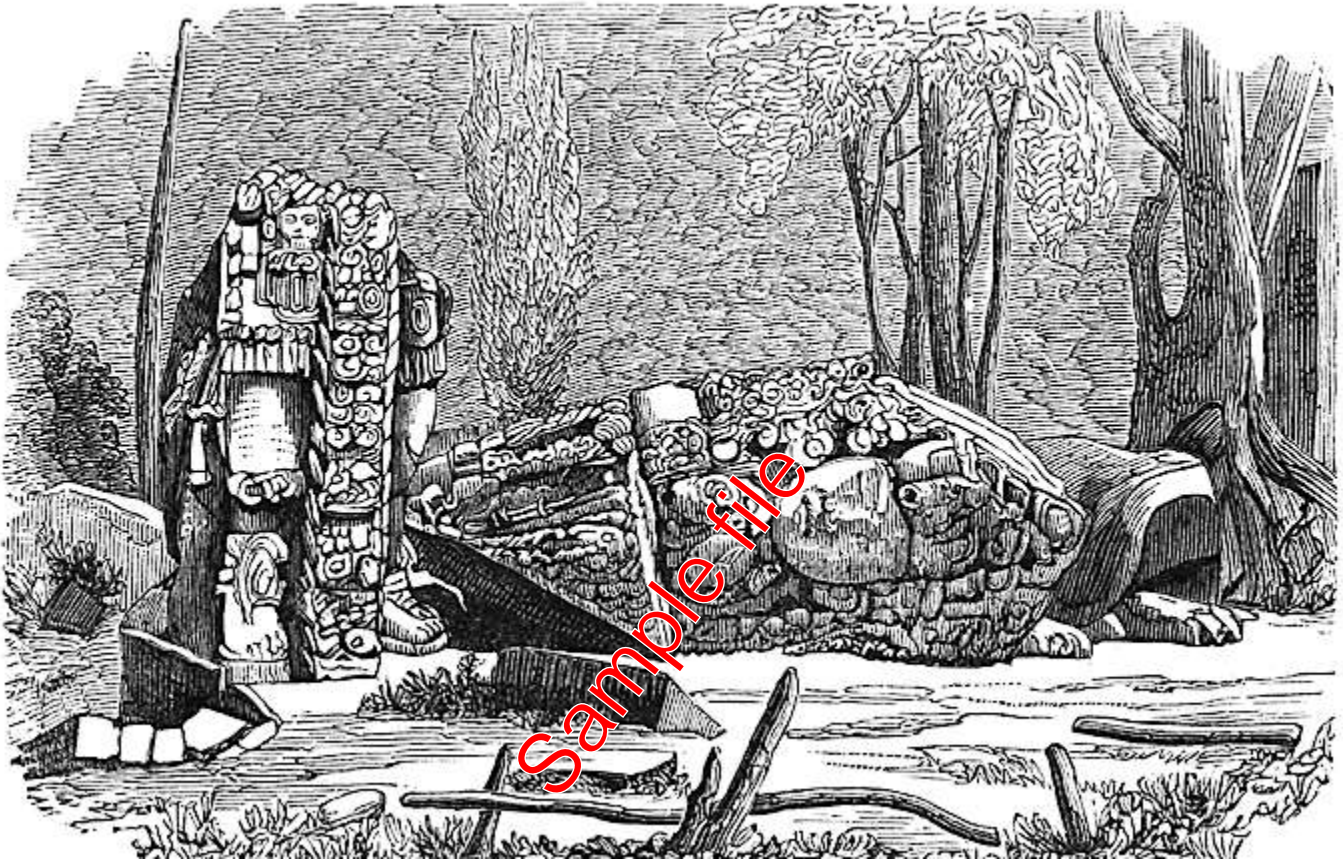


Pantheon Building

A Guide to Constructing a Fantasy Pantheon for Games or Fiction



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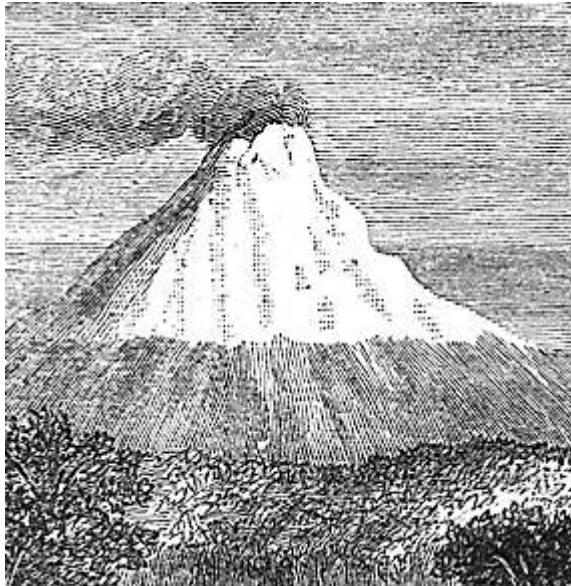
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One of the most important parts of building your own fantasy setting is building a consistent, functional pantheon. In most fantasy settings, the gods are real entities that often directly interfere in the affairs of mortal. But even if your gods and goddesses are more myth than reality, crafting a pantheon that fits into your worldview will help provide a sense of place and purpose in your setting.

Unfortunately, often when people sit down to design pantheons, they tend to think of them in terms of how they relate to player classes and skills. World designers come into the process attempting to reverse engineer gods to fit some pre-conceived notions of what types of gods are needed to meet the needs of the players or characters. This leads to a stilted, often fragmented pantheon of unrelated gods and goddesses with little cohesiveness.

Pantheon Building is designed to provide a way of thinking about designing your pantheon. Use the information in this product to get a better understanding in order to develop a more organic feeling pantheon for your game world. This information can be used by both game designers looking to bring variety to their campaign settings, or by writers hoping to develop a believable pantheon for their fantasy fiction.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



In order to determine the nature of the gods that will populate your pantheon, you need to have a firm understanding of the needs of the people in your setting. The gods of a culture reflect what is most important to the culture, and what is most important to the culture depends on how far up the pyramid of needs the culture has evolved.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow published his book *A Theory of Human Motivation*, in which he stated the Hierarchy of Needs. Though considered a bit oversimplified by modern scholars, the concepts provide a good working basis for understanding cultural development. While all needs have importance to people, the dominant needs are those that must be met first in order for the person to focus energy on other needs. When these dominate needs are the primary focus of the culture, they will impact the types of gods that are worshiped.

Physiological needs:

These are the most basic needs of food, water, air, and other bodily needs. Raw survival is the dominant goal of someone at this level of the pyramid. The fight for food is the primary focus of the individual. What little culture exists is in the form of small hunting parties, which work together to bring down game and find other sustenance.

Security Needs:

Closely associated with the physiological needs are the security needs, and they often go hand in hand. Humans, at their most basic level, desire order and stability. Because order and stability ensures that the physiological needs are met. A person at this level on the pyramid is concerned with protection from the elements, safety from the wilds, and general security.