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# Valley of Dust and Fire



by L. Richard Baker III



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by L. Richard Baker III

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# Introduction

*The Valley of Dust and Fire*, an accessory for the DARK SUN™ campaign setting, describes the most terrible, most dangerous spot in the entire Tyr Region of Athas—the realm of the Dragon King. No other place in that warped landscape rivals the sheer grandeur or the stark evil of Ur Draxa, the City of Doom.

You need the DARK SUN boxed set and *The Complete Psionics Handbook* to use *The Valley of Dust and Fire*. It expands your DARK SUN campaign with new locations in the vast Sea of Silt, east of the Tyr region; new rules for traveling and surviving in the silt; detailed description of the greatest and deadliest of secrets: the Valley of Dust and Fire; and lastly, new monsters of the deep silt and the Valley itself.

Use this information cautiously; some of the oldest mysteries of the DARK SUN campaign world permeate these pages. If you are ready to face the greatest secrets of the world of Athas, then hesitate no longer. The Valley of Dust and Fire awaits you.

## The Legend

It is said that in the heart of the Sea of Silt there is a city among the sands, a lush and verdant paradise where people live in ease and wealth. There is no want and no thirst, no slaves and no masters. There the image of Athas as it might once have been is preserved in these dying days.

Once in a lifetime a man standing at the shores of the Sea of Silt may be granted a glimpse of this place, a sweeping mirage of rich fields and pleasant fountains, hovering beyond the endless silt. One traveler claims to have seen the city from the road that goes from Draja to Ket; another traveler claims she saw it while standing in the shadow of the Bleak Tower; and yet another swears it lies beyond the isle of Waverly. Great heroes and powerful warriors have sought the city in all these places. Most likely they met their deaths in the suffocating dust, or at the hands of hostile giants. Few ever return from such a quest.

Yet another, darker tale is sometimes whispered about caravan campfires, or shuddered at by scholars in the golden palaces of the sorcerer-kings. Some people believe nothing but death and madness lie in the Sea. Scattered hermits and wandering traders claim to have seen the Dragon racing ashore from the very depths of the Sea, breaking on the shores like a dust-storm. Those who have collated these scattered accounts claim that the paradise in the center of the Sea is the Dragon's home-death to any so foolish as to venture there.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that this is true lies in the tattered journal of Galek Sandstrider, a famed traveler and adventurer who lived nearly 100 years ago. The journal was lost for many years after the death of Galek, but turned up in Tyr recently, sold by a renegade elf to a nobleman of that city. No one knows how Galek met his death; some say the Dragon came upon him in the wastes and devoured him because of his dangerous knowledge.

## From Galek's Journal

"Who has not heard of the mystical city of the silt, the green and fair realm in the heart of the choking dust? Too many people have seen it for such a place to not exist; of that we can be certain. But what is it? How does life exist in the depths of the Sea of Silt? And why is it that none who have sought the wonderful city have ever returned?

"I am Galek, who once on this ruined world would have been called mage. In these bitter times I am an outlaw and a renegade. I have dedicated my life to answering questions, leaving the wars and squabbles of slaves and sorcerer-kings for other men. Now I grow old, and the scant knowledge I have gathered must be recorded or lost again.

"I know that this was once a green world, a world of seas and forests. I know that this cruel and tormented world in which we live was shaped by our own hands. Sorcery, dark and evil, made Athas what it is today.

"But of all the things I have learned, of all the



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riddles I have answered, the greatest and darkest defies me still. I have seen the city in the Silt, that wonderful and magical place that dances before the eyes of men dying of thirst. I have been there.

“And I tell you this: it is stark hell.

“In the very center of the Sea of Silt is a valley, a wound in the very earth itself. A furnace wind screams endlessly through this devastated realm, carrying away the silt in an eternal pall of choking dust, scouring the earth to bare rock. I passed into this valley, and I found fire and death. The earth is warped and barren, devoid of life. The sun is hidden behind the endless clouds of blowing dust. And at the heart of this tortured place a ring of burning rock encircles a city so large my eye could not encompass it in one glance.

“I could not pass beyond the sea of molten rock; my companions were dead, and I was at the end of my strength. But before I turned away I studied the city long and hard; though you may think me a madman to say it, I know that city was a hundred times greater than any I have ever seen—and I have visited every one of the cities of Tyr, from far Balic to ancient Raam.

“It was at that nameless city in the sea of molten rock that I saw the Dragon.

“It came as I turned to retrace my steps through that shattered land. I heard a horrid cry and saw the beast, flying away from the city, arrowing straight for me. Its scales glowed red with the heat of the naked magma, and the clouds gathered beneath its wings like a storm of fire. I threw myself to the hard ground, averting my eyes; my doom was at hand. Yet the creature missed me (or did not deign to trouble over one insignificant human), and I lived to tell this tale. The Dragon vanished in the winds and the dust, and I saw it no more.

“To this day I do not know who built that terrible city or why. I cannot even say whether the place is still inhabited or simply the greatest of ruins; but it is there, in the center of the Sea of Silt, and so is the Dragon.

“Is it his city, his kingdom? I cannot answer. I can only say it is true. I have seen it.”

The story of the green city in the heart of the dust is nothing more than a daydream, a tale retold because people want to believe it. The darker tale, of a terrible death in the heart of the silt, is the truth. Galek Sandstrider is the only known traveler who has seen the Valley of Dust and Fire and returned to record his journey.

The search for the mystical city makes a fantastic adventure. The heroes face enormous challenges—dreadful monsters, scathing storms, and, most significantly, the vast Sea of Silt itself. The sway of the sorcerer-kings halts at its border; characters of the city-states find a world unlike any they have ever known.

Considering the risks of the search, why go?

First, the characters could mistakenly believe that the Valley is the utopian city of legend. Seeking out a land of wealth and ease has sent many an explorer off to adventure—just look at Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus. The wild tales of the Orient they heard helped inspire their journeys. Player characters could decide all by themselves to seek out the hidden city.

Characters ready to accept great risk in the hope of rich reward might come across Galek Sandstrider’s account and read of his journeys. Any AD&D® game player worth his or her salt should jump at the chance to explore what might be the greatest treasury of knowledge and power in the entire DARK SUN™ campaign world.

Lastly, very powerful characters might decide to take a shot at the Dragon. Their research should show that it frequently travels the silt, implying that it maintains a lair in the wastes. Of course, destroying the Dragon in its own demesne is a herculean and probably doomed task—but your players can find that out the hard way.







# The Sea of Silt





## Chapter One: The Sea of Silt

*"Beyond the Sea of Silt there is a land of forests and lakes, where the sun is a kiss of warmth and the earth is rich and fertile. There the mountains are made of iron, and the streambeds are strewn with gold. And the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky fill the air with song and gladness, and no creature kills another. Some day this bliss shall be ours as well, when the sorcerer-kings are no more and the Dragon but a legend told to frighten children."*

**—From the dwarven saga of Mordek,  
the Hero of the Rising Sun**

Vast beyond understanding, the Sea of Silt fills the great basin east of the Tyr region. No one has ever fully explored its borders or numbered the myriad islands and mud flats that dot its gray surface. Sages and sorcerer-kings can only dream of the great mysteries concealed beneath its deadly blanket of dust. Many believe that cities and ruins of the ancients lie upon the floor of the sea, just as they do the tablelands and mountains of Athas.

The cartographers and students of the schools of the great cities believe the Sea of Silt is roughly circular and almost 400 miles in diameter. From this central body deep rivers of silt snake their way into the tablelands—the Estuary of the Forked Tongue is an excellent example. Expeditions around its borders have reported a series of impassable fjords and active volcanoes around the northern border and vast mud flats and open silt around the southern edge.

Consider the obstacles to circumventing the Sea of Silt: One must first cross the Ringing Mountains, heading almost directly away from the sea; then the Forest Ridge, against the will of the ferocious halflings that infest the jungle; lastly, the eastward curve of the mountains on their unknown outer side to a region beyond the knowledge of Tyr sages.

To be sure, giants can wade the silt, and silt skimmers can travel its shoals. But only fliers can cross the deep silt easily. Even then, who but a madman

would trust his life to the prospect of a safe landing place when his mount becomes exhausted? Even strong fliers such as rocs shun a broad expanse of open silt. It is simply against their nature to fly out of sight of solid land, and the rider who attempts to force his mount out over the open silt invites a tragic end.

Unless someone comes up with a better method of crossing silt, the legendary "Other Side" and its fabled riches will likely remain a legend until the end of the world.

### The Silt

What is the Sea of Silt? Where did it come from? One need only see the ruins of the ancients that litter its shores to realize that Athas was not always the arid waste it is today. Some people believe the Sea was once filled with water, so much water that one could stand on a shore and not see the other side.

The silt itself is a grayish powder, like very fine and dry dust. It runs through the fingers like water, leaving not a trace on one's hands. The slightest trace of moisture causes it to stick and clump; it can cake the eyes, nose, and throat in seconds. Breathing the airborne silt slowly lines the lungs with powder and chokes the life from even a giant.

Like water, silt has a devilish ability to find its way into everything. A traveler walking along the borders of the Sea of Silt on a windy day finds boots, packs, and even pockets filling with gray dust. Most of the time it is merely annoying—but contamination of a canteen or food supplies is a sore blow to the wayfarer on short rations.

Silt is heavier than air, but far lighter than water. Stories tell of inventors who tried to copy the hulled, wheelless vehicles the ancients used to travel through water. The silt is so light, and of so little substance, that even the most carefully built boat sank through the dust to rest on the bottom. Others tried to strap great baskets to their feet, hoping that these could support their weight over the silt. They were no more successful.





## The Sea of Silt

Water sinks rapidly through the silt. A gallon of water thrown into shallow silt leaves a foot-wide muddy shaft through the dust down to the rock below. This rapidly fills over and collapses, but some sages observing this effect have speculated that a sufficient amount of water, such as one good rain, could pound the entire Sea into a single mud flat. Of course, the terrible heat of the sun would soon dry the mud back into silt.

### The Gray Death

Silt travelers must be forewarned of the Gray Death: suffocation from windborne dust while wading or flying above the silt (or even traveling near its borders) on windy days. The lungs and the throat slowly clog with dust, and unprotected characters traveling in these conditions suffer as if they were drowning (see "Holding Your Breath," *Player's Handbook* or *PHB*, page 122), except all times are computed in turns, not melee rounds. See the Sea of Silt Weather Chart (under Encounters) to find when Gray Death conditions exist.

Breathing through a thin, fine cloth is adequate protection for most humans and humanlike creatures. The cloth must be kept damp and clean, which consumes ½ gallon of water per day. Creatures suffering from the Gray Death have an initiative penalty of +4 and -4 to hit and damage.

### Wind and Weather

The endless flat expanse of the Sea of Silt allows terrifying winds to develop across its empty scope. It is a rare day when the Sea is still. Most of the time, it is whipped into a blinding, pearly haze by the fierce winds that sweep across the dust.

On very windy days, the top layer of the silt is actually carried away and borne into the atmosphere. Dust can hang in the air for many hours, and sometimes even days, after a major storm. Depending on the depth of the silt and the power of the wind, this stripped layer can be anywhere from a few

inches to dozens of feet thick. In many places a large storm can strip shallow silt right down to the bedrock and carry a blanket of silt over lands that are not normally covered. The borders of the sea are thus fluid and shift with the wind. Eventually, the wind always replaces what it has taken away, and the Sea returns to its normal limits.

Beneath this top layer lies the wave silt. This behaves like any body of water, forming waves when agitated. Running snakewise before the wind, the endless rise and fall of the gray dust can become hypnotic. Unlike water, the dust is too light to ever break or fall, and if the wind should suddenly die, the silt is left frozen in endless rippling dunes. They are deceptively solid to the eye, but are no more dense than other silt.

Underneath the wave silt is the deep silt. This layer lies so far down (40-50' deep) that it is almost never disturbed by the surface weather. Even the most knowledgeable sages can only guess at conditions in the deep silt. Presumably it is lightless and airless, and some amount of silt compression most likely takes place. What creatures make their homes here, or what secrets the deep silt hides, no one knows.

### Sea of Silt Visibility Range Categories

Wind	Day	Night
None	Clear sky	By # moons
Light	Silt Sea, calm	By # moons
Moderate	Silt Sea, rolling	By # moons or Silt Sea
Strong	Sandstorm, mild	Same
Storm	Sandstorm, driving	Same
Sirocco	Sandstorm, driving	Same

Categories above refer to Table 62, Visibility Ranges (page 117, *PHB*) and DARK SUN™ Visibility Ranges (page 84, *Rules Book*).



## Sea of Silt Weather Chart

Choose the weather according to the needs of the story. If there is no preference, use this chart. The first column gives the number rolled; the next two give day and night temperatures; the last two give day and night wind strength. Roll first for temperature, then roll again for wind. Check weather at midmorning and midevening.

2d6	Temperature		Wind	
	Day	Night	Day	Night
2	Cool	Cold	None	None
3	Warm	Cold	Light	None
4	Warm	Cool	Light	Light
5	Hot	Cool	Mod.	Light
6	Hot	Cool	Mod.	Light
7	V.hot	Cool	Mod.	Mod.
8	V.hot	Cool	Strong	Mod.
9	V.hot	Warm	Strong	Mod.
10	V.hot	Warm	Storm	Strong
11	Furnace	Warm	Storm	Strong
12	Furnace	Hot	Sirocco	Storm

**Temperature:** **Cool** and **Cold** temperatures halve water requirements. **Very hot** temperatures increase water requirements 50% over normal. **Furnace** temperatures double water consumption and cause characters wearing any armor to suffer heat exhaustion as though wearing metal armor. All terrain costs increase by +1 MP.

**Wind:** **Moderate** winds cause Gray Death conditions for silt waders or silt walkers only. **Strong** winds cause Gray Death conditions for anyone within one mile of the dust basin and flyers at less than 500' altitude. Aerial movement costs double. **Storm** winds cause Gray Death conditions for anyone within five miles of the dust basin and all flyers, regardless of altitude. Terrain costs triple; aerial movement costs quadruple. **Sirocco** winds cause Gray Death conditions for anyone within 20 miles of the dust basin. No flight or surface movement is possi-

ble. When a sirocco arises, it lasts 1d4 days and nights before ending. Do not reroll weather until the storm blows itself out.

## Denizens of the Silt Sea

The silt has some indigenous plant life outside the mud flats. In regions of shallow silt (10' or less) the olom-reed flourishes. This hardy plant roots in the solid bottom of the silt basin and reaches up through the dust blanket to the sun. Its stem is strong and flexible, with a tassel of soft rushes at its top. Travellers welcome sight of the olom-reed because stands of hundreds of reeds may conceal a small spring or mud flat.

Another plant, driftweed, is more common in the deep silt. This rootless network of thin, brittle branches is so light that it actually floats on the silt; it is one of the few substances able to do so. Driftweed is often carried hundreds of miles from the Sea by the worst dust storms.

Despite the difficulty of survival in the silt, the basin is not uninhabited. Many creatures have adapted to life in the dust-flyers, floaters, and burrowers that can move in or over the silt. For them, the silt is not death; it is instead their home, their refuge from the predators of the tablelands, and their hunting ground.

The creatures of the silt include countless varieties of small insects, bats, floaters, razorwings, and the different species of silt horrors. The small insects include dust beetles, mud wasps, tsek-flies, and silt spiders—all fascinating creatures and well adapted to their environment, but of little concern to the silt traveler. Floaters and razorwings are far more dangerous, often attacking humans near the sea. They are true silt creatures, perfectly adapted to their environment.

Many dangerous creatures use the silt as concealment as they stalk their prey. Some, like the silt horrors, can sense the vibrations or disturbances of the silt from a great range. Others rely on psionic detection of their prey. Sighted creatures such as humans



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or giants are at a great disadvantage in fighting off the attacks of the silt predators—the dust is impervious to any kind of vision, and a creature buried even a few inches cannot be detected by most humans.

Hunting groups of black horrors range far across the shallows in their pursuit of prey, and the larger white, gray, and brown horrors are feared by all silt travelers. But in the deep silt, there are creatures from which even the silt-horrors flee. The mighty sink worms and silt drakes command the respect of the most powerful silt horror. And the dreaded silt vortex fears nothing that lives.

### Giants and Others

Four different types of giants live in the isles of the shallow silt: Athasian, desert, plains, and beast-head. In general, the desert giants prefer rocky isles; the plains giants live on scrub isles. Beasthead giants are found on any kind of island. Usually only one variety of giant lives on a given island, although Lake Island and Waverly support several different giant clans.

Giants have a bad reputation in other parts of the Tyr region, but they are really not all bad. Just like humans and most other races, there are good and evil giants. Many isolated giants delight in company—provided the visitor does not invade without permission. The exceptions to this are the beasthead giants, who tend to be far crueler and less hospitable than their cousins.

Human and dwarf villages lie along the shore or on isles just offshore. These hardy folk have devised means of crossing the shallow silt and often operate ferries across the silt estuaries or conduct trade up and down the coast.

The mud flats and rocky tors dotting the silt also provide homes for one of the greatest dangers of the Sea: airborne predators. A few rare rocs and cloud rays have, over the course of generations, overcome their fear of flying over the open silt and now range far across the dusty plain, seeking prey. A full-grown roc can capture creatures as large as a young

sink worm and carry them off as a meal. Some travelers have encountered powerful roc-riders far out in the deep silt. They believe there may be a hidden village in the center of the Sea, far beyond the knowledge of sages.

### Terrain of the Silt Sea

To the untrained eye, the silt is an endless plain of desolation, lifeless and deadly. Yet this is only an illusion, a distortion of the truth. The silt possesses its characteristic formations and moods, just as landforms anywhere do. The experienced silt traveler faces an ever-changing terrain as diverse as that of the Tablelands or the Ringing Mountains.

Silt is not found in the boundaries of the Sea alone. Many inland dust sinks and silt basins, as well as the great silt estuaries, are found near the borders of the sea or within a few days' march. The dust that fills them is carried across the intervening lands in the course of great storms out on the Sea, and it fills the lower-lying areas. The dust basins surrounding Bodach and the Mud Palace were created in this fashion.

Conversely, the Sea of Silt is not composed exclusively of silt. Rocky islands rise from the dust, dotting the surface of the sea with firm land. Bare patches of stone can be found here and there, places where the earth is scoured flat by the endless winds—places where the silt never accumulates. In other areas, sharp crags pierce the blanket of dust like spears buried in sand. Lastly, of course, there are countless mud flats scattered across the pearly silt.

### Rocky Islands

In ancient days, before the Sea of Silt was filled with dust, these stony outcroppings were great ranges of hills or highlands. The island of Waverly is an excellent example of one of these old highlands. Other rocky islands seemed to have been more recently formed by volcanic activity; Lake Island is one



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of these. Rocky islands offer the traveler one of the few safe havens to be found in the silt.

Some rocky islands are blessed with an abundance of clear, cold water fed by deep springs within their strong roots. Others are dry and lifeless. Islands possessing natural springs are in great demand—it is almost inconceivable that one might stumble across one that did not support a giant clan or some other fierce predator.

Little vegetation grows on most rocky islands, even if they do have plenty of water. Many are far too mountainous, with steep slopes of barren stone. Those few areas that are level rarely possess any topsoil, as most is carried away by the terrible winds that scour the Sea of Silt. Some more sheltered islands, or those of considerable size, are an exception to this general rule and support a remarkable amount of life. For example, the hills ringing the island of Waverly protect the region of scrub plain that lies in the isle's center.

Islands that are within wading distance of the

mainland are often chosen as homes by giant clans of all types. Very rarely, a tribe of gith might claim one as a camp. Most giants like to keep large herds of erdlu and goats, but dislike actively cultivating the ground. An island occupied by a giant clan will seldom be plagued by many large predators; the giants protect their herds well.

Islands that are in the deep silt are far more likely to be found in a wild state. Because the only creatures that can reach such an island are either winged or silt predators, the islands are rarely populated by intelligent creatures. Monsters such as gaj, gtid fiends, crystal spiders, thrax, bhaergala, rhaumbusun, and giant lizards or beetles plague these isolated islands.

On occasion, powerful flying predators such as rocs, wyverns, or cloud rays might be found with a nest or den on the highest peaks of such an island. None of these creatures are disposed to regard intruders as anything except an easy meal. Some islands of the deep silt are inhabited by tribes of silt





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runners or aarakocra. Again, the infrequent intruder is generally considered an easy way to supplement their normal diets.

### Bare Stone

Regions of the shallow silt where the dust has been stripped down to the bedrock by the hellish winds of the Sea, patches of bare stone are rare. They never appear in the deep silt regions, but can occasionally be found near the shoreline.

Patches of bare stone are usually short-lived, lasting only a day or a week before a shift in the wind buries them again. Because they are covered with silt most of the time, the bare stone regions are usually devoid of any terrestrial vegetation or animals. There is a fair amount of evidence that some bare stone regions are more likely to be uncovered than others (or are more prone to being stripped of their protective silt).

On very rare occasions, an area of bare stone will reveal a ruin of the ancients that had been covered by the silt. In some cases these structures have not been looted to the degree that more accessible locations have been despoiled. A few very lucky travelers have reaped rich rewards from the ruins found in the silt—most notably, weapons of steel and hoards of treasure.

Commonly, the bare stone region will take the form of a hillock or low rise in the floor of the Silt Sea. Far too low to remain permanently free of the dust, these small knolls are more likely to be uncovered, albeit briefly, than the lower-lying regions of the dust basin.

A patch of bare stone in the silt sea is usually safe. The creatures of the silt cannot reach too far from their protective cover, and the terrestrial predators of the tablelands do not range out into the silt. The chief dangers come from airborne predators or the sudden return of the silt as the wind changes. In a few short hours a blanket of dust 10' thick can once again blanket the open ground, burying the unfortunate visitor.

### Stark Crag

Jutting through a blanket of dust hundreds of feet thick, the sheer pinnacles of rock that pierce the silt are one of the most dramatic sights of Athas. No gentle slopes ring these stone monoliths; there is only a wall of rock rising from the gray dust to claw at the sky with broken, weathered fingers.

Most crags are found in the deep silt, because a small mountain or steep hill in the shallow silt tends to form a rocky island instead of a true crag. They may just manage to pierce the silt, rising a bare 10-20' above the surrounding dust; or they may soar majestically for hundreds of feet. It seems likely that in many places in the deep silt, the lesser crags are occasionally revealed or buried by the vagaries of the silt.

The stark crags of the Sea tend to be rather forbidding to the terrestrial traveler. A sheer cliff hundreds of feet high is a daunting barrier. Fortunately, the upper surfaces of the crags are often weathered to the point of providing a considerable area of relatively level ground on which a flier can rest. Of course, some crags are inhabited by creatures that hunt through flying, and few of these care to have their homes and nests invaded.

Generally, the crags are without a source of water or food. Some possess natural springs high on their flanks that trickle water down their dusty sides, but these are often inaccessible to any but the most daring climber. A very few large crags are weathered sufficiently to support a few meagre acres of scrub on their crumbling crowns.

### Mud Flats

The Sea of Silt is dotted with small areas of teeming life known as mud flats. In these small islands of vegetation, some water seeps up from a forgotten spring or stream beneath the silt and forms a verdant patch in the middle of the choking dust. Most mud flats range from 50 to 500 yards in diameter. Some are far larger, stretching for miles. It is be-



lieved by some that these giant mud flats are the last dying remnants of the seas or lakes that once occupied the basin now filled by the silt.

Mud flats can only occur in the shallow silt (50' or less). A steady flow of water into the silt above a spring causes the silt to collapse into thin, gray mud. The damp area slowly expands to the largest area its water supply can keep moist. The fierce heat of the sun bakes the drier outlying areas into a crust as hard as stone, but the center of the flat often remains wet and muddy.

Mud flats are generally morasses of dust and mire, ranging from a foot or two to 20' in depth. The mud itself varies greatly in its density. In the center of the largest mud flats, where small lakes of open water still exist, the surrounding mud is so thin and watery that a man sinks as swiftly and as surely as if he had set foot in the silt. In smaller mud flats, the water is barely sufficient to prevent the formation of silt, and a man's feet might only sink a few inches. Many flats become dried out by the sun and form hard, brittle crusts on which a man may walk as though on hard stone. But if a crust should break, the traveler could easily be left floundering in dust and mud waist- or chest-deep.

The combination of a source of water (however small and polluted) and a lack of silt makes most mud flats some of the most heavily vegetative areas left on Athas. Many plants flourish in the wet dust, from tangled patches of thorny bramble to low, impenetrable mangrove copses. Life is harsh and savage in the mud flats of the Silt Sea; the scrub plants and wild grasses are often protected by razor-sharp leaves and spines. Carnivorous plants, especially dew fronds, often infest mud flats.

Worse than the dangerous vegetation of a mud flat are the powerful carnivores that frequently make their homes in the mud flats. The dreaded kluzd is perhaps the most well known of the mud-flat predators, but many other dangerous creatures can be found here. Great flocks of carnivorous bats often roost in the dense foliage of a mud flat, and numer-

ous insectoid monsters such as centipedes, scorpions, and giant beetles abound in the mud flats. Dangerous avian hunters such as wyverns often nest in the mud.

If neither the plants nor the animal predators of a mud flat do not make a meal out of the unwary traveler, the small insect life of a mud flat will. The flats are virtually crawling with biting, blood-sucking flies and gnats of all descriptions. They swarm around any soft-skinned creature such as a man in numbers so great that the victim is driven mad by the bugs. Ears, eyes, and nostrils are constantly attacked. Dozens of gnats are swallowed or inhaled. The only methods of driving off the noxious insects are completely covering the body or burning various woody plants to create a pungent smoke unpleasant to the vicious insects.

All things considered, mud flats are areas best avoided. The only good thing that can be said about them is that a traveler can usually set foot on one without sinking and suffocating in the silt.

### Movement in the Silt

The Sea of Silt is one of the most formidable barriers to travel on the world of Athas. Aside from the difficulty of simple movement across the dust, the weather is extremely hostile. Rare are the days when a traveler can find the Sea still enough to attempt a crossing. Also, the Sea is full of dangerous predators that view anything moving as a possible meal. Even giants hesitate before wading silt they do not know, and many refuse to try a crossing without a companion.

There are few good ways to cross silt. The best way is to befriend a powerful wizard and have him or her *teleport* one to a destination. Unfortunately, the few mages capable of this rarely care to be bothered with such a mundane goal. Other methods of travel include wading, flying, magic, and the silt skimmer. Each has its advantages as well as its disadvantages.





## The Sea of Silt

### Wading

The simplest method, wading, is available to everyone and is cheap. Unfortunately, it is risky in the extreme, slow, and limited in range.

Any character can wade in silt up to three-quarters of his height in depth, chest-high for humans and demihumans. Characters who push this to chin-deep run an excellent chance of stepping into a bottom irregularity and immersing their heads in the dust. Wading through silt is hard work; silt has a terrain cost of a for overland marches. In combat, any creature wading the silt moves at  $\frac{1}{3}$  its normal rate.

On windy days, the blowing dust makes breathing nearly impossible if one's head is close to the surface of the silt; beyond that, it is almost impossible to maintain any bearings. In general, the wind must have a strength of Light or less to allow a wading creature to move. Giants, who are strong and practiced waders, may wade in Moderate wind conditions.

**Wading through silt over one's head:** The PC has several options. First, have someone who is taller carry the PC. Depending on his or her Strength score, a half-giant could carry one human-sized person with no problem and possibly several in a basket or similar harness. A full-blooded giant could carry at least two human-sized characters and even six or eight with some preparation. One or two half-giants could be carried instead of human passengers. Friendly giants might be persuaded to carry passengers for free; however, most giants expect compensation for their effort.

Second, find a path formed on a layer of compressed silt. Compressible silt only exists in silt of less than 40-50' feet deep and is never higher than half the depth of the silt—For example, the safe layer of a region of silt 20' deep is never closer to the surface than 10' and could possibly be within a foot of the bottom. The best way to take advantage of this phenomenon is to find a place where people have already formed trails and to stay on them.

About 10% of the shallow silt enjoys the right conditions of bottom contour to be compressible, but the only way to find out whether a specific location in the silt supports a walkable layer is to test it with a man's weight. If somebody just jumps into the silt, hoping that a path will form beneath his or her feet, there is a 1 in 10 chance that the conditions are right. Divide the silt depth by two and roll to randomly determine how far from the bottom the compressible layer actually is.

*Example:* Kerith, a very foolish elf, leaps into a region of silt 12' deep. The DM rolls 1 on 1d10, indicating that a layer may form that could save Kerith's life. Because the silt is 12' deep, the layer will be no higher than 6' from the bottom and could be as low as 1' above the bottom. A roll of 1d6 yields 4; the layer will form 4' from the bottom, 8' from the surface. Unless Kerith is very tall, he's done for.

Silt compression is a fickle phenomenon, and a village with a path used for generations might discover that their path suddenly does not bear weight anymore. This appears to be affected by the weather and the disturbance of the silt by large storms.

The last and least-preferred method requires stilts. A character can use stilts half his or her height in length with a Dexterity check on 1d20. For every additional foot of stilt length, add 1 to the Dexterity check. A six-foot-tall man walking on ten-foot stilts can wade in silt up to 14' deep (leaving 2' of breathing room), but he must roll his Dexterity or less on 1d20, with 7 added to the roll.

Moving on stilts is every bit as tiring and slow as wading. Characters are reduced to  $\frac{1}{3}$  their normal movement rate. Traveling long distances on stilts is next to impossible. Characters must check Dexterity every 100 yards. Failing a Dexterity check means the character topples over into the silt.

### Flying

Flying involves the use of a trained airborne mount, a glider, a *fly* spell, or a magical device such as a *fruit of flying* or a *carpet of flying*. This is



considered by many to be the best method of traveling through regions of silt; movement is fast, dangerous silt creatures can be avoided, and the silt can be crossed regardless of its depth. Unfortunately, nothing is ever quite as easy as it looks.

**Riding a flying mount:** The most common airborne mounts are pterrax, dragonnels, rocs, and air elementals. Of these, only air elementals are not instinctively afraid of flying over silt. When an animal is forced out over the silt, the rider must make an Air borne Riding proficiency check. Success means he can continue. Failure means the mount turns and heads back to solid ground. Failure with a roll of 20 on the check means the rider loses control of his mount entirely and stands an excellent chance of being thrown. Flying over silt becomes easier for the avian creature with time; with each successful trip over the silt, add 1 to the rider's proficiency for the purpose of determining whether the animal will overcome its instinctive fear the next time it is forced out over the dust basin.

The mounts mentioned above are all very strong fliers and can literally fly all day without rest. A flier's MP rating for overland movement is equal to its normal movement. As with other mounts, they can be pushed to double movement or ridden longer than the standard ten-hour travel day. A lesser elemental can carry a halfling, a standard elemental a human, and a greater elemental several humans or one half-giant.

Eventually, even the strongest flyer needs a place to rest. One of the chief disadvantages in flying a roc on an over-silt journey lies in the difficulty of feeding and watering the beast when it finally lands.

**Glidors:** An excellent short-range solution, but still perilous. Cliff-glidors drop 20' each round and travel 120 yards forward. A pilot starting from a 200-foot hilltop could stay in the air for ten rounds and glide for 1,200 yards. Obviously, glidors rarely cross more than two or three miles of silt. Some glider pilots claim they have encountered bizarre drafts of warm wind that actually allow them to climb 20' a round, forfeiting their forward progress to regain





## The Sea of Silt

height. Gliders are rare and are seldom sold by the craftsmen who build them.

**A fly spell:** Another good short-range option. With a movement rate of 18, the recipient of such a spell can move 1,800 yards, or about one mile, every turn. The spell lasts a number of turns equal to the caster's level plus 1d6, so a 10th-level wizard can safely count on crossing at least ten miles of silt with one application. The *fly* spell allows spellcasting while in the air, so a wizard who memorizes several could conceivably fly for hours and cross vast areas without landing. Flying characters are advised to keep an eye out for rocs and cloud rays, though.

**Magical devices:** The best method of flying by far. The most accessible is a *fruit of flying*; anybody can use one, and it lasts for 1d4+4 turns. Other magical means of flight include *winged boots*, *broom of flying*, *carpet of flying*, *cloak of the bat*, *figurine of wondrous power (ebony fly)*, *rug of welcome*, and *wings of flying*. The most prized of these items have no limitations; they can remain airborne for days, crossing unbelievable distances. They vary in movement and endurance, but it is easy to calculate the movement of any device: If a movement rate of 18 lets a traveler cover one mile per ten minutes of flying, a movement of 24 would cover one and one-third miles per turn of flying. Be warned: a PC with a carpet of *flying* will never find the Sea of Silt a barrier again.

