

The Ordning (The Old Ways)

The Ordning was the name the giants which once roamed Lucidia gave to their strict social hierarchy. The name has since been adopted by the goliaths, giant-kin who live in the cold and mountainous lands of Svellnottr, to describe their pantheon of God-like entities. The Ordning, or the Svellnottan pantheon, is much wilder and less well-structured than the pantheons and traditions of the other races across Lucidia, emphasising local deities and practises and the connection to nature over religious institutions and the power of civilisation. Thus, religious practise and beliefs vary from region to region within Svellnottr, reflecting the interactions and struggles with natural forces faced by individual clans.

Over the last few centuries, the ways of the Ordning have been forgotten, and many of the Gods are no longer worshipped. Now, the Ordning is pejoratively referred to as The Old Way, which some see as having failed. While scattered worship does still occur, with some of the tribes adhering more closely to the Old Ways than others, there has been a definite shift in priorities and allegiances between the clans. While in the past, the Vagor clan have held sway at meeting in Badger's Mount, the power of the warlike Mammutin Sota tribe is now growing, as rival coalitions and beliefs form.

Auril Frostmaiden (Chaotic Neutral – snow leopard)

Auril Frostmaiden, often referred to only as the Frostmaiden, is the most widely worshipped remaining deity of the Ordning, and has also been accepted into the Theodesian pantheon to aid in the assimilation of the Svellnottan people into the Empire in the year 184 of the Justinian calendar. As the goddess of the winter, night and the wilderness, she embodies many of the hardships faced by the goliath clans which reside high in the mountains or far to the north. She is stern and unyielding, with all the wrath of winter storm and the bitterness of deep winter. Her temper is cold, her gaze piercing, and her kindness like the fleeting respite from the long winters of the north. The traditions which surround her largely comprise of reverence and respect, as her followers understand that she is as dangerous as the snowstorms of Svellnottr. She is also viewed as strong and unyielding, and is seen as the force which drives all goliaths to become stronger and stalwart in the face of adversity, so is treated with special honour among those who stay true to the Old Way.

Like all the gods of the Ordning, she has a beast form as well as her humanoid avatar form. Her avatar form is that of a tall and fearsome woman with skin the colour of snow, or made entirely of ice. Her eyes glow blue, and her brow is adorned with a striking crown of rough-hewn ice into six tall spires, reminiscent of her holy symbol which is a six pointed snow-flake. Her beast form is that of a giant snow leopard, many times larger than even the largest polar bear, said only to appear at the heart of the strongest snowstorms and with bright blue eyes. Catching a glimpse of her in this form is believed to be a sign of her favour, imparting both the strength of the storm as well as the quiet of the snows to whoever sees her. The only appropriate response would be reverence, respect, and rightfully some fear.

Hiatea, the Huntress and Mother Goddess (Chaotic Good – pregnant wolf)

Hiatea was the goddess of forests, wild animals, rebirth and fertility with a small following in every clan and was the dominant deity for the Jarvi people who are adjacent to one of the forests of Svellnottr. She is the most frivolous of the gods of the Ordning, viewed as manifesting the innocent aspects of nature; the mother with its litter, the quiet tree grove, and the ancient forest. She also

teaches that nature is both creator and destroyer, than admitting defeat is the greatest shame a giant can bare, and that the suffering of innocents is unnatural and wrong. Depictions of her often include these three images: a tall bronze skinned woman with a flaming sphere and amber eyes, red-golden hair, standing watch over a wolf mother and her litter in a grove, with a massive forest spanning behind them. She is believed to be an incredible hunter of those who threaten the balance of nature with wanton violence. Similarly, her beast form is that of a giant pregnant wolf, also with amber eyes. She is believed to watch over pregnant mothers, and those who look after the forest and its creatures. Her holy symbol is a simple wooden circle, engraved with the face of a wolf.

Unlike the other gods of the Ordning, Hiatea was said to have a special closeness with a small wood on the edge of the Vale, up against the mountains of Svellnottr, where she was believed to be resting. Her followers would sometimes visit the wood, especially pregnant mothers who were able to make the journey, in the hope of securing her blessing or catching a glimpse of her best. Wolves are known to live the wood and are treated with reverence. However, in the year 148 King Byzas burnt the Vale and strung up corpses in Hiatea's forest. The ground has become desecrated, and Hiatea's presence has left that place. Indeed, it was at this time that children began being stillborn, and that the Vagor abandoned the Old Ways, believing that their god had been driven away and left them. The wood is still looked after by a reclusive firbolg tribe, who mourn the loss of their mother goddess and attempt to prepare the wood for her return.

