

# DUNGEON FANTASY EARTH



**FOR FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAMES**

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# INTRODUCTION

Many Fantasy Worlds have a striking resemblance to earth. Some only in culture, some even in geography. Therefore, why not just make earth a fantasy world? With only a few changes, earth becomes an interesting fantasy world. Another advantage is that everyone knows earth and is familiar with its history at large.

*Dungeon Fantasy Earth* started as an attempt to place all the races, creatures and magic of Edition 3.5 of the most popular Fantasy Roleplaying Game on earth (or to make earth such a world, if you want to put it that way). But its focus became more widespread because this Edition is no longer available, I prefer *GURPS* as a Roleplaying system and I wanted to keep this work more generic.

*Dungeon Fantasy Earth* is centred on Europe (as many Fantasy Roleplaying Games effectively use a medieval European culture) and describes a modified history up to the discovery of America.

## ***The naming problem***

For a better understanding, the modern names are used for persons and places, even if they had other names at times.

# COSMOLOGY & HISTORY

## COSMOLOGY

### IN THE BEGINNING . . .

. . . there was nothing. But nothing was not empty. In the nothingness floated the primal gods. They were without consciousness and they played with nothingness, thus they created the first gods, father and mother.

The first gods began to create more gods and these created homes for themselves, the outer planes. But their children were not satisfied and they spoke to their parents: "We are bored, we have created the planes but we have no playground and nothing to play with." Their father thought for a while, then he pointed in one direction and spoke: "Look over there. I give you four basic elements - fire, water, earth and air - go and play with them. But do something creative so you don't come back and bother me again."

So the children went and began to create the earth and they filled it with oceans, mountains, plants and animals. For eons they watched in fascination as their creations evolved. Eventually, they got bored again and they created life in images of themselves. They made them sentient to make their own decisions to keep things interesting. And they demanded praise from them as their creators.

### *About chaos*

Chaos is the primordial, formless condition before being, before being shaped by the gods.

But sometimes, something comes into existence spontaneously and breaks into our world. These spontaneous creations are so strange and incomprehensible that they destroy, what the gods made.

This is why there rages an eternal battle between the gods and chaos.

At the beginning, chaos spoiled the creations of the gods and corrupted part of the outer planes, which became the abyss. From the abyss stepped forth demons who attacked the gods. So they created celestials and angels to battle them.

Chaos also spoiled the creations of the gods on earth. It wiped out dinosaurs by throwing a comet on the earth. Later it corrupted sentient races. They became the evil and chaotic races - orcs, dark elves and the like.

### *The contract with hell*

Eventually, some of the angels and celestials were worn down by their battle against the demons and they began to show marks that only the demons had shown before. This kind of angels, that is now known as devils, was led by the charismatic Lucifer.

As the mortal began to break the laws that the gods had given them, he was charged with their punishment. But he had plans of his own. He tricked the gods into giving him a place to punish the souls of the sinners - hell - and to grant him the power to draw magical energy from them. But as they began to realize that he also seduced the mortals to break the gods laws and the number of souls that ascended to their heavenly planes dropped, he showed them the contract they had made before.

And as they saw that he had turned their own law against them, they threw him out of their planes in their anger. And he fell into hell, cast out forever. He and his cohort were damned to fight the demons for eternity.

## HISTORY

The history of *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* is at large the same as real history. But it includes the fantastic races of fantasy roleplaying games and their role in it.

This section leads through history and the changes due to the fantastic elements.

### PREHISTORY

#### *Of Elves and Dwarves*

The first great civilization at the end of the ice ages on earth was the one of the elves of Atlantis. Atlantis

was a great island in the atlantic ocean, where the Azores are now. They had colonies on the shores of western europe and america.

At the same time the first dwarven realms formed in Europe, at a time when mankind still lived in stone age.

The elves of atlantis were warlike and wanted to conquer. They waged wars against the dwarves to suppress them and other sentient races. At the long term, the dwarves were inferior to the elves and their impending defeat was close at hand. But as their inevitable victory seemed near, fate turned as atlantis

was drowned in a natural disaster (or was it divine?) and with it the great elven civilization.