### Magical or Psionic Movement

Other magical means include personal levitation, levitation of a platform or raft, or travel spells (or psionic disciplines) that do not actually confer the power of flight. *Levitating* creatures have two options: drift at the mercy of the wind in the air, or walk across the surface of the silt. Using levitation to walk across the dust allows the character to move as though crossing plains, using normal overland movement. If the levitation is of short duration (e.g., potion or spell), consider a human character to cover 1,200 yards in a turn, or about two-thirds of a

mile. A high-level mage may be able to levitate a raft large enough to hold several people and make it *permanent*; in this case the platform must be either sailed or poled. Poling a raft only works in silt less than 20' deep. Sailing only works when there is wind present, and under those conditions the Sea of Silt rapidly becomes uncrossable by any means. Poled vessels can only cover one mile every two hours; if supplemented with a sail, the speed doubles.

Use of a *fruit of feather falling*, *ring of feather falling*, or *ring of water walking* lets a character walk across the dust as though it was hard-packed sand. All are relatively safe and reliable.

Some psionic powers help in crossing the silt, as well. Psionic levitation works just as well as magical levitation. The psychometabolic discipline of body equilibrium allows the psionic character to cross the silt as though it were level, solid ground. Other abilities such as dimension door, dimension walk, dream travel, and teleport can be used to circumvent silt. Lastly, metamorphosis or animal affinity could allow a character to move as a native silt or avian creature. The only limitation in the use of psionic travel is the constant drain of PSPs the psionist faces.

### Silt Skimmer

Silt skimmers are among the safest methods for crossing silt, but they are limited. A large and lightly built wagon, the typical silt skimmer has four wheels that are 25' in diameter. These wheels come to a sharp edge and are hollow in the center. Skimmer slaves climb the never-ending stairs inside the wheel to provide motive power, and the skimmers also use large sails when the wind is favorable. Silt skimmers can travel six to eight miles a day and can carry a load of two tons. However, they cannot cross silt deeper than 15'.

### Encounters in the Sea of Silt

First, determine whether the characters are traveling by night or by day. At the beginning of each





day, or each night if they travel then, choose weather conditions or check them with the Weather Chart. They might not be going anywhere if the weather becomes bad.

Assuming the weather permits travel, conduct normal movement for the party. The standard travel day is ten hours, but muls and thri-kreen can travel 20 hours a day. The "Movement in the Silt" section above tells how well the PCs' chosen travel method works.

When you choose to stage an encounter, remember to decide whether either side achieved surprise. The surprisers may be able to ambush the party and can probably attack before the PCs detect them in any event. If the party is not surprised, the encounter occurs at the limits of their normal visibility. Sub-silt creatures such as silt horrors cannot be spotted until the party is on top of them.

**Shallow silt:** Parties might encounter silt runners, silt horrors (white, gray, brown, or black), sink worms, floaters, razorwings, large bats, and giants (beasthead, Athasian, plains, or desert) wading the silt or—if the party is well armed—sand vortexes. Flying characters might run into air drakes, cloud rays, and rocs that can spot and pursue them. A few rocs carry a rider, usually a high-level fighter.

A party might instead find unusual terrain: mud flats 50-500 yards across; rocky or scrub islands 1-4 miles long and wide (arid rock, scrub plain, or even forested; almost all islands are inhabited); or a patch of bare stone 100-1,000 yards across. Rarely, the silt uncovers an ancient ruin.

**Deep silt:** Here parties may meet most of the creatures listed above, as well as wyverns and aarakocra (within 20 miles of a crag or island, where the rest of the tribe lives). Within 50 miles of the Valley of Dust and Fire, many rocs are ridden by a Dragon Warrior (see Chapter 4). Unusual terrain includes rocky islands (similar to those in the shallow silt but uninhabited) and crags, 10-1,200 feet high and 10-2,000 yards in diameter. Some crags have natural springs and scrub vegetation.

## Fighting in the Silt

The dust basin is generally a bad place to pick a fight. In many cases, the slightest misstep could send a character into the silt. Few creatures who fall in this way are ever seen again. If a PC is forced to make a stand, he should find the nearest solid ground and put it beneath him before engaging in melee with attackers.

**Wading** characters are reduced to  $\frac{1}{3}$  movement and take an initiative penalty of +2 (if waist-deep or less) to +4 (up to chest-deep). Under-silt creatures such as the silt horrors are able to attack wading characters from the rear with a +2 to hit. A character knocked unconscious will fall beneath the silt and begin suffocating without the benefit of gaining the gulp of air required to hold his breath. Characters on stilts lose all Dexterity adjustments to their Armor Class and suffer a +4 initiative penalty. Each successful hit requires a Dexterity check at -1 per point of damage inflicted in order to remain on the stilts. A character who is knocked off the stilts begins to suffocate.

**Walking** characters (including those using magical or psionic devices) fight normally, but still might not see under-silt attackers. A walking character who must concentrate to maintain this ability will sink if knocked unconscious.

Characters riding devices such as a *carpet* or *broom of flying* forfeit Dexterity benefits to Armor Class and suffer a +2 initiative penalty. A successful hit 4 or more above the number needed means the attack may unseat the rider; a victim who fails a Dexterity check is knocked off the device and into the silt. If the flying item is large, such as a levitated 20' raft, the PC is in no danger of falling into the silt.

## Places of Interest

The Sea of Silt is not the featureless waste of dust that many people believe it to be. Human and dwarf villages huddle against its borders, giants and gith



## The Sea of Silt

live on its isles, and verdant mud flats dot its surface. Experienced silt travelers claim that the Silt Sea possesses just as much diversity of life, landscape, and culture as any other part of Athas.

### Ket

The most remote of the villages of the Tyr region, Ket is a client village of the city-state of Draj. Like its parent city, Ket sits upon a mud flat, surrounded entirely by the dust basin. A narrow causeway a mile long spans the silt around the small town and provides the only access to the village. Let's population is about 500.

Several merchant houses of Draj, including the Dedys Consortium, maintain outposts in the village. The people of Ket are surrounded by a fertile mud flat, and they grow more food than they can use. Merchants buy the surplus and transport it to less fortunate areas.

Several volcanic peaks of the Ringing Mountains are only four or five days' journey away, so the merchants sometimes organize obsidian-quarrying expeditions. On rare occasions, one does not return; no one has discovered the fate of the expeditions that do not come back. A garrison of 200 soldiers protects the village against giant attacks.

### The Road of Fire

Stretching more than 200 miles into the Silt Sea, the Road of Fire is a chain of volcanic islands. Many map-makers believe the Road of Fire represents the dying remnants of the Ringing Mountains as they fade into the dust of the silt basin. Others claim that the archipelago is new and is still growing as it emerges slowly from the silt. Only time will tell.

There are three major islands of the Road of Fire and many smaller peaks and crags surrounding the large land masses. The islands are known by the giants as Dhuurghaz, Avegdaar, and Morghaz—Furyfire, Hellglow, and Dawnfire in the common tongue. All three are almost completely desolate

and lifeless, covered with choking ash and black, smoking lava plains.

Despite this, a few hardy souls inhabit the isles of the Road of Fire. A small clan of beasthead giants inhabits Furyfire, keeping flocks on the south side of the broken hills of the island. Several small clans of desert giants inhabit Hellglow. Dawnfire is not known to be inhabited, but there are rumors of an ancient ruin hidden in its bleak hills.

Furyfire and Hellglow actually contain cauldrons of seething lava of considerable size. The islands are home to several fire drakes. Occasionally a fire drake begins preying on a giant village, and the giants send out a call for help. A war party of 20 or 30 assembles and sets out after the beast. Despite the incredible ferocity and power of the fire drakes, there are few things on Athas that can stand up to 20 angry giants.

Few people know of the existence of the volcanic archipelago. Giants of the northern portions of the Silt Sea (Lake Island and farther north) have heard of it, and the people of Ket know of the islands as well. In Draj, the volcanic isles are only a distant rumor. Violent eruptions along the Road of Fire sometimes cause ashfalls in the city.

Furyfire, the first island in the chain, is inhabited by several small clans of beasthead giants with short tempers and foul dispositions. It is also home to many creatures of elemental fire and earth who are likely to view visitors as prey. Hellglow is much the same, but the desert giants of that island are so starved for trade with the outside world that they often welcome guests of any race, invited or not.

Dawnfire is an uninhabited island that the giants of the Road of Fire believe to be haunted. They refuse to set foot on it. The island is actually the most fertile of the bleak archipelago, as its volcanoes have been dormant for some time. A few hidden valleys in its steep shoulders contain dense scrub and forest. Unfortunately, the giants are correct about the island; it is the home of a powerful undead preserver. The very southern point of the is-



land rises to a towering cliff; the shattered ruins of an ancient mages' fortress overlook the Silt Sea from this vantage.

## Haakar

Human Preserver (undead)

17th Level

Neutral Good

Str 17

Dex 11

Con 20

hp: 73

AC: 3

#AT: 1

THAC0 11

Dmg: 1d8 + drains 2 points Constitution

Movement 24 (Fly)

Psionics Summary: PSP 108; Disciplines—telepathy, clairsentience; Sciences—mindlink, election, clairvoyance; Devotions—contact, aversion, awe, id insinuation, mind thrust, combat mind, danger sense; Defense Modes—all.

Haakar is a free-willed undead spirit, similar to a spectre but far more powerful. He is largely insubstantial and can only be struck by +2 or better weapons. He maintains the spellcasting abilities he possessed in life and relies on them in combat. Haakar is bound to the island of Dawnfire and cannot leave. There are several hundred desiccated skeletons in the courtyards and rubble of the ruins; Haakar can animate six per turn and command them to assist him.

Haakar is an ancient wizard, the master of the mage society whose fortress this was. He and his brothers fought against the rise of the defilers, but were destroyed in the terrible wars that swept Athas in the ancient days. Haakar's strength of will survived the death of his body, and he guards the ancient fortress to this day. Powerful magic and dangerous knowledge are still hidden within the ru-

ins, and Haakar ensures that word of the ruins' existence never leaves the island of Dawnfire.

Good-aligned PCs may be able to convince Haakar to aid them, or at least refrain from destroying them. Haakar knows of the Valley of Dust and Fire and knows that it is the Dragon's home. He warns the party against direct confrontation with the Dragon.

## Shault

A rare forested isle in the Silt, Shault is one of the greenest areas left in the Tyr Region. A powerful druid and a clan of 40 good giants protect the isle. The Athasian giants live in small family groups of two to four. They attack intruders who abuse the island's resources.

In the heart of the jungle covering the island's interior is a mysterious ruin of white marble. Now overgrown with ivy and scrub, it was once a large city. Even in its ruin it is apparent that the city was strikingly beautiful in its days of glory. Not even the druid of Shault can say who built the city or why it was abandoned.

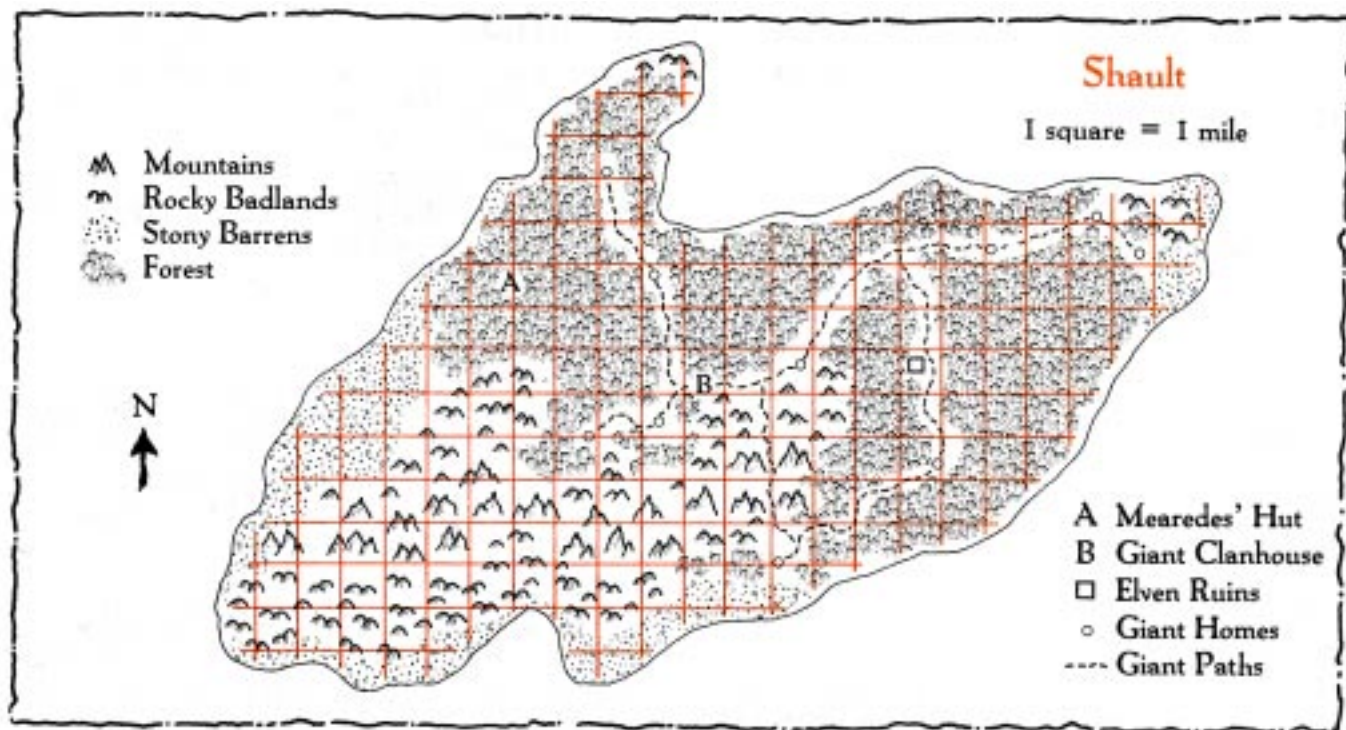
The city of white marble was one of the last cities of the original inhabitants, before they became the nomadic raiders they are today. The giants are not inquisitive, and though the druid of the isle is curious about the ruins, she is not overly so. The ruins are infested with dangerous predators such as giant centipedes and scorpions.

Visitors to Shault who conduct themselves in a respectful manner and avoid angering the giants will eventually meet the druid. She says they are welcome to stay as long as they wish, but asks that they do not tell anyone of Shault's existence when they leave.





## The Sea of Silt



### Mearedes

Human Druid  
15th Level  
Neutral

Str 7	Int 11
Dex 16	Wis 19
Con 12	Cha 16

hp: 55  
AC: 2 (*bracers of defense*)  
#AT: 1  
THAC0 12  
Dmg: 1d6+2 (*obsidian spear* +3)  
Movement 12

Mearedes is the guardian of the island of Shault. She is a weatherbeaten human of 60 who enjoys the physical condition and health of someone half her age. She understands how precious Shault is, and she has spent her life nurturing the isle. The island was slowly dying before she came to it; now it is

strong and green again. Mearedes is a friend to the giants of the island, who are happy to help her in her task. If anyone threatens her, dozens of giants leap to her defense. They call her "little grand-mot her" and treat her like a member of their clan.

**Giants (1-4):** AL NG; AC 4; MV 15; HD 15; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+14 or rock for 2d10; SD immune to psionics; ML 17.

### The Isle of Ash

This volcanic isle smokes and smolders constantly. Although it rarely erupts in lava flows, the volcano produces enormous amounts of ash, which coat its cinder cone several feet deep. The island usually lies beneath a pall of airborne ash, and this may cover surrounding regions downwind in Moderate or greater wind conditions.

The column of hot ash and smoke rising from the cone is visible 40-50 miles away, if the wind permits. Ashfall can occur as far as Draji. There is no water



and no life on the Isle of Ash.

On rare occasions, the volcano produces a superheated mass of volcanic gases, ash, and dust. This lethal mixture blankets the island, requiring any breathing creature to save vs. poison or take 10d6 damage (save for half damage). This kind of eruption is preceded by many warning signs for days beforehand, so an alert and fast-moving party can escape the area.

## Isle of Bones

A cluster of several closely grouped stark crags rising from the deep silt, the Isle of Bones is a barren and forbidding place. Each crag rises 400-800' above the silt and is 100-1,000 yards from its nearest neighbor. The silt between the crags is several hundred feet deep. There are 11 crags, and four are large enough to support vegetation on their crowns.

The Isle of Bones gains its name from the broken skeletons littering the steep shoulders of the crags. These are the remains of the prey of the isle's chief predators, a large tribe of aarakocra. The bird-men are exceptionally fierce and strong and range for miles over the silt in search of food. Many of the skeletons of the Isle of Bones are human or elf.

The aarakocra tribe numbers 80 and inhabits the four largest peaks. The natural caves and vegetation of the crags make for excellent lairs. An exceptionally savage and degenerate tribe, the aarakocra prey on any travelers who come within their clutches. They are frequently encountered as far as 30 miles away and prefer to hunt in parties of 6 to 12.

The aarakocra of the Isle of Bones prefer to attack with swooping volleys of javelins, but occasionally try to capture human or demihuman victims for torture back at their lair. For this the bird-men drop weighted nets over fleeing prey. Four aarakocra can carry a netted human by the trailing ropes of the net. The hapless victim endures vicious abuse before being thrown from the top of the crag.

The isle is also home to many carnivorous bats of the large and giant varieties. The aarakocra are di-

urnal creatures and the bats rarely trouble them.

**Aarakocra:** AL NE; AC 7; MV 6, FI 36 (C); HD 1 + 2; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1d3/1d3 or 2d4 (weapon); SA dive with javelins at +4 to hit and double damage; ML 13.

**Bats, Large (Giant):** AL N; AC 8; MV 3, FI 18 (C); HD 1-4hp (1); THAC0 20 (13); #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (1d4); ML 7.

## The Mountains of the Sun

Rising from the central Sea of Silt, the Mountains of the Sun are a mighty range that is slowly dying. The fierce storms of the deep silt have been weathering the mountains for thousands of years, and with each day a little more of their substance is broken apart by the heat of the sun and the cold of the night, to be carried away by the endless winds. The scale of this change is beyond human comprehension; only a few inches of dirt and rock might be lost in the lifetime of a man.

The Mountains of the Sun are very old and no longer possess the jagged edges and sheer cliffs of younger ranges such as the Ringing Mountains. The softer rock has all been worn away, and only the rounded domes of granite that once composed the mountains' hearts are left today. The individual peaks range from 200-3,000' high and are often separated by broad tracts of deep silt. Each mountain is anywhere from one to ten miles across and rises one to eight miles from its neighbors. From the highest peaks in the center of the range, it is barely possible to see the ash storm surrounding the Valley of Dust and Fire.

There are few sources of water in the mountains and fewer foliated regions. Some of the older mountains support a few acres of sparse scrub along their leeward shores. Most are barren. Any given peak has a 25% chance for a spring or cavern lake. Peaks with water sources have vegetation half the time.

The wildlife of the Mountains of the Sun is unusual. Thousands of years of isolation from the mainland have weeded out all but a few tough species.



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Those peaks that support life are the lairs of powerful avians such as wyverns, dragonnells, or rocs. A few hardy goats and erdlu still survive on some of the larger peaks. The dominant predators are a bewildering variety of spiders, including huge, giant, and phase species.

Scattered groups of intelligent beings inhabit the Mountains of the Sun. A few small clans of aarakocra live in the high peaks, and underground degenerate tribes of hej-kin guard most of the hidden water supplies. Surprisingly, a few small clans of feral dwarves inhabit the mountains as well. The dwarves and the hej-kin are the last remnants of large populations that migrated to this area before the Silt Sea became impassable. A dying breed of less than 100, the dwarves here are cannibals and wretched savages who constantly war with the spiders and the hej-kin. Needless to say, the dwarves are not doing very well. It is a testament to their innate toughness that they are even there at all.

The hej-kin and spiders attack anything foolish enough to cross their paths. The dwarves, regrettably, are not much different. They have never known anything but a world full of enemies. However, a dwarf PC might get the dwarves to speak to him before they try to kill him. The dwarves of the Mountains of the Sun may be ignorant savages, but they possess a lot of unusual oral legends concerning the days before the Dragon. Unfortunately, they firmly believe the rest of the world to be uninhabitable silt.

**Feral dwarves (1-8):** AL N; AC 3 (skins); MV 6; HD 1+3; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +2; SD save at +4 vs. poison or magic; ML 10. Armed with slings, stone clubs, bone spears.

**Huge spiders:** AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + poison; SA jump and surprise at -6; ML 8.

**Giant spiders:** AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 4+4; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + poison; ML 13.

**Hej-kin:** AL NE; AC 10; MV 6, phase 3; HD 2; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SA surprise at -2, psionics; ML 10.

### The Black Isle

A forbidding place with sheer cliffs of black basalt, the Black Isle is known to only a few travelers of the deep silt. It rises almost vertically from the surrounding dust, ringed by unbroken cliffs 500-1,000' high. The upper surface of this remote and desolate island is covered by a thick, impenetrable jungle. The forest is not visible from the surface of the silt below.

The jungle is filled with deadly plants of all kinds. Strangling vines, poisonweed, blossomkillers, and dew fronds are found here in unnatural numbers. The prevalence of carnivorous plants has kept the animal population down to a few varieties of insects and birds.

The center of the Black Isle holds a deep, still lake of dark water. Nearly half a mile across, the lake seems to be fed by some deep, hidden spring. A few quiet streams wind away through the jungle to trickle over the cliffs. The water possesses a dark and powerful enchantment: once a person has drunk from the lake, any other water becomes deadly poison (save vs. poison or suffer 5d6 points of damage).

Along the shores of the lake stands a rambling palace of pristine bone and ivory. Silent obsidian golems eternally guard the palace. This island was once the retreat of either a powerful wizard or psionist who died in another land and never returned to his secret fortress. The Dragon has investigated the island at length and discovered the properties of its lake and jungle. The Dragon lets it remain unspoiled as a lure for careless travelers of the deep silt.

### The Silt Archipelago

The Silt Archipelago is an unusual region of shallow silt and mud flats nearly 180 miles long by 100 miles wide. It is believed by some to be the last remnant of the fabled sea of water that once occupied the lands covered now by silt. Whether this is true, one of the largest sources of water left in the





region is obviously buried beneath a few feet of dust and mud.

The silt surrounding the vast mud flats of this area is shallow, ranging from 4-30'. The mud flats are passable, but their central regions are too wet to allow the formation of crust. The mud in the center of the flats reaches 30' deep, and characters who try to wade this will meet a bad end.

The flora and fauna of the Silt Archipelago are the same as mud flats and shallow silt elsewhere. The mud flats are plagued by kluzd, carnivorous bats, and wyverns. The shallow silt is populated by silt horrors, floaters, and razorwings. The few solid isles of the region are populated by plains giants.

The single most remarkable feature of the Silt Archipelago is the number of villages it supports. Humans, dwarves, and giants account for most of the people of the area. The folk of the different races tend to cooperate rather than fight in exploiting the resources of the Archipelago. Trade between the villages is not only common, it is a way of life for many hundreds of people.

Life in the Silt Archipelago is hard, but it is also free. The people are beyond the reach of the sorcerer-kings and do not practice slavery. Occasionally raiding tribes from the Tyr region or slavers from Balic attempt an expedition to the Archipelago. But human and dwarf warriors fight a fierce campaign until enough giants can be mobilized to end any threat.

Though the Archipelagans resist any raids or contact with the sorcerer-kings, they welcome traders with open arms. A few small houses of Balic sometimes send caravans to the Silt Archipelago to trade for food, wood, hemp, and giant hair. In return, they bring mekillot hide and bone, bank honey, and finished products beyond the islanders' ability to make. The Archipelagans are known to range far to the south and the east of the Tyr region, but none of the Seven Cities knows what places they may visit on the far shores of the Silt Sea.

Humans of the Silt Archipelago are the most nu-

merous of the races. They form farming villages, trade villages of silt skimmers, and hunting tribes. The tribes have domesticated pterrax and use them for mounts, flying far over the silt in search of prey. The human silt skimmer communities are gypsy-like, roaming from place to place in their high wagons. Some have traveled as far as Balic and South Ledopolus. Tribes sometimes develop serious rivalries that occasionally break into feuding.

**Dwarves** are usually traders. They have refined the building of silt skimmers into an art, and their vehicles are some of the largest and strongest found anywhere. When the Archipelago becomes impassable, the dwarves gather in extended clans of four to six skimmers, stake them to the ground, and settle down to perform repairs and raise crops.

**Giants** here are some of the friendliest and most cooperative anywhere. They prefer to inhabit the larger plains islands and raise livestock, but many offer their services as silt waders and cargo haulers to the traders of the Archipelago. Frequent dealings with humans and dwarves have led them to view these races with special friendship, inasmuch as the little folk always seem so nice and polite.

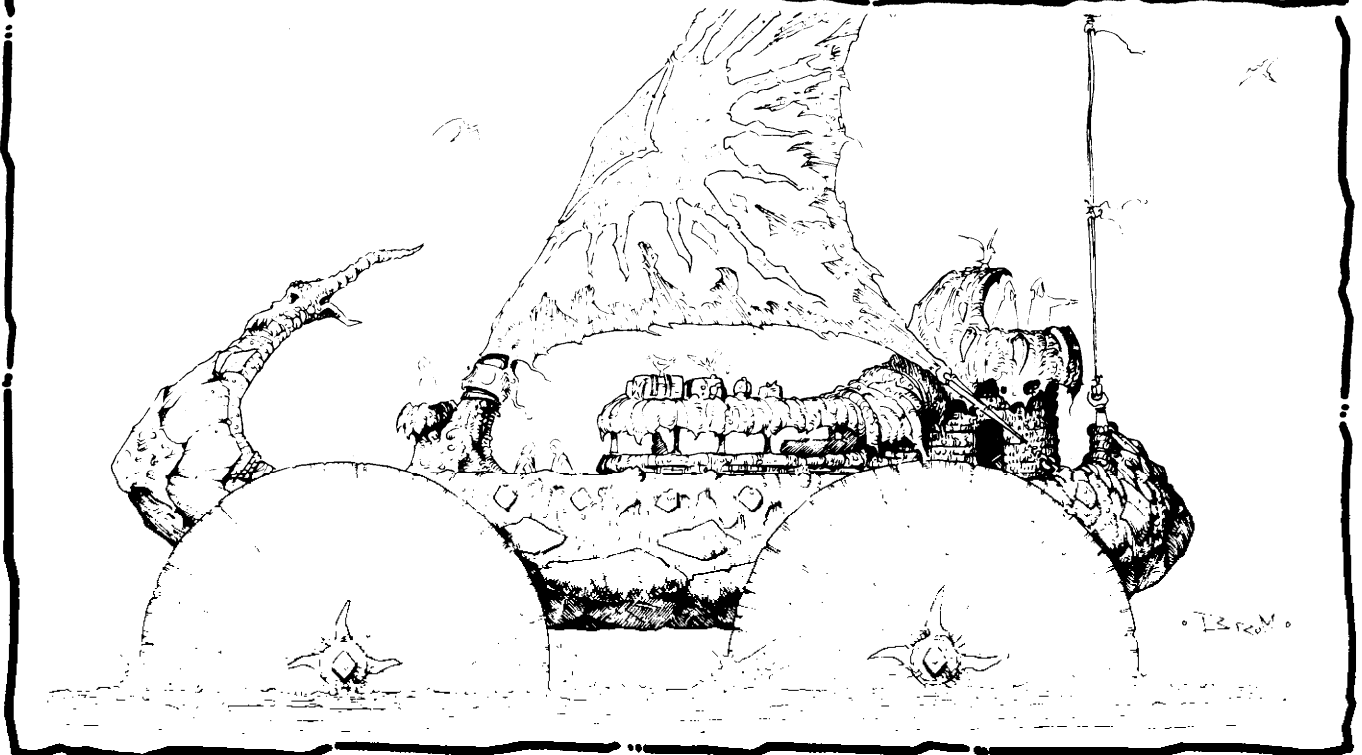
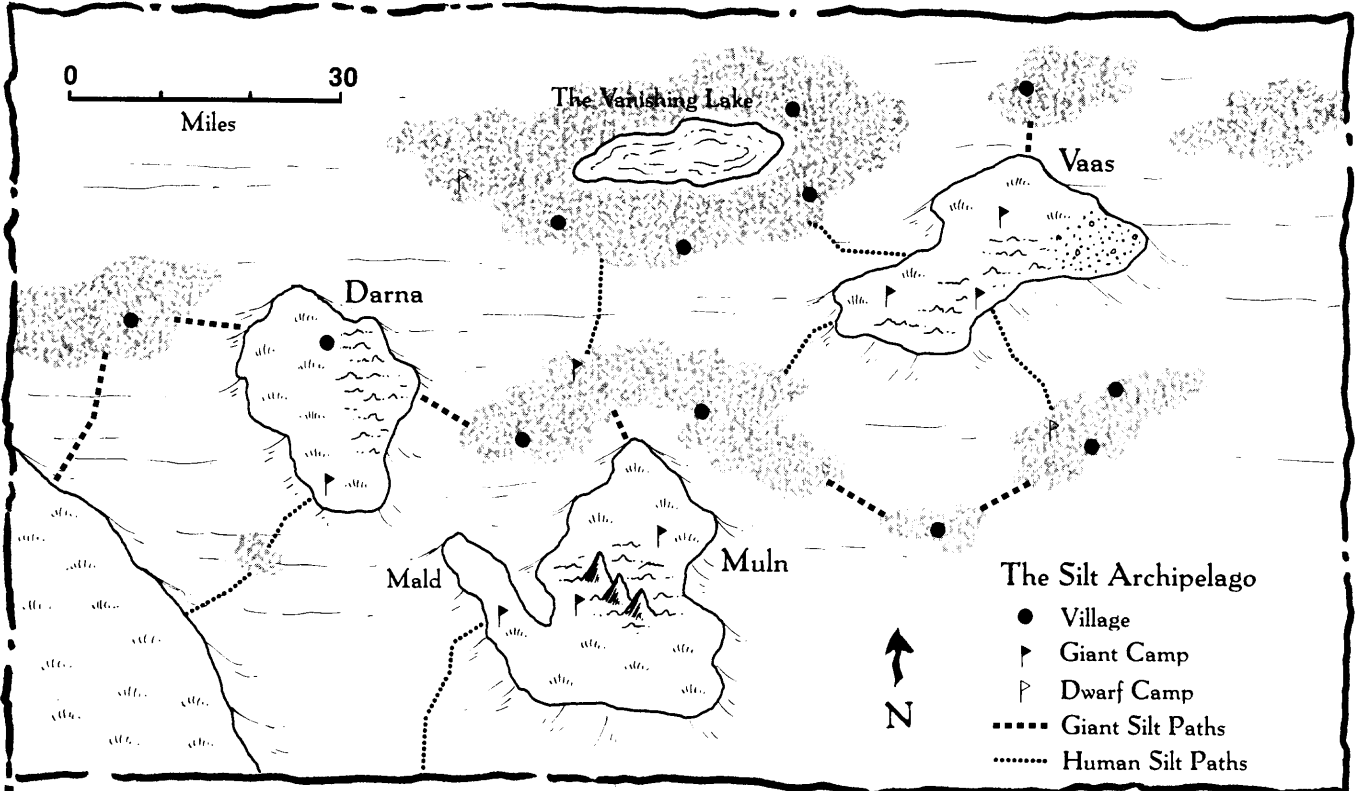
Large numbers of gith raiders inhabit the shores of this area, but they rarely cross the silt to pursue their raids. More dangerous are the hordes of silt runners who plague the region. Though no village has been attacked by the gith in living memory, these loathsome vermin may set upon lone silt skimmers and small bands of travelers.

All the people of the Silt Archipelago hold clerics and druids in high esteem. Each village is led by a cleric-chieftain who is usually on good terms with the nearby druids. Mages of any kind are taken as defilers and driven away as quickly as possible.

**Human pterrax-rider (1-6):** AL varies; AC 7 (studded leather armor); MV 12, mounted Fl 12 (C); 2nd to 5th level warrior (d4+1); THAC0 varies; #AT varies; Dmg by weapon; ML 13. Usually armed with short bows, spears, nets, and poisoned arrows.



# The Sea of Silt





**Pterrax:** AL N; AC 7; MV 12, Fl 12 (B); HD 5; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/2d6; SA psionics; ML 10. MC drops to C when ridden.

**Dwarven traders (5-20):** AL varies; AC 6 (hide armor); MV 6; HD 1; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +2; SD +4 on saves vs. magic, poison; ML 13. Encountered with silt skimmer.

**Plains giants (1-6):** AL CC; AC 5; MV 15; HD 16; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8+14; SA hurl rocks for 2-20; SD immune to psionics; ML 15.

