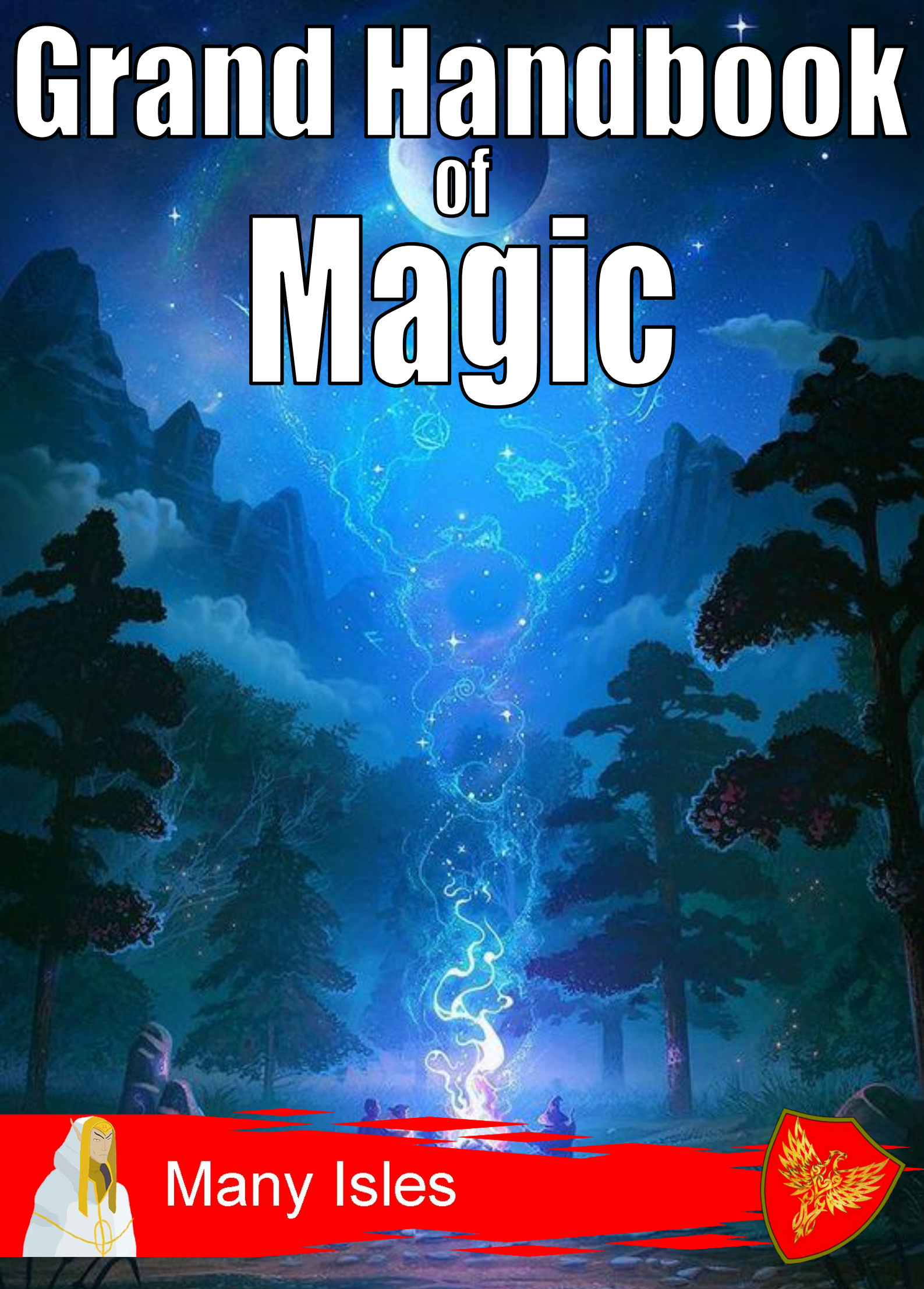
Grand Handbook of Magic



Many Isles

1 - Magic Theory

Magic is an essential part of the Many Isles. The Weave - the source of magic - permeats all the planes, like an overlay placed above the material world. It can produce great effects, such as massive fireballs, yet also requires great efforts by the most skilled spellcasters to produce a simple slice of bread.

Additional Sources

The Many Isles published a number of additional magic-oriented resources you can have a look at.

Handbook of Magicry. Tons of magic items.

