, GODDESS OF AGRICULTURE & DOMESTICATION

### DOMAINS

Karametra is the patron goddess of the city-state of Setessa, and is the *de facto* ruler and leader of the polis. Although her worship and central priesthood are located within Setessa, many other mortals worship the goddess for her vast power and influence. Karametra is the goddess of the home and hearth, agriculture and domesticated plants, pastoralism and domesticated animals, orphans, and the harvest. She is associated with green and white mana.

Karametra speaks of Nylea as her sister, and the two goddesses do share some influence in similar domains. However, Nylea, being a feral goddess of the natural world and its cycles, despises Karametra for her creation of agriculture, animal husbandry, and domestication, and often acts to thwart her and her warrior-priests for these reasons. Also, because inclement weather is often destructive to agricultural fields and livestock, Karametra has a perpetually conflicting relationship with Keranos, the god of storms.





## SIGNATURE ITEM

As with the five major deities, Karametra too has signature items that are sacred to her. She carries **Miope**, a crooked shepherd's staff, and **Chirax**, a golden harvesting sickle.

Karametra's real-world correlary is the goddess Demeter, and to a lesser extent Hestia. For more information on this goddess, please see the section detailing the polis Setessa.

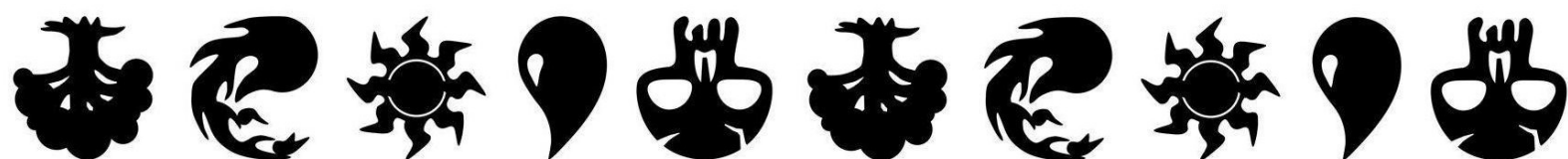
## PERSONALITY

Karametra is loving, tender, compassionate, and gentle – the archetype of the nurturing mother. Perhaps more so than any of the other gods and goddesses of Theros, she cares for mortals and takes an active role in their affairs.

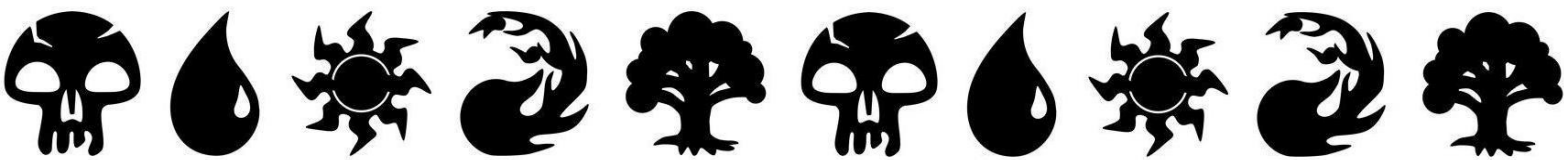
## WORSHIP

The mortal societies of Theros are largely agricultural and pastoral, the two primary domains of this goddess. As such, Karametra is worshipped almost universally in Theros, especially so by farmers, herders, and vinters. The vast majority of homes and dwellings in Theros have a small shrine or idol dedicated to Karametra. Even the warlike Akroans praise her, knowing that their fearsome war machine would sputter and fail if it weren't well fed by the harvests blessed by Karametra's favor.

*Karametra atop her living throne*







# IROAS, GOD OF VICTORY & MOGIS, GOD OF SLAUGHTER: THE TWIN GODS OF WAR

## DOMAINS & PERSONALITIES

These two gods are twins, and they both lord over warfare. However, though they are often worshipped as a pair, the two gods have very distinct, even dichotomous personalities.

**Iroas** is a warrior-god who values discipline, tactics, leadership, courage, honor and honorable combat, and the strategic use of force. Outside of war, Iroas takes great interest in physical competitions and sports, and the development of the mortal physical form in general. Iroas seeks to encourage the honorable aspects of warfare in mortals. He favors the militaristic polis of Akros and has established the Iroan Games in that city's arena, whose podium is also the main temple to the god. Each year, during the height of summer, athletes and soldiers from all across Theros compete for the wreath that signifies the highest achievement in physical prowess. Iroas is the progenitor of Theran **centaurs**, who he created in his image to honor himself.

The god of victory is associated with red and white mana. His devotees include champions of the Games and charismatic commanders of troops. **King Anax of Akros**, a ferocious warrior and skilled tactician, is a longtime worshipper of Iroas, although in recent years he has also embraced Purphoros as he forges his polis into an empire.

**Mogis**, on the other hand, is quite different from his brother. While also a god of war, Mogis lords over the darker and more sinister aspects of violent conflict. He is the god of fear, pain, bloodlust, rage, violent death, jealousy, and cannibalism. Akroan soldiers are trained to avoid the impulses and influences of Mogis, for it is in the heat of battle that he is known to slip into the hearts and minds of warriors. Mogis has a dedicated sect of followers who inhabit rural, mountainous caves known as **Androphages**, or "Man-Eaters". These fanatics give themselves over completely to the rage and madness of Mogis, and live only to pillage, destroy, rape, and cannibalize other mortals. "By the red eye of Mogis" is a common profanity, used in response to tragedy and despicable violence. Mogis is also the creator of the dreaded race of toxic mutant ox-beasts known as **Catoblebases**, and is the father of Theran **minotaurs**.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

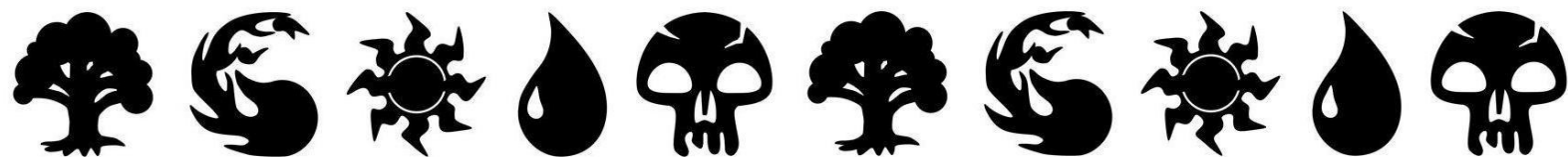
Neither Iroas nor Mogis is so short-sighted a warrior-god as to favor a single weapon or arrangement of armor. Both these gods are seen and depicted as bearing a great variety of arms, armor, and tactics.

## WORSHIP

The central and most important Iroan temple, the **Temple of Triumph**, is located in Akros, and serves also as the podium of victors in the Iroan Games. Iroas has little respect or need for a devoted priestly caste, and prefers warriors, soldiers, and athletes who invoke his name as they plunge into battle or competition. In formal ritual, Iroas enjoys the sacrifice of large, powerful creatures, most especially the bull, the killing of which demonstrates the "victory" of mortals over the powerful forces of nature. Though they may not often share this god's desires and virtues, the centaurs of Theros still pay heed to their creator.

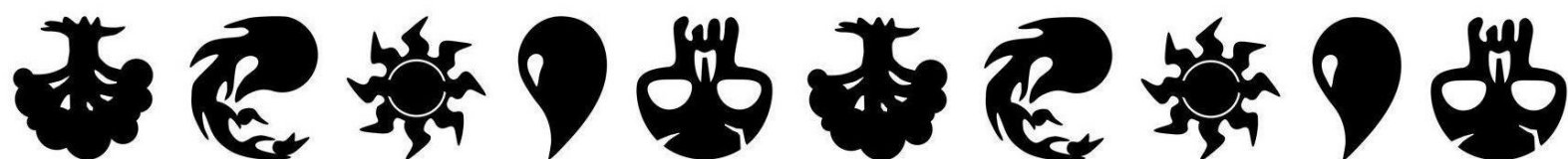
Mogis has no formal temple nor any centralized priestly sect, save for the Androphages. Like his self-

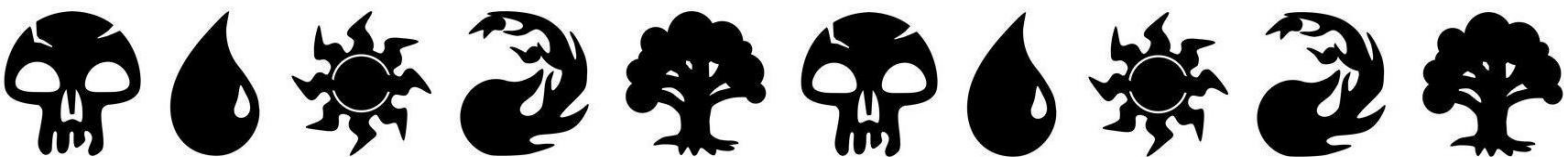




righteous brother, Mogis too prefers warriors, soldiers, and the murderous brutes who worship him to invoke his name in the act of spilling blood and slaughtering the living. The minotaur of Theros, children of this bloodcrazed god, worship their father and creator with rites of slaughter and extreme brutality.

*Iroas above, and Mogis below*





# KRUPHIX, GOD OF HORIZONS

## DOMAIN

The most enigmatic of the gods, Kruphix has dominion over the potential, the distant, and the unseen. Thus, he is seen as an oracle of dreams. He also governs navigation, portals and doorways, mystery, and the cycles of time. Mortals say that Kruphix is the most ancient of the pantheon, the keeper of mysteries that no others are meant to learn. The reclusive god speaks rarely and counts few worshippers. He often takes no real form but appears only as a Nyx-filled space in the sky. Kruphix is associated with green and blue mana, and his sole temple is built over a cataract at the very edge of the world.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

None. The god of horizons neither carries nor uses any items.

## PERSONALITY

Cryptic, edlritch, and difficult to understand. Some think this god is mad, but he is simply too old, too wise, and too broad in scope and vision for either mortals or gods to comprehend his limitless mind. As with Erebos, Kruphix is called "he", although in truth this god is both male and female, and neither. This god pushes all limits and boundaries in all its domains, and its sex and gender are no exception.

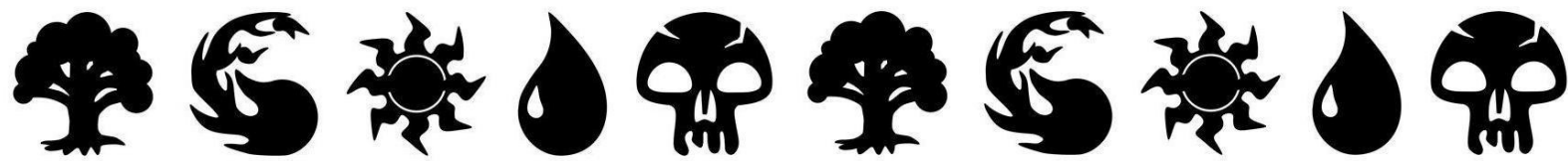
## WORSHIP

No formal worship to speak of, save for a single, solitary temple on the cataract that overlooks the edge of Theros and the confluence of the Rivers into the Underworld. The one priesthood that maintains the **Temple of Mystery** is the most secretive and exclusive of all the Theran cults; its mysteries and rites are unknown to any except themselves, and the innerworkings of Kruphix's single temple remain a riddle to the outside world.