Caused by the downfall of their civilization, elvish society was split apart: The keepers accepted their fate and wanted to be quiet watchers, keeping a watch on history. The conquerors still wanted to conquer the world, because they thought they were the first and best of all sentient races.

A part of the keepers settled on Ireland, but the greatest part of the elves, keepers and conquerors alike went to America.

The keepers now sought to live in harmony with nature, settled in North- and South America and became Indians. The British elves became the Sidhe of the Celts.

The conquerors went to Middle America and became the forefathers of Maya and Inca. The gods changed the color of their skin to better distinguish them from their more peaceful brethren.

## THE ANCIENT WORLD

### *Mesopotamia (4,300 – 1,600 BC)*

The first human civilizations developed in Mesopotamia in the land between the rivers Euphrat and Tigris. No contact had been made with nonhuman races except for halflings who seem to have been always at the humans' side. Ancient legends told of Atlantis and the Elves, but to the humans they were just that – legends.

At this time, humans had not developed great magical skills, there were only primitive shamans.

### *Assyria and Babylon (1,600 – 500 BC)*

The first empires of humans were the Assyrian and the Babylonian. At that time, they had made contact with dwarves and these aided them building their great monumental buildings.

### *Egypt (3,000 – 0 BC)*

The Egyptian culture was a very long lived one, spanning more than just 3,000 years. They also made contact with the dwarves and got their help as they built the pyramids.

The Egyptians were the first human civilization that used magic to its full potential. Egyptian pharaohs had the greatest sorcerers at their disposal and their clerics gave them the favor of the gods. Gnomes, magical talented, were a common sight in Egypt.

### *Greece (1,500 – 300 BC)*

The pantheon of Olympian Gods was very active in Greece. Some of them were parents of the great Greek heroes.

The Greeks made contact with centaurs and Amazons (a matriarchal society that had a kingdom at the shores of the Black Sea). Other nonhuman races were not common in their kingdoms.

### *Rome (500 BC – 600 AD)*

The Roman Empire had conquered a great part of the known world and made contact with Elves and Orcs in Britain. Dwarves, Gnomes and Halflings were common in their empire but not very numerous. Dwarvish stonework was highly valued in Rome and Gnomish

illusionists made appearances in the Circus Maximus. Half-Orcs had their place within the Roman legions and the gladiators.

In the end, Rome was divided into East- and West-Rome. The West-Roman Empire fell first to barbarian invasions from the north. The barbarians themselves fled from Goblin invasions from the east. The East-Romans held longer and eventually became the Byzantine Empire.

## THE MIDDLE AGE

### *Rome's demise (600 – 1,300 AD)*

As Goblinoid tribes – called Huns – from the east invaded Germania, they drove the native human tribes into the West-Roman Empire which fell after a short while.

In the wake of Rome came the Franconian, Carolingian and the Holy Roman Empire. This Empire was a union of smaller states, some of which were not populated by humans at all.

In the west of Europe, France, England and Spain established their kingdoms.

### *The Arabian Caliphates (632 – 1,000 AD)*

Driven by religious zeal, the Arabs conquered the Near East, Northern Africa and Southern Spain. Eventually they were driven out of Spain by the Castile Kingdom.

### *The Goblinoid Invasions*

After the Hun invasion (370 – 376 AD), the Goblinoids settled in East Europe, North of Greece. New Goblinoid tribes arrived in 800 AD and spread more unrest.

In 1,200 AD, the Mongols, another Goblinoid tribe, conquered great parts of Asia and devastated the Arab Caliphates. Their Empire held until the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE RENAISSANCE

In 1492, Columbus discovered the new world, and that world was already populated by the most vicious race that was ever detected – the Dark Elves.

The Spanish conquistadores want to conquer the new world, but the Drow are not easy to conquer. They have established an empire in Middle America, enslaved humans and normal Elves. They have their own magic for defense, they want to keep their power and they will fight back.

# LIFE ON EARTH

Life (and Roleplaying) on a historical earth is interesting in itself. It gets even more interesting with the introduction of fantasy elements.

