AGON

What would the world be without the *agon*—the agonistics of one man against another—to show everyone the order of precedence among men, just as no two other things on earth are alike? How could any of us alive know quality if competition and personal combat did not let all the world know who embodies excellence and who merely manages mediocrity?

—Odysseus, OLYMPOS

The word *agon* in Greek is the root of our word "agony", and it means a fight. The Greeks tended to see pretty much everything that happened as a fight between two sides, even things that seem to us like they only have one side. Memorizing your lines for a play, for instance, is an *agon*, a fight, between you and the play.

Getting up in the morning when you are tired is an *agon* between your *nomos* and your *physis* (or an *agon* between your desire to impress your boss and your desire to watch late-night TV).

Courtship is an *agon* where one person tries to win the heart of the other.

DICE MECHANIC

First and foremost, **AGON** is a game of competition—of battle—to determine who is best. This battle can be one of swords and spears, or of cunning and words. To determine the winner in a contest, we roll dice.

Character abilities and items are rated by die-size, from d4 to d12. The larger the die, the better.

When your Hero takes action, you roll the dice for your character's Name, Ability, and Weapon. The highest single die is your result.

The opposition (usually played by the Guide) also rolls dice and gets a result. The highest result wins. Sometimes you will roll once to determine the winner of a battle. This is called a **Simple Contest**. Most battles will require multiple rolls to resolve, though. These are called **Extended Contests**.

Victories

If you beat your opponent by 4, you score a Victory. If you beat your opponent by 8, you score two Victories—and so on, in multiples of 4. A Victory can be used to do more damage to your opponent, or to provide a bonus of +2 on a related roll.

Open-Ended Dice

Sometimes, a die can be "open-ended." This means that a die showing its highest value (a 6 on a d6) can be rolled again, adding the second roll to the first. So, if you rolled a 6 on the first roll, and a 4 on the second roll, the total result would be 10. If the die shows its highest value on the second (or subsequent) roll, you can roll and continue to add.

Modifiers

Die rolls can be modified by a bonus or penalty. Bonuses or penalties are applied to the final result total. So, if you have a +2 bonus and roll a 9, your final result is 11 . You can also get bonus or penalty **levels**. In these cases, the **die-size** is increased or decreased. A d6 with a +1 bonus level would become a d8.

CREATING A HERO

Take a look at the Hero Sheet and keep it handy while you read this section.

Your Name

The first thing you will create is your Hero's **Name**. Names are very important to Greek heroes. They believe that their deeds will be remembered down through the centuries (and they will), so it's important that your name is strong. There is a list of ancient Greek names (male and female) at the end of this document.

Your name has two parts: Your personal name and your lineage. Your personal name is what others call you. It is a simple "first name" like Talos, Aleta, or Eurylochus. Your lineage is the name of your significant parent. If you are an Amazon, your lineage should refer to your mother. If you are not an Amazon, your lineage refers to your father.

Talos, son of Arsene

Aleta, daughter of Thesius

Eurylochus, son of Galinthias

You may also choose to have a god as your parent, making your Hero half-immortal.

Cenon, son of Athena

Finally, your Name has a rating, in the form of a die-size. **Mortal Heroes have a d6 Name. Half-Immortal Heroes have a d8 Name, and a Fate of 8** (see **Fate**, page XX).

Heroic Trait

Each Hero is special in some way—marked by the gods. This special quality is your **Heroic Trait**. You choose your Heroic Trait from a list. Each trait provides different bonuses to your character during play. Don't worry too much about these bonuses right now. Just choose a trait that sounds right for your Hero. As you play, you will learn more about how Heroic Traits work.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those that loved me, and alone; on shore, and when thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades vext the dim sea: *I am become a name. . .*

—Alfred Tennyson, ULYSSES

Heroic Traits

Beast-Master
+2 damage to beasts (including taming "damage")
+2 to positioning roll when fighting beasts

Clever-Eyed
+2 to Cunning rolls
+2 to Insight rolls

Far-Reaching
+1 Range for melee weapons (Sword = 1, 2; Spear = 2, 3)
+2 to positioning roll when fighting inside

Far-Seeing
+1 Range for missile weapons (Bow = 5-7; Javelin = 2-5)
+2 to positioning roll in bright conditions

Fleet-Footed
+2 to Athletics rolls
+2 to positioning roll when fighting outside

Great-Spirited
+2 to Spirit rolls
+2 to Orate rolls

Man-Killer
+2 damage to humans
+2 to positioning roll when fighting humans

Monster-Slayer
+2 damage to monsters
+2 to positioning roll when fighting monsters

Strong-Limbed
+2 to Might rolls
+2 to Wrestle rolls

Wise-Eyed
+2 to Lore rolls
+2 to Heal rolls

Your Heroic Trait completes your hero's name.

Far-Seeing Talos, son of Arsene

Fleet-Footed Aleta, daughter of Thesius

Eurylochus, The Monster-Slayer, son of Galinthias

Abilities

Your Abilities represent your Hero's level of excellence in various activities. There are 16 Abilities, divided into four groups of four.

Arete: Insight, Grace, Might, Spirit
Battle: Aim, Shield, Spear, Sword
Craft: Cunning, Lore, Orate, Heal
Sport: Athletics, Music, ???, Wrestle

Abilities are rated by die size (from least to greatest):

d4: Competent
d6: Adept
d8: Elite
d10: Amazing
d12: Legendary

Each Ability starts with a rating of d6. When you create your Hero, you may raise an Ability in a group to d8 by lowering another Ability in that group to d4. You also get two "free" die levels to add where you like. No Ability can start with a rating greater than d10.

Brandon creates the Hero *Aleta, daughter of Thesius*. He distrubtes her Ability dice like this:

Arete: Insight d6, Grace d6, Might d8, Spirit d4
Battle: Aim d8, Shield d6, Spear d6, Sword d4
Craft: Cunning d8, Lore d6, Orate d4, Heal d6
Sport: Athletics d6, Music d6, ??? d4, Wrestle d8

Finally, he adds two levels of dice: one to Aim and one to Wrestle, to make each d10.

Abilities are defined in detail on page XX.

First he wrapped his legs with greaves of good make and fitted with ankle-clasps of silver; next he strapped the breastplate round his chest, blazoned with stars; he hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well-wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped a redoubtable spear that suited his hands.