*Kruphix, God of Horizons*







# PHARIKA, GODDESS OF AFFLICTIONS

## DOMAIN

Deadly poison can be healing medicine in small amounts, and this dichotomy is reflected in the god whose province is such tinctures. Pharika is the keeper of apothecary knowledge, the source of dark magic. She is also the mother of all **gorgons** and snakes, and their snaky bodies resemble hers. To those who would oppose her, Pharika is a fearsome enemy, but mortals she favors are hard to kill. She bears a potion cup from which she dispenses draughts that simultaneously strengthen her servants and slay her enemies. Pharika is associated with black and green mana, and her dual nature also governs aging—the stretch of life and the approach of death. Stories say that the secretive god has hidden medicinal knowledge within the natural world. None know whether she did so to reward or to toy with mortals who quest to unearth them.

## SIGNATURE ITEM

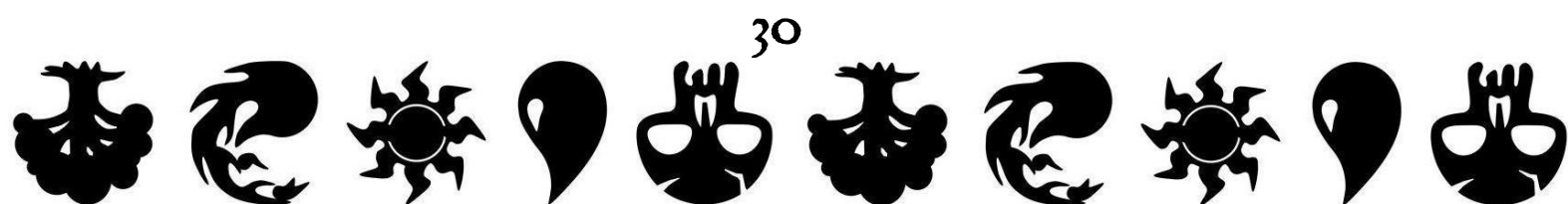
Pharika's most treasured item and most used tool is the medicine bowl known as **Phimenas**. This vessel, which acts as both a drinking chalice and a mortar and pestle, can be used to concoct or cure any ailment in existence, or any medicine.

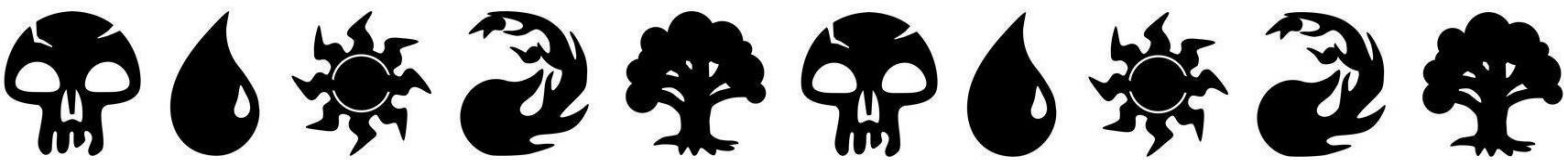
## PERSONALITY

Perhaps because she appears to be half serpent, Pharika often seems cold, uncaring, even spiteful and malicious towards mortals. Given that she is the patron of healers and apothecaries, however, she can certainly also act with compassion, warmth, even love toward the sick and afflicted. Her primary concerns being disease, sickness, health, life and longevity, and poisons, Pharika is deeply immersed in the lives and pursuits of mortals, and cares little for the bickering and political maneuvering of the other gods and goddesses.

## WORSHIP

Pharika has a great many supplicants at any given time, including all those who are ill or poisoned, who call to her for aid and succor. Among her devotees and clerical worshippers, Pharika claims herbalists, physicians, apothecaries, and assassins and nightblades alike. The formal temples dedicated to her train all of the above professions, and engage in many rites and mysteries that others find distasteful and terrifying. Pharika's worshippers and her children (gorgons and snakes) tend toward green/black alignment, like the goddess herself.





*Pharika with Phimenas*



## PHENAX, GOD OF DECEPTION

### DOMAIN

This capricious deity holds dominion over all things pertaining to blue/black mana: lies, treachery, deceit, illusions, spies, agents, assassins, politics, gossip and rumors. He is also the patron deity of theatre and actors, a fact that preserves his somewhat negative reputation.

### SIGNATURE ITEM

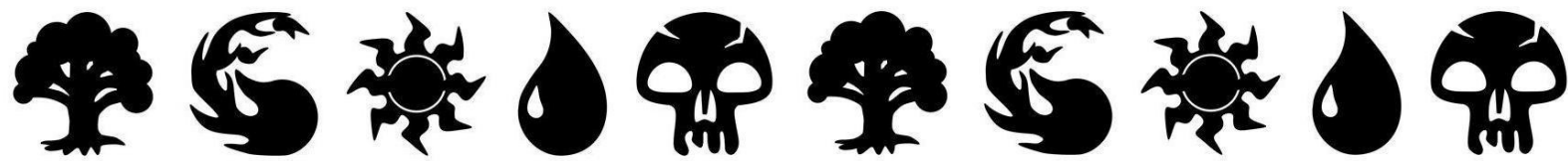
Phenax always wears a golden mask whose face and shape are ever-changing. The mask bears no name, nor any significance in any Theran tales, but still it is inseparable from the god who wears it. This mask not only hides the intentions, motivations, and emotions of the god of deception, but likewise mesmerizes any mortals who behold its everchanging face, allowing Phenax to better manipulate them.

### PERSONALITY

As expected from the god of lies, illusion, and deceit, Phenax loves politics and delights in playing manipulative and destructive games with mortals. This dishonest and unethical god meddles constantly in mortal affairs, but also takes particular joy in toying with the other Theran deities. His motives and goals are known only to him.







## WORSHIP

Politicians, diplomats, rhetoricians, actors, spies, and illusion mages all seek his favor. Phenax has a few sparse temples scattered across Theros. In addition, most amphitheaters and offices of statecraft and rulership maintain shrines to him,

*Phenax with his golden mask*



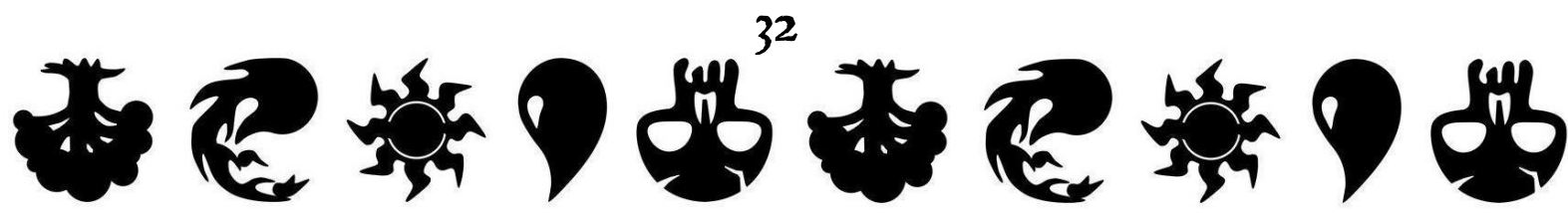
## XENAGOS, GOD OF REVELS

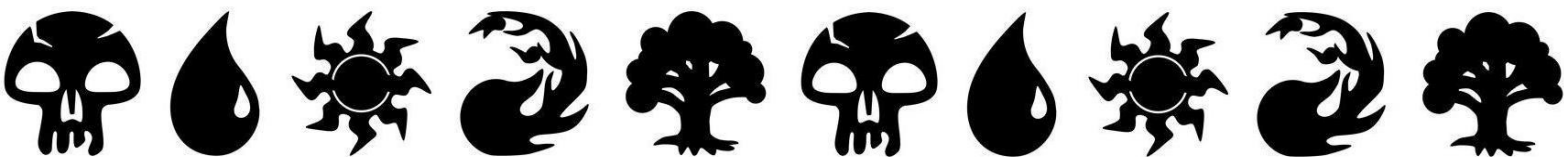
### DOMAIN

Revels. Parties. Debauchery. Alcohol, intoxication, hallucinogens, wild abandon, and sex. This satyr-god rules over all things relating to red/green mana, and is a favorite object of worship for Theran satyrs. Once mortal, Xenagos was a satyr himself, born with the ultra-rare and highly coveted Planeswalker Spark. Using his planeswalking abilities, and his vivid mastery of red and green magic, this once-mortal satyr crossed the threshold of immortality and ascended to godhood, earning himself a tenuous and imperiled seat on the Theran pantheon.

### SIGNATURE ITEM

None. This god is far too interested in the fun of wanton destruction to possess any item for too long.





## PERSONALITY

Wild impulse and the Epicurian urge to enjoy all the multiverse has to offer drive this god. As with many satyrs, this god's revels often end in suffering, pain, hangovers, and sometimes death, none of which deter him in the slightest. Although generally in good spirits and amicable to others, Xenagos is despised by many of the gods, most especially Heliad, who views Xenagos's godhood as an upjumped abomination.

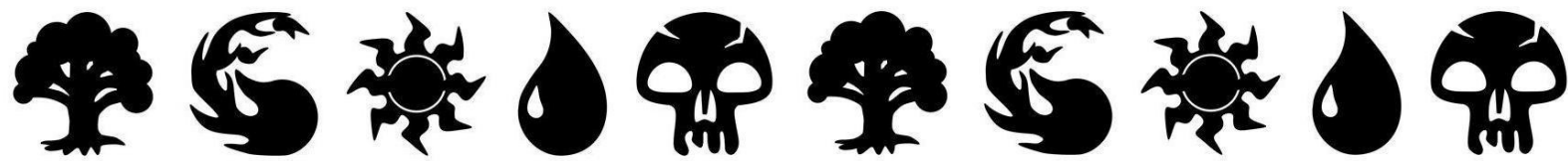
## WORSHIP

Xenagos is worshipped by all revelers, but most devoutly and most sincerely by satyrs. His kin see Xenagos as the ultimate achiever of life, lust, love, and chaotic abandon. His arrogance and selfish disregard for the consequences of his actions draw deep reverence and respect from Theran satyrs, all of whom wish they could do just as Xenagos did. Many other non-satyr mortals also worship Xenagos, and dedicate a great many drunken bad decisions to his dubious name.

*Xenagos, God of Revels*







## THE POLEIS:

# MAJOR CITY-STATES OF THEROS

Most humans of Theros embody the spirit of carving out a place for civilization from the wilds. Although other, smaller settlements exist, and although some wild, uncivilized humans retain their landbased lifeways, the majority of Theran humans are associated with one of Theros's three major poleis: Meletis, Akros, and Setessa.

### MELETIS



#### CULTURE

Meletis is the polis of learning, magic, and progress. It is a city-state of progressive thinkers, pious thaumaturges, and wise oracles. Meletis was born from the defeat of tyranny, and to this day it retains a spirit of the triumph of free thought over brutish force. Meletians pride themselves on their great temples to the gods, their thaumaturgical academy, their great works of architecture, and for their Reverent Army.

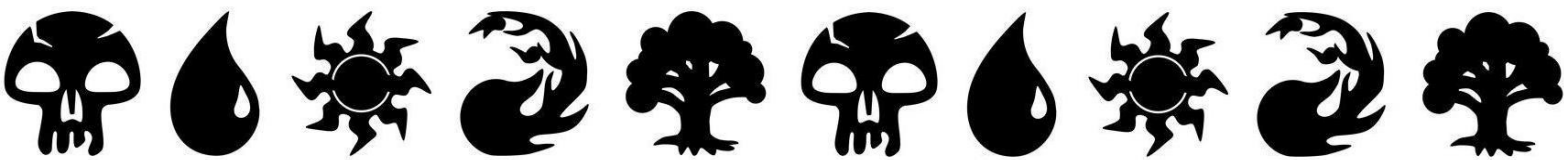
Meletis sits on the coast, surrounded by rivers and vast, stepped grasslands. Fields of a cultivated type of barley called **sitra** provide sustenance to Meletians and their animals. Branches of the **River Kheir** splay out across the landscape, bringing fresh water and trade from distant villages.

