

Rome: Decline and Fall

Everything in the document is public knowledge and can be read by both players and the DM.

It is 998 AUC (Ab Urbe Condita, years since the founding of Rome) [245 AD in the modern calendar]. The empire struggles with invasion, social collapse and neglect. The nobility of Rome has increasingly turned away from the Olympian gods and towards the easy power granted by demon-kind.

Last year, the current emperor, Marcus Julius Philippus (Philip the Arab), killed the teenage, ineffectual child-emperor Gordian while fighting the dwarves of the East. He has since returned to Rome and to consolidate his power. Already his rival generals are considering their own moves for the throne. As Rome's nobles fight among themselves, the rest of the empire is left to get by as best it can.

History

Prehistory

Scholars believe the world was created from the elemental chaos by ancient gods now long forgotten. It may also be that these ancient gods *became* the world. Only two of these creator gods are now known: Gaea (the earth) and Uranus (the sky). The creator gods were overthrown and destroyed by their own children, the Titans. The current fate of the creator gods is unknown.

The Titans, also known as the Primordials, did not create the world itself, but they populated it with many strange and gargantuan creatures. They reshaped the world to amuse themselves, creating the first great civilizations to worship them. During that time, the known world was divided between two great nations: the lands of the giant-kin in Europe and the empire of the dragon-kings in North Africa and the Middle East.

The leader of the Titans was the god Cronus, also known as father-slayer, he was the one who destroyed the creator-god Uranus. His greatest fear was that his own children would repeat this patricide, so he immediately devoured all children born of his wife Rhea. Only one, the great god Zeus, escaped this fate. He vowed to free his divine siblings and take revenge himself on his father.

The War of the Gods

When the Primordials shaped the world, there were two outer realms they largely ignored: the source of life and the land of death. Zeus fled to life-source, the realm of Arcadia, also known as the Feywild. There he found allies for his war against his father.

The greatest of his allies were the elven-kin, the fey nobles of Arcadia. Zeus convinced the elven races that it was only a matter of time before the Titans turned on Arcadia, and that the elves would have to strike first to save their homes. The elves mustered a powerful army and left Arcadia, never to return.

The elven forces came first to western Europe and fell upon the giant-kin. The elves found allies among the slaves of the giants, the lowly dwarven race. The dwarves were great weapon-crafters and knew many secrets. Once free of the giant-kin, the dwarves used their skills against their former masters.

As the elves and dwarves struggled in Europe, Zeus crept back into the Heavens. He tricked his father Cronus into a deep sleep, sliced open his belly and freed his siblings. This was not enough to finish Cronus, but with the aid of his brothers and sisters, Zeus was able to wage war with the Titans in earnest.

What followed was a long age of destruction and death. Both the Gods and the Titans used every resource they could find in their war. Both sides used horrible beasts to fight for them. Just as the Gods used allies from the source of life, the Titans chose to draw power from the land of death. The servants of the Gods had to learn how to wield the divine light protect themselves from the undead creatures of the land of the dead. This is why all clerics have power against the undead.

On earth, the elves and the dwarves overthrew the giants, driving them out of the world entirely and back into the elemental chaos. They turned next on the dragon-kings of the south, who in their arrogance had ignored the wars in the north. As they came, the elf-dwarf armies freed more slave races of the dragon-kings, so that the size of their army swelled. At last the dragons were also defeated, their numbers scattered and their empire crushed. The two great leaders of the elves and dwarves, Menes and Gilgamesh, swore eternal peace between their races.

In the heavens, the Gods also triumphed over their primordial parents. Apep and Tiamat, the dragon-god allies of the Titans, fell with the empire that worshipped them. The Titans themselves were defeated, and either imprisoned or exiled from the world into the alien darkness of the Far Realms. The world was split, and Arcadia and the Underworld became separate worlds. The Gods took their seat in the heavens, to rule over the world they had won.

The Wars of the Elder Races

At the end of the war, the eladrin (high elves) chose to rule over Egypt while the dwarves settled in the middle east, the land of the fertile crescent. Despite their promises, the eladrin and dwarves soon became rivals. Both races had voracious appetites for trade, the dwarves seeking metal and the eladrin the rare components needed for their magic. The dwarvish military was more powerful, but it was counterbalanced by eladrin magic. Centuries of war erased the good will between these races.

With the long lives of the eladrin, Egypt was stable and timeless. Protected by wizardry and deserts, the eladrin only rarely had to contend with invading armies. The high elves left menial work to lesser servant-races they inherited from the dragons, and themselves grew soft and decadent. Egyptian dynasties rose and fell mainly due to internal intrigue. These civil wars divide Egyptian history into the old, middle and new kingdoms, with two intermediate periods of anarchy.

The dwarves were less unified. The Mesopotamian city-states fought among themselves as well their neighbors. Dwarvish nations rose and fell as different cities and clans gained and lost power. Despite their internal differences, dwarves still saw themselves as one race. They all shared the same gods and a general disdain for non-dwarvish folk.

The goblins of Asia were the other major race in this time period. Goblin hordes periodically swept south into Mesopotamia and overthrew several dwarvish kingdoms. The wolf-riding Hyksos tribe once reached as far as Egypt, taking advantage of the civil wars of the second intermediate period to pillage that kingdom. The greatest nation of the goblin invaders were the Hittites. They established empire in Anatolia that troubled the dwarves and the eladrin for a thousand years.

European Migrations

From the beginning, humans were present in the lands of the elder races, but they were considered a minor race. While the elder races struggled against each other in the Near East, a new group of humans moved out of the East. This migration separated the elves of Europe from the eladrin, and the few European dwarves were either pushed south to join their kin or into the furthest frozen north.

The Celts were one group in this migration, and they moved west into northern Europe. There they met and mingled with the elvish folk that stay in the north after the war of the gods. In time, both groups merged to form a blended half-elvish race. Other human nations pushed into southern Europe. Two of these groups, the Latins and the Greeks, became important in later history. Initially these humans were over-awed by the ancient civilizations of the elves, eladrin and dwarves. Slowly the humans built their own civilizations independent of the elder races.

Centuries later, the migrating humans were followed by the even more barbaric orcs. Orcs eventually settled in Germany and became bitter enemies of the Celts and their elvish allies. This split the humans of Europe between the elf-blooded Celts and their Latin and Greek cousins in south-eastern Europe.

The Rise of Humans

The humans in Greece were isolated from the elder races of the south by the goblinoid Hittites and from their elf-influenced cousins in the north by rampaging orcs. Separated from external influence, these humans were able to forge an independent human civilization for the first time. They adopted the worship of the Olympian gods, honed their skill at war against rival human tribes and even started to develop their own systems of magic.

The Greeks developed most of modern art, philosophy and science. They also formalized the study of magic. Unlike elves, who saw magic as a deeply personal matter, the Greeks organized magic into formal schools, each with an associated philosophy. They began to expand into the Mediterranean, clashing with and even defeating the elder races when they met them, seriously challenging their position of dominance.

As the Greeks traders spread through the East Mediterranean, new cultures gradually gained strength in the West. The Phoenicians, a nation of dwarvish traders, established trading outposts in North Africa to the west of the Egyptian sphere of influence. The greatest of these outposts was the city of Carthage. Dwarvish Carthage soon became a power in its own right, dominating North Africa and spreading into Europe through Hispania (Spain) and Sicily.

In Italy, the human city of Rome emerged as the greatest city of the Latin people. Rome threw off its ruling kings and became a republic. With its powerful legions of citizen-farmers, this republic proved to be an effective form of government. Rome's power gradually spread throughout Italy as it brought the rest of the Latin people under its rule.

The half-elven Celts were also expanding in this period. Their raiding parties struck south, pillaging Rome at one point. One group of Celts reached as far as Anatolia to found the kingdom of Galatia. Clashes with Celtic and orcish warbands forced the human nations of Rome and Macedonia to hone their military skill.

Alexander the Great

The Macedonians were a human kingdom heavily influenced by the Greeks. The Macedonians adopted Greek religion, philosophy and military strategy. Combined with human strength and flexibility, this strategy proved very effective. Under their king Phillip, Macedonia conquered the Greek peninsula. Phillip's son, Alexander, was indoctrinated in Greek lore by his tutor, Aristotle, but his ambitions were even greater than those of his father.

By this time, the dwarves of Persia and the eladrin of Egypt had become tired and decadent nations, exhausted by endless wars. When Alexander succeeded his father, the Macedonians exploded across the Near East. The combination of human magic and strength of arms was unstoppable. Within 10

years, all the nations of the elder races were under Macedonian rule. Only the fact that Alexander died young prevented further human expansion.

The Macedonian generals divided Alexander's conquests into the Alexandrian successor states of Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleucid Persia and the original Macedonia kingdom. Over the centuries the dwarves were able to reassert some of their strength, throwing off human rule in Persia. The weakened dwarves soon fell under the heels a new group of goblinoid invaders, the Parthians. For their part, the eladrin slowly assimilated their conquerors in Egypt, eventually regaining power.

One legacy of Alexander's conquest is the influence of Greek culture. Greek philosophy was adopted by much of the world. The Greek schools of wizardry made magic more widely available. The gods of became known by both their local and Greek names, leading to a greater uniformity of religion. The city of Rome was especially influenced by Greek thought.

Roman Expansion

In the west, Rome finished its conquest of Italy and turned to its greatest rival, the dwarven nation of Carthage. Carthage had a powerful navy, but Rome's land forces were generally superior. The two cities fought the first Punic War over control of the island of Sicily. After some initial reverses, the Romans were victorious.

Several decades later, Carthage sought vengeance in the Second Punic War, led by the great dwarven general Hannibal. Hannibal rampaged across Italy for over a decade, defeating every army raised against him. Finally, the Romans found a general who could match him. Scipio stopped Hannibal in Italy, and launched a counter-invasion in Africa. Scipio met and defeated Hannibal at the battle of Zama, earning himself the name Africanus.

Rome took control of the old Carthagian territories in Hispania and southern Gaul. Rome then turned against the last remnant of Alexander's empire, the human kingdom Macedonia, which had made the mistake of allying with Carthage. Rome went on to conquer Greece, then finished off Carthage in third Punic War. Without any particular plan or design, Rome found itself in control of an empire.

Rome treated its provinces differently from previous empires. Instead of simply looting their defeated enemies of everything worthwhile, they improved their provinces by building roads and cities. They encouraged cooperation from conquered nobility by allowing some local rule, while establishing colonies of retired legionnaires to further cement Roman control. Many peoples found themselves more prosperous under Roman rule than before. The Romans built their empire to endure.

About this time, the goblinoid nation of Parthia began to expand in the East, eventually absorbing all of Persia's territory and expelling the remnants of the Macedonian Seleucid dynasty. Parthia would eventually become Rome's biggest rival in the East. In Egypt, the last of the Macedonian Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt intermarried with locals, allowing the eladrin to regain control of Egypt, but the ruling eladrin were wary of the encroaching Roman armies.

The Fall of the Republic

The Roman Republic was originally a city-state of farmer-soldiers, and was not structured to rule foreign provinces. The wealth from Roman conquests flowed into the pockets of provincial governors and generals instead of the city treasury. Generals rewarded their legions directly, stealing their loyalty. Roman politics became dominated by a few powerful men, and their struggles plunged the nation into decades of civil war.

The general Julius Caesar eventually triumphed over his rivals. He became sole ruler of Rome, but his arrogance enraged the old aristocracy. Fearing that he would abolish the republic, a group of senators lead by Brutus assassinated Julius Caesar. Caesar's lieutenants, Mark Antony and Octavian Caesar, defeated the forces of the rebellious senators.

Octavian gave his ally Antony the hand of his sister Julia in marriage, strengthening their connections. Antony took control of Rome's more prosperous eastern provinces, while Octavian ruled the west. Antony was the older and more respected by the Senate, but Octavian was ambitious and tireless. Octavian worked slowly to erode Antony's power.

To defend her kingdom from the advancing Romans, the Egyptian pharaoh Cleopatra seduced Antony. This foreign influence over Antony made the Senate lean more towards Octavian. Cleopatra cajoled Antony into a war against the goblins of Parthia, which he lost. After Antony left his wife Julia for Cleopatra, Octavian marched against Antony with the support of the Senate and the Roman people.

