

Though many scoff at the idea of ancient beings that predate this world and the gods themselves, enough evidence exists to conclude that the Old Cults draw power from something truly primeval, and whatever that something may be it is older and stranger than the anthropomorphic entities worshiped by people today. Perhaps the cultists' stories are true, that this world once belonged to stranger creatures than humans and dragons. Whatever the truth, the gods aren't saying.

The First Gods

The civilized world has very few records dating back to before the first great human civilization was destroyed. Some scholar-priests and past-scyring mages have pieced together bits of information about this prehistoric time, but these accounts are rare for mortals, and gods have more pressing matters than to drudge up ancient information. It is known that during the dawn of mortal life, the earliest gods battled Rovagug to prevent him from destroying all creation. Among those known to have opposed him were Abadar, Apsu, Asmodeus, Calistria, Curchanus, Dahak, Desna, Dou-Bral, Erastil, Gozreh, Minderhal, Pharsma, Sarenrae, and Torag, as well as numerous other gods from remote parts of the world. Many minor gods died in these battles, though no known records exist of their names.

Once the Rough Beast was imprisoned (and it is likely that each deity contributed a portion of his or her power to create this prison, as no simple barrier or force could hold Rovagug for long) the surviving gods nursed their wounds and returned to their homes in the Great Beyond. Some married and had children. Some split themselves into multiple beings. Some hid themselves away or left Golarion entirely, sickened by the battles and death. Others steered key mortals in Golarion to serve their own ends, but in general they adopted a policy of nonintervention other than granting spells—the mortal world was for mortals, and direct godly efforts in the world would cause wars that rivaled Rovagug's fury.

From this time emerged new gods, such as Shelyn. She joined her half-brother Dou-Bral and together they watched over the powers of beauty, love, music, and art. For unknown reasons they quarreled, and Dou-Bral went beyond the world to the spaces between the planes and was transformed. After he attacked his sister and father upon his return, the other gods banished him to the realm of shadow. The dead mortal Urgathoa fled the line of waiting dead in Pharsma's Boneyard and returned to the world as a goddess, the first undead creature, and the bearer of many plagues that would cull countless mortal lives. Lamashtu ascended at this time as well, ascending from