The great temples of Meletis are testaments to the achievements (and destructive hubris) of civilized humanity. Signs of architectural and academic achievement are everywhere. Even the streets of Meletis are formed of bricks of interlocking geometric shapes, demonstrating mathematical and mystical principles. The wildlands of Theros feel distant, almost mythical, from inside the city's regimented and formulaic bounds. Meletis does suffer attacks from sirens, tritons, and larger monsters, but many citizens of Meletis have never seen in person any monster or humanoid bigger or more "exotic" than a centaur.

*Meletis, view from the sea*







Meletians are very concerned with the actions of the gods. Gods are regularly part of their language. Following below are some phrases common in Meletis that incorporate the gods:

*"By Heliod's bright spear."* Expresses surprise or wonder.

*"From the gods' voice to my ears"* (or simply *"gods' voice"*). Used to emphasize that what the speaker says is true — i.e., that the speaker has been told this by the gods themselves.

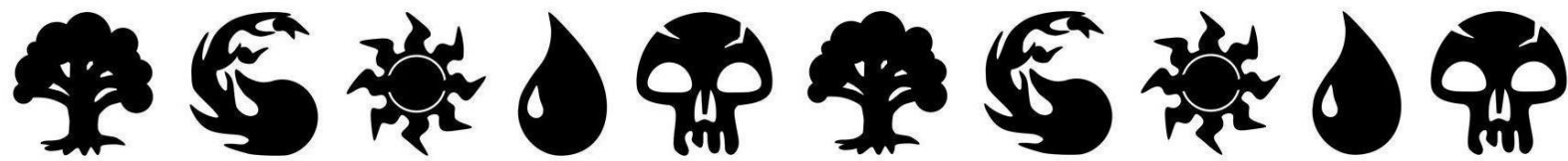
*"By the red eye of Mogis."* A mild profanity, often used in reaction to tragedy or violent death.

*"With Erebos"* or *"At Erebos's side."* Another way of saying "deceased" or "in the Underworld."

Almost every street of Meletis bears a temple, from simple, one-room neighborhood shrines to six-story temples held up by phalanxes of marble columns. Every god has a temple in Meletis, and many temples are devoted to multiple gods. Artisans continually improve the temples in Meletis, swapping out broken marble or crumbling sculptures with fresh materials, and painting over grand friezes with grander ones.

*Meletis, view from a temple to Thassa*





## SOCIETAL ROLES & SPECIALIZATIONS

### THE REVERENT ARMY:

Meletis is defended by the Reverent Army, religiously trained soldiers who fight monsters and exalt the gods. The Meletian Reverents are not as fierce as Akroans nor as sturdy as Setessans, but they are clever and resourceful, and they believe their superior piety for Theros's pantheon leads them to more success in battle.

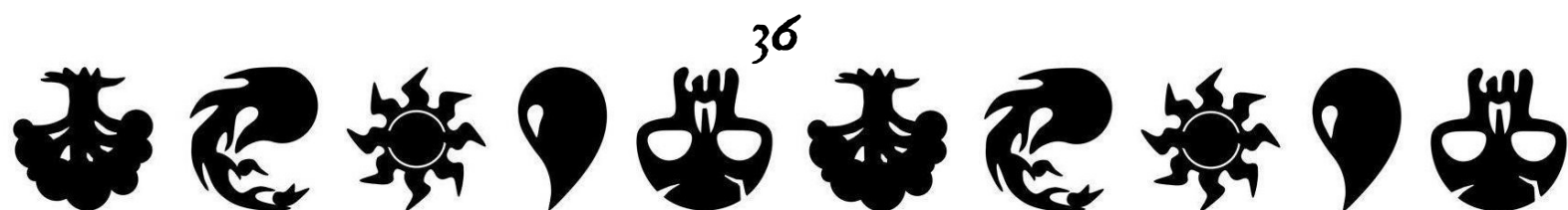
### THE BATTLEWISE:

Meletian leaders, known as The Battlewise, are trained to manipulate the battlefield primarily through tactics and stratagems rather than through physical strength. Their hoplites use clever ruses, unusual or rapidly changing troop formations, and even outright deception to score victories.

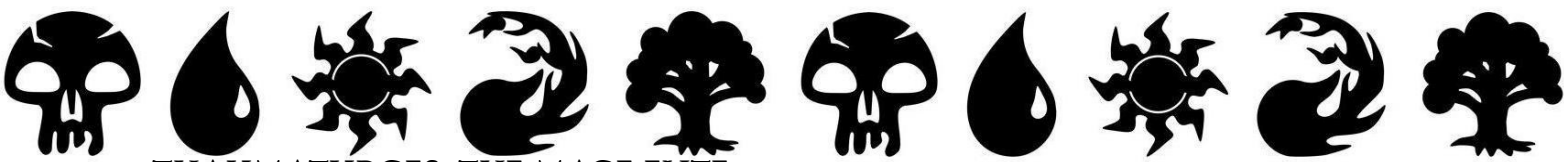
### THE SPELL-TRAINED:

It's said that every Meletian soldier knows at least one spell. That may be an exaggeration that Meletians allow to circulate, but it is true that many Meletian hoplites could be considered low-level taskmages. Spells of healing, endurance augmentation, and battlefield trickery are often taught during soldier training. Those soldiers of the Reverent Army who work magic are known as The Spell-Trained.

*Reverent Army Spellwise Hoplite*







### THAUMATURGES, THE MAGE ELITE:

Weaving magic is a time-honored tradition in Meletis; magic is seen as one of the greatest arts an artisan can master. The most accomplished mages are known as thaumaturges ("wonder workers"). Many Meletian mages received training at the **Dekatia**, including many thaumaturges, but one is not truly considered a thaumaturge until one has received a reward or other positive omen from the gods. For example, a mage might be considered a thaumaturge when Heliad, god of the sun, grants her a spear of sunlight, or when she is granted a wild creative vision by Keranos, god of storms.

### THE STONEWISE:

Meletis is a polis of industry and building. Stonewise thaumaturges specialize in magic that erects and restores buildings and other such edifices. Stonewise mages are crucial to the Reverent Army when creating inland military outposts and fortifying entrenched positions.

### FORMALISTS:

The Æther is of particular interest to Meletian scholars, and many study its use in magic. Some believe that the Æther is the realm of abstract entities, such as numbers, concepts, and theories. Some formalists study magics that allow them to cause objects to disappear from physical reality. They say they are "perfecting" real, necessarily flawed, concrete objects by transferring them to the realm of perfect, abstract entities. Formalists think very highly of themselves and their education; wilder, more feral humans, satyrs, and centaurs think they're all a bunch of lunatics and crackpots.

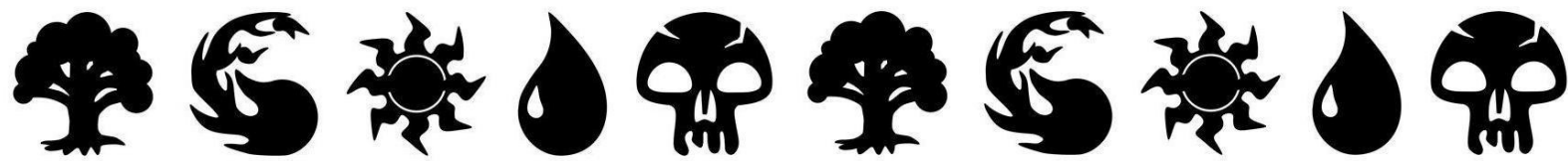
### PHILOSOPHERS & THE TWELVE

Meletis is world renowned as the center of philosophical thought. Philosophers have special status here; they are often attended by servants so that they might spend more of their time debating, thinking, and teaching. The Twelve, a council of philosophers, serves as the ruling body of Meletis. The Twelve are currently headed by **Perisophia**. Although philosophers of Meletis are undoubtedly great thinkers and rhetoricians, they are also incredibly elitist, classist, and privileged – facts that make many poorer Meletians and foreigners despise them.

*Perisophia, giving a philosophical discourse*







## NON-HUMANS IN MELETIS

Tritons can survive for a while on land, and a few tritons make their home in the coastal city of Meletis. Some serve as lookouts and tower-keepers who watch the shores, warning Meletians of attacks by krakens, archons, or other monsters. Others attend the baths or even instruct students as adjunct philosophers at the Dekatia.

Many Pheres Band centaurs are hostile to Meletians, but Meletis officially maintains a fragile peace with the Laggona Band. Some smaller centaur tribes have established a profitable trade with the polis. Meletian officials even designate two holidays during the year, making allowances for the overlap with certain centaur celebrations. In accordance with the peace, Meletian outposts generally allow smaller centaur bands to move across their surveyed lands, but some Meletian soldiers aren't happy about it.

### *Meletian Humans*



## IMPORTANT FIGURES & LEGENDARY PERSONALITIES OF MELETIS

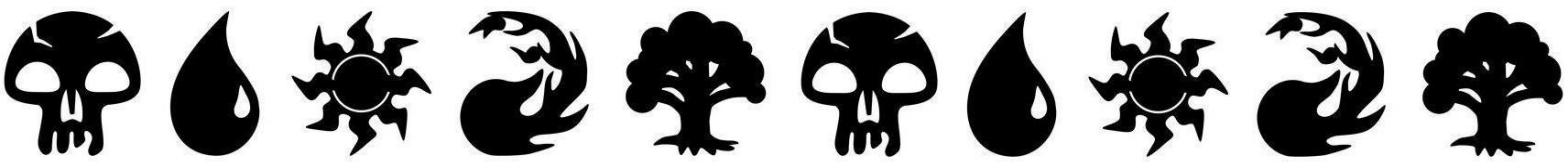
### PERISOPHIA, THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER:

The most learned living philosopher of Meletis is Perisophia, whose skills at logic, rhetoric, and mind magic are so formidable that she is the match for any debater in any forum. Perisophia currently rules as the most senior member of the Twelve.

### THRASIOS, THE TRITON HERO:

Only a handful of tritons live among the humans of Meletis. The most famous is Thrasios, an accomplished warrior who believes he bears the divine sanction of Thassa, god of the sea. Meletians saved Thrasios's family from a pack of marauding minotaurs, so he now fights for the honor of Meletis. His prowess in battle is said to be miraculous; no blow ever seems to land on him.





### **HYPATIA OF THE WINGED HORSE:**

Hypatia was trained as a grange-mage in a Meletian temple to Karametra but found that her calling was on the field of battle. She took up the sword and shield of the Meletian army and showed great promise fighting off threats to the city. During one battle, she was wounded on a high plateau overlooking Meletis. She saw a pegasus herd flying overhead and said a silent prayer. A pegasus flew down and allowed her to climb onto its back, saving her life. The two of them became inseparable, and to this day fight in the service of Meletis.