Without Roman allies, Antony could not stand against Octavian. The Egyptian army and navy were crushed at the battle of Actium. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide to avoid capture, and Egypt fell under Roman control.

Octavian was less openly dictatorial than Julius Caesar. The Roman people, tired of war, tolerated his rule as long as he paid lip service to Republican traditions. By the end of his long reign, the power and position of the emperor was well established, and the Roman Republic was effectively over. The Roman Senate awarded Octavian the name Augustus. Octavian's two names, Caesar and Augustus, effectively became the title of future emperors.

The Early Emperors

The first few emperors who followed Octavian did not have his talents. His adopted son Tiberius reluctantly became emperor after Octavian's death. Tiberius was gruff and unsociable, eventually retiring to the island of Capri. He largely left the rule of the empire to his subordinates. Tiberius designated the capricious Caligula as his successor, perhaps to spite the Senate.

As Caligula's excesses grew wilder, it became clear that he was insane. Caligula worshipped demons and practiced dark magic. He abused the Senators and their wives, killing on a whim. After a short reign, Caligula was killed by his own guards, and replaced by the more tractable Claudius.

Claudius had been dismissed as an imbecile by his family because of his stuttering, but he proved to be reasonably intelligent and a capable emperor. His greatest weakness was his taste in women. Both his wives betrayed him; the second, Agrippina, had him killed so that her son Nero could be emperor.

Nero proved to be almost as bad as Caligula. The ungrateful man eventually executed his mother and his wife (the daughter of Claudius), going on to enjoy a decadent lifestyle without any concern for others. After a fire wiped out much of Rome, Nero built a huge estate, the Golden House, right in the center of the city. This complex became the imperial palace of future rulers. The Roman legions eventually revolted, and Nero committed suicide.

By this point, all of the relatives and descendants of Julius Caesar were dead, and the Julian dynasty came to an end. The empire plunged again into civil war, in what was called the "year of four Emperors". One general would briefly gain power, only to be overthrown by the next. Eventually the eastern general Vespasian prevailed, establishing the short-lived Flavian dynasty.

Vespasian brought stability back to the empire. He was followed by his sons after his death, the first emperor whose own children his heirs (a rarity in Roman history). His first son, Titus, ruled well but briefly. His second son, Domitian, probably poisoned his brother, and was cut from the same mold as

Caligula and Nero. As his reign continued, Domitian became increasingly paranoid, until he saw plots everywhere. After several purges and executions, one group of senators arranged his death to save themselves, making Domitian's paranoia a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The “Good” Emperors

The Senate appointed the elderly Nerva to succeed Domitian. His only major achievement in his short reign was to choose the half-elven general Trajan as his successor. Trajan was from the province of Hispania, the first emperor born outside the city of Rome. He fought a series of wars to rebuild Rome's tattered reputation. The wealth from his conquests returned the empire to peace and plenty.

Trajan was followed by his distant (and human) cousin Hadrian. Hadrian was unpopular with the Senate, but loved by the people. He consolidated Trajan's conquests, building walls and forts to secure the empire's boundaries. Hadrian gave Roman citizenship to the upper classes throughout the empire, and the balance of power shift from Italy to the provinces, another reason why the Senate hated him.

The childless Hadrian had difficulty finding an heir. His first choice, Ceionius Commodus, died soon after his selection. Hadrian then choose Aurelius Antoninus as his next successor, on the condition that this middle-aged senator adopt two sons: Hadrian's nephew, the 17 year old Marcus Verus, and the child of Ceioniu Commodus, the 7 year old Lucius.

Antoninus worked more closely with the Senate. He was awarded the name “Pius” for his religious devotion. The two decades of his reign were largely peaceful. Antoninus Pius clearly favored the older of his adopted sons, now named Marcus Aurelius. Marcus Aurelius married Faustina, the daughter of the Antoninus Pius, and was given more responsibility as he grew older. For the last decade of Antoninus's life, Marcus was practically co-emperor. Lucius, on the other hand, was neglected.

In 914 AUB, Antoninus Pius died of old age. Marcus Aurelius followed the wishes of Hadrian, appointing his brother Lucius as co-emperor. To cement the alliance, Lucius was given Marcus's old family name Verus and was betrothed to Lucilla, the 12 year old daughter of Marcus Aurelius.

Marcus was worthy the trust of honor of Hadrian, but Lucius wasn't up to the job. Lucius was sent to rule the east while Marcus managed Rome and the West. Rome was soon embroiled in another exhausting war with the goblinoid Parthians. After 5 years of war, Lucius eked out a meager victory, but there were rampant rumors that he turned to dark powers to accomplish this.

Lucius returned to Rome, where he and Marcus were left to fight against the expansionist orcs of Germany. Lucius died in those wars, made worse by the ravages of plague. Marcus struggled to hold the empire together and died a broken man in 933 AUB. His final decision was his worst. Rather than following the trend of the last four emperors by adopting a capable Roman noble as his successor, he left the empire to his son Commodus.

The Decline of Rome

Commodus proved even worse than his uncle Lucius. He “solved” the problem of the Orcs by absorbing the less savage half-orc tribes into the legions, pitting the orcish people against each other. Unlike his uncle, Commodus's reliance of demonic power was an open secret. From this time forward, demonic influence spread through the Roman nobility. Through this regular interaction with demon-kind, the half-demonic Tieflings became increasingly common among Roman nobility.

Commodus's paranoia grew, and he began to execute Roman senators that might be a threat to him. His brutal fear became another self-fulfilling prophecy when a cabal a senators killed the emperor in 946

AUB. It is notable that those senators used a demonic assassin to accomplish this foul deed. Without a clear heir, the empire was plunged into civil war. The few surviving advisors of Marcus tried to find a competent successor, but they were overwhelmed as ambitious generals made their own bids for power. This struggle was known as the “year of five emperors”, though it actually lasted four years.

Four years later the general Septimus Severus put down the last of his rivals and became sole emperor. Publicly he spoke of reform and a return to the old ways, making Septimus was popular with the Roman people. Privately, however, he was forced to rely on the same demonic allies as Commodus in order to take the throne. He struggled to raise capable successors from his own sons, but this was a lost cause in his demon-tainted household.

Septimus was died in the year 964 AUB, the last emperor to die without violence. His sons immediately began fight each other. The elder Caracalla had the younger Geta killed by demonic assassins. Caracalla extended Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire, but this gesture was simply an excuse to raise taxes to a crushing level.

Caracalla was eventually assassinated, as were all of the dozen or so emperors that followed him. Each emperor was overthrown by ambitious legionnaires or senators, who were in turn killed by their successors. Half these emperors were distant relatives of Septimus Severus, put up by the legions to give them a veneer of legitimacy. The rest were ambitious, low-born military men who new realized that throne could be won by the sword. None held power for more than 5 years. At times competing claims to the throne meant different parts of the empire were ruled by different emperors.

When the half-orc general Maximinus Thrax took the throne a decade ago (988 AUB), it was too much for even the demon-tainted Senate to bear. Fearing his legions, the Senate publicly acknowledged his claim to the throne, but Thrax didn’t even bother to travel to Rome to accept it. Different groups of Senators plotted against Thrax, but they were rivals with each other as well. The empire was again embroiled again in civil war. Thrax was initially able to put down the rebellions, but as his own forces dwindled, he was eventually defeated. His surviving rivals fought over the remains. This conflict was known as the “year of six emperors”.

The Senate and the army compromised on the child-emperor Gordian in 991 AUB, but he was merely a puppet. In East, the weak and ineffectual goblinoid empire of Parthia has recently been replaced by a new and vigorous Persia under the rule of the dwarvish Sassanid dynasty. The dwarves had no compunction against warring against demon-tainted Rome. With demonic aid, Rome has able to hold off the dwarven armies for a time, but just last year the legions suffered a terrible defeat in the East.

The ambitious Praetorian Prefect, Marcus Julius Philippus (Philip the Arab), took this opportunity to kill and replace the teenage Gordian. He then eked out a victory against the Persians and peace treaty with the dwarven king Shapur. Though low-born, he has returned to Rome to curry favor among the senate. They have accepted from now, but ambitious generals throughout the empire are weighing their own chances for the throne.

After five decades of civil war, the empire is a shambles. The legions are full of barbarians. To pay off the army, the emperors have raised taxes to a crushing level. They have debased the silver coinage to the point where it is nearly worthless. The roads are falling apart and internal trade is grinding to a halt. With the legions focused inward, barbaric orcs and goblin raid deep into the empire without fear of retribution. The worship of the Olympian gods continues among the common folk, but much of the nobility of the empire openly consorts with demons.

Unless some might heroes intervene, the civilized world will soon fall into ruin.

Timeline

Dates AUB (Ab Urbe Condita; After the founding of Rome. Add 753 years to get the BC/AD date)

- -: Creation of the world from elemental chaos by Gaea and Uranus.
- -: Overthrow of the creator gods by their children, the Titans, also known as the Primordials.
- -: The Titans shape the world to their liking, guarding against their own children, the Olympians.
- -8000: End of the ice age. History begins.
- -6500: Earliest towns and agriculture. The giant-kin rule in Europe.
- -4500: The rise of the dragon kingdom in the Egypt and Mesopotamia.
- -2600: The father of the gods, Zeus, seeks out elven allies in Arcadia.
- -2500: The war of the gods. Elves invade Europe.
- -2400: Elves overthrow the giant-kin and free the dwarves. Zeus frees his siblings.
- -2300: Elves and dwarves overthrow the ancient dragon-lords Apep and Tiamat. The Olympian gods overthrow the Titans, imprisoning or exiling their parents.
- -2298: Foundation of eladrin Egypt and dwarvish Sumerian city-states.
- -2000: Slow migration of humans into Europe. Gradual mingling of northern elves with the Celts.
- -1600: Foundation of the dwarvish Akkadian empire and first eladrin-dwarf wars.
- -1450: Akkadian empire overrun by goblinoid Hittites and falls. The goblins build their first empire.
- -1430: Egypt collapses into civil wars (the first intermediate period).
- -1281: Egyptian civil wars ended by Mentuhotep (the middle kingdom).
- -1250: Dwarvish Amorites drive Hittites into Asia Minor and re-found their nation.
- -1100: Germanic orcs appear in Europe for the first time, separating the half-elve Celts from their human cousins in Italy and Greece.
- -1000: Hittites and nomadic Hyksos goblinoids begin wars against Egypt and Amorites.
- -950: Wolf-riding Hyksos pillage northern Egypt, which falls to anarchy (second intermediate period).
- -850: The dwarvish Amorites defeated by Hittites, dwarves split back to small city-states.
- -805: Pharaoh Ahmose reunites Egypt (new kingdom).
- -750: Taking advantage of dwarvish disunity in Mesopotamia, Egypt expand into Near East.
- -700: First independent human civilization appears in Greece. Greeks conquer Crete.
- -675: Foundation of Athens and Thebes.
- -650: Beginning of heroic age in Greece.
- -596: Akhenaton tries to found monotheistic worship of Aten, interrupting Egyptian expansion.
- -590: Dwarvish kingdom of Assyria founded.
- -580: Akhenaton overthrown by priests and expansion renewed under Seti.
- -525: Beginning of the reign of pharaoh Ramesses the Great.

