



THE APOTHECARY

The official newsletter of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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The Primal Order, an Introduction

By Peter Adkison

The Primal Order™ (TPO) is the first book in The Primal Line by Wizards of the Coast®. It is a system-independent capsystem for the roleplaying and development of deities, spheres of influence, religions, artifacts, and planes of existence in fantasy roleplaying games. Peter Adkison is one of the authors of TPO, along with his wife Cathleen, Steve Conard, David Howell, Cliff Jones, Ken McGlothlen, and Russ Woodall. TPO is due for release in March of 1992.—Ed.

Like most roleplayers I won my initial scars as a gamemaster by playing AD&D® (actually, it was just D&D® back in those days). Eventually I started to become somewhat disgruntled with the limitations of the AD&D system, and began looking for a solution. I think that most roleplayers who reach this position eventually do one of two things: either they move on to newer systems, or they start coming up with house rules, plagiarizing everything in sight. I did the latter. My campaign of *Chaldea* is such a confused menagerie of rule systems that even I get them all confused from time to time.

One of the areas in which I could not find any material to my liking, however, was that of deities. When several of my players in *Chaldea* reached demigod status they began to ask questions and make comments such as "What are deities?" "Why do they want worshipers?" "What can they do?" "The deities in this book don't look that tough to me!" and so forth. Eventually Russ Woodall, a friend of mine and GM of *Nul-Athor* came up with what he called the "primal energy" system. This system of house rules proposed that deities were individuals who possessed what he called *primal energy*. He defined primal energy as the ultimate energy in the universe, the energy from which all other energies (matter, time, magic, psionics, gravity, and so forth) stem. Primal energy was divided into *primal base*, which is a deity's soul, and *primal flux*, which is the energy that a deity can use on a day to day basis.

Primal base in *Nul-Athor* was very difficult to acquire and highly valued, for the more of it you had, the more powerful was your divine soul. Primal base could only be gained by becoming a deity in the first place, by taking control of a plane of existence, by surviving through time (primal base increases by 1% every earth year), or as a gift from another deity. You could lose primal base as a result of a primal flux attack from another deity, by converting it to primal flux (typically done only in a pinch), by creating artifacts or servitors, or by ascending a mortal to divine status.

Primal flux was analogous to mana in spell point systems; i.e., you'd get a certain amount of primal flux each day to play with and what you didn't use that day you lost. Then the next day you would have a new supply. Primal flux

could come from worshipers, temples, sacrifices, or controlled planes, and you'd get a certain amount automatically (10% of your base) simply by virtue of the fact that you were a deity.

Since I had a character in Russ's campaign who had recently become ascended, I especially liked this system. I felt that with this system my character really was a deity. Naturally, I began using the system in *Chaldea*, and Russ and I along with many others evolved the system and playtested it over a period of approximately eight years.

Eventually in May of 1990 when we decided that we were crazy enough to start up a gaming company, it was obvious that the primal system was an excellent prospect for an initial product. Steve Conard headed up the initial effort involved with developing the product, and then I took it over when he got married and moved to Vancouver, B.C. Eventually we became pleased enough with this product that we decided to create an entire line of products around the concept. In addition to *The Primal Order*, we are working on a divine-level bestiary, a variety of supporting modules, a planes supplement, a churches supplement, a table game, and more. Rest assured that this product line is being supported with timely releases just as if it were a game system in and of itself.

Speaking of game systems, we decided to keep this product system independent, (i.e., not built around any particular game system on the market). Frankly, we think that there are already many fine game systems out there (like *Talislanta!*), and we'd rather provide products that will help you play in the systems you already like. However, most system-independent products require considerable effort on the part of the GM in order to adapt it to the game system being used. We thought we'd try to help out with that problem by providing extensive integration notes on how to use this material with nineteen popular game systems, including *Talislanta* of course.

We obviously hope that you'll enjoy the game and think that everyone should rush down and buy a copy as soon as it comes out. Even if you don't play deities and never have any intention of playing deities, this book is still a very valuable reference work for helping to define this highly important subject that plays such an integral part of most fantasy campaigns.