**Silt runners (5-30):** AL CE; AC 7; MV 48; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA psionics; ML 9.

## The Vanishing Lake

At times the largest body of water known in the Tyr region, the Vanishing Lake is more than 20 miles long and 5 wide. Its dimensions are subject to debate, for the open water is surrounded by silty mire that is mostly water, but appears as a mud flat. The lake's mire border is just as deadly as silt or water to the fool who sets foot in it.

Extended periods of extremely hot weather dry out the lake, advancing the mire border closer and closer to the lake's center. Eventually the open water disappears entirely, and the lake appears to vanish—even though miles of watery mire still exist in the middle of the mud flat. Old travelers claim that the periods of open water are growing shorter and further apart as the years pass. Someday the lake may vanish and never return.

The mud flat surrounding the Vanishing Lake is one of the largest and the most fertile known. Some parts are strong enough to support villages and extensive crop fields on their hardened crusts. Dangerous predators not normally found on mud flats inhabit the Vanishing Lake, including gaj, id fiends, and cha'thrang. Natives of the Vanishing Lake are familiar with the dangerous properties of the mire and avoid the inviting glimpse of open water.

Some travelers claim that the Vanishing Lake is the region's only remaining habitat for water

drakes. If the monstrous creatures can survive in its silty waters, they must hibernate for months when the open water vanishes. Because a journey to the edge of the open water is nearly impossible, the water drakes' existence remains unproven.

The Vanishing Lake is under the protection of the druid known as the Old One. Defilers who come here meet him whether they want to or not.

## The Old One

### Human Druid

18th Level

Neutral (Good)

Str 3

Dex 17

Con 15

hp: 83

AC: 1 (+3 *ring of protection*)

#AT: 1

THAC0 10

Dmg: 1d8+2 (*wooden longsword +4*)

Movement 12

Int 13

Wis 20

Cha 15

The Old One is among the most powerful druids in the Tyr region. Born nearly 100 years ago as a peasant villager in a distant city-state, he left the civilized world and took up the study of nature. In time he came to the Silt Archipelago and inherited the guarded lands from the ancient druid who preceded him. For more than 70 years he has guarded the fragile Archipelago against the careless abuses of intelligent creatures and the ruin of defilers. The time is coming when the Old One will lay down his guardianship and select another to carry on the never-ending fight.

The Old One knows of the Valley of Dust and Fire, having traveled there once on his journeys. He counsels against visiting it, especially the Dragon's sanctum in the center of the city. But he may impart his knowledge to a party that helps him. He may ask them to defeat a band of renegade giants who are





## The Sea of Silt

destroying a village or to simply help a farming family put in their crops.

If the party fulfills its end of the bargain, the Old One tells of the Great Ash Storm, the Ring of Fire, and the Gate of Doom, described in Chapters Two and Three. He may give them a memento that serves as a token of safe passage among the Outlander clansmen led by the warrior Aristes (see the end of Chapter Two).

### Tarelon

A legendary city of the silt, Tarelon lies on a buried highland that is sometimes revealed as bare stone. The winds that scour this region of the Sea of Silt create a shifting border region of shallow dust. The exact area revealed by the winds seems to change every day; travelers who have visited Tarelon report that they could not find it a second time.

Tarelon seems to have been a large city, but not so great as Waverly or Bodach. Like Arkhold, many of its buildings are permanently buried beneath the silt, and others are sometimes revealed. One great ancient temple stands at the center of the ruined city, carved with powerful and mystical symbols. It was once dedicated to the deities of the Elemental Plane of Earth.

Despite its appearance and reputation as a haunted city, Tarelon is inhabited. The ruins conceal a small slave tribe, the Silt Raiders. The Sea of Silt is their chief protection—and their greatest foe. Though no slavers or soldiers of the sorcerer-kings will ever find the tribe in the midst of the Silt Sea, the barrenness of their home strains their resources and cunning to the utmost. They can only manage to grow a few meagre acres of scant crops, and they must rely on trade and raiding to furnish their basic supplies.

The Silt Raiders, about 100 slaves of all races, are led by an Earth cleric, known as Kelestes, who dreams of seeing the ancient temple restored to its former glory. Visitors to Tarelon find that the slaves are eager for supplies and trade but are hardly fools;

they attack foes within the maze of crumbling walls and buried buildings. The raiders know the ruins perfectly, and in many places they have built secret tunnels and passages from one buried building to another. It is a very defensible position.

In return for food, the raiders produce crafts and volunteer their services as guards and scouts. They refuse to work for any merchant who uses slaves. Another source of income lies in the ancient treasures they find in the ruins of Tarelon itself. They hoard steel armor and weapons and trade them for months of supplies. Adventurers hoping to loot the ruins during their visit discover that the tribe regards the city as a crucial resource by the raiders. In their eyes, plundering the ancient town would be akin to harvesting another man's crops.

The Valley of Dust and Fire





## Chapter Two: The Valley of Dust and Fire

*"In the heart of the Silt Sea is an endless storm, a howling demon of dust and wind that shrieks its rage for all eternity in the lands unknown. It is the child of the Dark Sun, a savage and hungry thing that will one day consume all Athas. It is the Great Ash Storm."*

### —An old elven camp tale

Fewer than a dozen travelers have looked on the Valley of Dust and Fire and returned to tell the tale. Buried beneath a choking cloud of ash and silt, the Valley is the Dragon's realm. Hellish winds, strong enough to flay the skin from a traveler, scour the land bare. The heat is incredible, trapped beneath the endless clouds of dust. The sun is never more than an angry red eye in the brown haze overhead, and the nights are impenetrably dark.

The borders of the Valley of Dust and Fire shift with the winds every day. The Ring of Fire, a vast sea of seething lava inside the Valley, surrounds the City of Doom. The terrible heat and hellish glow of the burning rock can be detected 20 miles away. The heat of the Ring of Fire powers the Great Ash Storm that rages over the Valley.

The outer lands of the Valley are largely uninhabited—few creatures can withstand its fierce climate. Those that can survive in this environment are, without exception, monsters of terrible power. It is likely that the Dragon maintains a population of deadly creatures here to deter would-be explorers.

Characters approaching over the Silt Sea must first find the Great Ash Storm. Once they have pierced its dusty walls, they confront 20-30 miles of the most desolate terrain in the burning world: the Ring of Fire. Worse, the ring forms a psionic and magical barrier to ethereal, dimension walking, and phasing characters. No traveler can cross the Ring of Fire by these means.

Only the strongest and most resourceful adventurers can cross the Ring of Fire and enter the City of Doom. The Dragon itself watches over the Valley of Dust and Fire—let interlopers be warned.

## The Great Ash Storm

Like a vast wall of dust, the Great Ash Storm eternally hangs over the heart of the Sea of Silt. Almost 180 miles in diameter, it towers ten miles into the sky. On a clear day (a rare occurrence in the Silt Sea) it can be seen from 200 miles away. The storm appears as a roiling wall of dust that stretches out of sight to either side and into the sky.

The storm has an alarming tendency to expand or shrink suddenly as winds fluctuate. Minor variances can send the wall of dust surging outward several miles in only moments. Anyone within five miles of the storm may be engulfed in a sudden surge.

Within the Great Ash Storm, wind velocity reaches 100 miles per hour. Sudden eddies and gusts can reach wind speeds of almost twice that. Flying in these conditions is impossible for all but the most powerful creatures—at a minimum, the flier must be size H or larger, with a flying movement of 30 or better. Even fliers of this size and strength find that the powerful gusts buffet them like sparrows in a tornado.

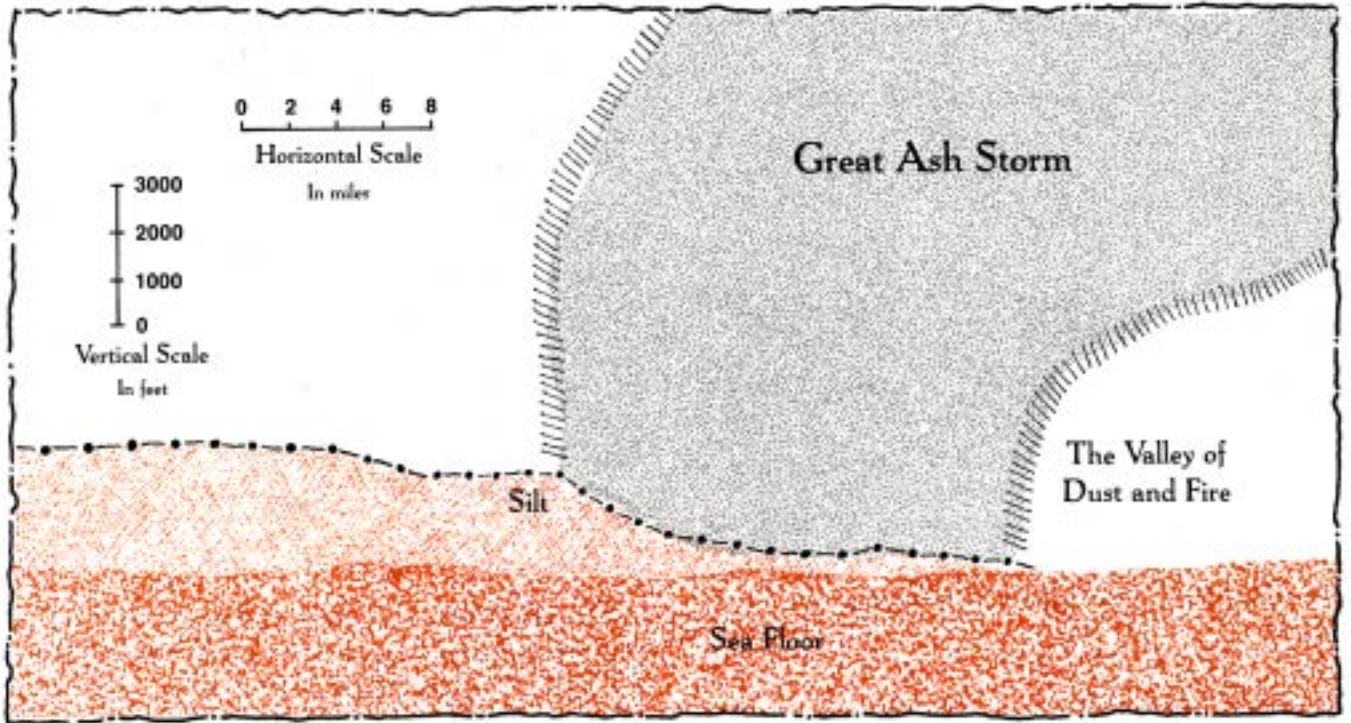
Visibility drops to five yards, hearing is almost impossible above the roaring of the wind, and any breathing creature begins to suffer the Gray Death unless it can protect its lungs and throat from the choking dust. Worse still, the wind-driven dust scours creatures for damage equal to their base Armor Class -4. Adjustments to Armor Class for shields, magic, or dexterity do not count against this damage.

**Example:** An unarmored human (base AC 10) suffers 6 points of damage per turn. A thri-kreen (base AC 5) suffers only 1 point per turn. A dwarf in mekillot hide armor (base AC 6) suffers 2 points of damage every turn.

The clouds of dust also generate barrages of lightning. Sheet lightning constantly flickers and dances in the clouds, which are tinted a brilliant red by the thick airborne dust. Flying creatures may be threatened by a strike. Damage is 10d6 per bolt, but a saving throw vs. death magic means that the bolt



# The Valley of Dust and Fire



missed entirely. Creatures on the ground are in less danger, though a successful save does not negate damage but inflicts half damage instead.

The Great Ash Storm extends ten miles into the Valley, existing in this form only over the silt. At the storm's outer borders, the Silt Sea is 2,000' deep, but within it the silt is slowly stripped away. Ten miles inside the shifting borders, the silt has been stripped down to bare rock. Here the storm weakens into a hollow dome of winds. Past the ten-mile shell of the Great Ash Storm, travel becomes much easier.

## Beneath the Storm

Over the barren rock of the Valley, the Great Ash Storm rises away from the ground by about a mile or so. In this bubble of relative calm, the winds rarely reach more than 70-80 miles per hour, and lightning strikes are far less common. Flight is usually possible, although still dangerous. Gray Death conditions and scouring damage do not occur.

The Valley of Dust and Fire is not without its own

perils, though. The heat of the Ring of Fire, trapped beneath the storm, greatly intensifies the heat of the day. This is reflected in the Weather Chart for the Valley. Powerful creatures roam the blasted hills and smoking plains, searching for prey. Lastly, the ash storm overhead occasionally descends to ground level in the form of a massive dust funnel or cyclone. These cyclones are 1d6 miles in diameter and duplicate the conditions of the Great Ash Storm. They form and descend in 2d10 minutes. The cyclones move at a rate of 2d20 on the ground, traveling in a random direction.

The Valley is a terrible thing to behold. Its floor is a shattered, broken tangle of rock and ash. Fierce winds sweep stinging clouds of hot ash and silt through the winding canyons. Great columns of ash descend from the broiling red storm overhead, weaving slowly over the Valley and destroying everything in their path. Scarlet lightning flares constantly. By day, the blasted scenery is revealed in a reddish-brown haze of tremendous heat. By night,



## The Valley of Dust and Fire

only the flashes of lightning and the hellish glow of the Ring of Fire bring light.

Few mortals can look on these lands and remain unmoved.

### Valley of Dust and Fire Visibility Range Categories

Wind	Day	Night
Moderate	Twilight	Night, no moon
Strong	Night, 2 moons	Sandstorm, driving
Storm	Sand, blowing	Sandstorm, driving
Sirocco	Sandstorm, driving	Same
Ash storm	Sandstorm, driving	Same

The categories of visibility above refer to Table 62, Visibility Ranges (page 117, PHB) and the DARK SUN™ Visibility Ranges (page 84, Rules Book).

### Valley of Dust and Fire Weather Chart

2d6	Temperature		Wind	
	Day	Night	Day	Night
2	Warm	Cool	Mod.	Light
3	Warm	Cool	Mod.	Mod.
4	Hot	Warm	Strong	Mod.
5	Hot	Warm	Strong	Strong
6	V.hot	Warm	Storm	Strong
7	V.hot	Hot	Storm	Strong
8	V.hot	Hot	Storm	Storm
3	Furnace	Hot	Sirocco	Storm
10	Furnace	V.hot	Sirocco	Storm
11	Inferno	V.hot	Ash storm	Sirocco
12	Inferno	Furnace	Ash storm	Ash storm

**Temperature:** Cool weather reduces water consumption by 50%. *Very hot* weather increases water consumption by 50% over the normal required amounts. Furnace temperatures double water consumption and cause any character in armor to suffer heat exhaustion as though wearing metal armor. All terrain costs are increased by +1 MP *Inferno*

temperatures double water usage and cause all non-thri-kreen characters to suffer heat exhaustion as though wearing metal armor. All terrain costs are increased by +2 MP.

**Wind:** *Strong* winds double terrain costs for flying only. *Storm* winds triple terrain costs for ground movement and quadruple terrain costs for fliers. *Sirocco* winds prevent all flight and reduce ground movement to one mile. Unlike the Sea of Silt *sirocco*, this lasts one day. *Ash storm* conditions indicate that the Great Ash Storm has descended to ground level. No movement is possible, and scouring, lightning, and Gray Death conditions exist for all exposed characters.

### Fighting in the Valley

The valley floor is gloomy by day, but characters can see as far as the current wind condition allows. At night, it is literally pitch black except for a few areas near the Ring of Fire. Nighttime combat occurs under conditions of Total Darkness, but characters who have infravision are not hampered by this (refer to Combat, page 30, PHB).

Winds of storm velocity or higher increase all thrown and missile weapon range categories by one—short range becomes medium, and medium becomes long. Long-range fire is impossible. *Sirocco* or ash storm winds cause a +2 initiative penalty for characters who are unused to fighting under these conditions.

### Denizens of the Valley

Despite the utter hostility of the Valley, a few creatures dwell here, most notably the Dragon King. The Dragon spends about half its time beyond the Ring of Fire, within the walls of Ur Draxa; the rest of the time it roams the deserts and tablelands of the outside world. In the Valley it occasionally patrols the outer lands to hunt ka'ardani (the outlanders) or destroy a dangerous monster before it poses a threat.



# The Valley of Dust and Fire



The Dragon's servants also police the Valley. The Dragon Warriors of the Iron Citadel overfly the outer lands routinely, searching for any intrusion. Parties of slaves are sometimes sent from Ur Draxa to mine obsidian or other minerals. The few criminals and riffraff of the City who are not slain out of hand are exiled to these broken lands to become outlanders—a fate worse than death.

Powerful monsters wander the Valley, including fire drakes, earth drakes, megapedes, nightmare beasts, so-ut, crystal spiders, behir, bulettes, remorhaz, wyverns, and a few giants and braxat. In some cases, only one or two members of a species live in the Valley; it seems plausible that the Dragon keeps this region stocked with dangerous monsters.

Even given the near-total lack of vegetation or water, a few social creatures maintain basic agriculture in some favorable places. Giants, braxat, and outlanders all gather in nomadic tribes that carefully seed as many areas as they can. It makes no sense to live in one place when, despite all your efforts, your crops will be destroyed anyway. The fights for scant water and food supplies are terrible.

## Encounters in the Valley

The Valley of Dust and Fire is extremely hostile in both climate and inhabitants. Any non- or semi-intelligent hunter almost certainly attacks anything remotely resembling prey out of sheer hunger. The subjects of the Dragon King who occasionally journey into the outer valley, such as Dragon Warriors or slave expeditions, are under standing orders to capture any intelligent creature they encounter. The few creatures of the valley who live outside the Dragon's rule (braxat, giants, pterrans, and outlanders) are hunted by natural predators as well as expeditions from the Dragon King. They usually regard a stranger as an enemy or a meal.

The party's trip across the valley floor should be dangerous and memorable. This area contains lethal monsters, and players should feel scared when they bring their characters through the Great Ash

Storm and into the Valley of Dust and Fire.

Some typical monster encounters in the various terrains are described below.

**The Valley overall:** Parties may meet earth and fire drakes, braxat, flailers, cha'thrang, tembos, so-ut, wyverns, beasthead giants, id fiends, kirre, phase spiders, giant scorpions, death watch beetles, or even (for the party with heavy firepower or high mobility) a nightmare beast.

Instead of (or in addition to) monsters, the party may encounter an expedition of 11-30 slaves and 6-24 Draxans, of whom 1-6 are templars. They are led by a defiler, templar, or psionacist of level 5-12 (1d8+4). Expeditions try to capture intruders for questioning.

A raiding party of outlanders may attack visitors for their food or weapons, or instead may invite them to their current stronghold to talk. Or Dragon Warriors, always mounted on domesticated rocs, may try to capture or kill the intruders. See the MC entry on "Men" in this supplement for details.

**Smoking lands, salt flats:** Many of the monsters above, plus gal, slicer beetles, ankhegs, and (in the smoking lands) pulp bees.

**Lava plain:** Most encounters listed above, plus basilisks and even a megapede (heavily armed parties only).

**Mountains, rocky badlands:** Here characters may meet an air or earth drake or a crystal spider, as well as many of the monsters listed above. They might encounter a band of 1-10 pterrans, always with pterrax mounts. In a village, 11-30 more pterrans may be encountered. Pterrans will probably attack the party, provided they have a numerical advantage.

## Terrain of the Valley

The Valley of Dust and Fire is the bleakest, most barren, and most dangerous region of the burning world. A volcanic wasteland, at times it seems that the smoking plains and shattered hills of this desolate region belong to another world entirely. The





## The Valley of Dust and Fire

valley floor is a realm of black, broken rock, howling winds, and choking heat.

Travelers in this hellish realm find many regions of the outer lands familiar to them; great areas of the valley floor are composed of rocky badlands, boulder fields, and salt flats. There are even low ranges of mountains within the Valley. But there are many surprises for the unwary traveler. New terrain includes dead forest, smoking land, and lava plains.

### Dead Forest

Once verdant jungles like the Forest Ridge, the dead forests were slain by wind and the ashfall of the Valley. That some still stand is evidence that the Valley was not always a wasteland. The forests consist of charred gray trunks and dead trees of all kinds. Every year, a few more fall to the ravages of the Great Ash Storm. Half the trees of any forest region still stand as bare white skeletons.

The floor of the forests are treacherous, for sev-

eral inches or feet of acrid ash cover the ground. Soft loam lies beneath the ash. It sometimes hides sharp branches and deadfalls, and it is easy for a traveler to stumble into these.

The dead forests, despite the name, are the most populous outer lands. The trees will never regrow, but in many places small and sturdy shrubs grow through the ash, fed by tiny springs in the deep ravines and dells of the ruined woods. This relative abundance of food and water makes the dead forests dangerous, for powerful predators can survive here.

Most dead forests support mundane life, such as insects and rodents and grazers. Many small carnivores have perished because of the competition, leaving wyverns and so-ut as the most commonly encountered predators. Intelligent creatures usually avoid the dead forests because of the high number of dangerous creatures, but outlanders and giants mount occasional hunting expeditions into the ash-choked woods.



# The Valley of Dust and Fire



## Smoking Land

Regions of cooling lava flows and hot volcanic vents are common in the outer regions of the Valley. The proximity of the Ring of Fire contributes to the already catastrophic conditions of the Valley of Dust and Fire, and extreme volcanic activity is common.

The smoking lands take several different forms, most commonly a stony barren with scattered vents and mud pits. The land trembles from time to time, and geysers of hot ash and burning gases are routine. Despite the physical danger of the smoking land, tough weeds and brambles survive in its tormented soil. These scarce plants in turn support a small animal population among the mud pits and scalding vents.

Travel in the smoking lands is possible, but hazardous. A wayfarer unaccustomed to the dangers can stumble dangerously. For instance:

- A mud geyser splatters scalding mud over 1-3 characters. Save vs. death or suffer 1d6 points of damage.
- A hidden vent emits scorching fumes. All characters must save vs. poison or suffer 1d8 damage.
- Apparently solid ground conceals a pit of boiling mud. A random character must make an Intelligence ability check to notice, or he falls in and suffers 2d8 points of damage.
- Noxious mist sweeps over party, causing blindness and nausea for 1d10 turns unless a save vs. poison is made.
- A tremor opens a fissure beneath 1-3 random characters; succeed in a Dexterity check or fall in for 2d6 points of damage.

Stage these events as the adventure requires to keep the players alert and to demonstrate the hostility of the environment.

Most creatures find the smoking lands too desolate and dangerous to live in. However, these regions of blasted earth support scrawny brambles and

tough shrubs. Animals such as erdlu, goats, jarbos, and jankx survive here, but large carnivores are rare; the ruined lands simply cannot support them. Most caves or fissures of the smoking lands are vents for such geological activity as geysers or toxic gas eruptions. The smoking lands offer no shelter for the traveler.

## Lava Plains

Black, featureless fields of frozen rock, many lava plains are only a few dozen years old, formed by nearby volcanic activity. No plants can survive in this waterless desert of solid rock—and without plants, few animals survive.

Unlike the Ring of Fire or other stretches of molten magma, the lava plains have long since cooled and ceased their relentless flow. They cover the ground in a blanket of dense black stone anywhere from 8-30' deep. In a few places a strong natural spring can force its way to the surface, but these are simply buried anew. In other places volcanic vents spew poisonous gas.

The lava plains are difficult to cross on foot. Though generally flat and level, they are crisscrossed with deep fissures. The ground itself is hard, sharp, and unforgiving; travelers must proceed with caution or risk shredding their feet on the jagged stone.

Lava plains are often riddled with subterranean pipes or 'tunnels within the rock. These lead back to the volcano whose fury spawned the black plains. It is thought that these tunnels serve as conduits for fresh lava during subsequent eruptions—let spelunkers be warned!

Given the near-total lack of food and water, there is little to recommend a lava plain. However, most flows do possess one redeeming quality—they are free of dangerous animals. No carnivore hunts such empty land. However, be wary of flying creatures. On the flat expanse of lava, a roc or wyvern is the last thing a traveler wants to see.



## The Valley of Dust and Fire

### Movement in the Valley

The shattered terrain of the Valley of Dust and Fire is hardly smooth going, but at least it is solid—unlike the Sea of Silt. The same methods of travel that work elsewhere work here. Travelers may journey through the Valley on the ground, in the air, or by magical means. Each method has its own dangers and advantages.

#### Ground Travel

Ground travel is the slowest method, but also the safest. The broken terrain of the valley floor has the following Movement Point costs:

Terrain Type	Movement Cost
Dead forest	2
Smoking lands	3
Lava plains	3

In addition to the normal costs of the terrain, assess weather effects using the rules under “Beneath the Storm” earlier in this chapter. The intense heat and fierce winds of the Valley slow a walking character even more than the sheer ruggedness of the terrain.

The outer lands are barren and lifeless even by Athasian standards. This twisted landscape of barren rocks and stinging sand offers little by way of sustenance. Survival, Hunting, and Water Find nonweapon proficiencies are halved. Travelers should bring all the food and water they can carry.

If the player characters manage to bring mounts into the Valley, forage for the animals is a grave problem. The scarcity of water and food means that the animals must carry water and food for the entire journey. In addition, earth tremors, ashfalls, and lightning barrages can panic even the most reliable steeds. All things considered, characters are much better off walking using only one or two kanks as pack animals.

#### Flight

Flying characters cover ground as discussed in Chapter One; for example, a mage casting a *fly* spell can move one mile every ten minutes, six miles an hour, or 60 MP for a ten-hour “march.” Compare the base movement rate of the device or spell to the *fly* spell’s movement rate of 18. Airborne mounts use the normal overland movement system, modified by weather conditions. A flying creature’s MPs equal its normal movement rating. Note that the tactical movement system is faster than the overland.

The usual comfort, speed, and safety of flying are unknown here. Aside from the limitations of the means of transport (time limit, food requirements, resting time), strong winds can halve or quarter the flier’s speed or prevent flight altogether. The flier must be careful of dust cyclones and the Great Ash Storm overhead. The endless lightning displays of the storm are dangerous, as well—a 10d6 lightning bolt may endanger the traveler every half-hour or less.

#### Magical and Psionic Transport

This includes *teleport*, *wind walk*, and *gate* spells and psionic disciplines such as dimension walk. In general, characters able to travel this way should exercise great caution. A character who emerges from a dimension walk in the middle of a poisonous gas and ash vent is in big trouble.

One unusual feature deserves attention here. The Ring of Fire cannot be crossed by ethereal, dimension walking, or phasing characters. A barrier exists that prevents such travelers from setting foot on the island in the center of the Ring of Fire.

#### Places of Interest

The Valley of Dust and Fire is a windswept waste of burning heat and choking dust. Player characters adventuring here should find every minute full of peril and excitement, for simple survival taxes their



# The Valley of Dust and Fire



abilities and resourcefulness to the utmost. Some regions and sites command special attention.

## The Tortured Hills

A region of rocky badlands so blasted and broken that it stands out even in the Valley, the Tortured Hills stand in the northeastern corner of the Valley of Dust and Fire. The proximity of the Ring of Fire causes much geological action in this area of the Valley—hot mud geysers and mineral springs are common, and in some places the shattered terrain overlies the seething magma below by only a few dozen yards.

The Tortured Hills are razor-sharp ridges and tors of barren stone. Deep gulches between the hills are filled with boulders, rubble, thorny plants, and tough scrub grasses. Treat this extreme terrain as Mountains for overland movement. Water is relatively easy to find, but often the springs are contaminated by minerals.

The Tortured Hills are almost lush by the standards of the rest of the Valley, despite the extreme ruggedness and impassability of the terrain. Several clans of outlanders live in caverns or sheltered canyons within the Tortured Hills, but the chief residents are the braxat. A very powerful chieftain has managed to gather the chaotic creatures under his rule, extracting promises of cooperation and fealty from each of the small family groups that wander the Tortured Hills. As many as a dozen powerful braxat may unite for raids in this area.

The Tortured Hills are home to tough, agile goats skilled in climbing the sheer precipices; bats, carnivorous and fruit-eating; spiders, from mundane to giant and phase varieties; scorpions of all sizes; gaj; silk wyrms; id fiends; tembo; spider cacti; centipedes; and earth and fire drakes. A remote tribe of pterrans also inhabits the hills, soaring over the broken terrain on pterraxes.

**Braxat:** AL NE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 10; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +10; SA psionics (breathe acid for 2d10); SD hit only by

magic or steel weapons; ML 18. Encountered in groups of 1-4 in the Tortured Hills.

## Shard Flats

Scattered along the western periphery of the Valley, the Shard Flats are a chain of salt flats. Before the destruction of the Valley, the Shard Flats were volcanic mineral lakes; with the desiccation of Athas, the potent mix of contaminants in the water became a hard crust of mineral salts. Unlike most salt flats, the Shard Flats consist of black, needle-sharp crystals capable of piercing even a thri-kreen.

Fortunately, the shards are very brittle, and a traveler can carefully kick a path clear by sweeping his feet from side to side. This slow, methodical process adds +2 MP to the normal terrain cost for crossing a salt flat. On the bright side, few animals set foot on the Shard Flats. However, the flats are completely waterless. The black crystals absorb heat and effectively raise the temperature on the flats one category above the temperature of the surrounding areas, to a maximum of Inferno temperatures.

Though the Shard Flats lack terrestrial predators, they are no place to encounter an airborne carnivore such as a roc or wyvern. Characters fighting the attacks of flying creatures lose any Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class if they move carefully to avoid impaling their feet. If they don't care, stepping on the shards without preparation causes damage equal to the creature's base Armor Class -4. When a two-legged creature impales its feet, it must succeed in a Dexterity check or fall down. Should a creature fall, be knocked down, or be knocked unconscious, the damage is 10 + base AC.

On rare occasions parties of giants or outlanders cross the Shard Flats as a shortcut, but most intelligent beings prefer to simply walk around.

## The Gate of Doom

Located on the Ring of Fire due west of the City of Doom, the Gate of Doom is a towering archway



## The Valley of Dust and Fire

of black, seamless granite. It stands nearly 130' tall, and is 60' wide. Its surface is carved with huge mystical runes of terrible power. The archway can be seen from several miles away if weather permits.

The gate is the Dragon's personal monument, warning sign, and means of transport to and from its realm. It contains a magical *gate* of enormous size and power that spans the Ring of Fire. This is the only means of extradimensional travel that can span the lava sea, and it only works by the will of the Dragon. A matching gate exists on the opposite shore of the Ring of Fire. Armies can cross the Ring of Fire with a step if the Dragon so wills it.

The entire structure of the gate is a psionically empowered device created through the use of the metapsionic science empower. It has Int 18, Ego 25, 140 PSPs, and a Power Score of 16 in the following telepathic abilities:

- **Sciences:** mindlink, probe, domination, ejection, tower of iron will.
- **Devotions:** contact, aversion, awe, ego whip, ESP, id insinuation, identity penetration, intellect fortress, post-hypnotic suggestion, send thoughts.

The Gate of Doom is quite capable of discerning between friend and foe. It uses its probe, ESP, and identity penetration abilities to scrutinize anyone who attempts to use its magical *gate*. In desperate circumstances it uses send thoughts to warn the Dragon of powerful intruders.

To invoke the power of the gate, a traveler must either be with the Dragon when it uses the magical device or know a magical command word. Only the Dragon knows the entire set of command words, and the word differs for each individual who uses the Gate of Doom. No matter where the Dragon is on Athas, it can close or open the Gate by a mere act of will. Usually, the Gate is set to allow servitors of Dragon Warrior, vizier, or templar rank to pass, along with anyone accompanying them.

The Gate of Doom is guarded by 13 obsidian golems who are programmed to obey the orders of the

gate. They normally stand motionless in alcoves in the inner passage of the archway.

**Obsidian golems (13):** AL N; AC 4; MV 6; HD 12; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 4-40; SA smash fists for stun and shards; SD immune to psionics, hit only by magic weapons, immune to preserver spells and spells cast by creatures of 7 HD or less; ML 20. For details, see the DARK SUN™ *Monstrous Compendium*.

### The Basalt Plain

A lava plain of enormous size, this deserted region remains volcanically active, and in many places molten lava still flows only a few dozen feet below the surface.

The Basalt Plain is completely without water, food, or shelter. Its location at the southern edge of the Ring of Fire prevents travelers from detouring around it, and so denizens of the valley cross the Basalt Plain only if necessary. The lack of cover makes this a bad place to be caught by airborne predators or treacherous weather.

An unusual property of the Basalt Plain is its affinity for dust funnels. The winds that circle the Valley of Dust and Fire tend to swirl and eddy here, and the Great Ash Storm often descends to blanket the ground. Should a dust cyclone form near the party, see "Beneath the Storm" at the beginning of this chapter for details.

### The Dead Forest

Although several regions of dead forest terrain exist within the Valley of Dust and Fire, *the* Dead Forest is the largest and best known of these. Extending 50 miles along the shores of the Ring of Fire, the forest occupies a range of rolling hills and highlands 20 miles wide. Many of the desiccated trees have been knocked flat by some ancient cataclysm—entire hillsides are littered with the wreckage of the once-beautiful forest.