—THE ILIAD

Weapons & Armor

Choose weapons and armor for your Hero.

Your Hero can carry **one missile weapon**.

- **Bow**: Power 1d8+1. Range 5, 6.
- **Javelins**: Power: 1d6+1. Range 2-4.

Your Hero can carry **three melee weapons**.

- **Shield**: Power 1d8. (max: 1)
- **Spear**: Power 1d8 1d6. Range: 2 (max: 1)
- **Sword**: Power 2d6. Range: 1 (max: 2)

These are the weapons your Hero carries while adventuring on an island. They cannot all be wielded at once. "Max" means the maximum number of that weapon you can carry. Weapons that are lost or destroyed can be replaced aboard the Hero's ship, or taken from fallen enemies. Weapons are explained in detail on page XX.

Your Hero may also wear Armor. There are three different pieces of Armor. Each piece protects your Hero from damage, but each piece also affects your Ability rolls. You may choose to wear zero, one, two, or all three pieces of armor. If you choose to wear a piece of Armor, put an X mark in the little box for that piece on your Hero Sheet.

- Helmet (-1 to Aim rolls)
- Breastplate (-1 to Sword and Spear rolls)
- Greaves (-1 to Athletics rolls)

Defense

Your Hero's **Defense** rating represents how difficult it is for an enemy to strike him or her in battle. To determine your Hero's Defense rating, divide his or her Name die by two, then add 1.

Defense = (Name/2) + 1

If your Hero has a Name of d6, his or her Defense would be 4 (6/2=3. 3+1=4). If your Name is d8, Defense is 5.

If your Hero is using a Shield in battle, add 1 to Defense.

CONTESTS

The game of **AGON** is played as a series of scenes. Each scene centers around one or more **Contests**. There are two types of contests: **Simple** and **Extended**.

Simple Contests

A simple contest is resolved by one roll from each contestant. The highest result wins, and proves that character the best. In the case of a tie, the tied contestants should roll again until a winner is determined.

For a simple contest, roll Name + Ability. The Guide will usually call for the roll, and select the Ability to be used.

Winning a simple contest is usually worth 1 XP. The Guide may create especially difficult contests that are worth more XP, however. Losing a simple contest usually results in 1 Fatigue (see **Damage: Fatigue & Wounds**, page XX).

Victories from simple contests may carry-over as bonuses to other related rolls (+2 bonus per Victory). For example, you might have a contest of Lore to determine who knows more about a legend, and these roll those Victories over as bonuses for a Cunning roll to trick someone using that legend.

Creative Abilities

You may add dice to your roll by using one or more extra Abilities. Simply narrate how the extra abilities help you with the task at hand, and then add those dice to your roll. However, every extra ability you roll is **impaired** by one level after the roll (for more about impairment, see **Damage: Fatigue & Wounds**, page XX).

> Cara wants to use her Hero's Cunning to help her win a foot race. She adds her d8 Cunning to her Name + Athletics dice and narrates how she uses a shortcut to take the lead. After the roll, her Cunning die is impaired and becomes d6.

Stranger though he was, he knew no fear on finding himself single-handed among so many, but challenged them to contests of all kinds, and in each one of them was at once victorious, so mightily did Athena help him.

—THE ILIAD

Extended Contests

An extended contest is resolved over many rolls by each contestant. Each set of rolls is called an **exchange**. During an exchange, each contestant will roll a set of **offensive** dice and a set of **defensive** dice.

Your offensive dice consists first of your **offensive weapon**. If the contest is a battle, the weapon die (or dice) is determined by the weapon your Hero is wielding. If the contest is not a battle, your offensive weapon die will be one of your Arete abilities. You hold your offensive dice in your right hand.

Your defensive dice consists first of your **defensive weapon**. Again, if the contest is a battle, the weapon die (or dice) is determined by the weapon your Hero is wielding. If the contest is not a battle, your defensive weapon die will be one of your Arete abilities. You hold your defensive dice in your left hand.

Next, you may add your Ability die for the contest. You may add your ability die to your offense -or- your defense, not both.

Finally, you may add your Name die. You may add your Name die to your offense -or- your defense, not both.

Once dice are determined, each contestant rolls their offensive and defensive dice.

- If your offensive result equals or exceeds your target's Defense or defensive result (whichever is greater), you do damage.
- If your opponent's offensive result equals or exceeds your Defense or defensive result (whichever is greater) you take damage.

Examples will help make this clear.

> Brandon's hero Aleta is in an extended contest with the centaur Orphion. It is a contest of wrestling. If Aleta can best Orphion, he will show the heroes a secret path through the Mountain of Winds.
>
> First, Brandon takes up Aleta's offensive weapon die. In this case (a wrestling contest), the offensive weapon is Aleta's Might ability, d8.
>
> Then, Brandon picks up Aleta's defensive weapon die, which is her Grace, d6.
>
> To these, Brandon adds Aleta's Wrestling ability, which is an impressive d10. He decides to add the Wrestling die to offense. Finally, Brandon adds Aleta's name, d6, to her defensive dice.
>
> So, Brandon has offense: d8 + d10 and defense: d6 + d6. He rolls and gets a 9 on offense and a 6 on defense.
>
> The Guide gathers dice in the same way for Orphion, rolling an 8 on offense and a 4 on defense.
>
> Aleta beats Orphion's Defense rating of 5 (which is higher than his roll) and has an extra Victory (she beat his number by 4). She'll do two levels of damage to Orphion (one for hitting and one more for her Victory).
>
> Orphion beats Aleta's defensive roll of 6 (which is better than her Defense rating of 4). He does one level of damage to Aleta.

After an exchange, you measure damage to the contestants. Then, contestsants have the option to quit the contest (give up) or continue.

Battle is a special type of extended contest, and is convered in detail on page XX.

DAMAGE: FATIGUE & WOUNDS

When you lose a simple contest or a are hit during an exchange in an extended contest, your hero takes damage.

For a simple contest, damage is usually one Fatigue level, plus one for each extra Victory of your opponent. Sometimes the Guide will create special simple contests that do damage as Wounds instead of Fatigue. See **Dangerous Contests**, page XX.