## THE SENTIENT RACES

### HUMANS

Humans developed on the continent of Africa and have spread over the whole world. Their development and history has happened as it did in the real world except where mentioned throughout this document.

They are the most numerous of the sentient races because Elves and Dwarves are too long lived and therefore slow to change, Gnomes and Halflings are just too weak physically and Orcs and Goblinoids are too bestial to advance their societies beyond a certain level.

### DWARVES

Dwarves are stocky, bearded humanoids (some say even their women have beards). They are shorter than humanoids (up to 1.5 meters), weigh as much and live twice as long as humans.

Dwarves developed in the mountains of the Himalaya and spread through Eurasian mountain ranges. But still the largest dwarven realm lies in the Himalaya.

In Europe, dwarves first settled in Scandinavian mountains, where iron ore is plentiful. In southern Europe they are spread more lightly, because they suffered a great deal in the wars with Atlantis elves. They still keep a grudge against the elves because of these wars.

Dwarves can be found where metal ores are plenty, but mostly in mountainous areas where they tend to keep to themselves. They have established some city states (kingdoms) in (or under) the Alps, Scandinavia and other mountain ranges. These are always ruled by a "mountain king", the leader of the clan.

Dwarfish society is organized into clans. Each clan rules a mountain kingdom (a city state) and the clan leader is the king in unison. Their family bonds are strong and their societies order is as cast into stone. Those dwarves that break the rules of their society become outcasts (most dwarfish adventurers belong to this caste).

Being talented craftsmen, especially with stone and metal, their craftsmanship is highly sought after and some dwarves have settled in human cities where they earn good money.

A relatively young kingdom is that in Helvetia (the western Alps). Their dwarves have begun to establish a banking system.

### ELVES

The fae-like elves are slender and gracious to humans. They wear their hair long and never grow

beards. They are also extremely long lived. The oldest of their race can get 1,000 years old. Most elves live in America, but an elven kingdom exists on the island of Ireland.

The elves of Ireland have taken the place of the Sidhe from the Celtic myths. After the drowning of Atlantis, a great part of them settled on the British islands. Later, they were displaced by humans and pushed back to Ireland. Here, they have built themselves a fairytale kingdom. The kings and queens of England have tried to conquer Ireland several times, but always failed. Thus elves are always suspicious of humans.

In North and South America, elves live in harmony with nature, living in tribes as hunters and gatherers.

In Middle America, the dark elves have established empires based on the worship of bloodthirsty gods. Periodically, they send hunting parties to capture slaves as sacrifices. With the arrival of humans in 1492, things are about to change (though these elves will not be as easy to conquer as the Aztecs).

### GNOMES

Being the relatives of Dwarves, Gnomes are as short, but not as broadly built. Their society is not as reclusive as their cousins and they have spread through human society in small numbers.

The largest gnomish society in Europe is in Helvetia, where they have established a realm together with the dwarves. Those gnomes that live here are known for their mechanical wonders.

### GOBLINOIDS

Goblins and Hobgoblins are native to the plains of east Europe and Asia. They have made several invasions of Europe and China. Huns and Mongols are their most famous tribes.

### HALFLINGS

The smallest of the sentient races, Halflings often get confused with human children, being only as tall as 1 meter.

The origin of the Halflings is a mystery, they were always there at the side of human civilization, without pulling much attention to them.

### HALF-ELVES

The offspring of a human and an elf, Half-Elves originate in Ireland. They have spread to the rest of Europe and beyond.

## HALF-ORCS

Half-Orcs are descendents from a human-orc relationship, often forceful. Humans find orcs to be disgusting and thus, half-orcs are often the unwanted offspring of rape victims.

Since orcs have mostly retreated to the highlands of Scotland, the number of half-orcs in Britain and surrounding countries is higher, but half-orcs have spread throughout Europe. In human society, they are treated as scum, although they were highly valued as gladiators in Rome.

In the recent past, small half-orcish villages have been established.

## ORCS

Orcs once were Neanderthals, but they were corrupted by chaos and became an aggressive race. As the icecaps receded at the end of the ice age they were driven north and ended up in the highlands of Scotland. In *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* they take the place of the picts.