Credits

Editor-in-Chief: Lisa Stevens

Associate Editor: Casey Brebberman

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Special Thanks: Stephan Michael Sechi, Eric Chandler, and Peter Adkison

Arkon's Logbook



by Eric Chandler

(Excerpted from the folios of Arkon, the renowned sorcerer of ancient times)

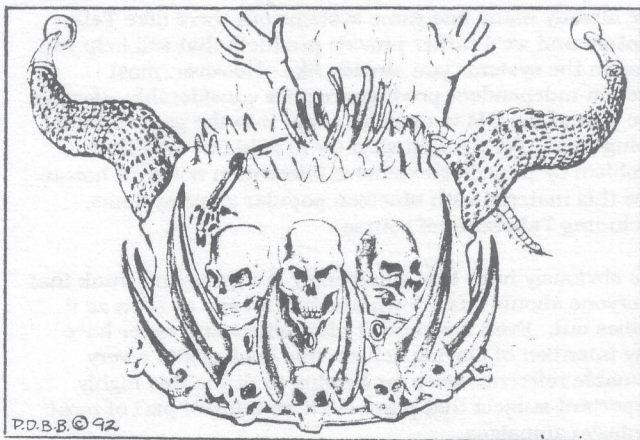
"Curiosity is a common malady, for which there is no known cure. I myself admit to harboring an inexhaustible interest as regards the habits and preoccupations of my contemporaries: particularly the sorcerer Koraq, who is always hard at work on some secretive and fascinating project; and the enchantress, Salaecis, who exhibits a laudable disdain for all but the most abbreviated apparel while within the confines of her sanctum sanctorum.

Regrettably, the individual's right to privacy poses the greatest obstacle to curiosity. The locked door, the drawn curtain, and the latched shutter—all are anathema to the seeker of knowledge, for whom the phrase 'out of sight, out of mind' has no meaning. Yet minor annoyances of this sort need no longer impede the quest for truth. The solution to all such dilemmas resides within the following useful cantrip, which in all modesty I claim as my own invention."

ARKON'S WANDERING EYE

By virtue of this simple charm, the magician is able to conjure forth an enchanted orb resembling a solitary, floating eye. The orb cannot be detected except by magical means, and can be made to travel at the behest of the caster

CONTEST: YOU PROVIDE THE CAPTION!!



Occasionally, we receive some rather enigmatic pieces of artwork here at WotC. In our quest to get our customers involved, we decided to start a contest where YOU provide the caption for a piece of artwork that has left us in the dark. Give us a caption of 15 words or less for the above piece of artwork. The winner of this issue's contest will receive the *Tales of Talislanta* anthology and have the caption printed in the next issue of *The Apothecary*. Send all submissions to: The Apothecary, Wizards of the Coast, Inc., PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. Contest ends March 15, 1992. Void where prohibited.

up to a distance of ten feet per level of the enchantment. It can pass through any solid, non-magical substance, up to the limits of the spell's range.

A Wandering Eye functions as an extension of the caster's own optical organ, enabling the magician to see what it sees. The orb has a range of vision equal to that of a normally sighted person, and will be able to utilize any form of vision that the caster possesses *naturally*, though its peripheral vision is necessarily somewhat constrained; the eye can only see straight ahead, in the direction that it is facing. It requires some source of illumination in order to function at its fullest capacity, and is ineffectual in spotting invisible or astral presences.

To cast the spell, the magician recites an arcane couplet and closes his or her eyes; the caster is then able to see through the Wandering Eye. The caster must maintain total concentration with eyes closed for the duration of the spell's use (maximum duration is ten rounds per level). Opening the eyes while this spell is still operative will cause the caster to suffer severe disorientation, lasting for one round per level of the spell.

MAGIC RESISTANCE: None. Note, however, that a Wandering Eye can be blinded by a Spell of Radiance or other strong illumination, and can be rendered useless by certain magics that affect the sensory organs. It should also be noted that the use of this spell renders the caster susceptible to illusions, placing him or her at -1 to resist while the spell is operative.

Editor's Note: There is evidence to suggest that Arkon did not actually create the cantrip, ARKON'S WANDERING EYE, but instead stole it from a magical reference of unknown origins, which he found while sneaking about in the workroom of his friend and rival, the renowned sorcerer and theoretician Koraq.

Newsflash!!