"Hear me, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, unconquerable, if ever you loved my father well and stood by him in the thick of a fight, do the like now by me; grant me to come within a spear's throw of that man and kill him. He has been too quick for me and has wounded me; and now he is boasting that I shall not see the light of the sun much longer."

—Diomedes, THE ILIAD

Fatigue

After the contest is over, you must **impair** a number of ability levels equal to your Fatigue. One level of impairment reduces the die-size of the ability to the next-lowerst size. A d12 becomes a d10, a d10 becomes a d8, and so on. These levels can be subtracted from one ability or several, as you choose. The first level of impairment from Fatigue must go to an ability that you used during the contest. Write the impaired die-level next to the box for that ability on the Hero Sheet (leave the normal, full rating in the box). An ability that is reduced below d4 is **crippled**, and cannot be used again without special healing. A crippled ability cannot be impaired further.

Wounds

Wounds represent harm done to your hero. The harm may be physical, in the form of cuts and broken bones; or spiritual, in the form of pain, disappointment, and loss of confidence.

During an extended contest, your hero suffers **wounds** when he or she loses an exchange. Wounds go on the wound track of your Hero Sheet. Mark the wound box number that corresponds to the number of wounds your hero has taken during the exchange. For example, if you took two wounds, you would put an X in the box numbered '2', but would not mark the '1' box at all.

If you need to mark a box, but it is already marked, then you must mark the next box. If you took two wounds, but your '2' box was marked, you would have to mark your '3' box instead.

Each box has a penalty associated with it. You suffer the penalty of the highest box you have marked.

If you have to mark your '6' box, but it is already marked, you are **incapacitated** and immediately lose the contest.

Armor

Armor blocks wounds. When you would suffer a wound, you may instead place a marker on a piece of armor (I like to use pennies for markers). Each piece of armor can "hold" one wound in this way.

After the contest, all wounds on armor pieces become Fatigue levels.

During battle, your hero's armor is the actual physical armor that he or she wears (helmet, breastplate, greaves). In other types of contests, your hero can have "armor" based on certain high ability ratings. For example, in a wrestling contest, a d10 Athletics ability provides two pieces of "armor." In a contest of Cunning, a d8 Lore ability provides one piece of "armor". The associated armor abilities are explained in detail on page XX.

Healing

The Heal ability is used to heal wounds. It may be not be used during a contest. To heal someone, roll your Name + Heal vs. 2d6. If you win, you heal one box of damage, plus one extra box per Victory. Start healing with the highest damage box first.

One person may be healed multiple times in a scene, but each attempt after the first incurs a cumulative -2 penalty.

Heal can also restore a crippled ability. Roll name + Heal vs. d6 + the die-size you want to restore.

Refreshment

You restore ability levels lost to fatigue through **refreshment**. Refreshment takes place during interlude scenes (see **Scenes & Pacing**, page XX).

To refresh an ability, you engage in a contest—*agon*—with the other heroes. Choose an ability from Battle, Craft, or Sport to use for the contest. Every hero will then roll Name + Ability. The winner gets 1 XP and may refresh two ability levels in any other category. So if you rolled a contest of Wrestle (Sport) you could refresh any ability in Arete, Battle, or Craft.

"Most dread son of Cronos, what is this that you are saying? Would you snatch a mortal man, whose doom has long been fated, out of the jaws of death? Do as you will, but we shall not all of us be of your mind."

—Hera, THE ILIAD

Second place gets to refresh one ability level (with the same category restriction as the winner). Third place and below get nothing.

Each hero may initiate two refreshments during an interlude scene, but may not roll the same ability twice.

The Music ability is especially good for refreshment. See the ability descriptions on page XX for more details.

CONTESTS IN PLAY

Most Voyages (game sessions) will consist of many brief, simple contests and one or two extended contests. Often, the simple contests leading up to the finale will have an impact on the extended contests in some way (like a series of challenges to navigate a dangerous volcano and its denizens before the big final showdown with the hydra).

FATE

Every hero must someday meet his or her fate. This may be glorious death in battle, a happy old age surrounded by family and friends, or a tragic end filled with horror. One thing is certain: Fate is inexorable and cannot be turned aside.

Each hero has a Fate rating on the Fate scale at the bottom of the Hero Sheet. For mortal heroes, this rating starts at zero. For half-divine heroes, the rating starts at eight.

There are three benchmarks on the Fate scale, marked 8, 10, and 12. When your Fate rating crosses the level of a benchmark, you raise your hero's Name die to the size indicated (d8, d10, or d12).

Gaining Fate

Fate only increases. There is no way to reduce your hero's Fate rating. There are several ways to raise your hero's Fate rating, however.

- Raise your Fate by one to avoid one wound.
- Raise your Fate by one to remove one level of impairment.
- Raise your Fate by one to avoid all damage from an exchange by quitting the contest and being "left for dead." This is sometimes preferable to taking lots of impairment damage.

Your Fate will also increase automatically when certain conditions are met:

- +1 Fate when your hero is incapacitated
- +1 Fate when you complete a Quest item
- +1 Fate to challenge a god. If a god gives you a divine command that you don't wish to follow, you may challenge the god to a contest to resist the command.

When you run out of Fate boxes, your hero's tale is almost at an end. Your hero will get one more conflict scene and then will retire from the game. You get to narrate how your hero meets his Fate, either now, on the current island, or in the future.

- If your hero has completed five or more Quest items, then he has proven his worth to the gods and his Fate will be glorious. His Name shall be remembered forever.
- If your hero has completed three or four Quest items, his or her Fate will be pleasant.
- If your hero has completed 2 Quest items or less, he has not proven himself to the gods, and his Fate will be dark and tragic.

Making a New Hero

After you retire your hero, you get to create a new one. Follow the same process to create your new hero as you did to create your first, with one exception: The number of "free" ability levels you get to add is equal to the number of completed Quest items your reitred hero completed.

BATTLE

Fighting on the battlefield is an extended contest with a few extra rules of its own.

Positioning

Before the battle begins, the relative positions of the combatants are determined. This is based on the terrain and visibility of the battlefield, as well as the movement and tactics of the warriors. Every fighter wants to get into position to use their weapon best while keeping their enemies at a distance that makes their weapons less effective.