*Hypatia & Pegasus*



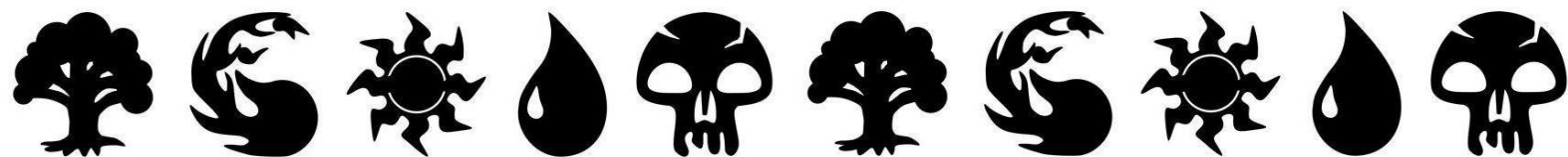
### **MEDOMAI, THE WANDERING ORACLE:**

The wise and ancient sphinx Medomai is not a consistent resident of Meletis. Instead, he appears a few times a year during moments of historical import, such as religious ceremonies, coronations, and the onset of wars. Medomai has been part of Meletis's history for many decades, seeming to possess cryptic knowledge of future events. His arrival is not necessarily seen as a good omen, as his predictions can be dire.

*Medomai, the Wandering Oracle*







## HISTORY OF MELETIS – AGNOMAKHOS, THE ARCHON TYRANT

Meletians know that the area that is now their city-state was once ruled by an archon— a hooded warlord who rode a great flying beast— called Agnomakhos. Agnomakhos ruled with an iron fist for centuries, apparently immortal, outliving the generations of leonin that he used as his soldiers and personal guard. Agnomakhos aggressively expanded his empire during his reign, spreading it as far as the forests to the north and the mountains to the east, imposing merciless order over the wilds wherever he went.

The legend goes that the god Ephara granted magic to the humans to help them overthrow Agnomakhos, cast out the leonin, and free Meletis from tyranny. The humans who were victorious over Agnomakhos founded the enlightened polis of Meletis from the wreckage of Agnomakhos's empire. To this day, the leonin remain detached from Meletis and uninterested in trade or dialogue.

## AKROS



### CULTURE

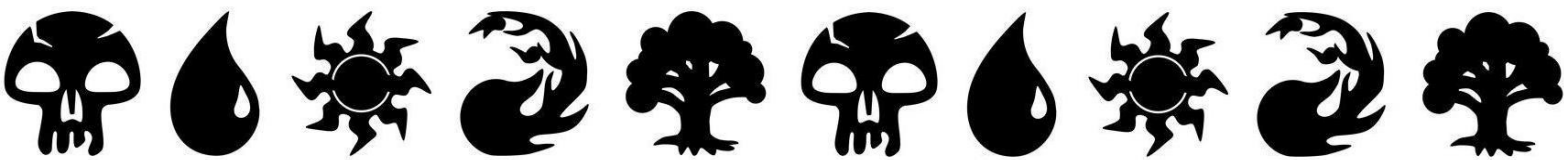
The mountain realms that surround the mighty polis of Akros serve as shield between its holdings and the rest of Theros. The Akroans are half-mythical even within their own time. They are known to be the most feared warriors of Theros. They have lived and died by the spear in the name of countless kings, hardening their armies generation after generation by fostering a culture that revolves around perfecting the body and the mind for combat.

The central fortress and seat of Akroan power is the **Kolophon**, a huge, many-tiered structure perched on a cliff. Within its thick stone walls the Akroan people worship, train, and conduct their lives. At the innermost part of the Kolophon rests the hall of the Akroan king. Here, scouts and couriers give reports from outposts that stretch to the furthest reaches of the Akroan territories.

*Akros, the Kolophon*







The current king of Akros is a fierce warrior named **Anax**. The current, equally fierce queen is **Cymede**. Anax is a burly man in his late 40s, once a follower of Iroas. In his later years he has turned to Purphoros as he steers his people through the creation of a small empire. This shift is reflected in the trend in art now seen from Akroan artisans. Swords and armor are now decorated. Pottery, clothing, wall paintings, and weaving show ancient Akroan patterns and symbolism handed down for generations. To his people, Anax is a great leader to be followed without question. To other poleis, he is known as a skilled tactician and heartless killer.

Cymede worships Keranos primarily. She is a skilled warrior but a more powerful seer. Having herself been struck by lightning and given a glimpse of the future, Cymede is seen by some as being partly responsible for her husband's effectiveness as king. Cymede is beginning to become aware of the power of godly creatures such as nymphs. She has seen abstract glimpses of their power and feels the gods are bestowing gifts on the faithful. Because of this, the cult of Keranos is gaining a foothold in the Kolophon. Cymede has even had a special temple built on a distant mountain summit where the storms are particularly severe. During the storm season, she visits there, meditating on a silver platform.

There are a few temples in Akros dedicated to the major gods — mainly Purphoros and Iroas — but due to the Stratian duties of many Akroans, the major temples are located afield, in mountainous places.

## OUTPOSTS & TERRITORIES

Scattered throughout Akros are several outposts—staging grounds for Stratians to venture out and seek plunder or patrol for monsters and invaders. These include:

### ONE-EYED PASS:



This outpost has been carefully chosen by the Stratians for a particular reason: the abundance of cyclopes. They funnel their enemies into the pass, using the cyclopes who aggressively defend their territory as a gauntlet of certain death.

### PHARAGAX ABYSS & BRIDGE:



The Stratians defend this huge stone bridge with all their might against any who would enter Akros without the king's permission. Some claim that the massive chasm it spans leads to the Underworld, and that foul creatures emerge from its depths.

### THE TITAN'S STAIRS:



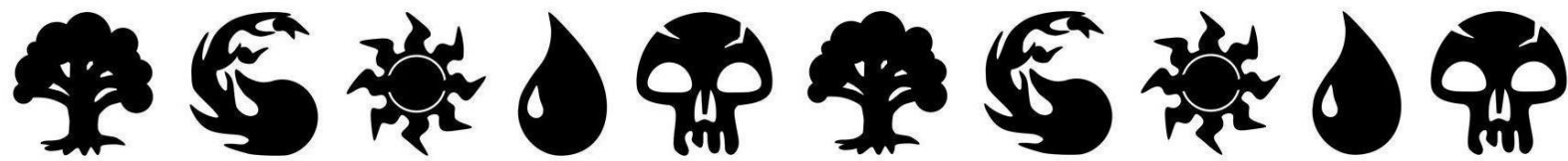
This is a natural access through the granite cliffs that protect Akros. Stratians have guarded this strange formation for centuries and have used it as a staging ground for invading the lowlands.

### PHOBEROS:



Phoberos is the badlands of the Akroan realm. It is the line of demarcation between relative safety and certain peril. Encampments of Stratians are always stationed here on the border between the human realm and those beyond. They're relieved every month or so by a fresh cadre of troops, who inevitably hear terrifying stories of marauding leonin, flesh-eating minotaurs, and firebreathing dragons. The borderland between Phoberos and Akros is long and rugged, and the Stratians are kept in wandering groups, patrolling the whole of the Akroan frontier.





## SOCIETAL ROLES & SPECIALIZATIONS

### STRATIANS:

Although the center of Akroan culture is located within the great walls of the Kolophon, the main body of the population consists of wandering bands of warriors that make up the Akroan army: the Stratians. These warrior bands are entirely self sufficient, relying on hunting and plunder to feed their numbers and to train the young soldiers in the field. The Stratians are tasked with scouring the countryside for monsters that have strayed from their domains seeking to attack merchants and traders who travel the roads between poleis.

### ALAMON ("WANDERERS"):

These are the forces that are always on the move about the borders of the kingdom of Akros. They are tough and rugged warriors armed for speed, so they can move and strike without warning. They are the forces who find new domains for conquering.

### LUKOS ("WOLVES"):

These are the elite of the Akroan forces called in after the Alamon have spotted a target and have begun attacking it in their guerrilla style of assault. The Lukos march in and take over the village, capturing slaves to haul plunder back to the Kolophon.

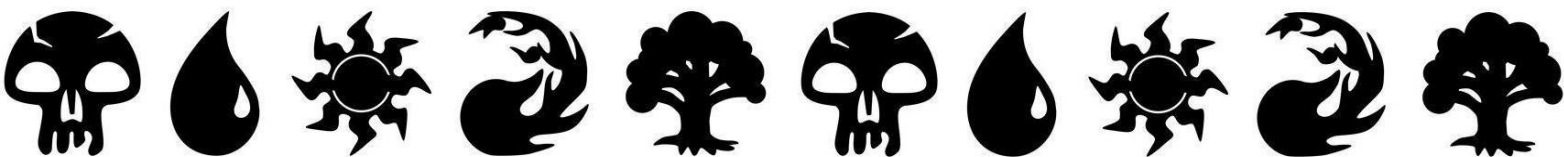
### OROMAI ("WATCHERS"):

These are the forces that never stray far from the Kolophon, protecting the fortress from invaders. The Oromai also keep the large population of serfs in check while the main part of the Akroan army is away for long periods of time. They serve not only to protect the king and queen, but also to police the populace and root out any potential demagogues and subversives.

*Akroan Stratians*







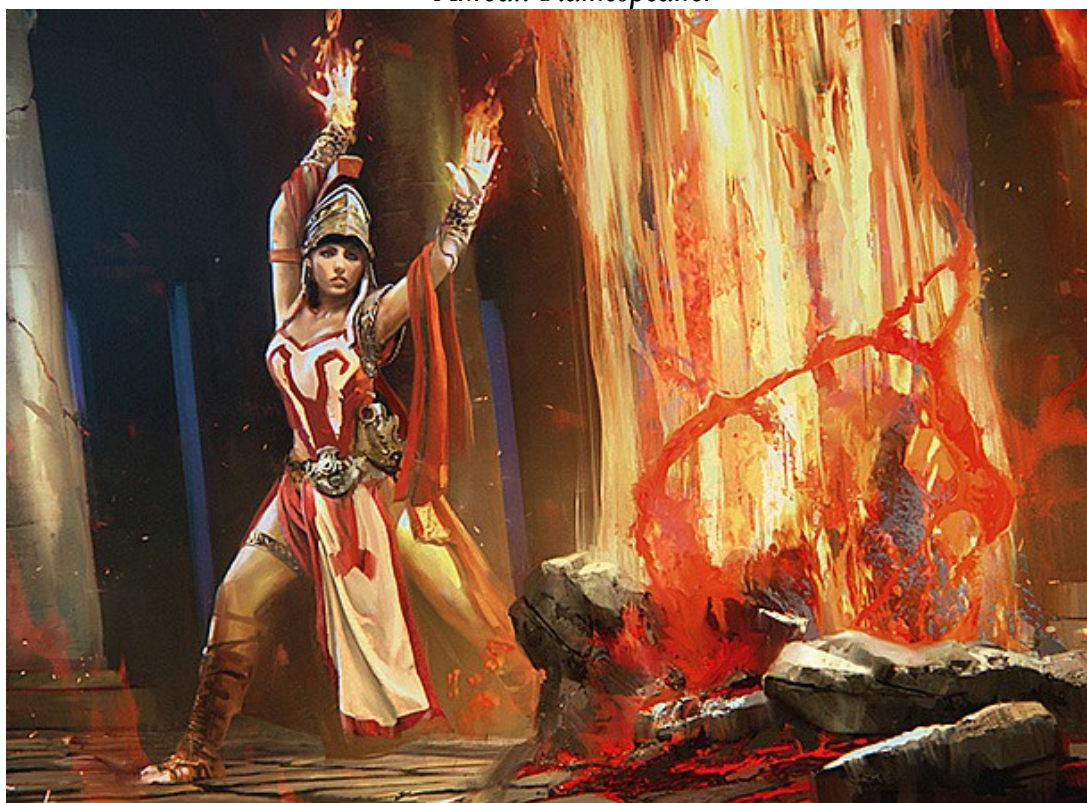
### FLAMESPEAKERS:

These shamans of Purphoros worship strange eidolons said to inhabit the volcanoes and cracks in the great mountains of Akros. The Flamespeakers still have the ear and belief of many modern Akroans, and some make the pilgrimage far up into the mountains to be blessed by Flamespeakers or to receive prophecy from them.