- -505: Stalemate between Ramesses and the goblinoid Hittites at Kadesh.
- -465: Trojan war between human tribes in south-eastern Europe (until -456).
- -458: End of reign of Ramesses the Great, and gradually waning of Egyptian power.
- -430: Rampage of human barbarians. Goblinoid Hittites collapse, end of heroic age in Greece.
- -300: Dwarvish Assyria defeats and absorbs dwarvish Aramaeans and Chaldaens.
- -200: Wars between Egypt and Assyria for dominance of the Near East.
- -100: Human Greeks and dwarvish Phoenician begin exploring and colonizing the Mediterranean.
- -60: Founding of Carthage by Phoenicians.
- -22: First Olympic Games.
- 1: Founding of Rome.
- 32: Dwarvish Assyrian kingdom increasingly brutal and horrific under the demon-influenced Sargon.
- 53: Egypt defeated by Assyria; all its Middle Eastern dependencies are lost.
- 100: Goblinoid Medes and Scythians press on Assyria.
- 128: The weakened Assyria overthrow by more enlightened dwarfs of Babylon.
- 166: Teachings of the dwarf Zoroaster renews worship of the Olympian gods among the dwarves.
- 194: Ascension of Cyrus, who overthrows Babylon and founds the dwarvish Persian empire.
- 200: Dwarvish Carthaginians expand across North Africa and into Hispania.
- 230: Darius expands Persian Empire and dwarvish rule into India and Asia Minor.
- 245: Expulsion of the kings of Rome and the foundation of the human Roman Republic.
- 272: Dwarves of Carthage invades Sicily but fails to conquer the whole island.
- 273: Xerxes, son of Darius, leads dwarvish Persia to invade Greece but is stopped by human armies.
- 295: Civil wars among humans in Greece between Athens and Sparta.
- 350: Slow degeneration of dwarvish Persia begins.
- 354: Socrates takes poison.
- 363: Rome sacked by half-elf Celts from Gaul.
- 368: Plato founds the Academy, the first wizard school.
- 382: Greek civil wars end.
- 394: Philip become ruler of Macedonia, a human kingdom north of Greece, and begins to expand.
- 410: The Greek Aristotle tutors Alexander, Philip's son.
- 415: Philip finishes his conquest of Greece.
- 417: Philip dies. Alexander becomes king of Macedonia and founds the first human empire.
- 418: Aristotle founds the Lyceum, the second wizard school and rival of Plato's Academy.
- 420: Alexander defeats the dwarvish Persians.
- 422: Alexander conquers Egypt and the eladrin.

- 430: Alexander dies at Babylon, followed by civil war among the Macedonians.
- 446: Epicurus founds Ho Kepos (the Garden), another wizard school.
- 450: Zeno founds the Stoic school, the last of the modern wizard schools.
- 451: Foundation of the Alexandrian successor states, Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleucid Persia and Macedonia.
- 463: Rome conquers central Italy.
- 483: Rome conquers southern Italy.
- 489: First Punic War between the expanding humans of Rome and the dwarves of Carthage.
- 500: The goblinoid Parthians conquer the eastern half of Seleucid Persia. Some dwarves of Persia regain their independence.
- 505: Through interbreeding, the Ptolemaic dynasty become Egyptianized and half-eladrin. The eladrin slowly return to power in Egypt.
- 512: First Punic War ends, Rome controls Sicily.
- 515: Expansion of half-elves from Gaul across Europe and into Asia Minor, founding Galatia.
- 520: Spread of wizard schools beyond Greece.
- 524: Rome conquers Illyrian coast.
- 528: Rome defeats the army of invading half-elves from Gaul.
- 530: Gallic migrations cease.
- 535: Second Punic War; the dwarven general Hannibal invades Italy.
- 539: The human king Philip V of Macedonia allies with Carthage against Rome.
- 551: The Roman general Scipio Africanus defeats Hannibal at the battle of Zama.
- 556: Rome defeats Philip V of Macedonia; Greece reverts to independent city-states.
- 560: Rome begins expanding into southern Gaul and Hispania.
- 580: Wizard schools expelled from Rome as heretical.
- 582: In the Middle East, Goblinoid Parthia declares war on Seleucid Persia.
- 593: Seleucid armies are unable to defeat Parthia, and Seleucid Persia retracts further. More dwarves fall under goblin rule, though a few small kingdoms remain independent.
- 600: The Near East and Anatolia dissolves into many kingdoms.
- 602: Rome accepts wizardry and prepares to use it against Carthage.
- 607: Third Punic war begins. First use of war-magic in Roman legions.
- 608: Rome annexes rebellious Greece and Macedonia.
- 610: Third Punic War ends, Carthage razed to the ground.
- 612: Parthia expands, founding a new goblinoid empire ruling over humans and dwarves in the East.
- 617: Wizard schools established in Rome.
- 620: Roman tribune Tiberius Gracchus attempts land reforms but is assassinated.

- 624: Goblinoid Parthia defeats the remnants the Seleucids and consolidates its empire.
- 632: Gaius Gracchus attempts another reform but is put down with much bloodshed.
- 640: Orcish tribes from Germany begin rampage across Europe.
- 648: Roman legions annihilated by orcs.
- 651: Marius reforms legions and defeats the orcs.
- 655: Ptolemaic Egypt becomes a Roman protectorate. Eladrin power again wanes.
- 661: Rome, represented by the general Sulla, meets Parthia, represented by the goblin ambassador Orobaze, for the first time. The Euphrates is set as the boundaries of their spheres of influence.
- 663: Civil war between Rome and the rest of Italy.
- 664: Rome grants citizenship to all Italians. Some Italian kingdoms switch sides.
- 665: Rome defeats remaining Italian forces in their civil war, consolidating their rule.
- 667: Civil war between supporters of Marius and Sulla, with Sulla victorious.
- 668: Sulla goes to the east to battle Mithridates of Pontus, a minor dwarvish kingdom.
- 669: Marius takes over Rome in the absence of Sulla, but dies of old age.
- 670: Sulla returns to Rome and becomes dictator, an early precedent for the Roman empire.
- 674: Sulla retires and soon dies. The Roman republic is nominally restored, but Rome is actually controlled by a few powerful men.
- 680: Sparticus leads slave rebellion, put down in 682 by Crassus.
- 693: First triumvirate in Rome: Pompey, Crassus and Julius Caesar.
- 695: Julius Caesar begins conquest of the half-elves of northern Gaul.
- 700: Army of Parthian goblins defeats Roman legion under Crassus; Crassus slain.
- 701: Civil disorder in Rome, Pompey becomes sole Consul and put down revolts.
- 704: The Senate, influenced by Pompey, orders Julius Caesar to disband his legions. He invades instead.
- 705: Pompey defeated by Julius Caesar in Greece. Pompey flees to Egypt and is killed by assassins.
- 706: Julius Caesar dallies with eladrin Cleopatra in Egypt. He returns to Rome and becomes dictator.
- 707: Julius Caesar assassinated, but the Roman Republic is not restored.
- 710: Caesar's lieutenants, Marcus Antony, Octavian and Lepidus form second triumvirate.
- 711: Marcus Antony and Octavian defeat Julius Caesar's assassins Brutus and Cassius.
- 712: Marcus Antony marries Octavian's sister Julia to cement their alliance.
- 713: Marcus Antony campaigns the east, Octavian in the west, Lepidus holds Rome.
- 717: Lepidus grabs for power but is put down by Octavian.
- 718: Rome goes to war in the east with Parthia. Mark Antony suffers disasters and loses popularity.
- 720: Marcus Antony falls in love with the eladrin Cleopatra and repudiates Julia.
- 722: Senate strips Marcus Antony of power and Octavian goes to war with Egypt.

- 723: Octavian defeats Egyptian armies; Marcus Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide.
- 726: Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian becomes sole ruler of Rome and the first emperor. He is renamed Augustus.
- 730: Augustus receives tribunician (veto) power and consolidates his position.
- 733: Peace treaty between Rome and the goblins of Parthia.
- 762: Varus loses three legions to orcs in Germany, ending Roman expansion in that region.
- 767: Augustus dies after 40 years of rule and Tiberius becomes emperor.
- 779: Tiberius withdraws to the island of Capri. Power devolves to the Praetorian Prefect Sejanus.
- 784: Sejanus falls from grace and is executed. Tiberius increasingly paranoid and tyrannical.
- 790: Tiberius dies and is succeeded by his insane nephew Caligula.
- 792: Caligula delves into dark magic and demon-worship.
- 794: Caligula murdered by his guards. His uncle Claudius succeeds him.
- 796: Roman legions conquer Britain at the order of Claudius.
- 801: Claudius's wife Messalina plots against him and is executed. He marries Agrippina.
- 806: Claudius's son-in-law Nero marries his daughter Octavia.
- 807: Claudius is poisoned by his wife Agrippina. His son-in-law Nero succeeds him.
- 812: Nero has his mother Agrippina put to death.
- 815: Nero divorces Octavia and has her put to death. He marries Poppaea Sabina.
- 817: Fire in Rome. Nero fiddles.
- 818: Conspiracy against Nero uncovered. Many deaths, including Poppaea.
- 819: Dwarvish Hebrew revolt against Rome in Judea.
- 821: Roman legions revolt. Nero kills himself.
- 822: The year of four emperors. Civil war. Galba, Otho and Vitellus rise and fall in quick succession. Vespasian finally triumphs.
- 826: Judean revolt crushed. Temple in Jerusalem destroyed. Diaspora of the dwarvish Hebrew begins.
- 832: Vespasian dies. He is succeeded by his son Titus. Eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- 834: Titus dies. His brother Domitian emperor becomes emperor.
- 840: Domitian's reign becomes increasingly brutal, recalling the reigns of Caligula and Nero.
- 849: Domitian assassinated by his own guards. The elderly Nerva is appointed emperor by the Senate. Nerva quickly appoints the vigorous half-elf Trajan of Hispania to succeed him.
- 851: Nerva dies and Trajan becomes the first emperor born outside of Rome.
- 854: Trajan raises legions for war against Dacia across the Danube.
- 859: Trajan conquers the half-orcs of Dacia.
- 865: Trajan attacks the goblins of Parthia.
- 868: Trajan captures Parthian capital of Ctesiphon. He carves out new provinces.

- 870: Trajan dies, appointing the human Hadrian his successor. Hadrian abandons Parthian conquests.
- 874: Hadrian visits Britain and orders construction of Hadrian wall.
- 883: Revolt against Rome in by the dwarves of Palestine.
- 887: Palestinian revolt is crushed. Diaspora continues as more dwarves disperse through the empire.
- 891: Hadrian appoints Antoninus his successor and soon dies. The reign of Antoninus is exceptionally peaceful.
- 892: Antoninus awarded the name Pius by the senate for winning honor for the gods and Hadrian.
- 914: Antoninus Pius dies. Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus become co-emperors.
- 915: Renewed war against goblinoid Parthia.
- 919: Lucius defeats the Parthians, possibly with demonic aid. Returning soldiers bring plague to the empire.
- 920: Orcish Marcomanni and Quadi tribes invade empire from Germany.
- 922: Lucius Verus dies in Altinum in northern Italy while returning from orcish war.
- 928: Marcus Aurelius finally defeats the orcs. Both sides are exhausted by war and plague.
- 933: Marcus Aurelius dies. His son Commodus takes the throne, breaking the chain of good emperors
- 938: Commodus openly summons demons to renew Roman strength. He fills the legions with partially civilized half-orcs from Dacia and Gaul, turning them against the Germanic orcs.
- 942: Commodus sees plots everywhere and begins assassinating his “enemies”.
- 946: The year of five emperors. Commodus is murdered by Roman senators. Civil war ensues.
- 950: The Roman general Septimus Severus defeats his last opponent and becomes emperor.
- 951: Septimus Severus launches wars conquest against the Germanic orcs and Parthian goblins. He quietly relies on the same demons as Commodus.
- 964: Septimus Severus dies. His sons Caracalla and Geta become co-emperors, but Caracalla soon has Geta killed by a demon.
- 967: Caracalla grants Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire, but it is a ploy to raise taxes, which become crushing. Between high taxes and debased coinage, the Roman economy collapses.
- 970: Caracalla is killed by the ambitious leader of the Praetorian Guard Macrinus, who briefly becomes the first low-born (non-patrician) emperor.
- 971: Macrinus is deposed and executed by rival legions. He is replaced by Elagabalus, a distant relative of Septimus Severus and also an open demon-worshipper.
- 975: Elagabalus’s excesses become too great. He is murdered while in the east by the legions and replaced by Alexander Severus, another distant relative of Septimus. Alexander is simply a puppet for the legions and the Senate.
- 979: Weakened by war with Roman, goblinoid Parthia at last collapses and is replaced by a new dwarven Persian empire under the Sassanid dynasty.
- 984: Expansionist Persia clashes with Rome. Rome again relies on demonic aid to protect her borders.
- 988: Alexander Severus killed in a mutiny in the East. The half-orc general Maximinus Thrax becomes emperor. He is never fully accepted by the Senate, and never bothers to visit Rome.

- 991: The year of six emperors. The Senate finds and appoints a noble replacement for Maximinus Thrax, but that only triggers another civil war and a rapid succession of emperors. The survivor is the child-emperor Gordian, who is only a puppet of the legions and the demon-corrupted senators.
- 994: A series of revolts plague young Gordian's rule. His guardians have him launch a war on Persia.
- 997: A Roman defeat by Persia demoralizes the legions. The low-born but ambitious Praetorian Perfect has Gordian killed and takes the throne as Marcus Julius Philippus (Philip the Arab).
- 998: Present day. Philip returns to Rome to consolidate his rule. By appeasing the noble families, he accepts his position as emperor. Outside of Rome, other military leaders consider their own chances.