The Guide will select the starting terrain and visibility for the battle. If the heroes want to set the starting conditions for the battle (by luring enemies into a trap, for example) you can run a contest (simple of extended) to see who has control over where the battle will take place.

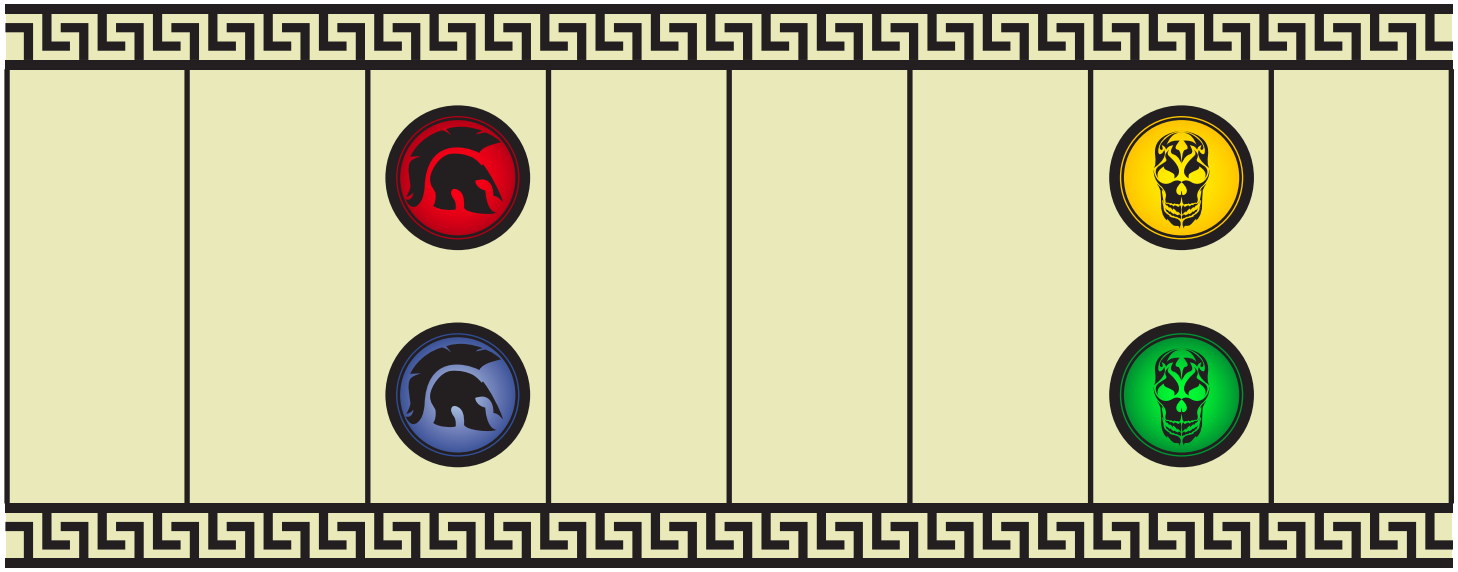
Starting Range

	Bright	Dim	Dark
Open exterior	7	6	5
Rugged exterior	6	5	4
Dense exterior	5	4	3
Large interior	4	3	2
Small interior	3	2	1
Cramped interior	2	1	0

After the starting range is determined, all combatants choose their weapons. Place a counter for each combatant (or group) on the range strip. Place the heroes in one range band, and the enemies in the other—at the proper starting distance. Then, positioning rolls are made.

Each combatant rolls Name + Athletics. Then, acting in order from **lowest** roll to highest, each combatant gets to move an enemy unit (or group) by one range band. You may only move an enemy who rolled lower than you in the positioning contest.

The range strip and a starting range of 4—Two Heroes vs. Two groups of Skeletons



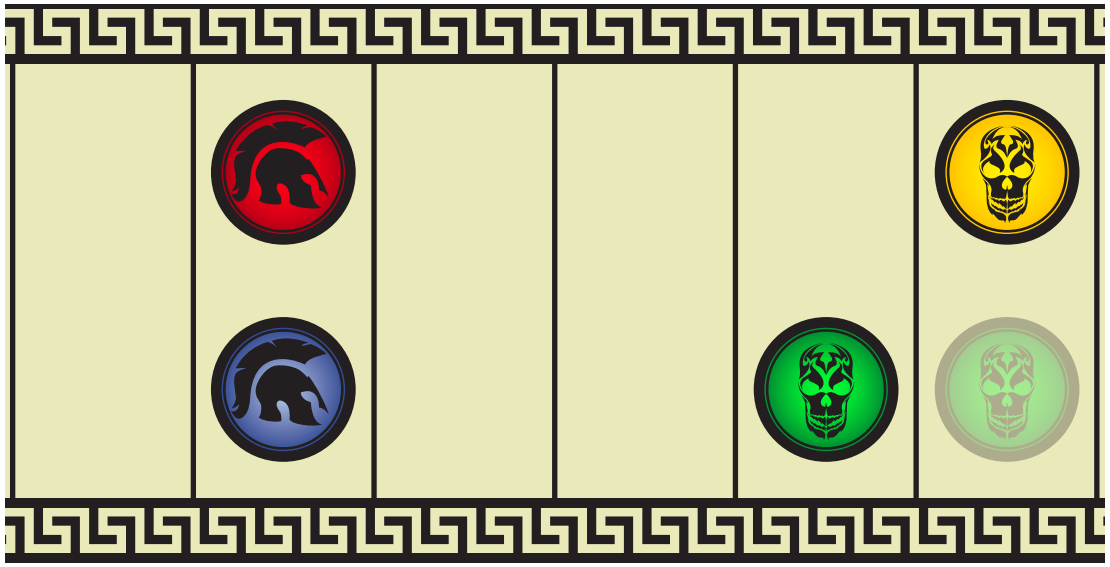
Positioning Example

After the positioning rolls, the order is (from lowest to highest):

