

Springend
03/807

The Blackrune Free Dispatch

Issue 1/Vol. 1

Compiled, Edited, and Published by The Blackrune Free Company (0421)

"A Lion To My Lamb"
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Campfire Confessional

“A Lion To My Lamb”

The Role and Reality of Religion in TribeNet

“Several cults now grew up around the monster. Some held that it was a devil or damned soul forced to appear on Earth in torment to expiate the catastrophe of two centuries back. Others believed that it, or he, was some kind of messenger whose roar portended either doom or hope according to the believer. One very vocal sect taught that the apparition registered the moral conduct of the townspeople over the past year, and scrutinized the annual apparition for changes which could be interpreted for good or ill. It was considered lucky, or dangerous, to be touched by some of the dust raised by the monster. In every generation at least one small boy would try to hit the monster with a stick, usually acquiring a broken arm and a lifelong tavern tale. Pelting the monster with stones or other objects was a popular sport, and

for some years people systematically flung prayers and flowers at it. Once a party tried to net it and were left with strings and vapor. The area itself had long since been fenced off at the center of the park.” (Excerpt from “The Man Who Walked Home” by James Tiptree, Jr.)

Since the moment man first entertained the notion of the existence of a power or force external to himself, the mystery and fear of the unknown and unexplainable could finally be reconciled: “It is the work and the will of the Gods.”

The belief in a higher power, or powers, has tantalized and intrigued mankind on every inhabited continent on Earth at one time or another, in one way or another, and persist virtually unabated to this very day.

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and stillborn children were all
dreadful examples of the wrath
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pantheon.***

While modern advances in Science, and an increasingly profound knowledge of how the universe actually works, have pushed against the edges of the “Domain of the Divine”, we still find ourselves with many questions for which we have no answer except “Divine Design.”

Our own ancient ancestors did not have the luxury of tunneling electron-microscopes, satellite imaging, or gravity wave detectors to explain natural phenomena. So, when something as commonplace as an eclipse occurred, which is wholly predictable and explainable in our modern age, it was ascribed divine portent.

Floods, plagues, earthquakes, and stillborn children were all dreadful examples of the wrath of an angered deity or pantheon. Conversely, an abundant harvest, productive dairy herds, and rain

amid a prolonged drought were seen as positive indications that the gods had received the people's prayers, offerings, and sacrifices, and were abundantly pleased. At the very least, they were no longer angry for perceived transgressions.

Praise and prayer, offerings and temples, proselytizing and penance: these were all seen as ways to appease the gods and bring good fortune and prosperity, health, and luck in battle (and the bedroom, as well). The perceived rewards, whether skeptics personally believe they were divinely delivered or not, kept religion flowing, and the populace happy (and controllable).

When I set about writing the outline for this essay, I had to confront my own

personal prejudices by asking myself: “how would a religion work in a game with no mechanism for the supernatural?” The answer, it turned out, was quite simple...”The same way it works in our modern world...through faith.”

When people believe that something they are doing will bring them blessings, they tend to feel better about doing it. If they believe it strongly enough, they can accomplish seemingly wondrous things (or, sadly, completely monstrous ones.)

So, how do we develop a religion within the confines of the rules and code, protocols and prohibitions of TribeNet? Surely we cannot ask Peter to allow the gods to manifest and walk amongst us, smiting our enemies on our behalf, as they are said to have done in Norse and Greek mythologies. But, can we design a religion in the game which simulates the benefits and requirements of the worship of a pantheon of deities? Certainly.



When considering the formation of a religion in TribeNet, some players will likely concentrate on the desired benefits and requisite sacrifices, and pay little attention to fleshing out the deities who are allegedly responsible for the former, and demanding of the latter. “Here's a religion which lets my Trade Element transfer goods between units up to 20 hexes away, and we have to assign 1000 Actives to Meditation during Month

10.” Yeah....that's a pretty decent benefit, and a pretty hefty sacrifice, but is it a “religion”?