### ANDROPHAGES ("MAN-EATERS"):

During training, every Stratian is warned about the threat of Mogis, because it is during battle when the god can slip into the hearts of warriors, making them crave ever more blood and pain. All Akroans know how Mogis can take a small flame of revenge and grow it into an inferno of madness. Those who are overcome by such desires flee the polis to find enclaves of those who worship Mogis. Not all who worship the twisted god are cannibals, but all crave rage and bloodlust — and some do crave human flesh as the minotaurs do.

*Akroan Flamespeaker*

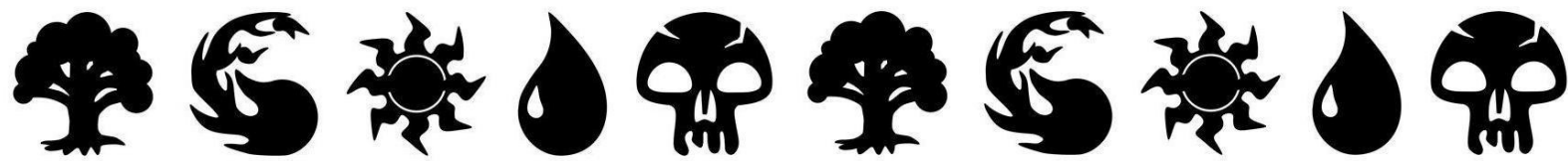


### THE IROAN GAMES

Because of their warrior culture and discipline, the god Iroas favors the Akroans. In the god's honor, the Akroans host a series of athletic competitions each year known as The Iroan Games. These games are held every year in the withering heat of the summer to weed out pretenders and to allow only the most hardy of athletes to prevail. The central podium where athletes receive awards is also the main temple of Iroas on Theros. Prominent events in the Games include javelin, discus, wrestling, **pankration** – a mixed martial arts event of boxing and wrestling, various running events, archery contests, swimming competitions, and so forth. Three recent competitors in the Games have risen to prominence. They are:







### ARISSA:

A hero of recent Iroan games is a woman called Arissa. She comes from a little-known village and defeated all comers in javelin at the games, but that is not what gained her immortality. In a fit of jealousy, Mogis sent a black, bat-like creature to snatch the young son of an Akroan hero during the ceremony following the games. As it flew into the air with the child, Arissa threw her javelin farther than humanly possible, skewering the bat-thing; she caught the babe and returned it safe and sound.

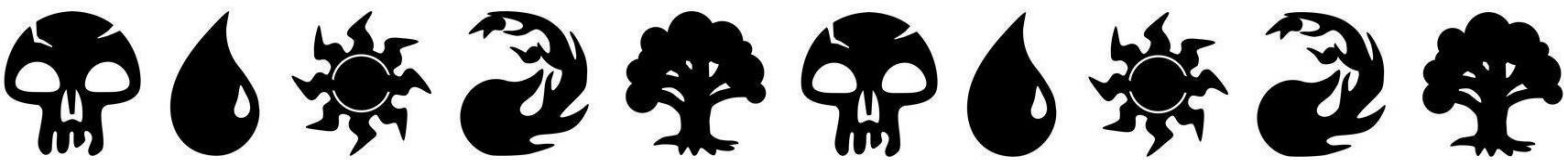
### LANATHOS:

The Akroan wrestler Lanathos, after defeating all combatants in the arena, took on a wild Akroan bull for a true challenge, pinning the beast after a day-long struggle.

### NYMOSYNE:

A warrior from Setessa, Nymosyne was renowned for her prowess at pankration (a hybrid of boxing and wrestling). Legend has it that in the middle of a match, a cyclops raided the grounds of the games, attacking spectators and combatants. Nymosyne jumped out of the arena and, after a brief clash, snapped the monster's neck.



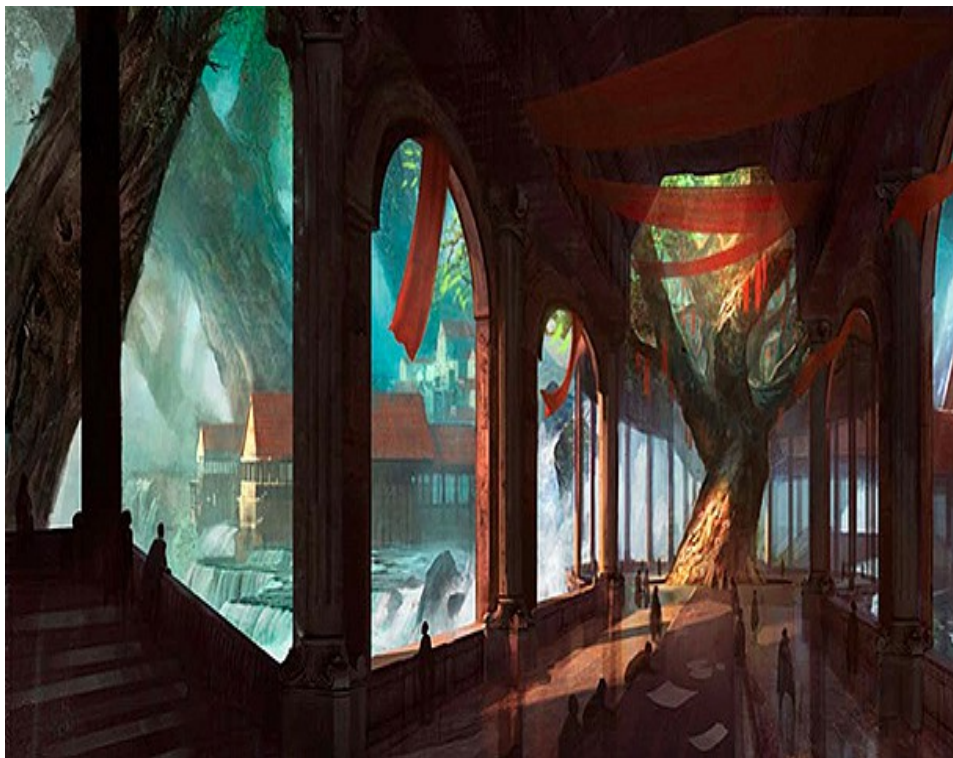


## SETESSA CULTURE



*Setessa*

From a bird's-eye view, Setessa's layout resembles the rings of a tree, which radiate outward from the Temple of Karametra at its heart. Swaths of forest alternate with family dwellings and other civic structures. Setessa encompasses a sprawling area on the border between the Nistos Forest and the open chaparral. Roads are winding and narrow and usually not wide enough to accommodate a cart. Rope bridges provide easy foot travel through the wild spaces.



To the south, Setessa is bordered by a high ridge whose inhabitants have carved it into "shelves" for terrace farming and orchards, as well as digging warren-like dwellings inside the ridge itself. These defensible locations are used for protection when the city is attacked. Secret tunnels lead out into the forest.

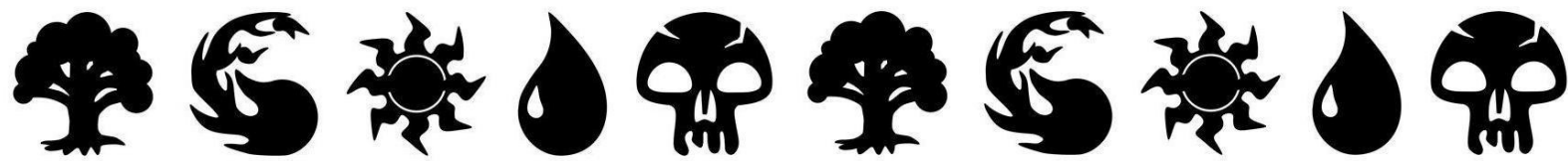
Setessa's outermost ring is a dense circle of trees and vegetation that functions as a natural wall against outsiders. The trees have platforms for archers and the wall is constantly guarded. Karametra's warrior-priests monitor who enters and exits the city. Although the people of Setessa value community and treat each other as family, outsiders are not readily welcomed.

Setessa is populated mainly by women and children. There is no marriage and property is held communally. Ancestors are traced matrilineally. For the inhabitants of Setessa, the welfare of children is paramount. Karametra, the polis's patron, is the god of orphans (among other things), and abandoned children are brought from outside to be raised by the polis. The children of Setessa are called **arkulli** ("little bears"—singular *arkullos*), and are held in the highest esteem by the entire community. Children are welcomed everywhere, from the temple to the training grounds.

There are men in Setessa, but most live near the Amatrophon, a menagerie at the edge of the polis. At a young age, men are encouraged to "peregrinate," a practice of wandering the world and seeking a home beyond that of their mothers. It is believed that women become heroes through martial training, while men become heroes by finding their own way in the world. In this way, and through many of its other customs, Setessa is thoroughly, though not brutally, matriarchal.







## Setessan Humans



## KELEMA VEIL & THE NEXUSES

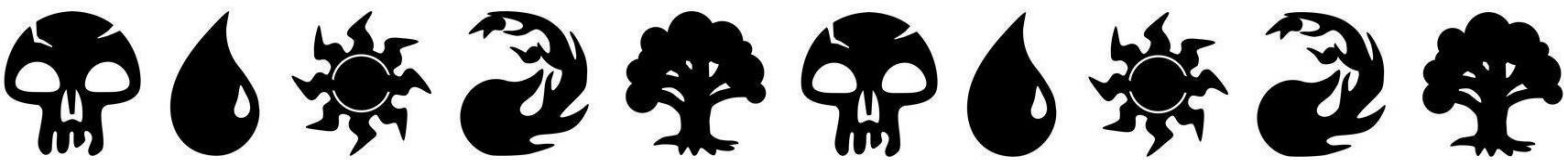
Setessa has a nexus honoring each of Nylea's seasons and the accompanying Karametran planting rituals. There are no temples to other gods in Setessa, but offerings to any god may be placed at these holy sites. Under each nexus is a starfield — a vision of Nyx.

As conduits to the various gods, the nexuses are a source of enchantment magic in this region. This phenomenon is called the Kelema Veil. In Setessa, oracles can decipher the Kelema Veil. It has been described as a misty starfield that flows across the land. Inside the starfield are images that resemble constellations. These tell stories of the gods and can be used to predict the future.

### SPRING NEXUS:

The Spring Nexus is in a lush garden behind Karametra's temple. Its form is that of an arch made of vines and flowers that never fade. The Spring Nexus is the source of the magic of abundance, summoning, and healing. Although they have a tumultuous relationship, Karametra speaks of Nylea as her sister, and encourages people to leave offerings for her here.





### SUMMER NEXUS:

The Summer Nexus is in an ancient olive grove near the Bassara Tower. Dark green leaves form a canopy over the grove, and it is a favorite resting spot for the many animals who wander freely through the polis. Summer is seen a time of strength, and the Summer Nexus is a source of increased power. Nylea is worshipped here, as is Iroas before the Iroan Games.

### AUTUMN NEXUS:

The Autumn Nexus is in a golden-apple orchard along the Southern Ridge. A natural basalt arch leads into a narrow cave where a fire is kept burning at all times. The people of Setessa believe that it is Purphoros's fire that warms the earth enough for the autumn harvest, so people give offerings in hopes of an autumn bounty. The Setessan warriors pay homage here to the Twins of War, Iroas and Mogis; they see honor and fear as equal parts in victory.