1. Green Skeletons
2. Blue Hero
3. Red Hero
4. Yellow Skeletons

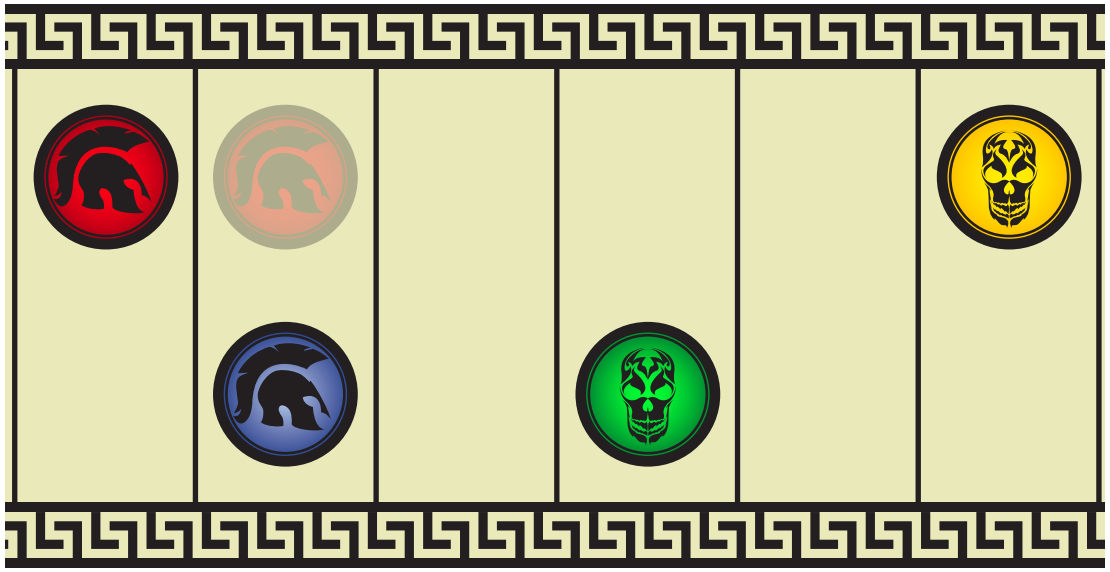
The Green Skeletons are the lowest, so they don't get to position anyone.

The Blue Hero goes second. He can move any opponent that he beat, which in this case is only the Green Skeletons. He moves them one range band closer.

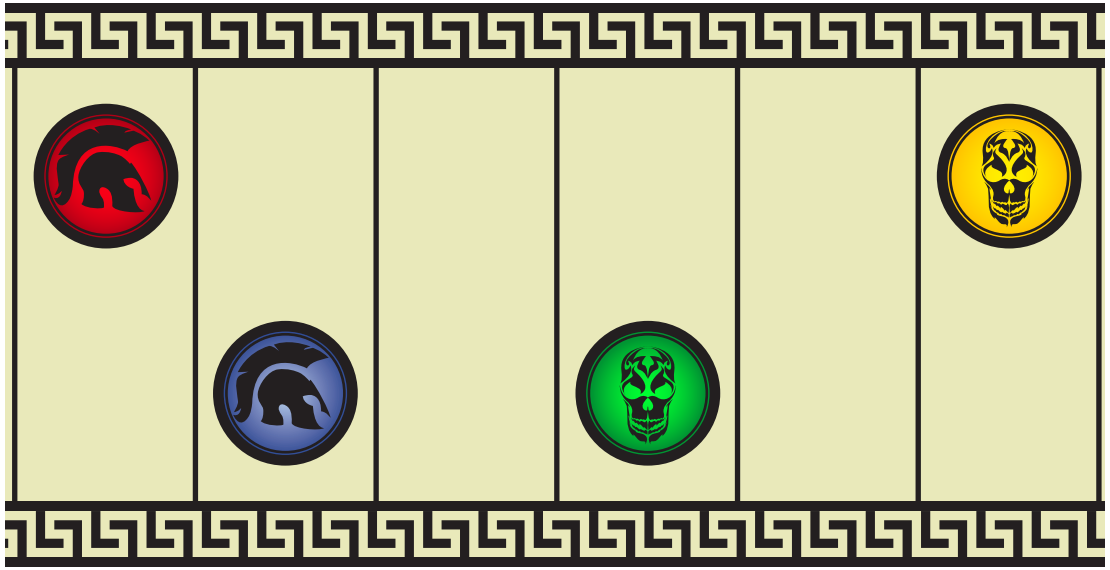


Then the Red Hero goes. He can also move the Green Skeletons, so he moves them closer again, to get them into spear range (2) for both Heroes.

Finally, the Yellow Skeletons get to position. They decide to push the Red Hero away one band, putting him into their bow range (5,6) and moving him out of optimal spear range against the Green Skeletons.



That leaves us with our final positions before the action starts for this exchange. Blue has Green in optimal spear range, and Yellow has Red in optimal bow range. Red doesn't have a bow, but he can hurl javelins at Green.



The positioning system is not meant to be "realistic" in any way. It's a very abstract way to capture the swirl and flow of the battlefield where combatants are rushing at each other, creating openings, feinting, falling back, and threatening spaces with their weapons. Think of the positioning rolls as a test of battlefield awareness and good reflexes.

Weapons

In battle, your weapons are your life. After the starting range is determined (but before positioning rolls) the combatants arm themselves for the fight.

To arm your hero, you will put dice into your hands. The dice represent your hero's weapons. You will hold them as your hero holds her weapons. See the weapon descriptions to the right.

When your target is in range for your weapon, you roll dice normally. If the target is one range band closer or farther, you suffer a -2 penalty to your attack roll. If your target is more than one range band outisde your range (either closer or farther) you cannot attack using that weapon.

Remember, in an extended contest, you only roll **one** ability die. If you are using two weapons (shield and spear, shield and sword, two swords) you must choose which ability die to roll. You do not roll both.

Order of Action

Combatants act in order of weapon range and position. The closest weapons, Swords, go first as a group. Within that group, the combatants in the best position (at optimal range) act first. If two characters are tied for position (they're both using Swords and are both at range 1 to their targets, for example) then the warrior with the higher ability die goes first. If there's still a tie, compare these abilities, in order, to break the tie: Athletics, Cunning, Grace, Insight.

WEAPONS

Bow 1d8+1 Range: 5, 6
Use of the bow requires an empty left hand. Put the bow die in your right hand.

Javelin 1d6+1 Range: 2-4
The javelin is the least powerful weapon but it is useful at many different distances, making it very versatile. The javelin die can be used in either hand.