The Dead Forest is rich in water and food.



Numerous trickling streams force their way through the dust and ash. Small, hardy shrubs and grasses are growing back to replace the ancient forest with scrubland. A frail food chain of insects, small grazers, and burrowers supports larger carnivores such as wyverns, so-ut, kirre, cha'thrang, spiders, and scorpions. The wealth of animal life attracts intelligent hunters such as giants, braxat, and expeditions from the City of Doom.

Several large tribes of outlanders live in the Dead Forest, claiming territory and viciously defending it. Other residents include beasthead giants. The Dead Forest has few good caves or defensible lairs, and competition for them is exceptionally fierce.

## Outlanders

The ka'ardani ("outlanders" or "exiles" in the tongue of the City of Doom) are descendants of criminals exiled from the Dragon's kingdom. They scratch out a precarious existence here, outside the Ring of Fire; they believe nothing lies beyond the Sea of Silt.

The outlanders are far more savage than even feral slave tribes. Thousands of years of isolation have taught them superstitions unknown in the Tyr region. They regard preservers, defilers, and clerics as shamans or witch doctors—powerful and fearsome creatures to be respected and obeyed.

Outlanders speak a crude dialect of Low Draxan (the slave tongue of the City of Doom), with a few words and structures of the outer world's Common thrown in. Their speech is only about 5% intelligible to outsiders, about 60% intelligible to speakers of Low Draxan.

Humans, dwarves, elves, half-elves, and muls are all present among most tribes. Half-giants, half-lings, and thri-kreen are only distant rumors. Outlanders may be fighters, rangers, clerics, psionicists, or preservers. The resources of the Valley are so depleted that defilers are not tolerated.

## An Outlander Village

The Clan of the Roc, a strong band of raiders and hunters, fortunately possesses a small cavern system for its home. Spring-fed underground lakes supply a wealth of water. The clan site, marked on the large map, is a rocky tor in the foothills of the mountains. Clansmen guard their lair well, posting sentries for miles around.

The Clan of the Roc consists of 30 human, 4 dwarven, and 7 elven adults and 8 children of the different races. The clan is led by Aristes Wyvernsbane, a powerful human fighter now in his fiftieth year. Aristes was a slave gladiator who was brought to the Valley when he was 18 years old as part of the Dragon's sacrifice. At 22 he escaped from an expedition of viziers and templars and fled into the Dead Forest. An intelligent and charismatic man, he managed to form a small group of outlaws and exiles into the Clan of the Roc. They have flourished under his leadership, but the question is arising whether Aristes' son will automatically inherit leadership or if some kind of competition or election should be held. Fortunately, Aristes enjoys vigorous health.

Outlaws, slaves, and criminals have little chance of winning an invitation to join the Clan of the Roc. Any strangers defeated by the clan are considered too weak to become members and are killed for their belongings. But if a character fights bravely and honorably and tells the clan of his background, Aristes might set up a duel for the person's life.

By day, 2d6 members of the tribe are gone from the caverns on different errands: hunting; collecting wood, stone, and bone; and harvesting wild plants. By night, 2d4 are gone. Beyond the members of the tribe out and about, eight are always on watch.

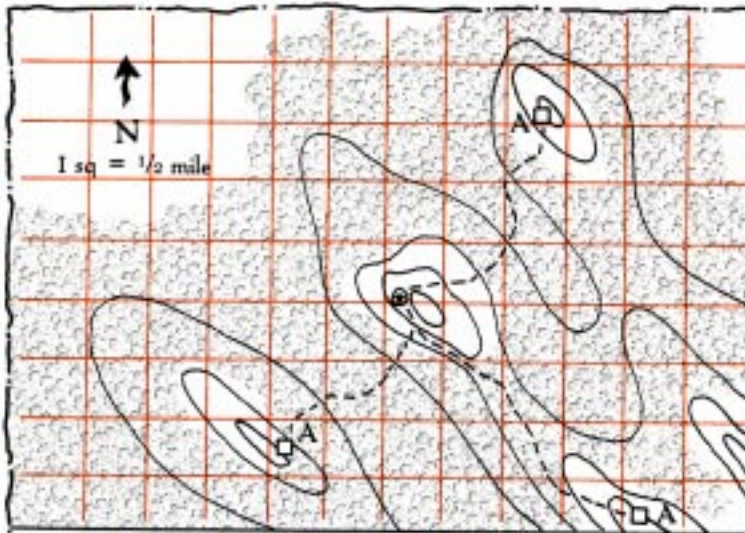
## Key to the Roc Caverns

**A. Sentries:** At all times four sentries, 3rd-level LN fighters, watch from good vantage points in the surrounding wasteland.





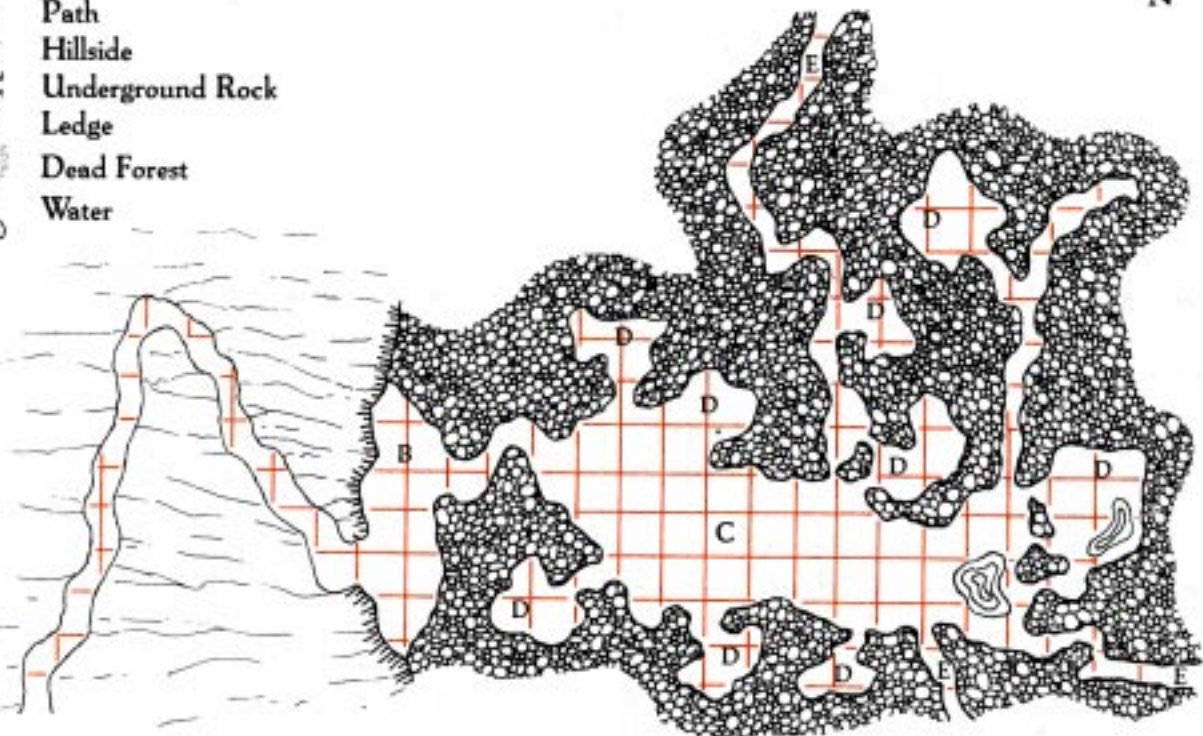
# The Valley of Dust and Fire



- A. Sentries
- B. Guards
- C. Common Cavern
- D. Clan Quarters
- E. Escape Routes

Roc Clan Diagram

- Cave Entrance
- Path
- Hillside
- Underground Rock
- Ledge
- Dead Forest
- Water



Roc Caverns

1 sq = 10 feet

## The Valley of Dust and Fire



**B. Guards:** Four 4th-level LN fighters guard the cavern entrance.

**C. Common cavern:** The largest chamber of the lair features a deep, cold lake and natural light from small entrances around the room. By day, the rest of the tribe prepares food, makes weapons, or teaches children. By night, this area is usually empty—most of the Roc clansmen sleep in private chambers.

**D. Clan quarters:** Each chamber is home to a family or a couple of single warriors. There are five human families, one dwarven, and two elven. In addition, eight humans, one dwarf, and one elf are single warriors. The children sleep with their parents. Aristes sleeps in the largest of the private chambers with his three children.

**E. Escape routes:** These winding passages lead to secret exits from the cavern complex.

**Roc clansmen:** AL LN, NG, or CG; AC 7 to 10; MV varies; THAC0 20-15 and up; #AT usually 1; Dmg by weapon; SA psionics; ML 13. Wear cloth, leather, or hide armor and use bone javelins, slings, and stone axes.

### Aristes

Human Fighter  
12th Level  
Chaotic Good

Str 18/12

Dex 8

Con 17

hp: 71

AC: 5 (braxat hide armor, shield)

#AT: 2

THAC0 9

Dmg: 1d8+8 (steel *long sword* +3, specialized—  
+ 5 to hit)

Movement 12

Int 14

Wis 11

Cha 15

The hostility of the Valley and the impossibility of escape have forced him to extreme measures; it is Aristes' law that no outsider may learn of the lair and live. However, he bends his own rules for strong and nonevil visitors who help the clan. He may provide especially helpful visitors with information about the Gate of Doom and the Dragon Warriors.

Aristes is short, muscular, and lean, with a scarred body and gray hair. He is a fierce enemy, a strong friend, and a good chieftain for the clan.



A good-hearted man, Aristes leads the Clan of the Roc. An' escaped slave gladiator of Ur Draxa, he gathered his tribe over the course of 30 years.






# The Ring of Fire







## Chapter Three: The Ring of Fire

*"It is written in the Book of Urik that the Sea of Silt was once an ocean of water called the Sunrise Sea. In the middle of this fabled sea a great island lay green and fair, in the days before the founding of Urik. No one knows what happened, but some great calamity overtook the green isle, for the Book of Urik tells of the boiling of the Sunrise Sea and the Rain of Ash over the seven cities."*

**—From the Scroll of Kelaimos,  
in the Library of the Oba of Gulg**

The center of the Valley of Dust and Fire contains a seething sea of lava, the Ring of Fire. Enclosing the island of the City of Doom, the Ring is 150 miles from north to south and 100 miles from east to west. It is the largest caldera of open magma in the known world and the principal cause of the devastation of the Valley.

The Ring of Fire is an awesome spectacle, a boiling river of red, glowing molten rock that swirls and seethes continuously. In some places, hardy spires of dense stone pierce the lava sea to stretch like black fingers at the red sky. In other places, lava eddies drain in endless, slow-moving whirlpools, only to re-emerge as violent fountains of magma hundreds of feet high. Black cliffs of basalt tower along the shoreline.

Only the Dragon knows whether the Ring of Fire preceded the City of Doom in its center, or vice versa. Regardless of whether the city was placed here first or the ring was made around the city, the Ring forms an impassable barrier to all but winged creatures. The isle of Ur Draxa is 20 to 30 miles from the shores of the outer valley. Even strong fliers think twice about crossing 30 miles of open lava.

The Ring is impassable by teleportation or extra-dimensional travel, including dimension walking, etherealness, or plane shifting. This property probably results from the Dragon's awful magic. The only practical options remaining are flight or the Gate of Doom, and the gate is closed to enemies of the Dragon.

### The Lava

The seething lava's fierce heat can be felt miles away, and its hellish glow eternally illuminates the shore of the outer valley and the city beyond. Day and night are meaningless here.

At first glance, the Ring of Fire seems a monolithic barrier. However, rocky crags and spires rise up from the blanket of magma. The lava varies greatly; in some places, it has cooled to a black crust that is actually safe to walk on, provided one can tolerate the intense heat of the air. Elsewhere, fountains spray molten rock as swift and liquid as water. The awful forces at work create and destroy these features constantly—no stretch of lava ever remains the same.

In game terms, magma is instant death to a character who falls in. Some magical abilities or devices may let the character survive; clerics of elemental Earth or Fire may ignore the effects of lava if they are of sufficient level, and a *ring of elemental command* or *fire resistance* could give the character a fighting chance. Make a ruling based on the nature of the protective device. In all other cases, allow the character a saving throw vs. death at -4. Success means the character has fallen onto a hard crust or a rock outcropping and sustains only 10d6 damage from the heat.

In addition to the dangers of contact with lava, simply being near it is hazardous. Any creature without elemental immunities suffers 2d6 damage each round it is within 10' of the surface, and 1d6 damage each round it is within 50'. This damage is a combination of radiant heat and the inhalation of superheated air.

### Weather Over the Ring

The Ring creates its own weather patterns. Its intense heat powers the Great Ash Storm. Local hot or cool spots of the lava have intense effects on the air masses above them.

Treat all temperatures as Inferno, day or night.



# The Ring of Fire





The hellish winds of the Valley begin here; a gale of scorching\* air always blasts up into the Great Ash Storm. The dust funnels of the outer valley cannot form here; the rising drafts of heated air prevent the descent of cyclones. However, the ring has its own cyclones—firestorms that spin away from eddying masses of superheated air and rage across the lava.

The superheated air above the lava is free of ash or silt; the visibility is very good here, compared to other regions of the Valley. A character standing on a cliff overlooking the ring can make out the walls of Ur Draxa on the opposite shore.

### Visibility in the Ring

Day or night, visibility is Clear—the glow of the lava sea illuminates the ring. Winds of Sirocco strength or higher cut visibility to Twilight. Firestorms are treated as Sandstorms, Driving. For visibility ranges, see page 117 of the PHB and page 84 of the DARK SUN™ *Rules Book*.

### Ring of Fire Weather Chart

2d6	Wind	2d6	Direction
2	Strong	2	Downdraft
3	Strong	3	Tailwind
4	Storm	4	Tailwind
5	Storm	5	Headwind
6	Storm	6	Crosswind
7	Sirocco	7	Crosswind
8	Sirocco	8	Updraft
3	Sirocco	7	Updraft
10	Sirocco	10	Updraft
11	Firestorm	11	Updraft
12	Firestorm	12	Updraft

*Strong* winds double and *Storm* winds quadruple terrain costs for fliers. *Sirocco winds* prevent all flight unless they create a Tailwind or Updraft. *Firestorm* winds prevent all flight. Any creature not magically protected against fire suffers 6d6 damage, but may save vs. death for half damage.

*Downdrafts* force fliers to climb (see page 78,

*Dungeon Master's Guide*) to maintain altitude. Otherwise, fliers drop 100' per round. Headwinds and *Crosswinds* force a climb to maintain course and speed. *Updrafts* force a climb (actually downward) or fliers drop 100' per round.

## Denizens of the Ring

Few creatures are at home in the inferno: fire drakes, fire lizards, fire minions, and various forms of fire and earth elementals. Even these shun the place, because there are few sources of food within the lava sea. All in all, the Ring of Fire may be one of the safest places in the Valley.

Some strange creatures from the Para-Elemental Plane of Magma occasionally pass into the Ring through hidden portals—creatures resembling common Athasian monsters, but in elemental form. Fire scorpions and earth beetles seem to be common. In general, an elemental monster is exactly similar to its Athasian counterpart, but has +2 HD, -2 to normal AC, and inflicts an extra die of damage in each attack.

**Example:** A giant fire scorpion has 7+5 Hit Dice, Armor Class 1, and inflicts 2d10 damage with each claw hit and 2d6 with its stinger. Be creative.

Two other creatures of the Ring, fire drakes and fire lizards, make their lairs in the rocky spires or islands, emerging to hunt over the lava and to ravage the shores of the Valley. They are always hostile.

Finally, among the inhabitants of the Ring are the Dragon Warriors. Their Iron Citadel perches on a rock outcropping in the lava sea, reachable only by air. From this secure fortress they fly out over the entire valley, and occasionally through the Great Ash Storm to the Silt Sea beyond.

## Terrain of the Ring

Travelers encountering the Ring are hard-pressed to recognize distinctive features. Despite this apparent uniformity, the lava sea possesses as many moods as any mundane ocean. Varying densities,





## The Ring of Fire

temperatures, and levels of activity each carry partitular dangers.

**Density:** This varies from near-solid stone to thin, fast-flowing liquid rock. Most stretches of magma are thick enough to support the weight of a human-sized creature. The rare, yellow-hot lava cannot. Travelers walking the Ring with powerful magical protection must detour around thin lava.

**Temperature:** Surfaces vary from cold crusts that would not even singe exposed flesh to superheated lava that glows bright yellow. Most magma is in the cool red to hot red range, which is quite sufficient to burn a human to ashes. The hottest regions can set a human afire a hundred yards away.

**Activity:** Vast areas simply seethe slowly, forming unbroken plains of red-hot stone. Other regions are a stunning display of natural power and energy, with lava fountains hurling tons of rock hundreds of feet in the air. The most dangerous active regions are the dormant ones; no one wants to be surprised by a sudden eruption of a new fountain where none was suspected.

Generally, creatures of the Elemental Plane of Fire tend to prefer the hottest, most liquid magma they can find. Creatures of the Elemental Plane of Earth and terrestrial fire creatures such as fire drakes or fire lizards, prefer cooler lava.

No water or vegetation is ever found on the rock spires and barren islands. The heat is too great, and firestorms regularly scour them clean. Despite this destitution, the spires can save the life of a flier in need of rest or a traveler fleeing a magma creature.

### Movement and Magic in the Ring

Surrounding the City of Doom like a great moat, the Ring of Fire is completely impassable to travelers who do not have access to powerful magic or natural flight abilities. The Dragon could not have created a deadlier or more impenetrable barrier to guard its city.

The ring is not only a physical hazard; it is infused with a powerful enchantment to prevent many

magical and psionic forms of movement. No extra-dimensional or planar travel can function over the lava waste. This also neutralizes spells that allow contact with other planes.

The following wizard spells do not function in the ring: *dismissal, banishment, deppockets, rope trick, blink, dimension door, vacancy, distance distortion, Leomund's secret chest, passwall, teleport, phase door, teleport without error, vanish, Drawmij's instant summons, gate, Leomund's secure shelter, shadow walk, there/not there, astral spell, contact other plane, and energy drain.*

The following priest spells do not function in the Ring: *speak with astral traveler, astral window, join with astral traveler, plane shift, astral spell, extradimensional detection, divination, commune, divine inspiration, meld into stone, wind walk, negative plane protection, raise dead, reincarnate, restoration, energy drain, resurrection, dimensional folding, extradimensional manipulation, extradimensional pocket, space-warp, plant door, pass plant, transport via plants, and gate.*

The following psionic abilities do not function within the ring: shadow-form, displacement, banishment, probability travel, summon planar creature, teleport, teleport other, astral projection, dimension door, dimension walk, and wrench.

Many other spells or talents work but may be of marginal usefulness in the Ring of Fire. For example, *summon swarm* or *creeping doom* fail because no insects live within the ring.

Note that magical items that duplicate forbidden spell effects do not function either-so a *helm of teleportation* or a cloak of displacement is powerless within the ring. No signs posted at the border of the lava sea warn travelers of this phenomenon; player characters must discover it the hard way.

There are only two practical ways to cross the Ring of Fire: use the Gate of Doom or fly. It is unlikely that player characters can use the Gate. Flight is a far more likely option.

Flying is risky. If characters are fortunate, they



can stay near the outcroppings of rock and island-hop across. Otherwise, they are looking at a 20- to 40-mile flight over open lava with nowhere to stop and rest. Also, the colossal updrafts of superheated air can carry even strong fliers right up into the Great Ash Storm overhead. Eruptions of lava threaten even high-flying characters with molten debris and poisonous gasses. Lastly, the tornadolike firestorms must be given a wide berth.

**Wind effects:** To compute how far characters can fly, refer to the Movement sections of the previous two chapters. Remember to take wind and weather into account—most characters are slowed by strong winds and intense heat.

## Locations in the Ring

Few locations stand out from the seething magma. Unless the characters specifically search for the sites below, they encounter them only by chance. Use these places as secondary goals or diversions.

## The Dragon's Causeway

A series of stepping-stone islands leading from the Gate of Doom to the island of Ur Draxa, the Dragon's Causeway is connected in some mystic way to the Gate of Doom. The islands are nearly uniform in size and appearance. Each is 100' square, and rises about 40' out of the magma with sheer, vertical sides. The islands are placed every mile, and there are 16 of them altogether.

The islands of the causeway are in fact the markers or supports for the mystical conduit that spans the ring, connecting the two halves of the Gate of Doom. They radiate powerful magic of the alteration and conjuration schools. Fliers may be tempted to use the islands as resting points in a crossing of the Ring of Fire, but that would be dangerous—the islands are guarded, and it is perilous to be on one of them when the Gate of Doom is used.

A character who stands on one of the islands while the Gate of Doom is used must save vs. spells.





## The Ring of Fire

If successful, the character feels a psychic rushing or blast of wind as the creatures using the gate are channeled past. A character who fails to save is swept up by the users of the gate and carried along, to emerge from the destination gate along with whoever was using the gate. In either case, the character takes 1d20 points of damage and suffers severe disorientation for 1d4 hours; the character fights and saves at -2 during this time.

Each island of the Dragon's Causeway is guarded by four magma golems. These creatures stand as silent statues along the edges of the block and immediately attack anyone who scales the island or lands on its upper surface. The golems are not affected by use of the Gate of Doom.

**Magma golems (4):** AL N; AC 5; MV 3; HD 12; THAC0 8; #AT 1; Dmg 4-24; SA Heat damage, crush; SD only hit by magical weapons, immune to mind-affecting spells, psionics, fire, cold, and priest spells of the Fire or Earth spheres; ML 20. See the end of this supplement for details.

### The Maelstrom

A vast whirlpool of molten lava, this eddy is more than two miles wide. At its heart there is a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. This portal opens into a vast air pocket within the elemental plane that drains magma away from the Ring of Fire. This loss is more than balanced by other portals that bring magma into the lava sea.

The maelstrom is a spectacular sight, a playground for various elementals and creatures of fire. Not all of these creatures are malign, but friendly fire elementals can be just as deadly as hostile ones. Many elementals of this area take the form of elemental monsters, like magma beetles and fire scorpions. These creatures behave like their Athasian counterparts.

Other eddies similar to the maelstrom exist in different areas of the ring. Most are temporary, lasting only a few weeks at the longest. Others migrate from area to area, moving a mile or two a day as they

slowly spin. Fliers should avoid flying over the eddies; the open portals to the elemental planes may endanger any traveler who comes near.

### Sith

This island in the lava sea is the home of the most powerful group of outlanders in the Valley. The hunters and raiders of the Clan of the Fire Scorpion, safe from the dangerous predators of the outer Valley, use cliff gliders to cross the mile of lava from their home island to the mainland.

The island of Sith is unique in that a small natural spring still exists in a deep cavern. With this precious resource the Fire Scorpions carefully raise feeble crops in the sheltered ravines of their island. However, the island cannot support the entire tribe, and the Fire Scorpions must rely heavily on forays into the outer Valley. The clan numbers 60 altogether.

The island itself, about five miles square, has sheer and rocky slopes. Canyons wind back into its interior, hiding the small fields and bare scrub of the island. The Fire Scorpions maintain a keen lookout constantly, and pass warnings to hide when a Dragon Warrior patrol appears. They use cliff gliders only to cross the open magma; once they reach the outer valley, they hide the gliders and proceed on foot.

The Fire Scorpions are led by Guerdra, a powerful elven fighter and psionist. She established the clan over 80 years ago and has twice survived its near-extinction. A wily leader, she has difficulty controlling her overconfident clansmen, who have forgotten the power of their enemies. Guerdra is preparing to move the Scorpions to prevent the raid she knows is coming soon, but the cliff pilots of her clan oppose the move, and she has yet to find a suitable lair.

The Fire Scorpions hide from intruders and avoid contact until Guerdra is alerted. She then decides whether to attack, greet, or avoid the strangers. The Fire Scorpions avoid powerful characters, but may attack those who appear weak to gain their







## The Ring of Fire

**Psychokinesis:** Science—telekinesis; Devotions—control sound, inertial barrier, levitation.

**Metapsionics:** Science—aura alteration; Devotions—cannibalize, martial trance.

Guerdra was born in the Valley of Dust and Fire as an outlander. She has lived as a hunted person all her life, and is the consummate survivor. No matter what happens, she continues fighting. Twice her clan has been raided and destroyed, but each time she has used the few left alive to form an even stronger band. A powerful psionist and deadly fighter, Guerdra has the respect, if not the love, of the Fire Scorpions.

As leader, Guerdra is only interested in her own survival. Weak members hurt the clan's chances for surviving—and therefore her own. Though pragmatic, Guerdra is hardly singleminded or stupid. She carefully weighs every matter to determine what gain or threat it poses.

Guerdra now quietly struggles to retain leadership. Torthan, a charismatic young warrior who leads the clan's cliff pilots, has boldly challenged her, defying her edicts and openly seeking allies among other clansmen. Guerdra regrets the loss of a fine fighter, but plans on killing him to retain command.

### The Iron Citadel

Sitting on a pathless rock spire that rises 500' from the lava, the Iron Citadel seems the embodiment of raw menace and martial splendor. The citadel gains its name from the iron sheathing on its towers and spires. A fortune in iron went to strengthen the fortress structure and plate the walls. Gargoyles and ornamental spikes are made of cast iron, an art now lost. Its highest pennants fly nearly 800' above the Ring of Fire. Soaring buttresses and needle-sharp spires of black stone create a distinctly arachnoid impression. Clearly visible 15 to 20 miles away when the conditions permit, the Iron Citadel is obviously a strong and evil place.

It was built 2,000 years ago to extend the defensive works of Ur Draxa, the City of Doom. The citadel's cost in material and human life was absolutely staggering. Though neither commodity normally concerned the Dragon, the expense helped it decide that the Great Ash Storm and the Ring of Fire were sufficient deterrents.

The Dragon decided to garrison its newly created fortress with an elite band of warriors, who coincidentally formed a powerful political faction that opposed the Dragon's favored faction. Until this time, only viziers and templars could gain councillor status within Ur Draxa. By creating the Dragon Warriors, the Dragon shook up the political scene of its kingdom and also gained a powerful fortress and alert scouting force.

The Iron Citadel is still the headquarters of the Dragon Warriors, their sacred retreat and stronghold. Half the Dragon Warriors are here at any time; the other half live in the city. The fortress usually is manned by 40 Dragon Warriors, 100 Draxans, and 200 to 300 slaves. The garrison warriors patrol half that time, ranging out over the Valley and the Sea of Silt.

### Inside the Citadel

The citadel does not have a single door to the exterior at ground level. All access is through the landing stages or the rooftop. The citadel has six commonly used levels and a few unimportant sub-basements and cellars. A deep well in one basement provides water.

**Level One:** The lowest of the common levels features large storerooms and armories. The fortress mess halls and kitchens are here, as well as the slaves' quarters. Most common Draxans of the garrison reside here, sharing barracks that house 20 men or women each. The slave quarters are far more crowded, and the slaves are locked inside when not on duty. Service in the Iron Citadel is hard.

**Level Two:** This level is devoted to the rocs of the Dragon Warriors. Eight landing stages allow the

# The Ring of Fire

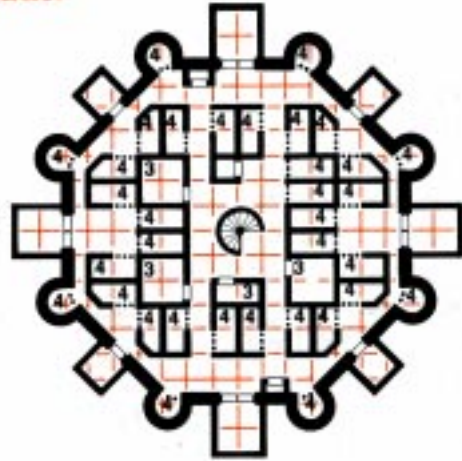


## Iron Citadel

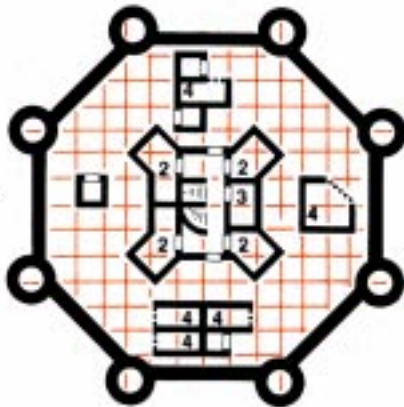
Level One



Level Two



Level Three



Level Four



Level Five



Level Six



1 sq = 10 feet



- Stairs
- Cage
- Door
- Double Door

1. Slave Quarters
2. Barracks
3. Storerooms
4. Roc Cages
5. Mess Halls
6. Officer's Quarters





## The Ring of Fire

giant birds to enter and leave the citadel from this level. Thirty-four spacious cages house the rocs. Saddles, bridles, harnesses, and saddlebags are all here as well.

**Levels Three and Four:** The rooftop level is largely open to handle extra rocs. Five extra cages are on the rooftop, and the towers store extra food and supplies. A large central tower rises from the rooftop; the Dragon Warriors themselves have spacious and comfortable quarters here. Four Dragon Warriors share each chamber on this level and on Level Four.

**Level Five:** Reserved for leaders. Each chamber houses two elite Flight Leaders, Dragon Warriors who lead others in combat. The chambers are accordingly more luxurious and comfortable.

**Level Six:** The private demesne of Amandia, the Commander of the Citadel, and her superior, the Lord Warrior. The commander is almost always here. However, the Lord Warrior is one of the kaisharga, undead servitors of the Dragon, and is usually in the city to counsel the Dragon. Four elite Draxans guard this level.

**Amandia** (Commander of the Iron Citadel)

Human Gladiator

15th Level

Lawful Evil

Str 19

Int 14

Dex 15

Wis 11

Con 15

Cha 14

hp: 30

AC: -8 (*banded mail +4, shield +3*)

#AT: 5/2

THAC0 6

Dmg: 2d4+13 (*steel bastard sword +4, specialized*)

Movement 12

A powerful, clever warrior who has climbed through the ranks of the Dragon Warriors, Amandia is a tall and broad-shouldered woman of 40, noted for her striking appearance and caustic personality. A vengeful person who never forgets a slight, she has ruined enemies for the merest snub. Amandia is the living leader of the Dragon Warriors, but serves the undead Lord Warrior, a kaisharga (Dead Lord) of the Dragon's Council. She hopes to depose the Lord Warrior and take his place, not realizing that her success would only cause the Dragon to "reward" her with undeath. To attain her goal, she may secretly recruit the party as her agents, taking them to Ur Draxa as "prisoners" and then letting them escape-with the Lord Warrior taking the blame, as well as perishing at their hands.





## Chapter Four: The City of Doom

*“Unto the Dragon was rendered the tribute of 600 erdlus, 170 kanks, 30 mekillots, and 400 slaves. One hundred pounds of iron, 60 pounds of copper, and 20 pounds of gold were given unto the Dragon at that time as well. It is recorded that the beast was well pleased with the levy of Yaramuke and spared the city, in the sixth recorded Year of King’s Contemplation.”*

**—The Scroll of Eibok,  
recovered from the ruins of Yaramuke**

A fortress city of unbelievable size and power, Ur Draxa is the heart of evil and might in the ruined Tyr region. It is the Dragon’s citadel, from which the creature ravages all the known world. No character can prepare for the power beyond Ur Draxa’s cyclopean walls.

### Entering Ur Draxa

When your player characters reach the city, make sure they understand the scope and implications of what they see. The outer walls of the city are a full 700’ high and a quarter-mile thick, easily visible from many miles away. The Great Ash Storm, the Ring of Fire—with the first sight of Ur Draxa, the characters suddenly realize that these are not natural phenomena, but *defenses* of an awesome scale. The sheer power and unearthly proportions of the city transcend anything the characters could ever imagine.

### The View from Outside

From the viewpoint of a stranger on the ground outside Ur Draxa’s mighty walls, it is not even apparent that a city stands within. The visitor is simply confronted with a cliff of smooth rock that rises 720’ high and curves away to the left and the right. The walls have an outer diameter of 24 miles and a circumference of more than 75 miles. It would take days on foot to circumnavigate the city.

The blocks that make up the wall average 100’

long by 50’ high, but they are asymmetrical. They interlock in a pattern that repeats nine times around the wall’s circumference. An observer atop the outer wall can tell they are about 80’ thick. The blocks obviously weigh thousands of tons apiece.

Close inspection of the wall reveals slender seams so perfect a steel knife cannot fit between the stones. The stone itself is smooth, showing no chiseling or other work. It is startlingly cold to the touch—barely above freezing. The intense heat of the nearby Ring of Fire cannot affect it. Thirteen gates, spaced evenly around its circumference, are each 130’ tall and 60’ wide. Fifteen-foot borders along the arches are elaborately carved with dire runes of power. The gateways themselves contain nothing but blank stone, identical to the stone of the rest of the wall. No seams mar the inside of the gates.