I suppose it *could* be a religion, if the author took the time to explain the mechanics, mundane or divine, behind the transfer, and ascribed it as either a direct interface with some patron god of merchants, or the assistance of teams of fellow worshipers at the local level. That would satisfy the “divine” aspect of a religion, and still be workable within the game rules.

But, we can do better than that, can't we? Can't we design a whole Pantheon of gods and goddesses, giving them each their own “sphere of influence”, and tailoring our benefits and requirements around them? That would seem to jibe better with the ancient religions of Earth, and it makes for a more enjoyable and immersive game.

If my clan worships N'lyotes, a goddess of the sea and wind, I could see one of her “blessings” being an improvement in fishing returns, an increase in naval movement rates, a specialty ship only available to her worshipers, or something along those lines, and it would make sense. The sacrifice in exchange for that benefit should make sense, as well....requiring all villages be coastal or near a body of water, for instance, might satisfy her. The sacrifice should fit the reward, and the god/goddess to whom it is dedicated. In this case, the benefits could be easily explained in a coincidental sense, too, for those players who balk at the idea of the supernatural in a game which tries to remain realistic...favorable winds, the discovery of rich fishing grounds, and inspired workmanship and design.

Garash, the god of battle and mayhem, may require that cattle or goats be slaughtered in order to gain an increase in morale in the event of a battle. He may bless the clan with an influx of divine warriors every so often. Again, these can be explained in a natural

way: Prayers and invigorating sermons in the face of an enemy can steel a warriors resolve, and dispel his fear. Local men who aspire to do great deeds in battle may be attracted to the clan, and join them.

Very few people *believe* that something good will happen to them without also *believing* that some kind of external force drives the universe. We can extend that generalization to TribeNet, I think, without stretching the fabric of realism for those who do not wish to be bothered with the hocus-pocus aspects of religion.

Religion in TribeNet offers an opportunity for all players to create the kind of world they want for themselves, but I think it needs to be handled

properly, and given a little more attention than it usually is. It takes a long, long time to reach Religion 10, after all, and some consideration should be given to the effort. I think it will reward those players who decide to pursue that route.

Take it on faith.....



Are Goods Tribes Really Any Good?

A Discussion and Demonstration of the GT Relationship by Kuluk Khan of The Sauromati

What is a Goods Tribe?

A "Goods Tribe" is a Tribe that holds all of the Goods for itself and other Tribes and Elements located in the same hex. When a Goods Tribe relationship is established, there is no need for transfers between the Tribes and Elements that are part of the relationship.

What are the benefits?

Because there is no need for transfers between the units involved, your orders become much simpler. No sending resources back and forth. No sending provs to keep people from starving. The units involved all share in the same inventory.

What Are The Downsides?

You can't move your Tribes apart while the Goods Tribe relationship is in force. If you wish to break the Goods Tribe relationship, you will need to state so in your orders and in the same turn transfer any desired Goods to the unit that is leaving the relationship.

However, hex-to-hex transfers still apply in the Goods Tribe relationship. So, if the Goods Tribe and another Tribe are in adjacent hexes and one of them has a meeting house then the Goods Tribe relationship can still work across the adjacent hexes.

The Rules on Goods Tribes

The main section of the rules that governs the Goods Tribe relationship is section 3.9 Goods Tribe (shown below). In actuality, the establishment of the Goods Tribe deviates slightly from section 3.9.5 because Peter transfers all Goods to the Goods Tribe when the relationship is established.

Note that rule section 3.9.8 states that herding terrain is the terrain where the activity is performed. What this means is that the Goods Tribe holds all of the animals in inventory but if a Tribe in another hex does the herding then the terrain used for breeding calculations is

the terrain of the unit that does the herding, not the terrain of the Goods Tribe.

Section 8.15 Herding adds this to the rule, "If using a Goods Tribe only one of the Tribes is permitted to Herd." This means that you can spread the herding duty across units when using a Goods Tribe relationship.