Shield 1d8
You hold your shield your left hand. You may use a spear and shield at the same time.

Spear 1d8 + 1d6 Range: 2
You hold your spear in both hands. Put the d8 in one hand and the d6 in the other (left for defense, right for offense). You may swap the positions of the dice at any time before you roll. You may use a spear and shield at the same time.

Sword 2d6 Range: 1
You hold your sword in one hand. Put the 2d6 in the hand that holds the sword. Sword dice can be shared with other swords. If you hold a sword in your other hand, you may shift 1 die from one to the other. So you could have 1 left, 3 right; 3 left, 1 right; or 2 and 2. You may swap the positions of the dice at any time before you roll.

Next, the longer-range weapons act, in order: Spear, Javelin, Bow. Within each weapon group, combatants act in order of optimal position, then ability, then tie-breakers.

Note that if you have initiative over your opponent (i.e. you act first) you may choose to attack first or to let your opponent attack and then respond.

You may attack one target during an exchange. You may defend against multiple attackers. Leave your defensive roll on the table, and use it (or your Defense rating, whichever is higher). However, groups of coordinated attackers get a "gang up" bonus when they outnumber the defender, usually +2 or +4 depending on the size of the group.

Once every warrior has made an attack, the exchange ends.

Between Exchanges

Combatants may take action between exchanges. You may arm yourself with different weapons (that you carry or pick up from fallen warriors) and you may add or remove armor pieces. Some monster abilities (such as Fear) take effect between exchanges.

Cunning, Lore & Orate

These abilities may be used between exchanges. See the ability descriptions on page XX for more details.

Aristeia

Between exchanges, warriors may challenge one another to one-on-one combat, or *aristeia*. If both warriors agree to the combat, move them off the range strip onto a new range strip of their own. Denying a challenge from a warrior of equal reknown (same Name die level) immediately impairs your Name by one level.

If both warriors agree to a fighting distance, they may start at that range. If not, they start at a random range (roll 1d6) and then position from there. No other warriors may intervene in *aristeia*, unless one of the warriors cries out for help. If this happens, any other warriors can move onto the *aristeia* range strip (between exchanges), moving into the range band of the warrior they want to help. Crying out for help immediately impairs your Name by one level.

Surrender

One side in a battle can surrender to the other. This happens between exchanges. To surrender, you lay down your arms and plead for mercy. The other side dictates the terms of the surrender, and you must comply or go on fighting.

Note: All the "between exchanges" actions (including Surrender!) may also be performed before the first exchange in the battle.

Run Away!

Running away is sometimes a prudent option. Especially if you are fighting a monster that cannot be slain with normal weapons. If one side flees, a chase contest is begun. This can be a simple or extended contest, using the Athletics ability. The winner determines if the fight continues (for one more exchange, at least) or the escape is successful.

Defeat

A combatant is defeated when it surrenders or is incapacitated from wounds. A defeated warrior is either killed or entirely at the mercy of his opponent (bound and helpless, for example). A hero cannot be killed before she meets her Fate, of course. Defeated heroes (with Fate remaining) always survive, but are at the mercy of the enemy. They may have to make terrible bargains to be set free, or face very difficult contests to escape.

Defeat also impairs a hero's Name by one level.

GODS & DIVINE FAVOR

You choose which god your hero is most devoted to. In the lower right corner of your Hero Sheet, there are a number of boxes to represent **divine favor**. The number of boxes for your god measures how much supernatural aid that god is willing to give you during your adventures. You start play with 6 boxes of divine favor. Put an X mark in the remaining boxes.

During play, you may check off boxes of divine favor in order to activate special actions in the game.

- 1 box: Open-end a die**.** You may re-roll a die that shows its max result (a 6 on a d6) and add the second roll to the first. If you roll the max result again on subsequent rolls, you may continue to re-roll and add.
- 1 box: +1d6 to a weapon for 1 exchange
- 2 boxes: Re-roll any one die
- 2 boxes: Attack another target during 1 exchange
- 3 boxes: Ignore damage penalties for 1 exchange
- 3 boxes: Move your hero one range band
- 4 boxes: double weapon dice for 1 exchange
- 6 boxes: Re-roll any number of dice

Sacrifices

To restore divine favor, you must sacrifice to your god. A sacrifice must take place during an interlude scene. Sacrifice involves a simple contest of the god's favored ability. You restore all of your divine favor, even if you fail. Failure does add a level of Fatigue, however, as usual.

Increasing Divine Favor

You can increase divine favor by spending advances. See Advancement, page XX).

ABILITIES

Arete Abilities

Arete abilities are used as "weapons" in non-battle contests. They may also sometimes be tested as "saving throws" in Guide-created dangerous contests (like crossing a burning desert or surviving a storm at sea).

Insight

Inight is a combination of awareness, reason, and wisdom. You might test Insight to see through an illusion.

Grace

Grace is agility and poise. You might test Grace to avoid a sudden trap.

Might

Might is physical power, both strength and vigor. You might test Might to resist being knocked over a cliff or to smash something to bits.

Spirit

Spirit is power of the will. You might test Spirit to resist the effects of a Fear power or to show bravery against a god.

Battle Abilities

Aim

Used to attack with a bow, javelin, or other missile weapon.

Shield

Used to defend with a shield.

Spear

Used to attack and defend with a spear or any pole-type weapon.

Sword

Used to attack and defend with a sword, knife, or other close-in weapon.

Craft Abilities

Cunning

Cunning can be used for any type of stealth, subterfuge, deceit, camouflage, or trickery—and also resisting those things.

Weapons: Spirit (offense). Insight (Defense).

Armor: Lore (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Lore

Lore represents knowledge of all kinds. A lore roll can be used to gather information about something, usually from memory or oral tradition, since the heroes (and the world) are mostly illiterate. Lore is especially good for knowing about enemies: weaknesses, special abilities, supernatural powers, etc.

Weapons: Insight (offense). Spirit (defense).

Armor: Music (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Orate

Orate is the ability to speak to others and have an effect on them.

Weapons: Spirit (offense). Insight (defense).

Armor: Presence (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Heal

Heal can be used to remove wounds and to restore crippled abilities.