Classes

Adventuring classes make up a small minority of the population.

- **Clerics:** Clerics are devoted servants of the gods. All clerics honor all the gods, but most chose a specific deity as their patron. Some priesthoods, especially in Rome, are political positions and are not held by clerics. Because of their historical role in fighting the undead, all clerics wield the power of radiant light. As the voice of the gods, people often turn to clerics as leaders.
- **Fighters:** The greatest warriors and gladiators of the empire are generally fighters. Some fight for the legions and others are fight for themselves. Fighters prefer to be martial champions, leaving military leadership to warlords.
- **Paladins:** Paladins are divine warriors who choose one of the gods as their patrons, the martial counterpart to clerics. Unlike clerics, paladins are always champions of a specific god. As more people turn to easy path of demonic power, paladins have lost their prestige among the nobles of Rome.
- **Rangers:** Rangers are scouts, hunters or solitary wanderers. A few fight for the legions, but most are independent of the military. As the borders of the empire weaken, rangers wander further into the barbarians lands to learn more of the empire's enemies.
- **Rogues:** The most skilled criminals are rogues, from burglars to tomb robbers to assassins. In these dark days, their knowledge of the seedy underside of the empire is becoming increasingly relevant. Less talent petty criminals do not have the same skill as true rogues.
- **Warlocks:** Wizardry is the most traditional form of magic, but there are other, quicker paths to power. Warlocks form pacts with otherworldly forces, giving them another form of arcane power. In the past, warlocks would have been feared, but now they walk openly in society.
- **Warlords:** Warlords are leaders of men, especially in battle. Military men and non-corrupt nobles often follow this path. Lower-level military officers may also be warlords, encouraging their comrades to fight well in battle despite the foolishness of politically-appointed generals.
- **Wizards:** Wizards are philosophers and scholars who formally study magic. Wizardry was introduced to the world by the eladrin, but Greece formalized wizardry into philosophical schools which now dominate its study. Philosopher-wizards are often the advisors to kings and nobles, but other wizards seek arcane power for personal reasons.

Future Classes: Other classes may be added with future Player Handbook releases, in particular druids, sorcerers, bards and barbarians.

Races

In the world of Rome: Decline and Fall, the ethnic groups of the ancient world are also members of various fantasy races.

- **Humans:** Romans, Thracians, Greeks, Macedonians and some African races are human. This race currently dominates the known world: the lands around the Mediterranean.
- **Dragonborn:** Remnants of the ancient Draconic empires, this proud race now survives as mercenaries among the modern, mammalian races. Unlike the other reptilian races which skulk at the edge of modern society, the dragonborn still participate in the civilized life.
- **Dwarves:** The Mesopotamian and Semitic cultures are dwarves. The dwarves of Carthage, Anatolia and Palestine have been conquered by Rome, but dwarves of Persia have recently gained independence from their goblin overlords. They are now Rome's largest rival.
- **Eladrin:** The eladrin (high-elves) are individually powerful, but as a race they are on the wane. They once ruled the land of the Egypt, but have been forced to submit to Rome. Traveling eladrin can now be found throughout the empire.
- **Elves:** The elves never formally submitted to Rome. There are still a few hidden elvish strongholds in the woods of Europe, but most elves live in Hibernia (Ireland). Like their eladrin cousins, their numbers are dwindling. Elves that travel the empire usually portray themselves as Celtic half-elves.
- **Half-Elves:** The human Celtic tribes mixed with the elves of Western Europe to become half-elves. Subjects of Rome, many have adopted Roman culture. Others keep to their traditional ways.
- **Halflings:** The long-oppressed halfling race has no land of its own. What power they have is won through guile and stealth. They do not correspond to any historical ethnic group.
- **Tieflings:** In these decadent days, humans with demonic blood are no longer unusual, especially since demonic blood breeds true. Tieflings may not be trusted, but they are numerous among Rome's nobility and therefore must be tolerated.

Other humanoid races are the barbarians of the Roman world.

- **Orcs:** The orcish tribes of Germany are the most aggressive enemies of Rome.
- **Goblinoids:** The ancient Hittites and modern nomadic Sarmatian, Mongols, Parthians and Huns are members of the goblin, hobgoblin and bugbear races. Their cavalry and archers are greatly feared.
- **Gnolls:** These African warriors occasionally appear north of the Sahara as slavers and raiders.
- **Reptile-folk:** The lizardfolk, kobolds and troglodytes are scattered remnants of the ancient Draconic empires, lurking at the edges of civilization. They see the dragonborn as race-traitors.

Future Classes: Races not mentioned here, and those added with future Player Handbook releases, are rare and unusual, not major participants in the history of the world of Rome: Decline and Fall.

Humans

Ethnicity: Human societies are scattered throughout the world. Humans are most notably associated several great empire building races, the Greeks, Macedonians and Romans. Illyrians and Thracians are also human, as well as the ancestors of the Celts. There is a distinct set of humans in Africa.

History: Once a minor race, humans have grown to preeminence. The Macedonians under Alexander the Great overwhelmed the aging cultures of the dwarvish Middle East and eladrin-ruled Egypt. The elder races had a brief respite after the collapse of the Alexandrian empires, but a few centuries later the humans spread again from Rome. This time human conquests seemed permanent.

Humans dominate the Mediterranean basin and all the societies surrounding it. Only the nomadic goblinoid, Germanic orcs, the Hibernian elves and dwarvish Persians resist their power. For the last few centuries, the history of the Mediterranean basin has been identical to the history of Rome. Humanity has proven itself versatile and able to absorb knowledge from older races. In recent days, it has also proven its willingness to succumb to corruption.

Society: Humans are the preeminent race of the Roman Empire. Humans founded Rome. Even though the empire has many non-human citizens and has even had a few non-human emperors, humans are still considered the “true” Romans. Humans are most common in the Italy, Gaul, Hispania, Greece and Egypt. Large colonies of humans exist throughout the Empire, however. Humans hold most leadership roles in the Empire, with Celts (half-elves) and half-orcs being the only other race with significant numbers in government and the military.

Quite a few humans belong to cultures that are not Roman. Africans (some of whom are in Egypt) as well as Greeks and Macedonians (throughout the East) are the most notable examples.

Religion: Most humans worship the Olympian gods in their Roman or Greek forms. Followers of foreign gods also thrive. Rome is very religiously tolerant, and only Druidism is officially proscribed. In the last century, demon summoning has become common as well, especially among the nobility, but humans do not “worship” demons (at least, not officially).

Dragonborn

Ethnicity: The dragonborn do not correspond to any historical culture. They are now rare.

History: The dragonborn were the humanoid leaders of the ancient draconic empire, second only to the dragons themselves. Their role in the final war against the dragons is unclear. Elvish and dwarvish history only mention dragonborn as enemies, but the dragonborn themselves claim to have turned on their corrupt rulers in the final days of their empire. Unlike the other reptilian races, the dragonborn have embraced the worship of the Olympian gods and live in modern society.

Their reptilian nature has always made the dragonborn outsiders among the mammalian races, but their strength as warriors makes them valuable enough to be tolerated. Individual dragonborn have risen to prominence as warleaders or champions in the wars between other nations, but their race itself is no longer influential.

Society: The dragonborn are very insular. They are considered traitors by the other reptilian races for turning away from their ancient gods, Tiamat and Apep. They are not well-accepted either by the human, dwarf and eladrin societies in which they now live. Mostly they keep to themselves in small enclaves, but a sizable percentage of dragonborn seek their fortunes in the military, either in national armies or as mercenaries. Their warriors return home to mate and birth children, leaving their offspring with their clan to raise.

A dragonborn’s honor is its most precious possession. An oath-breaker is ostracized from the dragonborn community, forced forever to live among the mammalian folk. Such exiles become either corrupt monsters or sad broken creatures, seeking the sweet salve of death in battle.

Religion: The dragonborn revere the Olympian gods in whatever manifestation they take in the society in the larger society which the dragonborn live. Their fierce devotion to these gods is one of the things

that allows them to keep their place in those societies. Privately they teach their children of the shameful fall of the dragon-kings, and how the dragonborn were forced to turn against their corrupt and evil gods. Most dragonborn fear the spread of demon worship in the empire, seeing it as a repetition of their own nation's fall. A few young and arrogant dragonborn instead take this as license to once again honor Tiamat and Apep.

Dwarves

Ethnicity: Dwarves are associated with the Mesopotamian and Semitic cultures, including the Persians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Hebrews. After humans, they are the most numerous race.

History: Dwarves dominate the Middle East, but dwarves are reasonably common throughout the known world. Dwarves established several civilizations in Mesopotamian and fought against their traditional enemies for centuries: the marauding goblins and the eladrin of Egypt. The dwarven desire for metal and trade drove the Phoenician dwarves to colonize the Mediterranean.

Dwarves once ruled several nations in the Mediterranean basin, including Rome's classical enemy: Carthage. Though Carthage's military power was impressive, Rome eventually defeated them. The dwarves of Carthage were dispersed and their lands razed. This pattern was repeated as Rome moved east into Asia Minor and Palestine, leading to the diaspora of the dwarvish Hebrew. The dispersed dwarves may now be found throughout the Roman empire.

There are large numbers of dwarves living outside the empire as well. Long ago, the dwarves of the Middle East ruled the mighty empire of Persia, but for centuries they were the slaves of the goblinoid Parthians. In the last 20 years, the Persian dwarves have driven out their goblin overlords, re-founded their nation. The revived Persia has emerged as the biggest rival of rival humanity.

Society: Dwarves prefer to organize themselves into independent city-states, ruled by the leading clan. Dwarves have an affinity for metal and stone. They are often craftsmen, traders and warriors. Dwarves trade with other races for soft goods, including food. Roman power makes this trade difficult, so Persia keeps client races within its boundary to produce its food (as the goblins did before them).

Since dwarves have ruled some of Rome's largest rivals, they are sometimes persecuted by Rome. The diaspora of Carthage and then Palestine has shaped dwarvish culture within the Empire. Roman dwarves live in small enclaves within larger human communities, keeping to themselves as much as possible. Despite human prejudice, dwarvish skill and craft makes them valued members of the community, useful but never quite accepted.

Religion: The dwarves are a particularly pious race, and worship the Olympian gods under their Sumerian names. The recent trend of demon-summoning among Roman nobility has appalled the dwarves within the empire, and encourages the dwarvish Persians to war against the corrupt humans.

Eladrin

Ethnicity: Most eladrin live in Egypt, forming its ruling class. Eladrin are related to the elves of Europe, but have been separate from them long enough to form a separate race.

History: Eladrin feel that they are the oldest civilized race (ignoring the claims of the dragonborn by pointing to the early civilizations in Arcadia). Their long lives ensure that their history moves at a slower pace than the younger races. The eladrin are the branch of elven-kind that migrated south to Egypt millennia ago. They fought to wrest that land from the great dragons Apep and Tiamat. In the process, they won the secrets of wizardry, which has been the foundation of their culture ever since.

The Egyptians eladrin are an arrogant and conservative race. For millennia their society was virtually unchanged. Only conflict with the dwarves and the need for magical components could make them leave from their desert kingdom. It was a rude shock when Egypt was overrun by humans, first by Macedonians and then by Romans. Despite their air of superiority, eladrin have lived quietly under Rome for three centuries. To humans, it seems that the eladrin race has accepted the new order of things. Few in Rome realize that three centuries is not much time to the long-lived fey.

Some of the younger generation of eladrin have a less superior attitude. Born under the rule of Rome, they recognize that the survival of their race is in jeopardy. These eladrin have taken to journeying in the wider Empire in the hope of find a new way of life for their kind, particularly seeking out the elves of Europe to reconnect to their lost kin.

Society: Eladrin have always been few in number. Today there are less than 50,000 of them. Even when they controlled Egypt, they formed only the upper level of society, ruling various subject races (humans, dwarves, reptile-folk). Eladrin devote their time to leisure and study, particularly of magic, leaving manual labor to “lesser” races.

