

# **Water and the Spirit: A Heretic's Look at Oannes**

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## **Introduction**

Most experienced IN NOMINE<sup>®</sup> players “know” that Oannes, Archangel of the Waters, was killed by Belial during the War in Heaven. Not every GM, however, plays campaign history strictly by the books: I personally saw good reasons to keep Oannes alive in my version of the Symphony.

- First, Heaven had already lost one elemental Archangel when Belial joined Lucifer in Hell. (Gabriel, in this campaign, is the Archangel of the Divine Word—a messenger and prophet who never had a specific link to Fire.) Letting another elemental Archangel take Gabriel's place helps to balance Heaven's standing in the War.
- Second, water plays a prominent role in all the Divine religions; all of them use water as a symbol of life, purity, and holiness. I find it hard to believe that no Archangel would defend a Word so important to Heaven.
- Third, waterside locations are important to this particular campaign setting: not only is the “home town” (Madison, Wisconsin) built between two lakes, but most of the party's other adventures have taken place in lakeside or coastal towns. Again, it seems wrong that Hell would have a monopoly on aquatic Tethers (which would turn up more often in settings like mine).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although Vephar did die fighting Oannes, a new Demon Prince ([Rahab](#)) has taken the Word of the Seas in this campaign.

Mortals who are aware of the Symphony (but have never seen Oannes personally) often debate which Choir is his. Some of his traits suggest an Ofanite: the Waters are an active, mobile force; and stagnation causes decay there. Some suggest a Kyriotate: the Waters pervade many places, have no form of their own, and adapt easily to change in their surroundings. In reality, however, Oannes is an EloHITE—calm and transparent, but capable of inspiring or reflecting others' passions.

If Oannes was *not* soul-killed during the War in Heaven, what happened instead? My own history agrees that he fought and destroyed Vephar, and that Oannes suffered terrible damage in the battle. He had lost several Forces and fled to the deepest ocean trench he could find to recuperate. Belial could not reach Oannes there, but neither could his heavenly allies. Raphael, the Archangel of Healing, spent several years trying to find and restore his old comrade; during that time, some human cultures (influenced by Oannes' presence) began worshiping benevolent sea-kings as gods. (The Norsemen, who had *two* rival ocean-deities in their pantheon, probably heard distorted tales of the battle between Oannes and Vephar.)

After his recovery, Oannes frequently traveled between his heavenly Grotto and various parts of the Earth—not only seaside regions, but inland waters and even rain-thirsty deserts. (During his journeys, the angel taught the Egyptians and other Near Eastern cultures how to irrigate croplands; he also taught the Romans how to build aqueducts and plumbing.)

As the Industrial Revolution grew, however, Oannes felt his Word declining again: people began to pollute the waters more intensely, kill some sea life through overfishing, and disdain the religions which teach about Water's spiritual power. Despite this abuse, Oannes never completely lost faith in humanity. He taught Americans to improve irrigation techniques and build better reservoirs after the Dust Bowl years; he also encouraged the local churches to continue practicing full-immersion baptism. (Other celestials give Novalis and Jordi credit for the environmentalist movements later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; they're partly right, but many overlook Oannes' hard work at inspiring every mortal who's helped a coral reef grow or protested against garbage being dumped into a lake.)

Oannes' celestial form resembles a typical EloHITE at first glance: a graceful-but-sexless humanoid body with intelligent, luminous eyes. On closer inspection, however, an observer would notice gill slits in his throat and webbing between his toes. These features never hinder the Archangel on land; they merely reveal his perfect adaptation to life underwater.

When he travels in the Corporeal world, Oannes often merges with a body of water and becomes completely invisible. Mortals able to hear the Symphony sometimes claim that a Divine voice reveals itself in the sound of the waves; they may have encountered him without knowing it. Sometimes, however, Oannes needs a more substantial vessel for his missions: he can take the form of any local water creature, but sometimes appears as an elderly fisherman or sailor with kind, expressive eyes.

## **Dissonance**

The waters take the path of least resistance. It is dissonant for servitors of the Waters to use violence to remove an obstacle to their objectives—unless it is the last resort, or the obstacle is of Infernal origin (a demon, Hellsworn mortal, or the like).

## **Choir Attunements**

**Note:** All angels who serve Oannes (regardless of their Choir) naturally withstand the pressures of the deep sea. They move as freely in the water as they do on dry land. (This benefit applies only while submersed in water, and will not allow the celestial to breathe in any other special atmospheric conditions.) In addition, when immersed in water, these angels may assume their celestial form automatically, with no Essence cost; the usual Disturbance rules still apply.

### **Seraphim (partially restricted)**

Seraphim of Oannes have the ability to tell just how deep and pure a body of water is with a resonance roll. They can also divine where natural bodies of water are, making them celestial divining rods. Finally, being closest to the purity of Heaven, these angels can purify as many gallons of water as they have Celestial Forces.

### **Cherubim (partially restricted)**

If the subject of a Cherub's attunement is on or within a large body of water, the Cherub may add his Corporeal Forces to the check digit when locating it. They can also resuscitate a drowned being if he drowned within a number of minutes equal to the angel's Corporeal Forces.

### **Ofanim (restricted)<sup>2</sup>**

On a successful resonance roll, Ofanim of the Waters travel through water at double the usual speed. If the check digit is a 5 or 6, they can reach the speed of sound in water: the angel could merge his celestial form with a mountain stream, and reach a distant island in the sea only an hour later.