Handbook of Spellcrafting. Cool in-world mechanics for creating your own spells.

Handbook of Blessings. Holy boons that bestow temporary buffs upon characters!

There's also other modules that include some creative spells or magic twerks. Check out our Spell Index for spell lists, or just search by "magic" in our digital library!

The Nature of the Weave

Magic is a physical representation of things from another dimension, the Weave. It is from a completely different universe named Pruth-Henkuk.

A tiny part of this world can be entered or called upon through the Weave. It is a non-physical layer that overlaps with Ochebana, a realm of essence that can only be entered with a soul. All things in the material world are reflected there, and are bound to the essence of the Weave.

Interacting with the Weave. Most magic-users apply specific mantras (spells) that channel some of the Weave's energy and cause it to burst forth in the material world. Truly powerful spellcasters, called *seeing* casters, can actually look into the Weave. The image they see is thwarted by their own perceptions - one might see the reflection of a forest as a mystical fey place, while another could see skeletal trees - but magical links and living souls can be seen there. Seeing the Weave can help casters form their spells, as they can see the Weave reacting to their movements before the spell is actually released. For example, a wood elf would see the thrumming of the Weave as it spins around her coaxing hand, pulling light out of a tree that shrivels up and burns while a ball of fire erupts in the material world.

A spellcaster with their soul fully in the Weave can directly interact with the essence there and form much more powerful spells, physically pushing them out into the material world. Such beings that can directly enter the Weave have great power and are usually gods.

Using the Weave

There are two ways in which the Weave can be used to affect the real world, two kinds of magic: creation and transmission.

Creation. This is the act of pulling energy across out of the Weave, essentially "creating" it out of thin air. Summoning energy, however, strains the essence of the summoner. An artifact that produces lighting can do so only a limited number of times before its connection to the Weave is so weakened and torn that it must wait for the links to reform. Creating physical objects, rather than just images thereof, takes supreme effort and is a rarely achieved feat.

The Weave can usually repair its strains by itself, but big holes caused by massive overuse can remain open for centuries or longer, manifesting as "antimagic fields" in the physical realm. Producing physical objects, no easy feat, damages the Weave the most.

Translocation. Instead of pulling at the Weave and tearing it apart, another magical art is to transfer energy or matter through the Weave instead of the physical realm. Paired gemstones - with the sort determining the type of energy it can transfer - can ingest one kind of energy on one side and release a completely different energy over a certain distance from the other gem. In general, translocation is done by pairing two essences in the Weave and then transporting something through the Weave between these two paired items. This is usually energy, but can also sometimes be matter. If the transfer is done from energy within the Weave to something outside of it, the tearing still occurs on the releasing end.

Kinds of Gemstones

Gemstones are important in manipulating the Weave as they are prime carriers and transformers of energy and can easily be paired. A gem's kind determines what kind of energy it can take in and gives out.



Gem Kinds

Gem	Energy Type
Ruby	Heat
Crimson Ruby	Fire
Aquamarine	Kinetic
Turquenite	Wind
Chrysocolla	Water
Diamond	Stone
Emerald	Life
Sapphire	Lightning
Pink Tourmaline	Light
Golden Ruby	High Magic
Citrine	Weave energy

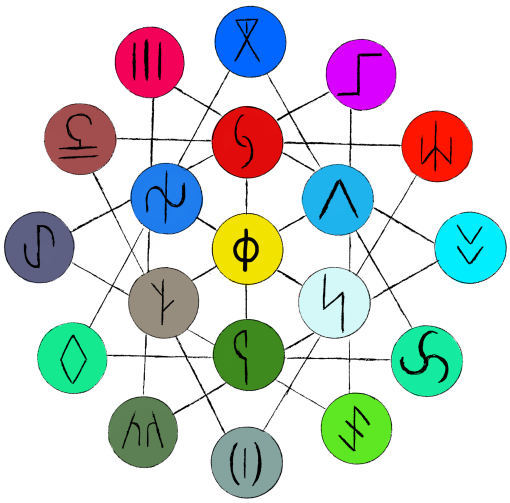
Citrine is special in the way that when worked into a holy symbol or similar, it can form a pairing directly with a source of power, granting the caster more power within the Weave.

Magical Models

We will discuss two models that were developed by Ochebanian scholars which represent some aspects of the magical art. They are attempts to structure magic beyond the physical realities of Creation and Translocation, of finding associations between various kinds of Creation or Translocation.