Eladrin are sure of their own power, and will not admit inferiority to anyone, not even the gods. Their submission to Rome is particularly humiliating, but they are making the best of their situation. Though they no longer rule the Egypt government, they control its temples, magical schools and noble houses. Some younger eladrin are less conceited and more willing work with other races as equals.

Religion: The eladrin honor the gods under their Egyptian names. Eladrin have a different attitude toward religion than other races. They point out that Zeus came to them seeking allies, not servants. Eladrin priests bargain with the gods rather than worshipping them. Each interaction with the gods is a negotiation, with offerings given in exchange for divine miracles. Priests of other races find their attitudes sacrilegious, but eladrin prayers are still answered. Many eladrin are completely irreligious, preferring only arcane power.

Note: All eladrin use the ability scores (elite arrays) of adventuring characters. This makes the “average” eladrin considerably better than “average” members of other races, though they are on par with other adventurers. This is the main reason for the eladrin attitude of superiority.

Elves

Ethnicity: Most elves live in their homeland of Hibernia (Ireland), which they call Tir Nan Og. Originally they lived in Western Europe, by they mingled with the migrating humans to form the half-elven Celtic race. Since the Roman conquests of Gaul and Britain, they have retreated into hiding.

History: The elves are the branch of elven-kind that remained in the north after the defeat of the giant-kin. Their eladrin cousins viewed them as cowards for staying behind, but the elves could not bear to part from their beloved forests.

When human kind first came to the elven forests of the west, the elves greeted them warmly. Bonds of love and friendship were common and the two races mingled, forming the half-elven Celts. The elves soon learned that the shorter-lived humans had stronger blood than the fey, however. As time went on, fewer elves than half-elves were born, and elven-kind gradually withdrew into their forests.

When the Romans arrived, the elves would have nothing to do with them. They closed their borders with magic, hiding within their secret homes, fully expecting the human empire to soon pass on. Three centuries later, they are still waiting.

Society: The elves are more numerous than their eladrin cousins, but they are still a dwindling race. Some older elves are resigned to their fate, ready to pass the world on to younger and more vibrant

racess. The youngest elves watch in horror at how the newer races treat the world, however, and cannot sit by and see evil overwhelm the world.

The elves live in small, hidden communities, at peace in their natural surroundings. They share the land's bounty with each other communally, having few personal possessions. They are usually friendly with the other fey-born species. While they are not particularly warlike, elven rangers protect their hidden homes with a terrible deadliness.

When traveling in the Roman empire, elves usually pose as half-elven Celts. Out of necessity, they find they can work well with the criminal underworld of the empire, especially the halflings. With their open attitude toward possessions, elves have few qualms against stealing, especially from non-elves.

Religion: The elves consider themselves honored allies of the Gods, following them under their Celtic names. Many elves have a deeply personal relationship with one of the Gods, choosing to work their will in the material world. Like the eladrin, they do see themselves as allies rather than as the servants of the Gods, but they have a greater respect for the Gods' power and wisdom.

Note: Like the eladrin, all elves use the ability scores (elite array) of adventuring characters. They are somewhat less arrogant about this than their southern cousins, however.

Half-elves

Ethnicity: Half-elves are associated with the Celtic races, particularly in Gaul, Hispania and the British isles. The term "half-elf" only arose in the last few centuries as a derogatory term used by Egyptian eladrin to describe their distant Celtic relatives. Through eladrin influence, other races have adopted the term, but Celts themselves find it insulting.

History: In the distant past, the fey races dominated Europe, including the light-skinned, northern elves. Over time, human tribes migrated into this region and mingled with the elvish race, producing a mixed race called the Celts. Human blood proved more potent than elf, and over time the number of Celts grew as the number of elves shrank. Most of the elves withdraw to the island-nation of Hibernia (Ireland), leaving western Europe mostly to their Celtic descendants.

The Celts were early opponents of Roman expansion. After Julius Caesar, most of the continental Celts fell under Roman rule, and their Druidic religion was suppressed. Modern Celts fall into two groups: those who have been Romanized to live like humans and those who try to keep to their traditional ways within the empire. Only the Celts of northern Britain are still independent.

Society: Traditional Celtic society is much like that of their elvish relatives, living in harmony with the natural world. Celts are more lusty and warlike than their elvish cousins, however, because of their shorter lives and human blood. Celts dwell under tribal chiefs in small villages, held together by a web of alliances and marriage. The local druid is an advisor to the chief and the judge of tribal law. Individual Celts are powerful warriors, but the more unified Romans defeated them piecemeal.

Many modern Celts have become fully Romanized, living as humans do. This is especially true in southern Gaul and eastern Hispania. Celtic influence in Rome is second only to humans, and Celts have spread beyond their traditional lands. There has even been a half-elf emperor, the vigorous Trajan. Even those half-elves who have not embraced human ways stay quiet to avoid the Rome's wrath.

Religion: The Celts honored the Olympian gods in their Celtic forms, but many of their priests are secretly druids who draw power from nature. The Druidic religion was a major focus for Celtic resistance against Rome, and was repressed after the conquest. Druids now live in secrecy and seclusion, but there is enough sympathy in Celtic society to keep their religion alive. Publicly, modern Celts worship the gods of Rome. Fully Romanized Celts are often priests in Roman and Greek temples.

With their diluted fey blood, many half-elves with an arcane inclination seek out the power of Arcadia, becoming fey-pact warlocks. Some stumble on darker forces in the process instead.

Note: A few half-eladrin also exist in Egypt, but have no distinct culture. They have no special status, except for a brief period during the reign of the half-eladrin Ptolemies. They are identical to half-elves, except that their dual heritage is human-eladrin rather than human-elf.

Halflings

Ethnicity: Halflings have no direct association with any historical culture. Their closest analog are the Romani (gypsies).

History: Halflings have never had their own nation. They have always been too weak to stand up to the larger races. Occasionally halflings form small communities on the edge of other civilizations, but for the most part they scrape out marginal lives within the nations of their larger neighbors.

There have been no famous halfling wizards or warriors, no great halfling priests or philosophers. What little influence halfling-kind has comes from the shadows. With nothing to call their own, halflings have learned to live off the wealth of others. Wherever there is profit to be made on the other side of the law, the halflings will be there. Here, their agility and stealth make up for their smaller size.

When times are tough, halflings use numbers to make up for their lack of strength. Though individual halflings are weak, they are fiercely loyal to their own kind. Those who persecute them often face a sudden knife in the dark. Their greatest strength is the tendency for larger races to underestimate them.

Society: Free halflings are nomadic. Rather than living off the bounty of nature, they take what they need from other people. Among other races, halflings have an almost universal reputation as thieving vagabonds, fit only for the slave collar. Halflings also have a great affinity for the earth and growing things. Despite their lowly status, halflings are still able to take great pleasure in life. They believe seeking joy and staying loyal to their family as the ultimate good.

Halfling culture prizes finding and keeping secrets. A halfling who discovers a great secret earns considerable respect from other halflings. These secrets are passed down among halfling families and are guarded like treasure. Because of this, there are a number of long-lost secrets known only to halfling kind.

Religion: Halflings have an ambivalent attitude towards religion. They are generally beneath the notice of the Gods in the same way they are underestimated by larger races. Halflings pay lip-service to the Olympian gods, but nature-worship (druidism) is more common among them.

Tieflings

Ethnicity: Tieflings are part of the same culture as humans, and are most common among the Romans. They are humans with demonic ancestors. Since demon blood breeds true, they are a fast-growing race.

History: Tieflings are the newest race to walk the earth. In the past, there were a handful of Tieflings, largely the result of demonic atrocities or dark warlock pacts. As Roman nobility summoned and mingled with demon-kind, however, humans with demonic blood became increasingly common. Since the child of a tiefling and human will be a tiefling, there are several growing tiefling clans whose demonic ancestors are now a distant memory.

Since human-demon interactions within the empire continue, there are new demon-blooded children born every year. The large numbers of tieflings among Roman nobles makes their influence larger than it might be otherwise.

Society: Tieflings live among humans, and many consider themselves to still be human. Most people, however, fear Tieflings for their tainted blood. Only the growing influence of demon-kind and tieflings among the noble families of Rome keep the rest of humanity from destroying them.

Many tieflings embrace their demonic heritage. If humanity rejects them, than tieflings will reject humanity. Some, though, try to overcome the horrors of their ancestry, turning against those demons who spawned them. This is not an easy path to follow, though, since the call of the demonic blood is very strong.

Religion: Most tieflings are either irreligious or embrace the worship of their demonic ancestors. A few struggle to find acceptance among the temples of the Olympian gods, but the prejudices of the other races makes this very difficult. Tolerances of tieflings is lowest among religiously-minded people.

Note: The appearance of tieflings varies, depending on their demonic ancestry. They do not all have horns, tails and red-skin, as portrayed in the Players Handbook. All tieflings have a visible demon mark though, which makes them obviously non-human. This could be an unnatural shade of skin or hair, physical markings like scales, strange appendages or inhuman features like slit-pupil eyes.

Half-orcs and Orcs

Ethnicity: Orcs in general are associated with Germanic tribes. Tribes near human and Celtic society have interbred with their neighbors, producing the mixed race of half-orcs.

History: Orcs are a relatively recent arrival in Europe. Though they have long raided Celtic lands, orcs have only pushed into southern Europe in the last 500 years. The orcish tribes beyond the Rhine are some of the fiercest foes of Rome. War has been sporadic since the time of Marius. The depredation of the orcs was one of the major incentives for the development of the modern Roman legion.

Those orcs nearest human and Celtic society have mingled with other races, producing the slightly less savage half-orc race. Rome used these tribes as a buffer between Rome and the more savage humanoids. Members of these tribes joined the Roman military, serving as the auxiliaries against the empire's enemies. In modern times, they make up much of the legions. Half-orc communities, mostly consisting of ex-legionnaires, can now be found throughout the Empire.

Society: Orcs live in tribal societies under a war-chief, with shamans and priests guiding the worship of their strange "gods". Half-orcs live much the same way, though those in the army worship the Roman gods. An orc's wealth is measured in the number of cattle and woman belonging to him. Their lives are brutal and short, filled with constant battle. The harsh German environment necessitates a callous attitude toward the weak. Old orcs soon perish when they can no longer aid the tribe.

Occasionally a strong leader will unify several tribes and they will attack a more ambitious target. In a sense, the tribes under Rome rule are simply follow another powerful leader. As their numbers in the army have grown, so has their influence. There was recently a half-orc emperor, the general Maximinus Thrax. The most powerful group of half-orcs is the elite German bodyguard used by various emperors.

Religion: Orcs worship a wild array of "gods", most of whom are actually demons. Orcs make little distinction between their priests and their shamans (warlocks). Orcs seek a pragmatic relationship with their gods. They offer their worship only for as long as their priest benefits the tribe. If their priest and his god should fail, the tribe will quickly choose another, celebrating by sacrificing of the old priest.

Romanized half-orcs generally worship the Olympian gods, though some have gone back to their old ways now that demon-summoning and worship is spreading in the empire.

Goblins

Ethnicity: Goblins are associated with the nomadic raiders of the east and the empires they founded. In particular, they are associated with the Hittites, Hyksos, Parthians, Mongols and Hun.

History: Goblins did not participate in the War of the Gods, but they appeared soon afterwards as rivals of the elder races, the elves and the dwarves. Goblins would conquer a local kingdom and build it into a goblin empire, ruling over the original inhabitants as slaves. Over time, though, the goblin rulers would grow soft, to be eventually overthrown by their slaves or by other goblin invaders.

The latest great empire of the goblins, the Parthians, has been waning for a long time. For centuries it was the major rival of Rome, but 20 years ago, it was overthrown by dwarves, who re-instated the Persian empire. The goblins were driven east and north, where they rejoined their nomadic cousins to plague civilized races with raids.

Society: Goblins value strength but can appreciate organization as well. They are more inclined to band together for mutual benefit than orcs. They cannot build for themselves, but have a long history of taking over the lands of others to reap the rewards of civilization. In their “natural” state, goblin live as nomadic raiders. They return to this pattern of life when they are ejected from civilized lands.

Religion: Goblins have little use for the Olympian gods since they did not take part in the war that won the Olympians place in the world. In the wild, they generally worship various demons. As rulers of empires, they sometimes pay lip service to worshipping the gods of their slave-races to placate them.