Section 8.31.2 Overseeing contains another addition to the rules of Goods Tribes: "Slaves in the Goods Tribe can only be used by the GT. They are not available to any Sub-units. They must be moved to the unit that needs them." This is in conflict with section 3.9.6. Peter said that we should go by rule 8.31.2.

The rule for hirelings in section 8.31.4 Hirelings, Locals, and Mercenaries clarifies the rule for hirelings stating, "Hirelings may be used via a Goods Tribe relationship." Meaning that hirelings held by the Goods Tribe can be used by other Tribes in the relationship, even across hexes.

Section 15.2 Sailing says that ships cannot be used by a Goods Tribe relationship: "Fleets must have their own Ships in order to move (that is, Fleets cannot use Ships via a Goods Tribe relationship)."

Lastly, section 18.1 Book Writing states that, "A Book written by a sub-Tribe will not automatically be shown with its Goods Tribe." This means that books will stay with the unit that wrote the book.

[3.9 Goods Tribe

One Tribe can be the holder of the Goods and animals for other designated Tribes of the same clan, any Goods needed or produced will be recorded with the Goods Tribe.

While the idea of the GT works quite well, it needs to be fully understood and requires vigilance. Here are some comments:

1. The GT acts as a storehouse for all sub-units (SU's) using it - and thus a GT may provide Goods for the Fair or other Trade.

2. Any Transfers from a GT to its SU's and vice versa will not work - and are not necessary. The one exception is when you absorb a unit back into another unit which using a GT (in this case the Goods might show as being with the SU). In this case you would order "Transfer All Goods to insert Goods Tribe #" on the following turn.

3. The GT should be used only when positions are relatively settled and should not be changed often (and certainly not in mid-Orders).

4. You should (and in fact, must) make reference to the GT in your Orders only if there is a change of status (for example, if a particular Tribe is no longer acting as the GT) or if the correct status has not appeared on your Report. If changing GT status please use, for example, "Change GT to xxxx before Activities".

5. Announcing that a SU is to use a GT will not of itself transfer the SU's existing Goods into the GT. If this is desired then it should be done in the Transfers section of Orders prior to the announcement of the GT. The units involved must be in the same hex and/or in an adjacent hex if the GT has a Meeting House.

6. When using a GT relationship via adjacent hex ALL Goods, including animals, must be in one hex. Facilities (such as Refineries, Bakery etc) must be in same hex as the unit using them. That is, can't be used from adjacent hex. Slaves, Hirelings etc can be used from an adjacent hex without the need to transfer them.

7. There is no rule 7!

8. Herding terrain is the terrain in which the Activity is performed.

9. You need to tell me if breaking/changing a Goods Tribe relationship, by moving one

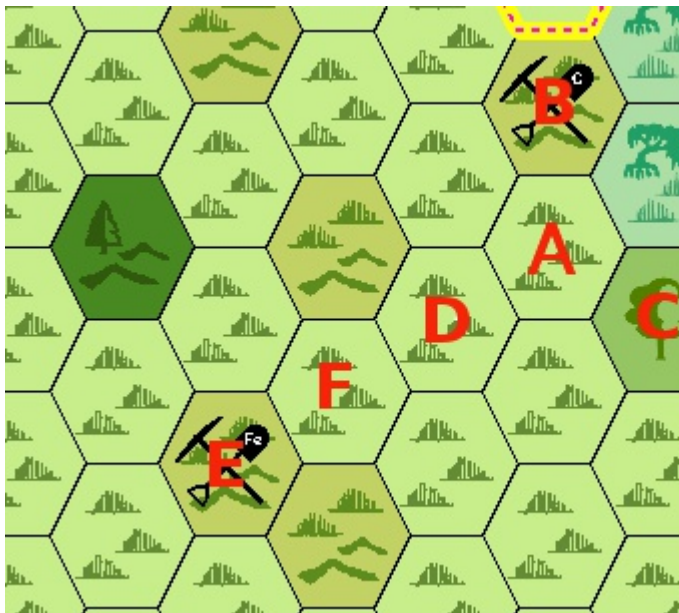
of the Tribes for example.]