### WINTER NEXUS:

Winter is seen as a time of sleep and death. The Winter Nexus is at the far edge of Setessa in an old lion's den believed to predate the founding of Setessa. The ancient den is in a small rocky cave below a burial mound. The cave is said to lead down to the Underworld itself, and the smell of blood and decay hangs in the air. Here, people make offerings to Pharika and to Erebos in hopes of sparing themselves grief or pain in old age, or in remembrance of someone who now walks in the Underworld.

## WATCHTOWERS & FORTS

There are four watchtowers in Setessa. Each is named for an animal, and each has a regiment of Setessan warriors attached to it.

### LEINA TOWER (LION):

This limestone tower stands near the Temple to Karametra at the heart of Setessa and houses the polis's protectors. They fight with double-edged axes and provide most of the martial training for the arkulli. Their leader is **Anthousa**, who also leads Karametra's Council of Warriors. She is considered the god's closest advisor and *de facto* ruler of the city when the god is not present, which is much of the time.

### HYRAX TOWER (FALCON):

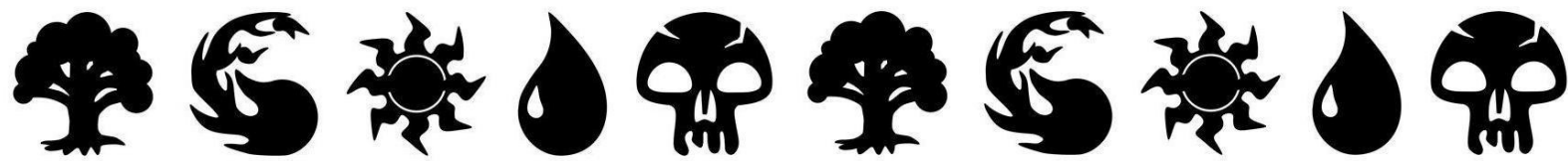
This wooden tower stands on the ridge along Setessa's southern border. It is occupied by falconers and scouts. Their leader is **Phaedra**, a former orphan from Meletis raised in Setessa. She is only nineteen years old, but her skills in battle earned her a place of leadership.

### BASSARA TOWER (FOX):

The regiment stationed in this tower protects the Nistos Forest and watches for interlopers who enter without Nylea's permission. Bassara warriors are welcomed by Nylea and spend extended periods of time living among the ancient trees. During their training, they focus on archery and guerrilla warfare. Their leader is **Niketa**, a woman in her fifties who now spends most of her time in Setessa. She supervises archery training for the arkulli.







### OPHIS TOWER (SERPENT):

This tower is hidden in a wild space near the temple to Karametra. It serves as a base for wandering warriors and spies who travel incognito to gather information for the Council of Warriors. They search out routes for "peregrinations," including sympathetic households who will mentor young men at the beginning of their journeys. Ophis warriors also seek lost and abandoned children and bring them back to Setessa. Their leader is **Kallias**, who was sold into slavery as a child. She lost an eye and several fingers before she was rescued by the Ophis and brought to Setessa.

*Ophis Tower Warriors*

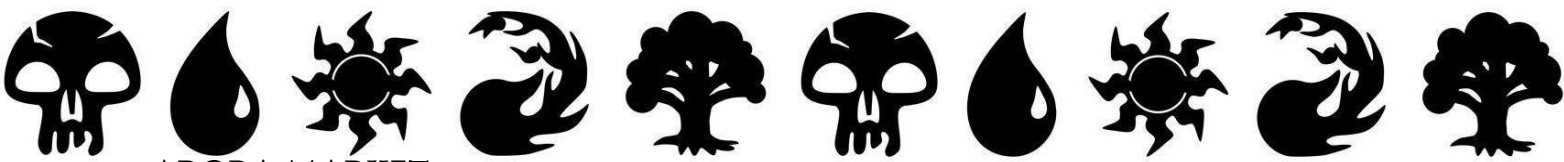


### NOTABLE PLACES IN SETESSA

#### AMATROPHON:

The Amatrophon is a safe haven and training ground for a diverse range of animals. These creatures occupy an honored place in society. The Amatrophon encompasses a large region of forest and grassland at the edge of Setessa. There are extensive stables for horses and combat training grounds for warriors and animals alike. Karametra values animals as natural protectors. Pegasuses, wolves, and even lions are all trained to accompany warriors in combat. They also wander freely through the polis, serving as free-ranging guards. Men who remain in Setessa take care of the animals and help train horses, falcons, and other animals.





### ABORA MARKET:

The Abora Market is a giant, open-air market just inside the main gate of Setessa. Outsiders are allowed to use the market on certain days but are prohibited from roaming the polis at large. For Setessans, the market is open every day, year round. Currency is not common, although foreign sellers sometimes accept coin. For Setessans, all commerce is done in trade. Fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, fish, meat, nuts, seeds, and spices are all plentiful. There is a permanent "raptor hall," where falcons and other trained raptors are sold to merchants from other cities. Trained Setessan raptors are considered the best in Theros.

### SETESSAN HISTORY – ANTHOUSA AND THE COLOSSUS

After a storm shook Setessa, taking down centuries-old trees, Karametra chastised Keranos for his selfishness. Furious at her impudence, Keranos sent a storm of truly epic proportions to destroy the crops, snap the branches from the young trees, and force the people to huddle indoors.

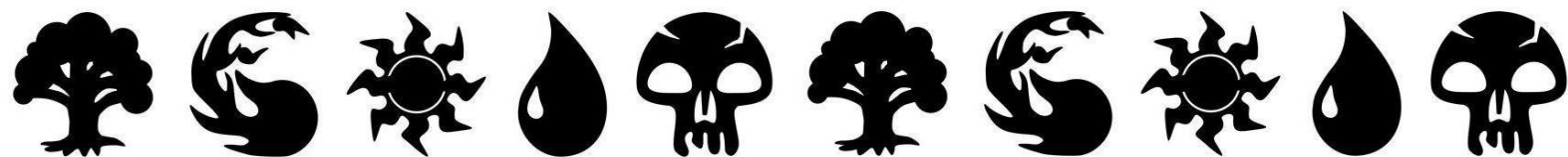
Young Anthousa had been hunting and was caught in the deluge. Knowing she was Karametra's favorite, Keranos sent a bolt of lightning down from Nyx. It struck the grave of a titan, buried for countless centuries under the earth. The ground rose before Anthousa, uprooting trees as frightened birds fled into the stormy sky. An earth-titan, easily thirty feet tall, rose from his primordial resting place. Grabbing the trunk of a broken tree, he swung wildly at the young warrior. Anthousa narrowly escaped, and the titan gave chase. Nylea saw the scars on the face of her forest and raised vines to clutch at the titan's legs. Turning back, Anthousa saw the titan stumble. Quick as a deer, she used the vines to scale up to his shoulder as he struggled to get free. Anthousa sought the soft flesh just below the titan's ear.

Calling out to Karametra, she drove her dagger deep into the flesh. Hearing her daughter's plea, Karametra enchanted Anthousa, giving her the preternatural strength needed to cleave the titan's head from his body. The severed head fell to the ground, where it sunk halfway into storm-soaked earth. There the skull lies to this day, the home of foxes that shelter in the great cave of his mouth.

*Anthousa and the Colossus*







# IMPORTANT PLACES IN THEROS

Although the human poleis are certainly the largest, most civilized, and most populated areas of Theros, they are by no means the most important. Outside the city-states, Theros is rich beautiful landforms, necropolises, enchanted isles, and cyclops-infested mountain passes. This chapter seeks to elaborate on some of these fascinating features of Theros.

## RETURNED NECROPOLISES: ASPHODEL & ODUNOS

The Returned refer to their two small city-states as necropolises ("Dead-Cities") mostly without irony — they are occupied by the dead, after all. Smaller, more isolated settlements exist, and some of the Returned eschew civilization altogether, occupying caves or simply wandering. The two necropolises, roughly equal in size, are called **Asphodel** and **Odunos**. Each has a kind of overarching characteristic: Asphodel's is despondence; Odunos's is anger.

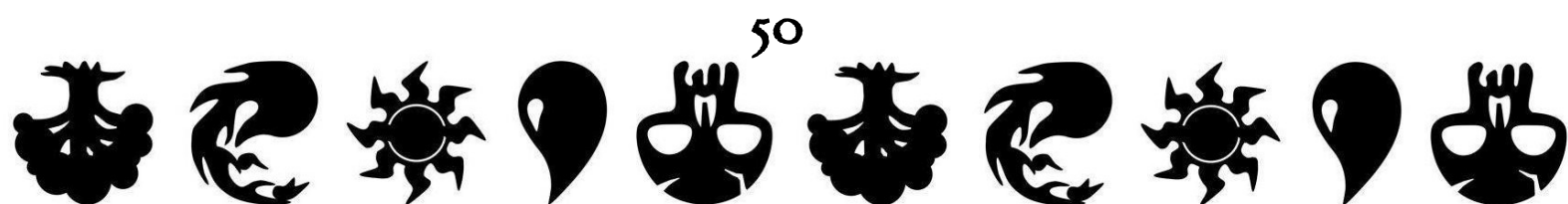
### ASPHODEL

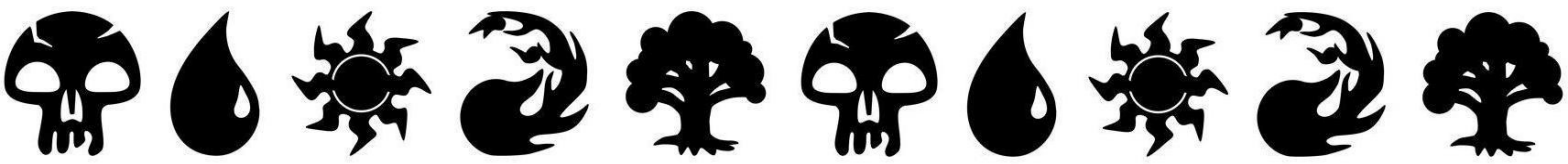
The polis of Asphodel, situated in a sprawling, inland, coastal marsh, is home to those Returned who have a deep nostalgia for things they can no longer remember. It is, for the most part, a dull place, although it maintains a guard and an order of mages for defense. Its citizens seek to be left alone, venturing out only when seized by fugues of emotion, or when resources are needed or desired (often for unrecalled reasons). The main sources of conflict in Asphodel are occasional raids on the polis by living beings who have become convinced by their leaders or their gods that the Returned are an abomination to be eliminated. Asphodel is symbolically aligned with Erebos in that its residents accept their fate.

### ODUNOS

This polis stands in contrast to Asphodel. Its citizens tend toward a combination of greedy, violent, and resentful. These Returned have come to envy and/or despise the living and are driven by a desire to deprive them of the joys of life. Odunos raiders strike at any humanoids nearby — leonin, minotaurs, and the humans of Akros and environs. Their raids are small but effective, and almost always nocturnal. Whereas Asphodel's citizens pointlessly amass wealth, Odunos seeks to destroy the wealth of the living (both literal, such as gold, and figurative, such as food, children, and comfort). The Returned of Odunos desire little for themselves beyond water.

The morose hordes of Odunos are led by a brutal warrior-king by the name of **Tymaret**, known to outsiders and the living as the **Murderer King**.