Reptilian Races

Ethnicity: Reptilian races (lizardfolk, kobolds and troglodytes) have no direct human analog. They were all member races of the pre-historic empire of the dragon-kings.

History: The reptilian races once ruled much of the known world under their draconic rulers, but that was many thousands of years ago. Now only scattered remnants live in savage tribe skulking on the edge of civilized lands. They have had little influence on modern history.

Society: Most remaining reptilian races live in savage, sub-human tribes. On rare occasions individuals briefly gain power through service to their evil gods. They consider the dragonborn to be race-traitors because of their participation in civilized society, hating them above all others.

Religion: The reptilian races worship the ancient and evil dragon-gods, Apep and Tiamat, long banished from this world along with the Titans. They instinctually fall under the sway of any dragons that lair near their tribes.

Religion

Modern nations generally worship the gods, also known as the Olympians, who overthrew the Titans. These gods are known by many names to different cultures, but they are all the same despite differences in their myths and appearances. Now that they rule the heavens, the Olympians have become distant and rarely intercede in mortal affairs. The gods are generally seen as good, but they do not think as mortals do, and their ways are often mysterious.

The greatest of the gods are the twelve Olympians, plus a thirteenth god Hermes, the herald of Olympus. Clerics honor all the gods, but usually choose one as their personal patron. In the west the

gods are often worshipped under their Celtic names, in Africa under their Egyptian names and in the East under their Sumerian names.

- **Zeus/Jupiter**, king of the gods, and god of the sky and storms.
- **Hera/Juno**, queen of the gods, sister and wife of Jupiter.
- **Poseidon/Neptune**, god of the sea, Zeus's brother. Honored by sailors.
- **Demeter/Ceres**, goddess of the earth and harvest. In Rome, she is now more popular in her manifestation as Isis or Cybele.
- **Hades/Pluto**, god of the underworld and wealth. Rarely worshipped directly but respected and feared.
- **Hestia/Vesta**, goddess of the hearth. Revered in Rome by the Vestal virgins.
- **Apollo**, god of medicine, prophecy and music.
- **Artemis/Diana**, goddess of the hunt.
- **Ares/Mars**, god of war. Honored by soldiers.
- **Athena/Minerva**, goddess of wisdom. Enemy of Ares.
- **Hephaestus/Vulcan**, god of craft. Popular with the working class.
- **Aphrodite/Venus**, goddess of love.
- **Hermes/Mercury**, herald of the gods. Honored by thieves.

There are several influential cults of gods not counted among the Olympians:

- **Dionysus/Bacchus**, god of wine. Replaces Hestia in the list of the twelve great gods of Greece.
- **Hecate**, goddess of black magic.
- **Tiamat** and **Apep**, primordial gods of the draconic empire.
- The **Titans**, the ancient gods overthrown by the Olympians and driven out into the Far Realms. They are also known as the Primordials.
- **Demon-kind**, powerful creatures of elemental chaos. Their worship has crept into the halls of power in Rome. This group includes devils as well as demons.

Gods and Metaphysics

Roman metaphysics is based on the philosophy of the Greeks. These philosophers divide the divinities into three groups, each corresponding to an era of history: the Creators, the Titans (Primordials) and the Olympians.

The creator gods predate all modern races and were never worshipped by mortals. They arose from the elemental chaos and used it to shape the world. No one knows their nature or fate, other than they created (and possibly became) the world. They were overthrown by their children, the Titans. Only two of their names survive: Uranus and Gaea.

The Titans did not create the world, but they reshaped it for their own amusement. As indicated by their names, they preferred things to be larger than they are now. The worshippers they created were ruled by the largest creatures, the giant-kin in the north and the dragon-kings in the south. Fearing a repeat of their own rebellion, Cronus, the leading Titan, devoured all of his own children, the Olympians. As divine beings, this didn't kill them, but it imprisoned them where they could do no harm.

The mercy of Cronus's wife, Rhea, let one of his children escape. This young god, Zeus, slipped into the hidden corners of the world forgotten by the Titans. At the time two other realms were connected to the world: the well-spring of life, Arcadia (also known as the Feywild) and the land of death, the Underworld (also known as the Shadowfell). It was in Arcadia that Zeus sought allies.

With his fey allies, Zeus distracted the Titans with a war in the physical world while he crept back into heaven. He was able to trick his father Cronus and rescue his siblings. The gods then warred in the heavens until the Titans were overthrown. The defeated Titans were destroyed, imprisoned or exiled beyond the boundaries of the world into the alien darkness of the Far Realms.

Zeus and his siblings divided the world among them and took the seat of heaven to become the modern gods, worshipped throughout the world. They do not use the same names with all people, however. Being powerful and mutable, the gods manifest with different appearances to different people. Zeus is known as Jupiter to the Romans, Amon to the Egyptian eladrin, Dagda to the Celts and Enlil to the dwarves. Though always powerful and fatherly, the form he takes resemble the worshippers before whom he manifests.

The wishes of the Gods are rarely clear. The Gods communicate with their mortal worshippers in visions or riddles. One of the major function of priests is interpreting the messages of the Gods. Most nations have myths of the Gods; these stories are often contradictory. Priests treat these stories as allegories rather than historical events, but the tales are popular with the common folk.

Mortal Servants of the Gods

There are two primary groups devoted to honoring the Gods: clerics (priests) and paladins (champions).

Because the Titans created the undead during the War of the Gods, all priests have some strength against undead. Their divine light (radiance) can wash away the power of the walking dead. This power taps into the well-spring of life, which is also the source of divine healing magic. Clerics are devoted to the entire pantheon of the Gods, and can perform ritual honoring to any of the Olympians. Many priests choose a particular god as a patron, however, favoring their patron above other gods.

Paladins are the champions of the gods. Unlike clerics, paladins always follow a specific god. Paladins of rival gods are known to fight one another.

Alternate Names of the Gods

In the descriptions of the gods below, their names in various cultures are given. Often Romanized cultures will hyphenate the local name of their god with the Roman name. For example, a Celt following of goddess of the hunt would say that she worship Artemis-Epona. She would identify with Greek and Roman priests of Artemis, but still use native elements of worship to honor the goddess's manifestation as Epona.

The Greek names of the gods are the most common.

Remnants of the Elder Gods

Though the elder gods no longer have any priests or temples, there are still holidays and shrines honoring them. The most notable such holiday is the Saturnalia, a week long Roman winter holiday with wild festivities.

Uranus (Egyptian Ra): A truly ancient god, creator of the world and father of Cronos. He is believed to have been destroyed long ago. His body may form the heavens. The Romans have no record of Uranus, and use his Greek name.

Gaia (Egyptian Nun): Said by some to be the wife of Uranus, by others the true creatrix of the universe. Regardless of the truth, she either is long departed from this world or her spiritless body has become the world itself. The Romans use the Greek name for this goddess, on those rare occasions when they speak of her at all.

Chronos (Roman Saturn, Egyptian Geb, Sumerian An): The father of the gods, and ruler of the Titans. It was Saturn and his brethren who were overthrown by the younger gods. Their followers, the giant-kin and the dragon-kings, were overthrown by the elder races at the same time.

Rhea (Greek Ops, Egyptian Nut, Sumerian Ki): Mother of the gods. Rhea is said to have secretly helped her children against their father. Nevertheless, she fell with her husband in the War of the Gods.

The Olympians

The Romans and Greeks honor twelve gods over all others, called the Olympians after their supposed home at mount Olympus in Greece. The Romans and Greeks do not completely agree on the members of this group. The Romans include the goddess Vesta (Hestia), while the Greeks put Dionysus (Bacchus) in her place.

Note: A cleric or paladin can only take the Channel Divinity Feat of a single god. By doing so, the cleric or paladin makes that god into his or her patron.

Zeus

Roman Jupiter, Egyptian Amon, Celtic Dagda, Sumerian Enlil

The king of the gods, Zeus is the greatest of the Olympians and the lord of the heavens. He has the most ancient temple in Rome, that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Jupiter the best and the greatest). He personally led the gods to overthrow their parents, the Titans. Now his divine will enforces the status quo. Sometimes he is a god of justice but other times his passions overwhelm him, especially his passion for beautiful mortal women. His symbols are the thunderbolt, eagle, and oak. His commandment are:

- Honor the gods of Olympus.
- Live a life of glory and passion.
- Follow the kings of earth as you do the king of heaven.

Zeus's Favor [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Kord's Favor, PH 198.

Hera

Roman Juno, Egyptian Mut, Celtic Danu, Sumerian Ninlil

The queen of the gods, wife and sister of Zeus, Hera is the patron diety of woman and marriage. Her marriage to Zeus is unhappy and she is bitter over her husband's many infidelities. Her symbols are the scepter, diadem, and peacock. Her commandments are:

- Honor your mother, your marriage and your family, in that order.

- Protect those under your care.
- Be true to your word.

Hera's Rescue [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Avandra's Rescue, PH 194.

Poseidon

Roman Neptune, Egyptian Tefnut, Celtic Nodens, Sumerian Enki

The god of the sea and Zeus's brother. Poseidon is a wild and unpredictable deity, who is placated rather than revered. He is also the patron god of horses, and can bring earthquakes as indicated by his name "Earth-Shaker". His symbols are the trident and the dolphin. His commandments are:

- Respect the sea, for those who do not fear it will perish upon it.
- Live free, accepting no form of slavery.
- Take revenge on those who betray you.

Flow of Poseidon [Channel Divinity Feat]

The blessing of Poseidon lets you move like a flowing wave.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to speed and ignore difficult terrain until the end of your next turn.

Demeter

Roman Ceres, Egyptian Isis, Celtic Damona, Sumerian Cybele

The goddess of earth and agriculture, sister of Zeus. Worship of the eastern forms of the goddess, Isis and Cybele, have largely replaced Ceres and Demeter in the city of Rome. She is still widely honored under her original Greek and Roman names in the countryside. She is a quiet and mysterious goddess, the oldest of Olympians. Her symbols are the scepter, torch, and corn.

- Honor the earth and it will yield its bounty to you.
- Obey the divine, whose mysteries forever beyond your understanding.
- Hunt and destroy those who steal children.

Demeter's Sacrifice [Channel Divinity Feat]

The compassion Demeter flows from you to a falling ally.

Encounter ♦ Divine, Healing

Immediate Reaction Ranged 10

Trigger: An ally drops to 0 hit points or fewer

Target: The triggering ally

Effect: You lose one a healing surge. The target gains and immediately spends a healing surge.

Hades

Roman Pluto, Egyptian Osiris, Celtic Balor, Sumerian Nergal

The god of the dead, ruler of the Underworld (the Shadowfell) and Zeus's brother. He is also the god of wealth. The Greeks and Romans view him as a dark, brooding deity. He is feared and respected, but rarely worshipped. The Egyptians view Osiris more positively, and Osiris's cult has some followers in Rome. His symbols are the coin and the three-headed dog Cerberus. His commandments are:

- Have no pity for those who die, for death is the natural end to life.
- Give proper honor to the dead to smooth their way into the underworld.
- Do not attempt to escape fate, for it is inescapable.

Hade's Poise [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Ioun's Poise, PH 198.

Hestia

Roman Vesta, Egyptian Tawaret, Celtic Brigid, Sumerian Nanshe

The virgin goddess of the hearth, Zeus's sister. The Greeks say that Hestia stepped aside to make room for Dionysus among the Olympians, but the Romans count Vesta among the twelve greatest gods. The second greatest temple of Rome honors Vesta and houses the Vestal Virgins, her priestesses. Her symbol is the hearth, and every home in the empire has a small altar to her. Her commandments are:

- Protect and honor your home and family.
- Support your community and work to extend civilization into the wilderness.
- You must be virgin to serve Hestia as a cleric or paladin.

Harmony of Hestia [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Harmony of Erathis, PH 197.

Athena

Roman Minerva, Egyptian Neith, Celtic Maeve, Sumerian Astarte

Goddess of wisdom and war, she is Zeus's daughter, sprung live from his forehead. After Zeus and Hera, she is the most honored god. She is a virgin goddess and longtime rival of her brother Ares. Her symbols are the shield, owl, and olive tree. Her commandments are:

- Seek wisdom and understanding in all things.
- Uphold the highest ideals of honor and justice.
- Protect those weaker than yourself.

Athena's Blessing [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Raven Queen's Blessing, PH 200.