The Ele'Sillian Principle

The elves were the first mortal race to order magic and look at it scientifically. Almost every elf had, to a minimal extent, acquired the ability to cast spells during the pinnacle of the Elvish Empire, in 5'000 b. OW.



The elven magic was based on the Ele'Sillian Principle. According to this theory, all spells are based on an elemental system. The six elements (fire, air, lightning, life, stone, water) represent the six specifications of magic. If one mixes any one element with another, following the Ele'Sill'Mirn (a diagram representing all the elements), one would get an unpure spell, which contains two elements at once. Such spells are weaker and much more prone to being dispelled.

Another blend exists, a type one reaches when one masters all six elements separately and becomes a great spellcaster. This element is that of High Magic, and stands at the center of all Ele'Sill'Mirns.

The ancient High Mages were the ones that understood all elements and managed to bind them to their will, making them great spellcasters.

The Ele'Sillian Principle is not complete, however. Many spells aren't any mix or pure elements. Any spell not attributed to a specific element or legal mix of two is named High Magic, due to its odd functioning. Sometimes, a spell doesn't fit into the scheme at all; these oddities can't be dispelled by methods relying on inhibiting the spell's elements.

Schools of Magic

There are 6 schools of magic. These schools are broad domains in which magic can be performed. Most have distinctions called colleges, which embody more specific aspects of the school. They aren't a reflection of the magic's essence, but of the specific summoning patterns, methods and effects used in the domain.

Abjuration.. This is the school of magical fields and immobile forces, often working with Translocation. Many types of magic use abjuration. *Comprehension* is the art of focusing on vibrations of essence to understand the meaning behind writings and speech. *Divination* uses fields to track objects or creatures by the faint magical traces and echoes they leave in the physical world. *Enchantment.* A field can be formed around a weapon or item, granting it certain special abilities by connecting it to the Weave and changing its essence. *Illusion* is the art of creating images and sounds using magical fields. *Fyloram* uses magical fields to modify what a creature sees and feels.

Evocation.. An evocator specializes in bringing energy into the material world, the simplest form of Creation. *Telekinesis.* In Telekinesis, an evocator channels invisible kinetic energy to shove, crush, or immobilize.

Hygieia. This is the school of modifying living creatures via the Weave. It is a very difficult school, and can usually only be achieved with knowledge granted by the gods. *Goiteia* is the art of changing the mind of a creature to charm it. *Necromancy* is the aspect of Hygieia concerning death specifically.

Teleportation. A spellcaster can pull the strings of the Weave in a certain manner, pulling him through it and back into the material world in another location. A pure form of Translocation. *Conjuration* is an aspect of teleportation, in which a caster teleports objects and creatures from somewhere he knows to him.

Tilemeta. This is the art of entering and observing the Weave. Typically, this can only be performed by extraordinary spellcasters; those that can see (and maybe even enter) the Weave. They can use what they can see in the other dimension to track and modify magic at their will. *Discernation* is the art one performs when using magical traces in the Weave to track creatures.

Transmutation. Transmutation is the school of modifying objects and nonliving matter, such as energy. Particularly powerful casters can even mold energy into matter.

2 - Spell Theory

Spells are codified ways in which the Weave can be manipulated to create effects in the material world. They are usually sequences of hand movements or sounds, along with a catalyzing essence, that cause energy to manifest.

Spellcaster Classes

There are distinctions between ways of learning how to summon spells, and sometimes even between how one harnesses magic.

Wizards and sorcerers use the arcane method. They practice the steps of casting a spell. Wizards do so by researching codifications of spells and learning them in a scientific way, while sorcerers' essence is usually paired in some way to codified spells. Maybe they're influened by an ancient wizard's spellbook. This gives them to innately acquire the knowledge of a summoning sequence, which they improve in through gut feeling rather than meticulous research.

Druids, witches and others use fugues, large patterns of magic. Druids access Nature's Roots, a kind of pairing network that is spun across many plant and beast essences. It includes a number of imprinted spell patterns which druids can learn more or less intuitively. Witches bind spirits, souls living only in the Weave, to use as a component and gain access to certain manifestations of magic. They also learn spells in an arcane way. Valkyries learn spells like wizards but have an essence embroidered in the Flamelink, while dragonsouls use the Dragonbond like druids do Nature's Roots.