### Getting In

The City of Doom is nearly impregnable. The outer wall is a vertical climb of smooth stone 720’ high; even the most skilled climber cannot scale this wall.

Flying or levitating is an option, but a wind of Storm-to-Ash Storm strength continually circles the city clockwise. The Great Ash Storm often descends almost to the ground outside the walls of Ur Draxa. Once over the city proper, intruders must deal with many capable guards.

Going through the walls of the city is difficult but possible. The walls are enchanted to prevent the passage of astral or ethereal travelers, but phased or dimension-walking characters can pass through. The outer wall is a quarter-mile thick, but a cleric of Earth or a mage with lots of passwall spells could conceivably make it.

The gates and the wall-tops are guarded, but no patrols bother to police the entire circumference. Adventurers are relatively safe from discovery, but only so long as they do not use the gates or go over the wall.



# The City of Doom







## The Outer Gates

The most efficient way through the outer wall is via one of the nine gates. This may not be immediately obvious; the interior of each of the archways is sealed with blank stone. But the stone in the archway can phase into nothingness, thus creating a tunnel.

Each outer gate is a psionically empowered device similar to the Gate of Doom. The gates remember a list of persons authorized to command them. A person unknown to the gate must contact and overcome it in psionic combat to force it to open. This is not obvious; on Athas, gates that open by thinking at them are unusual.

Each gate is garrisoned by a clan company of 50 guards. The garrisons are housed in fortresses flanking the inside archway of the gate. Tortuous stairways climb to the wall-top. Smaller guardhouses on the wall-top are garrisoned by members of the same company. The guards are largely ceremonial, but take their duties seriously. The company commander can override gate commands given by anyone except a Dead Lord or the Dragon. If anyone is in the gate when it is ordered to shut, they are whisked to the nearest exit and are disoriented for 1d6 rounds.

The gate that faces directly west, corresponding with the Gate of Doom, is known as the Grand Gate. It is substantially more ornate than the others, but it functions much like the other eight outer gates. It is traditionally manned by a city company (not a clan company, like the others) of 100 picked men.

Each outer gate has the same abilities as does the Gate of Doom (see Chapter Three). If any gate is overcome psionically, it can be forced open or closed. However, the gate sends out a psionic distress call to the nearest Dead Lord. In addition, if an outer gate is rendered unconscious, it closes automatically. A psionist may be inadvertently locked out.

## The Plan of the City

The area within the walls is uniformly cool and pleasant, never reaching above 80-85 degrees Fahrenheit. After the hellish heat of the outer valley, the comfort of the city comes as a pleasant surprise.

Ur Draxa is partitioned into nine equal sectors by walls much like the outer wall, but only 480' high. A second circular wall identical to the outer wall (720' high) encloses the center of the city, the Dragon's Sanctum. The partitioning walls run from the outer circle to the inner circle, joining the two in seamless intersections. The partitioning walls are covered with lush forest inhabited only by birds and small insects. Creepers trail 100' or more down the sheer sides of the wall, hiding the wall-top with luxuriant green vegetation. The forest strips add extra hunting space for the Draxans, who keep them clear of dangerous creatures.

The wall-tops are not garrisoned or patrolled, but stairs lead from the outer wall-top to each of the kardan walls, and from the kardan wall-tops to the floor of the city.

Five great circular boulevards ring the city, running parallel to the outer and inner walls. The boulevards cross the partitioning walls through great gates similar to the outer gates. These are a little smaller—only 100' tall and 40' wide. All are usually open and empty of stone.

Each of the nine sectors of the city contains towns, fields, lakes, forests—all manner of terrain. Townlands are generally cultivated by massive slave armies; forests, hunting grounds for the Draxans. Many regions are completely depopulated and have fallen into ruin. The "city" of Ur Draxa is more accurately described as a collection of towns and villas encircled by a common wall.

**The central sanctum:** The inner wall of the city has 13 sealed gates identical to the outer gates. Weird, eldritch lights dance in the air over the central city. Gossamer colors on the edge of visibility form curtains and flashing light-falls over the very center of the city, resembling an aurora.



## The City of Doom

The innermost circle is the private retreat of the Dragon. Nobody save the oldest and most trusted kaisharga may enter. Entering the inner sector uninvited is fatal—as the player characters may discover.

### The History of Ur Draxa

Over thousands of years, the Draxans have become enlightened and ennobled by their association with their city and the Dragon. (Only the cleverest and strongest survived the rigid standards of competition enforced by the Dragon.) As a race of advanced and civilized warriors, it was beneath the Draxans to labor in the fields or to attend to the baser duties of life. (They became a race of cruel slave overseers, and they no longer grow their own food or make their own wares.)

Every Draxan alive today can trace his lineage back to the first citizens of the city, the great heroes of the Dragon's armies. (Occasionally clans have been erased and lesser clans permitted to claim the higher bloodline; only heroic bloodlines now remain among the Draxans.) Ur Draxa is the sole shining light of culture left in this brutal and unforgiving world; all other creatures only exist to serve the citizens of the City of Doom, the City of the Dragon, mighty Ur Draxa. (Few Draxans even suspect that there are other cities in the world; they think the rest of Athas to be like the Valley or the Sea of Silt. If ever told otherwise, they would probably brand the bearer of the news a liar.)

Ur Draxa is the perfect society. The noble sons of heroes are free to pursue the constant honing of their military and scholarly skills (most are illiterate and bloodthirsty slave overseers), and the slaves have accepted their lots as lesser beings and gladly serve their superiors. (Not quite.) Disputes are settled honorably, in the arena of noble struggle (brutal killings before screaming crowds mad with bloodlust), and all sides are happy to allow differences to be judged by trial of arms. (Oddly enough, skilled fighters often have "accidents" just before they are due to enter the arena.)

The typical Draxan is intoxicated with superiority and the belief that he or she is a hero of a race of heroes. Despite this, Draxans are less educated and enlightened than they realize. Draxans can go on for hours concerning the deeds of their clan, their lineage, the wrongs and redressals of past generations—but most change the subject in embarrassed anger if asked to actually read an account of the past or to recite a piece of epic poetry. The Draxans have become a nation of megalomaniacs. Most would kill a slave in a moment for not properly abasing himself.

Some Draxans do not fit this stereotype. The leaders of the clans, the viziers, and some templars and slave scribes maintain records of the city's history and true greatness. They understand that they live in a violent society where true knowledge is often scorned in the face of martial prowess. Despite this, the literate of Ur Draxa are the ones who direct the affairs of the city.

### Draxan Society

The people of Ur Draxa are born, live, and die in a social system that encourages competition and strife. All their lives the Draxans try to improve their lot at the expense of their neighbors. This cultural orientation has been carefully instilled in each new generation for centuries. Arts, sciences, and other forms of enlightenment have suffered as military prowess has been selected again and again as the chief virtue of the Draxan society. It is ironic that the Draxans themselves do not grasp their own condition.

Humans, half-elves, dwarves, and muls are all found in Ur Draxa. Thri-kreen, halflings, and half-giants are unheard of. Draxans speak an archaic language called High Draxan, unintelligible to speakers of Common from the Tyr region. Slaves are put to death if they are heard to use High Draxan; they speak Low Draxan, or the Slave Tongue. Based on High Draxan, it includes a sprinkling of loanwords from the influx of new slaves over the



years. It is about 50% intelligible to High Draxan speakers and nearly identical to the dialects of the outlanders.

**The top of the Draxan hierarchy:** The Dragon's word is law—its every whim an edict. The common Draxans almost worship the Dragon, referring to it in the same way a religious fanatic might to the leader of his sect. The Dragon can do no wrong; it is a living example of strength, wisdom, and power to be emulated by every living Draxan.

Despite the adulation the Dragon enjoys, it does not seek deification. Thousands of years ago it could have proclaimed itself a god, but apparently the absolute loyalty of its citizens is sufficient for its purposes. It is a remarkable example of forbearance and wisdom for the otherwise voracious creature.

In the distant past, the Dragon was greatly involved with the day-to-day administration of the city. It decreed laws, weighed matters of justice, and directly supervised the armies of Ur Draxa. As the centuries pass, the Dragon has slowly faded from the public eye, involving itself less and less with the common affairs of its people. Only the gravest matters are brought to its attention now. The Dragon spends its time either in the world beyond the Ash Storm or within its inner sanctum.

**The Dead Lords:** Directly beneath the Dragon are the dreaded kaisharga, or Dead Lords. These undead creatures form a cabinet of ministers for the Dragon, attending to the mundane operations in which the creature has apparently lost interest. Each kaisharga was a powerful vizier, templar, or warrior rewarded for cruelty and efficiency with undeath. Several kaisharga dream of unseating the Dragon and taking its place, but not even all the kaisharga together could stand against the beast. The kaisharga include the Lord Warrior, the Lord Vizier, the Lord Templar, the Chamberlain, the Herald, the Lord Scribe, the Lord Guardian, the Lord Assassin, and 17 others.

Beneath the cold hands of the Dead Lords are the living denizens of the city. There are three administrative arms: the templars, the army, and the viziers.







## The City of Doom

Postings to the government are considered the highest honor for the Draxan citizen; clans engage in fierce feuds to determine who may enroll a son or daughter in the ranks of the templars, or to gain a favorable assignment in the army.

**The templars:** The templars function like templars anywhere in the region. They are the city's administrators and supervisors, directing the distribution of goods, managing the properties reserved for the Dragon King, and maintaining law and order within the city. Schooled in doctrine and martial philosophy, the templars ensure that the citizens maintain the shai, or Draxan martial spirit.

**The army:** The Draxans never seriously expect a major attack. Most do not even believe a slave revolt is possible. Despite this smug attitude, they still mount a ferocious defense of their city.

Every free citizen is technically a member of the army, but a cadre of powerful and influential officers lead individual factions; the full army would form around this skeleton if the call came.

Powerful clans sponsor entire regiments; smaller clans muster one or two companies. These forces are armies-in-being, composed of clansmen of their respective families. Every clan leader fields troops in the Dragon's name, but many of the leaders leave the mustering of their forces to the younger warriors of their clan. Some clans have a permanent posting, like the Guard of the North Gate or the Army of the East. There are 50 clan companies, varying in size from a few dozen to nearly 1,000 male and female warriors.

Less common are the chadra, or city companies, elite guards not sponsored by a clan but instead drawn from all clans and commanded by army officers. The city companies quietly struggle for the Dragon's favor, seeking to impress their master with efficiency and ferocity. There are 15 city companies, including the Dragon Warriors of the Iron Citadel, the most prestigious soldiers of the Draxan army (see Chapter Three).

The Draxan army, led by the kaisharga known as

the Lord Warrior, includes four legions—the Legions of the North, South, East, and West. Each legion comprises both city and clan companies. A Dead Lord general and living staff captains command each legion.

**The Viziers:** Made up of powerful psionics, defilers, and learned scholars, the viziers are a council body and Draxan university. The preservation of arts and lore now fading in the Draxan culture is of intense interest to the viziers, whereas the templars choose to suppress everything they disapprove of.

As a body, the viziers are the most knowledgeable and open-minded of all the Draxans—but they are also the most competitive and power-hungry. The kaisharga are most often drawn from powerful viziers; living vizier leaders can trace nets of supporters and allies that include templars, city companies, and clans. Acting as power brokers and preservers of lost knowledge, the viziers often seem to be the real powers of the city of Ur Draxa.

**The clans:** All citizens are clan members. Every free Draxan is born into a land-owning clan and is considered noble. A Draxan views him- or herself as a soldier of the Dragon King, a lord over all the earth, and a member of an ancient and noble family—even if the same common Draxan spends most of the day overseeing slaves in the clan's fields.

The clan ("tsai" in Draxan) is the most important institution of Draxan society. Everything revolves about the clan: childhood training, arranged marriages, lineage and ancient deeds, and vendettas. Draxans seek glory for the honor of their clan; an insult to a clan means an immediate challenge to the death. In the violent world of the Draxans, the clan is the only home and the only ally an individual ever finds.

The clans hold land in a feudal system, with lesser clans serving greater clans who, in turn, serve the Dragon. The lords of the greater clans ("tsaisharga") rule an entire kardan, or sector, of the city. Each ruling clan's vassals ("tsaishars") claim smaller estates within their ruler's sector.



## Draxan Culture

Though the civilization of Ur Draxa has degenerated into a brutal survivor society, the people of the City of Doom are not without their arts and skills. In a world where the martial virtues are glorified beyond any other talents or abilities, the skillful use of weapons and grace and power in combat become arts in and of themselves. But not all Draxans are arrogant, bloodthirsty slavedrivers; the educated classes have the resources of a centuries-old culture to provide learning and beauty.

**Dress:** Draxans enjoy the most favorable climate in the known world. Their enchanted walls protect them from the heat and savage weather of the outside world. Clothes and armor reflect this. Both males and females wear long kilts or skirts, broad belts, and a sleeveless and sideless tabard worn over a simple military harness of leather. Both sexes shave their heads after age 13, wearing ornate headpieces of expensive materials. All nobles are armed, if only with a dagger or staff.

Equipment in Ur Draxa is of better quality than in most DARK SUN™ campaigns. Weapons of steel or iron are one-third their normal Athasian price. Within the walls, metal armor does not cause heat exhaustion. Metal armorers are gone now, but many suits of light chainmail or exotic banded mail still lie under heavy guard in the armories and halls of the Draxan noble houses.

Soldiers dressing for battle prefer a light, stylized form of steel banded mail or a chitinous hide armor. Warriors favor swords and tall, narrow shields of lacquered hide.

Slaves are permitted a short kilt of white linen, and in the case of women a sleeveless shirt of the same color. White tunics mark the slave; no Draxan would be caught dead wearing a plain white garment. Slaves are also branded on the inside of the wrist with the mark of their owners. This means little, because any Draxan can commandeer any slave at any time.

**Arts:** The educated elite of the city now keep

(barely) alive a rich tradition of enlightened artistic appreciation. Perversely, common Draxans scorn an interest in the arts as a decadent luxury—certainly no pastime for a warrior. A few of the literate Draxans (chiefly viziers or clan leaders) maintain great libraries and keep slave musicians, sculptors, and dancers in their households.

The ancient Draxans possessed a keen interest in engineering and military architecture. The palaces of the clans are beautiful, with subtlety and strength blended in a smooth mixture of form and function. The genealogies of the clans, and the immortalization of past heroes in song, are also highly developed arts; numerous examples can be found in the homes of the literate Draxans. Lastly, any combat-related science or study is very highly developed by the Draxans. Keshai, or the War Dance, is an ancient martial art emphasizing the use of weapons and unarmed strikes. All Draxans are schooled in keshai to some degree; the training is part of their childhood.

**Justice:** The templars enforce the ancient and simple Draxan code of laws. There are only seven laws; any other wrongdoing or complaint is settled between the antagonists in the arena or by intervention of the clan leader of the sector. The laws:

- Obey the Dragon, the Dead Lords, and the leader of the clan.
- Do not arm a slave, nor allow a slave to believe it is in any way the equal of a Draxan.
- Redress wrongs in the arena. Do not feud.
- Do not betray Ur Draxa to an outsider.
- Do not practice elemental (i.e., clerical) magic.
- Do not hinder the templars. Violators of the Code must be punished.
- Never dishonor clan, kardan, or city.

Only three punishments are given to criminals: slavery, exile, or death. Death is considered the most lenient of the three, slavery the worst. In the rare case that a Draxan commits a crime deserving of enslavement, it is customary to leave the culprit



## The City of Doom

alone for a time so that he or she can do what honor demands. The clan of a warrior who is found guilty and then sentenced to enslavement is terribly dishonored.

Most lesser issues are resolved by the offender's clan leader. This is not a formal court proceeding, but a hearing of the facts of the case by the lord of the sector. Clan leaders can impose banishment for up to a year, fasting, or stripping a criminal of titles and assignments—in effect, demoting the accused. Wealth, slaves, and lands can be taken and given to the wronged of the case. Unfortunately, the clan leaders are not entirely objective; they remember favors and slights when the time comes for them to settle disputes.

**The arena:** This is the most common way to settle disputes between Draxans. Any Draxan can at any time, for any reason, demand the right to face another in the “kaidar,” or duelling arena. The challenged party has the right to state the conditions and the weapons—for example, to the death with maces, or to surrender with psionics. The challenger may offer an alternative weapon, and if the challenged refuses, the fight is on-barehanded. The duel is always fought in a ring 12 paces across. Once the duel begins, to leave the ring is death—the spectators ensure that the duel is resolved before any duellist may leave.

No one may interfere once the duel has begun. During the kaidar, anything goes. Psionic or magical attacks, throwing sand in the face of your opponent, feigning death to lure him in for an easy strike—no one interferes. The only rule forbids the concealment of secret weapons, like a dagger in the boot, because the weapons of the match are agreed upon before the duel.

**Slavery:** The Draxans rely more on slavery than other Athasian cultures. Craftsmen, scribes, artists, artisans, and all manual laborers or field workers are slaves. The demand for slave labor is insatiable; the slaves of Ur Draxa enjoy good living conditions, but Draxans execute slaves for as little as a surly look.

Most slaves of Ur Draxa were born here. Many can recite oral genealogies describing thousand-year-old slave lines. However, the Dragon returns annually with slaves to Ur Draxa from its rampages in the outside world. Once slaves are brought into the City of Doom, they are forbidden on pain of death to speak of their previous lives beyond the Valley of Dust and Fire.

Practicing artisans and craftsmen are valuable and are treated well. They are given small homes for their families and are fed well so long as they produce good work and maintain a subservient manner around the Draxans. These pitiful creatures are eager to maintain the status quo; the fight has gone out of them over thousands of years.

The discontented slaves are those who are newest to Ur Draxa, and more rarely the most fiery of the slave families who see slavery for the abomination it is. They are most commonly found among the field and labor slaves, who suffer worst. Their rebellious attitudes draw savage retribution from their often savage masters.

The children of slave concubines by Draxans are raised as full members of the clan; the slave bloodlines are considered negated by the nobility of the Draxan parent. The slave parent is usually sent away immediately and the child never knows its slave mother or father.

### Movement in the City

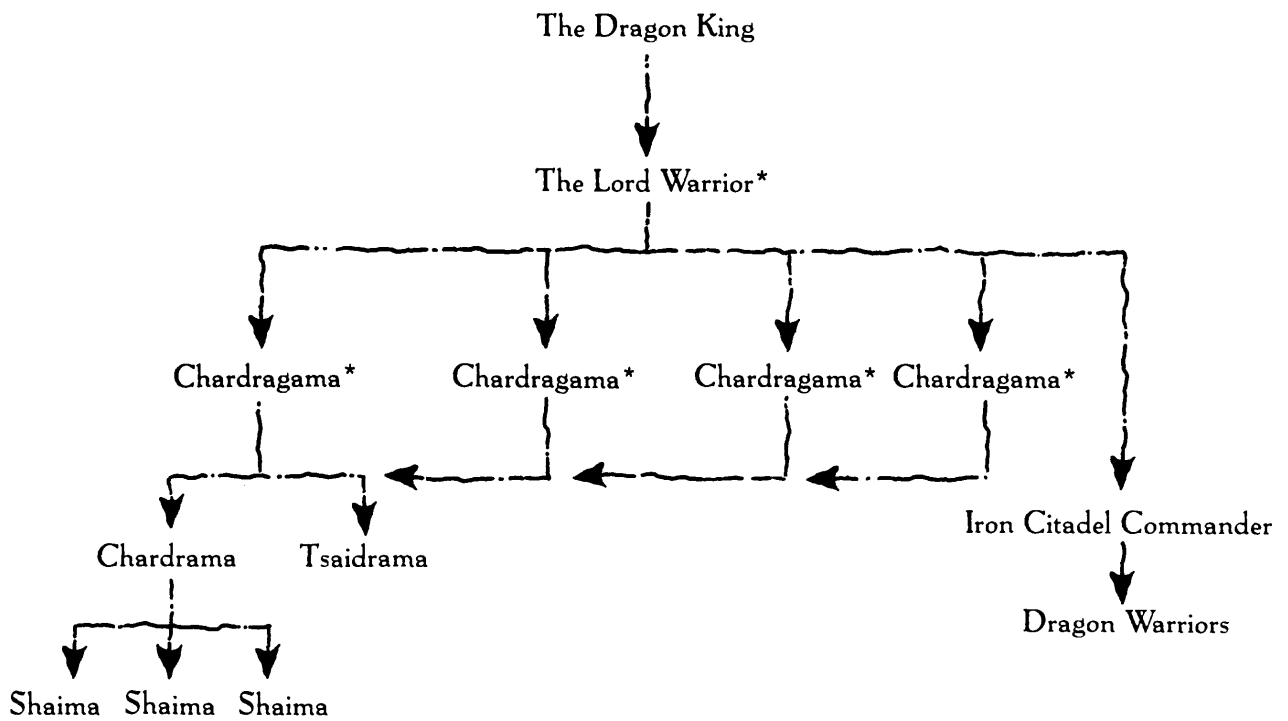
Ur Draxa is very large; the outer wall encompasses an area of more than 300 square miles, and each sector is a six-mile-long wedge, two miles wide at its inner edge and four miles wide at its outer edge. In general, use the overland movement system for travel through the sectors and only revert to tactical movement when the player characters become involved in a fight or go indoors.

Treat townland sectors as Clear ( $\frac{1}{2}$  MP per mile) and forest sectors as Forest Ridge (3 MP per mile) for purposes of overland movement. Travelers walking along the boulevards of the city or through the





## THE DRAXAN MILITARY



- Chardragama : Legion Commander (8-15 Chardra and Tsaia)
- Chardrama : Regiment Leader (3-20 Shaima)
- Tsaidrama : Clan Regiment Leader (3-20 Shaima)
- Shaima : War-leader (10-20 Draxans)

\* Post held by Kaisharga



## The City of Doom

Monument Sector may move as on a road, paying only ½ MP per mile. Weather never slows movement within the city.

**Flight:** Convert flying movement to the appropriate hourly rate. For example, a roc's movement rate is 36; the roc has 36 MP available and still air costs ½ MP, so the roc can move 72 miles a day, on a ten-hour march. Every hour the roc moves seven miles, using overland movement.

However, if endurance is a factor or if the traveler is trying to take full advantage of the speed of flying, convert movement rates into movement per turn—remember, a movement of 18 converts to one mile per ten-minute turn. On this scale, the roc moves 12 miles in an hour.

Flying over the inner wall is extraordinarily dangerous. See "The Dragon's Sanctum," page 74.

Fliers who avoid the center of the city and its eerie witch-lights are still in peril. A flier is a far more visible intrusion than a traveler on foot. If they detect the flier, one to four Dragon Warriors on rocs respond to the threat, first investigating to make certain that the flier is not a vizier or Draxan.

**The Boulevard Gates:** Five gates pierce each partitioning wall, one for each of the boulevards that ring the city. These gates are left open, but a serious threat or intrusion could cause the leaders of Ur Draxa to order their closing. For example, a group of PCs manage to incite a slave revolt in the third sector. If all Draxan forces within the sector are defeated, the gates will be closed to prevent the spread of rebellion.

The interior gates, like the outer gates and the Gate of Doom, are psionically empowered devices that respond to only selected individuals. Currently, only the Dragon, the Dead Lords, and the clan leader of each sector have the power to close off the partitions.

### Encounters in Ur Draxa

As the characters travel the city, stress its differences from the city-states and villages of the Tyr Re-

gion. The Seven Cities range in size from 10,000 to 50,000 people; Ur Draxa is at least twice that size. More, the buildings are taller, larger, cleaner; the statuary more artistic; the streets cleaner and paved with flagstones—rare in the Seven Cities.

The party encounters different aspects and intrigues of Ur Draxa according to the way they enter it. They might intrude as invaders or stealthy spies, enter under guard as prisoners or slaves, or even gain permission to wander the city as visitors.

### Intruders

The Draxans' awareness of the party's threat determines the alertness of their response. If the player characters keep quiet, avoid large battles, and otherwise remain discreet, the Draxans only gradually realize a party has intruded. If the characters leave a trail of destruction in their wake or a routine patrol catches them flat-footed, they will alert the Draxans.

Player characters who choose this entry method should feel like fugitives during their stay in the city. Their only refuge comes with the few rebellious slaves who fight for a better life—for instance, Faro the Potter, in the village of Jezelred in the Second Sector (see below). Posing as slaves, the party can gain information, depose particularly cruel slave-lords, and help selected slaves achieve freedom. Ambitious heroes may try a full-scale revolt, but they cannot hope to succeed while the Dragon lives.

### Prisoners

Whether caught at the Ring of Fire by the Dragon Warriors or by a patrol outside the city walls, the party enters Ur Draxa as captives—and, soon, pawns in the game of politics. The characters' presence represents a grave breach of security. The closer they got to the walls before discovery, the more trouble *someone* is in—the army, viziers, templars, or even Dead Lords.

Underlings may view the party as tools to advance



their careers; the party, in turn, can exploit this ambition to escape and cause trouble. For example, the characters' arrival soon brings a visit from Hitasho Ken, the mortal Grand Vizier from the Hall of Learning in the Seventh Sector (see below). Ken aspires to replace one of his Dead Lord superiors, and he may enlist the party as assassins or spies against it. He promises an arranged escape if they cooperate; whether he means it is up to you.

## Visitors

Clever heroes might persuade the Dragon Warriors in the Ring of Fire that they are scheduled visitors, guests of the Dragon or a Dead Lord. Unlikely as this sounds, the Warriors know that an unfriendly templar or vizier is well able to block their access to important information. They may escort the party under heavy guard into the city, where fast-talking player characters could ingeniously gain official approval and free run of Ur Draxa.

This method easily leads to involvement in clan intrigue. Vassal clan leader Naom Falghar plots against the powerful Cl an Thalak of the Eighth Sector (see below). Mejour Xairas, ruler of the Second Sector, hopes to extend his clan's dominion over adjacent kardans. These and other rivalries may draw the player characters into assassination attempts, arena challenges against clan champions, or espionage missions to enemy estates.

## Encounter Types

These notes indicate the variety possible in routine encounters. Use them as springboards for your own inspiration.

**Draxans:** Soldiers are armed and armored. See "Men, Draxans" in the monster section. Common Draxans are accompanied by 1d20 household slaves; the Draxans wear armor half the time. Templars are armed and armored, with 11 craftsmen or field slaves. Clan Leaders travel with 2d6 common Draxans and 0-9 (1d10) household slaves; half the

Draxans are armored. Dragon Warriors ride rocs 50% of the time. They are armed and armored, and if encountered on foot, are accompanied by 2d6 Draxan soldiers. Kaisharga travel with 2d6 templars, viziers, or Draxan soldiers.

**Slaves:** Slave craftsmen avoid combat, but if cornered fight with basic tools like hammers and axes. They are 0-level humans or dwarves. They report encounters to the Draxans 1d6 turns later. Household slaves are similar to slave craftsmen, but do not have weaponlike tools. Bands of field slaves rarely include a fighter of level 1-10 or a thief of level 2-12; otherwise they are normal. Rebellious slaves are identical to outlanders; refer to "Ka'Ardani" in the Monsters section. Unless they mistake the PCs for Draxans, they could be friendly. During the day, rebellious slaves masquerade as loyal field slaves.

**Forest creatures:** Adventurers who enter a forest sector find a comfortable resting place. The sectors are large enough that a small party of people can stay out of sight for a long time. However, the nobility maintains monsters here for its frequent hunts. Tembo, jankx, agony beetles, Athasian sloths, and kirre forage in forest sectors by day. Gaj and id fiends usually lair in the forest sectors, but occasionally forage in the townlands for several days; they attack psionically from safety. Characters in hiding must also avoid large hunting parties of Draxans, and slaves foraging for fruit and small game.

## Places of Interest

Ur Draxa is too large to describe in detail. Use the noble villa, the slave town, and the regiment barracks described here as templates for similar locations elsewhere in the city.

## The Gate of Doom

Directly west of Ur Draxa, the Gate of Doom overlooks the Ring of Fire. The gate here is identical to the gate described in Chapter Two. It responds only to the Dragon, Dead Lords, and selected vi-





## The City of Doom

ziers, templars, and officers of the army. In effect, the two halves of the Gate are one integrated structure, sharing one consciousness, though 25 miles separate them. This half of the Gate is guarded by 13 magma golems found in ornate alcoves at the base of the arch.

**Magma golems (13):** AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 12; THAC0 8; #AT 1; Dmg 4d6; SA heat damage, crush; SD only hit by magical weapons, immune to mind-affecting spells, psionics, fire and cold, and priest spells of the fire or earth spheres; ML 20.

### The Boulevard Gates

Smaller than the outer or inner gates, the boulevard gates are only 100' tall and 40' wide. Each gate is ornately carved with massive stone monuments depicting ancient heroes.

The boulevard gates are usually open and unguarded. Like the other gates in the Draxan walls, they close by phasing a solid plug of matching stone into their archways. Unlike the other devices, the boulevard gates are strictly magical in nature. Their only psionic talent is the ability to recognize a command to open or shut.

The clan leaders of each sector know the command phrase for the gates bordering on their lands. In addition, the Dead Lords and selected templars, viziers, and officers of the army know the commands for the boulevard gates. If characters are in the gate when it is phased shut, they are hurled to the nearest open end and disoriented for 1d6 rounds.

### The Sectors

The nine divisions (kardans) of the city include four townland, four forest, and one Monument Sector. Each is ruled by a "tsaisharga," or clan leader, who heads the most powerful clan of the sector. Three to ten lesser chiefs head the vassal clans in the same sector.

Several sectors contain buildings that serve the

entire city, such as the templar complex in the Fourth (Chuur) Sector or the Hall of Glory in the Eighth (Thalak) Sector. All sectors are known both by their number and the name of their ruling clan leader.

The numbered entries in these sector listings are keyed to the large Ur Draxa map.

### First (Ulth) Sector

Also called the Monument Sector, Ulth Sector was designed as a grand processional from the Grand Gate to the corresponding inner gate. Ulth Sector is intentionally under-cultivated, with only a few small fields and rice paddies far from the main boulevard. Most of the sector is carefully tended parkland.

The boulevard leading from the Grand Gate runs along an embankment 20' high. It is lined with beautiful sculptures of heroes in different poses. Every Draxan aspires to immortality along the Boulevard of Heroes, but only a half dozen new statues are added in a lifetime. Almost 1,300 statues now line the road.

**1. Clan Gyarth:** Screened from the major roads by a series of fruit orchards, the estate of Clan Gyarth is a small but comfortable palace of white stone. Clan Gyarth is a dying house of only 11 Draxans, and they will soon abandon the estate.

**2. Clan Ulth:** Encompassing several palaces and slave towns, the sprawling Ulth grounds are impressive. Clan Ulth numbers 300 Draxans, many in influential positions among the tempiars and army. Ruler Tokarman Ulth grows old, but is noted as a powerful psionicist who served as a vizier in his youth.

**3. Clan Reyd:** The strongest of Ulth's three vassal clans, the clansmen of Reyd ambitiously scheme to claim a sector for their own someday. Their estate is small but growing: They have built several new palaces in recent years, and 230 clan members inhabit the rambling estate. The clever Theras, a woman of exceptional ability, leads the clan.



**4. Clan Raith:** Now on the decline, the Raith family has almost completely withdrawn from public life. About 30 years ago a major feud with a more powerful clan led to the deaths of many clansmen and provoked the house's allies to abandon it.

**5. The Black Scorpions:** A small, prestigious city company, the Black Scorpions have 130 warriors. Templar and vizier detachments raise the Black Scorpions into a powerful fighting force.

The Scorpion barracks is a walled villa with luxurious pools and gardens. For all this, it is an example of Draxan military architecture at its best—the villa is nearly impregnable. A great stairway winds up to the outer wall, where a secondary barracks is maintained for patrols.

The Black Scorpions are led by a powerful fighter, Elisia. She carries the title of Captain of the Grand Gate, but she is more concerned with her political ambitions than the vigilance of her men. The Black Scorpions are accordingly overconfident and somewhat inattentive.

## Second (Xairas) Sector

Ruled by the clan leader Mejour Xairas, this densely populated area is the single strongest sector of the city. Mejour Xairas is a powerful and influential clan leader, commanding the loyalty of seven lesser clan chiefs and governing the sector efficiently and effectively. The Xairas clan company numbers almost 800 skilled warriors.

**1. Clan Kolien:** The chief vassal house of Clan Xairas, Clan Kolien has held its position for almost 600 years. The awesome strength of Clan Xairas has prevented this otherwise powerful house from advancing further. Members have become followers, strong but without ambition. The clan leader of Kolien, Machon, is an old man mocked by his peers for his self-abasing manner.