Sport Abilities

Athletics

Athletics covers running, jumping, swimming, and climbing.

Weapons: Grace (offense). Might (defense)

Armor: Presence (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Music

Music covers the playing of instruments as well as recitation of poems and tales.

Weapons: Grace (offense). Spirit (defense).

Armor: Orate (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Presence

Presence is the ability to have an effect on someone without speaking. To make them love, fear, or respect you.

Weapons: Spirit (offense). Might (defense).

Armor: Cunning (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

Wrestle

Wrestle is the ability to grapple, throw, and pin an opponent. It is not used on the battlefield, though it may be used during *aristeia* or during a brawl without weapons. Range: 0.

Weapons: Might (offense). Grace (defense).

Armor: Athletics (d8=1, d10=2, d12=3)

SAMPLE CONTESTS

Here are some uses for abilities to show what can be done with them. This is not an exhaustive list.

Find out about the monster...

Lore contest vs. monster's Craft. A win means the Guide tells the players a fact about the monster (reveal one of its ability dice, or tell one of its supernatural powers, for example). Each extra Victory is one more fact the Guide has to reveal.

To find out a specific fact about the monster (what's its Battle ability? is it immune to normal weapons?) win a Lore vs. Craft contest with a -2 penalty.

You can try Lore during a battle (between exchanges) but at a -2 penalty. It's better to learn about the monster beforehand.

Sometimes the heroes will encounter "helpful" NPCs that will divulge information about enemies, if the heroes can beat them in a contest (Orate, Presence, Athletics, Cunning, Music, you name it).

Set up an ambush...

Cunning vs. Cunning (or Craft). The winner gets to ambush the loser. The winner chooses the starting range for the first exchange. If you win with a Victory, your opponent is completely surprised and has a -2 to all rolls in the first exchange.

Inspire the troops...

Orate contest vs. d6 + highest enemy die (between exchanges). Everyone on the winning side gets +2 to one roll during the next exchange.

Put the fear of Achilles into them...

Presence contest vs. d6 + highest enemy die (between exchanges). Everyone on the winning side gets +2 to one roll during the next exchange.

Use clever tactics...

Cunning vs. Cunning (or Craft) contest (between exchanges). The winning side gets +2 to their positioning rolls.

Tame the beast...

Presence contest vs. beast's Arete + Battle. If you win, you can give the beast a command. If you win with a Victory, you have made the beast friendly towards you. If you get multiple Victories, you can count on the beast as a helpful companion.

If someone beats the beast in wrestling first, you get +2 to your taming contest.

ADVANCEMENT

Earning Experience Points (XP)

You earn XP by defeating enemies and achieving Quest items. When you strike the blow that defeats an enemy you get 1 XP immediately. Each Quest item is worth 10+ XP.

At the end of a contest, the winning side gets a number of XP based on the challenge level of the contest, and whether it was a simple or extended contest.

Advances

Every 7 XP you earn converts into 1 Advance. You can save up Advances and spend them to raise ability levels. To raise the die size of an ability by one, spend a number of Advances equal to half the number of sides on the new die size. You can only raise one die size at a time.

So, to raise an Ability from d4 to d6 it costs 3 Advances.

To raise from d6 to d8, 4 Advances.

From d8 to d10, 5 Advances.

From d10 to d12, 6 Advances.

You may also spend 1 Advance to add 1 box of divine favor. Your exploits and successes please the gods, and they take more notice of you.

CREDITS

AGON is by John Harper.

The game came about because I was reading Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and the wonderful novels by Dan Simmons: *Ilium* and *Olympos*. That much awesome Greek action in my head just had to come out in some form.

The core dice mechanic was inspired by *Savage Worlds,* by Shane Hensley and John R. Hopler.

The random island generator was inspired by *Mazes & Minotaurs*, by Olivier Legrand and Paul Elliott.

The wound track was inspired by *The Shadow of Yesterday*, by Clinton R. Nixon.

The whole Fate business was inspired by my fuzzy memories of a Greek hero game that Jonathan Walton was messing around with years ago, called *Argonauts*. His version was probably cooler.

And when I say "inspired by" I mean "shamelessly stolen from." This is a Frankenstein game, and I am not ashamed to say so. I've benefitted greatly from the geniuses of game design that came before me.

Thanks to Philip LaRose, Brandon Amancio, Cara Tyler, Ed Ouellette, and Scott Dierdorf for playtesting. Extra special thanks to Brandon for creating a much better positioning system than the one I had to start with.

I couldn't have made this without the support, wisdom, and guidance of Matt Wilson, Wilhelm Fitzpatrick, Clinton R. Nixon, Philip LaRose, Brandon Amancio, Tony Dowler, Matt Durasoff, Chris Chinn, Matt Snyder, Vincent Baker and Ron Edwards.

I hope Andy likes it.

Hail Eris.

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ARETE

INSIGHT | GRACE | MIGHT | SPIRIT

CRAFT

CUNNING | LORE | ORATE | HEAL

SPORT

ATHLETICS | MUSIC | PRESENCE | WRESTLE

BATTLE

AIM | SHIELD | SPEAR | SWORD

BOW DICE	SHIELD DICE	SPEAR DICE	SWORD DICE
RANGE	DEFENSE	RANGE	RANGE

JAVELIN DICE

RANGE

ARMOR

HELMET	BREASTPLATE	GREAVES
-1 TO AIM	-1 TO SWORD & SPEAR	-1 TO ATHLETICS

AGON

HEROIC TRAIT

NAME

LINEAGE

EXPERIENCE TRAITS

FATIGUE

QUEST

ISLANDS

FATE

1: AVOID 1 WOUND
1: REMOVE 1 IMPAIRMENT LEVEL
1: COMPLETE QUEST ITEM
1: INCAPACITATED/LEFT FOR DEAD
1: CHALLENGE A GOD

DIVINE FAVOR

1: OPEN-END DIE
1: +1D6 TO WPN FOR 1 EX
2: RE-ROLL ONE DIE
2: ATTACK ANOTHER TARGET
3: IGNORE DMG FOR 1 EX
3: MOVE HERO ONE RANGE
4: DOUBLE WPN DICE FOR 1 EX
6: RE-ROLL ANY NUMBER OF DICE