Religious spellcasters and warlocks rely on a powerful entity for power. Clerics and paladins learn spells in an arcane way (sometimes, a god gives spellbooks to a church for them to learn), but get much of their power directly from their god through a paired holy symbol. This allows them to call upon much more energy or gain extremely specific skills. Warlocks get everything from their patrons, who gives them both more power through a pairing and special magical manifestations similarly to a witch's spirits.

Casting Spells

The process of casting a spell usually takes a few seconds, as a spellcaster goes through their paces, essentially getting the Weave into shape before effectuating the spell.

Spell Slots. Each time a creature summons energy or otherwise manipulates the Weave, its essence is somewhat strained, which is visible in the Weave as black tears around them. At a certain point, the Weave is so torn that it can no longer be manipulated and spun into spells. The caster needs to wait for the Weave to repair itself once they've used up all their "spell slots".

Creating Spells. The process of developing the correct sequence to call forth a certain spell is long and arduous. It's a process of exploring in the domain that the imagined spell is in and then refining the summoning sequence until one finds an adequate result. For D&D rules on creating spells, see the Handbook of Spellcrafting.

Components

Most spellcasters don't truly know what they're doing: they simply go through a series of codified steps that were developed by someone else and that are known to produce a certain effect; the spell's pattern is imprinted in the Weave, and performing it is in a way an instruction for how the energy or essence should form itself. Three kinds of summoning components can influence the resulting spell.

Vocal. Chanting or otherwise making sound vibrates the air and is echoed in the Weave. This helps the spell's strands to form.

Somatic. Hand and body movements are often a key part of summoning a spell. Living bodies have the strongest echo in the Weave and can more easily order and harness strands.

Material. Sometimes, having an essence close by is important to creating and harnessing the strands correctly. Powerful spells that can't be called by the limited power of the spellcaster can pull so hard on the material component's essence that it shatters, destroying the item while the spell is summoned.

In other cases, the item has been specially paired, which can help associate the correct strands or simply harness more power, if the item is paired to a powerful entity such as a god.

Improving Ability

There is always much room for improvement for spellcasters. Most of the time, better skills develop in the way that casters know better how to manipulate the Weave. The more one uses it, the more one can actually feel it. Sometimes, experienced casters can learn how to look into or enter the Weave. By feeling the strands better, one can manipulate them in less damaging ways, straining the Weave less.

Other casters rely on pairings with powerful entities. In this case, the link grows stronger, which allows the spellcasters to just pull more power with the same moves and strain.

Hygieia practicers, finally, may grow more experienced at analyzing organisms through the Weave and feeling the various changes that are made. By focusing their attention, experienced clerics can also reduce the energy and strain necessary for their spells.

Special Manipulations

Ways in which the Weave can be manipulated.

Rituals

Torn bits of Weave are repaired through diffusion, with the rest of the Weave just pushing in the tears and making it whole. Certain spells can be cast in a much elongated form, in which a spellcaster spends much time ordering the strands and channeling them from a large area, instead of just pulling it from their essence's immediate surroundings as with normal spells. By distributing the strain over such a large area, and carefully arranging the strands before summoning, spells can be cast with next to no damage on the Weave.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies are essentially spells, but cast by more than one person. A way to deal with the physical limitations of a single caster being able to call upon only so many strands is by introducing multiple casters working on the same spell. This is usually a delicate affair and takes more time, but can produce effects many times greater than what the spellcasters could have achieved on their own.

3 - Sources of Magic

Fugues

A fugue is a pattern of magic. It is a network of paired essences, sometimes tied to special patterns in the Weave such as traces of spellcasting that allow essences paired to a fugue to instinctively learn certain spells. They often also include powerful extradimensional beings that give the fugue the ability to channel more strands, spirits that can manifest magical effects in the material world, and imprinted knowledge or emotions that transfer to all its essences.

Dragonbond

Dragonkind is widely known for its magic. The large and quite heavy beings can fly, and they have innate magical breaths. They pull this power from the Dragonbond fugue, which interlaces the true dragons and to some extent their lessers. The Dragonbond also includes a number of primordials held captive in the draconic gods' holdouts, which supply the necessary magic. Dragons use an air primordial for flight, while their breath weapons are deviated from pure or mixed primordial elements.

Ardent dragon cultists occasionally gain access to the Dragonbond for spellcasting purposes. These dragonsouls both gain the intuitive knowledge on how to cast certain spells as well as great power in casting them. Their magic's signature color is deep purple.