Britain still suffers under their raids and there is a long standing enmity between them and the elves.

# RELIGION

Religion is playing an important role in the life of the people of *Dungeon Fantasy Earth*, because they know the gods exist and look down upon them.

### *Divine Interventions*

Since the dawn of civilization, the gods have interacted strongly with mortals. They supported them and even had children with them. But as time went by, the gods stopped that tendency and they resumed their position as quiet watchers in the background.

The last pantheon that interacted with mortals was the greek. And after that only one incident happened in israel. By the time of the romans, clerical magic was the only proof that gods existed.

### *The power of the gods*

In pagan society, the power of specific gods is constricted to their divine realm. In monotheistic religions, all power is concentrated in one god. The more people believe in a god, the more powerful he becomes. So it happens that gods fight for believers and these battles spread to the mortal realm. Gods and their cults can get lost, if their believers turn away from them as the Vikings did in the real world.

## PAGANISM

Before the rise of monotheistic religions, people believed in many gods. Every folk had its own pantheon with many gods.

If a folk was going down or it was conquered, so were its gods. Sometimes its gods were assimilated into the victors cult.

Many pagan cults have gods that have the same sphere of influence (e.g. Roman and Greek pantheons). In *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* those gods are really the same gods, they just have another name.

A god can also have several aspects: e.g. Mars is a god of agriculture and war and can be worshipped in both aspects.

## JUDAISM

The jews were the first folk that worshipped a monotheistic god. To them, the other gods were merely archangels and so they worshipped the one true god. The god of the jews was the god of the Israelite tribe and to no other tribe, and also only humans.

In the beginning, the Israelites were successful at conquering Palestine and by driving out other tribes from their taken homeland. But eventually, they were conquered themselves and forced to endure foreign rule, which brought foreigners to their land. Later they were scattered over the known lands.

Judaism is restricted to descendants of the Israelites. A nonhuman cannot become a jew.

## CHRISTIANITY

To increase his sphere of influence, the god of the jews had to bypass the restriction to be god of just humans. Therefore he send a prophet, who became the famous Jesus of Nazareth.

For a long time the Jews had hoped that a messiah would come and free them of roman oppression. So they were disappointed that Jesus was preaching peace and charity (even to nonhumans). They made the Romans to execute him.

But god let Jesus rise from the dead and ascend to heaven. This story was spread by his followers and so they established the fundament for christainity that eventually became the official church of the east roman empire.

## ISLAM

As god realized that Christianity was moving into a different direction as he had intended, he tried to rectify his error by sending another prophet – Mohammed.

Ironically, now three religions existed at the same time that all worshipped the same god. So, gods sphere of influence is the largest of the world. If it was intended, none can say.

## ELVISH GODS

The elves were the first ones to worship the Olympian gods. In the beginning, their most important god was Poseidon, until the fall of Atlantis. After that, Apollo became the most important patron of the irish elves, while the dark elves worship Hera.

## DWARVISH GODS

The dwarves brought their worship of the Aesir and Vanir to Scandinavia where it was adopted by humans.

Since the Scandinavian humans converted to Christianity, it's not widespread any longer. But the

dwarves keep their faith – and its secrets.

# MAGIC

Magic on *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* is real and exists. Since the dawn of time it is a common companion to the people.

In the beginning it was just shamanism that didn't distinguish between arcane and clerical magic, but with the rise of religions those two paths were established.

Arcane mages draw their power directly from the magical environment, clerics get theirs from their gods.

## RELIGION AND MAGIC

Religion and faith (i.e. Clerical Magic) are two different things on *Dungeon Fantasy Earth*. A cleric must not be capable to work divine magic. On the other hand, someone who works divine magic is not required to have religious rank.

Also, clerics of different religions can worship the same god (Jews, Christians, Moslems). If two such clerics are on both sides of a confrontation, it is the GMs decision, who is favored by his god. If they worship different aspect of a god, there is no conflict.

# CREATURES

Many of the monsters from Generic Fantasy have mythological origins. Some (from the SRD) require particular attention.