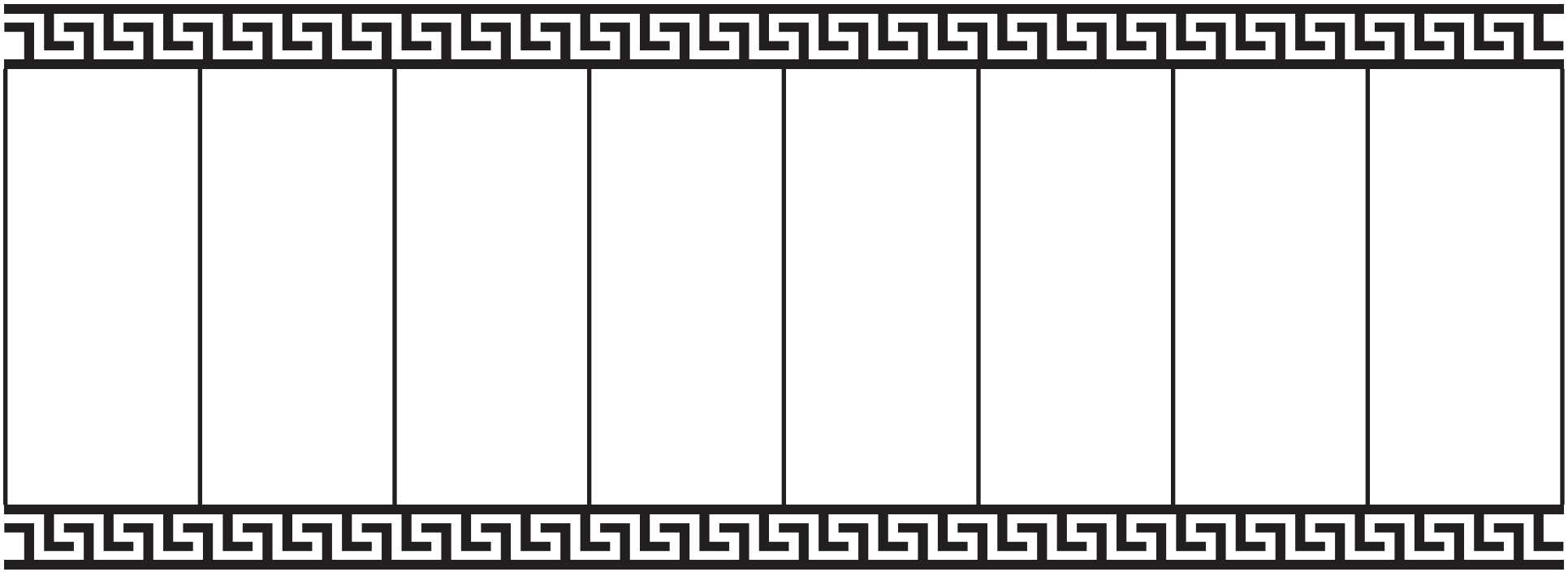
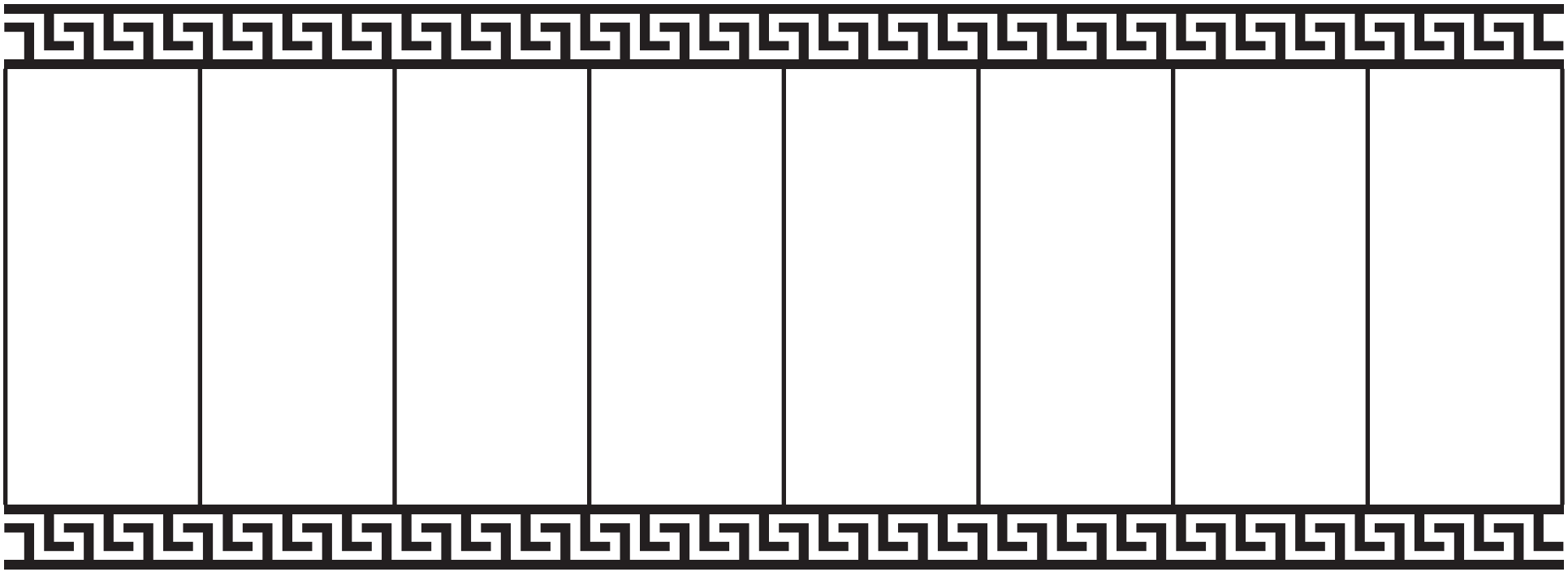
WOUND TRACK

1	2	3	4	5	6
-1 TO NEXT ROLL	-1 TO NEXT ROLL	-2 TO NEXT ROLL	-1 TO ALL ROLLS	-2 TO ALL ROLLS	-3 TO ALL ROLLS

FATE

8 10 12

ADVANCES

XP

GODS & DIVINE FAVOR