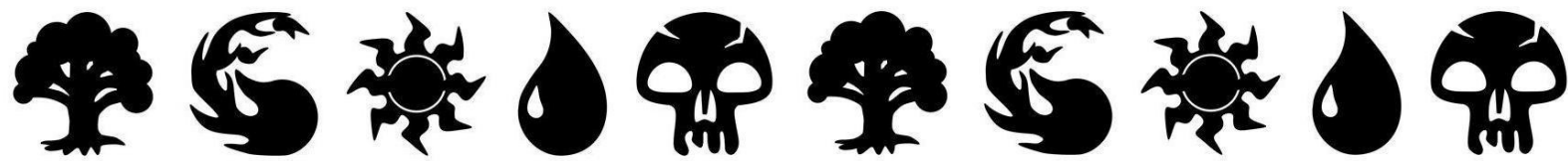




*Tymaret, the Murderer King & the Hordes of Odunos*







## LEONIN DOMAINS: ORESKOS & TETHMOS

### ORESKOS



This central domain of the leonin lies in a rocky river valley in a remote region of Theros. Here, one can see the old influence from when the leonin were ruled from Meletis. In Oreskos, a smattering of human culture remains from their time under the oppression of Agnomakhos, but the leonin are slowly reverting back to their original nature, abandoning the ideology and culture that have been imposed on them throughout their history.

### TETHMOS



This is the primary leonin den, high in the mountains. Leonin in Tethmos train endlessly and are constantly ready. They prepare both for skirmishes against the Akroans intruding in their lands as well as from a culturally ingrained fear that the Meletians will attempt to enslave them again.

## SKOLA VALLEY, HOME OF THE SATYRS



This verdant, highly enchanted valley dotted with copses of trees lies in Theros's chaparral. The satyrs subsist on the magic of the valley to the point that their lives resemble one long party. There are no permanent settlements, and the music of pipes can be heard from dawn until dusk.

## THE DAKRA, ISLES OF ENCHANTMENT



Meletis sits on the Siren Sea, surrounded by a host of small islands called the Dakra. The Dakra are said to have been created when Thassa, god of the sea, felt sorrow that Korinna, ancient queen of the tritons, had been killed by a human's harpoon. Thassa's tears fell onto the sea in the form of an archipelago of misty isles. The Dakra have rarely been settled by humans, as they harbor strange nymphs and fierce monsters, and are enchanted with the magic of the gods.

### ONE-EYED PASS



A mountainous pass within Akroan territory, known for its huge population of cyclopes.

### PHARANGAX CHASM



A huge, gaping abyss, guarded by Akroan Stratians at all times. Said to be the entrance to Erebos's realm, i.e.: the Underworld, out of which all manner of demons and beasts emerge.

### PHOBEROS



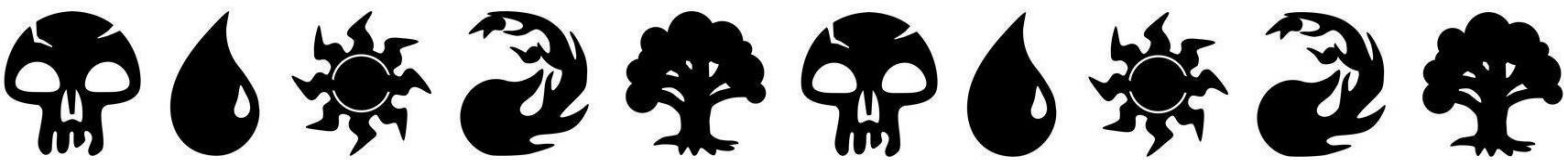
Phoberos is the badlands of the Akroan realm. A dangerous region full of beasts, militant Akroan warriors, marauding leonin, dragons, enraged minotaurs, and cyclopes.

### NISTOS FOREST



Theros's largest woodlands, and widely accepted to be the home of the goddess Nylea's sacred grove. Fecund beyond imagining, and beautiful to behold.





# BEASTS, MONSTERS, & MAGICAL BEINGS OF THEROS

Theros is home to a variety of monstrous creatures and magical entities, any and all of which can appear in a Magic: the Gathering campaign that visits this plane. Following below is a sampling of these creatures.

## ARCHONS

Archons are a relic of Theros's past, a race of mysterious conquerors who soar on the backs of giant winged bulls. Archons once ruled as overlords of huge expanses of Theros, using armies of other races to triumph over their lands. Archons saw themselves as champions of a strict, merciless justice, and ruled with an iron fist. But the age of the archons came to an end. As the archon overlords were toppled one by one, their holdings became the poleis. Individual archons still roam the world, eager to right what they see as the great wrongs perpetrated in this age of Theros.

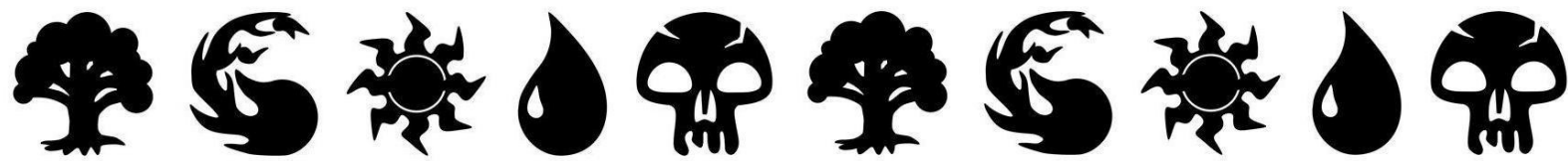


## BASILISKS

Reptilian monsters with a venomous bite and a deadly gaze, basilisks are an unpredictable threat for travelers through remote wilds. They range from a few feet to almost twenty feet long and can move with startling stealth and speed. Despite the dangers in acquiring it, there is a market for basilisk blood. Healers use diluted blood in potions and oracles use it in prophecy rituals. It's said that Pharika hid many secrets in basilisk blood, although most die trying to learn them.





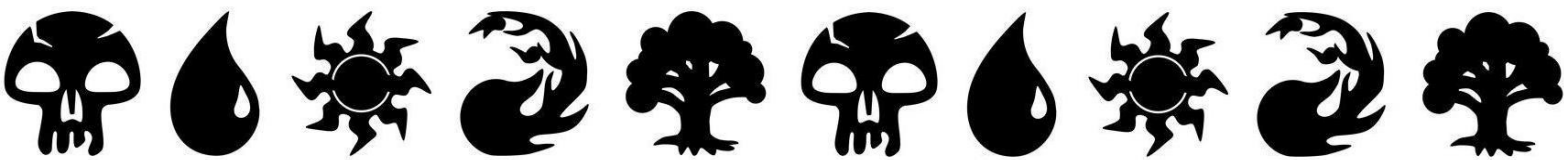


## CATOBLEPASES

A foul, ox-like creature with deadly, toxic breath, the catoblepas is thought to be the result of a curse by the gods. A herder bragged that his livestock was the finest in all of Theros because it had been created by Heliod and Nylea themselves. He grew rich from the lie, and the gods grew angry at the injustice. Heliod convinced Mogis to place a curse on the cattle, transforming them into poisonous, fetid creatures.







## CERBERUS

These fearsome creatures roam the mortal-realm side of the Rivers That Ring the World. Each cerberus is at least four feet tall at the shoulder and has two or three heads. The cerberus have paws like half-molten stone, and they leave seared, smoking tracks as they walk. As a result, the land that borders the first of the Rivers That Ring the World is a blackened, smoldering wasteland that's several hundred meters wide. The nature and origins of the cerberus are unknown. They are not creations of the gods, and they are feared by the living and the dead alike. Because of their boundless hunger for meat, especially that of humanoids, cerberus can be lured away from the riverbank, then set loose on an area.

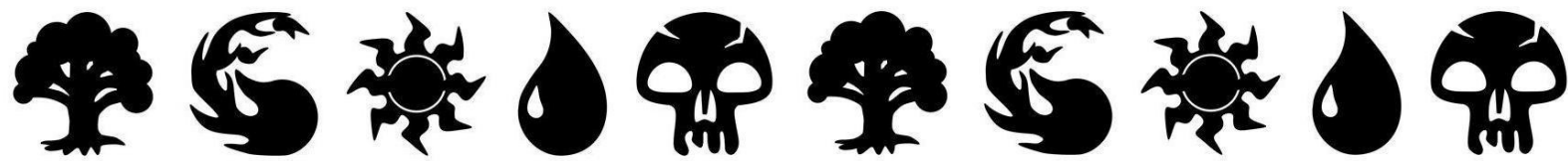


## CHIMERA

These monsters are the product of overambitious magecraft—the fusing of essences from three, four, or even five creatures to create a new and dangerous one. Most of these living amalgams fly, and some breathe fire or possess a deadly gaze or a poisonous bite or sting. Some believe they are the product of Keranos's folly; that he "inspired" a mage with lightning, leaving the mage's mind damaged but impassioned in one stroke. Others believe the secrets to the creation of chimeras come from a long-forgotten polis where magic was wielded too recklessly.







## CYCLOPES

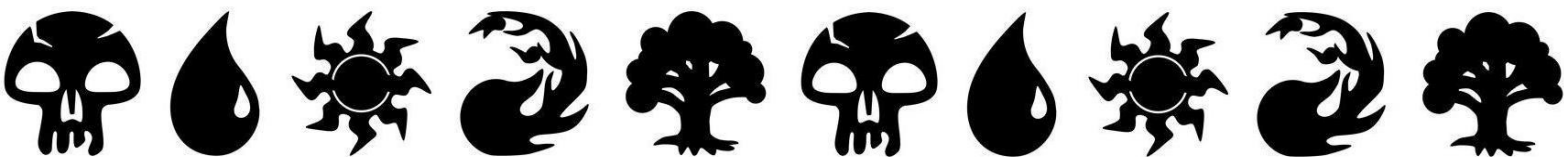
Solitary, belligerent, and relatively stupid, the cyclopes are territorial and feared for their unrelenting aggression and inability to feel pain. Once a cyclops has its eye on you or your village, there's no stopping it. It takes a truly heroic effort to take one down—or a small army of battle-hardened hoplites.



## DEMONS

Some souls in the Underworld come to despise their afterlives, growing more and more hateful over time. The most malicious, the ones whose hate reaches the level of true evil, become demons. The transformation occurs quickly, in an incredibly painful vortex of black-mana energy. Once it is complete, the demon can, with great effort and risk, fly back over the Rivers That Ring the World and return to the realm of mortals. Demons that survive the journey use their "second lives" in a variety of ways. Some take up residence in remote places, causing animals to flee the area and plants to blacken and die. Others wander, finding opportunities to torment the living along the way.





## DRAGONS

On Theros, dragons range from about the size of a monitor lizard to the size of a small kraken. They rule the skies above the highest mountains of Theros, preying on rocs, griffins, and large animals such as boar. The Akroans revere the majesty of the large dragons and fashion their helm crests to resemble a dragon's dorsal crest.

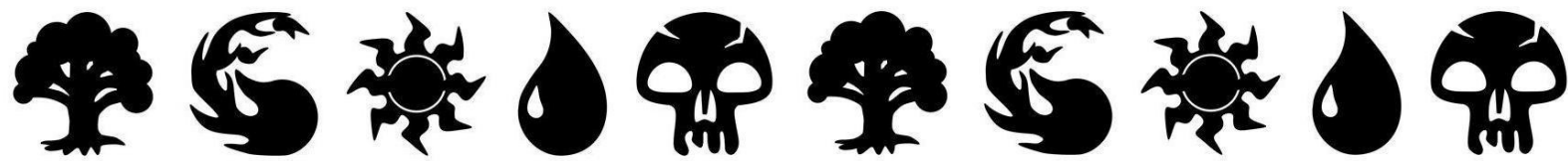


## GIANTS

Theran giants are an ancient race of towering humanoids born from the land itself. They get their strength from the ancient rocks of the hills, the roots of old-growth trees, the surging waters of great rivers, and even the darkness of echoing caverns. Most fearsome of the Theran giants are the weird race known as **Hundred-Handed Ones**, those giants who have a hundred arms and use them to terrific effect.