One unlucky side effect is that the Dragonbond can be used against the bodies tied to it. Some gems, infused with Dragonbond-touched blood, can be turned into "Dragonbond absorbers": they have a large empty storage space in their essence tied to the Dragonbond. They also have a special gem caging that destroys the infusion just before it can enter the gem.

When a piece of metal connected to a gem - say, a *dragoneater* spear tip - comes into contact with the flesh of a Dragonbond essence, it is sucked out, killing the body. The absorbed essence, no longer infused with Dragonbond, then diffuses back out of the gem. Flubbart, a fish oil, has an essence that vibrates antagonistically to the Dragonbond, causing damage to an infused essence. Both these weapons can be used very destructively against dragons.

Flamelink

The Dwarven King Dain Fireforge forged the Flamelink in 0 OW with the help of the dwarven gods. It was a desperate measure to fight the onslaught on darkness on the Dwarven Empire. The Flamelink fugue is centered on the king himself.

Valkyries, warriors trained on the Flamelink, can pull on it for knowledge and great power. The king has a large grip on the Weave, especially in the element of fire, so they can channel huge amounts of energy through him and paired gem foci into devastating flaming spells and other manifestations. The Flamelink essentially consists of a channel of energy from the pump (the king) to the outlets (Valkyries).

Many magic items were also endowed with Flamelink power. Crimson rubies affixed to the items allowed them to also channel the king's power. Here, however, the creators consciously left a limitation in the gems that meant that energy being Translocated through the Weave into the items also strained it, so that the items could be used only a limited number of times before they had to recharge.

A problem of the Flamelink is that the king couldn't actually control who accesses his power beyond checking the production of Flamelink-paired items. This meant that certain ambitious spellcasters could tap into the Flamelink to their own ends, and that Flamelink magic items fallen into enemy hands couldn't be deactivated. The fugue's nature, however, did allow one to track all outlets pulling on the king's power.

Nature's Roots

This fugue's origin isn't well known, but it likely involved some gods of nature that disappeared during the Celestial Wars. Essentially all living plants, especially fey ones, are connected to Nature's Roots. Many wild beasts and natural spirits are also tied to it. There are some sources of energy included in the fugue, in the form of dormant gods and a primordial of life, but they are restrictive in their power and do not share it openly to anyone in the fugue.

Spellcasters connected to Nature's Roots primarily gain access to an extremely rich trove of knowledge ingrained in its many essences. This, too, cannot be freely accessed, but interaction with the network's many plants - notably trees - can relinquish ancient information and spell patterns to druids.

Extradimensional Beings

Such creatures of great power have a very strong essence in the Weave; usually, they have their soul there, and only show reflections or shards of themselves on the material world. They have much control over the strands around them and are thereby a huge source of power. They can often also directly manipulate the Weave, which among other things gives them the ability to destroy souls without ever physically interacting with them.

Deities, Fell Lords...

Gods and their equivalent Demon Lords and devil nobility arose sometime in the early Celestial War, when they shaped the face of Ochebana and imprisoned the primordials. They are beings of great power that can see, feel, and maybe even enter the Weave.

Most gods, and the fell lords that maintain cults of worship, set up fugues of their own similar to the Flamelink. Ardent believers and holy artifacts can be infused in the fugue, using a paired item - either a citrine holy symbol or just a fitting gem - to draw power from the god. This can only be done in a limited fashion, however, because the supernatural power is drawn from within the Weave and pulling the energy out strains it.

Some supernatural beings depend on their fugues to survive, usually because they don't have enough power to impose themselves on the Weave and instead are just embodiments created in the Weave by their own fugues. They depend fully on the fugue's other essences to exist and draw their power from their number of followers. This is the case for many gods.



Primordials

Primordials are beings of great elemental power (using the Ele'Sillian classification). They roamed the world before the Celestial War, at the start of which some were killed and others were enclosed in great prisons, often beneath the surface of Ochebana. They are enemies of contemporary deities.

As extradimensional beings, they live both in the Weave and in the material world. They are a great spirit of power, emotions and knowledge that warps the Weave around it. Often, the material area around a primordial prison is altered by this mighty presence. An example is the remorhaz colony in the High Ice, in northern Balebu. The presence of a fire primordial led to the creation of a fugue with remorhaz essences, which allowed them to constantly draw power from the Weave to heat their bodies, melt the ice around them into tunnels, and fuel them.

The Many Isles thank you!

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