### **Elohim (restricted)**

Elohim of the Waters are like calm reflecting pools. They can not only sense emotions and motivations but also explain them, in such a way as to make the other see himself objectively and clearly. The emotional equivalent of Yves' Divine Logic attunement, this can be used in a variety of ways—to calm, to bring self-understanding, or to deter a hasty and dangerous action—depending on the circumstances. Subjects hostile to the angel get a Will roll to resist.

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<sup>2</sup> Partly adapted from Douglas Muir's "[Aquatic Passage](#)" Servitor Attunement; partly from the Choir Attunement suggested by [Jerry Grayson](#).

## **Malakim**

Oannes' Virtues move with a fluid motion and are hard to hit in combat; they may add their Corporeal Forces to all Dodge rolls (both the target number and the check digit). In addition, if they are standing at least ankle-deep in water, these Malakim regenerate 1d6 body hits each round.

## **Kyriotates (restricted)**

Kyriotates of the Waters may possess water—ten gallons of water for each Force they possess. They control the form of their liquid, and may go against prevailing tides or currents. When they assume celestial form underwater (but nowhere else!), they may remain there indefinitely without being pulled back to Heaven.

## **Mercurians**

Oannes' Mercurians are charged with helping humans use water; they sail ships, run public waterworks, and help design irrigation canals. They can instantly locate leaks or seepage in any structure; and any structure built (primarily) by them will be completely leak-proof for years equal to the angel's total Forces.

## **Bright Lilim (restricted)<sup>3</sup>**

Still waters run very deep and Oannes' Lilim, though quieter than most, can plunge those depths. A Bright of the Waters can automatically detect a person's longest-held Need: roll to determine the check digit, which indicates its strength. If she fulfills the Need, the Gifter earns 1 Essence (or 2 Essence if the Need was stronger than level 3).

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<sup>3</sup> Suggested by [Scott Rochat](#).

## **Servitor Attunements**

### **Baptism<sup>4</sup>**

This attunement lets Oannes' servants wash away others' dissonance or minor Discord; it can also cure similar disadvantages in mortals. The recipient must completely repent of his sins and be completely immersed in water (mortals may keep their head free to breathe). The angel may then spend enough of his own character points to wash away the Discord; he cannot remove any individual Discord greater than level 3, or more levels of total Discord than he has Forces.

### **Part the Waters<sup>5</sup>**

If the angel desires, any body of water will part to allow passage to the angel and to anyone accompanying him. Both "any body" and "anyone accompanying him" can be interpreted liberally: this attunement could make a tunnel through a glacier or a dry trail along ocean bottom, and hundreds of humans may accompany the angel if he wills it. The passage will collapse when the angel desires (or in 24 hours, whichever comes first).

### **Ripples**

By casting a stone into a body of water (at least the size of a farm pond) and spending 1 Essence, the servitor may hear the ripples of the last disturbance that he would have been able to perceive from that spot.

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4 Multiple-Discord rule added by Ingeborg S. Nordén.

5 Time limit added by Ingeborg S. Nordén.

## **Water of Life**

For 3 Essence, the servitor may imbue a pint of pure water with healing properties. Drinking the water restores six times the angel's Celestial Forces in Body hits—unless the drinker is a demon or undead, in which case the water *inflicts* the same amount of damage on him. This attunement is partially to blame for the popular belief that holy water harms demons.

## **Distinctions**

### **Vassal of the Waters**

Vassals of the Waters may communicate with any marine species telepathically, whether or not the species is familiar to them. The recipient must be within line of sight.

### **Friend of Rivers**

Oannes' Friends are springs of spiritual refreshment. For 6 Essence, the angel may revitalise a number of people equal to their total Forces, banishing fatigue and any associated penalties. In addition, it allows the recipients to immediately make a Strength roll at +4 to resist any poisons or drugs affecting their system—or a Will roll to cast out spirits possessing them.

### **Master of Tides**

These angels can spend 3 Essence to alter the condition of a body of water. The change takes a number of minutes equal to  $(7 - \text{the Master's Celestial Forces})$ , and can calm a raging storm to glass-like placidity or raise a tempest. The range of this ability is equal to 100 yards times the angel's total Forces. Some celestials jokingly refer to these Masters' power as “the Galilee effect”.

## Relationships

Oannes has earned no true enemies in Heaven; when he went missing after his battle with Vephar, many Archangels (not all of them “elemental”) mourned the loss.

**Allied:** Janus, Jean, Raphael (who saved Oannes' life after the battle)

**Associated:** Eli, Jordi, Marc, Novalis, Uriel (through the symbolic link to Purity), Yves

**Neutral:** Everyone else

**Hostile:** No one

## Invocation

**Chance of Invocation:** 2 (Oannes is still fond of visiting Earth, but travels so frequently that he's hard to catch in the right place)

### Invocation Modifiers:

+1—A pint of clean water

+2—A natural spring or mineral spa

+3—The source of a major river

+4—A rainstorm that lasts 24 hours

+5—At sea, out of sight of land

+6—At the bottom of the ocean

## **Rites**

### **Basic**

- Swim or bathe in a natural body of water for an hour
- Spend two hours helping a human use water (digging a well or an irrigation canal, teaching basic plumbing, etc.)
- Drown a demon's vessel (+2 if a servitor of Rahab or Belial)

### **Expanded**

- Help a find a pure drinking water supply
- Teach a man to fish (and feed him for a lifetime)
- Defend or protect an endangered water creature from harm
- Sink a ship that pollutes the oceans