**2. Jezelred:** The town of Jezelred is typical of the slave villages of Ur Draxa. Use the map as a template for encounters in the slave towns of the city.

Jezelred is sponsored by Clan Xairas. The village

occupies a portion of the clan leader's property and has stood for several hundred years. As a slave town, Jezelred is administered by a council of Overseers—slaves of influential families elected by their peers. The Overseers do not actually supervise the activities of the slaves, but they ensure that problems are dealt with quickly and quietly—before the Draxans become involved.

Almost 300 slaves live in Jezelred, pursuing their various crafts. Coopers, wainwrights, tanners, and smiths are the most common craftsmen, although small numbers of artists, potters, and weaponsmiths are found here as well. Most of the slave homes are kept immaculately clean, with small, well-tended gardens near by.

The slaves of Ur Draxa live the life of a conquered nation. At any time, even the lowest of Draxans could walk into a man's home, commandeer his services, his goods, even his wife or daughters. The slightest sign of resentment is met with the flash of a sword. Living under the threat of extinction has made the slaves of Ur Draxa very, very cautious and canny. Adventurers seeking help here are far more likely to be turned in, because no slave with any sense at all would risk his masters' wrath by aiding criminals.

The Chief Overseer of Jezelred is a sturdy dwarf known as Mikas Carpenter. He is the head of the loyal faction within the town and will do everything in his power to placate the Draxans. It is in his interest to do so: he is the third Chief Overseer in the last ten years, his predecessors having displeased the masters in one way or another.

Player characters may run across an ancient elf, Faro the Potter. Faro is one of the chief rebels of the town, aiding troubled slaves of other sectors and seeking ways to harm the Draxans and protect the slaves. Faro is a thief/preserver of some skill (T7/W7), and he can call upon 15 other artisans and field slaves in this sector.

**3. Clan Xairas:** This impressive complex of palaces, orchards, and parks is the home of clan leader

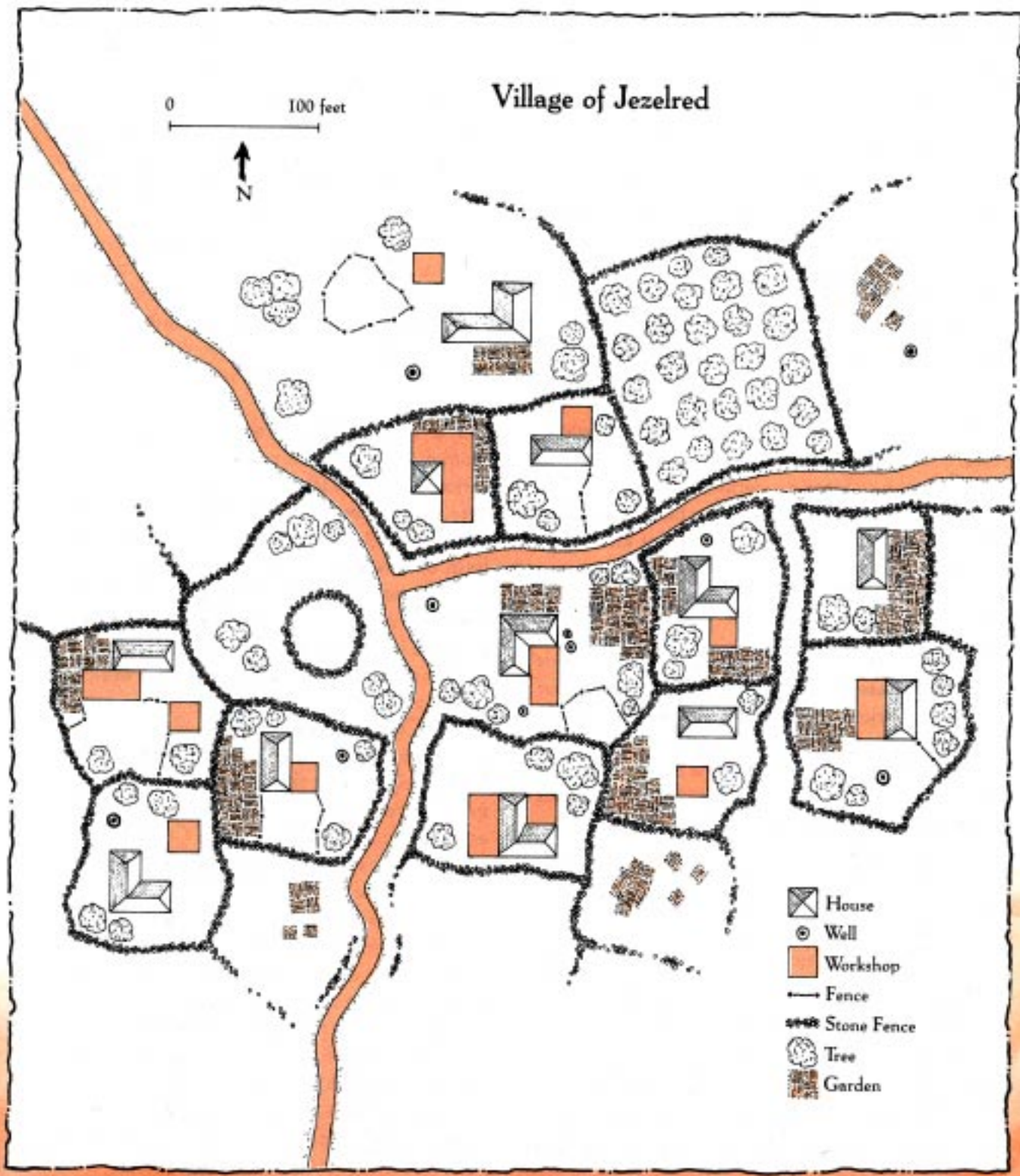




# The City of Doom

## Village of Jezelred

0 100 feet



- House
- Well
- Workshop
- Fence
- Stone Fence
- Tree
- Garden





Meior Xairas. The 500 members of Clan Xairas make it the largest and most successful clan after Thalak, below. Several hundred household slaves also live here, in quarters set aside for them.

Mejor Xairas is extremely ambitious, and he seizes outsiders as a tool he can exploit for his own advancement. A powerful warrior and perfect Draxan, he considers the old arts to be foolish wastes of time.

House Xairas sponsors the clan company Xairas, an elite fighting force of clansmen and the scions of the lesser clan chiefs. Their official posting is the Guard of the West, but realistically they simply garrison the outer gate and occasionally patrol the outer valley.

**4. Clan Gardan:** One of the vassal clans serving the Clan Xairas, Clan Gardan is a small and prestigious house noted for its powerful psionics. The current leader of the house is the clan chief Kier Gardan, one of the foremost viziers and a noted scholar. Kier is a middle-aged half-elf who secretly encourages the old art of literacy within his household. For several generations the Gardans have served as viziers to the Dragon King. Naturally, mejor Xairas considers Clan Gardan a house of complete degenerates.

**5. Clan Andara:** This ancient house is dying out, with only 24 living members. Still loyal servants of Clan Xairas, the clan Andara plays a smaller role in sector affairs with each passing year. The other clans of the sector are already fighting for its lands and possessions. The estate is a large, rambling palace with many empty rooms and untended fields.

**6. Clan Poln:** A typical Draxan house, Clan Poln is of average size, prestige, and station. About 150 clansmen belong to Clan Poln. A third of its family works in the bureaucracy of the city, either as templars, clan soldiers, or city guards. The rest of the family lives at the household, overseeing slaves who work the fields and produce the goods to keep the estate running.

The clan chief is Erikos, a defiler/psionics of

moderate power. An aging human, he served among the viziers until he came into his inheritance. He is literate and enjoys the luxuries of reading and art. His tastes provoke some embarrassment in the clan; a charismatic nephew of Erikos is planning to murder him and claim his title. Again, this is typical for a Draxan clan.

**7. The Fortress of the West:** This complex is the barracks and stronghold of the Xaidras Clan company, sponsored by the ruler of this sector. Situated near the outer gate that leads to the Second Sector, this fortress is a self-sufficient estate. Hundreds of slaves are quartered here and maintain the garrison in outlandish luxury.

The barracks is a small fortress, with low but strong walls encircling the compound. The walls are provided with an inner catwalk for archers or other missileers to fire over the wall. In the center of the clan company compound, a small keep houses the chief officers and armories of the clan company.

The Xaidras clan company, known as the Guard of the West, is made up of 500 Draxans (five companies of 100 soldiers each) of Clan Xaidras and its vassal clans. They are a potent fighting force. On rare occasions, they sortie to the outer valley to patrol the wastes.

The Xaidras clan company is commanded by Amandia Xaidras, a niece of the clan leader Mejor Xaidras. Amandia is not especially talented or ambitious, but her family pulled strings to place her in this important position. The family also elevated a couple of old, experienced fighters from the ranks to become her aides in military matters.

## Third (Gulidnay) Sector

The Third Sector is a forest sector, deliberately left uncultivated and carefully stocked with all kinds of game. Like all forest sectors, it has great natural beauty of the sort found in only one other place in the Tyr region, the Forest Ridge.

**1. Clan Gulidnay:** An ancient and honored house, Clan Gulidnay has faded in influence as its



## The City of Doom



lesser clans died out. In recent years this trend has reversed, as Irmena Gulidnay reasserts her authority and forces vassal clans to support her causes.

Irmena is a wealthy templar who left the ranks of the bureaucracy to claim her title. She commands the loyalty of four lesser clan chiefs within her sector, and unlike many other sector clan leaders, she is very serious in keeping the ancient practices of feudal loyalty alive.

The estate of Clan Gulidnay is a rambling old manor in the forest with several vacant or partially occupied wings. There are 210 clansmen of the clan at this time, and 200 in the lesser clans under Gulidnay's rule. Most Gulidnay clansmen seek employment in the ranks of the templars, where Irmena still has numerous contacts. Gulidnay does not maintain a clan company.

**2. Clan Slayd:** The foremost of the clans beneath Gulidnay's rule, house Slayd is a small clan that has slowly declined from former days of greatness. This expansive estate is largely in ruins, abandoned decades or even centuries ago. Only a few small wings are still inhabited. Clan Slayd numbers 40 Draxans, noted for their decadent literacy and artistic bent. Clan Slayd is led by Thon Slayd, an ancient defiler of learning and wisdom. He despises Irmena Gulidnay's insistence on feudal loyalty.

**3. The Rampant Kirre:** A small city company maintained here as an interior defense force and wardens of the gate, the Rampant Kirre has 110 soldiers. The commander of the Rampant Kirre is near the bottom of the list of desirable assignments, for the regiment has a reputation for slackness and poor discipline.

A few months ago, the Rampant Kirre received a new commanding officer, a fanatical templar named Zenar determined to "whip them into shape." To date he has survived four assassination attempts.

### Fourth (Chuur) Sector

A powerful and prosperous sector of townlands, the Fourth Sector has the largest population in



UrDraxa. Clan Chuur enjoys the loyalty of six lesser clans, all strong and flourishing houses. Chuur is the center of power for the templars. Their administrative headquarters is here, and several clans of this sector traditionally place their sons and daughters with the templars.

**1. The Hall of Administration:** This complex of fortresslike buildings is the center of the templar hierarchy. Schools, record halls, quarters for the leading templars, training grounds, and ceremonial halls are all part of the Hall of Administration. Nearly 1,000 templars of various ranks work here, with at least as many slaves.

The absolute master is the kaisharga known as the Lord Templar. This awful creature exercises its command from its own fortresslike tower. Beneath the Lord Templar, the human Grand Templar administers the city through his circle of High Templars and their bureaucracy. Templar organizations include the Bureau of Repairs, the Bureau of Justice, the Bureau of Records, and the Bureau of Information. Many templars are cross-attached to clan or city company as "shaidan," or war champions. They resemble the political officers of some real-world armies.

**2. Clan Thiem:** Formerly the first house under the rule of Clan Chuur, Clan Thiem has recently been wracked by devastating clan-feuds and assassinations. A lesser clan of the sector, Rathay, has set its sights on Clan Thiem and has opened a covert campaign to dislodge the first house. In typical Draxan fashion, most of Thiem's allies wait to see if the clan can defend itself before committing to the fight.

The estate of Clan Thiem is a small, open villa surrounded by well-tended fields. Eighty members of the family survive, and the newest clan chief plots a bloody revenge against the aggressors.

**3. Clan Chuur:** A strong old house priding itself on its loyal service to Ur Draxa, Clan Chuur is a clan composed of warriors and templars. The decadent practices of literacy and art are scorned within

the halls of the manor, and from an early age the clansmen of Clan Chuur are instilled with the best and highest of Draxan virtues. The clan is without exception intolerably arrogant and aggressive in its outlook.

The clan leader of Chuur is a clever warrior who formerly held a high rank in a city company. He is called Varghas and is known for his enthusiasm in suppressing heretical literature and art within his sector. Varghas, a man of 40, shows every sign of ruling his clan for decades to come.

Clan Chuur sponsors a powerful clan company known as the Doom of the South. Levying troops from his lesser clan leaders, Varghas fields an army of nearly 1,000 soldiers. The Doom of the South is based in a fortress complex by the outer gate of this sector.

**4. Chuur Red:** A slave town of 200 craftsmen and their families, Chuur Red is known for the faultless loyalty of its residents. Given the savage Chuur regime, this is not all that surprising. What is surprising is the large complex of tunnels beneath the town that hides slaves in need of help. Although the entire town pretends loyalty, most leading slave families are rebellious and protect themselves against the Draxans by any means.

Competent psionicists and thieves have arisen among the slaves of Chuur Red, and they carefully misdirect the Draxans. Eventual discovery is certain, but for now the slaves do what they can to make their lives more tolerable in the face of the Draxan repression.

## Fifth (Raxes) Sector

The Fifth Sector, now nearly abandoned, contains forest and a large lake. Lake Blackwater is dark and still. Despite its ominous name, it is actually pure and sweet. The boulevards cross the lake on low bridgelike causeways. The lake is 100' deep at the center.

Clan Raxes is a small house, the least of the sector-ruling clans. Four small lesser clans still in-





## The City of Doom

habit this sector, but two of those are on the verge of death. Less than 300 Draxans and 600 slaves live here. As in the other forest sectors, some dangerous creatures live in the woodlands. Several derelict palaces and estates hide in the forest, overgrown now for centuries.

**1. Clan Mu'an:** A house of 50 Draxans with an honorable bloodline. Most of its young men and women serve in city companies or the ranks of the templars. The estate is a small group of villas linked by common courtyards and walkways, deep in the forest.

Jhar Mu'An is the clan chief of the house, an aging warrior who remembers better times. Though most Draxans consider him soft, he still commands the respect and obedience of his household. Jhar is a goodhearted man brought up under an incredibly brutal system.

**2. Clan Raxes:** This beautiful complex of palaces and sparkling fountains is largely unpopulated. At one time Clan Raxes numbered hundreds of Draxans, but now only 120 still live here. In addition, the house is considered degenerate; art and ancient works of Draxan masters are celebrated here. Clan Raxes maintained a small company until 20 years ago, when they could no longer supply the manpower.

The clansmen of Clan Raxes, noted as defilers and psionicists, are well represented among the viziers. The clan leader is Kera Raxes, a human woman nearly 100 years old, although she appears to be in her early 50s. She is a very powerful defiler and a skilled psionicist who has deflected years of scorn over her house's artistic tastes and learning. Kera fully intends to join the ranks of the Dead Lords someday.

**3. The Dragon Warriors:** The foremost of the city companies, the Dragon Warriors spend much of their time at the Iron Citadel in the Ring of Fire. About a third of the company are there at any given time; the rest occupy this base, a large, rambling fortress of green stone in the deep forest. Many rocs

are kept here, as well as the common guards and troops of the company. This fortress also guards the outer gate to this sector.

The commander of the Dragon Warriors lives at the Iron Citadel and the Lord Warrior kaisharga usually inhabits the Hall of Glory. Command of this barracks falls to the second officer of the company, a powerful mul warrior named Melido. He marshals 120 skilled warriors and 200 slaves.

The Dragon Warriors also maintain a small detachment of roc riders and slave attendants at the Hall of Glory, in Thalak sector.

### Sixth (Morzket) Sector

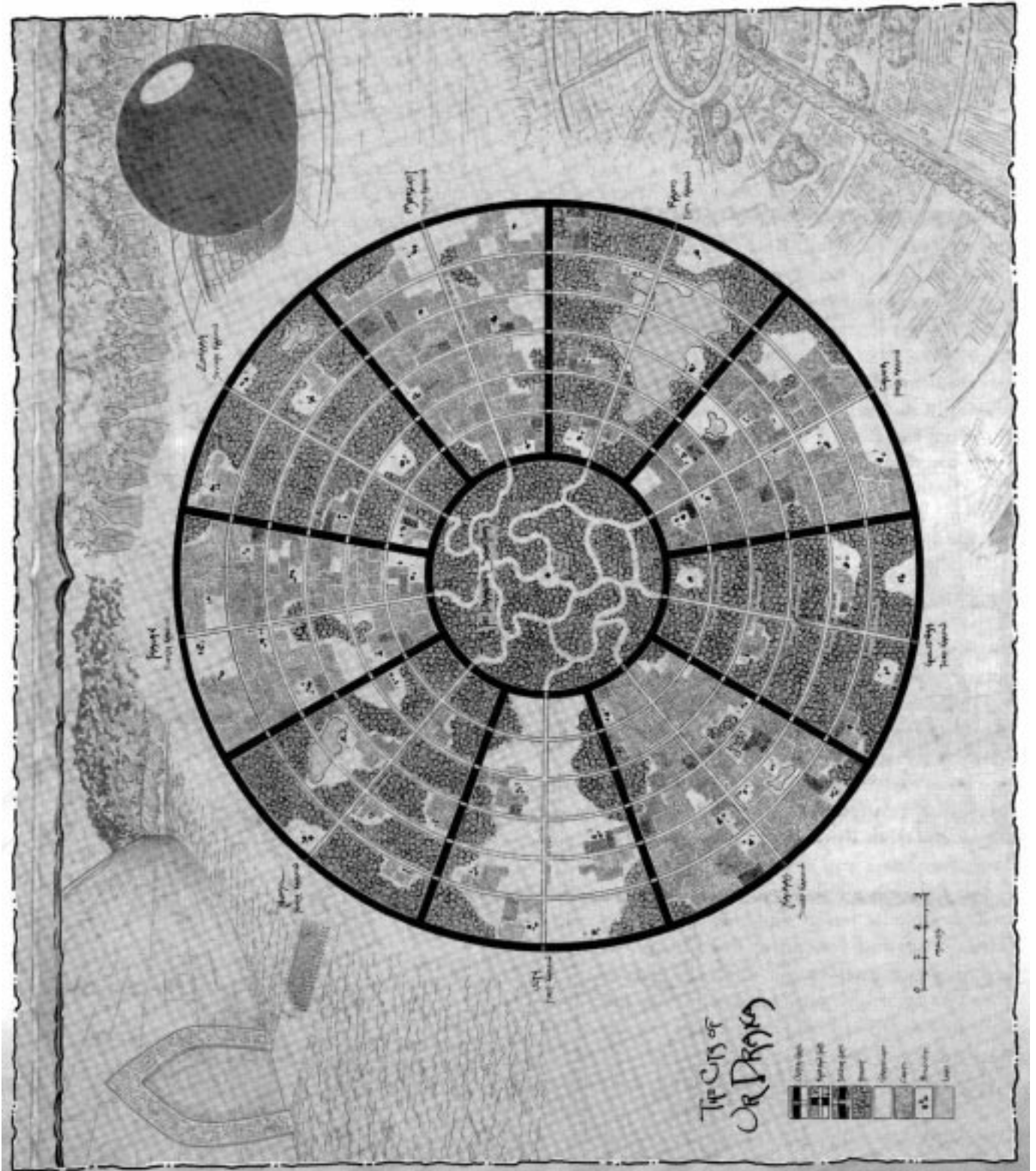
This townland sector is recovering from fierce feuds and a slave uprising. Nearly a third of the Draxans living within Morzket Sector have perished in the last ten years, and the Dead Lords finally intervened to exile the leaders of the old ruling clans and elevate new clans to their former stations. Clan Morzket has held power here only three years and is still unstable.

In addition to the Draxans who perished in the feuds and slave killings, thousands of slaves were put to death as punishment. The sector has been crippled by this loss of workers, and fields lie untended for the lack of slaves. Even slave craftsmen were hard hit by the Draxan punishments, and there are many empty homes in the slave towns.

**1. Nethelred:** Three years ago this slave-town had a population of well over 1,000 craftsmen and their families. Then the slave revolt resulted in savage reprisals against all the slaves of this sector, even though the craftsmen of Nethelred had little to do with the whole affair. Now only 250 people survive in this largely abandoned settlement.

The slave uprising was hardly a rebellion. A pair of Draxan rakes pushed a field slave camp too far, vandalizing their homes. The slaves who killed the youths fled, but the Draxans destroyed the camp in retribution. In response, the small band of desperate outlaws raided two palaces, but Draxan reprisals

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were monstrous—20 slaves were executed for every noble who died. The outlaws soon surrendered to end the bloodbath.

**2. Clan Morzket:** Recently elevated to leadership in this sector, Clan Morzket was one of the largest and most powerful of the lesser clans. The competition for the sector lordship was fierce; Morzket, the chief force in ending the slave risings that overthrew the previous clan, still works hard to consolidate power and legitimize its ascension.

The clan relocated when they were promoted, displacing the previous lords. This palace is a large, strong structure, the ancestral house of a clan considered degenerate. Clan Morzket is an ideal Draxan family, dedicated to the spirit of Ur Draxa. The clansmen are all warriors or templars, and the only arts permitted within the walls of the palace are the arts of combat. All other learning is considered an ignoble waste of time.

Clan Morzket is led by Arian Morzket, a fierce warrior matron known for her common sense and sheer determination. However, she is greatly influenced by her uncle, a canny old templar named Orith. Orith is an ancient human who is content to govern from the shadows.

**3. Clan Borin:** The first of Morzket's lesser clans, house Borin is also new to its position. Clan Morzket formerly occupied these lands before its elevation to the lordship of the sector, and Clan Borin replaced it as a reward for faithful service. A large, strong clan with conservative Draxan values, Borin scorns weakness and admires strength.

The palace is a military fortress-villa housing 300 members of the family and their servants. Gaarid Borin, a scarred veteran of the Dragon Warriors and an exceptional warrior, leads the clan wisely.

**4. The Sword Moons:** A powerful new clan company fielded by the military houses of this sector, the Sword Moons were founded two years ago to replace the clan company fielded by the former houses. They occupy an old fortress by the outer gate, serving as gate guards and occasionally patrol-

ling the outer regions of the Valley. The Sword Moons number 300 warriors, chiefly members of Clan Morzket and Clan Borin.

The Sword Moons aggressively patrol the interior of the sector, inasmuch as this sector has the most recent history of slave troubles. Adventurers from outside Ur Draxa find Morzket Sector one of the most dangerous in the city.

Iliaran Morzket leads the Sword Moons. She is a powerful templar who won this prestigious post through political intrigue and a discrete assassination or two. Iliaran is constantly scheming to advance.

### Seventh (Zuraag) Sector

Zuraag is the center of the viziers' power. Most conservative Draxans view the vizier complex and the openly decadent clans of the sector with extreme distaste.

Zuraag is populous for a forest sector, and substantial areas of forest have been cleared for cultivation. Four lesser clan chiefs serve the clan leader of Zuraag, and all the houses of the sector are strong and influential.

**1. The Hall of Learning:** This complex of several dozen palaces, libraries, and administration buildings sprawls through deep woods. Here are Ur Draxa's viziers, the powerful psionics and defilers who act as the city's magical guardians and advisors to the Dragon. They are led by a Dead Lord known as the Lord Vizier, assisted by two lesser kaisharga, the Lord Defiler and the Lord Mental. All three of these abominable creatures often inhabit the Hall of Learning.

In addition to the kaisharga, the viziers are led by the mortal Grand Vizier, a surprisingly young man named Hitasho Ken. Hitasho is a potent defiler and skilled psionics who caught the Dragon's eye during his apprenticeship. The Dragon's favor has not left him since, making him one of the most fortunate people in the city. Below the Grand Vizier are 15 High Viziers—one for each of the schools of magic





and the disciplines of psionic study. Advancement to the rank of High Vizier is competitive, and all are skilled in their chosen study.

The Hall also contains many literary and artistic works that the templars deem unworthy of saving. The Hall is one of the few places where new works are appreciated. An army of slave craftsmen works here, quartered in luxury as long as they produce.

**2. Clan Zuraag:** A patrons of the arts, Clan Zuraag has held its position for over 1,000 years. Many sons and daughters become viziers, accepting the scorn of the military Draxans to preserve knowledge lost to the outside world. The quiet palaces of the Zuraag clan are full of libraries, studies, and meditation chambers. Despite Zuraag's insistence on learning over martial prowess, the house is strong. Martial clans that seek out trouble with the Zuraag dynasty never seem to last long. Apparently there is some strength in the study of old skills.

Clan Zuraag is led by an ancient man called Aras Zuraag, a powerful defiler who has led his family for over 70 years, using magic to extend his life. He shows no signs of weakening.

Clan Zuraag is unusual in the utter loyalty of its vassal clans. Unlike other ruling clan leaders, Aras seems untroubled by ambitious underlings.

**3. Clan Jharek:** A small clan of high standing, Clan Jharek is the most martial of the families of the Zuraag sector. Their service is divided between the templars, viziers, and city and clan companies. This moderate attitude makes the clan a good common ground for a number of opposing factions. The clan chief, Ynes, is a great negotiator, and in her 22-year leadership of Cl an Jharek has maintained strict neutrality in the feuds of other houses.

The palaces of Cl an Jharek are small and quiet, out-of-the-way estates where visitors from other clans need not feel threatened.

**4. The Fire Drakes:** A powerful city company of 400 Draxans, the Fire Drakes are currently posted as the Army of the East. They vigorously patrol the Ring of Fire and the outlying lands, and also garri-

son the outer gate of Zuraag sector. Over the last two years the Fire Drakes have been searching for the outlander tribe that lives on the island of Sith, and their patrols have skirmished with the outlander hunting parties on several occasions.

The Fire Drakes live in a comfortable walled compound of palaces and strongpoints, attended by a suitable number of slaves. They are led by a scion of Clan Chuur named Kelestes, a strong warrior who unfortunately lacks the intelligence to be truly effective. He is aided by a small staff of professional officers who make up for his failings.

## Eighth (Thalak) Sector

The last of the townland sectors, Thalak is the strong and heavily populated home of the Hall of Glory, the army's center of power. The clans of the Eighth Sector are we -established 11 conservatives, sending their sons and daughters into the city and clan companies.

The sector is ruled by the clan leader Ban Thalak, one of the most powerful and important men in the city. He demands loyalty from his vassals, treating them more like military subordinates. Universally disliked but respected, Thalak is quite secure in his position.

**1. The Hall of Glory:** This massive fortress complex is the headquarters of the Draxan army. Within the dark walls of the fortress are vast training areas, armories, barracks, stables, weaponsmiths and armorers, meeting halls, and the quarters of the elite army commanders. All four legions are headquartered here, although their various companies are scattered about the city of Ur Draxa.

Several city and a couple of clan companies are quartered in the Hall of Glory, including the Ram-pagers, the Gold Seals, and the Blood Suns. Altogether, 800 Draxan warriors occupy the Hall of Glory at any given time. They are attended by 1,000 slaves, many used in bloody training exercises.

**2. Clan Falghar:** A powerful and influential clan, Clan Falghar numbers 500 Draxans. Most fill the

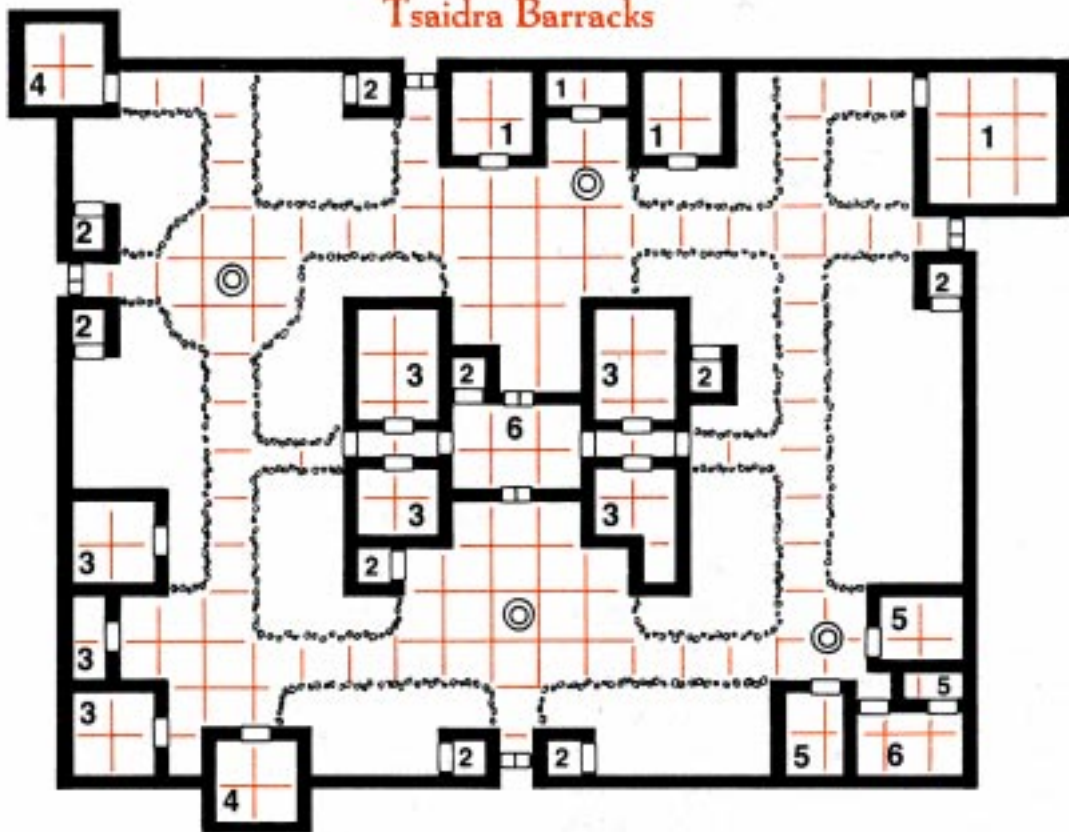






# The City of Doom

1 sq = 20 feet



## Tsaidra Barracks



-  Door
-  Double Door
-  Path
-  Fountain

- 1. Slave Quarters
- 2. Storerooms
- 3. Barracks
- 4. Armories
- 5. Officers' Quarters
- 6. Mess Hall



ranks of the city and clan companies. They manage their fields with brutal efficiency and maintain their house in the conservative Draxan style. The leader of the clan is the feared Naom Falghar, a retired warrior with a reputation for cruelty. She ambitiously plots against her neighbors, intending to bring the entire sector under her thumb.

**3. Clan Thalak:** The single strongest clan of Ur Draxa, Clan Thalak numbers 300 Draxans. Many of these are lesser Thalaks, recent additions to the family through the absorption of smaller, failing bloodlines. Despite their mixed heritage, all clan members enthusiastically support clan leader Ban Thalak. More than 1,500 slaves work in the clan household or its fields.

Ban Thalak has ruled the clan for 11 years and is still a vigorous man. He maintains his position as captain of the clan's company, the Riven Shields. Ban Thalak is a man of exceptional ambition, energy, and accomplishments.

**4. Thalared:** A small but well-managed village of slave craftsmen, Thalared numbers 100 craftsmen and their families. Beneath the oppressive rule of Ban Thalak, the slaves are pushed to the limits of human tolerance, but still do not dare to speak of rebellion. A few bold field slaves have set up a basic information network; the Thalaks would savagely crush even this small spark of defiance.

**5. Clan Inzhilar:** By tradition the leading vassal house of the sector, clan Inzhilar is engaged in a bitter struggle to maintain its position as the first of Thalak's followers. Inzhilar is a family of 180 Draxans, vital and loyal to the martial spirit of the city. Despite this, the larger clans of the sector—Falghar in particular—are asserting themselves, trying to drag Inzhilar down. Ban Thalak does not see any reason to interfere, believing the competition is healthy.

Rian Inzhilar is the leader of the clan. She is a powerful psionicist and skilled warrior of 50 years who has so far managed to deflect her enemies.

**6. The Riven Shields:** Occupying a rambling se-

ries of walled barracks complexes, this clan company of 400 is sponsored by Clan Thalak. The regiment carries the title of Guardians of the North, and vigorously patrols the outer valley. The Riven Shields are led by Ban Thalak himself.