Yes, we have no bananas — Yes, it is sad but true, the *Arcanum* is officially out-of-print. It has actually been gone from our inventory for over a year. While there are no immediate plans to release a new edition of the *Arcanum*, don't rule it out either. Watch here for future details.

Author, Author — Wizards of the Coast is looking for a few good authors. If you wish to publish your ageless prose with WotC, send a letter of query and a SASE to Jay Hays here at WotC central. Of course, we are also looking for small tidbits for future issues of *The Apothecary*, so send your ideas to Lisa Stevens. All submissions to *The Apothecary* become the property of WotC, however the authors of the articles, spells, magic items, etc. will be credited in the text. Where else can you see your ideas in print!!

I, Robot — Secret sources close to the WotC staff have leaked out news on their future product plans. The comedy team of Garfield and Davis are hard at work on a robot board game due to be released this summer. Our inside agent mentioned that the game promises to be a heck of a lot of fun, while a maintenance robot interviewed only responded with a "splurt" and a frazzled look. More news will be forthcoming soon.

All Work and No Play — President Peter Adkison was observed recently taking the day off. The reason for this change of schedule could not be confirmed.

Mail Order Catalog, Spring 1992

Coming soon from Wizards of the Coast:

Talisanta Guidebook, Third Edition • WOC2002 • \$20.00
• Available March 1992

This third edition of the award winning Talislanta game system is Wizard of the Coast's first release in the licensed Talislanta series. The year is 620 N.A. and much has changed on the Talislantan continent. The Lyceum Arcanum has been opened in the city of Cymril and the Tirshata has appeared to unite the Sub-Men against the other civilized races of Talislanta. A new and improved magic system highlights this edition of the popular game system. So explore the most diverse and intriguing milieu in fantasy gaming—try Talislanta.

Tales of Talislanta • WOC3001 • \$5.00 • Available March 1992

An anthology of short stories written by some of the top authors in the fantasy field, **Tales of Talislanta** will serve as an introduction to the fascinating world of Talislanta for those readers who are new to this milieu.

The Primal Order • WOC0001 • \$20.00 • Available March 1992

A completely new capsystem designed for use with any roleplaying system, **The Primal Order** introduces a fully developed means of playing deities as either player characters or non-player characters. Though geared toward fantasy, **The Primal Order** can be used with any genre that allows the existence of deities. For gamemasters, this universal supplement will explain how deities gain their power, why they supply their priests with spells, why they have home planes, spheres of influence, and much more. Players also gain from **The Primal Order** because it allows them to raise their powerful characters from mortal to immortal status.

Talisanta Geographica • WOC2201 • \$6.95 • Available April 1992

The long awaited, full-color map of Talislanta has finally arrived. Rendered by renowned cartographer Eric Hotz, **Talisanta Geographica** will bring your **Talisanta** campaign to living color.

Available NOW from Wizards of the Coast:

Talisanta Worldbook • WOC2001 • \$20.00

The **Talisanta Worldbook** is the atlas and gazetteer of Archaeus, the strange and exotic world that serves as the setting for the **Talisanta** game.

Talisanta Naturalist's Guide • WOC2200 • \$12.00

The **Talisanta Naturalist's Guide** is a compendium of selected flora and fauna native to the magical realm of Talislanta.

The Chronicles of Talislanta • WOC2000 • \$12.00 (Limited quantities available)

This original Talislanta product details the chronicles of Tamerlin—explorer, self-styled wizard, and obscure author of ancient times.

The **Cyclopedia Talislanta** series provides detailed and in-depth overviews of different locales in and around the Talislantan continent. The following volumes are available:

Cyclopedia Talislanta •

WOC2400 • \$14.00 (Limited quantities available)

Cyclopedia Talislanta: The Seven Kingdoms •

WOC2402 • \$10.00

Cyclopedia Talislanta: The Wilderlands of Zaran •

WOC2403 • \$10.00

Cyclopedia Talislanta: The Western Lands •

WOC2404 • \$10.00

Cyclopedia Talislanta: The Eastern Lands •

WOC2405 • \$10.00

Cyclopedia Talislanta: The Desert Kingdoms •

WOC2406 • \$10.00

Atlantis: The Lost World • WOC1080 • \$20.00

Atlantis is a complete and comprehensive world setting for any fantasy roleplaying game. This book contains the original text of **The Lexicon** and **The Bestiary**, plus new material never published before.