## ***Centaurs***

Centaurs originate in northern Greece around the hills of Thessaly. They are a sentient species, but not as sophisticated as humans.

## ***Angel***

Angels are beings from the upper planes, the messengers of gods and their warriors.

## ***Basilisk & Cockatrice***

Basilisk and cockatrice are creatures from European mythology that can kill with their gaze. A basilisk has a petrifying gaze, while the cockatrice has a toxifying one.

## ***Couatl***

A couatl is a winged serpent from Aztec mythology living in middle America.

## ***Demons***

Demons are beings from the lower planes that serve only themselves, although a mighty demon can oppress others and build himself a powerbase.

## ***Devil***

Devils are the natural enemies of demons. They are also seducers of mortals that offer their services to them – for a price.

## ***Dinosaur***

Several kinds of dinosaurs live in the jungles of Africa, south America and other remote areas.

## ***Dryad***

Dryads are forest spirits from Greece and Roman mythology.

## ***Dragons***

Dragons live all over the world. Some of them are intelligent and the oldest sentient species. But most of them live remote lives.

## ***Gargoyle***

Gargoyles are related to dragons, but not as intelligent. Since the development of big cities they have taken up residence in them and become a downright plague.

## ***Genie***

Genies are elemental spirits in the Arabian world.

## ***Ghoul***

Ghouls are corpse-eaters. Originally they've descended from Arabia, but spread to the whole civilized world.

## ***Giant***

Giants are mostly at home in Scandinavia, but also on other continents, e.g. in North America's rocky mountains.

## ***Golem***

Golems are constructs, originally invented by Jews.

## ***Gorgon***

Also called Medusa, gorgons are mythical creatures from Greece. They live in the Atlas mountains and Libya.

## ***Griffon***

A griffon is a kind of chimera from the antique. It lives in Asia Minor and North Africa. It has the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.

## ***Harpy***

The harpy is another chimera from Greece mythology. It has a woman's body, an eagle's wings and feet. Harpies live on Greece islands in the Mediterranean sea.

## ***Hell Hound***

The hellhound, called Cerberus in Greek mythology, guards the entrance to Hades.

## ***Hippogriff***

The hippogriff is similar to the griffon, with an eagle's head and wings, but instead of a lion's, it has the body of a horse.

## ***Hydra***

The hydra is a monster from Greek mythology. It resembles a nine-headed snake and lives in swamps in southern Greece.

## ***Lamia***

Lamias are vampiric monsters from Greek mythology.

## ***Lich***

A lich is an undead mage, a mage that didn't want to die a true death.

## ***Lycanthropes***

The most famous lycanthropes are werewolves. As early as in Greek mythology, they are mentioned.

## ***Manticore***

A manticore is a chimera from Asia Minor. It has the body of a lion, a human's face and a scorpion's tail.

## ***Medusa***

See gorgon.

## ***Minotaur***

The minotaur is another mythical creature from Greece. It lives in a maze in Minos on Crete.

## ***Mummy***

A mummy is an undead. Technically, it's a mummified zombie.

## ***Nymphe***

A nymphs are mythical creatures from Greece. They are spirits of mountains, trees, meadows and grottoes. They are also famous for seducing human males.

## ***Pegasus***

A Pegasus is a winged horse from greek mythology. It lives in southern Europe.

## ***Roc***

Roc is a gigantic bird of prey from Arabian and Persian mythology.

## ***Satyr***

A satyr, also called faun, is another mythical creature from Greece. It's always male and looks like a normal human with hooves. A nymphs, they are famous for their libido.

## ***Skeleton***

A skeleton is an animated dead body, that is dead a long time.

## ***Sphinx***

The sphinx is a chimera from Egypt mythology. It has the body of a lion and a womans head. It lives in the mountains outside of Theben. It is famous for its riddles, the confronts travellers with.

## ***Sprite (Faeries)***

Sprites are related to elves and are encountered mostly in Ireland.

## ***Tarrasque***

The tarrasque is a dragonlike creature that is living close to Tarascon in france.