## Ninth (Numel) Sector

Almost abandoned, the Ninth Sector houses only a few hundred Draxans and their slaves. Many slave villages and noble palaces dot Numel's jungles, but almost all are overgrown and inhabited only by the creatures of the forest. Numel was the site of the largest slave rising in the history of Ur Draxa, a two-month war 330 years ago. At that time the Dragon was away on one of its long periods of wandering. Three of Numel's vassal clans were slaughtered to the last Draxan on the first night of the revolution, and two more suffered such heavy losses that they never recovered. Of course, the rebellious slaves were all eventually caught and executed. In addition, every seventh slave throughout the entire city was put to death as an example.

Numel's small population makes it the wildest sector, with many forest predators surviving on the abundance of game here. The sector is a favored hunting ground for many wealthy Draxans. Clan Numel is only too happy to put them up and provide guides.

**1. Clan Nemed:** The most prominent of Numel's vassal clans, Clan Nemed is only a shadow of what it was in centuries past. Only 60 Draxans survive in this vast estate, attended by 30 slaves. Clan Nemed is a decadent family, given to the pursuit of pleasure and the patronage of various arts. They have withdrawn completely from the competitive Draxan lifestyle, preferring to be left alone.

**2. Clan Numel:** Once favored by the Dragon, house Numel was devastated in the slave revolts. The only reason the clan retained its lands and title was the heroic measures it took to control the revolt. Outnumbered and reeling from the first blows of rebellion, clan leaders closed the boulevard gates





## The City of Doom

to confine the insurrection-locking themselves in with the revolting slaves.

Numel has always been a martial clan, and though they only number 30, they are still warriors. Most young clansmen serve in the city companies, and the current leader of the house is a former commander of the Black Scorpions: the canny old warrior Bendar Numel, a scarred and aging man with a keen mind.

The palaces of Clan Numel are three-quarters empty, with several left to the forest and the others vacant. Clan Numel's palace, shown below, illustrates a greater clan leader's palace, although other clan leaders have larger dwellings.

**3. The Fire Sirocco:** One of the smallest and least prestigious of the city companies, the Fire Sirocco has 180 warriors. Despite their lack of status and numbers, the Fire Sirocco warriors are skilled and ambitious to improve their position—at the expense of the companies above them. The Fire Sirocco is responsible for guarding this gate and routine wall-

top and internal patrols.

The Fire Sirocco is led by Ulthara Poln, a skilled young warrior noted for her psionic abilities.

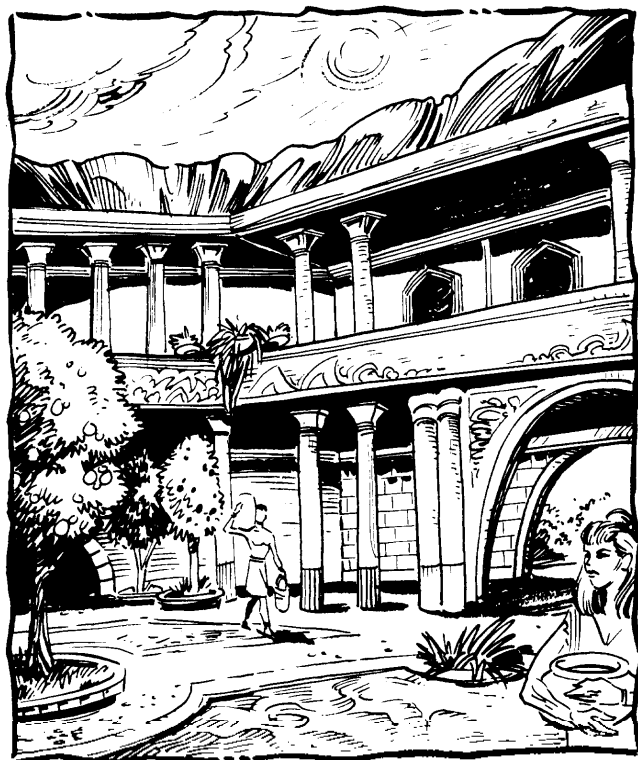
## The Dragon's Sanctum

Hidden behind the dizzying parapet of the Inner Wall, the Dragon's Sanctum occupies the center of the city of Ur Draxa. No creature except the kaisharga may enter. Even they enter only rarely, with the Dragon's express permission. The Dragon generally orders subjects to appear at the Halls of Glory, Learning, or the Templars, where it holds court.

The Dragon's Sanctum is an open area of beautiful forest (primarily *trees of life*) seven miles in diameter. From each gate, paths of dark, glossy stone wander through cool jungles. There is not a single creature in the entire forest—not a bird, not even an insect—only plants. Small streams and pools throughout the forest emerge from mysterious springs and drain into subterranean lakes. The result is a breathtakingly beautiful wooded paradise, silent except for the sound of running water. Overhead, the eerie dancing aurora appears as a warm golden glow—the hue of the sky as it should appear, unmarked by the roiling clouds of ash that roof the rest of the Valley of Dust and Fire. This is the eye of the storm, the center of the Dragon's power.

**The Black Sphere:** In the exact center of the Dragon's Sanctum is a strange monument or marker known as the Black Sphere. Only the Dragon and the Dead Lords have ever seen it; the Dead Lords know nothing about it, and the Dragon never discusses it. The Black Sphere appears to be smooth, black stone, 12' in diameter. It hovers four feet above the floor of a shallow pit 30' in diameter and 10' deep. The sphere's equator is level with the ground beyond the depression. The Black Sphere is the only structure in the Dragon's Sanctum. It radiates intensely powerful magic of all schools. No attack of any kind can harm it.

**Caches:** The Dragon maintains many emergency





hoards of potions, rings, and magical weapons in its Sanctum. Each is buried undetectably three feet underground and shielded from magical detection. Each holds six *fruits of extra-healing*, 1d6 other potion fruits, a *ring of invisibility* and *inaudibility*, and a rod, a stave, and a wand of random type. Some caches may contain more rings and miscellaneous magic.

The Dragon knows each cache's contents and location. It has prepared these caches over thousands of years to protect against a serious attack, though it has not faced such an attack in living memory.

## Entering the Sanctum

Most Draxans would view an outsider's attempt to enter this place as a sacrilege. They are taught that the Dragon's Sanctum is forever barred to all living creatures, save the Dragon.

Intruders who fly over the Inner Wall encounter the deadly aurora that guards the Dragon's Sanctum. This field of shimmering witch-lights covers the inner area, forming a display of weird lightfalls and sparkling dust. The aurora is a powerful field of defiling magic, combining the properties of a *wall of force* and the psionic science of life draining. The initial collision with the unyielding field causes 1d6 damage per move of 6 of the flier. For example, a mage using a *fly* spell sustains a 3d6 collision (with a move of 18). Once caught in the field, the victim suffers 10d6 damage per round (save for half damage) and is wracked by the intense pain of defiling magic.

Intruders can also phase or passwall through the inner wall. It is protected against the passage of ethereal and astral travelers, but a high-level cleric of Earth could use his ability to ignore earth to walk through.

The Inner Wall is marked with nine mighty gates identical to the outer gates, except that they activate at the Dragon's command alone. Even the kaisharga cannot operate these gates. Though a powerful psionist might overcome a gate and force

it open, the gate sends a telepathic distress call to the Dragon. From anywhere on Athas, it first casts *teleport without error* and transports itself to the Gate of Doom, then it traverses the Gate, and lastly it *teleports* or simply flies to the gate under attack. From the time a psionic assault is launched on an inner gate, no more than five rounds elapse before the Dragon appears. Needless to say, it is very, very angry.

## Evading the Dragon

If a clever character evades the logic of the alarm system or suppresses the gate's psionic distress call, the Dragon does not become aware of the entry; it is practically omnipotent, but not omniscient. Also, if characters do not enter the sanctum, but instead just look over the edge of the wall, the Dragon never knows of their intrusion. However, from the wall they can't see the Black Sphere, nor much of the huge central area.

If the party triggers the alarm but manages to get away before five rounds pass, the Dragon may be able to track them. Its psionic abilities do not include retrospection, sensitivity to psychic impressions, or other pertinent talents, nor do its usual spells relate to tracking. However, the Dragon has all proficiencies, is superhumanly intelligent, and certainly can get any known defiler spell; also, it can bring in kaisharga with the requisite psionics.

In general, if the players are clever, cautious, and fast-moving, stage a suspenseful climax to their invasion and then let them elude detection. But if they make a mistake, don't feel obligated to forgive it. Only the greatest heroes can escape the Dragon.

## Meeting the Dragon

The Dragon speaks Common (and most other languages) with perfect grammar and without an accent. It behaves with a haughty, aristocratic demeanor. An isolated and private creature, it keeps its own counsel and never deigns to tell its plans,



## The City of Doom

secrets, or anything else. However, the Dragon interrogates intruders mercilessly, to learn how they found the city and breached its security.

Characters may try to provoke the Dragon's anger. But the creature has lived for millennia, seen every trick, and invented many of its own; it does not fall for routine ploys.

The Dragon has plots and purposes that can take centuries to unfold. Where it once pursued dozens of schemes and paid close attention to the doings of its minions, it now seems more contemplative and introspective. The Dragon is content to let other, lesser beings busy themselves with paltry designs; nothing is worth its personal efforts any more. It spends weeks on end wandering in the corridors of its own mind, devoting its fearsome intelligence to pursuits beyond the conception of mortal creatures.

Only the greatest and most unusual events—such as an invasion of its Sanctum—now rouse the Dragon's interest. Do not mistake its indifference for inability; if its obscure purposes are threatened, the Dragon responds with full fury.

The *Dragon Kings* supplement includes much information on very high-level characters. The Dragon of Tyr is a fully transformed 30th-level dragon. It does not tolerate aspiring dragons within its realm. If a powerful character shows signs of reaching extreme levels, the Dragon either kills that character or transforms him or her into a kaisharga. The Dragon would view an avangion or an elemental cleric as a threat and would respond to that threat.

After interrogation, the Dragon customarily kills intruders. A generous DM might instead have the Dragon turn prisoners over to a kaisharga, either for further interrogation or for enslavement. The kaisharga would place prisoners under the tightest security; the Dead Lord knows that if the prisoners escape, its own unlife would be forfeit.

### Fighting the Dragon

For most parties, confrontation with the Dragon means certain death. Make this explicitly clear to

players who are unaware of it. Try to stage the uneven battle with many opportunities for heroic death scenes. A fighter might rush the Dragon and wound it bitterly as he dies; a mage might engulf both herself and the enemy in a colossal fireball; a thief might backstab the Dragon, sacrificing himself but distracting it at a critical moment so that a companion can escape. Let the characters damage the Dragon severely; it can heal after they are dead, and it makes their passing more dramatic.

**Tactics in an even contest:** Campaigns using the *Dragon Kings* supplement may have characters above 20th level. Conceivably a heavily armed and well-organized band of high-level characters could match the Dragon's power. These parties would take the Dragon by surprise; it never expects a mere band of intruders to present a true threat!

As soon as the party lands a significant blow, though, the Dragon sees its mistake. It teleports elsewhere in the Sanctum (usually less than 1,000 yards away), to one of its many buried caches of potion fruits and treasures, takes as many *potion fruits of extra-healing* as necessary to heal completely, activates its danger sense and other defenses, and defines a teleport trigger that will take it to the opposite side of the Sanctum from the party when it is reduced to 25 hit points or less. Then the Dragon dons a *ring of invisibility and inaudibility*, takes a wand and staff (roll randomly for type), and teleports within sight of the party. The whole operation takes about five rounds.

Now the Dragon inspects its opponents closely, searching for weakness or relaxation; it may spend many rounds stalking the party this way (letting down most of its psionic defenses if it needs to save PSPs). If the party seems ready to leave the City of Doom, the Dragon attacks to prevent this. When ready to attack, it first telepathically calls in its kaisharga and a few companies of troops to wear the party down. Then, when the party appears weakened, it attacks with life draining or death field, as described in the *Wanderer's Journal* entry.





If the Dragon has gotten a *wand of illusion*, it uses it to good effect, creating an illusion of itself to draw the characters' fire before revealing itself.

If you use the *Dragon Kings* supplement, the Dragon should also have several psionic enchantments ready, such as *dome of invulnerability* or *rift* (to increase the strength of its kaisharga).

In any case, the Dragon fights to kill dangerous opponents, but never fights to its own death if it can escape to fight another day.

**What if they win?** Even in the unlikely event that the PCs encounter and fight the Dragon, they should not be able to destroy it. If properly run, the Dragon is able to defeat even a party of the highest level adventurers.

The Dragon has had thousands of years to prepare its defenses. It must have many contingency spells, and possibly clones, to ensure its survival. The realm of psionic enchantment opens up still more amazing possibilities. You have many devices to keep the Dragon alive—if you want to.

Killing the Dragon is less an issue of firepower than of campaign direction. Without the Dragon, the Tyr region's balance of power changes completely. Unless the party demonstrates incontrovertibly that its power surpasses the Dragon's—an unlikely case—chaos ensues. Sorcerer-kings forego the struggle for supremacy long enough to unite against the player characters. Scenarios would be much different in this new world, now divorced from the established DARK SUN™ campaign background.

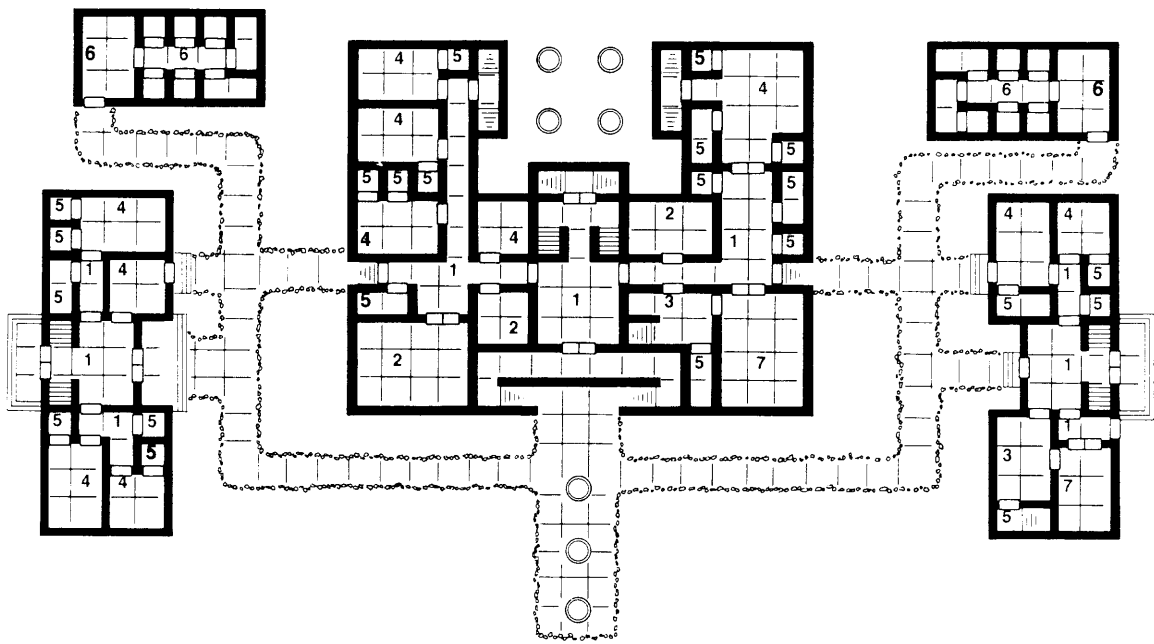
Still, that may appeal to you and your players. After all, if the issue arises, both players and DM have clearly demonstrated a sense of adventure. There is no other way to survive the Valley of Dust and Fire.





# The City of Doom

## Numel Palace



1 sq = 10 feet

- 1. Halls or Antechamber
- 2. Studies or Parlors
- 3. Kitchens
- 4. Private Chambers
- 5. Closets
- 6. Slave Quarters
- 7. Dining Halls

- Door    Double Door
- Stairs Up    Stairs Down
- Path    Fountain



## Chapter Five: Campaigning in the Valley

*"In the hellish inferno of that valley I would surely have perished, if it were not for the Clan of the Roc. Incredibly, people lived among the blasted hills and firestorm winds of that place within the Sea of Silt. When I was at the end of my strength and supplies, and death was mere hours away, the Clan of the Roc found me and saved my life.*

*"It was not their way to spare strangers, or so they told me, but they were starved for news of the outer world. They were ka'ardani, which in their tongue means outlanders, or the exiled. Crude savages and fierce hunters, they preserved the memories of their great-great-grandfathers – people who had lived within that mighty city in the lava sea. The daily horror of the clan's existence in that hateful valley was beyond imagining; it testifies to the strength and the resilience of the human spirit that they accepted their lot in life and looked for no more than the next day's food and shelter."*

—From the journal of Galek Sandstrider

The wonders and the terrors of the Valley of Dust and Fire do not integrate easily into a typical DARK SUN™ campaign. The dwellers in the Valley look upon visitors as meals or intruders who deserve swift and painful death. This makes it difficult to keep characters here for long.

In general, Chapter One and selected creatures of the New Monsters appendix can expand any normal DARK SUN campaign. The rest of this book deserves forethought and planning before use in a standard campaign.

### Campaign Scenarios

There are three general ways to introduce the Valley of Dust and Fire into your campaign. You can arrange a visit, where the heroes find the Valley, see a few of its sights, and then escape to go about their business. An entrapment is similar, but the party cannot leave and must find its fate within the Valley. Lastly, you could set up a native campaign, where the characters originate in the Valley and begin play there.

### The Visit

The exploration of great and ancient mysteries is a classic plot. In this scenario, characters adventure in the Valley temporarily. Decide their motive for exploration, how much of the Valley to reveal, and how they leave once they decide to go.

There are several good motives for entering the Valley. The heroes may search for the fabled city in the Silt. They might trail the Dragon of Tyr to its lair. A sorcerer-king might send them on an expedition to explore the Valley or spy on the Draxans. Or the party could simply be traveling the Sea of Silt and become lost.

Visitors can make few friends in the Valley. From the moment they set foot within the desecrated lands, they are on the run. The Ring of Fire is impassable to casual explorers. If they do reach Ur Draxa, it may prove too much even for a tough, experienced, and well-armed party. Most Draxans and slaves either attack or summon help at once to deal with incursions. On the bright side, obvious outsiders like thri-kreen or half-giants gain the benefits of surprise and disbelief. Because there are no thri-kreen in the city or in the Valley, few Draxans can immediately recognize a thri-kreen as friend or foe. Most outsiders find that the rebellious slave element within Ur Draxa is not an enemy, at least, and may even find a rare Draxan disposed to aid them.

Give thought to how far the characters can go, given their motivations. The reason the characters are in the Valley greatly affects their goals and direction. If they're here to kill the Dragon, they are doomed. If they are simply in search of a fable, or have wandered here accidentally, let them turn and flee when the going gets tough.

Leaving the Valley should prove difficult but not impossible. Characters can enlist help from sympathetic slaves, outlanders, or clansmen who would incur trouble by the characters' continued presence. An army expedition to the shores of the Sea may recruit the characters as slaves, then accidentally let them escape. A mid- to high-level party could use





## Campaigning in the Valley

*dimension walk* or *teleport* to escape the Great Ash Storm. Leaving with wagonloads of loot may be another matter.

Once the visit is over, the normal campaign resumes. Few characters will want to repeat the trip, and there is little use for the information parties bring back from their explorations. Keep in mind that the Dragon has no wish to see accurate accounts of the Valley become general knowledge; it takes steps to silence those who know too much.

### Entrapment

The entrapment scenario takes characters from the Tyr region and removes them to the Valley—perhaps forever. There are many ways characters could become trapped here. First, any “visit” mission could lead to entrapment. If outlanders or Draxans capture the characters, or deprive them of their means of crossing the Great Ash Storm, a visit could easily become permanent. Second, an outside force—namely, the Dragon—could capture the characters in the wilderness or take them as part of a city’s ransom.

The trick of the entrapment scenario is not getting characters in, but preventing them from leaving. Deprive them of mounts or magical items that can cross the Great Ash Storm. More difficult to remove are spells or psionic talents that permit escape. For mages, capture or destruction of some of their spellbooks could prevent escape. A powerful psionicist could use *mindwipe*, *mind thrust*, or *post-hypnotic suggestion* to suppress a psionicist’s powers.

Once characters are trapped, let them choose an orientation for the scenario. Initially, it is simple survival. Later, they might search for escape. On the other hand, entrapped characters might try to win freedom and citizenship in Ur Draxa.

If the characters decide to stay, they could become powerful in the Valley. A gladiator could unite the outlander tribes in a powerful host and lead them against the forces of Ur Draxa. A defiler or psioni-

cist might win freedom and join the ranks of the viziers, aspiring to unseat a kaisharga or the Dragon itself.

### The Native Campaign

Here the characters begin the campaign as natives of the Valley of Dust and Fire: Draxan clan members, slaves within Ur Draxa, or outlanders (ka’ardani). The characters know little or nothing of the Tyr region campaign. Each native campaign has a distinct character and set of goals.

#### Outlanders

The valley outside the Ring of Fire is a searing wasteland of savage tribes and terrible predators. Player characters who live there as members of an outlander tribe must compete vigorously with many adversaries—tribes of giants, braxat, and pterrans—for scant resources. Their fiercest enemy could be a rival tribe competing for food and water. Solitary monsters of great power also infest the region. Attacks by these awful monsters keep warriors on their toes.

Expeditions from Ur Draxa hunt for outlander slaves, dangerous creatures of the Valley, or materials unavailable within the city walls. The party might wage a guerilla war against the Draxans’ superior numbers and equipment. Any significant success they achieve is only likely to bring more powerful expeditions.

Numerous shorter scenarios suggest themselves. Characters may attempt a raid on the city or the Iron Citadel. Presumably a few crumbling ruins dot the valley floor, or perhaps a Draxan lord maintains a secret stronghold within the outer valley.

**Campaign notes:** The outlander campaign is difficult but rewarding. Simple survival is a daily challenge, and as the leaders and defenders of a clan, the player characters constantly fight off threats. Exceptionally daring parties could raid Ur Draxa in search of supplies or to free comrades captured by



the Draxans. The outlander campaign could easily become a slave campaign if the Draxans capture the characters.

Outlanders may be fighters, rangers, clerics, psionicists, or preservers, but not defilers. They cannot be halflings, half-giants, or thri-kreen. If you are using the various PHBR supplements (e.g., *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*), appropriate kits include savage, berserker, wilderness warrior, anagakok, witch, and scout.

### Ur Draxans

Life within Ur Draxa is not the daily challenge it is in the Valley, but the City of Doom has its own perils. The greatest are the Draxans themselves, arrogant, well-trained warriors. Ur Draxa can be the site of a single adventure—for example, a raid or spying mission inside its walls. Or it could host an ongoing campaign of Draxans or slaves who live in the city.

Whereas outside characters view any expedition into the walls of Ur Draxa as a straightforward adventure, a challenging native campaign revolves around intrigue, scheming for advancement, or surviving as a slave. The Draxan noble houses are constantly involved in various feuds, duels, and small wars. Templars, army officers, and viziers constantly plot against each other and occasionally arrange assassinations to secure their own advancement. Wealthy and daring Draxans venture into the Valley to hunt or collect slaves. At higher levels, Draxan characters could act as spies or emissaries in the outside world.

**Campaign notes:** A Draxan clan campaign is a dark and serious setting. It is best to cast the characters not as an adventuring group, but as a circle of allies or members of one Draxan house. They constantly must defend their house from the encroachment of houses of lesser station, and in good Draxan form they should constantly try to maneuver their way into power using house feuds, expeditions into the outer regions of the Valley, and occasionally duels or assassination. The competition

for the Dragon's favor is fierce, and the Dragon is notoriously fickle in its support.

A Draxan slave campaign presents characters with a nearly impossible challenge—survive life as a slave within Ur Draxa, and overthrow their masters. The characters can begin a guerilla war or plan a mass revolt designed to overthrow the Draxan system. The odds against success are staggering; slave characters who attempt an armed uprising against their Draxan masters are in for an exciting and probably brief career. The campaign can easily become an escape scenario, where the characters flee Ur Draxa to become outlanders, or even escape the Valley altogether.

A more plausible (and survivable) form of resistance is passive. The most daring of the Draxan slaves have created “underground railroad” systems of safe houses and secret hiding places to take fugitive slaves out of danger. The fugitives are slowly moved to a different sector, their appearances changed, and then returned to the normal life of a Draxan slave.

**Classes and kits:** Draxan clan members may be fighters, templars, psionicists, defilers, thieves, or bards. Slaves may be fighters, gladiators, clerics, psionicists, preservers, thieves, or bards. Cleric and preserver slave characters must be extraordinarily careful not to reveal their powers—the kaisharga themselves would take note of a slave rebellion featuring magic use.

If you are using the various PHBR supplements, appropriate kits for Draxan characters include the myrmidon, noble warrior, acamedician, militant wizard, patrician, fighting-monk, nobleman priest, scholar, assassin, spy, loremaster, and blade. Slave characters may be myrmidons, peasant heroes, outlaws, mystics, peasant wizards, peasant priests, acrobats, assassins, smugglers, spies, meistersingers, jongleurs, or jesters. Draxan nobles have an excellent chance to begin play with metal weapons and armor.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Ring of Fire, Ur Draxa
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	12
THAC0:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-24
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Heat, crush
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	L (8' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	12,000

Magma golems are powerful magical automatons created from the raw material of the Ring of Fire. Only a defiler of 18th level or higher can create one, shaping the golem from molten rock. When completed, a magma golem is a roughly man-shaped creature of red-glowing magma 8' tall and weighing a ton.

**Combat:** Like all golems, magma golems can only be damaged by +1 or better magical weapons, and are immune to poison, suffocation, and all mind-affecting spells. In addition, psionic abilities of the Telepathic, Clairsentience, Psychometabolism, or Metapsionic disciplines have no effect. *Dispel magic* cast upon a golem forces a save vs. spells; if the golem fails, it is stunned for a number of rounds equal to the level of the caster.

Magma golems are unharmed by fire- or cold-based attacks, and suffer only half damage from electrical attacks. They are immune to priest magic of the Fire or Earth spheres. Any weapon that strikes a magma golem must save vs. magical fire or be destroyed, although the golem may still suffer damage from the attack.

Magma golems radiate intense heat, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per round to any creature within 10 feet. This heat also causes an additional 1d10 points of damage to any opponent the golem strikes in melee. Characters struck by the golem must save vs. death magic or be set on fire, suffering 2d4 points of damage per round until they can extinguish their burning clothes and hair.

Once every five rounds the magma golem can use its special crush attack. Foregoing its normal attacks, the golem hurls itself on an opponent (10d6 damage; save vs. death



magic for half damage). Characters who are immune to fire or who are of size L or larger suffer 3d6 points of damage (save for half damage). When the golem uses its crush attack, it loses its attack for the following round as it gets up.

**Habitat/Society:** Magma golems are created by the Dragon and its kaisharga to guard areas of special concern. A powerful defiler might successfully research the creation process and construct a magma golem outside the Valley of Dust and Fire.

**Ecology:** The magma golem is an artificial construct animated by an elemental spirit. As such, it has no place in any living ecology. The golem exists outside of nature.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (Tablelands)
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (2-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	2 + 3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Seizing bite
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	5 (2' high, 4' long)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	175

The jhakar (singular and plural) is a powerful reptilian predator resembling a scaled bulldog. Its hide is thick and wrinkled, and it has four short, muscular legs and a short, stumpy tail. The jhakar's head is mostly mouth, with a blunt snout and a gaping, powerful maw. Its ears and eyes are well-protected beneath heavy ridges of bone and double sets of lids. The jhakar is sandy brown in color, with a darker snout and claws.

In the wild, the jhakar hunts in small packs that fiercely attack to pull down all but the most formidable prey. However, the creature is better known in cities as a domesticated guard-beast and tracker of escaped slaves. Domestic jhakar are savage and unpredictable creatures, greatly feared by would-be thieves and escaping slaves.

**Combat:** Jhakar are notorious for their tenacity and single-minded attacks. If the jhakar scores a hit during melee, it seizes its opponent in its jaws, refusing to release the prey until either the victim or the jhakar is dead. Each round after the initial hit, the jhakar hits automatically for normal bite damage and tries to drag its foe down. The jhakar's jaws grip its opponents with an effective 18/00 Strength.

Jhakar who have seized prey can overbear it. Due to their extreme ferocity and strength, they overbear as size M creatures. The overbearing attempt occurs at the same time the continuing bite damage takes effect. An overbearing attack is made at the jhakar's normal THAC0, at +4 against size S characters and -4 against size L characters. Multi-legged creatures gain an additional -2 for each additional leg beyond two, so thri-kreen are overborne at -4 altogether. Each additional jhakar who has seized the victim contributes +1 to the overbearing roll. If the jhakar succeeds in overbearing, the victim is pulled down and must fight prone. Wild packs of jhakar flock to prey pulled down by their com-



panions. Prone creatures are attacked at +4 to hit.

**Habitat/Society:** The jhakar is often domesticated as a blood-hound or guard-beast. It is an aggressive and stupid creature and has difficulty recognizing its handler from one day to the next. However, it is an excellent tracker, and once on the scent, it never gives up the chase.

A wild pack of jhakar hunts a man or an elf as readily as any wild creature. Once they have scented prey, they never give up. Jhakar attack in one bounding rush, hissing like steam-kettles when they catch sight of their prey.

**Ecology:** The jhakar is a dangerous predator that is not particularly strong as an individual, but extraordinarily dangerous in a pack. Most creatures of the desert give a jhakar pack a wide berth. Tembo are mortal enemies of the jhakar.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (Valley)
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional or better
TREASURE:	E, S, T, V (x2)
ALIGNMENT:	Any evil
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-3)
ARMOR CLASS:	0 or better
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	As in life, +5 hp/die
THACO:	As in life or 9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	As in life
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d10 or by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	5% per Hit Die
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	22,000

### PSIONICS SUMMARY:

Level	Dis	Sci	Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
10		4/5	15	all/all	15	120

**Psychokinetic:** Science—telekinesis; Devotions—control body, control wind, levitation, soften.

**Psychoptive:** Science—teleport; Devotions—dimension door, dimension walk, time/space anchor.

**Telepathic:** Sciences—domination, ejection, mindlink; Devotions—aversion, awe, contact, conceal thoughts, ESP, life detection, send thoughts.

The kaisharga are a class of Athasian undead similar to the liches of other worlds. They have sought undeath, unnaturally extending their lives past the endurance of their mortal frames. Unlife gives them many terrible powers. A kaisharga appears as a gaunt, wasted human with grayish, thinly stretched skin. They wear the trappings they preferred in life, and their eyes burn with a green fire.

**Combat:** The change to undeath raises the kaisharga's effective Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores to 20. Wizard, psionist, and templar kaisharga roll 8-sided Hit Dice, and warrior kaisharga roll 10-sided. All kaisharga gain +5 hp per die for Constitution, and may reroll any 1. Kaisharga gain the psionic abilities listed under the Psionics Summary if they were formerly Wild Talents; if they were psionists, they may recalculate their power scores to reflect their new ability scores.

Kaisharga are immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, and *death* spells. They can only be struck by +1 magical weapons or better or by creatures of 6 HD or more. Kaisharga possess an aura of fear that forces any living creature within 60' to save vs.



spells or flee for 5-20 rounds. Characters of 8th level or 8 HD are immune to this fear aura. Lastly, the touch of a kaisharga inflicts 1d10 damage from its deathly cold and paralyzes the victim unless a save vs. paralyzation is made.

Kaisharga have magical items appropriate to their class. Warriors usually have magical weapons and armor, and wizards have rings and wands. All skills and knowledge remain with the kaisharga after its transition to unlife, so wizards and templars may cast spells, and warriors may have weapon specialization.

**Habitat/Society:** The kaisharga is a dreadful creature that has turned its back on the rightful order of things, trading life for power. It has no place in the living world. If encountered outside the Valley of Dust and Fire, kaisharga tend to be solitary mages. Within Ur Draxa, the Dragon confers undeath on any of its servants who prove exceptionally capable, loyal, and efficient.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Valley of Dust and Fire
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Clan or Patrol
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Varies (Average)
TREASURE:	Individual K, M, N
ALIGNMENT:	Varies (Lawful evil)
NO. APPEARING:	1-12 (Patrol 2-16)
ARMOR CLASS:	Varies (5)
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	3d10
THAC0:	Varies (18)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Varies (1)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon (1d6)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Psionics or spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	None
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	M (5-6')
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	Varies (270)

## PSIONICS SUMMARY

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
3	1/0/1	nil/nil	12	30

**Wild Talent:** Roll 1d12— **1:** danger sense; **2:** ballistic attack; **3:** adrenalin control; **4:** displacement; **5:** graft weapon; **6:** ESP; **7:** invisibility; **8:** dimension door; **9 through 12:** no significant talent.