The Compleat Adventurer • WOC4803 • \$10.00 (Limited quantities available)

The **Compleat Adventurer** is part of the original Bard Games **Compleat** series product line useable for any roleplaying game system and offers a variety of colorful and viable character types from which to choose.



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Title	Price
Talisanta Worldbook	\$20.00
Talisanta Naturalist's Guide	\$12.00
Chronicles of Talislanta	\$12.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #1	\$14.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #2	\$10.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #3	\$10.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #4	\$10.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #5	\$10.00
Cyclopedia Talislanta #6	\$10.00
Atlantis: The Lost World	\$20.00
The Compleat Adventurer	\$10.00
Talisanta Guidebook, third edition	\$20.00
Tales of Talislanta	\$5.00
Talisanta Geographica	\$6.95
The Primal Order	\$20.00

Please send a check or money order made payable to Wizards of the Coast to: Wizards of the Coast, Inc., PO Box 707, Renton, WA, 98057-0707. All checks or money orders must be in U.S. funds. Allow 2 to 3 weeks for delivery. Foreign overseas orders should add 20% to the Subtotal for Surface Mail or 40% to the Subtotal for Air Mail delivery. No guarantee can be given about the timeliness of products that haven't been released yet.

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Whispers from the Wizard's Tower

Rantings and other gibberish
by Lisa Stevens (*Editor-in-Chief*)

Okay. I know. It's been a long time between issues of *Black Savant*. Way too long. But, as they say, good things come to those who wait, and you have all waited a long time. Therefore, you deserve the good things that we have in store for you. Who are we, you ask? Well, let me introduce ourselves. We are Wizards of the Coast, Inc., or WotC to our friends. Thanks to our good friend Mr. Stephan Michael Sechi, WotC now has the license to produce products in the **Talisanta** line (and the rest of the Bard Games line for that matter). We are proud to have acquired the **Talisanta** line and will do our best to make **Talisanta** the number one game on the market.

Oh yeah, you may have noticed that this newsletter isn't called *Black Savant* anymore. Why? Well, mainly because we plan on covering other things in addition to **Talisanta** in this newsletter. This will begin with our other product line, the **Primal** line, and expand as we develop other products.

So what's up with **Talisanta**? Lots. First off, Steve has taken **Talisanta** twenty years into the future. Much has changed and many of you, like Tamerlin, may not recognize parts of a once-familiar world. But I'm sure you will find this new **Talisanta** to be just as intriguing, if not more so, than the one with which you are familiar. Steve and game designer Jonathan Tweet have put their fertile minds to the task

of making **Talisanta** even better and we think that the results are going to be worth waiting for.

We have all kinds of things in store for you with **Talisanta**. Our first release in this line is actually a co-release: the *Talisanta Guidebook, third edition* and an anthology of short stories appropriately titled *Tales of Talisanta*. Down the line, we have lots to look forward to. Jonathan Tweet is writing the first official **Talisanta** adventure, *Scent of the Beast*, which is also going to be a series of adventures that follow the plot of the Sub-Men uprising introduced in the **Guidebook**. Another long awaited product is the full-color map of **Talisanta**. We have commissioned the renowned cartographer Eric Hotz (of **Härrn**™ map fame) to do the **Talisanta** map. Further down the line, we are going to be releasing an updated **Sorcerer's Guide**. We also have a bestiary of the Unknown Lands ready to go and plan to explore the Unknown Lands more in future products. In short, rest assured that we will be filling out the **Talisanta** milieu with frequent, high-quality products.

The flagship product for Wizards of the Coast is a capsystem called *The Primal*

Order. So what is *The Primal Order*? Basically, it is a capsystem designed to allow game players to introduce deities into any game system. Though geared toward fantasy, *The Primal Order* can be used with any genre that allows the existence of deities. Follow-on products for *The Primal Order* include adventures, fully developed deities, and other products going into more detail on various aspects of *The Primal Order*, such as temples, planes of existence and minions.

So that's it. We're here for the long haul and we're glad to have you along. There are a lot of exciting products in the works that will make an impact on the gaming industry. Please, don't hesitate to write and tell us what you think of any of our products, or about products you might be interested in seeing. We're here to serve you, our customers, and we want to know what you think. Till next issue, great gaming!