## ***Troll***

Trolls are mythological creatures from Scandinavia.

## ***Unicorn***

Unicorns can be found in asia minor, india and Europe.

## ***Vampires***

In every mythology, vampires can be found. They are bloodsucking undead and there are many kinds of them.

## ***Wyvern***

A wyvern is a dragonlike creature with four extremities. Unlike a dragon, it has no front legs. Also, it's unintelligent. It lives in north Africa and Europe.

## ***Zombies***

Like skeletons, zombies are animated dead.

# CAMPAIGNS

## YOUR ROLEPLAYING SYSTEM

Though this document is without game system information, some information is given here.

### EDITION 3.5

*Dungeon Fantasy Earth* was written with *Edition 3.5* in mind and almost everything from that game system will work perfectly with this setting. Additional material is helpful to play this setting with *Edition 3.5*.

The *Mythic Vistas* line from Green Ronin Publishing has some helpful books available: *Hamunaptra* for Egyptian adventures, *Trojan War* for ancient Greece, *Eternal Rome*, *Testament* for information about Mesopotamia and the *Medieval Players Manual* for medieval roleplaying.

### GURPS

To play a *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* campaign with *GURPS*, you need at least *GURPS Basic Set*. To make use of the rich magical background of this setting, you will need a copy of *GURPS Magic*. *GURPS Powers* is can be used to simulate additional supernatural effects. Templates for races and occupations can be found in *GURPS Fantasy*, *GURPS Banestorm* and *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*. Especially *GURPS Fantasy* is the perfect resource for this gaming background.

Also, a lot of old third edition material is also useful:

The historical sourcebooks provide information for their respective cultures: *Arabian Nights*, *Aztecs* (for the Dark Elves), *Celtic Myth* (Orcs are Celts), *Egypt*, *Greece*, *Imperial Rome*, *Japan*, *Middle Ages 1*, *Russia* and *Vikings*.

*Atlantis*: the orichalcum age chapter describes the ancient Elvish Empire.

*Bestiary*, *Dinosaurs*, *Monsters* and *Fantasy Bestiary* provide animals and monsters.

*Blood Types*, *Faerie*, *Shapeshifters*, *Spirits* and *Undead* give advice to use supernatural beings.

*Cabal* is a background book for mystical conspiracies.

*Low-Tech* is the sourcebook for the technology of the past.

*Magic Items 1-3* has plenty of items for this magical world.

*Religion* provides advice for the religious problems that inducing fantasy into the real world causes.

### CROSSOVERS AND CONVERSIONS

Because so many good roleplaying materials exist, you can place much of it on *Dungeon Fantasy Earth*. The following are just some examples.

#### *Ptolus*

On *Dungeon Fantasy Earth*, *Ptolus* replaces Putbus on Rügen (notice the analogy of the names). The Church of Lothian is replaced by the Catholic Church. The GM has to decide how much of the cosmology of *Ptolus* he wants to use. It bears enough resemblance to *Dungeon Fantasy Earth* to connect both.

Praemus (the primal god) made the first gods (father and mother) – the „Elder Gods“. Those made the other gods themselves – their children. Earth isn't the Galchutt's prison. The Galchutt are the chaos gods sleeping under the soil.

#### *Freeport*

This city is of course placed in the Caribbean. You will have to advance the time of your campaign to establish a pirate society there.

As an alternative, *Freeport* can be placed in the Mediterranean, e.g. on a Greece island.

Or to use *Freeport* together with *Ptolus*, you can place *Freeport* on an island in the Baltic Sea. It is a stronghold of the Victual Brothers.

# THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD

A campaign can be played in every age, but some examples are given below.

## THE ANTIQUE

The Antique presents several interesting campaign backgrounds: Egypt, Greece and Rome are very interesting. Additionally, all those take place around the Mediterranean sea and their backgrounds are overlapping.

## THE MIDDLE AGES

The most obvious age for a campaign on a Fantasy-Earth. Edition 3.5 is made for that age.

## THE RENAISSANCE

This is the best age to use with Ptolus and Freeport. America has recently be discovered and a lot of opportunities arise.