Apollo

Egyptian Horus, Celtic Ogma, Sumerian Utu

The god of prophecy, art, medicine and the sun. Apollo is the son of Zeus and Leto, as well as the twin brother of Artemis. The Romans worship him under his Greek name. His Egyptian form Horus emphasizes his solar aspects, and is more warlike. His symbols are the bow, lyre, and laurel. His commandments are:

- Create and protect beauty, as beauty gives life meaning.
- Shun darkness and embrace the light.
- In times of uncertainty, ask the Gods for visions.

Apollo's Tide [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Melora's Tide, PH 198.

Artemis

Roman Diana, Egyptian Sekhmet, Celtic Epona

The goddess of the hunt. Rangers and women warriors often honor Artemis. She is the daughter of Zeus and Leto and twin sister of Apollo. Another virgin goddess, she promotes woman as equals of men. Her symbols are the bow and deer. Her commandments are:

- Protect the wild from those that would abuse it.
- Hunt and destroy monsters as abominations of nature.
- Do not fear the savagery of nature. Learn to live in harmony with it instead.

Artemis's Grace [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Corellon's Grace, PH 194.

Hephaestus

Roman Vulcan, Egyptian Ptah, Celtic Lugh, Sumerian Kur

The god of crafts and fire. Hephaestus is the son of Zeus and Hera, husband of Aphrodite. He was thrown off Olympus as a child and is now lame as a result. Aphrodite dislikes his deformity and cheats on him with his brother Ares. His unhappy marriage makes him a gruff and unhappy god. He is only truly happy when he is crafting some new wonder. His symbol is the axe. His commandments are:

- Be strong, but do not abuse your strength.
- Face tragedy with quiet stoicism.
- Create or work some wonder through which you will be remembered.

Hephaestus's Resolve [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Moradin's Resolve, PH 199.

Aphrodite

Roman Venus, Egyptian Hathor, Celtic Aine, Sumerian Innanna

The goddess of love and luck. She is the daughter of one of the departed Titans, a younger cousin to Zeus and Hera, the only Olympian not descended from Chronos and Rhea. Her beauty was so potent that she nearly tore heaven apart. Hera convinced Zeus to marry Aphrodite to Hephaestus to keep the peace of heaven. Aphrodite despises her ugly husband and has frequent affairs, especially with her husband's brother Ares. Her symbols are the myrtle and the dove.

- Ugliness is a sin. Exemplify grace and beauty in all things.
- Face tragedy with quiet stoicism.
- Create or perform some wonder through which you will be remembered.

Aphrodite's Silver Tongue [Channel Divinity Feat]

You invoke Aphrodite's power of eloquence and persuasion.

Encounter ♦ Divine

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Effect: You re-roll a Bluff or Diplomacy check you just rolled, with a +5 power bonus. You use the new result, even if it is lower than the original result.

Ares

Roman Mars, Egyptian Anhur, Celtic Taranis, Sumerian Baal

The god of war. He is the son of Zeus and Hera. He is unpopular with the other Olympian gods and is the particular enemy of Athena. He revels in war and bloodshed, caring little for the reasons for it. As the champion of war, he is still widely worshipped, despite his unpleasant reputation. His symbols are vultures, dogs, boars, and a spear. His commandments are:

- Hone your skills in battle, for that is the path to glory.
- Violence is the anvil that gives life meaning. Seek it out whenever you can.
- Never show fear before an enemy.

Armor of Ares [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Armor of Bahumat, PH 193.

Hermes

Roman Mercury, Egyptian Thoth, Celtic Artaius

The messenger of the gods, and god of travel. Mercury is also a great trickster, patron of thieves. Technically he is not one of the twelve Olympians, but is instead their herald. He is the child of Zeus and one of the female Titans, which puts him in an odd place in the pantheon. His symbols are the caduceus (a staff with entwined serpents) and winged boots. His commandments are:

- Hone your wit and keep a glib tongue, for they are the surest way to earn victory.
- Secrets are power, so keep your close.
- Those who can't protect their possessions don't deserve to keep them, but never take those things that people need to survive.

Hermes' Reversal [Channel Divinity Feat]: As Sehanine's Reversal, PH 200.

Dionysus

Roman Bacchus, Celtic Cernunnos, Sumerian Damuzi

The god of the wine and rebirth. He is the son of Zeus and a mortal woman. His worship is known for its wild, midnight revels. The Greeks count Dionysus among the Olympians, but the worship of Bacchus is proscribed in Rome, and they put Vesta in his place. His symbols are the grape vine, ivy and the thyrsus (a vine-wrapped staff tipped with pine cones).

- Live life for pleasure, for without it, what purpose does life have?
- There is wisdom in wine: it opens your mind to things you may not otherwise see.
- Acknowledge the wildness within you, for it is your secret strength.

Luck of Dionysus [Channel Divinity Feat]

The favor of Dionysus briefly touches you.

Encounter ♦ Divine

No Action Personal

Trigger: You fail a saving throw

Effect: You can immediately reroll the saving throw you just failed.

Other Gods

Several other divine beings are worshipped in foreign lands or in mystery cults.

Hecate (Egyptian Nephtys, Celtic Morrigan, Sumerian Ereshkigal): The goddess of sorcery and death. Her followers are few, but powerful. She is believed to be a child of the exile Titans, rejected by her parents and the Olympians alike.

Tiamat and Apep (Egyptian, Sumerian and Lizard folk): Two great dragons ruled Sumer and Egypt before the coming of the dwarves and elves. The lizard folk of the African desert honor them as gods. A few of the more malignant lizard folk worship Set as well, though he is not as popular as Egyptian prejudices portray him.

Demon-kind: Not actually gods, various humanoid races worship demons in exchange for power. Demons are said to predate even the Titans, formed from the malignant remains of elemental chaos. They do not seek worship like the gods. Rather, they play with mortals and manipulate them for their own evil ends.

The Outer Gods: Alien beings from beyond the world, residents of the Far Realms. Their motives are incomprehensible and only the mad and twisted deal with them at all. They are the remnants of exiled Titans, alien beings from beyond time-and-space, or both.

Government

Nominally Rome is still a Republic. In practice, for the last 300 years it has been a military dictatorship ruled by the emperor. Ultimately imperial power is derived from the command of the legions, and usurpers with the backing of the Roman army now regularly overthrow the emperor. Because the empire has become so corrupt, most of the discussion below on government structure is largely theoretical. In practice, money, cruelty and military power rule the empire.

Officially, Roman government is roughly divided between the emperor (executive) and Senate (legislative). In practice, the emperor and his bureaucracy have much greater power than the Senate. Judicial functions are fulfilled by the senate in Rome, and by the governors (or their representatives) in the provinces.

- **Emperor:** The emperor heads the executive branch of the government. In theory, the emperor is appointed by the Senate. In practice, the Senate rubber stamps either the chosen heir of the previous emperor or the choice of the military. The emperor controls the national treasury, heads the Imperial bureaucracy, appoints governors to the Imperial provinces and controls the military. The emperor is also a senator and the laws proposed by the emperor are always approved. He also holds veto power over laws proposed by other Senators.

In the past, emperors would designate their chosen heir as “co-emperor” late in their reign. This promoted a more stable transition of power. The last 80 years have been too unstable for this practice.

- **Senators:** This body of 600 forms the legislative branch of government. Senators must first serve as an elected or appointed magistrate before they can enter the Senate. They must also maintain a certain level of wealth to keep their seat. Because of the need to hold an elected office before entry into the Senate, these positions were once democratic, but now there is enough corruption that the Senate has become a self-perpetuating oligarchy. An appointment to the Senate is for life, but the emperor can and does regularly exile or execute Senators that he dislikes. The emperor can also appoint whomever he likes to the Senate.

Almost all real power is derived from the emperor, but the Senate is an important source of provincial governors and military leaders. Not all Senators are in Rome; at any given time, a third of the senate will be in the provinces in administrative or military posts. Originally the Senate consisted entirely of Roman patricians, but now includes wealthy merchants and provincials as well.

- **Comitia Tributa:** Assembly of the tribes, this body meets once per year to elect local magistrates in Rome. These days, this is as close as Rome comes to popular elections. Since a candidate for Senate must first serve as a magistrate, the populace has a small influence, but this body is not a major factor in governing.

- **Magistrates:** The empire has a number of magistracies, some elected by the Comitia Tributa, some appointed by the emperor and some appointed by the senate. Once their term of office is complete, important magistrates may join the senate, provided they meet the property requirements.

- **Quaestors:** Minor magistrates responsible for the state treasury and finance.

- **Aediles:** The aediles are in charge of public works.

- **Praetors:** The praetors are chief justices in Rome, though treason and corruption cases are tried before the senate. There are eight to ten praetors.

- **Praetor Urbanus:** The praetor urbanus administers the city of Rome. His relationship to the emperor is resembles that of the mayor of Washington DC and the President of the United States.

- **Plebeian Tribunes:** The ten elected tribunes originally had veto power over the senate, but this power is now held by the emperor (and his designated successor). These are now purely honorary posts, but they are still stepping-stones into the senate.

- **Consuls:** Originally supreme military commanders, these posts are now simply the leaders of the senate. Two consuls are elected yearly by the senate. The emperor usually holds the consulship several times during his reign. Ex-consuls become provincial governors or military leaders. If there are not enough ex-consuls available to fill governorships, the current consuls will resign mid-year, to allow appointed consuls (consul suffecti) to make up the shortfall.

- **Propraetors:** Governors of minor senatorial (non-military) provinces. Always ex-praetors.

- **Proconsuls:** Governors of major senatorial (non-military) provinces. Always ex-consuls.

- **Legatus Augusti:** Military commanders of imperial (military) provinces. Often ex-consuls; always chosen for loyalty to the emperor. Given the high turnover rate of emperors these days, some legatus augusti will be appointments of the previous emperor, making them dangerous potential rivals of the new emperor.

- **Praefectus Aegypti:** Governor of Egypt. Given the importance of this region's agriculture, this is an imperial appointment, and never a senator (who could be a potential rival to the emperor).

- **Censors:** Elected for a term of eighteen months every five years, these two magistrates are the highest non-imperial offices. They conduct the census and update senatorial rolls. Usually the most senior ex-consuls serve this role.

- **Civil Servants:** The imperial court appoints many civil servants, most of whom are freedman (ex-slaves) of imperial household. They include the grain prefect, keepers of the water supply, keepers of the roads and so forth. They can have great power despite their humble origins.

Military

The backbone of the Roman army is the imperial legion. The emperor controls all provinces with legions (imperial provinces), while the senate controls provinces without legions (senatorial provinces). Once exclusively Roman, much of the modern legions are full of provincials and barbarians, especially half-elves and half-orcs. Due to neglect and constant war, many legions are worn down and have poor morale. Legionary rebellions are common and sometimes lead to a new emperor.

- **Legates:** General of a legion. In provinces with more than one legion, supreme command falls to the imperial military governor, the Legatus Augusti. Given that they are political appointments, their actual military skill can vary wildly. These days, an ambitious legates can become emperor by convincing (or bribing) his troops to support a bid for power.
- **Tribunes:** Command staff. The senior tribune is typically a young political appointment, often without any real military experience. The five other tribunes are professional officers.
- **Praefectus Castrorum:** Camp prefect, the highest rank for career-military.
- **Century:** A unit of 80-100 legionnaires led by a centurion.
- **Cohort:** A group of six centuries. There are ten cohorts in a legion. The first cohort is an elite force with five double-centuries. Total legion size is roughly 5000-6500 soldiers.
- **Primus Pilus:** Centurion of the first double-century of the first cohort.
- **Centurion:** Leader of a century.
- **Principales:** Non-commissioned officers, signifer, optio and tesserarius receiving double pay.
- **Signifer:** Standard-bearer for a century.
- **Optio:** Deputy to the centurion.
- **Tesserarius:** Watch commander for a century.
- **Decurion:** Leader of a squad of ten soldiers.
- **Immunes:** Soldiers immune to normal camp duties due to special skills.
- **Milites:** Ordinary soldiers.

The military has several special units:

- **Auxiliaries:** Each legion is accompanied by a like number of local auxiliaries, including light infantry, archers and cavalry. They are commanded by a Roman equite (knight). Auxiliary troops are drawn from client nations, but usually serve far from home to make mutiny less likely.
- **Barbarian Mercenaries:** These days, it is very common to hire orcish and goblin mercenaries to fight on the frontiers of Rome against their own people. For the last 50 years, these mercenaries have even been used within empire itself.
- **Praetorian Guard:** A legion sized force of elite troops, based at Rome. It campaigns with the emperor in war. Two imperially appointed Praetorian Prefects command instead of a legate.