Draxans are the citizens of Ur Draxa, the City of Doom within the Valley of Dust and Fire. From birth they are trained as warriors, psionics, templars, or defilers. They are the lords of the Valley and aggressively attack most intruders. Draxans are human, but centuries of martial training have made them into a cruel, fierce people.

When Draxans are encountered, half are average Draxans who conform to the statistics in parentheses above. They fight and save as 3rd-level fighters, and may have a random wild talent. The rest are unique individuals. Half of these are warriors of level 3-10 (1d8+2), 20% are psionics of level 2-12, 20% are templars of level 3-12, and 10% are defilers of level 3-12. Draxans are frequently accompanied by 0-2 slaves per Draxan.

**Combat:** Draxans fight according to their class. Defilers and psionics hang back and use spells and psionic abilities, whereas warriors engage the enemy. Templars choose one of these two strategies. Slaves cover out of the way.

Standard Draxans are effectively 3rd-level fighters in all respects. They are equipped with fine chitinous hide armor and a long shield, and they carry short bows of horn and spears and short swords of fine steel. Draxans are paranoid and often go about their city armed to the teeth; in their homes, or wherever a fight would be unexpected, they are



unarmored and equipped with daggers.

All Draxans are trained in the keshai, the Draxan martial art of strikes and throws, as children. Every Draxan can make unarmed attacks on the martial arts table given in *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*. If you do not use martial arts in your campaign, allow Draxans to punch and wrestle at +1 to hit and +1 on damage and knock-out rolls.

Some Draxans may have exceptional ability scores that affect their combat abilities. Roll one d6: 1-3, the Draxan has no exceptional ability scores; 4-5, one; 6, two. The abilities affected are noted in the descriptions below. Each exceptional ability has a score of 14 + 1d6 and corresponding benefits.

**Fighters:** Draxan warriors use three principal armors: studded leather, hide, or banded. Banded mail is usually reserved for high-level Draxan fighters. Most unique Draxan fighters have specialized in a favored weapon, gaining the additional attacks, hit bonus, and damage bonus of a specialist. Unique Draxan fighters have a 10% chance per level to own magical arms or armor of +1 to +3 value and half that chance to own a miscellaneous magic item usable by fighters.

Exceptional ability scores for Draxan fighters are found in Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Draxans favor short swords, large shields, spears, javelins, and bows.

**Psionics:** Draxan psionics progress as normal NPC psionics. Generating NPC psionics can take a long time; develop a couple of standard psionist templates to save time. Psionics usually wear hide or studded leather armor and prefer short swords. They have a 5% chance per level to own magical arms or armor of +1 to +3 value and



twice that chance to own a miscellaneous magical item.

Exceptional ability scores for Draxan psionicists are in Wisdom, Intelligence, or Constitution.

**Templars:** Draxan templars usually wear black, chitinous hide armor and carry short swords and spears on duty. Otherwise, they wear studded leather armor. Templars have a spell selection appropriate to their level. Templars have the same chance to own magical weapons and miscellaneous magical items as a fighter.

Templars may have exceptional ability scores in Wisdom, Intelligence, or Strength.

**Defilers:** Draxan defilers are limited to robes, but often are trained in weapons foreign to most wizards. If desired, use the Militant Wizard kit from *The Complete Wizard's Handbook* as a guide. Otherwise, treat Draxan defilers as normal mages who can wield the short sword as one of their weapon options. Defilers have spells memorized appropriate to their level and have a 5% chance per level to own an offensive magical item such as a *wand of fire*, *wand of frost*, or *wand of magic missiles*.

Defilers may have exceptional ability scores in Intelligence, Constitution, or Dexterity.

Draxans are persistent, aggressive foes who do not hesitate to carry the fight to the enemy. Warriors fire a volley or two of arrows, then draw their swords and attack the weakened enemy. Templars, psionicists, and defilers make early and effective use of their most powerful abilities and spells.

**The Dragon Warriors:** The most exalted Draxan fighters, the Dragon Warriors patrol beyond the Great Ash Storm. Dragon Warriors wear banded mail and carry shields, lances, composite short bows, and a melee weapon. They are warriors of 10th to 15th level (d6+9) and usually ride rocs.

**Habitat/Society:** Only a few Draxans ever leave their mighty city. The Draxans are a feudal clan society and are all considered nobles and landowners. The work of the city is performed by a massive slave population the Draxans oversee. Draxans are by nature competitive and settle their differences through ritual duels and intense feuds.

## A Draxan Glossary

**Chardra.** A city company; a company of the Draxan Army sponsored by the city. They range in size from 60 to 400 Draxan warriors and are often supplemented with templar and Vizier detachments.

**Chardraga.** A legion of the Draxan army, composed of both tsaidra and chardra. There are four chardraga. Each is led by a kaisharga (Dead Lord) and is headquartered at the Hall of Glory.

**Kaidar.** The ritual duelling arena of the Draxans, used to settle differences and insults. Duels are often to the death.

**Kaisharga.** A Dead Lord, one of the powerful lich-like crea-

tures that serve the Dragon as advisors and bodyguards. There are about 20 kaisharga altogether. See the "Kaisharga" monster entry.

**Kardakyla.** The estate of a tsai, or clan. A kardakyla is usually one-eighth to one-third of a kardan. All slaves and property within a kardakyla belong to the tsai. Each kardakyla is ruled by a tsaihar, or lesser clan lord.

**Kardan.** One of the great sectors of the city of Ur Draxa. Each of the nine kardans is ruled by a tsaihar, or clan lord.

**Keshai.** The Draxan martial art of throws and strikes, taught to all young Draxans. Some Draxans continue to study keshai throughout their lives.

**Shai.** The Draxan patriotic or martial spirit. To a Draxan, the shai represents all that is good and wholesome about the city.

**Tsai.** A Draxan clan of many extended families. A tsai can range from 10 to 1,000 Draxans. All clans are considered greater or lesser clans, depending on their hereditary station.

**Tsaidra.** A clan company; a company of the Draxan army sponsored by a tsai. They range in size from 30 to 500 Draxan warriors.

**Tsaihar.** A lesser clan lord, ruler of one tsai and its associated kardakyla. Tsaihar are the leaders of their families.

**Tsaiharaga.** A clan lord, ruler of his or her tsai and the associated kardan. In addition, the clan lord commands the allegiance of all the tsaihar (vassals) in the kardan.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Valley of Dust and Fire
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Varies (Average)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Any (Chaotic neutral)
NO. APPEARING:	2d6
ARMOR CLASS:	10 (6)
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	Varies (2d10)
THAC0:	Varies (19)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Varies (1)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon (1d6-1)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Psionics, magic use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	None
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	M (5-7')
MORALE:	Steady (11)
XP VALUE:	175

## PSIONICS SUMMARY:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
2	1/0/1	nil/nil	9	20

**Wild Talent:** Roll 1d12—1: danger sense; 2: ballistic attack; 3: adrenalin control; 4: displacement; 5: graft weapon; 6: ESP; 7: invisibility; 8: dimension door; 9 through 12: no significant talent.

The ka'ardani (Draxan for "outlanders" or "exiles") are residents of the outer valley, a people descended from escaped slaves, lost travelers, and exiled criminals. They survive where few creatures can—in the hellish volcanic waste of the Valley of Dust and Fire. Every day of their existence is a struggle to find food, water, and shelter.

When the ka'ardani are encountered, half are average 2nd-level fighters conforming to the statistics given in parentheses above. Half of the rest are rangers, 20% psionics, 20% clerics, and 10% preservers.

Most ka'ardani are human, but significant numbers of dwarves, elves, and half-elves (one in six) are found among them. As a rule of thumb, allow dwarves a +2 bonus on damage and hit points, and allow elves a -2 bonus to their Armor Class. If they are unique individuals, use the racial ability score modifiers instead.

Unique ka'ardani are of level 3-12 and have a chance to possess exceptional ability scores. Roll 1d6: 1-3, no exceptional scores; 4-5, one; 6, two. They have only a 2% chance per level to own a magical item that is appropriate to their profession.



**Combat:** Ka'ardani make do with whatever materials they can. Weapons are made of bone or stone, and armor is usually skins (AC 9) or hide (AC 6). They carry large wicker or hide shields. Ka'ardani use spears, clubs, and bows in combat and brew type A, B, and O poisons. They are consummate hunters and are familiar with the lands they live in. They gain a bonus of -1 on their opponents' surprise rolls.

**Habitat/Society:** The ka'ardani gather in small tribes of two to three dozen, for the ravaged land of the Valley cannot support larger groups. The tribes are ruled by the strongest and wisest warrior, but even the most well-liked leaders must be prepared to face a challenge to their leadership at any time. The ka'ardani are survivors, and when a chief no longer leads well, they replace him. Similarly, sick or old individuals are often sent away when they become a burden to the tribe.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Sea of Silt
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	6, Sw 18
HIT DICE:	12
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	5d10/2d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swallow, constriction
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	H(70' long)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	7,000

## PSIONICS SUMMARY:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
3	2/2/5	nil/TS, MB, TW	11	60

**Clairsentience:** Sciences—clairvoyance, precognition; Devotions—feel sound, danger sense, radial navigation.

**Psychometabolism:** Devotions—suspend animation, chameleon power, absorb disease.

Resembling a sand-colored serpent 70' long, the silt drake is commonly believed to be related to the powerful elemental drakes. The drake's head is blunt and horned, and its jaws gape more than 6' wide and are hinged far back in its head. The silt drake is a powerful and much-feared predator of the deep silt, endlessly hunting both the depths and the surface. Even the dreaded silt horrors are prey for the silt drake.

**Combat:** The silt drake uses its rudimentary psionic abilities to locate prey, above or below the silt. When it attacks, the silt drake swims beneath its prey and explodes from the dust with blinding speed, gaining a -4 bonus on its victim's surprise roll. The drake can attack fliers as high as 30' in the air.

The drake attacks twice a round, once with its bite and once with its tail. On a bite attack roll 4 or more higher than that needed to hit, the silt drake can swallow a size M opponent whole. Swallowed opponents begin to suffocate (treat as drowning) and take 8 points of damage per round. Swallowed victims cannot fight back physically but may use psionic abilities.

On a tail attack roll 4 or more better than that needed to hit, the drake entwines the victim with its tail (Strength 20) and automatically constricts the victim each round for 2d8 damage. Trapped victims lose the use of 1d4 limbs while in the silt drake's grasp, but can free themselves with a success-



ful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll.

Silt drakes prefer to fight from the silt, moving in for lightning attacks. When fighting in this manner, they only attack once every two rounds. Opponents trying to hit the drake in the silt suffer a -4 on their attack rolls. Opponents who wait until the drake surfaces can only attack the silt drake if their initiative is better than the drake's.

**Habitat/Society:** Silt drakes are natives of the Silt Sea, completely at home in the choking dust and mud flats. They establish no permanent lairs and are solitary creatures, only meeting for a few short weeks out of the year to mate.

**Ecology:** Silt drakes prefer the deeper regions of the Silt Sea and are only rarely encountered in the shallower regions. They are at the top of the food chain, hunting the dangerous silt horrors. On occasion, a silt horror will win the fight, but more often the massive bite of the silt drake quickly subdues its prey.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any silt
FREQUENCY:	Common
ORGANIZATION:	Clutch
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (2-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	3-12
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	3, s w 9
HIT DICE:	5
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 and 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8/1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Entangle, poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Air jet
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4' body)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	650

## PSIONICS SUMMARY:

Level	Dis/Sci/Dev	Attack/Defense	Score	PSPs
3	2/2/7	I,EW/M,-TS	12	60

**Clairsentience:** Science—precognition; Devotions—feel sound, feel light.

**Telepathy:** Science—mindlink; Devotions—attraction, contact, life detection.

**Note:** Only the leader of any given group (the one with the most hit points) has psionic ability.

The black silt horror is the smallest and most common of the silt horrors. Resembling a black, dusty octopus or cuttlefish with a writhing mass of eight barbed tentacles, the black horror is obviously related to the other horrors. However, it is much smaller and roams in groups called clutches. The black silt horror aggressively hunts anything it can catch—large clutches have attacked white horrors and wading giants.

**Combat:** Black silt horrors attack with pack tactics, dividing into a pursuing group and an ambushing group. The pursuers rapidly jet towards the prey to drive the victims toward their clutch-mates, who wait beneath the sand. The ambushing group receives a -2 to their opponents' surprise rolls if the tactic works; otherwise they break cover and join the pursuit.

Black silt horrors attack with their lashing tentacles. They attempt to entwine a victim to immobilize it, inflicting 1d8 damage with a successful attack. The black horror only attacks once for all its tentacles; individually, the tentacle attacks are negligible. On any round when the black silt horror scores a hit with its tentacles, it can immediately try to follow up with a bite. If it hits, the bite inflicts 1d4 damage



and injects a paralyzing poison. The victim must save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 3d4 rounds. If the silt horror rolls a natural 20 on its tentacle attack roll, the horror entwines the victim with its writhing tentacles, pinning 1d4 limbs. The silt horror automatically hits entwined victims each round for normal tentacle damage and may also attempt to bite. It releases entwined victims if reduced to 8 hp or less.

The tentacles of the black silt horror are AC 6 and have 4 hp each. The horror flees if it loses more than five tentacles. When fleeing combat, the black silt horror can direct its air jet to create an impenetrable cloud of dust, covering its escape.

**Habitat/Society:** Black silt horrors are gregarious creatures. The largest female, the clutch leader, develops rudimentary psionic abilities to aid in capturing prey. Black silt horrors are found in the Sea of Silt and many smaller dust basins.

# Appendix: Encounter Tables

This section is optional. Any series of optional encounters is a poor excuse for a well thought-out adventure plot. However, players sometimes go in surprising directions. This appendix aids in fleshing out an existing storyline. The encounter tables of this section should not govern your adventure. If you do not like the monster you rolled, or you feel it is too easy or hard for your party, change it!

## Using Optional Encounters

At the beginning of each day, or each night if the party travels then, check the weather conditions with the Weather Charts. Assuming weather permits travel, conduct normal movement. During a 10-hour march, check three times for an encounter. The base chance is 1 in 20, modified by weather conditions, method of travel, and location. Alternatively, simply choose the encounter you want.

When the party stops for the day, check the weather for the rest period, then check for an encounter once during camp. When an encounter occurs, check if either side is surprised.

## In the Silt

### Modifiers to Encounter Chance

(Base 1 in 20)

Shallow silt	+ 2
Deep silt	- 1
Party traveling	+ 1
Party camped	- 1
Night	+ 1
Very hot	- 1
Furnace	- 2
Strong wind	- 1
Storm	- 3
Sirocco	- 6

**Example:** The party is traveling (+1) by night (+1) in the deep silt (-1). The temperature is Cool and there is a Light wind (no modifiers). The modified chance of an encounter is 2 in 20.

## Shallow Silt

2d10	Result
2	Air drake
3	Cloud ray
4	Roc
5	Sand vortex
6	Beasthead giant
7	Athasian giant, 1-5
8	White silt horror
7	Black silt horror, 2-8
10	Silt runner, 5-30
11	Floater, 2-8
12	Razorwings, 2-8
13	Large bats, 4-24
14	Plains or desert giant, 1-3
15	Mud flat
16	Rocky or scrub island
17	Sink worm
18	Gray silt horror
19	Brown silt horror
20	Bare stone

## Deep Silt

2d10	Result
2	Air drake
3	Cloud ray
4	Roc
5	Sand vortex
6	Silt drake, 1-2
7	Aarakocra, 2-16
8	White silt horror
7	Black silt horror, 2-8
10	Sink worm
11	Floater, 2-8
12	Razorwing, 2-8
13	Mobats, 1-8
14	Wyvern, 1-2
15	Gray silt horror
16	Brown silt horror
17-18	Crag
19-20	Rocky island

# Encounter Tables



## Table Key

**Aarakocra** can spot and pursue flying characters. A crag or island must be within 20 miles, where the balance of the tribe will be found.

**Air drakes**, cloud rays, rocs, and wyverns can spot and pursuing fliers. 10% of rots have a rider, usually a high-level fighter. Within 50 miles of the Valley of Dust and Fire, half of all rocs have a rider.

**Bare stone** is a patch 1d10×100 yards across. One in 20 contains ancient ruins.

**Crags** are 1d12×100 feet high and 1d20×100 yards in diameter. One in four possess natural springs; of these, one in four support vegetation.

**Giants** of any kind are wading the silt.

**Mud flats** are 1d10×50 yards across. An encounter occurs only if the party investigates.

**Rocky or scrub islands** are 1-4 miles long and 1-4 miles wide. Roll d10: 1-5, the island is arid rock; 6-8, it is scrub plain; 7-0, it is forested. 80% of all islands in shallow silt are inhabited, but random islands in the deep silt are not.

## In the Valley

### Modifiers to Encounter Chance

(Base 2 in 20)

Party traveling	+ 1
Party camped	- 1
Day	- 1
Furnace	- 1
Inferno	- 2
Storm	- 2
Sirocco	- 3
Flying	+ 1
Dead forest	+ 2
Lava plain	- 2
Smoking lands	- 1
Badlands	+ 1
Mountains	+ 2
Salt flat	- 1

## Dead Forest

2d10	Result
2-3	Earth drake
4	Expedition
5	Braxat, 1-2
6	Flailer
7	Cha'thrang, 1-3
8	Tembo, 3-6
7	Ka'ardani, 3-18
10	So-ut
11	Wyverns, 1-6
12	Giants, beasthead, 3-6
13	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
14	Id fiend, 1-2
15	Kirre
16	Spiders, phase, 1-4
17	Scorpion, giant, 1-2
18	Beetle, death watch
19	Fire drake
20	Nightmare beast

## Smoking Lands

2d10	Result
2-3	Earth drake
4	Braxat, 1-2
5	Giants, beasthead, 1-4
6	Gaj, 1-2
7	Id fiend, 1-2
8	Spider, phase, 1-4
7	Wyverns, 1-6
10	Ka'ardani, 3-18
11	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
12	Tembo, 3-6
13	Scorpion, giant, 1-2
14	Beetle, slicer
15	Ankheg, 1-6
16	Pulp bee, 1-4
17	Flailer
18	Expedition
19	Fire drake
20	Nightmare beast





## Encounter Tables

### Lava Plain

2d10	Result
2-3	Expedition
4	Braxat, 1-2
5	Earth drake
6	Fire drake
7	Giants, beasthead, 3-6
8	Spiders, giant, 1-6
9	Scorpion, huge, 1-6
10	Roc, 1-2
11	Wyverns, 1-6
12	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
13	Ka'ardani, 3-18
14	Basilisks, 1-3
15	Flailer
16	Cha'thrang, 1-3
17	Id fiends, 1-2
18	Gaj, 1-2
19	Megapede
20	Nightmare beast

### Mountains

2d10	Result
2-3	Nightmare beast
4	Air drake
5	Earth drake
6	Tembo, 3-6
7	Pterrans, 1-10
8	Wyverns, 1-6
9	Roc, 1-2
10	Ka'ardani, 4-24
11	Braxat, 1-2
12	Giants, beasthead, 3-6
13	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
14	Expedition
15	Spiders, phase, 1-6
16	Scorpion, giant, 1-2
17	Beetle, slicer, 1-2
18	Id fiend, 1-2
19	Pulp bee, -4
20	So-ut

### Rocky Badlands

2d10	Result
2-3	Air drake
4	Earth drake
5	Nightmare beast
6	Giants, beasthead, 3-6
7	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
8	So-ut
9	Spider, giant, 1-6
10	Wyverns, 1-6
11	Ka'ardani, 4-24
12	Expedition
13	Spider, phase, 1-4
14	Gaj, 1-2
15	Flailer
16	Id fiend, 1-2
17	Spider, crystal, 1-2
18	Pterrans, 1-10
19	Roc, 1-2
20	Tembo, 3-6

### Salt Flat

2d10	Result
2-3	Air drake
4	Earth drake
5	Expedition
6	Spider, phase, 1-4
7	Ankheg, 1-6
8	Megapede
9	Dragon Warriors, 1-4
10	Ka'ardani, 3-18
11	Wyverns, 1-6
12	Scorpion, giant, 1-2
13	Basilisks, 1-3
14	Beetle, slicer
15	Id fiend, 1-2
16	Gaj, 1-2
17	Cha'thrang, 1-3
18	Giants, beasthead, 1-4
19	Braxat, 1-2
20	Nightmare beast



## Table Key

**Beasthead giants** are hunters or raiders. They attack any party they come across.

**Dragon Warriors** always ride rocs. Dragon Warriors try to capture intruders.

**Expeditions** consist of 11-30 slaves and 6-24 Draxans, of which 1-6 are templars. They are led by a defiler, templar, or psionist of level 5-12 (1d8+4). Expeditions will seek to capture or kill intruders.

**Ka'ardani** (outlanders) are a war or raiding party of standard composition.

**Pterrans** are always encountered with pterrax mounts. In a village, 11-30 more pterrans may be encountered. Pterrans attack the party provided they have an advantage.

## The Ring of Fire

### Modifiers to Chance of Encounter

#### (Base 1 in 20)

Party traveling	+ 1
Party camped	- 1
Storm	- 1
Sirocco	- 3
Open Lava	- 1
Islands	+ 1

#### 2d10 Result

2-3	Earth drake
4	Wyverns, 1-6
5	Magma golem, 1-2
6	Elemental creature
7	Fire minions, 1-6
8	Fire drakes, 1-3
9	Fire lizards, 1-3
10-11	Dragon Warriors, 1-6
12	Fire lizards, 1-3
13	Fire drakes, 1-3
14-15	Athasian fire elementals, 1-8
16-17	Greater fire elementals, 1-3
18	Geological event
19	Cha'thrang, 1-3
20	Expedition

## Table Key

**Athasian fire or earth elementals** include both Lesser and Standard Elementals.

**Cha'thrang** are only encountered on islands.

**Elemental creatures** are as described in Chapter Three. Use your imagination.

**Expeditions** consist of 11-20 slaves, 5-20 Guards (fighters of levels 1-10), 1-6 templars (level 1-6) and are led by a defiler, psionist, or templar of level 7-12 (1d6+6). Expeditions try to capture the party.

**Geological events** are generally violent eruptions that may threaten low fliers. Debris is hurled 1d10x100 feet. Any character in range must save vs. death or suffer 2d10 points of damage.

**Magma golems** are commanded to attack all intruders.

## In Ur Draxa

Random encounters in the city can keep up the pressure on your characters. No place on Athas is more dangerous than Ur Draxa, and even powerful parties should feel like hunted animals here.

When an encounter is indicated, think about who encounters the party and why they are there. For example, field slaves in a forest sector are probably gathering fruit and small game. If the encounter makes no sense, discard it and choose another.

### Modifiers to Encounter Chance

#### (Base 1 in 10)

Party moving	+ 1
Party camped	- 1
Day	+ 1
City alerted	+ 2
Monument or forest sector	- 1



## Encounter Tables

### Townland Sectors

2d6	Result
2	Special*
3	Slave craftsmen, loyal, 1-12
4	Household slaves, loyal, 1-6
5	Field slaves, loyal, 2-20
6	Draxan soldiers, 2-16
7	Draxans, common, 1-12
8	Templars, 1-8
9	Clan lord and party
10	Dragon Warriors, 1-6
11-12	Kaisharga and party

### Forest Sectors

2d6	Result
2-3	Special*
4	Field slaves, loyal, 2-16
5	Household slaves, loyal, 1-6
6	Draxan soldiers, 2-12
7	Common Draxans, 1-12
8	Templars, 1-6
9	Clan lord and party
10	Dragon Warriors, 1-6
11-12	Kaisharga and party

### Other

Use this table for any other area, including the Monument Sector and the wall tops.

2d6	Result
2-3	Special*
4	Craftsmen slaves, loyal, 2-12
5	Common Draxans, 2-12
6-7	Draxan soldiers, 2-20
8	Templars, 1-8
9	Dragon Warriors, 1-6
10	Clan lord and party
11-12	Kaisharga and party

\*Refer to the Special Results table below.

### Table Key

**Clan lords** are accompanied by 2-12 common Draxans and 0-9 (1d10-1) household slaves. Half the Draxans are armored.

**Common Draxans** are accompanied by 1-20 household slaves. Half the Draxans are armored.

**Dragon Warriors** ride rocs half the time. They are armed and armored and if on foot are accompanied by 2-12 soldiers.

**Field slaves** may include a fighter of level 1-10 or thief of level 2-12 (6% chance of either). Otherwise they are similar to other slaves.

**Household slaves** are similar to slave craftsmen, but do not have weapon-like tools.

**Kaisharga** travel with 2-12 templars, Viziers, or soldiers.

**Slave craftsmen** avoid combat, but if cornered fight with basic tools like hammers or axes. They are 0-level humans or dwarves. They report any encounters to the Draxans 1d6 turns later.

**Templars** are accompanied by 1-12 craftsmen or field slaves. Templars are armed and armored.

### Special Results

1d8	Result
1	Slaves, rebellious, 2-20
2	Tembo, 1-3
3	Jankx, 3-12
4	Agony beetle
5	Sloth, Athasian, 1-3
6	Gaj, 1-2
7	Id fiend, 1-2
8	Kirre, 1-2

### Table Key

**Agony beetles** are only picked up in the fields or forest. Choose another encounter if on a road.

**Athasian sloths** forage only in the forest by day.

**Gaj** and **id fiends** usually lair in the forest, but occasionally forage in the townlands for several days. They attack psionically from safety.

**Jankx** are viciously defending a nearby burrow.



## Encounter Tables



**Kirre** do not leave the forest by day. Choose another encounter if it is day anywhere except in a forest sector.

**Rebellious slaves** are like ka'ardani in all respects. If they do not mistake the party for Draxans, they could be friendly. During the day rebellious slaves masquerade as loyal field slaves.

**Tembo** are foraging for food and will retreat before a strong party.



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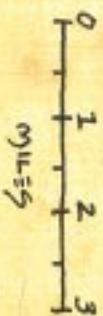
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THE DRAGON'S



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Kings  
Second Kingdom

Quinday  
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Sorrow



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Slaughter

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Grief

Isle of Babel



Mourning

MAP

MILES

Time Beyond





Great Salt Flat

The Bay of Los

The Islands of the South

The Bay of Los

M.M.

M.M.

M.M.

M.M.

M.M.

The Salt

The Bay of Los

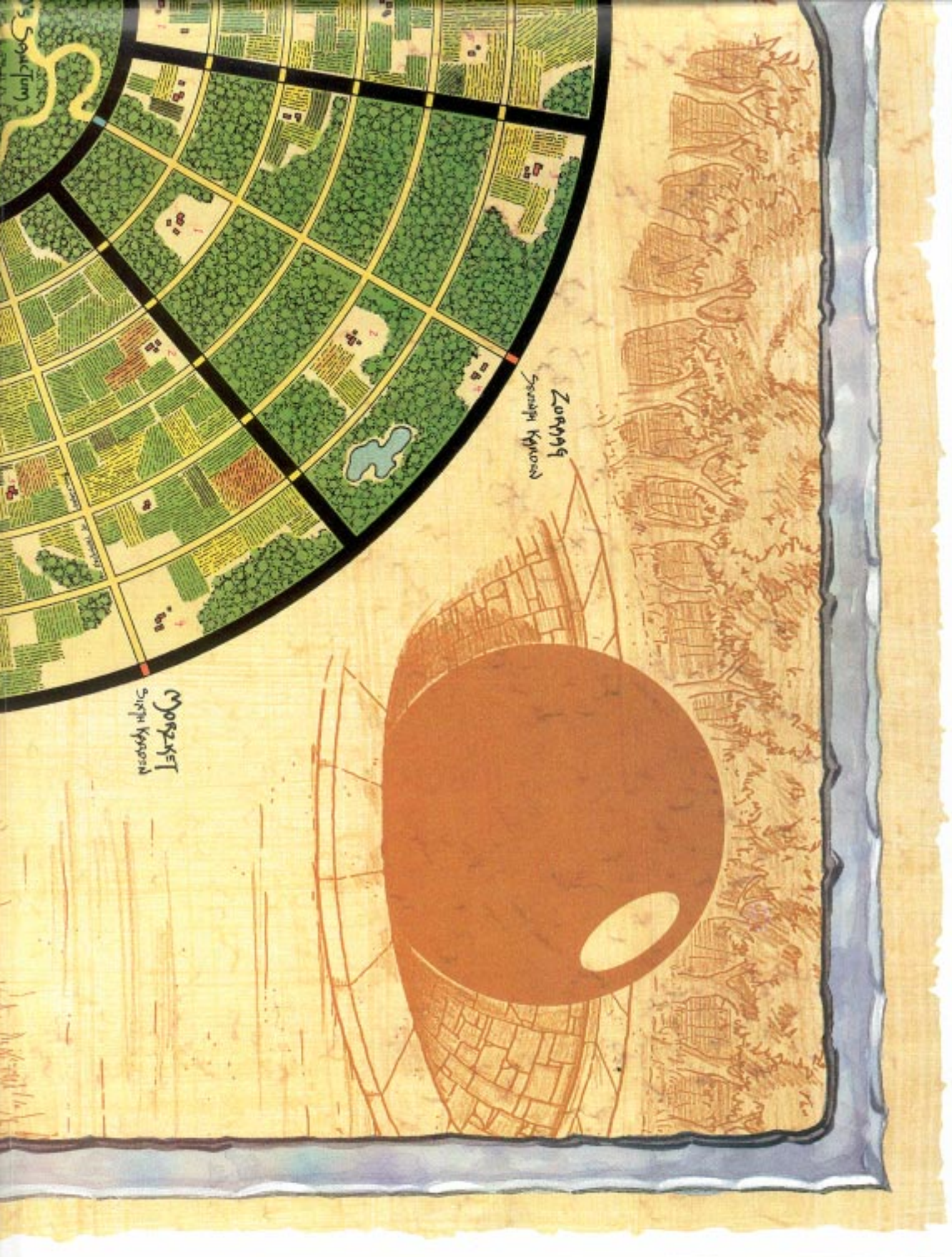




3 Spoutum

Zurrag  
Suzhup Kuzovod

Mozaret  
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Saint Sun

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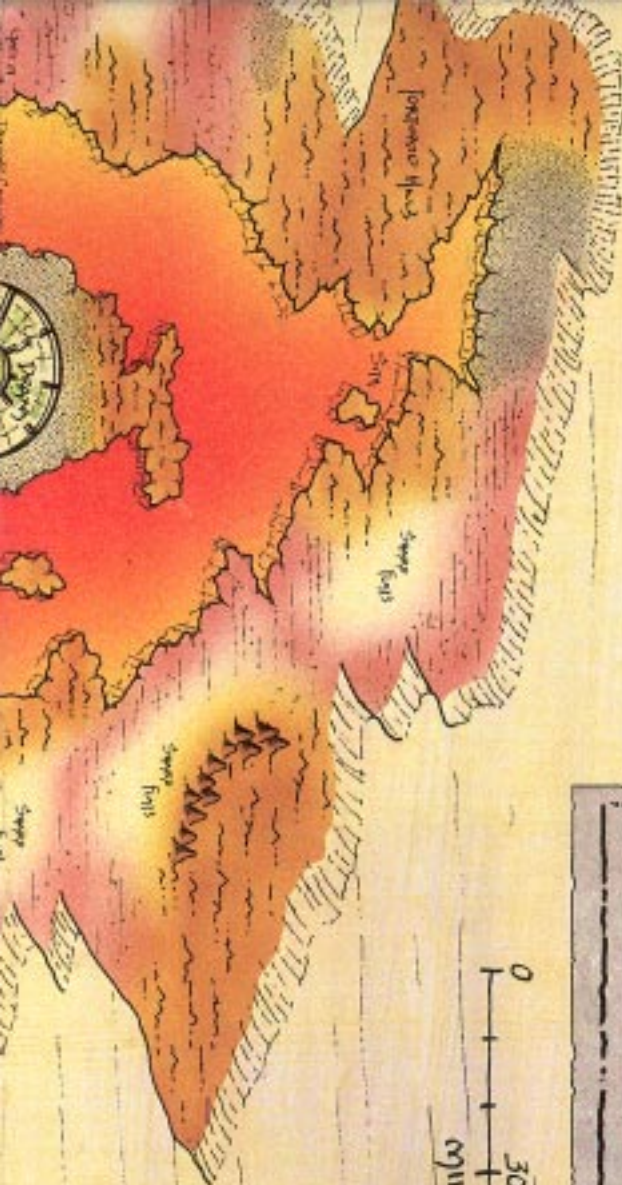
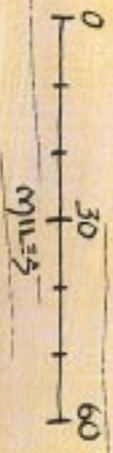


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