Grolantor Beastlord (Chaotic Evil – mammoth)

Grolantor is the Ordning god of War. He is depicted as a giant with flaming eyes and tusks, wearing nothing but the hides of beasts he has killed stitched together into hide armour, wielding huge clubs in either hand. In some depictions, he is also able to breath fire, and has the powerful legs with cloven hooves like a great bore, and is known to adopt the beast form of a giant mammoth, also with flaming eyes. He is still worshipped by the Mammutin Sota, though deviating from the traditions of the Ordning where he was more of an - albeit offensive - protector of the ways of Svellnottr, and is now seen as a sponsor of the path to war and bloodshed with the Empire. Many hags and the fomorian of the Feywild see him as their deity, and carry his holy symbol of a small wooden club.

Some of his followers now teach that since only the strong deserve to live, they should actively persecute the weaker races, including any giant-kin which are deemed as weak. This has created division between those who still follow the ways of the Ordning and this new hyper-aggressive trend, and a rift between the remaining followers of Hiatea and the Mammutoin Sota, for the followers of Grolantor now believe that followers of Hiatea, especially firbolgs, are weak and shameful.

Diancastra (Neutral – flying serpent)

Diancastra, sometimes referred to as the Flying Serpent in reference to its beast form, is the genderless Ordning deity of Dream and Visions, Clouds and Stars. Of all the remnant giant deities, Diancastra is the most aloof, with doctrines which are much more spiritual than the doctrines of the other gods. Its followers look for signs and omens in the sky and stars, with some of them believing that their dreams are dreams directly from the gods. Diancastra is described as appearing like a huge cloud giant with sparkly grey skin, white eyes, and teal hair which is shaved at the side and tied up in a ponytail. It is reported to carry a thin silver staff with a crescent at its end, enclosing what appears to be a number of ever twinkling stars. Diancastra's beast form is that of a giant opalescent flying serpent with white feathered wings a bright teal feathered crest running from the top of its head

part way down its spine. Its holy symbol is a snake eating its own tail, as many believe that Diancastra was there before the world began and will be there once it has passed on.

Being more distant from the concerns of the Prime Material Plane, Diancastra and its followers have historically been less involved in the disputes which ravage Svellnottr. They are viewed with respect and some fear from those who do not understand their practices, and have been sought for advice in the past. However, the followers of Diancastra are quiet but devoted followers of the Ordning, with their god being one of the true original cloud giant deities. Their sacred places are close to the Himmel region on top of the mountains, but the Himmel people have recently turned their backs on the Old Ways.

Thrym Skyborn (Lawful Neutral – phoenix)

Thrym Skyborn was believed to be a manifestation of the power of the sun, which flies across the sky just like he is believed to do in his beast form as a phoenix. In fact, some of his followers believe that he is the sun, and the sun is him. He teaches that fire has a purifying role, bringing life and energy to the world, but that its destructive power must also be respected, since it can enrich soil as well as destroy whole forests. He also emphasised a respect for nature, especially birds, since there are the freest of all the animals. Due to his connection to birds, the Orn tribe who also have an affinity to birdlife worship him as their chosen member of the Ordning. They also remain relatively true to the teachings of the Ordning, more because of cultural latency than anything else. His holy symbol is that of a phoenix, reflecting the belief that he is responsible for the sun in the sky.

lallaanis, Peace in the Centre of the Storm (Lawful Good – albatross)

lallaanis is the Ordning God of wisdom and storms. While this might seem strange to other races where storm gods are often also the gods of the tempest or war domain, to the goliaths it makes perfect sense. lallaanis was the patron deity of the storm giants, the most powerful of the giant race and at the top of the Ordning, and storm giants were the wisest and most peaceful of all the giants. lallaanis is said to appear either as a colossal giant stepping out of the sea, with lightning coming from his eyes and crackling across his finger-tips, or appearing as a face in storm clouds, also with lightning coming from his eyes. His voice is said to roll like thunder, and many of his followers listen closely to thunderstorms in case it is actually him speaking. He is never believed to have caused a storm, or lashed out in anger, but rather stands at the centre of the storm where everything is peaceful, and surveys the beauty of the storm from within. Goliaths seeking greater wisdom, or more self-control, are taught that the way of lallaanis is to find this same peace within, and allow the rage to swirl around you where you can watch and admire its beauty from safety. It is also believed that lallaanis' beast form is that of a massive albatross, the most peaceful of birds.

While not especially associated with the sea, lallaanis is revered by the Vagor people who watch the sea storms roll across their horizon. They are also the most ardent followers of the Ordning, seeking wisdom rather than battle in the hope that it will allow them to better face an ever-changing world. His holy symbol is that of a single lightning bolt.