## GORGONS

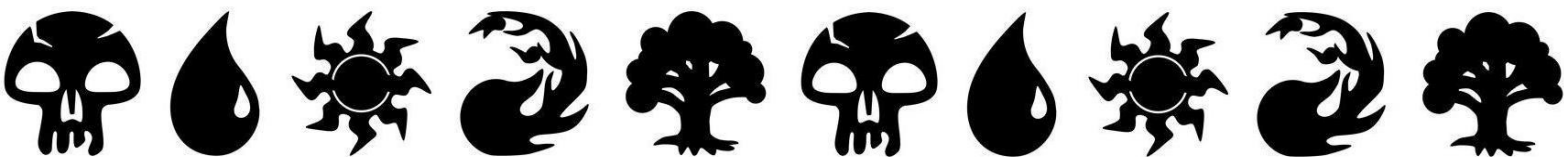
It is not known how many gorgons exist. On occasion, mortals attempt to capture a gorgon in order to force her to tell the secret of immortality. These mortals usually end up as statues, petrified by the gorgon's gaze; only the favor of the gods can turn stone back to flesh. Gorgons take delight in dispensing valuable secrets at the cost of deadly risk, and more than one medicinal breakthrough has come from someone surviving a gorgon's test.



## GRIFFINS

Majestic but fearsome creatures with the bodies of lions and the wings and heads of eagles, griffins are reclusive creatures that live along the borders of Phoberos. They hunt for food in the chaparral, and their keen eyes sense the slightest movement in the scrubland. Wild griffins are ferocious and hunt small humans, killing them with a single blow and carrying them off into their treetop aeries to devour them. Several Meletis hoplites have managed to tame griffins as mounts over the years.





## HARPIES

A harpy is a vicious creature with the head of a woman and the wings and legs of a vulture. Harpies are shrieking buzzards of the badlands and the forests that border them, intent on robbing, harassing, and even killing anyone who enters their territory. They tend to avoid attacking adult humans, preferring to injure them and take their belongings. Their aeries are filled with stolen objects they have no use for.

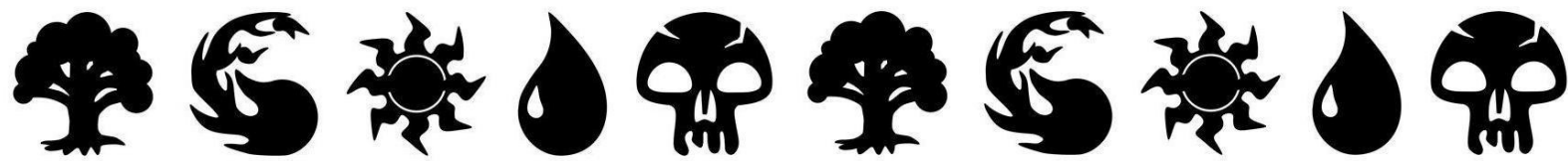


## HYDRAS

What krakens are to the sea and dragons are to the sky, hydras are to the land of Theros. These towering, many-headed monsters have rapid regenerative properties and acidic blood. They can withstand countless attacks, and some even grow stronger if wounded but not killed. Hydras can spend years dormant, but they continue to grow during this time. Great thickets grow over the largest sleeping hydras, hiding them from wanderers. When they awaken, they go on rampages that destroy great swaths of land.







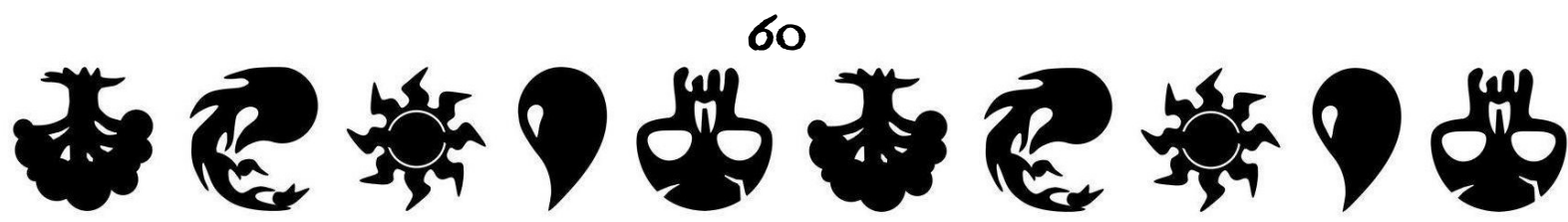
## KRAKENS

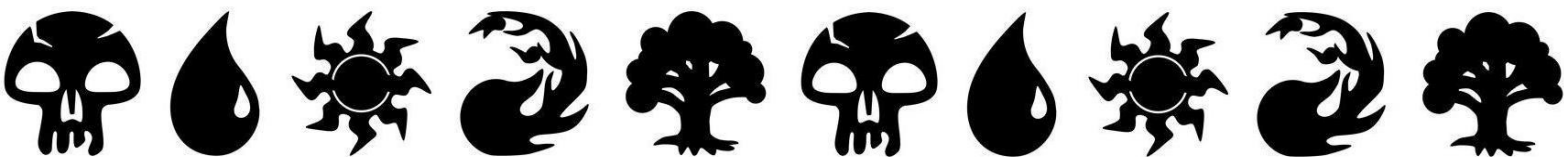
Krakens are fearsome, destructive gargantuans of the sea and the most terrifying entities of Theraan depths. The arrival of a single determined kraken can spell the end of an entire polis, and even casual actions by a kraken can wipe out fleets of ships or decimate fishing grounds. Krakens' destructive power comes not only from their immense size, but also because they seem able to breathe air and can crawl on land, meaning they can create swaths of destruction along the coasts or even deeper inland.



## MANTICORE

These rare creatures live in the far reaches of Theros, beyond leonin lands. A manticore has the body of a lion, a human-like head with many rows of teeth, and a deadly tail. Akroans say each manticore is the reincarnated spirit of a once-great warrior, part of an army slaughtered defending its homeland from archons. The warriors were so full of life and valor that the gods intervened and transformed them into manticores.





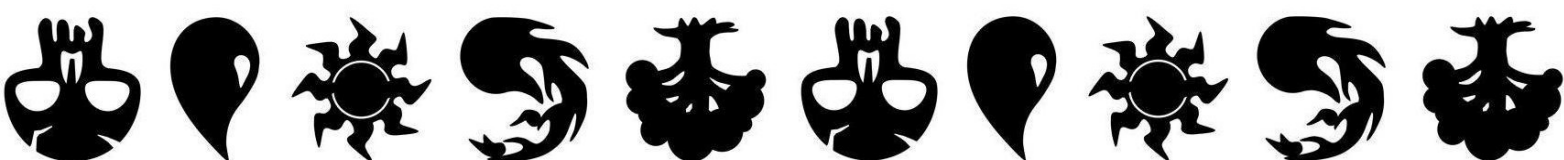
## MINOTAUR

Minotaurs are the barbaric, cave-dwelling raiders of Theros, barely sentient and certainly not sapient. Although they are among Theros's races, for all intents and purposes they are monsters, seeking only mayhem and meat, killing each other when they're not killing humanoid of other races. They have no high objective, no culture to speak of, and only the most rudimentary language. Most are found in the high mountains of Phoberos or Akros. Some have been known to frequent swamps, which has turned Minotaurs will squat in any cave, cavern, or shaft they deem large enough and safe enough. Their lairs are littered with refuse, dung, and the bones of a wide variety of animals and other races, but especially with the bones from their favorite meat: human. their hide and hair black with peat. Only the mightiest and most ferocious of minotaurs can force the herd into compliance. Fights between minotaur alphas can be heard for miles and almost certainly end in a gory death. The victor claims dominance and fealty.

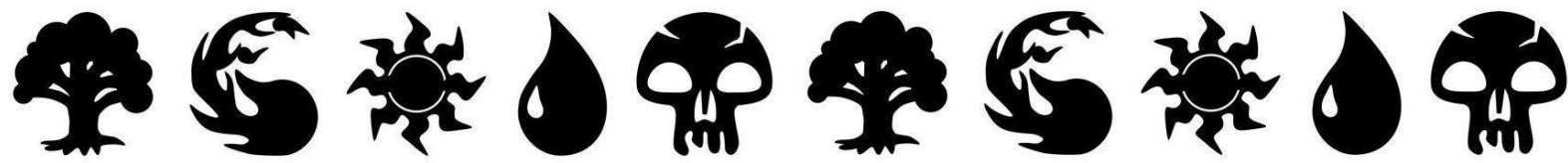


## PHOENIX

Phoenixes make their nests within the craters of volcanoes and are therefore associated with Purphoros. A phoenix lays just one egg during its centuries-long life, at the end of which it plunges itself into the volcano near which it lives. On that day, the egg hatches and a new phoenix is born.





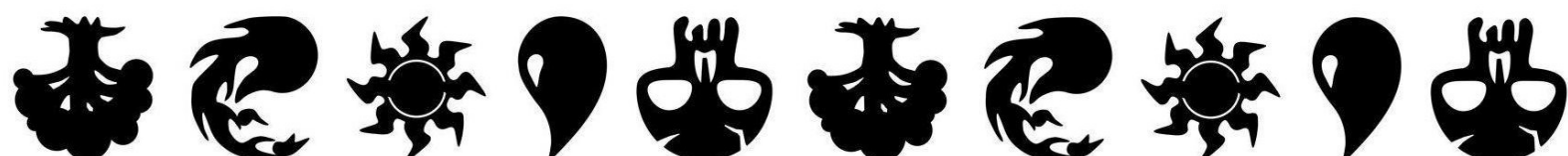


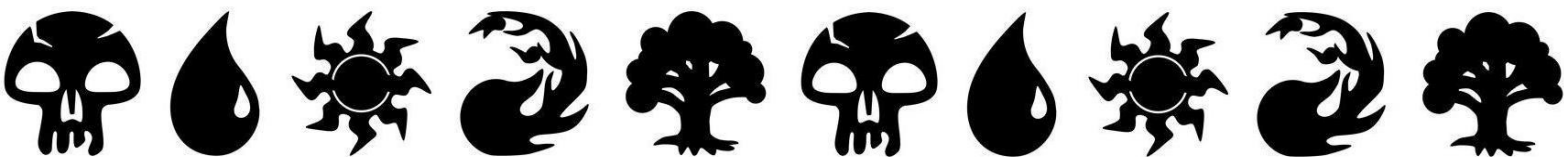
## SIRENS

Sirens are a race of bird-winged humanoids whose enchanting songs and natural illusion magic are the subject of legend. Sirens feed on fish and sea birds primarily; their songs help lure creatures toward them. But sirens feed on humanoid flesh just as happily. The legendary beauty of their song often lures passing sailors, who risk unsafe tides and currents to hear their melodies. Many shipwrecks and drownings are attributed to sirens' songs.

## SPHINXES

Sphinxes are long-lived Theraan monsters of dizzying intellect. Sphinxes do not set out to be enigmatic; their abstract thoughts only seem riddle-like to mortal minds.





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