- **Urban Cohorts:** A permanent guard in Rome and other cities, doubling as a police force. A tribune commands each cohort, all under the praefectus urbi. In Rome, the praefectus urbi is always a senator.
- **Vigiles:** Serves as a fire brigade and night watch, armed as light infantry. A tribune commands each cohort, all under the praefectus vigilum, an equite (knight).

The standard equipment for soldiers is as follows:

- **Legionnaire:** Scale armor, large shield, long sword, two javelins
- **Elite:** Plate mail, large shield, long sword, two javelins
- **Light Infantry:** Hide, small shield, short sword
- **Archers:** Leather, short sword, long bow
- **Calvary:** Chain mail, small shield, long sword, heavy lance

For ordinary legionnaires, a military enlistment lasts 20 years. At the end of their enlistment, the legionnaire is given citizenship and land. Originally this practice encouraged retired Roman legions to colonize distant provinces. Since modern legions recruit among barbarians, this practice now spreads these barbarians within the boundaries of the empire. Given the frequency of war, many legionnaires do not survive their term of service, though. It is common for legionnaires to take wives and try to make a family while still in the legion, even though this practice is technically illegal.

Legions

There are 33 Roman legions (not counting the Praetorian Guard). Together with auxiliaries, this makes the Roman standing army number about 330,000, about 0.5% of the empire's population. The legions are mostly based on the frontiers. Legions are designated by both numbers and names to distinguish like-numbered legions.

Many legions were founded by either Julius Caesar (690-709) or Augustus (710-725) during the civil wars at the fall of the republic. Other legions were founded by particular emperors. Legions have a primary standard: the Roman eagle with the legion's own emblem on a flag below it. Individual units carry flags with the legion's emblem. Several legions have the bull and goat as emblems (symbols of Julius and Augustus).

- **I Adiutrix:** stationed at Brigetio (Pannonia), founded 821 AUB by Nero, emblem Capricorn
- **I Italica:** stationed at Novae (Moesia Inferior), founded 819 AUB by Nero, emblem Boar
- **I Minervia:** stationed at Bonna (Germania Inferior), founded 835 AUB by Domitian, emblem Minerva
- **I Parthica:** stationed at Nisibis (Syria), founded 950 AUB by S. Severus, emblem Centaur
- **II Adiutrix:** stationed at Aquincum (Pannonia), founded 823 AUB by Vespasian, emblem Capricorn
- **II Augusta:** stationed at Isca Augusta (Britannia), founded 710 AUB by Augustus, emblem Capricorn
- **II Italica:** stationed at Lauriacum (Noricum), founded 918 AUB by M Aurelius, emblem She-Wolf
- **II Parthica:** stationed at (Syria), founded 950 AUB by S. Severus, emblem Centaur
- **II Traiana:** stationed at Alexandria (Egypt), founded 858 AUB by Trajan, emblem Hercules
- **III Augusta:** stationed at Lambaesis (Mauretania), founded 710 AUB by Augustus, emblem Pegasus

- **III Cyrenaica:** stationed at Bostra (Arabia), founded 717 AUB by M Antony, emblem
- **III Gallica:** stationed at Raphana (Syria), founded 704 AUB by Caesar, emblem Two Bulls
- **III Italica:** stationed at Castra Regina (Raetia), founded 918 AUB by M Aurelius, emblem Stork
- **III Parthica:** stationed at Resaena (Syria), founded 950 AUB by S. Severus, emblem Bull
- **IV Flavia Felix:** stationed at Singidunum (Moesia Superior), founded 823 AUB by Vespasian, emblem Lion
- **IV Scythica:** stationed at Zeugma (Cappadocia), founded 711 AUB by M Antony, emblem Capricorn
- **V Macedonica:** stationed at Potaissa (Dacia), founded 710 AUB by Augustus, emblem Bull
- **VI Ferrata:** stationed at Caparcotna (Palestine), founded 695 AUB by Caesar, emblem She-Wolf
- **VI Victrix:** stationed at Eburacum (Britannia), founded 712 AUB by Augustus, emblem Bull
- **VII Claudia:** stationed at Viminacium (Moesia Superior), founded 695 AUB by Caesar, emblem Bull
- **VII Gemina:** stationed at Castra Legionis (Hispania Tarraconensis), founded 821 AUB by Galba, emblem
- **VIII Augusta:** stationed at Argentorate (Germania Superior), founded 694 AUB by Caesar, emblem Bull
- **X Fretensis:** stationed at Jerusalem (Palestine), founded 713 AUB by Augustus, emblem Boar
- **X Gemina:** stationed at Vindobona (Noricum), founded 711 AUB by Lepidus, emblem Bull
- **XI Claudia:** stationed at Durostorum (Moesia Inferior), founded 712 AUB by Augustus, emblem Neptune
- **XII Fulminata:** stationed at Melitene (Cappadocia), founded 710 AUB by Lepidus, emblem Thunderbolt
- **XIII Gemina:** stationed at Apulum (Dacia), founded 696 AUB by Caesar, emblem Lion
- **XIV Gemina:** stationed at Carnuntum (Noricum), founded 712 AUB by Augustus, emblem Capricorn
- **XV Apollinaris:** stationed at Satala (Cappadocia), founded 712 AUB by Augustus, emblem Apollo
- **XVI Flavia Firma:** stationed at Samosata (Cappadocia), founded 823 AUB by Vespasian, emblem Lion
- **XX Valeria Victoria:** stationed at Deva (Britannia), founded 722 AUB by Augustus, emblem Boar
- **XXII Primigenia:** stationed at Moguntiacum (Germania Superior), founded 714 AUB by Caligula, emblem Hercules
- **XXX Ulpia Victrix:** stationed at Castra Vetera (Germania Inferior), founded 858 AUB by Trajan, emblem Jupiter

Provinces

Roman provinces are divided into minor senatorial provinces (praetorian provinces), major senatorial provinces (consular provinces) and imperial provinces. These provinces are governed by propraetors, proconsuls and legati augusti, respectively. Italy and Egypt are each special cases.

Italia (Italy): Heart of the empire. Governed directly by the emperor and Senate (Praetorians).

- *Nearby Provinces:* Sardinia, Corsica, Sicilia and several small and old Alpine provinces.

Hispania (Spain): A settled land with Celtic half-elves, Carthaginian dwarfs and wild tribes of troglodytes in the northwest. The peninsula is home to many dragonborn as well. There are numerous Roman colonies in the south and east.

- *Provinces:* Baetica, Lusitania, Tarraconensis (VII Gemina).

Gaul (France): Land of the half-elf Celts, with German orcs pressing on the border provinces. The southern half is largely Romanized. The southern coast also has many Roman and Greek colonies. A few elvish strongholds still lie hidden in Gaul's forests.

- *Provinces:* Narbonensis, Aquitania, Lugdunensis, Belgica, Germania Superior (VIII Augusta, XXII Primigenia) and Germania Inferior (I Minervia, XXX Ulpia Victrix).

Britannia (Britain): Half-elf celts with only a light allegiance to Rome. There is a strong influence from the nearby elves of Hibernia (Ireland). Legions (II Augustus, VI Victrix, XX Valeria).

Danubian Provinces: Forms a frontier with orcs and the goblinoid tribes. The bulk of the heavy fighting between Rome and the orcs is here, especially in Dacia and Moesia.

- *Provinces:* Raetia (III Italica), Noricum (II Italica, X Gemina, XIV Gemina), Pannonia Superior (II Adiutrix) and Inferior (I Adiutrix), Dalmatia, Moesia Superior (IV Flavia, VII Claudia) and Inferior (I Italica, XI Claudia), Dacia (V Macedonica, XIII Gemina).

Greece: The center of Roman arts and sciences, home to many philosophical schools of wizardry.

- *Provinces:* Achaia, Epirus, Macedonia, Thracia.

Asia Minor: Mostly populated by humans and dwarves, with Roman colonies in major cities, Greeks on the western coast, some half-elf Celts in Galatia and scattered goblinoids. Its legions are all in the eastern province of Cappadocia.

- *Provinces:* Asia, Bythnia and Pontus, Galatia, Lycia and Pamphylia, Cilicia, Cappadocia (IV Scythica, XII Fulminata, XV Apollinaris, XVI Flavia Firma).

Near East: Mostly humans, dwarves with scattered goblinoids. The near east is turbulent with revolts and Persian intrigues.

- *Provinces:* Syria (I Parthica, II Parthica, III Gallica, III Parthica), Palestine (VI Ferrata, X Fretensis), Arabia (III Cyrenaica) and Cyprus.

Egypt: Controlled by the Praefectus Aegypti to protect its grain supply. Egypt is a melting pot, with eladrin, humans, dwarves and reptilian races. Legion (II Traiana)

Africa: Populated by dwarves, reptile folks and Roman colonists. Bordered on the south by the Sahara, over which gnolls and humans from Africa sometimes travel.

- *Provinces:* Cyrenaica and Crete, Africa Proconsularis, Maurtenia Caesariensis and Maurtenia Tingitana (these two provinces share III Augustus)

Languages

- Abyssal: The language of demons and elementals.
- Celestial: The language of gods and angels.

- Latin [Human]: The language of government throughout the Roman empire.
- Greek [Human]: A widely-spoken language in the east, and the language of scholars.
- Coptic [Human]: Language of the common-folk (non-eladrin) of Egypt.
- Etruscan [Human]: Dead language of the Etruscan people
- Fey [Elf, Eladrin]: The language of the elves, eladrin and folks of the Feywild.
- Celtic [Half-Elf]: The language of the Celtic half-elves.
- Druidic [Half-Elf]: Secret language of the druids.
- Sumerian [Dwarf]: Dead holy language of the dwarves.
- Punic [Dwarf]: The language of the Cathagians and the western dwarves.
- Aramaic [Dwarf]: The dwarves in the Eastern parts of the empire.
- Persian [Dwarf, Goblin]: Language of the dwarves of Persia and the Parthian goblins.
- Hittite [Goblin]: Dead language of the Hittites.
- Mongol [Goblin]: Language of goblin nomads.
- German [Orc]: Language of orcs and ogres.
- Rom [Halfling]: The language of halflings, often used among criminals of all types.
- Draconic [Reptilian races]: Language of the dragon-kings and modern reptilian races.

Schools of Magic

Wizardly magic was invented by the eladrin and systemized by Greeks. Among elves and eladrin, magic is taught by a wizard to his chosen apprentice, but among humans magic is taught in schools. The schools also teach philosophy as well. Though they originated in Greece, the schools have spread throughout the empire. Other (non-fey) races now study in one of the five human schools of magic.

Aristotelians: This school was founded by Aristotle. Their schools are called Lycium. They focus on “practical” magic, and other schools look down on them as craftsmen mages.

Epicureans: The philosopher Epicurus founded this school. Their schools are called Kepos (gardens) after Ho Kepos in Athens. Epicureans believe that life should be enjoyed to the fullest. Outsiders see them as hedonists, but Epicureans appreciate the pleasure of learning as well. They believe in the power of the spirit world, and are similar to warlocks and sorcerers in this respect.

Platonians: This school as founded by Plato and is the oldest school of magic. Its schools are called academies, after the Academy in Athens. Platonians are often devoted to pure study and the exploration of abstract magical forms.

Pythagoreans: This school sets great stock in mathematical symbols. They attribute their founding to Pythagoras, calling themselves Pythagoreans. This would make them the oldest school of magic, but the Platonians dispute their claim. They focus on protective magic.

Stoics: The philosopher Zeno established this school. Their schools are called Stoa. Stoics believe that there is a natural flow to the world and everything is fated. It is important to react to life's trials with nobility and restraint. Stoic are the most common kind of war mages. Marcus Aurelius was a stoic and the first wizard-emperor.

Warlocks: Not true wizards at all, warlocks get their power from their relationships with otherworldly beings, either through blood-relation or pacts with these creatures. True wizards look down on them, but infernal-pact warlocks are common among demon-tainted humans, and fey-pact warlocks are common with the fey-aligned Celts. Star-pact warlocks who deal with the outer gods are considered insane by most people.