A Goods Tribe Example

The simplest way of using the Goods Tribe relationship is to have a single Goods Tribe in the same hex with the other Tribes.

They all share the inventory of the Goods Tribe as if they held it themselves. The obvious added advantage to this relationship is that the units can move together and still share their inventory. However, generally speaking it is usually best to use the GT once your units are settled (that is, not likely to move). It is also a good idea to not change GT relationships too often.

The next level of complexity is to have a Goods Tribe with a village that shares inventory with Tribes in adjacent hexes. The Goods Tribe must remain stationary but the other units may move as long as they remain in a hex adjacent to the Goods Tribe. This allows you to take advantage of the terrain for different activities. It is also possible for the non-Goods Tribes to have villages and leave the Goods Tribe mobile



- I leave that to your imagination.

A more complex configuration is to have multiple Goods Tribes. If you do this, the Goods Tribe relationship networks must remain separate, i.e., you can't have

overlapping or chained networks. The example below demonstrates such a relationship. Keep in mind that it is not meant to be a practical setup, just one that demonstrates the capabilities of a somewhat complex Goods Tribe configuration.

In this example Tribe A is the Goods Tribe for Elements B, C, and D. Tribe E is the Goods Tribe for Element F. For our example, let's imagine that Tribe A has a village and a refinery in the hex it occupies and that Tribe E has a village in the hex it occupies. Tribe A gets coal from Element B - whenever Element B mines coal it immediately shows up in the inventory of Tribe A. But Tribe A needs iron ore. How to get it from three hexes away?

To get the ore to Tribe A, Tribe E mines it during activities in month 1. In the same month Element F can transfer the ore to Element D during transfers. This transfer is possible because Tribe E is the Goods Tribe for Element F, therefore Element F has access to Tribe E inventory.

Now because Tribe A is the Goods Tribe for Element D, the ore transferred to Element D is entered into the inventory for Tribe A as soon as the ore is received. The iron ore was transferred three hexes from the source with no moving units. The ore is available for refining in month 2.

Working in the opposite direction, Element C is cutting logs in the hex where it resides. Those logs are entered into Tribe A inventory. Element D can transfer those logs to Element F in the same turn the logs are cut. In this case the logs have been transferred over four hexes with no moving units and the logs are available to Tribe E in the turn after they

were cut.

As you can see, the Goods Tribe relationship can be very powerful. It can also be very expensive in units. Setting up a chain like the one in the example would immobilize all of the units involved. This may not be the best use of them. It would certainly be expensive.

I hope this helps you to understand the Goods Tribe relationship. If you have any questions about this, please post them in the Facebook or Google+ forums.

WAR DRUMS

Everything seems to be trudging along "business as usual" for most of the Clans. Not a hint of conflict has been heard by the scribes of the Blackrune Free Company as of this writing.

The Rumor Forge

- * Clans in the North have been whispering of a rich vein of an unknown metal found near the base of an active volcano.
- * It is said that a new shipment of Diamonds has arrived at North Port, headed for parts unknown.
- * The fabled trading mecca of Shanghai has been discovered near the jungle!
- * It is said that The Wild Angels (0412), in an attempt to keep their coveted position at the bottom of the Clan Rankings, have been intentionally dumping their stores of provisions and refined metals into the sea.
- * Witnesses report that yet another Ancient King, Bromo The Useless Child, has been seen tending herds on the plains of Southern Mangalia.



The Haggard Herald

The Blackrune Free Company would like to thank David Shockey (Kuluk Khan of the Sauromati) for his submission on the Goods Tribe for this issue of the Dispatch



We are always accepting submissions from our fellow players. Please send your submission to c.j.stanifer@gmail.com any time.

